




The Greek Dark Age
History of Ancient Greece | Meeting #3

1



Upcoming Dates

- Monday, October 20
Proposal Due
- Thursday, October 2
No class meeting
- Sunday, September 14
Responses for Week 3 Due

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Five things today

- From Bronze Age to Iron Age
- Development
- Epic poetry
- Hesiod
- Climax of the Dark Age

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Quiz #1 | The Greek Dark Age

1. Historians sometimes call Early Iron Age Hellas the "Greek Dark Age" because
 - a. There was a problem with the sun
 - b. Everyone was poor and covered in dirt
 - ☒ c. The literary and archaeological record goes blank after the collapse of the Bronze Age
 - d. Black clothing became the norm
2. Things that continued to be socially or culturally important from Mycenaean times into the Early Iron Age include all of the following ☒ [Select all that apply](#)
 - a. Palace-city industry
 - b. Everyday agriculture
 - c. Religious rituals and worship
 - d. Use of the Greek language and storytelling about the past
3. Signs of economic and cultural growth in the 9th century BCE (mid "Dark Age") include all of the following ☒ [Select all that apply](#)
 - a. A shift from Protogeometric to more aesthetic and ambitious Geometric vase decoration
 - b. A market for more elaborate craft goods
 - ☒ c. Vast houses occupied by the superwealthy
 - d. Small domestic luxury items like fine gold jewelry and ivory carvings
4. The persistence of independent local chieftains during the Dark Age is suggested by all of the following ☒ [Select all that apply](#)
 - a. The Mycenaean word for village chieftain, *basileus*, became the usual term for ruler or king
 - b. A "chieftain's house," like the others but with an added curved courtyard, was found in various settlements
 - c. The Mycenaean word for great king, *wanax*, was now used only for legendary or mythical overlords like Zeus and Agamemnon
 - ☒ d. Only the most important man in each village was buried; the rest of the bodies were thrown away
5. Homer is credited as the author of the epic poems ☒ [Select all that apply](#)
 - a. *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
 - b. *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
 - c. *Therogony* and *Megamony*
 - d. *Iliad*, *Pan*, and *Odyssey*

Extra Credit

EC. Why are the works of Homer important?

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Responses

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Questions about whatever

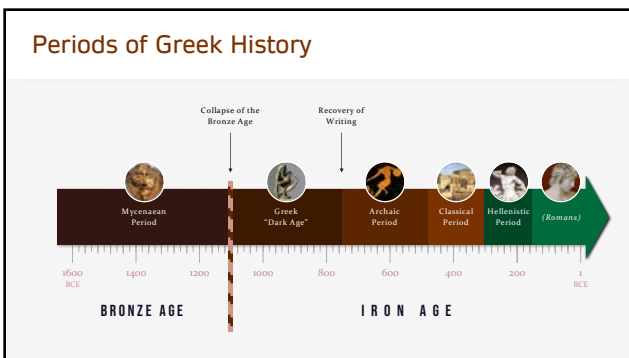


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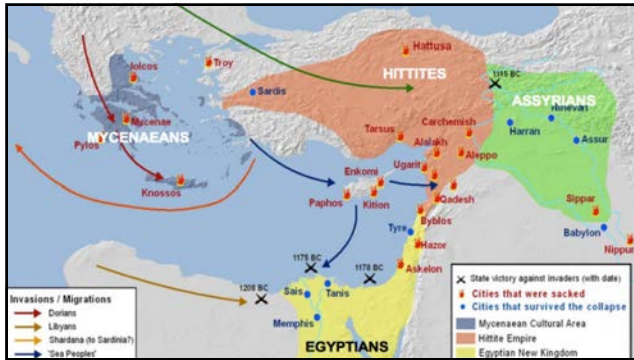
From Bronze Age to Iron Age

