

# Notes on Quiz #5: Archaic Hellas

## 1. What was a hoplite army? How was adopting hoplite warfare a change from the past?

The hoplite army was a city's citizen body—everyone who could afford the round shield, spear, and basic armor—defending the city's property and people by creating a phalanx, or long unified row of soldiers with overlapping shields, several men deep. The hoplite army was extremely effective, uniting the power and force of the entire army by striking the enemy with one massive blow.

It's a change because past military tactics had emphasized the role of the aristocracy, dwelling on single combat by hero types and so empowering the few over the many. The hoplite army is unified and anonymous; everyone acts together and as one, and any individual heroism actually destroys its effectiveness. It represents a social shift in power from the few to the many.

## 2. At the start of the Archaic period, population growth and limited resources meant “extra mouths to feed.” What were some of the ways the Greeks addressed this problem?

(a) They expanded their territory through the use of their military. (b) They created colonies that expanded their population and economy to new locations. (c) Their trading economy increased, increasing both imports (to feed the growing population) and exports (to strengthen their trading power).

## 3. This week you read the first sections of *Clouds*. At the very beginning of the play, what is troubling the father, Strepsiades? Why does he go to the Thinkery to solve it?

Strepsiades is upset because of the horse-racing debt accumulated by his playboy son, Pheidippides. He decides to send him to the Thinkery, so he can learn how to argue away his debts.

### EC1. Among the Greeks, a “tyrant” was:

- (a) A rich man who is stingy with his money
- (b) The commander of a Greek naval vessel
- (c) A governing body made up of the rich families
- ✓ (d) An illegal ruler sponsored by groups disadvantaged by the aristocrats

### EC2. What are some of the ways Homer's works were significant to the Greeks?

Homer's works told the story of the Bronze Age past and the failure of the Mycenaean civilization. It contrasted the venal, prideful, and selfish Mycenaean Greeks (like Agamemnon and Achilles) with the noble, honorable, and civic-minded Trojans (like Hector and Priam).

In the Archaic period and forever afterward, Homer's works served as the basis for Greek education. The Greeks (and those seeking to learn their tongue) learned their language and cultural values from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Most of all, Homer's works were the basis for the Greeks' understanding of the gods and their relationship with mortals. From Homer the Greeks learned that the gods' primary role was to respond to the destructive selfishness of mortals—ambition, greed, hubris, and arrogance—with punishment and destruction, not only for the offenders but for their families and even whole communities.

### EC3. In *Clouds*, how does “Socrates” first enter (physically appear on stage)? Why do you think the playwright, Aristophanes, introduces him like this?

“Socrates” appears descending from above in a basket, much like gods at the end of a tragedy descending to dispense wisdom and justice (“deus ex machina”), only “Socrates” talks not about the wisdom of the gods but the “natural functions” and physical processes of the temporal heavens. His scruffy appearance presents him as a false god. He also starts out with his head literally in the clouds.