

Architecture of reconfigurable systems : SoC

J. Lorandel

jordane.lorandel@u-cergy.fr

Slides available there: https://perso-etis.ensea.fr//lorandel/M2_ESI_ASR.php

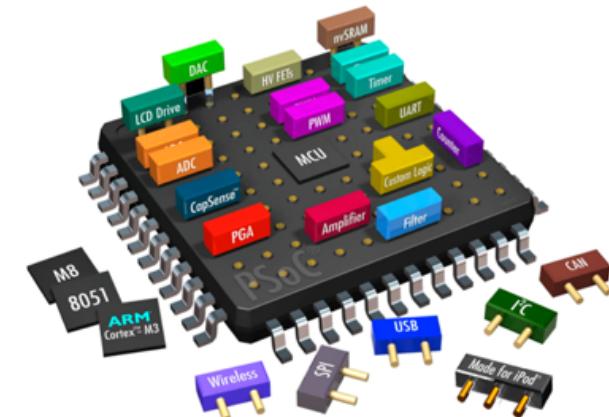
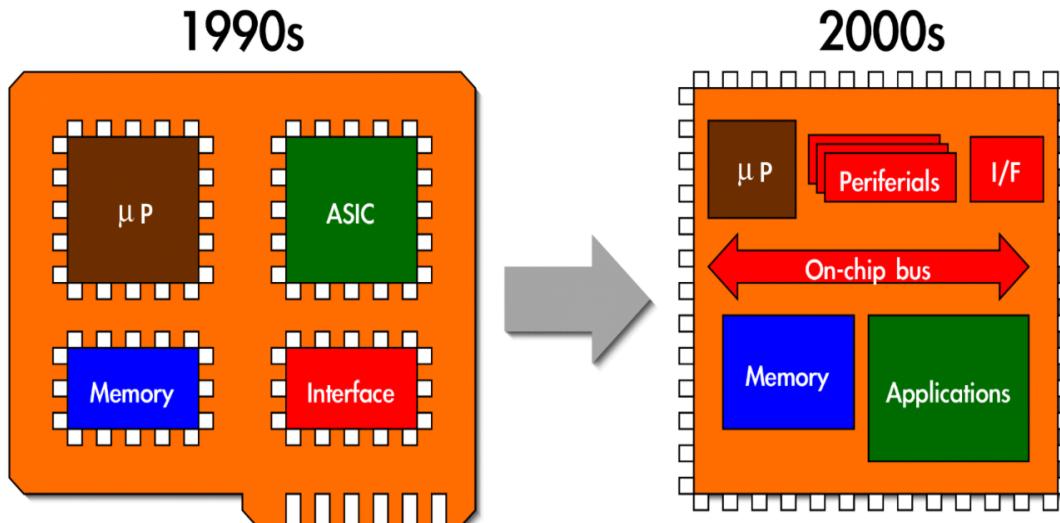
□Outline

- Design issues
- SoC Design & Intellectual Properties
- Interconnect
 - Interconnect topologies
 - Bus
 - Crossbar
 - NoC
- Embedded Bus and Standards : ARM AMBA & AXI
- SoC FPGA : New tools for Co-design
- TP

Design issues

❑ SoCs ?

- Integrated Circuit that integrates multiple components of a system onto a single chip -> **System on Chip / System on Programmable Chip**



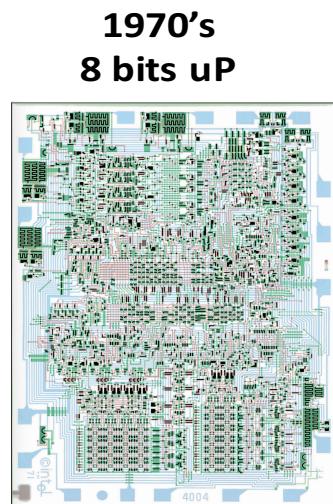
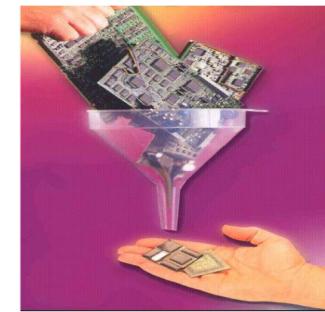
❑ MPSoCs – Multi-Processors SoC

- Addresses performance requirements

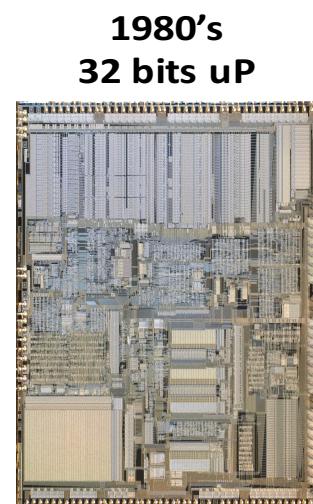
	Processor on a Chip	SOC
Area used by storage	80% cache	50% ROM/RAM
Clock frequency	3.5 GHz	0.5 GHz
Power	≥50 W	≤10 W
Memory	≥1-GB DRAM	Mostly on-die

❑ Evolution : From boards to SoC

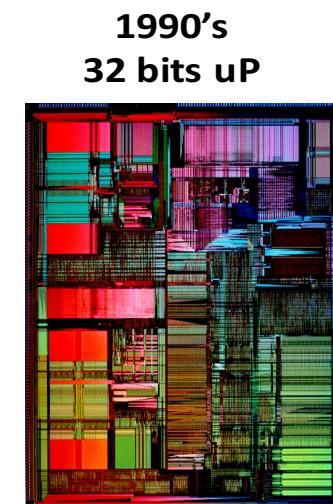
- Emerging new technologies
 - Greater complexity
 - Increased Performance
 - Higher density
 - Lower power dissipation



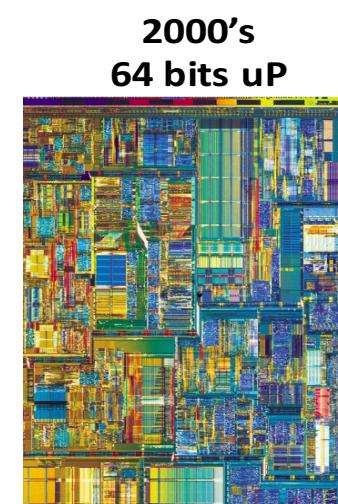
Intel 4004
2300 transistors



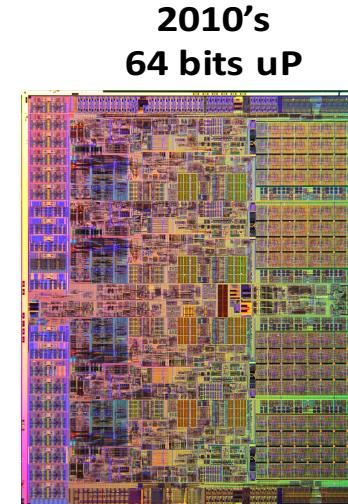
Intel 80386
275k transistors



Pentium (1993)
3,1M transistors



Pentium IV
[42-184]M transistors

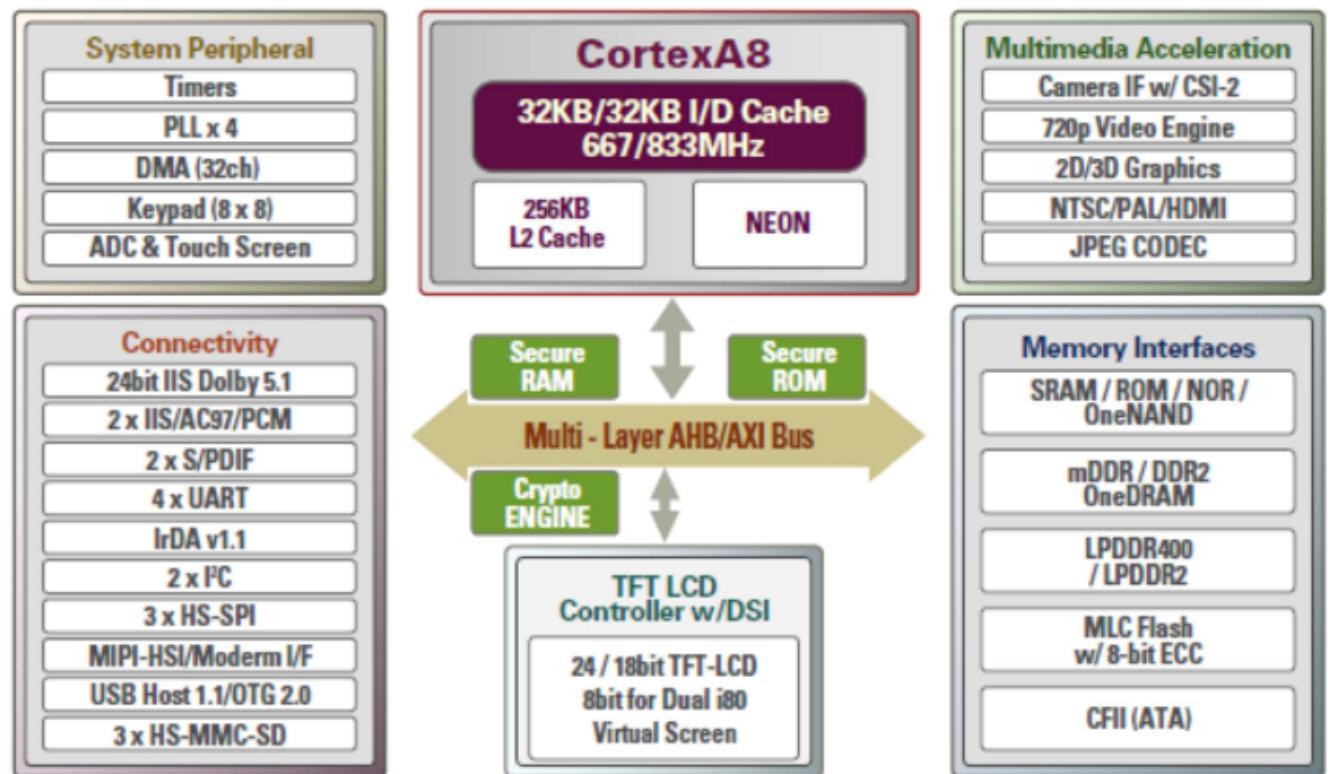


Core i7
[731M et + (>Billion)
transistors

□ Samsung S5PC100 SoC (iPhone 3GS)

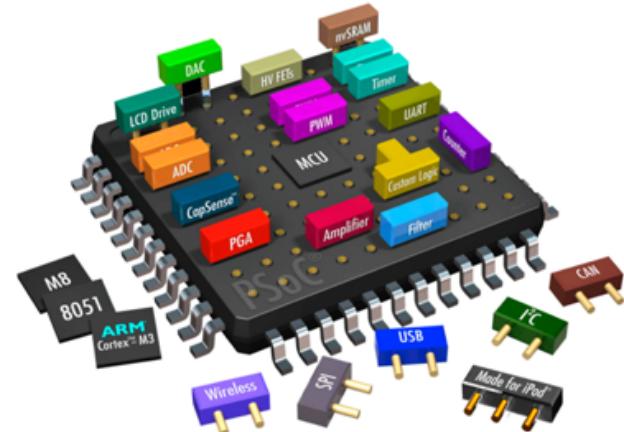


- A 32-bit ARM Cortex A8 RISC processor (833MHz)
- Includes powerful hardware accelerators (video, display control, JPEG codec...)
- Includes many HW peripheral such as ADC, SPI, Timers, LCD controller,...
- Various functionalities : Wireless communication, Navigation, Camera, Portable gaming, ...
- Used in iPhone 3GS & iPod touch 3rd generation



□ Inside a SoC

- Today, designing a SoC consists in the integration of several component (of a system) onto a *single chip*.
 - Embedded processor(s),
 - On-chip interconnection (busses, network, etc)
 - Hardware accelerators
 - Controller of peripherals
 - I/Os interface
 - Analog circuits,
 - ASICs logics
 - Software – OS, Application



□ Design Challenges of SoCs

1. Ensure a high-level of **performance**
2. **Used Area** = Cost of the integrated circuit
3. **Power consumption**
4. **Reliability**
5. **Configurability** : *standardization* for the manufacture and *customisation* for every application

SoC design is application-specific !
=> Cost-performance tradeoff

Design issues

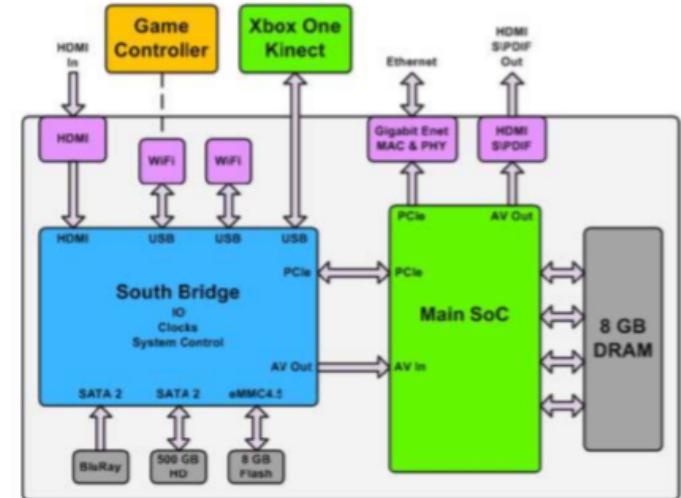
❑ Examples of SoCs

Xbox One:

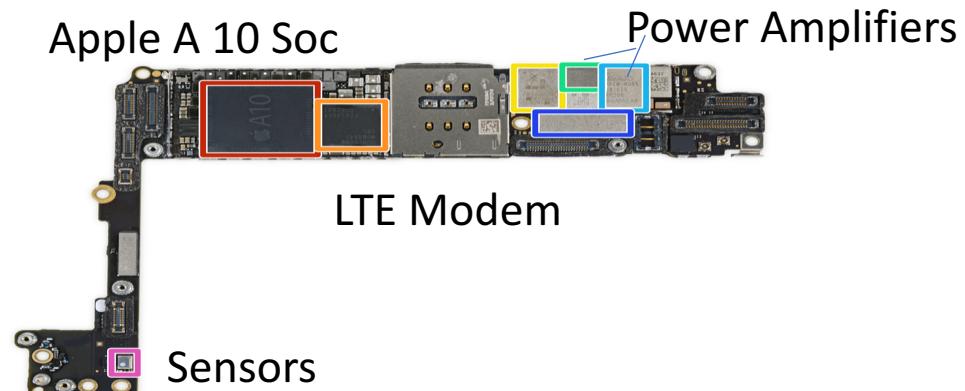
- Performance
- Area
- Power Consumption
- Reliability
- Configurability



Xbox One



Apple A 10 Soc



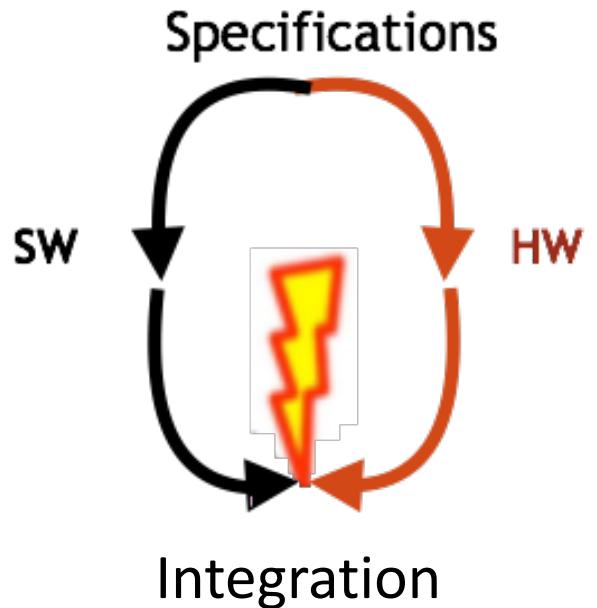
iPhone 7 plus :

- Performance
- Area
- Power consumption
- Reliability
- Configurability

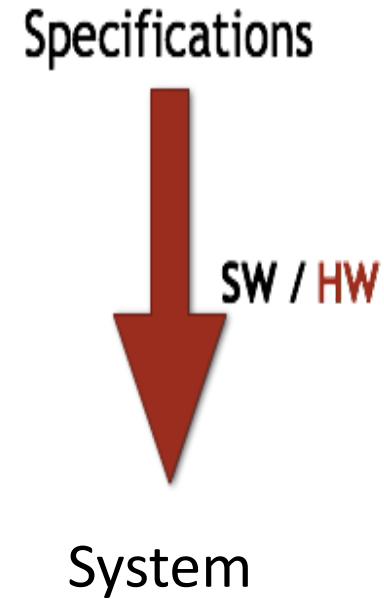
SoC Design & Intellectual Properties (IP)

☐ Software/Hardware

Classical approach



Co-design



⇒ Today, only a single HW/SW team for the entire design

❑ SoC Design and Interconnect

- The most important part of SoC design is **IP integration**
 - SW/HW IP Cores
 - Maximize design reuse to lower the cost
 - The good choice of interconnect
- Two main **interconnect architectures**
 - Busses based interconnection
 - Network on chip (NoC)

❑ Different types of IP for SoC Design

- **Soft IP**

- Hardware description model (VHDL/Verilog) that must be synthesized or purely functional
- Technology independent, flexible and reconfigurable
- Hard to protect

