

# ARCHAIC & CLASSICAL AGES OF GREECE

## Archaic Age (800-500 BC)

Development of the *polis*. Decisions made by assembly (*ekklesia*). Greek identity was not only as Greeks, but also as members of a particular *polis*.

Hoplite revolution (middleclass soldiers, heavy infantry)

Presocratic philosophers (*phusikoi*) & Ionian renaissance. These thinkers rejected earlier myths of Homer and other Greek poets, insisting upon physical and logical explanations for natural events. Leucippus & Democritus taught the atomic theory.

Colonization spread Greek settlements around the Mediterranean

Adoption of Phoenician script, turning it into an alphabet.

## Classical Age (500-323 BC)

Persian War (490-480 BC), after which, Sparta decides not to pursue Persians into Asia Minor; Athens takes over leadership of the panhellenic (united Greek) alliance.

Delian League formed under Athenian hegemony; eventually becomes an Athenian empire (over other Greek cities—Greek ships from Black Sea are taxed coming into the Aegean; islands and cities are forced to remain in the Delian League; treasury transferred from Delos to Athens)

Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) ends in Spartan victory over Athens

March of the Ten Thousand (401-399 BC) shows Greeks what a hoplite force can do in the heart of the Persian empire.

Rise of Philip II of Macedon, who turns that northern kingdom into a regional power. His son Alexander fulfills the dream of Philip (and many other Greeks) of a conquest of Persia.

## Greek cultural legacy

unparalleled depth of literature (biography, treatises, history, poetry, drama)

Greek emphasis on constitutions engendered by their colonization and emphasis on the *ekklesia*; their conclusion that the best government was a mixed constitution

Greek culture borrowed from Africa or Asia? Surely not.