



# The Iron Age

# Chronology (all dates approximate)

2000	1100/1000	(750)
Bronze Age	Iron Age	(Homer)
	(Dark Age/Geometric)	

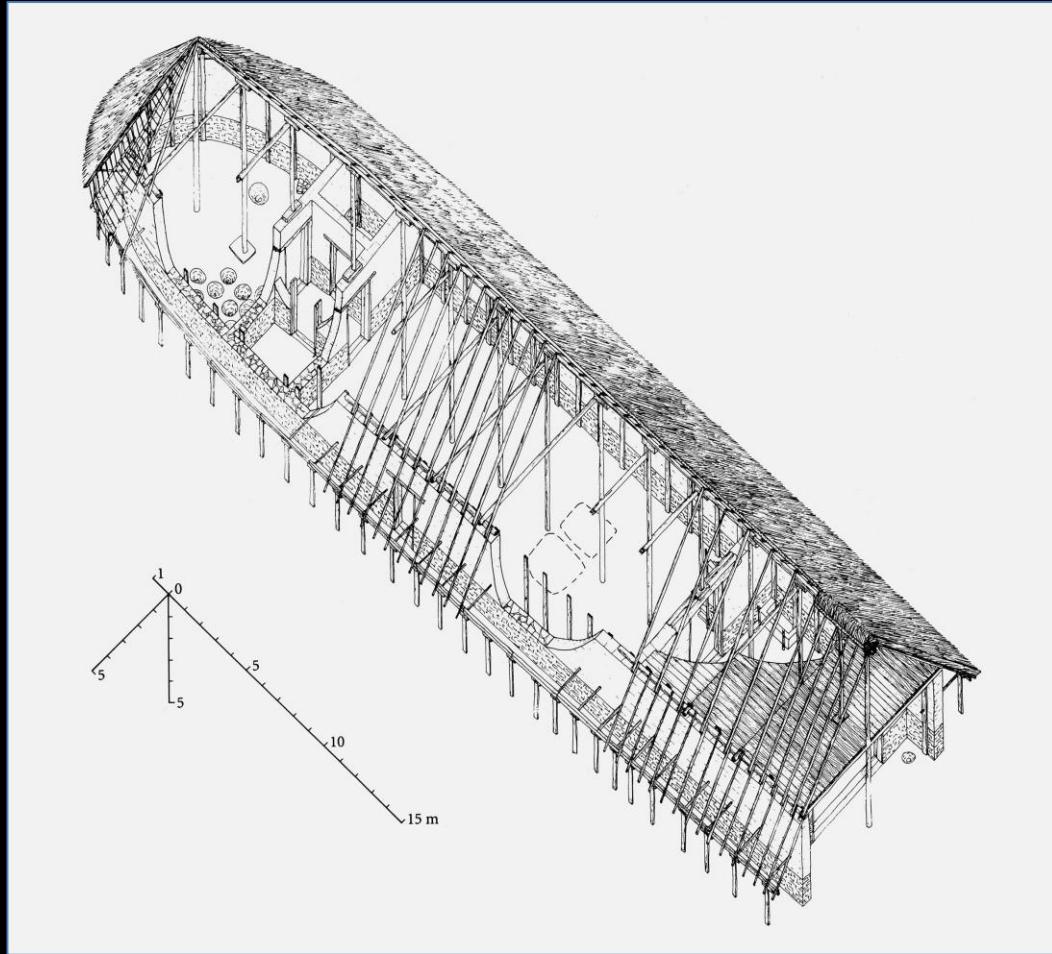
Bronze Age (Minoans and Mycenaeans) = 2000-1100 BCE