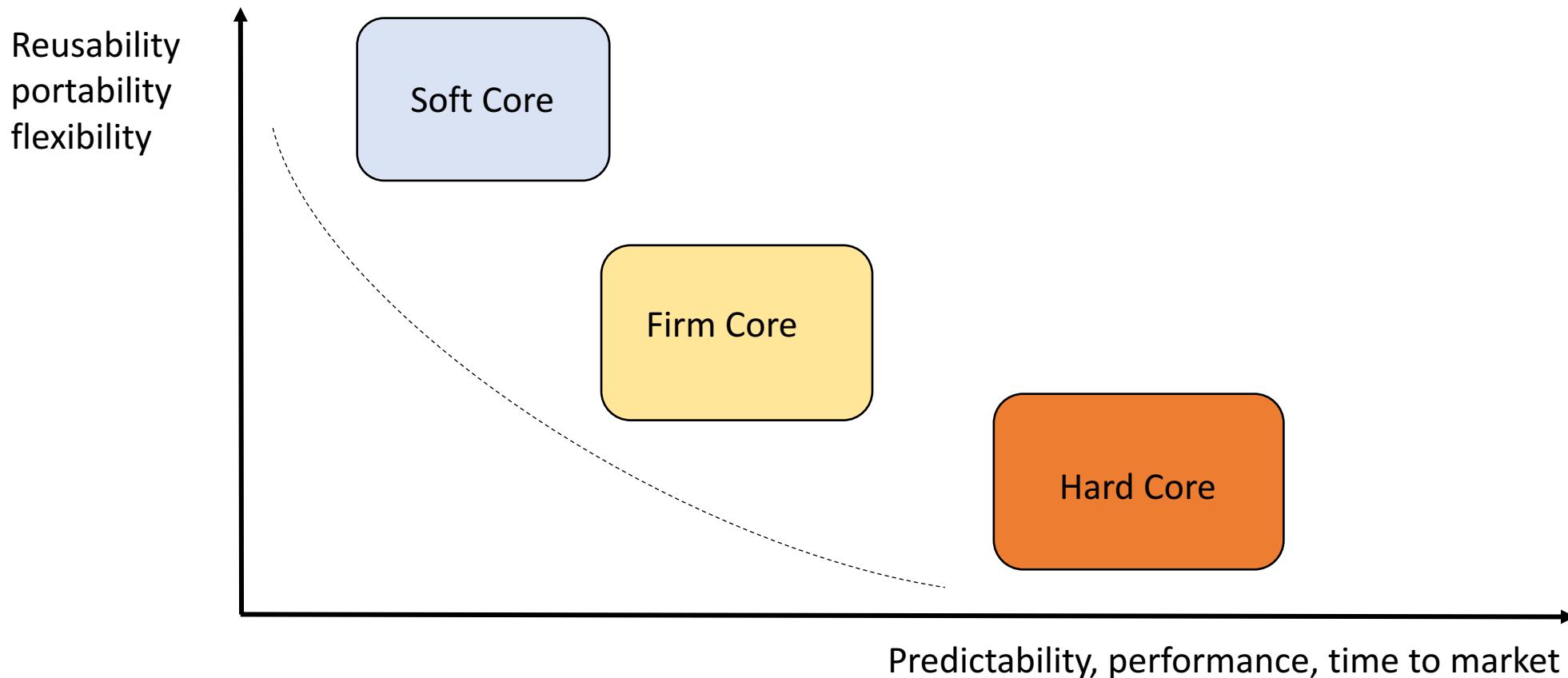
- **Hard IP**

- Placed and routed Netlist
- Depends on the technology, less flexibility
- provides timing information
- Easy to protect (=blackbox with I/Os)
- Simple and easy to integrate

- **Firm IP**

- Netlist after synthesis
 - Technology dependent (physical lib.)
 - Hard to protect
- = Tradeoff between performance of the IP hard and flexibility of the soft IPs

□ IP Cores



SoC Design & Intellectual Properties

❑ Some examples

- Processors (ARM7, ARM8,...)
- DSPs
- I/Os (PCI/PCIe, USB,...)
- Dedicated units (Crypto, digital communications,...)
- Network (Ethernet,...)
- Commercial IPs www.design-reuse.com
- Open IPs opencores.org

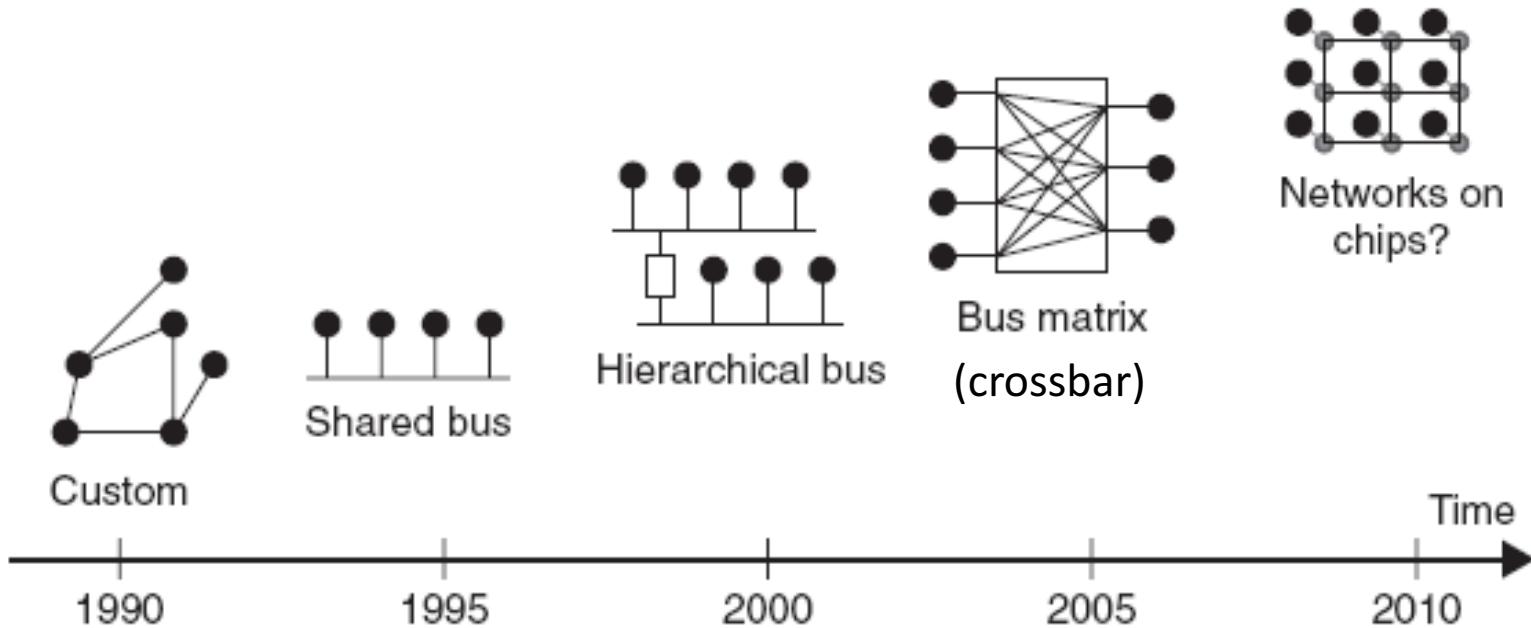
❑ Some IP providers

- R&D companies (fabless) : **IP Soft** for simulation and synthesis + licence :
 - ARM, ...
- Semiconductors companies: **IP Hard+Soft**
 - TI, Motorola, Intel/Altera, Xilinx,...
- Tool providers: **IP Soft**
 - Mentor Graphics, Cadence,...

Interconnect

Interconnect topologies

❑ Evolution of on-chip communication architectures

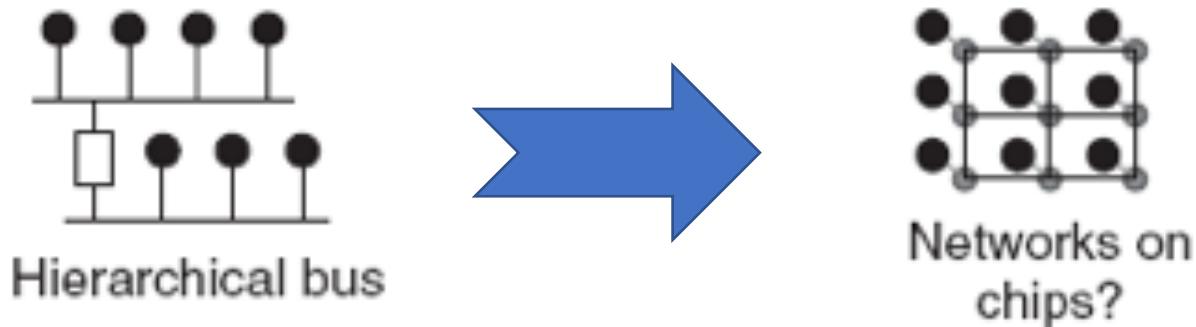


- The most widely used topology is the **bus**
- **Network-on-chip** (wired, wireless, hybrid) provide high-performance for future multicore SoC

Interconnect topologies

□ Busses to networks

- Evolution of the architectural paradigm :
 - Replace wires by **network**
 - Everything is packed in **packets**
 - Network on chip hides the physical interconnect from the design



❑ Terminology

- *Bus* : wires shared by multiple elements with logic to control its use
- *Bus Protocol* : set of rules for transmitting information between two or more elements over a bus (sequence of events, timing information etc.)
- *Master* : IP initiating a data transfer (read/write)
- *Slave* : IP responding only to the request of the master
- *Arbiter* : Control and manage the access on the bus (multi-masters)
- *Decoder* : Determine the receiver for the transfer
- *Bridge* : Connects two buses (which are not of the same type having different protocols), acts as master on one side and slave on the other

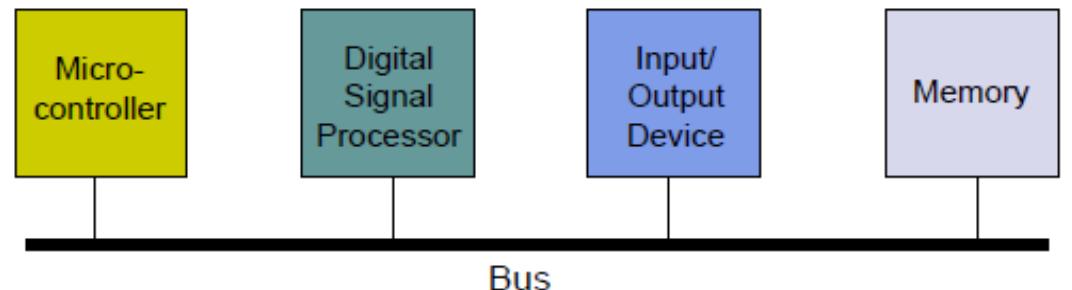
❑ Bus signals

- *Address*
 - *Carry address of destination for which the transfer is initiated*
 - *Can be shared or not for read, write*
- *Data*
 - *Carry information between source and destination*
 - *Can be shared or not for read/write data*
- *Control*
 - *Requests and acknowledgments*
 - *Specify additional information about the type of transfer (byte enable, burst size,...)*



❑ Shared Bus

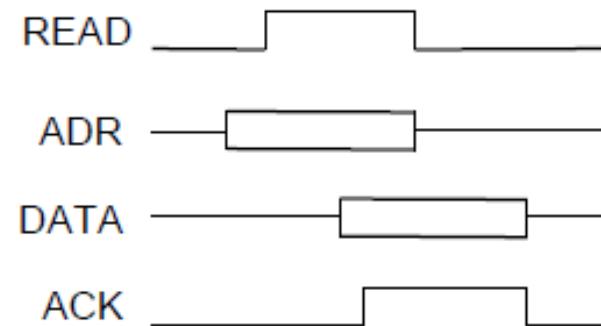
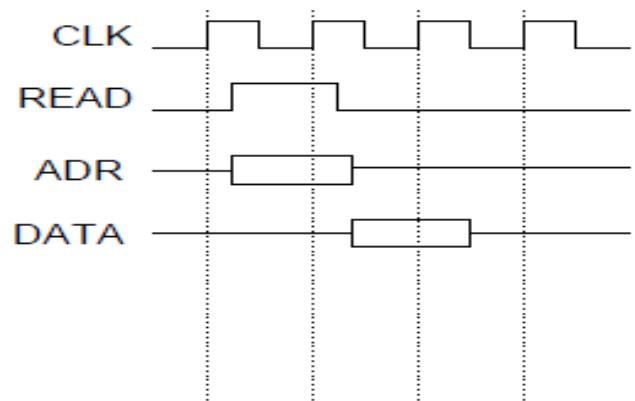
- Simple wires used as **shared communication medium**, interconnecting several modules
 - Only one component can send a message on the bus at a given time
 - Need arbiters if several elements wish to communicate on the bus at the same time
 - The bus can become a bottleneck
 - Simplicity but difficult to scale
 - Example : **OPB (On-Chip Peripheral Bus –IBM/Xilinx)**
- Example :
 - R/W transactions on the bus
 - Selection of the peripheral regarding the address



Interconnect topologies : bus

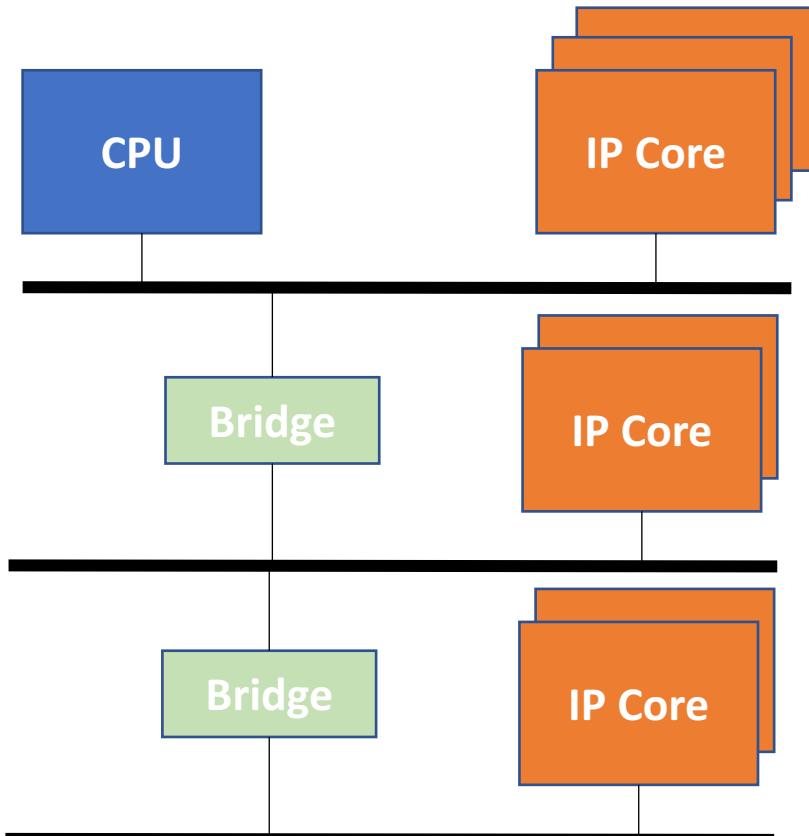
□ Synchronous/asynchronous Bus transfers

Synchronous	Asynchronous
Common clock lign (wire)	No clock lign
little logique, very fast	Support by a lot of peripherals
Require synchronization (same clock rate for all the connected modules)	Require a handshacking protocol



Interconnect topologies : bus

❑ Hierarchical Bus : Three level approach

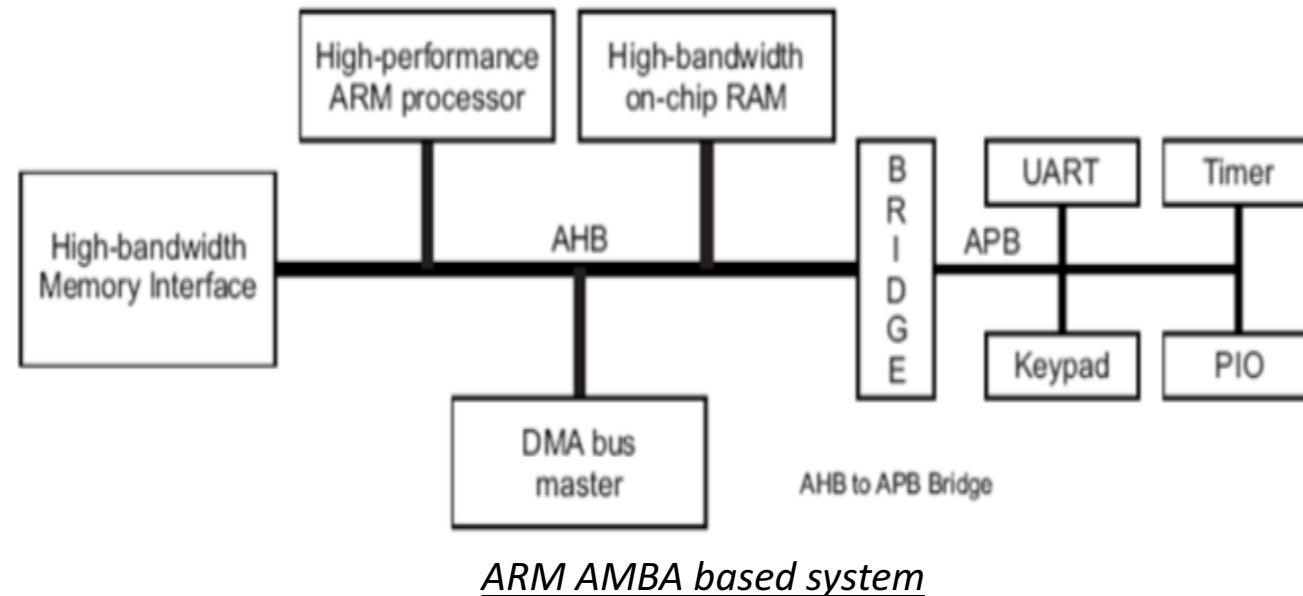


- **High performance bus**
 - Highest bandwidth (>10GB/s)
 - High end embedded processors and accelerators
 - PCIe, 10G Ethernet
 - DDR2/3/4 memory, embedded DRAM
- **Mid performance bus**
 - Lower bandwidth (<10GB/s)
 - Low and Mid embedded processors
 - PCI, USB2, Gigabit Ethernet
 - DDR memory, SRAM
- **Low performance bus**
 - Standard low bandwidth peripheral
 - I2C, USB, GPIO, Timers
 - UART, Flash memory

Interconnect topologies : bus

❑ Hierarchical Bus

- Multiple buses connected to each other through bridges
- Concurrent transfer on each bus
- Organized according to bandwidth and performance
- Bridge complexity

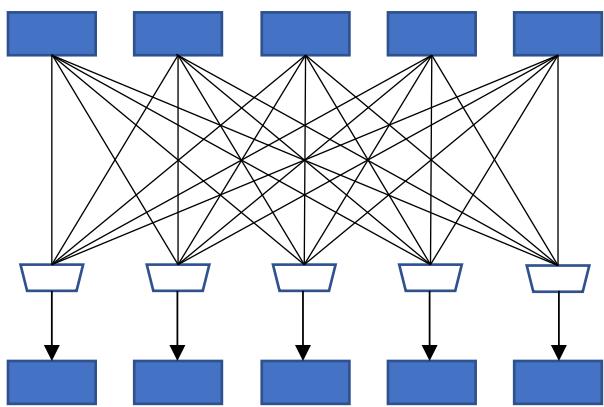


❑ Embedded busses

- AMBA 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 (ARM)
- Core Connect (IBM)
- STBus (STMicroelectronics)
- Avalon (Altera)
- Wishbone (OpenCores)
- ...

