



The Greek Dark Age

History of Ancient Greece | Meeting #3

1



Upcoming Dates

- Monday, October 19
Proposal due
- Sunday, September 20
Responses for Week 3 Due

2

Five things today

- The collapse of the Bronze Age
- From the Bronze Age to the Iron Age
- Cultural and technological developments
- Epic poetry
- Climax of the Greek Dark Age

3



4

Quiz #1: The Greek Dark Age

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

EC: Why are the works of Homer important?

Extra Credit

5

Questions from the Responses

- Who was the audience who stood in that room to see the fresco? How much of the Blue Ladies' faces is Minoan paint, and how much is modern fill by Sir Arthur Evans, who rediscovered Knossos?
- I would like to know why the Minoans painted dolphins and other sea animals. I would also like to know if dolphins had a special meaning to them or if they simply liked these animals.
- I would like to find out the type of tools and paint they had to draw the dolphins.
- These three women look like how I would imagine Athena to look, especially from their hairstyles. I was wondering if Athena, the goddess, was an inspiration for the later Greeks and has some roots in Minoan culture?
- One thing I'd like to find out more about is why the Octopus was created in a way that it seems happy. You see these similar resemblances in the image with the bull, and the dolphins, where they each seem to be lively. I wonder what this suggests about Minoan society.

6

Questions about whatever



7

The collapse of the Bronze Age



8

Hittites mention Greeks, Trojans

- Ahhiyawa (Achaean)
- Drdny (Dardanians?)
- Wilusa (Ilios)
- Danaja (Danaans)



9



Troy (Ilios)

- Wealthy city on the eastern Aegean coast
- Founded before Minoans or Mycenaean Greeks (ca. 3500 BCE)
- Increasingly only possible rival for control of Aegean trade

10



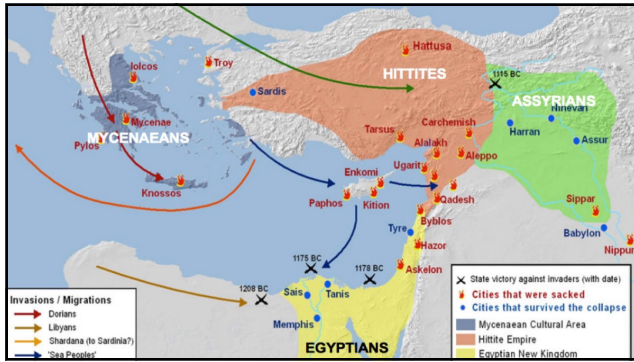
The Trojan War

- 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

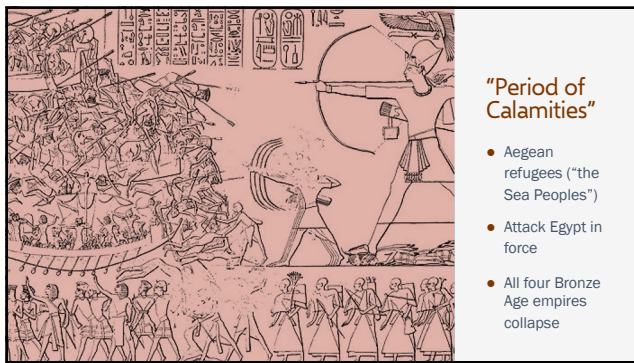
11



12



13



14



15



16

Transition to the Dark Age

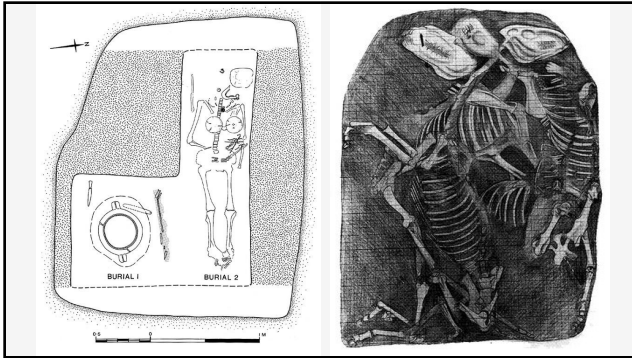
- Decline
 - Collapse of palace economy and culture
 - Deconstruction of strict class structure
 - Depopulation and migration (Ionians and Dorians)
- Continuity
 - Rural everyday life
 - Religion
- Development
 - Ironworking
 - Protogeometric ceramics