Iron Age = 1100-700 BCE

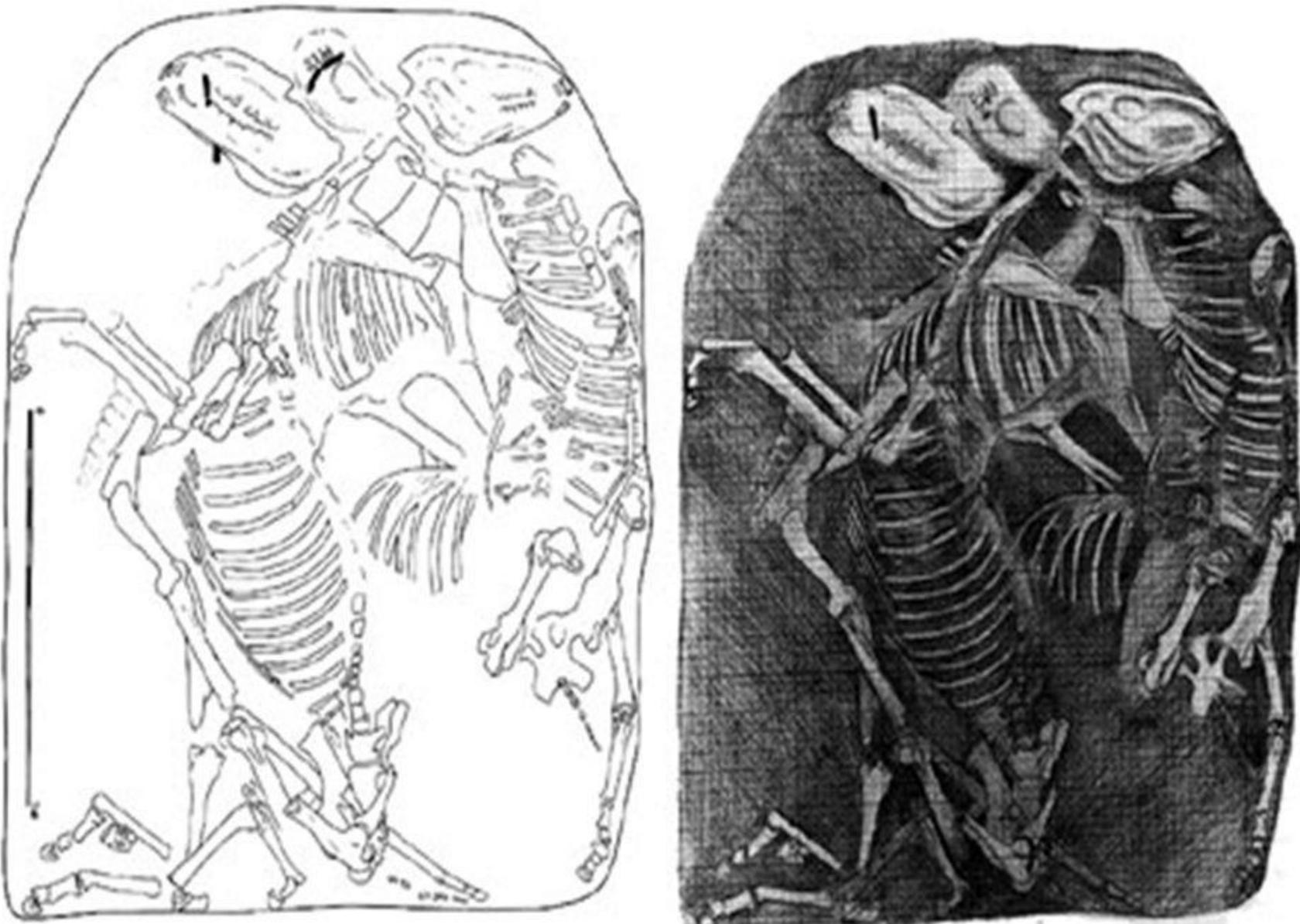
(Iron Age sometimes called “Dark Age” or “Geometric Period”)



# Lefkandi



# Horse Burial at Lefkandi



# Revising the “Dark” Ages?





J. Fine, *The Ancient Greeks: A Critical History* (1983), p. 33

“[I]n the Dark Age the mainland of Greece and the west coast of Asia Minor [modern Turkey] witnessed prolonged confusion. There were migrations throughout Greece and eastward across the Aegean Sea, destruction and abandonment of cities, and, in varying degrees, expulsion, subjection, and blending of populations ... It is obviously impossible to give a detailed and consecutive history of the Greeks in this chaotic age because of the lack of information.”