□ Crossbar Interconnects

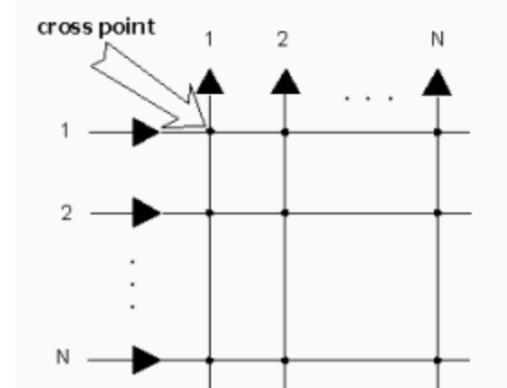
- Technology compensating for the increasing number of communicating elements wishing to access a common resource inside a SoC.
 - Needs concurrent accesses
 - Needs increased performance
- Every Master is connected to every slave with a dedicated bus => high data transfer parallelism (better throughput than hierarchical buses)
- Large area => High power consumption, timing closure problems



Crossbar architecture

N horizontal busses
= N inputs

N vertical busses = N outputs

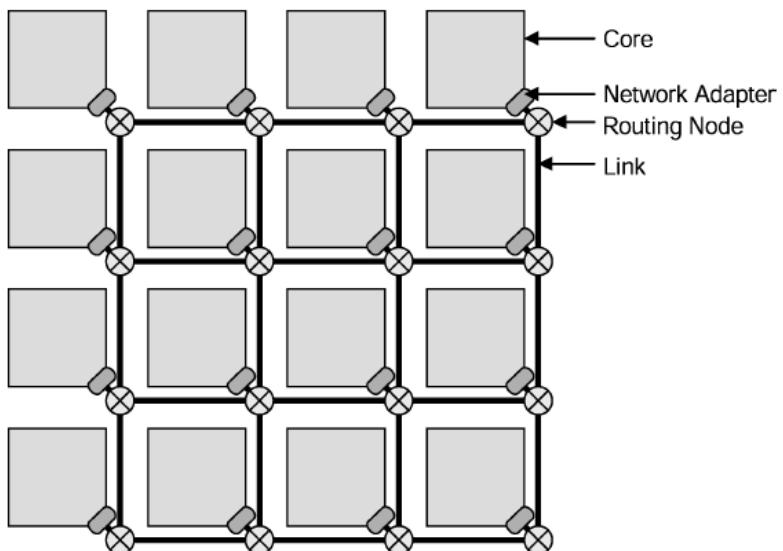


Matrix of $N \times N$ connexions

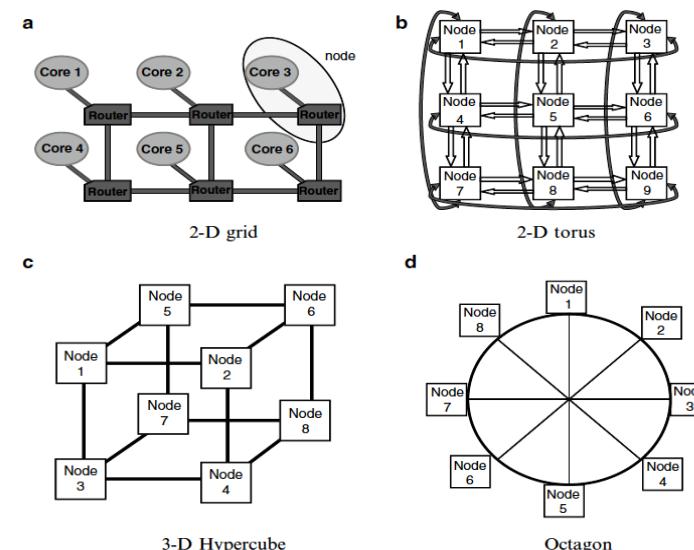
Interconnect topologies : NoC

NoC Interconnect

- NoCs are an attempt to scale down the concepts of large-scale networks, and apply them to the embedded system-on-chip (SoC) domain



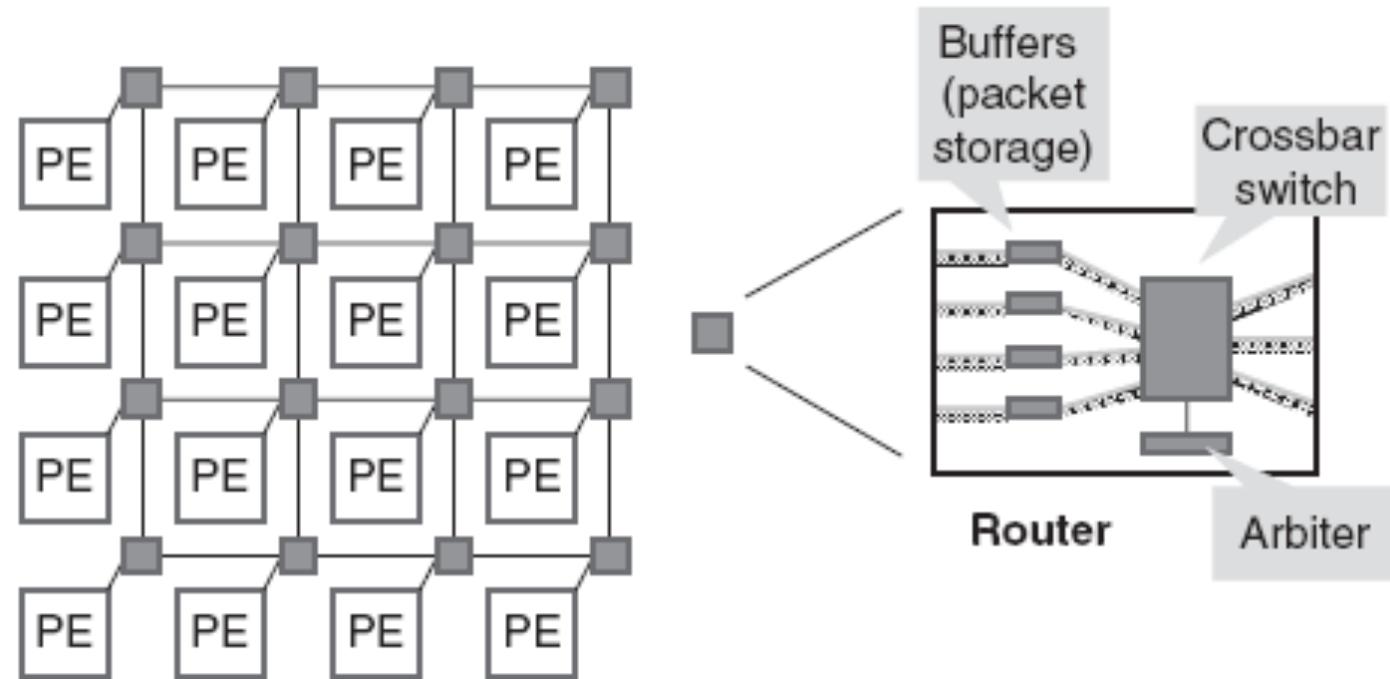
Topological illustration of a 4-by-4 grid structured NoC, indicating the fundamental components.



Other NoC topologies

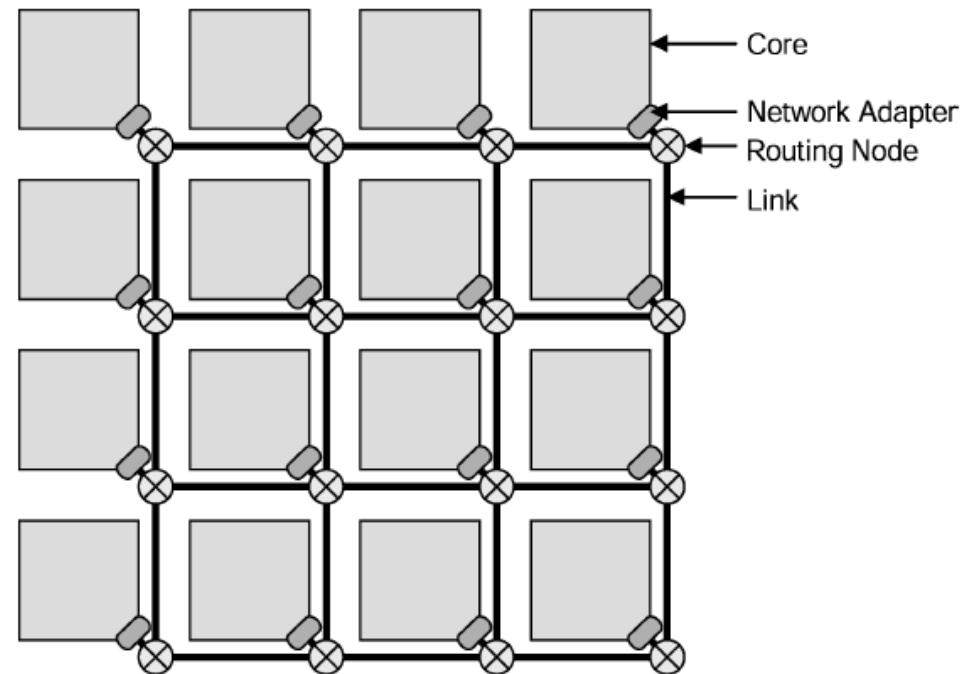
Interconnect topologies : NoC

- Network-on-chip (NoC) is a packet switched on-chip communication network designed using a layered methodology
- NoCs use packets to route data from the source to the destination PE via a network fabric that consists of
 - switches (routers)
 - interconnection links (wires)



❑ NoC Properties

- Regular geometry that is **scalable**
- Flexible **QoS guarantees**
- Higher bandwidth
- **Reusable components**
 - Buffers, arbiters, routers, protocol stack
- No long global wires (or global clock tree)
 - No problematic global synchronization
 - **GALS: Globally asynchronous, locally synchronous design**
- Reliable and predictable electrical and physical properties



Interconnect topologies : Summary

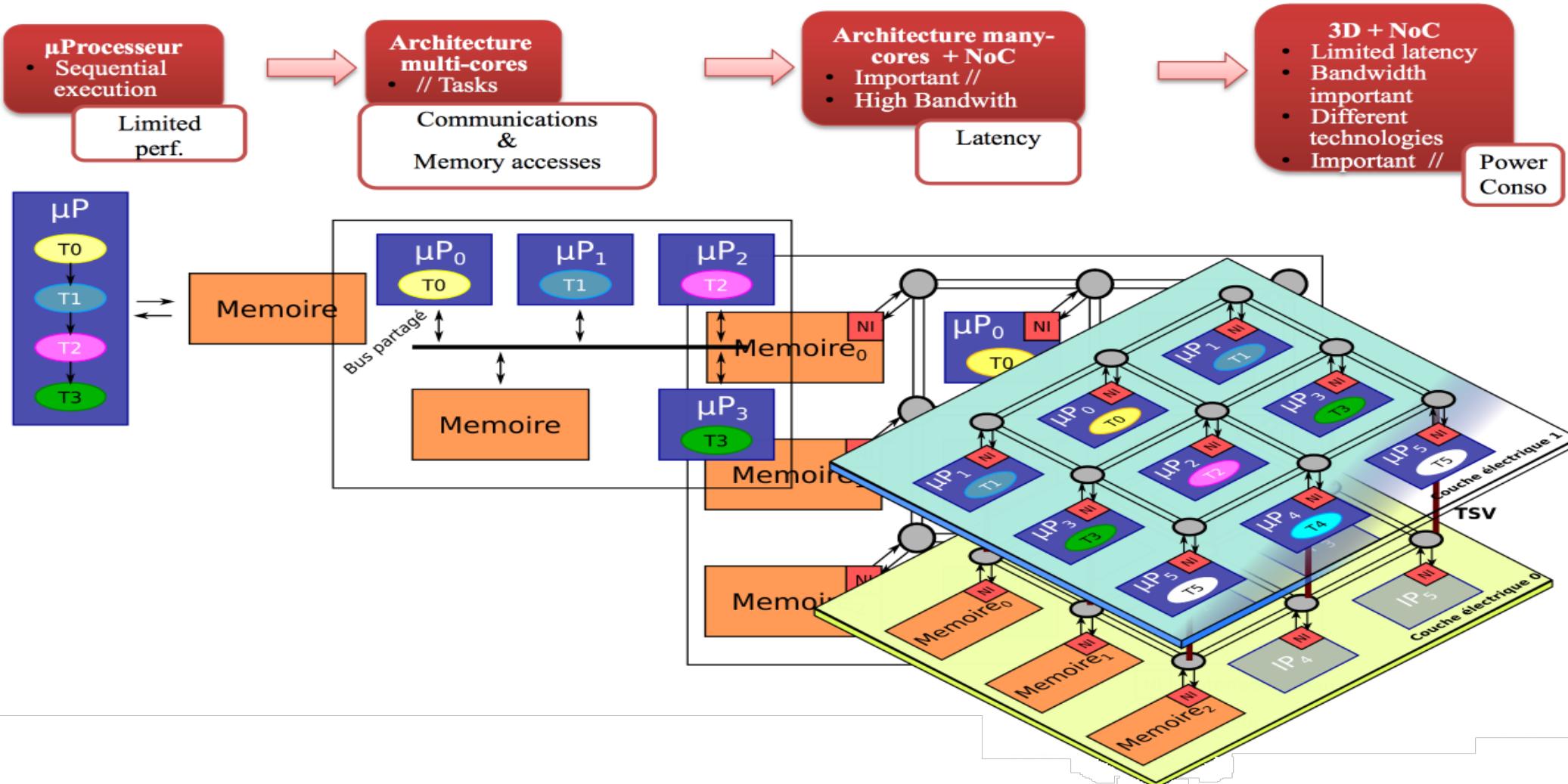
□ To summarize,

- A bus is an excellent medium to interconnect several elements on a chip
- The bus is shared and leads to a « bottleneck » in the system
- Many standards exists e.g. AMBA, Avalon, enabling design reuse and plug-and-play system design...

□ For future SoC,

- Unsustainable technology (Bus/crossbar) for complex SoC development with thousands of cores, heterogeneity
- Network-on-chip interconnect allows to increase the flexibility as well as the performance. SoC design is easier at system level without concerns about protocol, width conversion,...

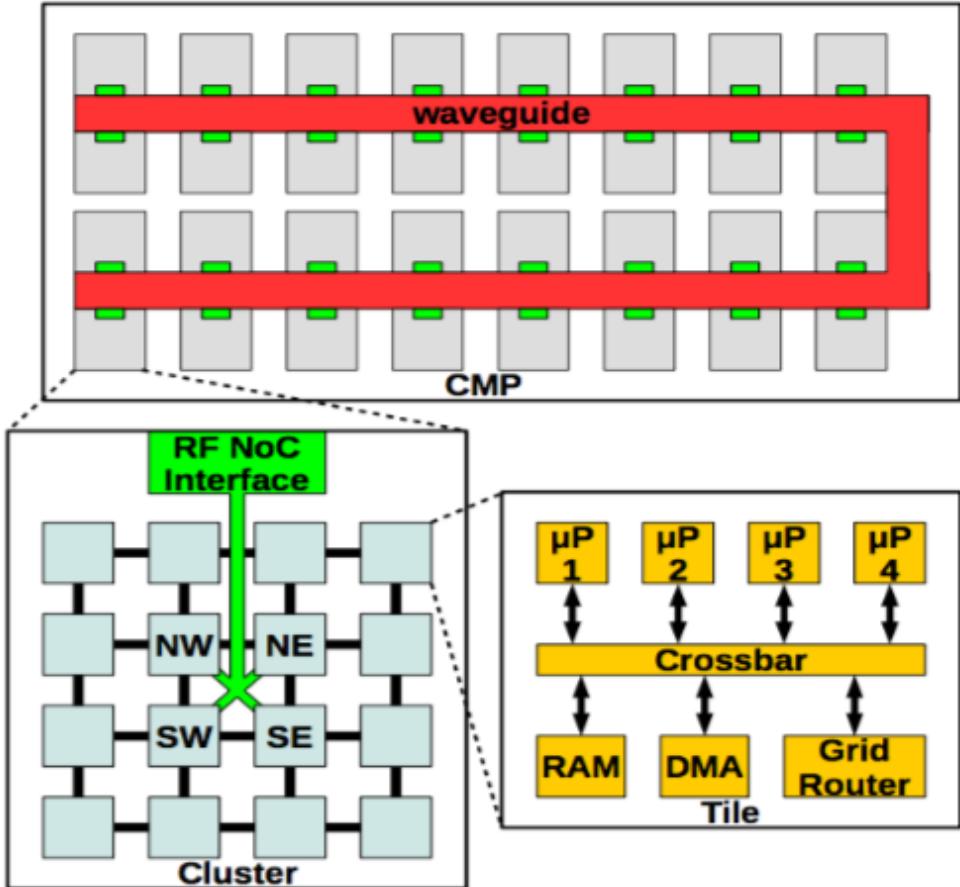
Interconnect topologies : Summary



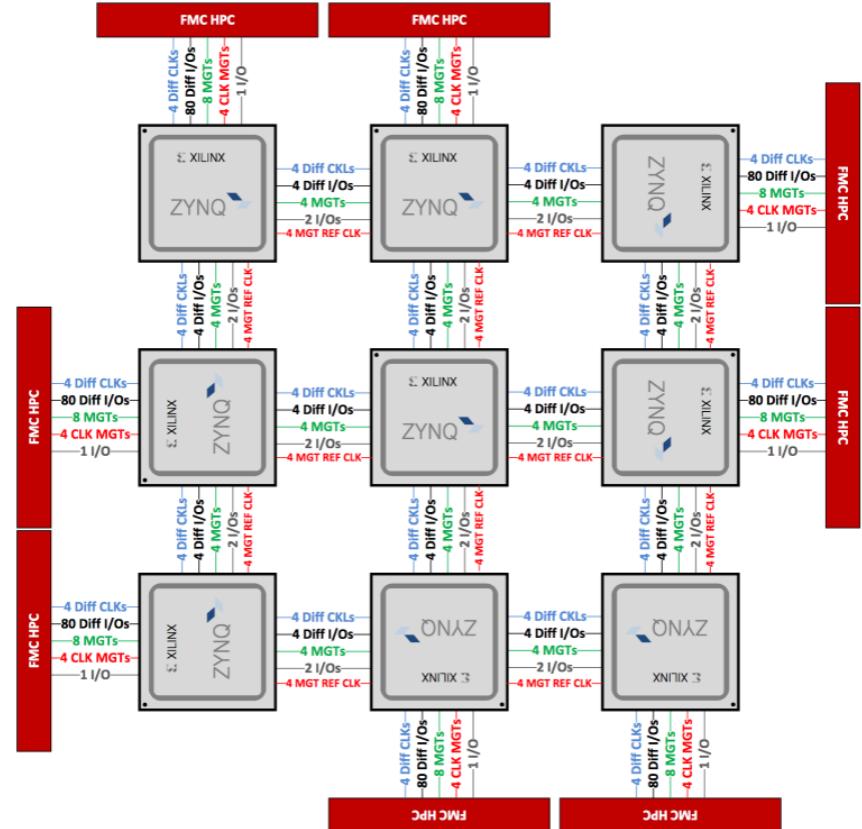
Source : Daniel Chillet, 3D Optical ManyCore Communication Allocation in a ManyCore Architecture based on an Optical NoC, Journée thématique de Emerging Interconnect Technologies, Paris, 27 novembre 2017