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Periods of Greek History



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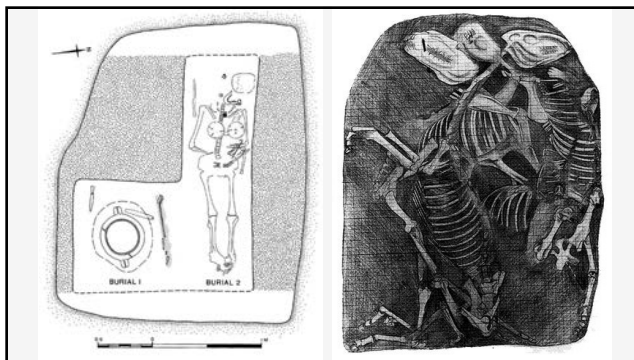
Transition to the Dark Age

- Decline
 - Collapse of palace economy and culture
 - Deconstruction of strict class structure
 - Depopulation and migration (Ionians and Dorians)
- Continuity
 - Rural everyday life
 - Religion
- Development
 - Ironworking
 - Protogeometric ceramics

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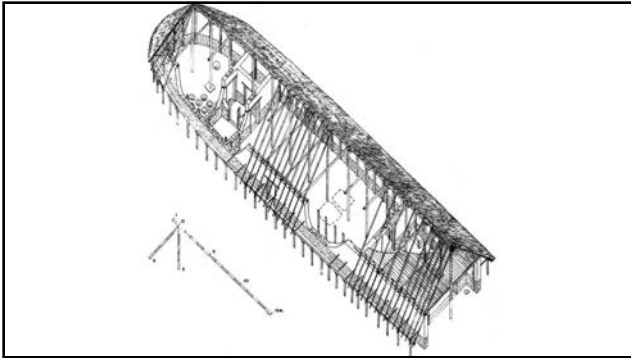
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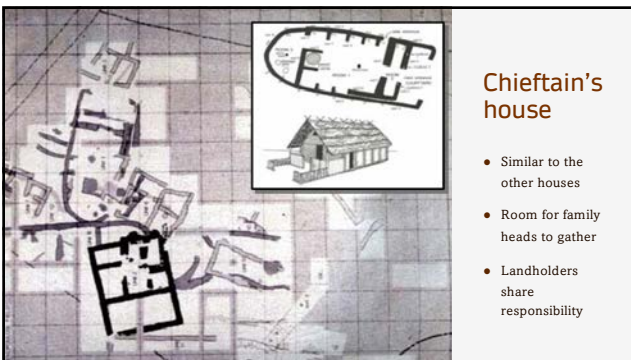
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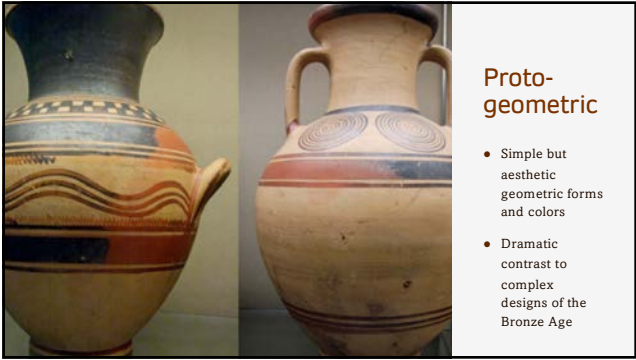
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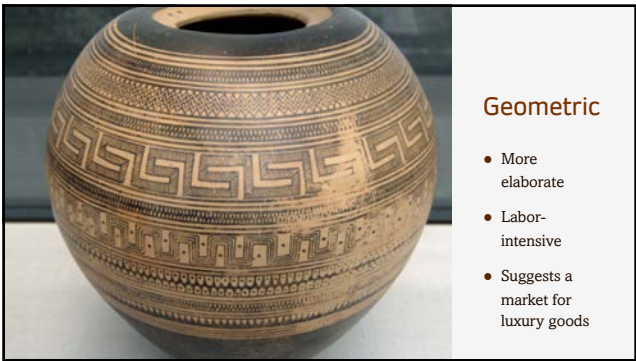
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Dark Age development

- the arts, writing, literature
- shipbuilding and bulk commerce
- piracy
- military tactics
- the spread of iron
- the use of waterproof plaster
- winemaking: the use of the olive for food
- landholding
- chickens
- terraced agriculture
- the polis
- intercity athletic competition