17

Lefkandi excavation

- Archeologists map three key areas
 - Settlement
 - Sanctuary
 - Necropolis
- Relics and material culture
 - Ceramics
 - Graves and grave goods

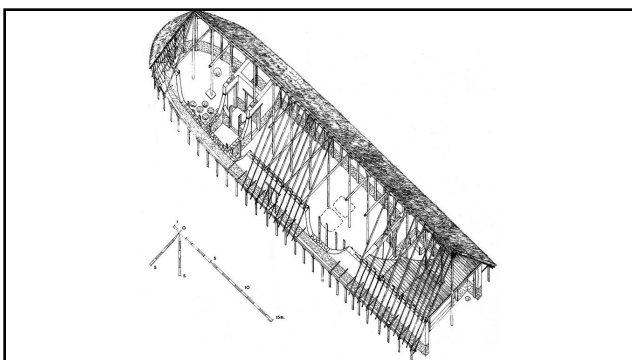
18



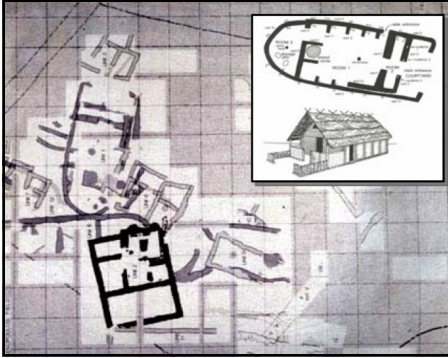
19



20



21



Chieftain's house

- Similar to the other houses
- Room for family heads to gather
- Landholders share responsibility

22



Cultural and technological development

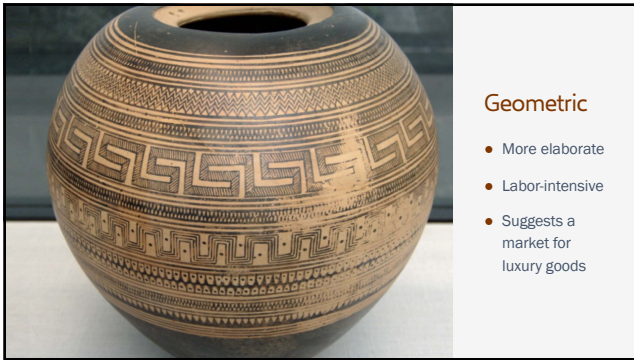
23



Proto-geometric

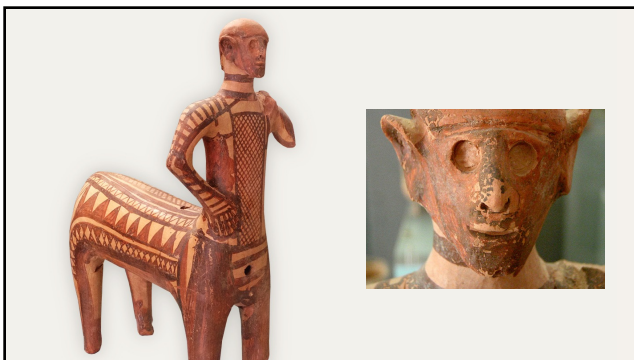
- Simple but aesthetic geometric forms and colors
- Dramatic contrast to complex designs of the Bronze Age