ETIS research project : WiNoCod // Wizarde

WiNoCod : Chip Multi-processors



Wizarde



ARM AMBA & AXI

❑ Standards & specifications

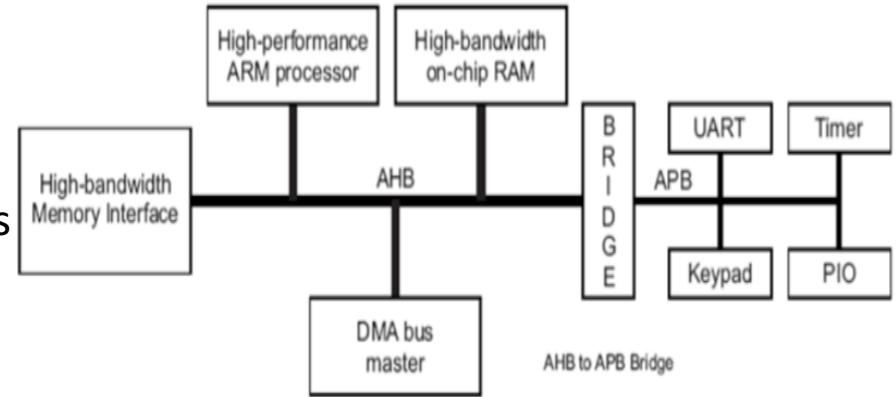
- Simplify IP integration
- Avoid integration mismatches

❑ What is AMBA

- *Advanced Microcontroller Bus Architecture = set of specifications*
- Based on the ARM Processor
- 4 specifications
 - AMBA [1996] -> 2 Busses
 - ASB Advanced System Bus
 - APB Advanced Peripheral Bus (Simple)
 - AMBA 2.0 [1999] -> 3 busses
 - AHB Advanced High-Performance Bus (Complex)
 - AMBA 3.0 [2003] Introduction of AXI standard
 - AMBA 4.0 [2010] 2nd version of AXI, AXI4

❑ From AMBA 3.0 Specifications

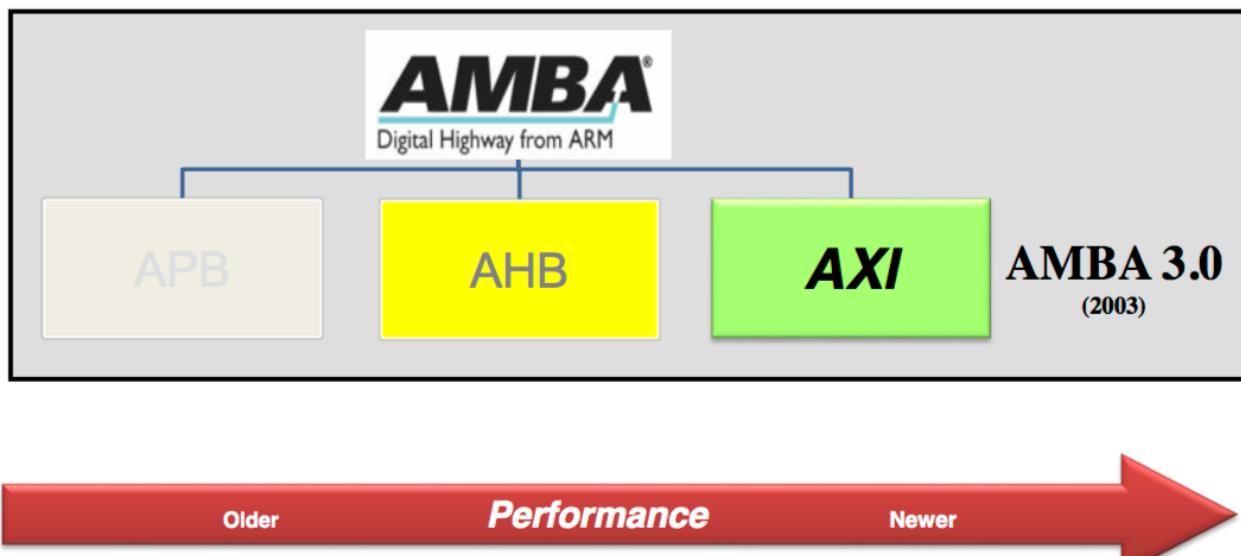
- Based on the ARM processor
- Three busses :
 - AHB - Advanced High-performance Bus
 - Burst transfer, multiples masters and slaves, large data bus (64-128bits),for high bandwidth...
 - APB – Advanced Peripheral Bus
 - Low-power, low-complexity interface, low bandwidth...
 - ASB - Advanced system Bus (older version of AHB)
 - Introduction of AXI – Advanced eXtensible Interface (for FPGA)
 - Protocol and interface specifications for IP cores
- This standard aims at solving the following issues :
 - Modularity and design reuse
 - Interface Protocol and efficient clock/reset management,
 - Energy Efficiency thank to AHB/APB partitioning
 - Access for on-chip test



ARM AMBA based system

□ What is AXI

- It's a part of ARM's AMBA
- The first version of AXI was first included in AMBA 3.0, released in 2003
- Xilinx has adopted this protocol for its FPGAs (Virtex-6, Spartan-6 et Série 7)

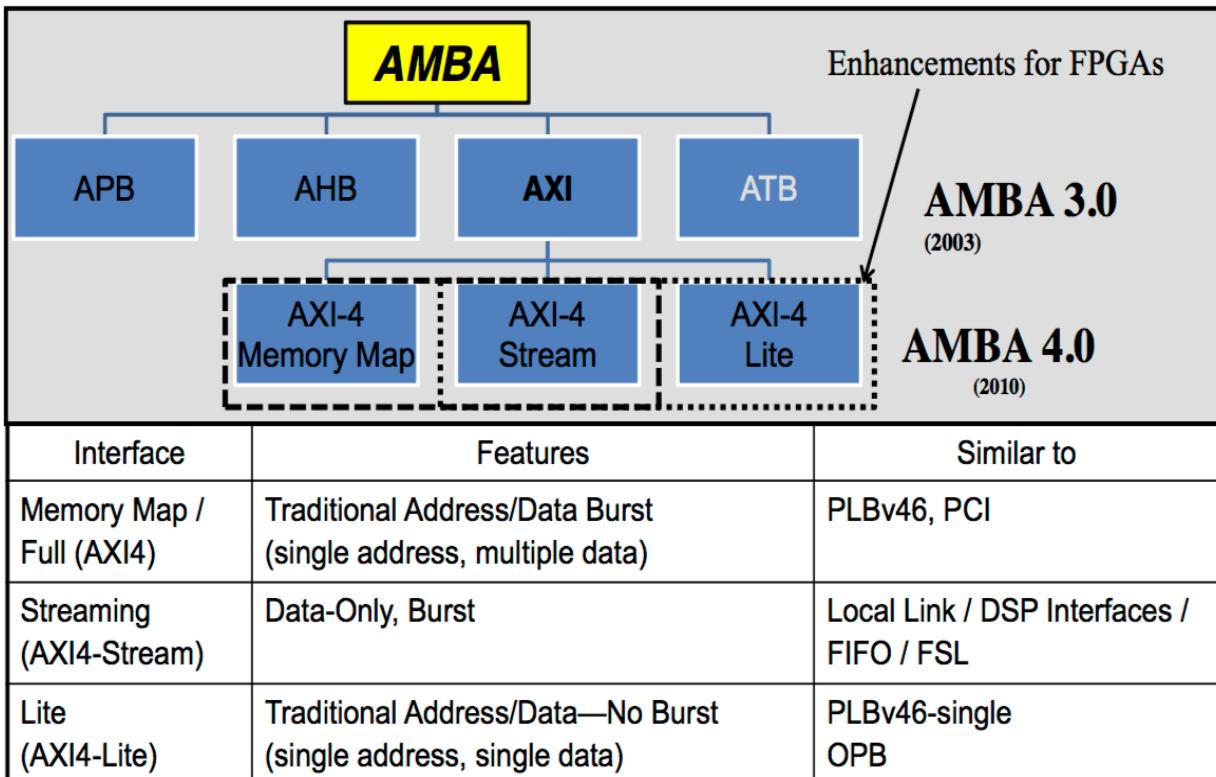


AMBA: Advanced Microcontroller Bus Architecture
AXI: Advanced Extensible Interface

❑ AXI protocol

- Suitable for high-frequency and low-latency designs
- High frequency operation without using complex bridges
- Meets the interface requirements of a wide range of components
- Provides flexibility in the implementation of interconnect architectures
- Compatible with existing AHB & APB interfaces

- AMBA 4.0, released in 2010, includes the second major version of AXI: AXI4
- 3 types of interfaces
 - Full (Memory-mapped)
 - High-performance memory mapped
 - Stream
 - High-speed streaming data (unidirectional) with reduced signal routing
 - Lite (Memory-mapped)
 - Simple and low throughput memory-mapped communication



❑ AXI protocols

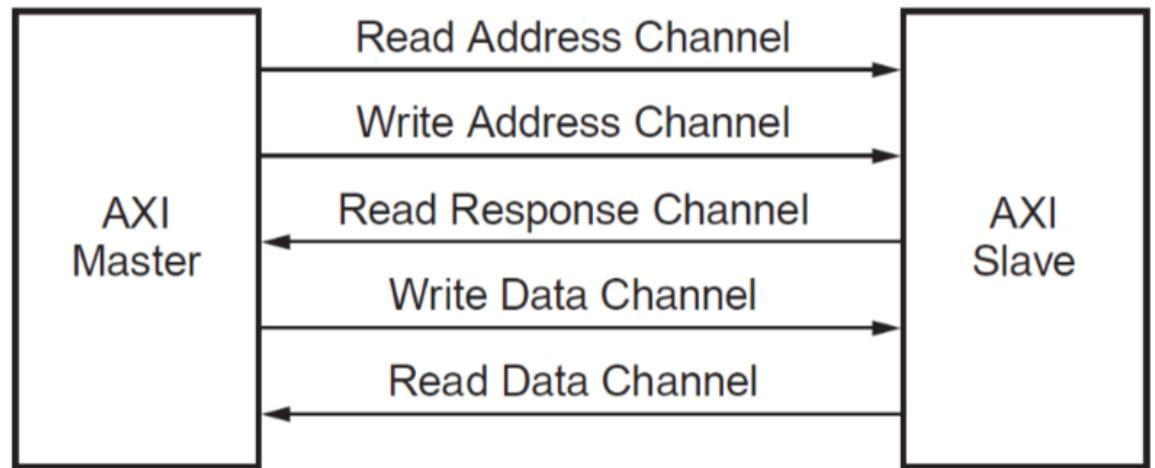
- Memory-mapped (**AXI3, AXI4, AXI4-Lite**)
 - All transactions use a target address within a system memory map space and data to be transferred
 - Example : a typical peripheral or memory bank
- Stream (**AXI4-stream**)
 - Data-only communication (ex: dataflow application where no address is required)
 - Example : data coming from an USB controller

❑ Key features

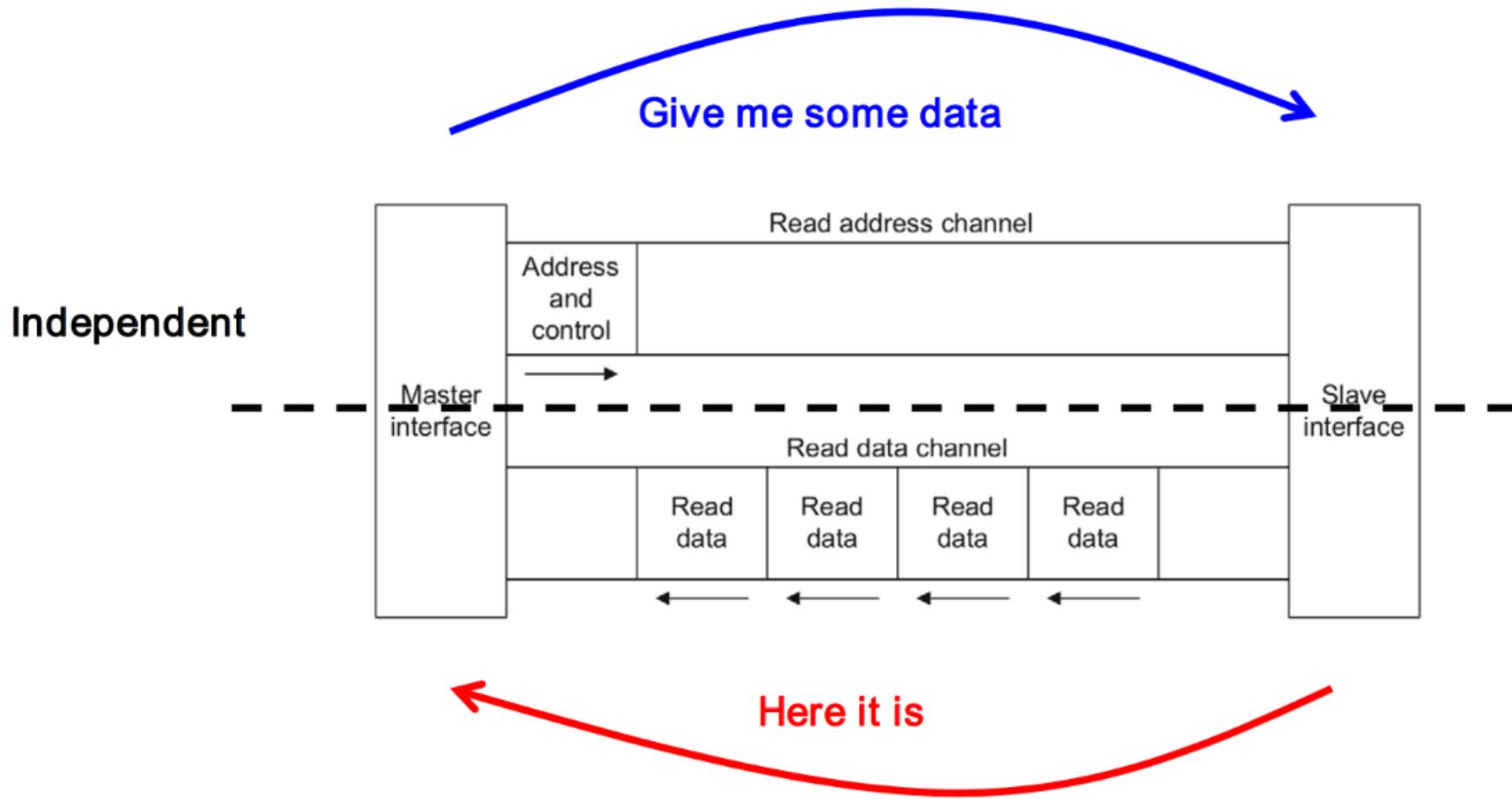
- Separate address/control data phases
- Burst-based transactions (1-16 data transfer per burst of ≠ sizes (8-1024 bits))
- ..

❑ Typical MM master-slave connections using channels

- 5 transactions channels :
 - Read address channel
 - Read data channel
 - Write address channel
 - Write data channel
 - Write response channel