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Epic poetry

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The rhapsode

- Master storytellers of epic poetry in larger communities
- Chanting to the accompaniment of a lyre
- Stories retold to connect with each audience
- Apprentice becomes master rhapsode to next generation

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The Greeks and their gods

- No priestly class
- Their understanding of the gods comes from literature
- Gods react to mortals' betrayals of the community
- Rarely punish the wrongdoer only, often visiting suffering on family and descendants

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Homer

- Key works: *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
- Written version of a story told orally for 500 years
- Focus on flawed Greeks and noble Trojans

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The Trojan War

- Fight to the death for Aegean economic power
- Some argue that the war is entirely mythological
- Archaeological evidence of Troy being violently destroyed ca. 1200 BCE

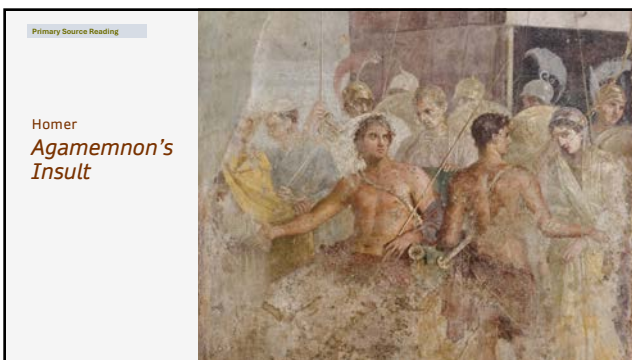
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The *Iliad*

- War caused by abduction of Helen by a Trojan prince
- Greeks are the bad guys
- Emphasis on community
 - Selfish motivations—ambition, hubris, and greed—are crimes against family, city, and progeny
 - Marriage bond as critical to community

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Primary Source Reading

Homer
Agamemnon's Insult

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Primary Source Reading

Homer
The Death of Patroklos



31

Primary Source Reading

Homer
Nausicaa and the Stranger



32

Primary Source Reading

Homer
Odysseus and the Suitors



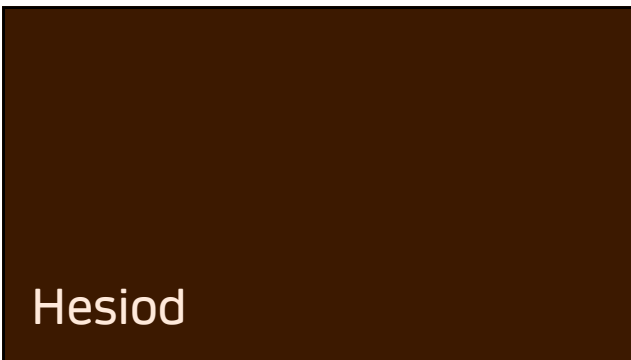
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"Homeric society"

- Regional diversity of custom and tradition
- Emergence of 'hellenism'
- Contrasting idea of barbaroi
- Xenia — guest friendship
- Agonal society
 - Timē — honor and respect
 - Aretē — achievement of excellence

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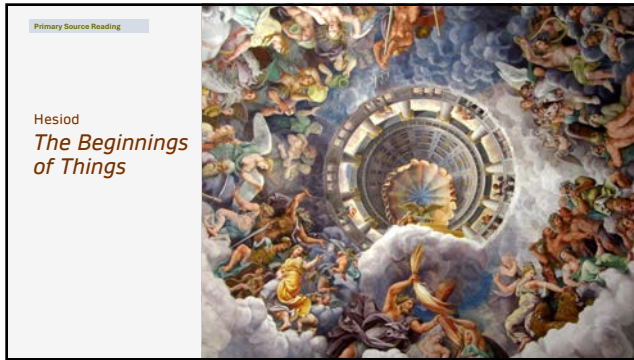
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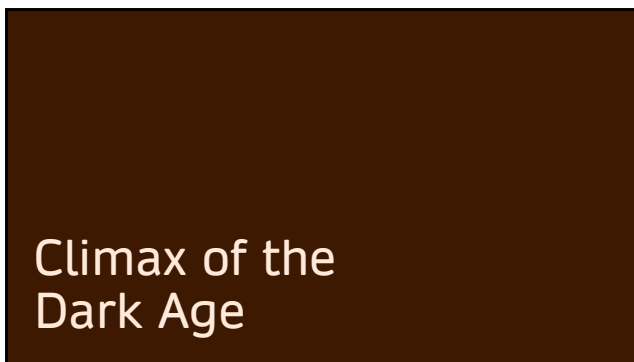
Hesiod