# Decline? It Depends Where You Dig.

“Thus it appears that the inhabitants of this region of east-central Greece, unlike those living in areas further south ... did not experience a major cultural break at the transition from the final Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age, and suffered much less of a decline in material culture than did their southern neighbors.” (quoted in McInerney p.99)

→ CONTINUITY



# Evidence of Continuity?

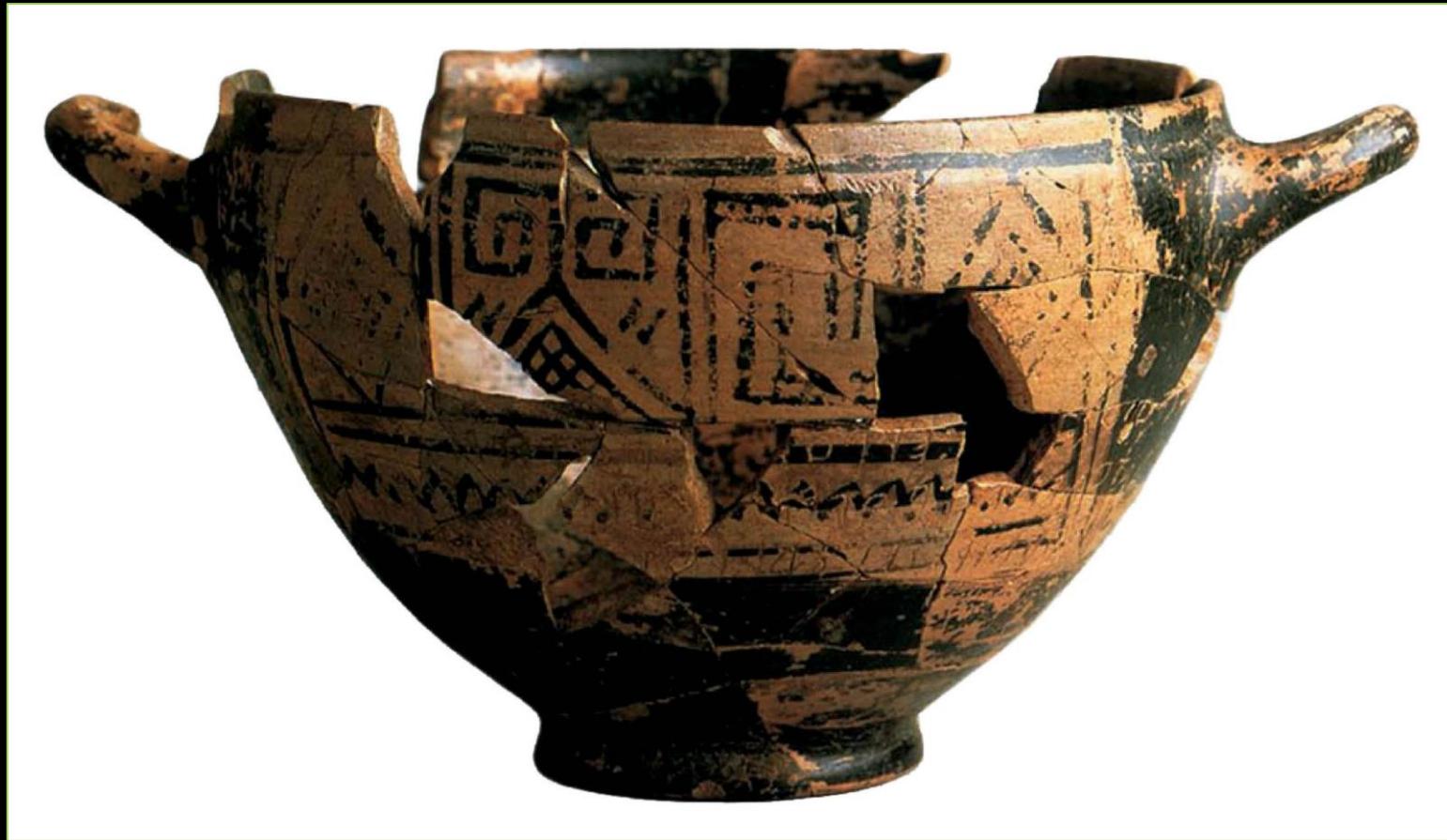
- Hero cults (cultural memory)
- Homeric poems
- Ancient tombs preserved

*Tholos* tomb, Attica (region that includes Athens), ca. 1400.