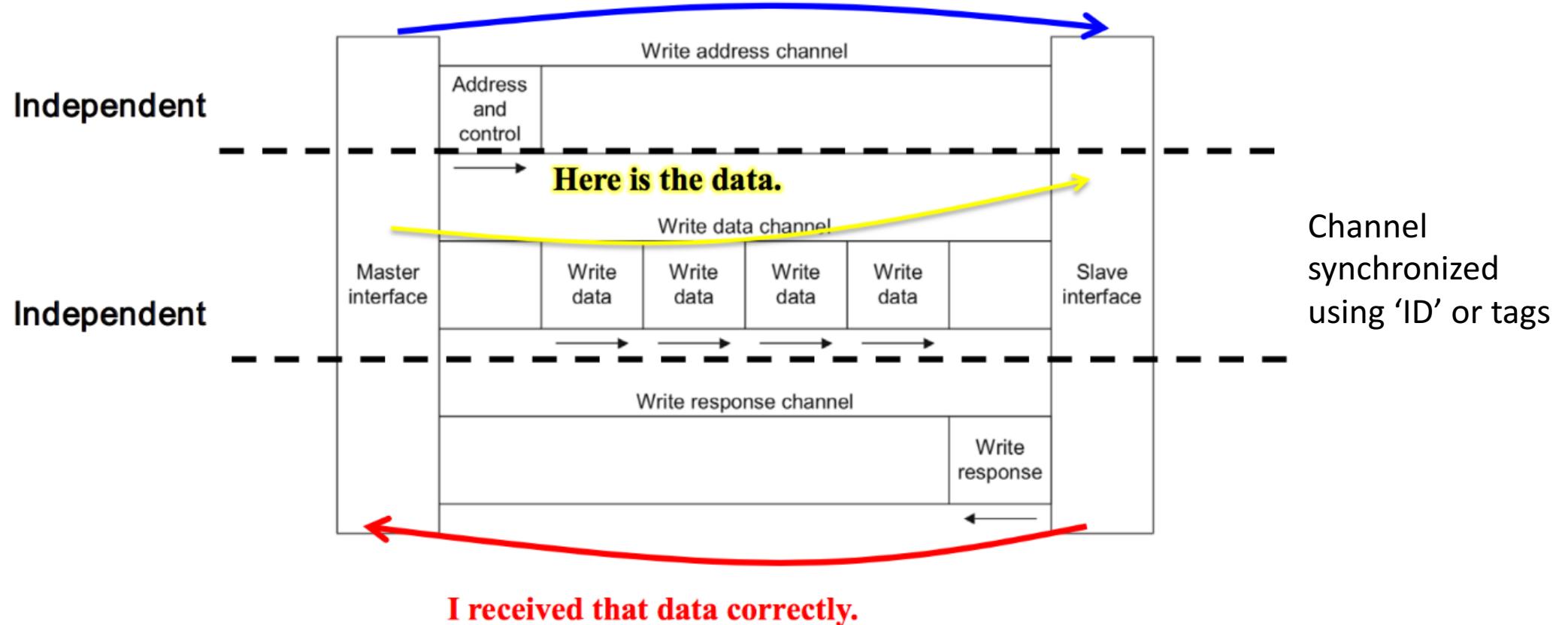


Read Transaction



Write Transaction

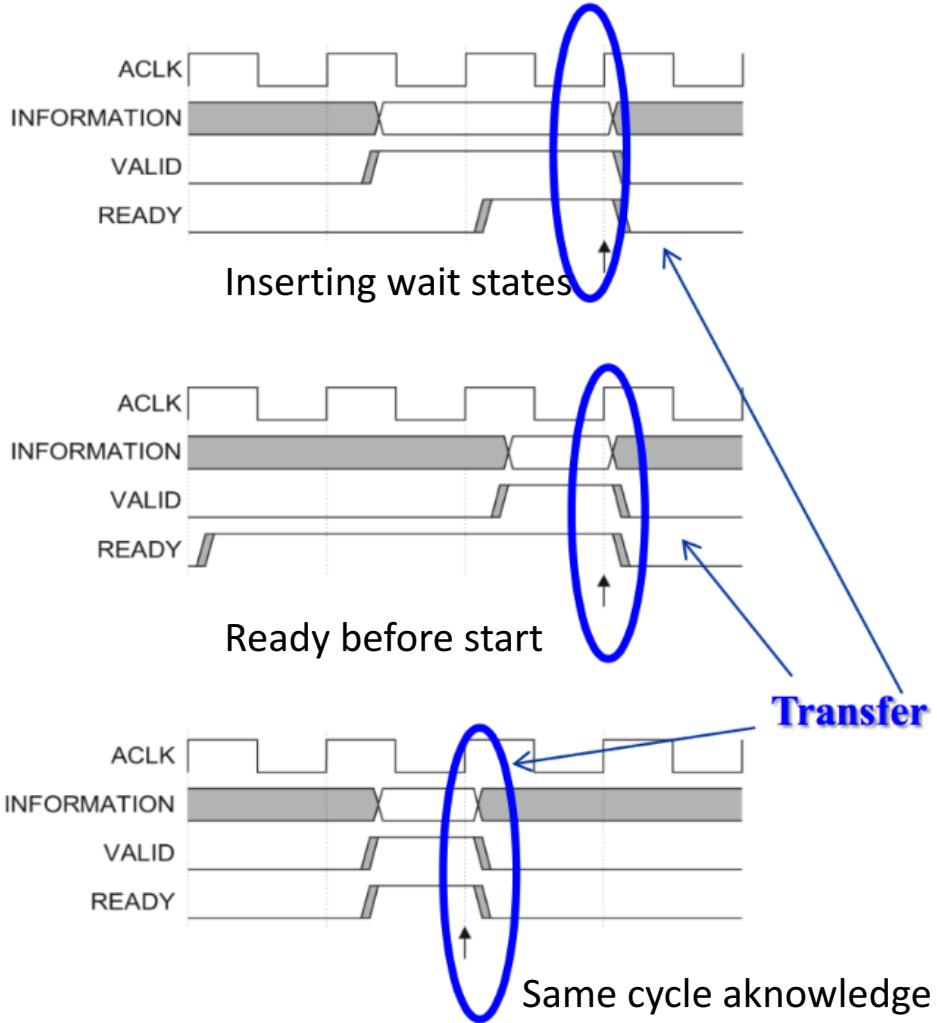
I'm sending data. Please store it.



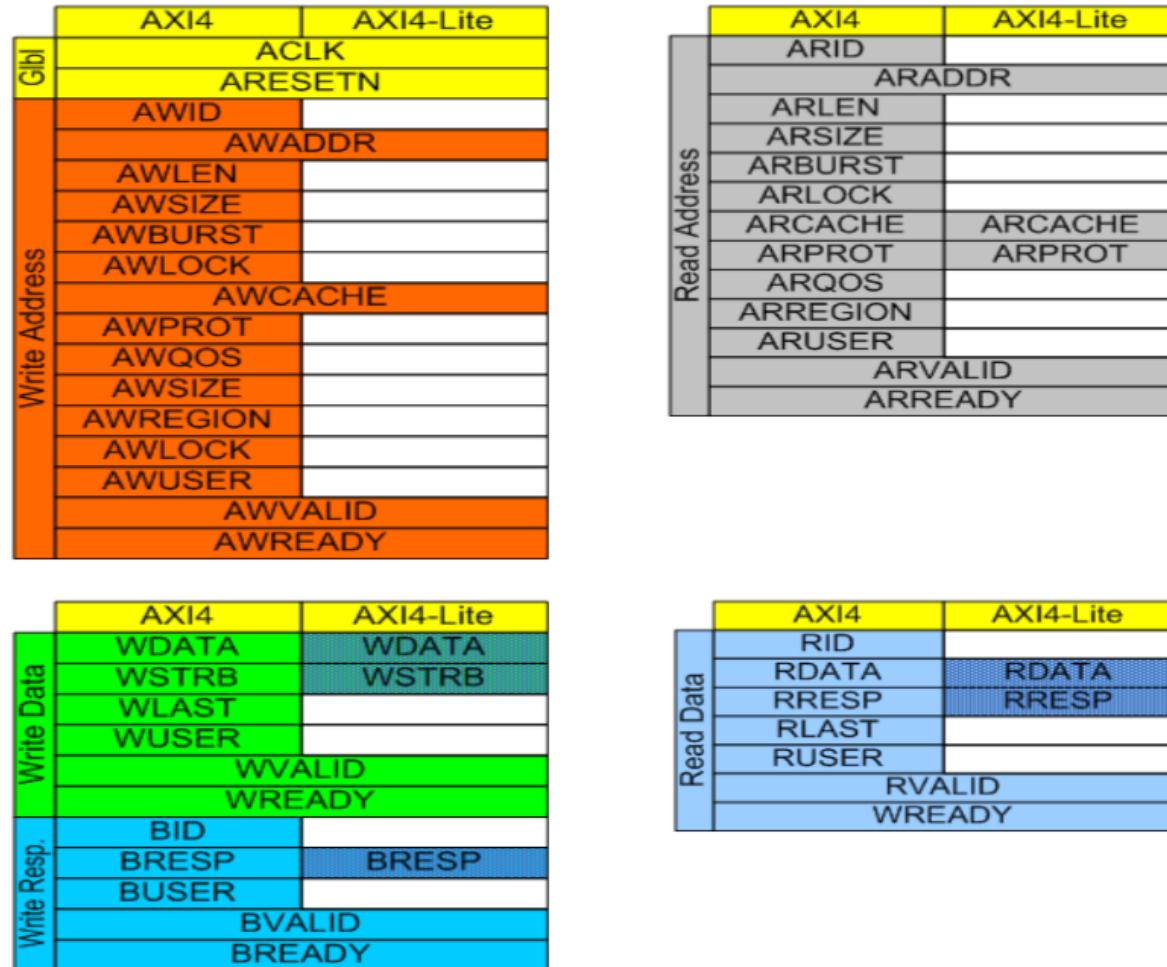
Flow control

- **Basic valid/ready handshaking**
 - Information is exchanged only when source is valid and destination is ready
 - Each channel has its own valid/ready

- **Both Master and slave can limit the flow**
 - Flexible signaling functionality
 - Inserting wait states
 - Ready before start
 - Same cycle acknowledge

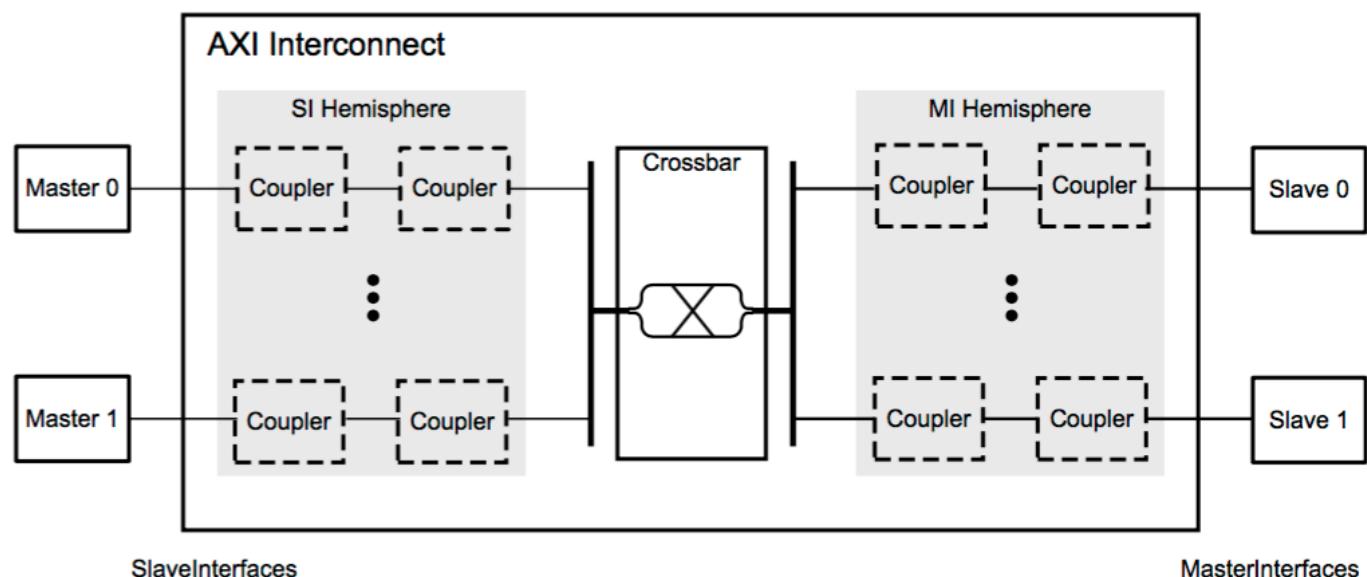


AXI MM signals



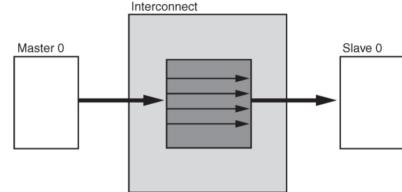
AXI Interconnect

- Interconnect Core
 - Crossbar routes the traffic between slave and master interfaces
 - Optional couplers can perform various conversion and buffering functions (Registers, data FIFO, clock converter, data width converter, etc.)
 - Configuration up to 16 slaves and 16 masters interfaces (if 1 slave, up to 64 Masters)



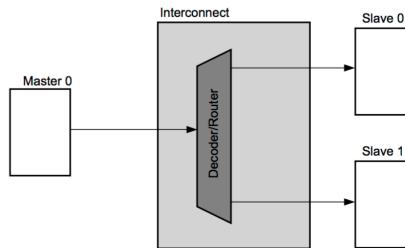
AXI Interconnect : several configurations

- Pass through



Resynchronisation for reset signals

- 1-to-N Interconnect



- N-to-1 Interconnect

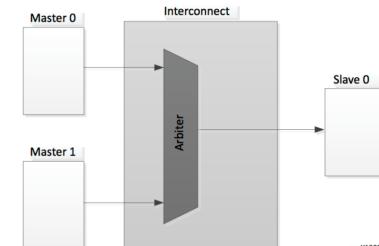
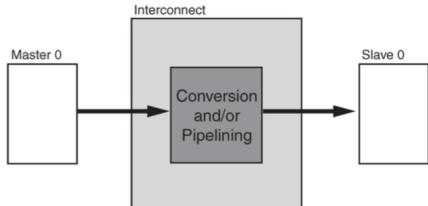


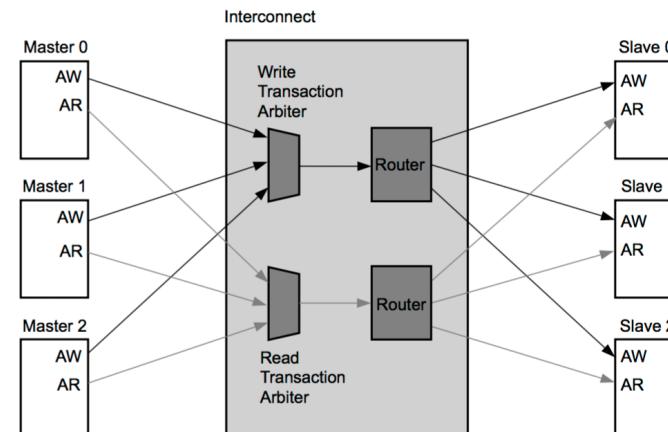
Figure 2-2: N-to-1 AXI Interconnect

- Conversion only

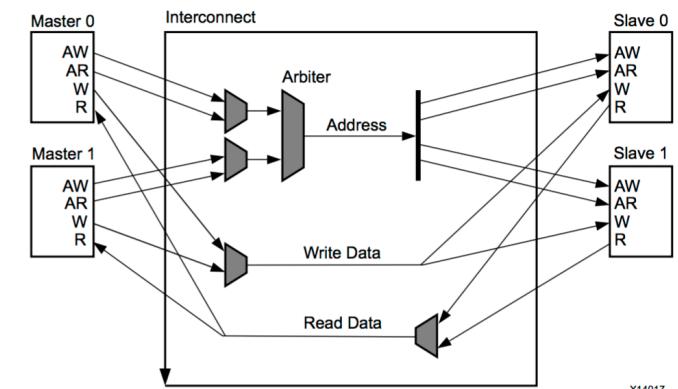


Clock, width conversion...

- N-to-M Interconnect (crossbar mode)



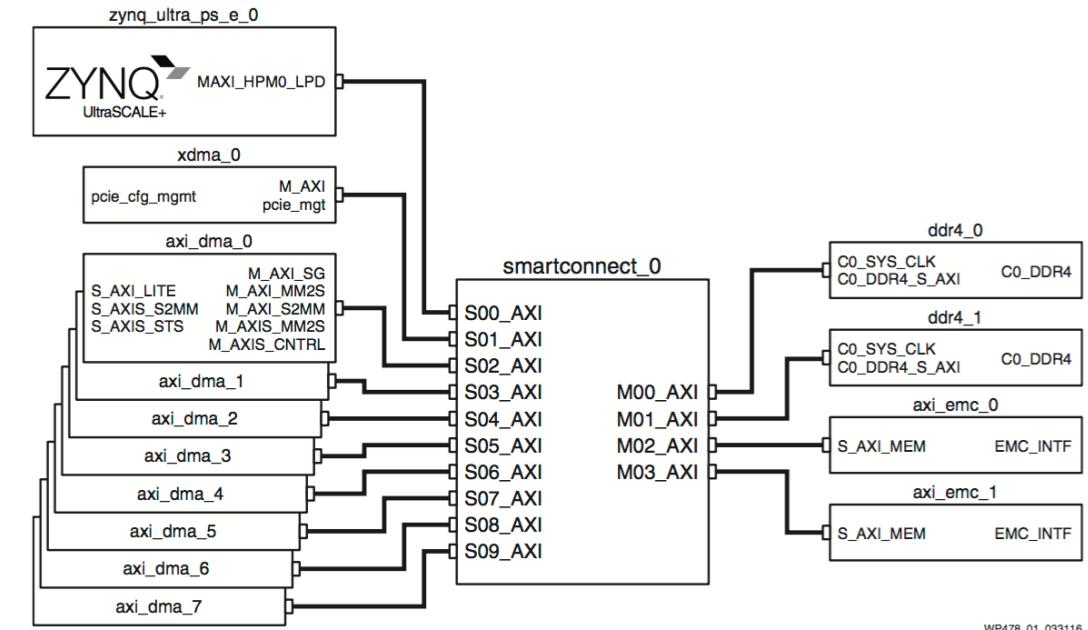
- M-to-N Interconnect (shared access mode)



X14017

❑ SmartConnect : an enhanced interconnect

- Dedicated to complex designs with multiple interfaces
- Achieves high throughput and low latency interconnect network
- Main features
 - SmartConnect core connects one or more AXI memory-mapped master devices to one or more memory-mapped slave devices.
 - AXI SmartConnect replaces AXI Interconnect v2 core and allows minimal user intervention
 - Integrated since VIVADO Design 16.1



❑ As Summary

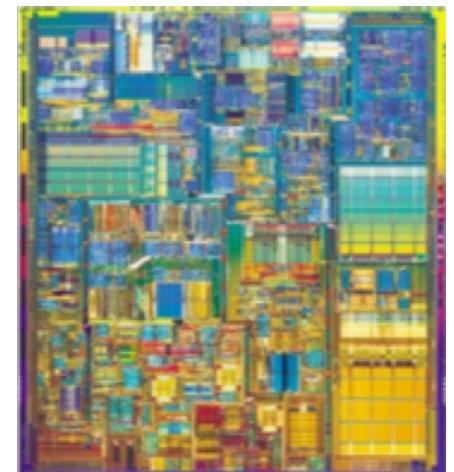
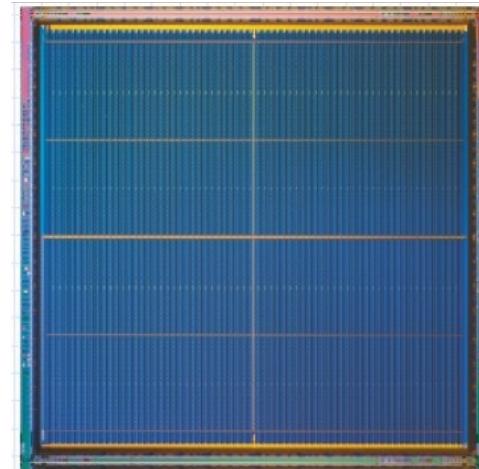
- Standards are important to make easier IP integration and avoid integration mismatches
- Standard bus architectures define
 - Interface between IPs and bus architecture
 - Specifics (not always) of bus architecture that implements data transfer protocol
- Such standards such as AXI increase productivity and flexibility during SoC design
 - Many IP providers support AXI Protocol
 - A lot of tools is available, allowing efficient system design, test and performance characterization