- Key works:
Theogony,
Works and Days
- Perspective of a small landholder
- Writes about the roles of mortals and gods in society and nature

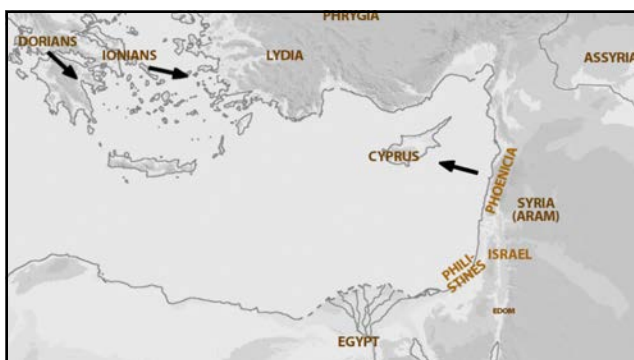
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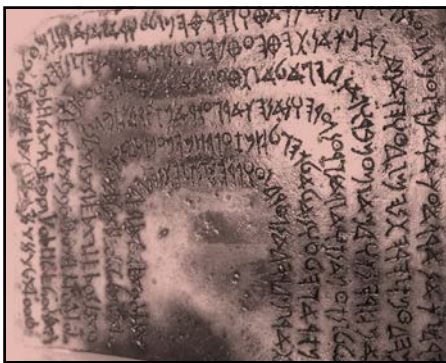
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The phonetic alphabet

- Bronze Age scripts are pictographic or syllabic
- Many characters with a high learning curve
- No phonetic scripts until the Iron Age

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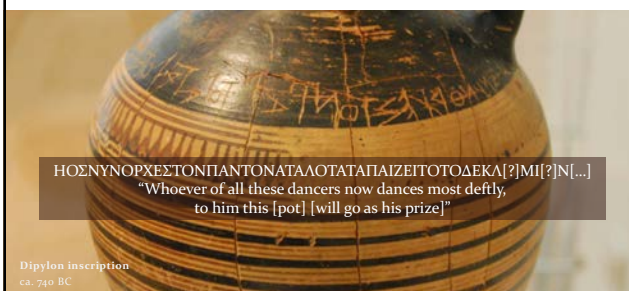


Phoenician contact

- Increasing trade in the late "Dark Age" brings the Phoenician alphabet to the Aegean peoples
- Adopted separately in each Greek community

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Greek alphabet



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α	Σφαίριο	Αχαιοί	Ιωνίοι	Κρητικοί	Αρκαδοί	Δωριεῖς	Λοκροί	Κορινθιοί	Φωκιοί
Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α
Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β
Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ
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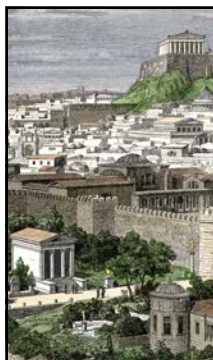
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Dark Age political structure

- wanax φαναξ → ἀναξ
 - Minoan/Mycenaean term for king
 - Now used to mean high-king or overlord
 - Agamemnon (overlord of the Greeks at Troy)
 - Zeus (ruler of the gods)
- basileus βασιλεύς
 - Mycenaean term for mayor, headman
 - Dark age (and later) term for king
- “Big man” system – e.g., Ithaca
 - Population gravitates toward local strongmen for stability and protection
 - Authority is transient and personal

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Foundations of Archaic Greece

- Polis
- Hoplite armies
- Knowledge through creative expression
- Epic poetry as the foundation for public religion
- Colonization
- Panhellenism

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