3.1 Aegean in the Bronze Age; Labyrinths and Cyclopean Architecture
4.2 Greek City-States; Classical Architecture in the Agora

1) Minoan Crete — c. 1900 - 1600 BCE

- Built with the unworked cyclopean stone masonry. Built on naturally defensible positions but did not add fortifications
- Minoans had a strong connection with nature, to wit: processions to sacred natural sites, sacred caves, sacred trees, sacred mountaintops
- Meandering pathways of caves, and meandering pathways caused by topography might have led to the concept of the labyrinthian
- Labyrinth, in any case, was an effective defense, as intruders would not have straight-line access to any part of the palace

- Labyrinth of Knossos — great temple complex at Knossos c. 1900 BCE
  
  Bull imagery throughout - maybe a reference to prototype god of Greek Poseidon
  Meandering circulation - no axial arrangements - adjusted to landscape
  
  Theater-like entry court
  Maze-like circulation
  The myth of Theseus and the Minotaur
  The counterintuitive columns that are thinner at the bottom instead of thicker (as we might intuit based on forces and structure)
  The taurokatharpsia - the Bull Dance with acrobats performed in the giant central Bull Court (pronunciation: tawro-ka-THARP-sia - “tauro”, of course, meaning “bull” as in the zodiac
  The Horns of Consecration - upper level sacred alignment with the distant mountain Juktas
  Throne Sanctuary at Knossos

2) Classical Greece — c. 500 - 400 BCE

- Reaching its peak in 5th century BCE, Greece’s cities developed in democratic cities, unlike the cities of southwestern Asia that were focused on tombs, temples, and the megalomaniacal wishes of the tyrants and warlords

- The democratic cities were marked by classical architecture, which, from here forward will be a strong influence on most of architectural history

- Classicism — A system of architecture that is a logical, tectonic, and symbolic representation of the craft of architecture and its construction method.

  The goal of classical architecture is to achieve physical, geometric, and optical perfection through the arrangement of this system and its parts. The classical system of parts may be thought of as a language and its geometrical arrangement its syntax.

- The polis is the city. (Such as Indianapolis, Metropolis, Acropolis, Demopolis and many other examples. Polis means the body of politics that underlie a city: it is the political constitution of the city. Regarding 5th century BCE Greece, the polis was based on what Aristotle referred to as the “living together.” Therefore, several villages would agree to live together as a confederation, or city-state, and become a polis, which was essentially democratic.

  The polis influences the physical manifestation of the city

  The polis will continue to influence the physical manifestation of cities throughout history

- The physical constitution of the city. Does the concept of “democracy” derive from the
landscape itself? The landscape of Greece is rough, rocky, jagged coastline, hundreds of islands, hilly terrain… which led, in part, to the development of independent city-states that self-governed themselves as democratic bodies.

- Two most important aspects of Athenian citizenship were:
  1. Private property rights
  2. Individual freedom

3) Four important components of the Greek City

- agora  The Greek agora was the gathering place of the polis, or the city…. It’s where people could gather to discuss openly ideas about politics and culture, share information, and have open debate.

  The agora accommodated a broad range of activities, including: markets, athletic events, and theatrical performances

  The Athenian agora was crossed by an important road, the Panathenian Way

- stoa  The stoa (plural stoas) was an architectural feature of the agora. It was a colonnaded area that was still part of the public realm that could provide protection for the public, such as protection from the blazing hot sun. The back of the stoa may have included chambers or offices that were semi-public

  The porch is an additive colonnaded piece to a building or house that is semi-public (bumps out)

  The loggia is a subtractive colonnaded piece to a building or house that is semi-public (bumps in)

- theater  The theater is an important building type in use today. Diagrammed as a semi-circle, a Greek theater is a semi-circular array of seats called a theatron carved into a hillside, often with a distant landscape as the backdrop. A stage for drama, oration, and poetry was in front of the viewers, and it was composed of a skene and a proskenion (a “scene” and a “proscenium”)

  Two theaters pushed together end-to-end would make an amphitheater … the prefix amphit meaning “both.” The amphitheater is really the genesis of the full-round place for viewing, as we’ll see at the great amphitheater of Rome called the colosseum.

- tholos  The tholos is a round architecture that, obviously places the occupant on-center in a profoundly important way. The tholos at ancient Athens was not a religious building and it was fairly crude, but the tholos quickly became a very religious building type - perhaps the most sacred - because its centrality was a direct connection to the vertical axis (earth and heaven)