SoCs FPGA

New tools for co-design

❑ SoC FPGAs

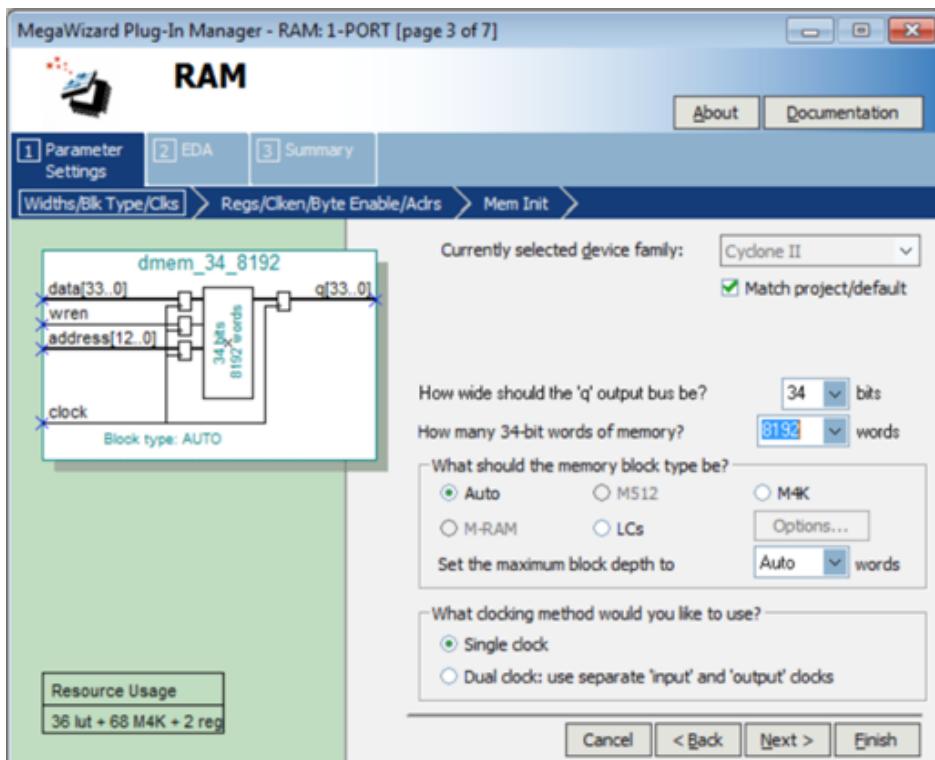
- why?
 1. **Time to market**
⇒ Low time-to-market and design time,
fast prototyping
 2. **Performance** : large amount of hardware
resources, parallelism
 3. **Area** : regular vs ASIC area
 4. **Reliability** : related to the regularity of
interconnections and resources,
 5. **Dynamic Reconfiguration** during
execution



❑ Tools from FPGA providers for design re-use (IP)

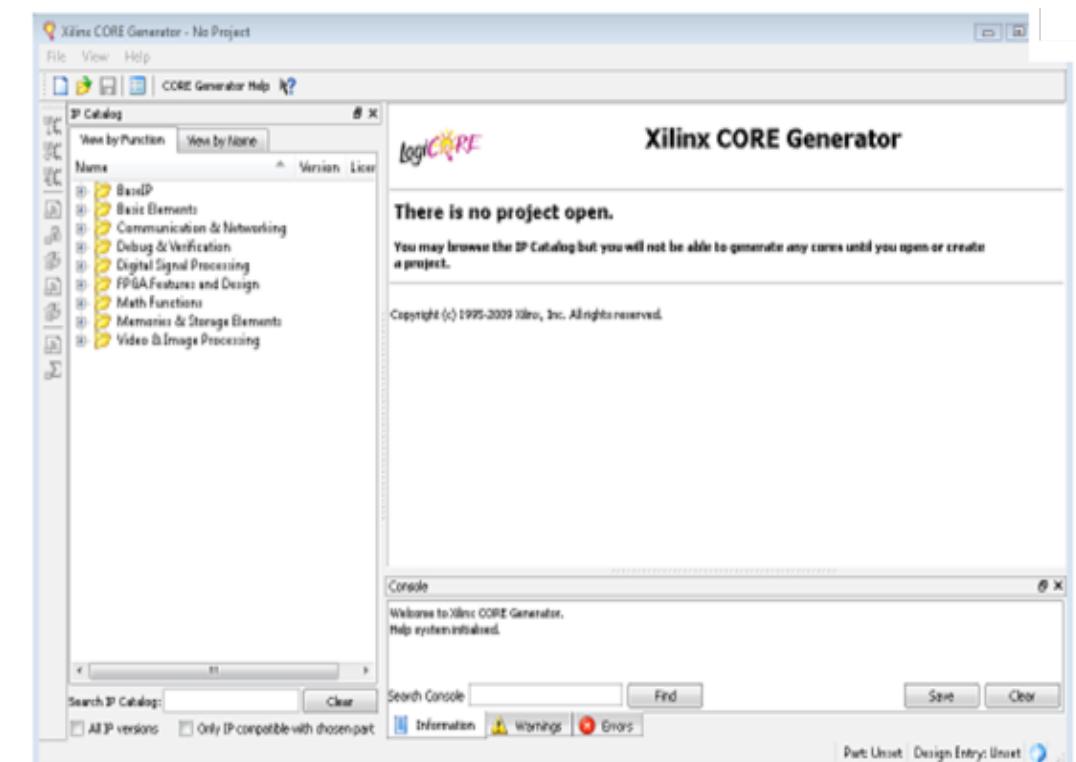
Altera

MegaWizzard Plug-In Manager



Xilinx

Core Generator (ISE)

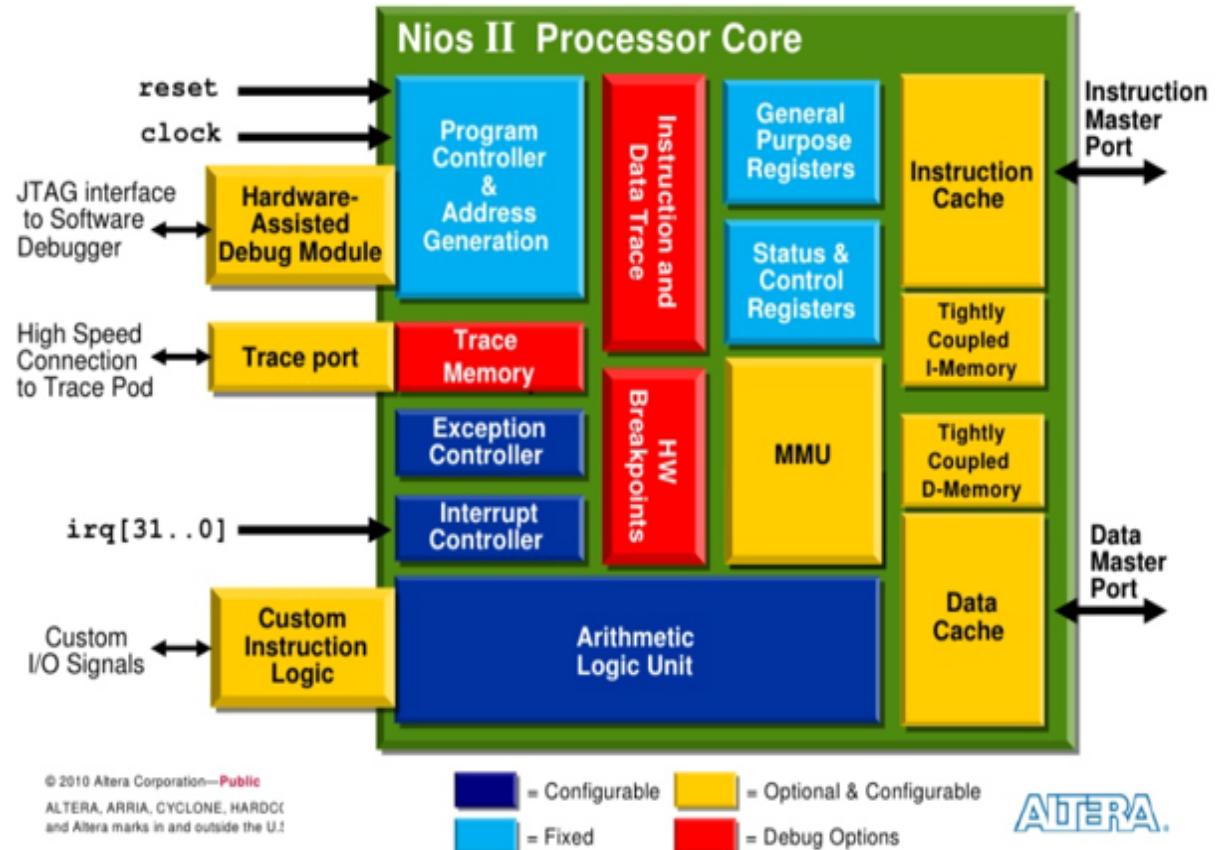


□ Soft Core Nios II

Goals : Reduce costs, power consumption and complexity of embedded systems

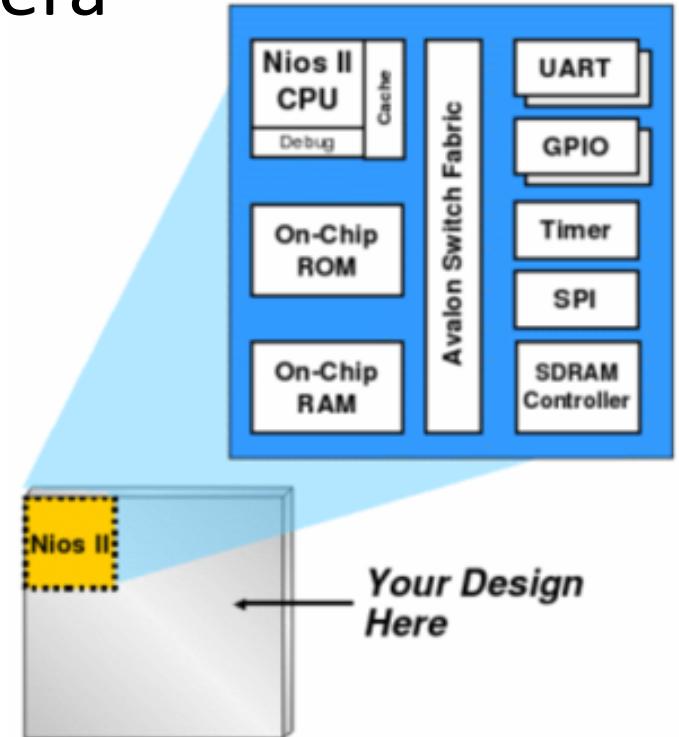
⇒ Allow designers to easily add peripheral to the processor, on the same chip

⇒ instantiation of peripheral according to the application needs

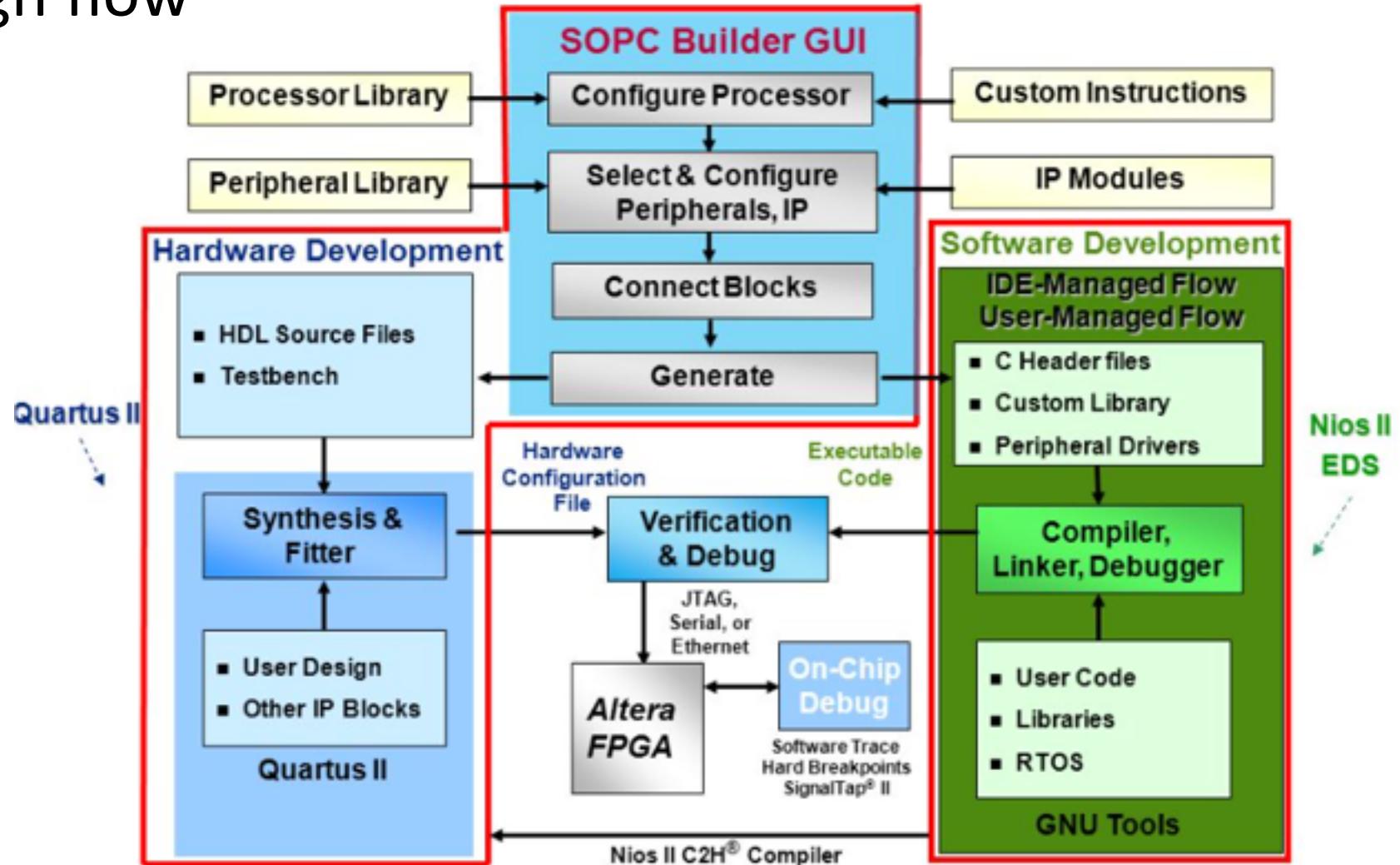


❑ Main Features of NIOS-II Softcore from Altera

- Harvard architecture
 - Data Master port
 - Instruction Master port
- RISC instruction set
- Bank of 32 registers (32 bits)
- No pipeline, 5 or 6 stages configuration
- 32 interrupt sources
- Avalon embedded bus
 - ⇒ Interconnect the processor and its peripherals
 - Avalon switch Fabric (managed SoPC Builder tool)
 - Avalon Interface (managed by the designer)