24



25







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

28



Epic poetry

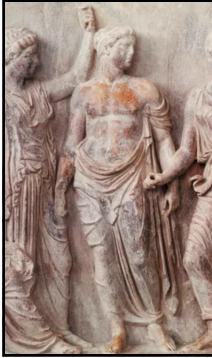
29



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

30



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

31



Homer

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

32



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

33



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

34

Primary Source Reading

Homer
Agamemnon's Insult



35

Primary Source Reading

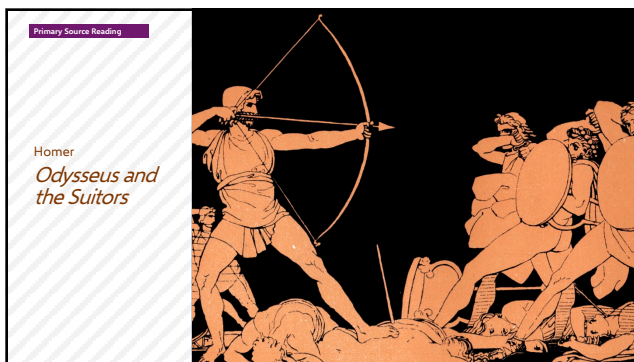
Homer
The Death of Patroklos



36



37



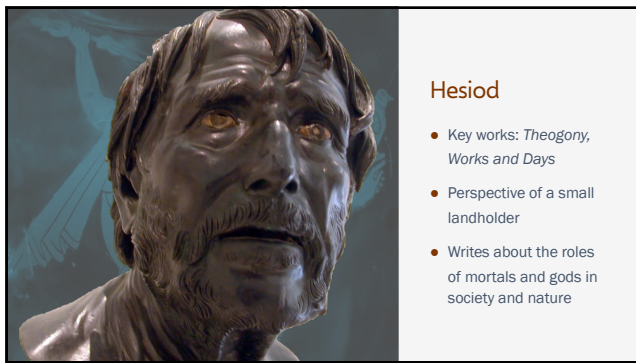
38



39



40



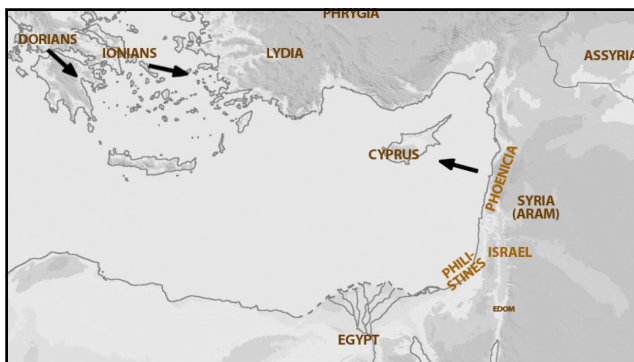
41



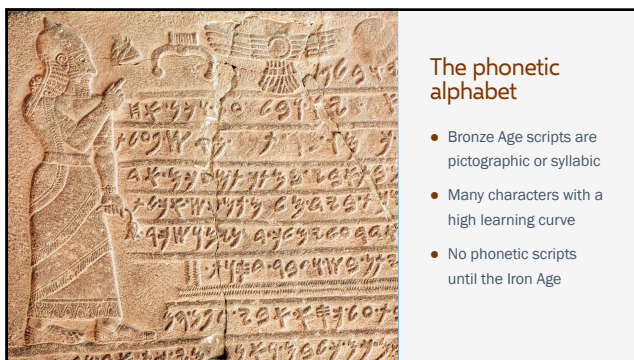
42



43



44



45

Phoenician contact

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

46

Greek alphabet

ΗΟΣΝΥΝΟΡΧΕΣΤΟΝΠΑΝΤΟΝΑΤΑΛΟΤΑΠΑΙΖΕΙΤΟΤΟΔΕΚΛ[?]ΜΙ[?]Ν[...]
"Whoever of all these dancers now dances most deftly,
to him this [pot] [will go as his prize]"

Dipylon Inscription
ca. 740 BC

47

α	Σπειρενίο	Αργείο	Ιωνικό	Κορινθιακό	Αρκαδικό	Δωδεκανησιακό	Κρητικό	Φοινικισμός
Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α
Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β
Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ
Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε
Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ
Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η
Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ
Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι
Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ
Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ
Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ
Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν
Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ
Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο
Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π
Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ
Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ
Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ
Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ
Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ
Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ
Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ
Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω

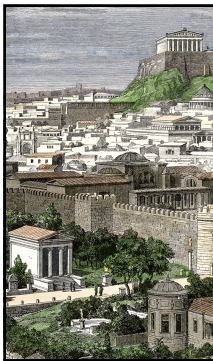
48



Dark Age political structure

- wanax φαναξ → άναξ
 - 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

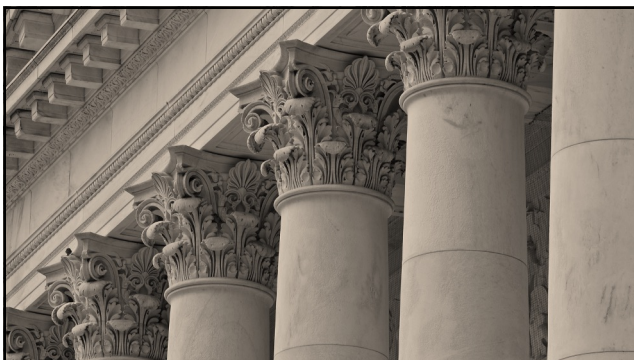
49



Foundations of Archaic Greece

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

50



51
