From Classical Greece to the Hellenistic Age
The Dark Ages of Greece: ca 1100-800 BCE

- End of Mycenaean city-states may have been caused by civil war or invasion (by Dorians or Sea Peoples)
- Time of stagnation in the Greek realm politically and economically yet not so in other respects
--Homer, e.g., may have lived near the end of this period
The Archaic Age (800-500 BCE)

-The term “archaic” is derived from the Greek word *arche* =beginning
-Time of revival; city-states develop; **colonization** of western Asia Minor (Ionia esp.), Black Sea Coast, Southern Italy, and western Mediterranean occurs
- Greeks abandon Linear B and use **Phoenician alphabet** for writing
- **Sappho** (d. 570 BCE), other poets flourish
- **Olympics** begin in 776 B.C.E.
Development of Hellenic Culture and Philosophy from the 6th century BCE onwards

I. Early figures (the Pre-Socratics):
   A. Thales (b. 626 BCE)
   B. Xenophanes (fl ca 540 BCE)
   C. Anaximander (of Miletus) (612-545 BCE)
   D. Heraclitus (fl ca 500 BCE)
   E. Pythagoras (ca 572-496 BCE)
   F. Democritus (b. ca 460 BCE)
   G. Hippocrates (ca 460 BCE – ca 380 BCE)
   H. Diogenes (ca 400-325 BCE) and Cynics
Reconstruction of Anaximander of Miletus’s Map of the World
The Main Greek Philosophers

• Socrates
• Plato
• Aristotle
Socrates (469-399 BCE)

- Family background
- Doctrine of learned ignorance, Socratic irony
- Socratic method (dialectic)
- Attacked Sophists
- Virtue is knowledge
- Condemned to death in Athens for corrupting youth and introducing new gods
Plato (ca 420 – 347 BCE)

- Pupil of Socrates
- Wrote Dialogues (e.g., The Symposium or The Republic)
- Founded the Academy
- Theory of Ideas (Forms)
- Allegory of the Cave (Senses are deceptive, reality is an illusion!)
- Elitist political theory (In his book The Republic, he depicts an utopia with 3 classes, ruled by philosopher-kings (guardians))
- Wanted to abolish private property, family; ban poets
Aristotle (384-322 BCE)

- Born in Stagira in Macedonia
- Student of Plato’s
- Founded Lyceum, or Peripatetic School
- Encyclopedic mind
- Realist theory of knowledge
- Father of Biology
- Political theory (Different types (monarchy, tyranny; aristocracy, oligarchy; etc.); no one type is always better than another)
- Taught Alexander the Great
Notable Greek historians

1. **Herodotus** (ca 484-425 BCE) – wrote *Histories* (aka *Persian Wars*) based on eyewitness accounts (mostly oral histories)

2. **Thucydides** (ca 460-406 BCE) – aristocrat, former general; started writing *The Peloponnesian War* while exiled from Athens; tried to present the war from various perspectives (Athens, Sparta) and determine its root causes
Hellenistic Era: 323-31 BCE
Despite some warfare, the Hellenistic Era was characterized by peace and stability, more trade and commerce, an urban focus, and greater opportunities for women.
The Hellenistic World
Hellenistic Achievements in Science and Art

I. **Euclid** (fl. ca 300 BCE) – organized early knowledge of geometry into a logical system

II. **Archimedes** (287-212 BCE) – inventor; established the value of pi; formulated Law of floating bodies

III. **Aristarchus of Samos** (ca 310 – ca 250 BCE) – said that the Sun was the center of the universe

IV. **Hipparchus** (2nd century BCE) – believed that the heavenly bodies revolve around the Earth in epicycles

V. **Eratosthenes** (276-196 BCE) – calculated the circumference of the Earth
Further developments in philosophy

I. Epicurus (341-270 BCE) – the founder of Epicureanism, a theory that if happiness was the goal of life, the way to achieve it would be to limit anxiety and daily cares and to avoid involvement in politics

II. Zeno of Kition (335-263 BCE) – founded Stoicism, the theory that people gained happiness by living in harmony with nature or God’s will; political activity was thus acceptable