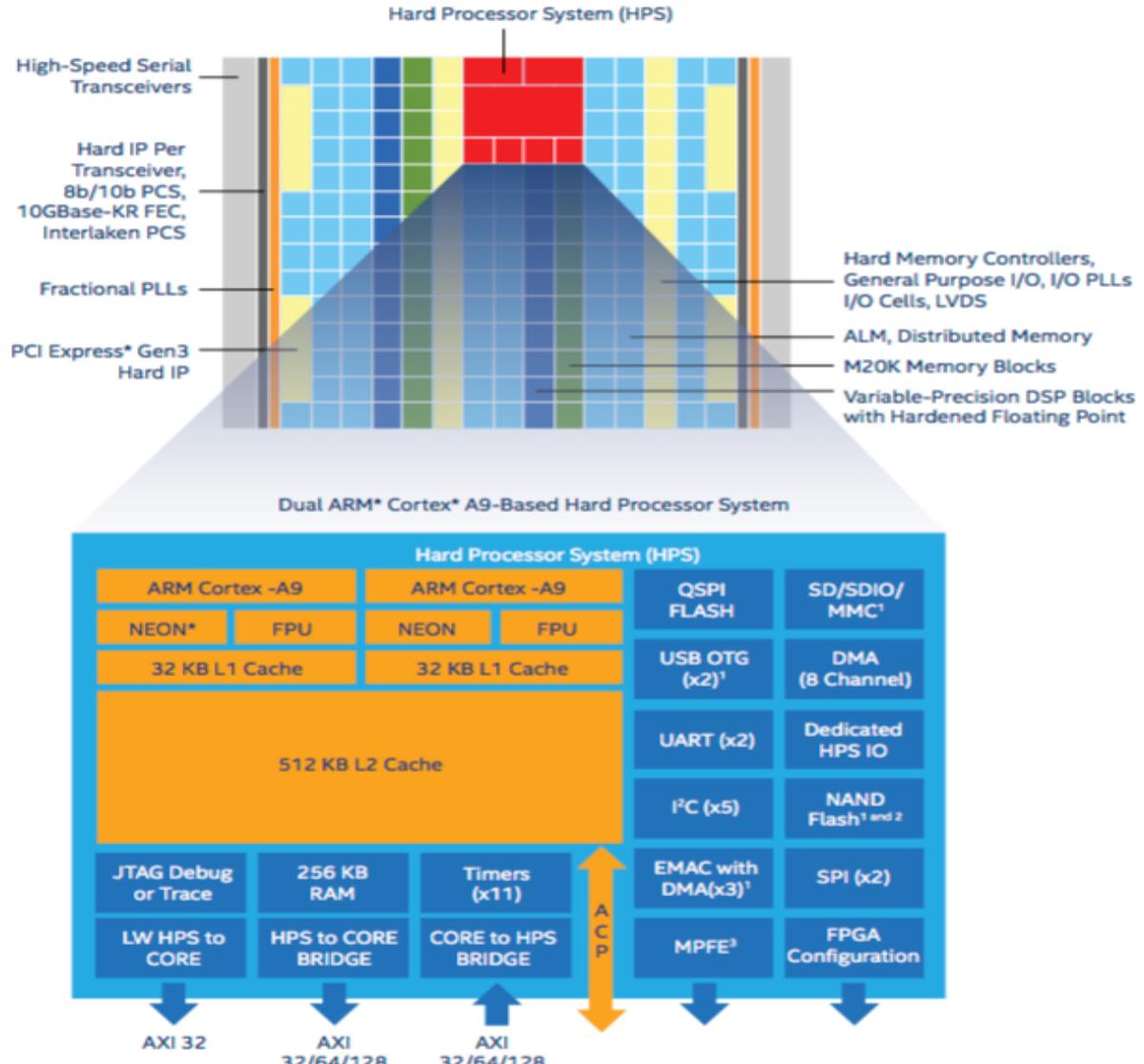


□ Design flow



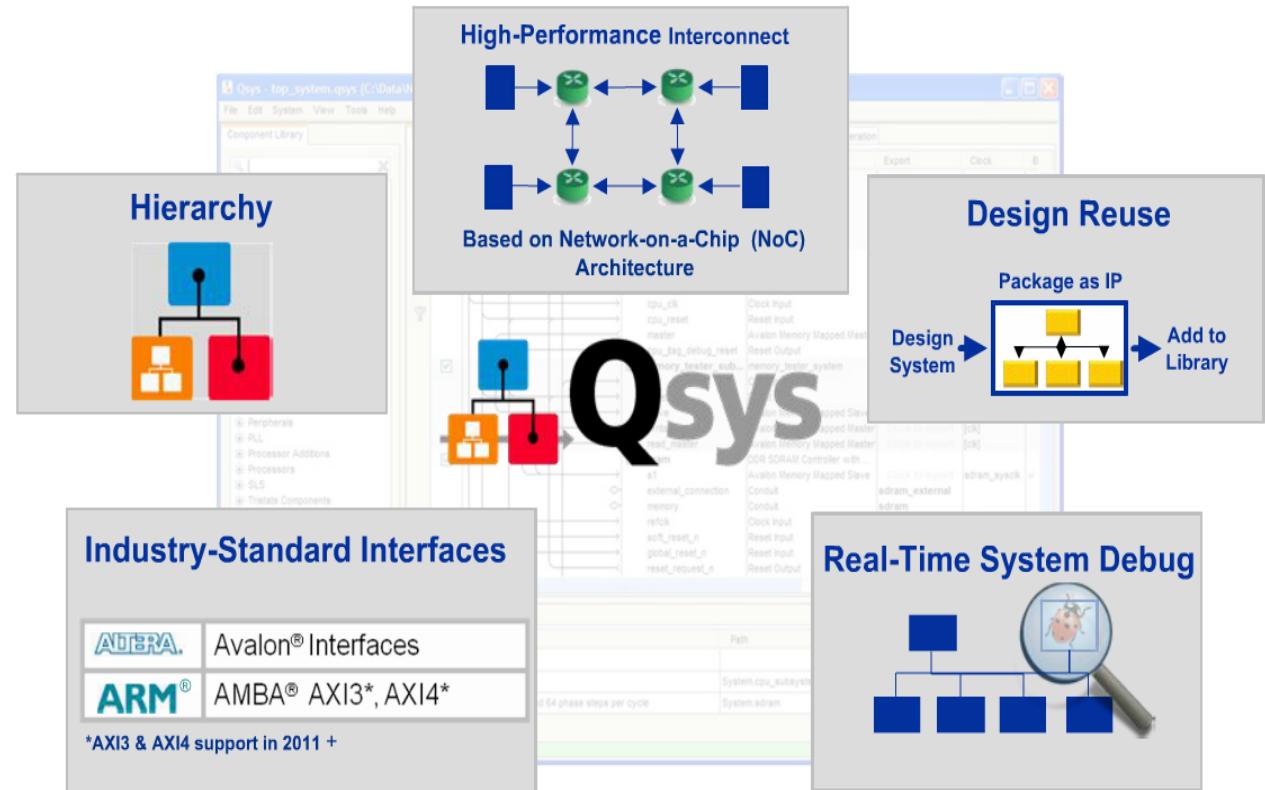
❑ SoC Intel/Altera

- Arria X Soc
 - Dual-core ARM cortex A9-based processing system
 - 1.5GHz
 - 20nm TSMC Programmable Logic
 - 160K-660K Logic Elements
 - 3,365 multipliers, 39Mb memory ,
 - Other elements:
 - Several I/Os, DDR3 et DDR4 SDRAM mémories, high-performance transceivers...
 - NEON DSP Core (SIMD)
 - BSP support for OS : Linux, WxWorks, uC/OS-II et III



❑ SoC FPGA development Suite /Altera (1/2)

- Quartus Prime (Hardware)
 - Set of tools from design entry and synthesis to optimization, verification, simulation.
 - Support
 - a HLS Compiler (C++ to RTL code)
 - Block-based design flow (incremental)
 - Partial reconfiguration
 - Platform designer (Qsys) for IP design and integration
 - Signal Tap Logic Analyzer, Power Analyzer



❑ SoC FPGA development Suite /Altera (2/2)

- Intel SoC FPGA Embedded Development Suite (Software)

Intel® SoC FPGA Embedded Development Suite



ARM Development Studio 5
Intel SoC FPGA Edition

Powerful Eclipse IDE based on ARM DS-5 is power packed with features. Code, build, debug, and optimize in one IDE!

Hardware Libraries

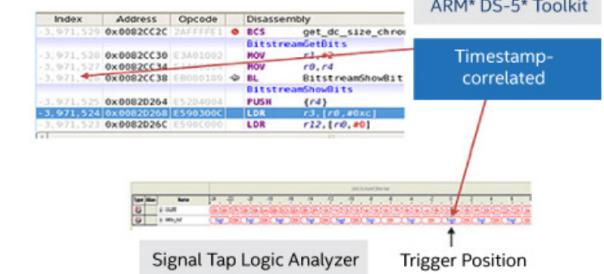
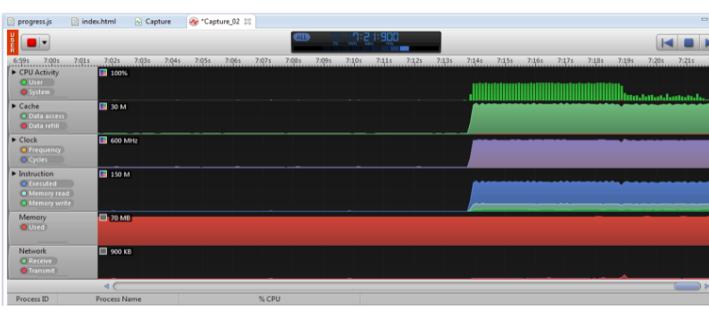
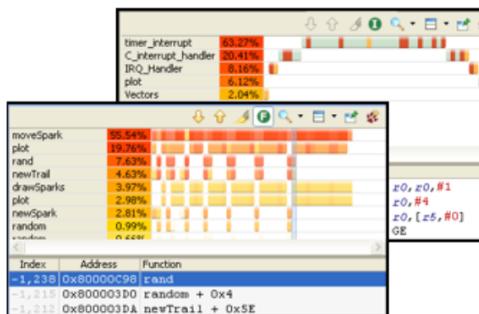
Easy access to low-level hardware for configuration and control.

Configuration Tools

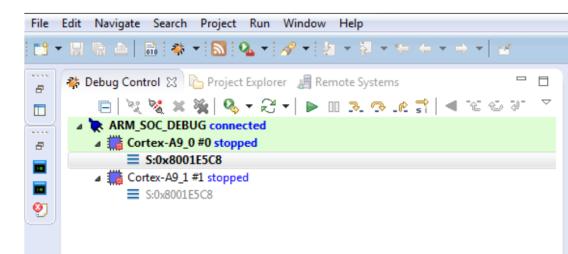
Intel FPGA-specific SoC configuration tools to improve productivity.

Examples

Reference designs, U-boot, linux reference examples

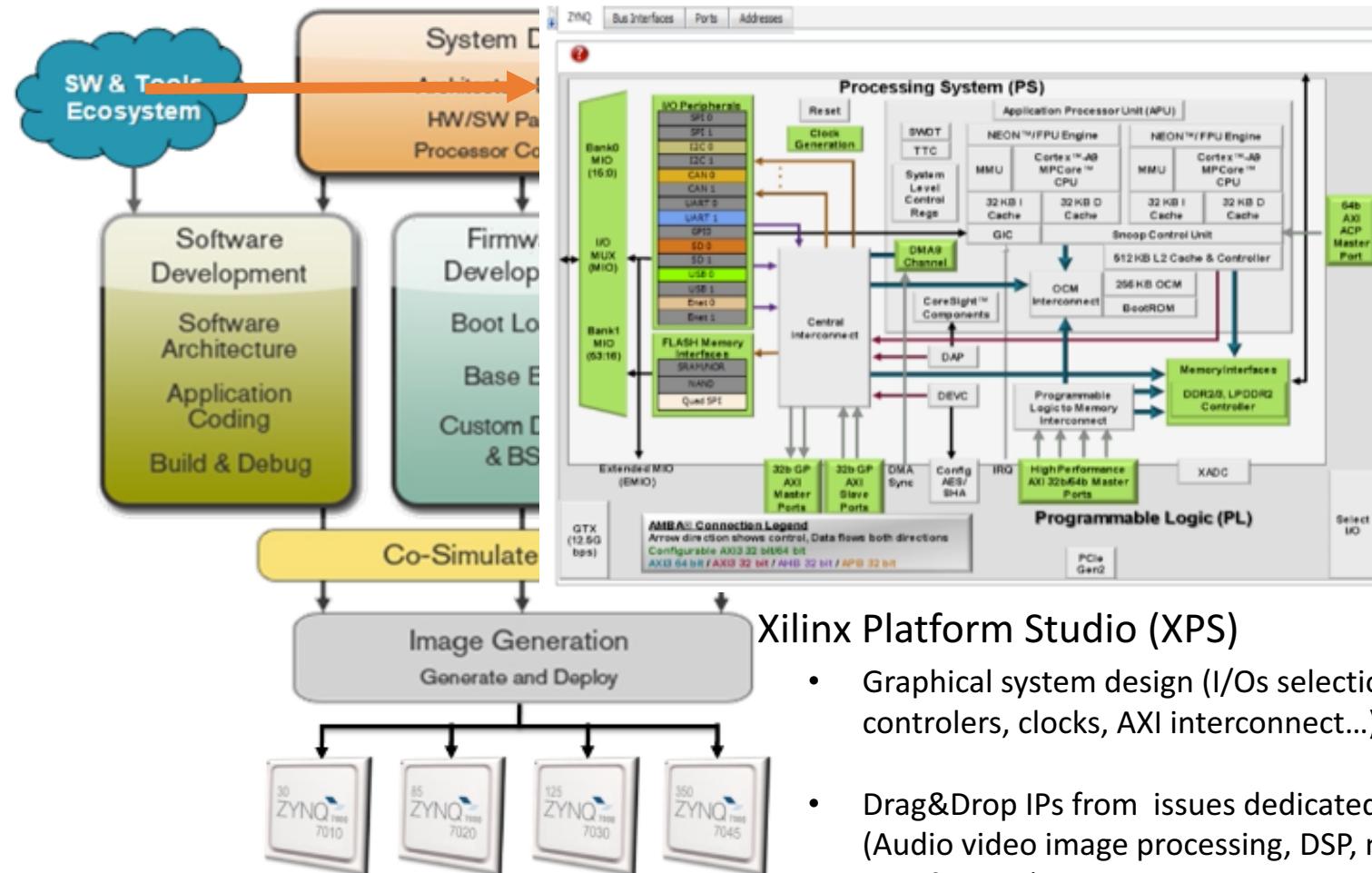


FPGA debug



Multi-Core debug

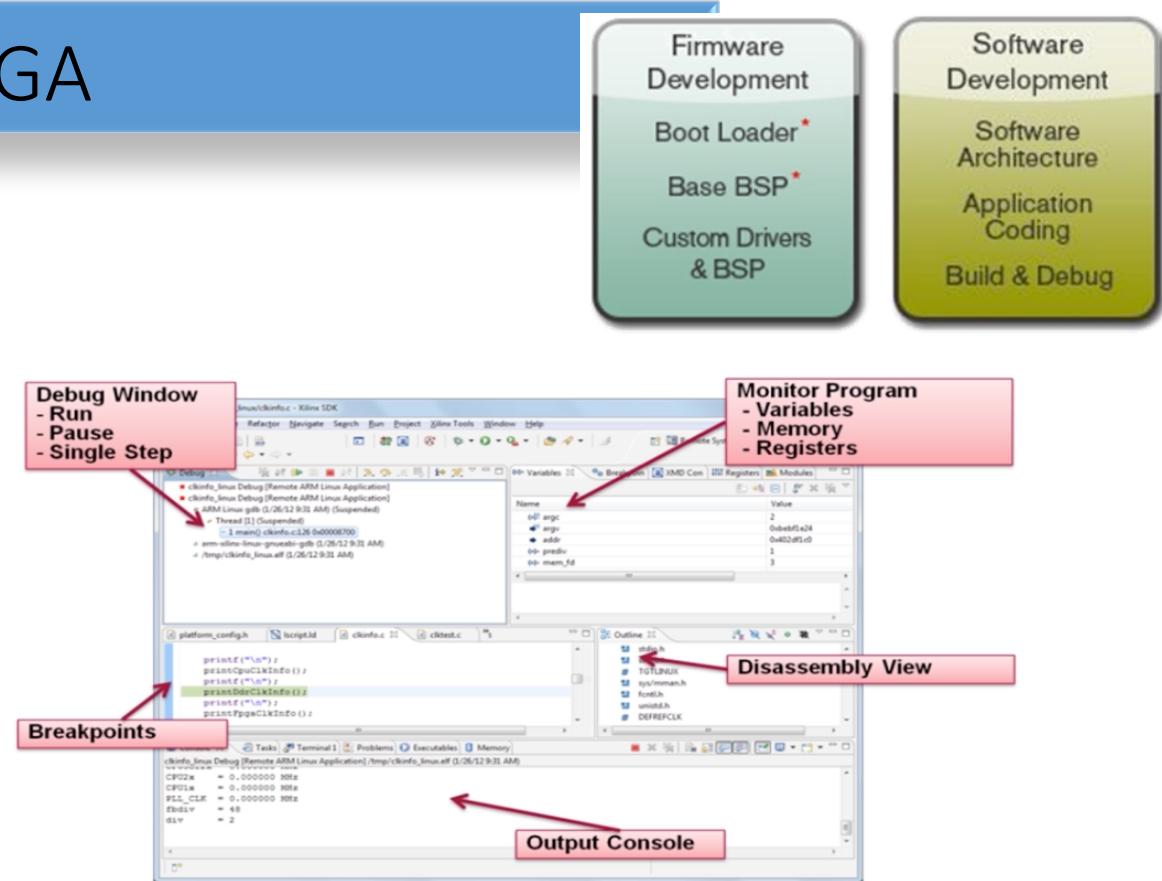
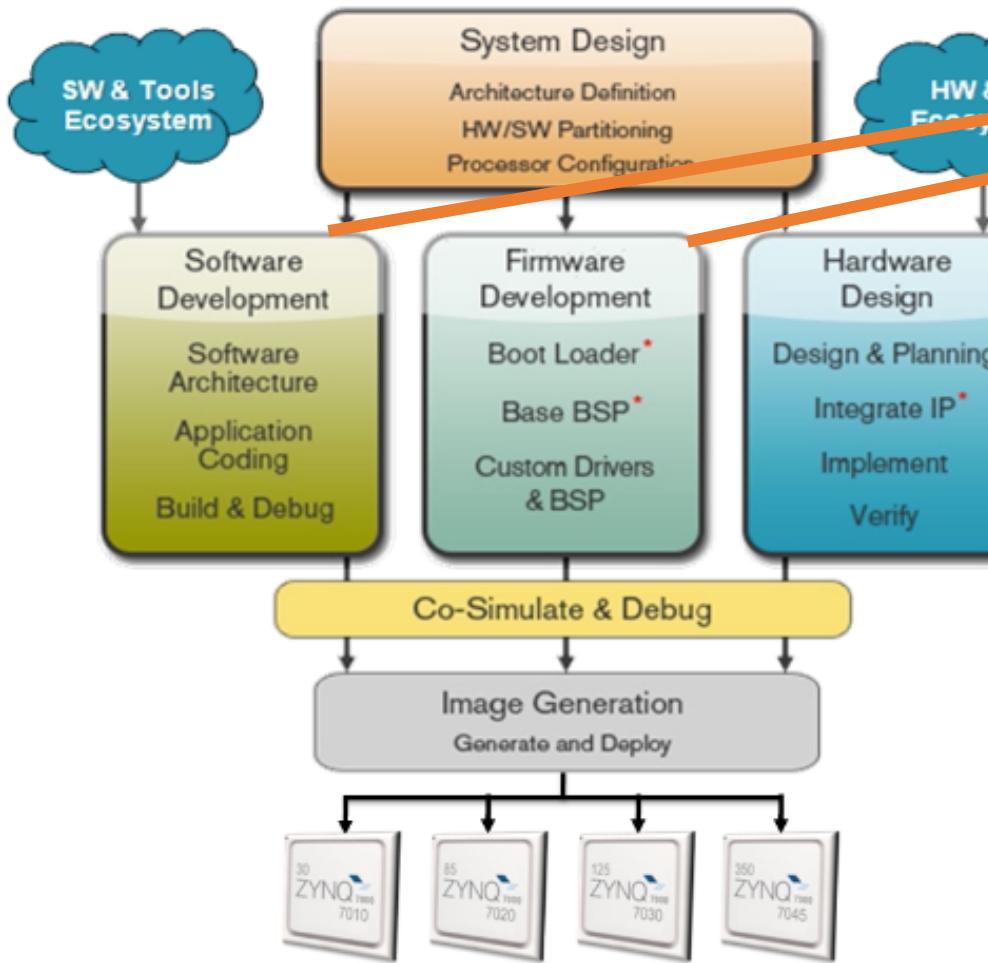
❑ Xilinx design flow : some tools



Xilinx Platform Studio (XPS)

- Graphical system design (I/Os selection, memory controllers, clocks, AXI interconnect...)
- Drag&Drop IPs from issues dedicated libraries (Audio video image processing, DSP, memory interfaces,...)

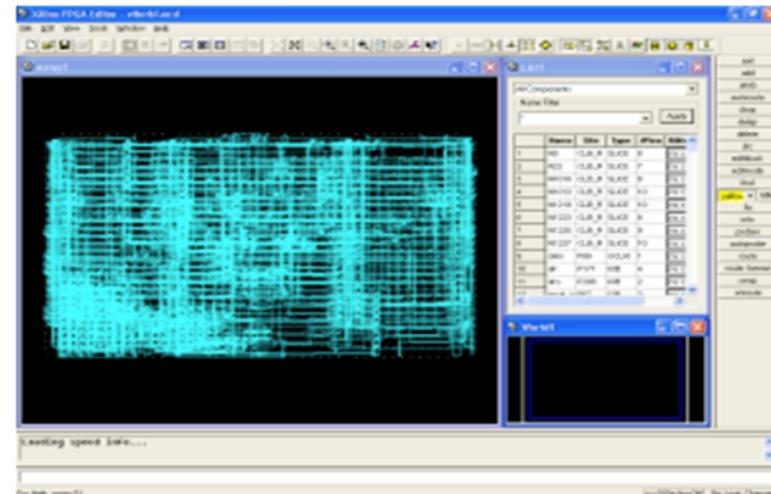
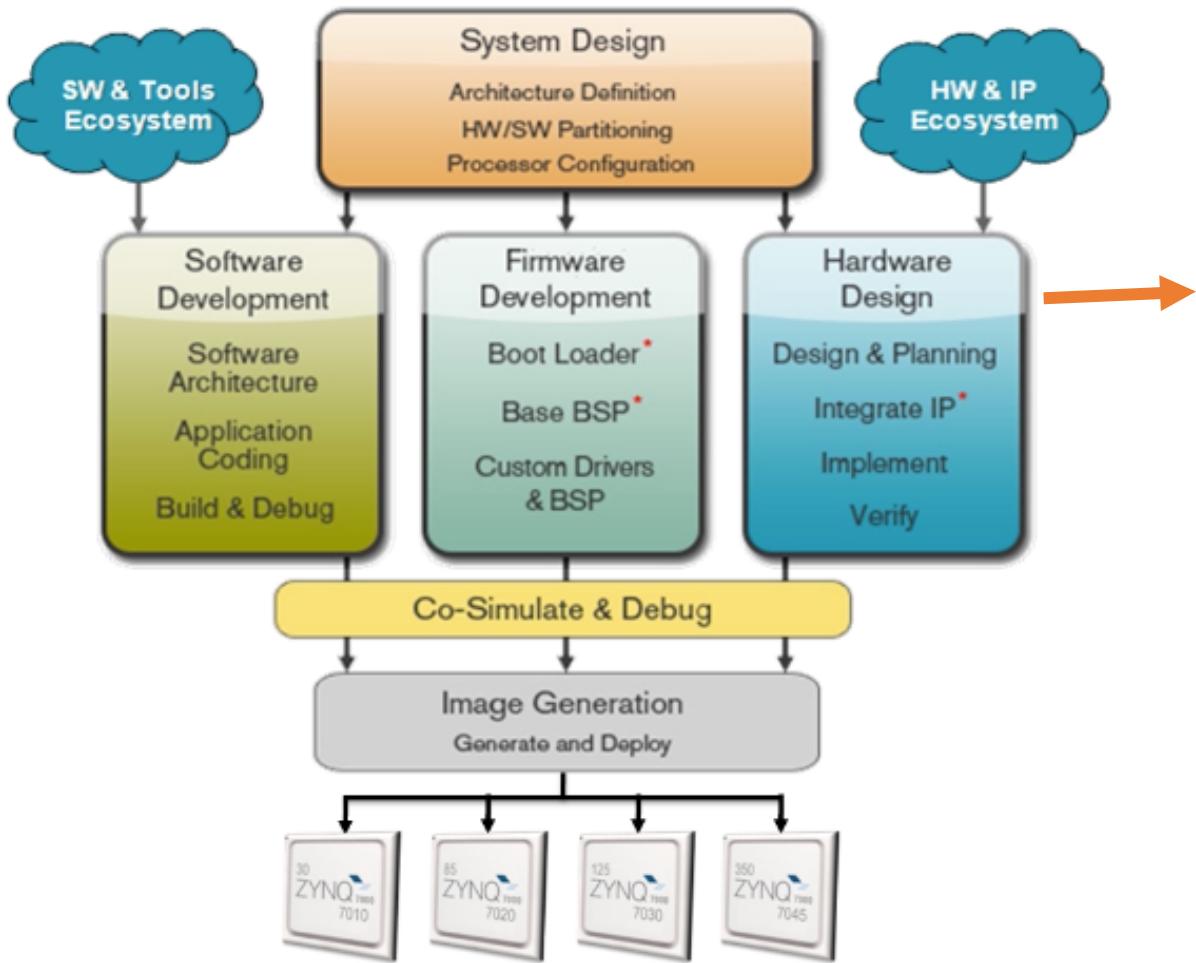
SoC FPGA



Xilinx Software Development Kit (SDK)

- Templates for C/C++ development projects, Boot loader, Board Support Package, Memory & peripheral tests
- Build/Deploy/Debug Petalinux distribution for Xilinx boards

SoC FPGA

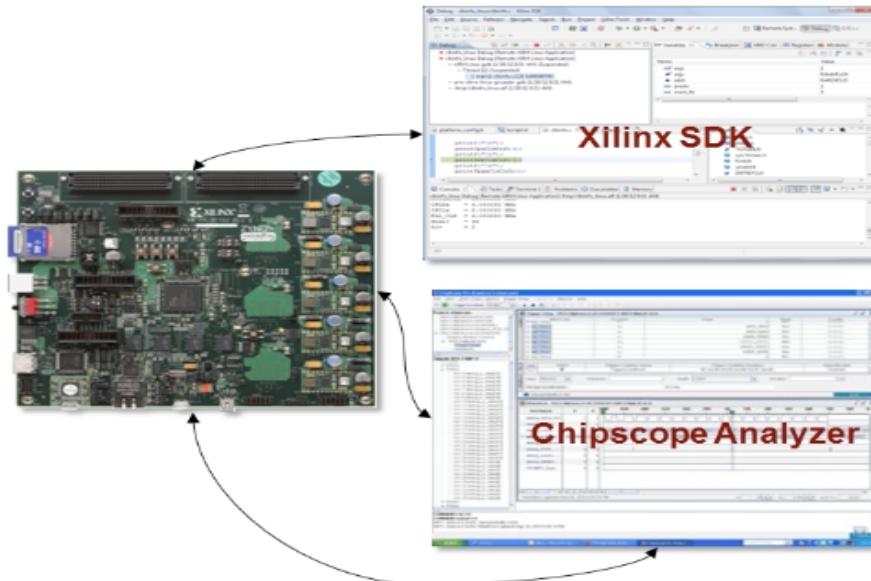
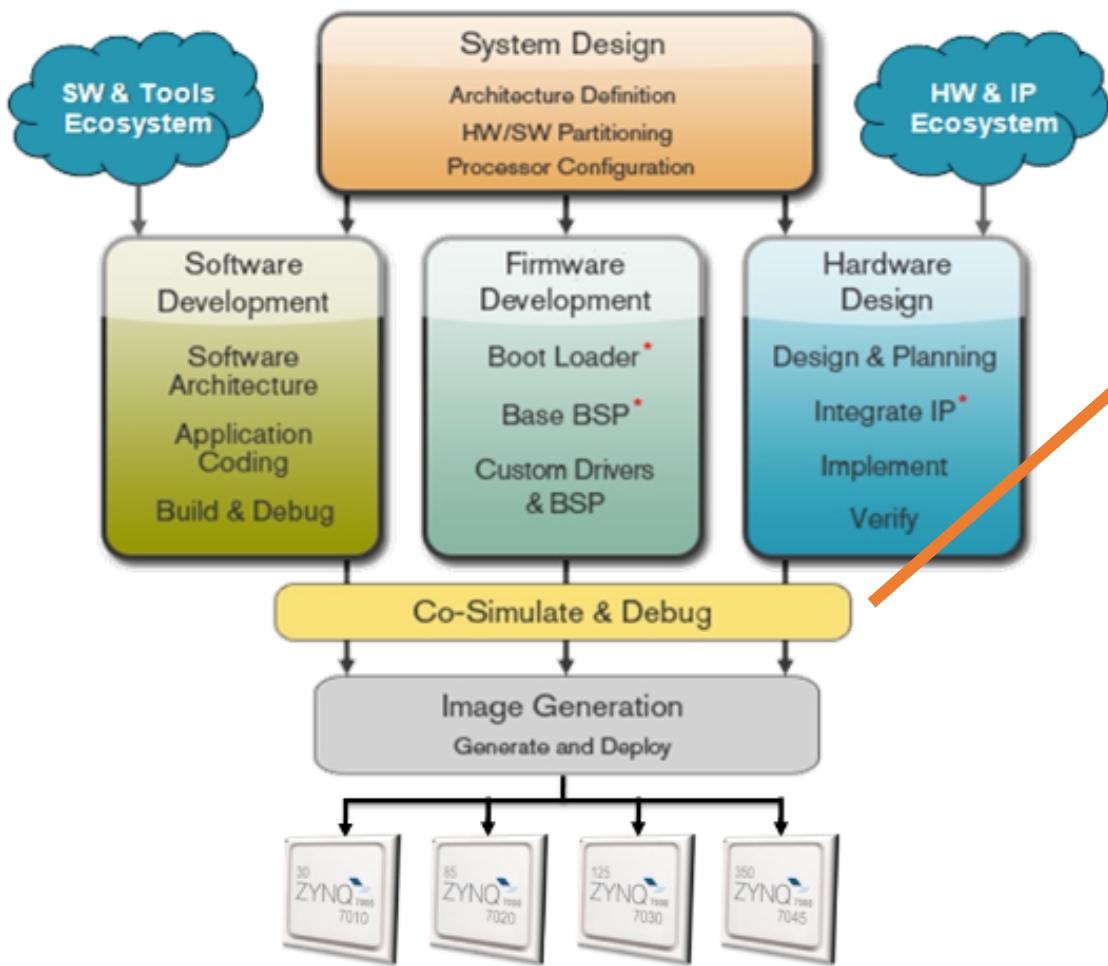


Xilinx PlanAhead Design tool

Design Analysis and Implement Custom Hardware IP

- VHDL/Verilog, RTL Sources, Timing constraints,
- Placement/Route Timing and Power Analysis,
- Design Implementation, bitstream generation

Co-Simulate & Debug

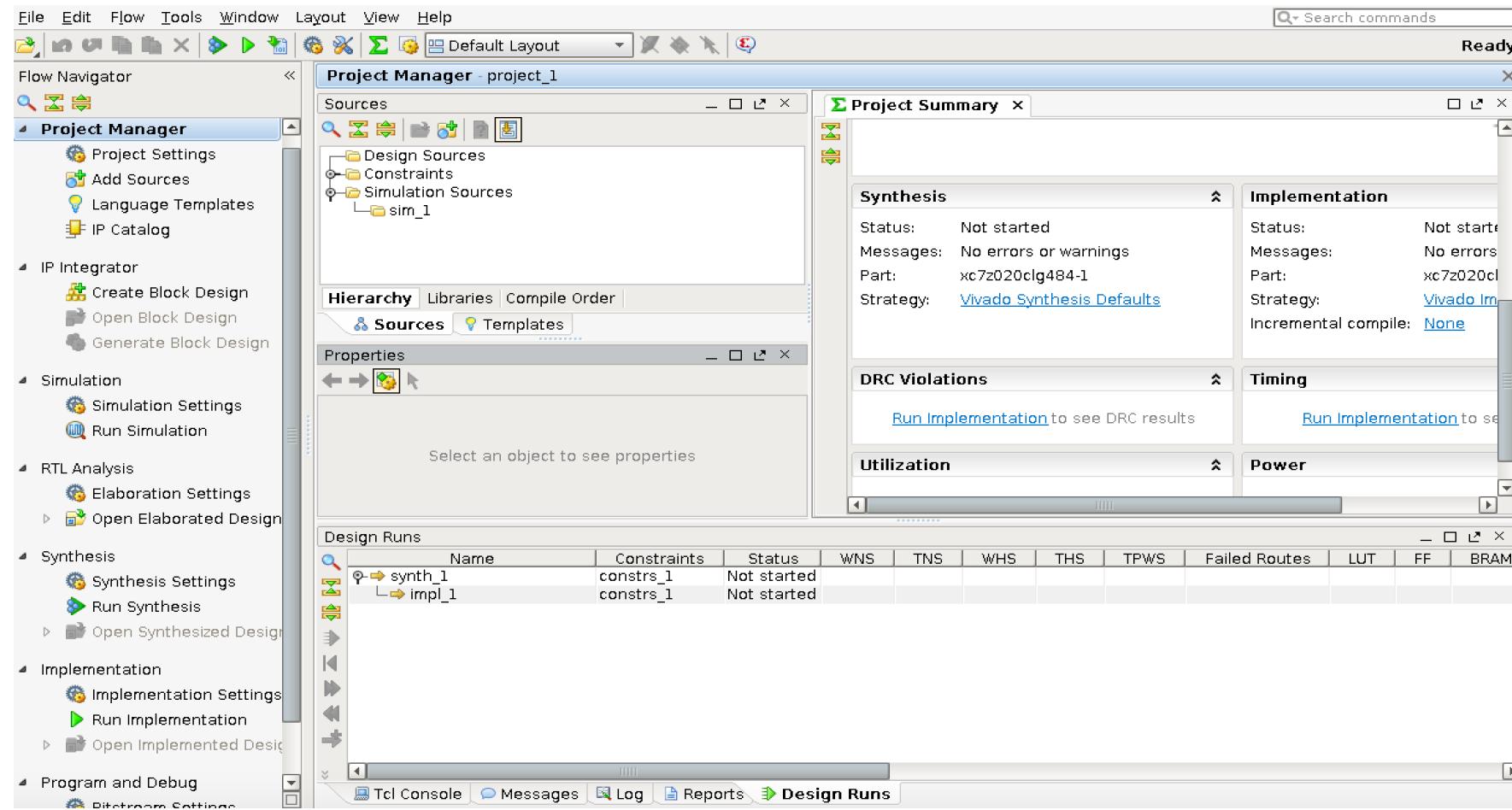


Simulators for every use case :

- Functional simulation for SW
 - Cycle accurate simulation for HW
 - HW/SW co-simulation
-
- Xilinx ISIM or Modelsim for HW debug, power & timing analysis
 - Xilinx ChipScope Pro for concurrent HW/SW debug

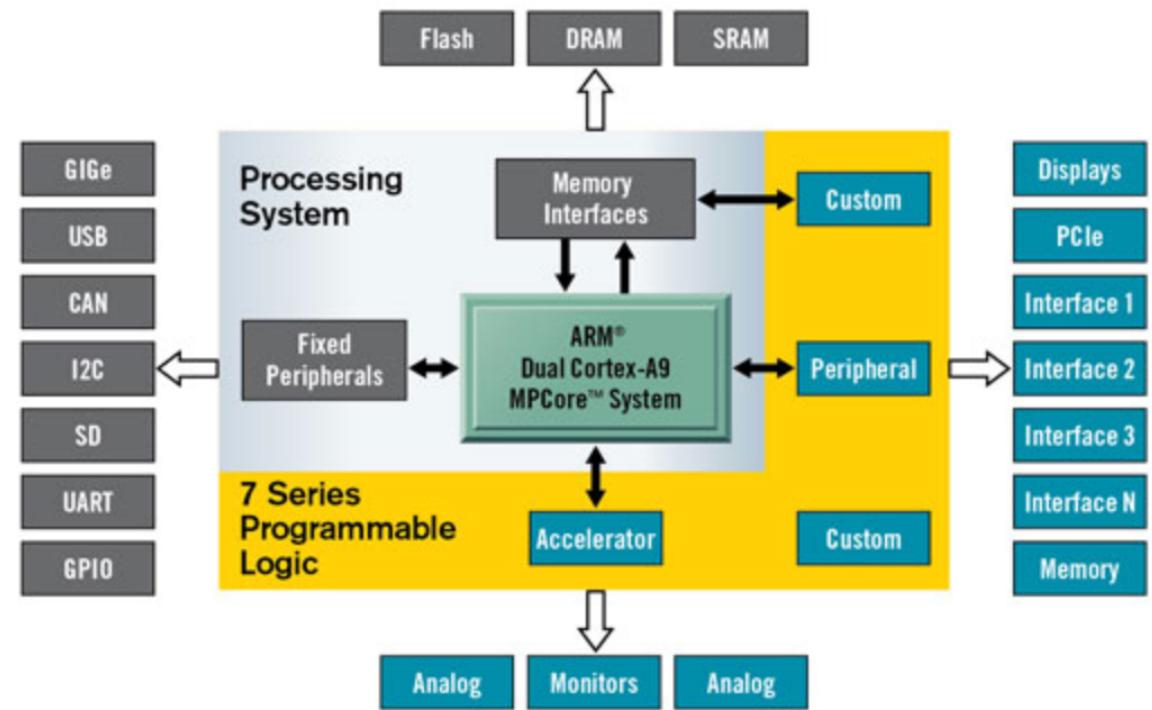
VIVADO

- Integrated Design Environment, gathering all these tools (excepted SDK)

The Vivado logo, featuring the word "VIVADO" in a large, stylized font with a trademark symbol, and a small green graphic element to the right.

❑ Xilinx All Programmable SoC

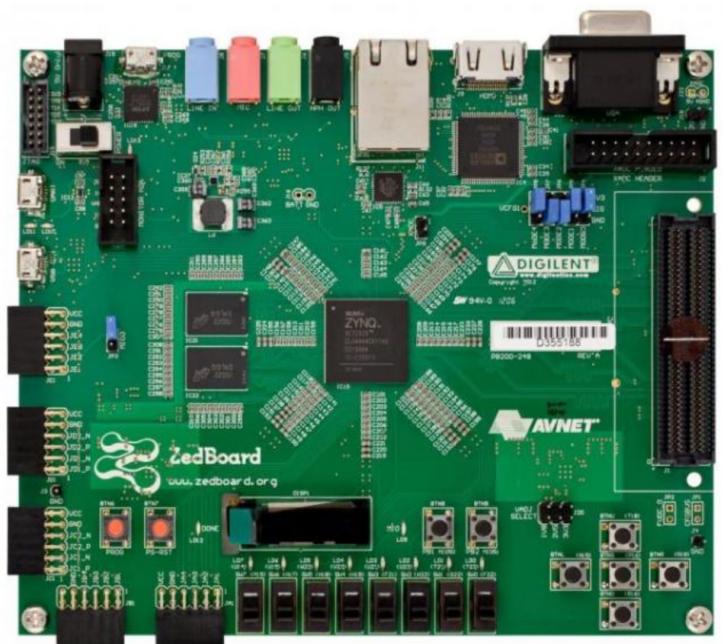
- Xilinx Zynq-7000
 - Dual-core ARM cortex A9-based processing system (PS)
 - Including memory and peripheral controllers
 - Fully independent from PL
 - 28nm Xilinx Programmable Logic (PL)
 - Highly integrated circuit, high performance
 - Used to extend PS
 - Other elements:
 - ARM AXI high performance interfaces
 - Several I/Os, ADC inputs, high-performance transceivers...



Xilinx Zynq-7000 SoC

□ Practical work using VIVADO and Zynq-7000 ARM FPGA SoC

- 1st part : Programing the PS on SDK
- 2nd part : System Design under Vivado
 - Control of hardware peripheral from PS
- 3rd part : extension with additional peripheral



Zedboard from Avnet/Digilent

References

- ARM Specification, <https://www.arm.com/products/system-ip/amba-specifications>
- G. Khan, “SoC Interconnect bus structures”, Ryerson University <http://www.ee.ryerson.ca/~gnkhan>
 - Very good presentation of the main embedded bus
- Xilinx, Breakthrough UltraScale+ Device Performance with SmartConnect Technology , White Paper WP478, April 2016 https://www.xilinx.com/support/documentation/white_papers/wp478-smartconnect.pdf
- Universidad de Alcalà, “Design of System of Chip”, http://www.depeca.uah.es/depeca/repositorio/asignaturas/201757/Unit_x_1_AXI_INFRAESTRUCTURE.pdf
 - AXI infrastructure overview
- Xilinx, AXI Interconnect Product Guide v2.1, PG059, 20 december 2017, https://www.xilinx.com/support/documentation/ip_documentation/axi_interconnect/v2_1/pg059-axi-interconnect.pdf
- Wishbone Specifications, <https://opencores.org/howto/wishbone>