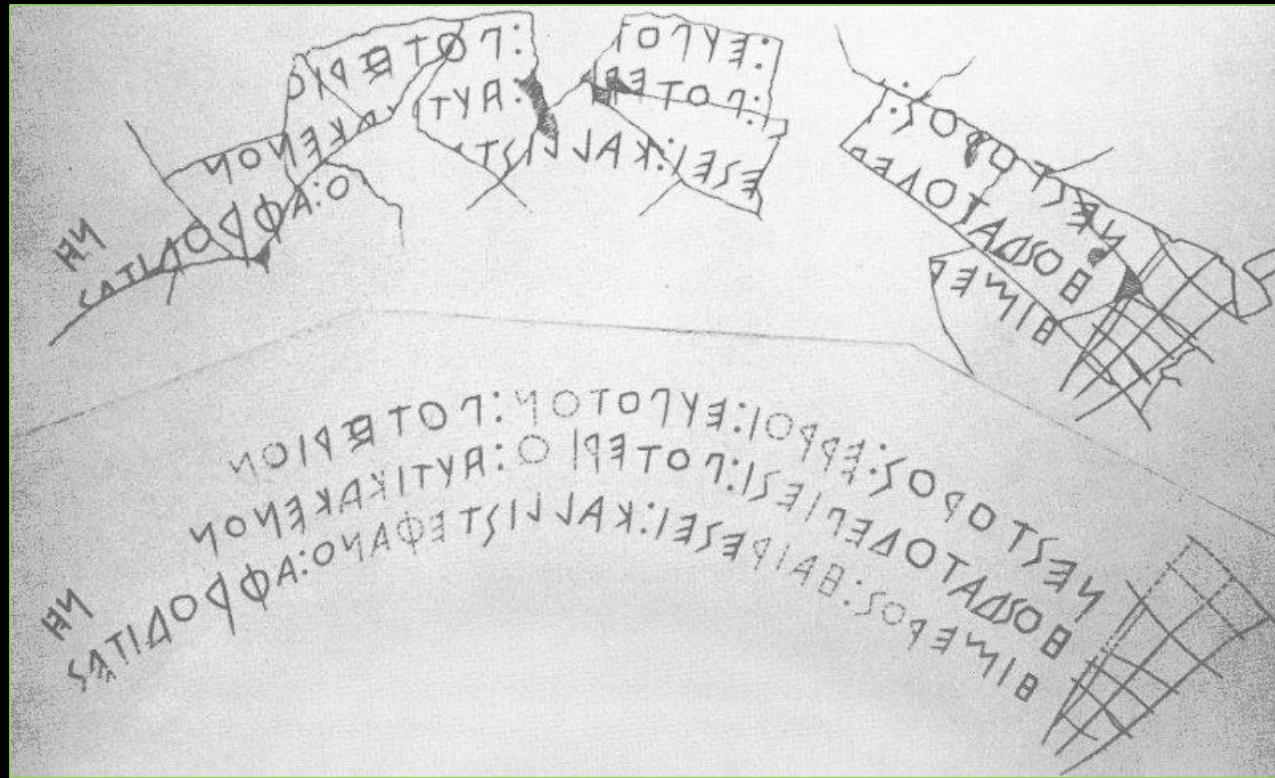
*Dromos* shows pottery from Iron Age to Classical Period



“Nestor’s Cup”  
(Pithecoussai, Bay of Naples, ca. 725 BCE)



# “Nestor’s Cup” (ca. 725 BCE)



“Nestor’s cup I am, good to drink  
from.  
Whoever drinks this cup dry,  
straightaway  
The desire of beautiful-crowned  
Aphrodite will seize.”

# Phoenician Signary and Greek Alphabet

*da, de, di, do, du*

- In Linear B each of the above would have been a different symbol
- In Phoenician one symbol or letter stood for all (a pictogram for door? → **d\*I\*t**)
- Greek letter **delta** ( $\Delta$ ) represents *only* the sound that those syllables have in common ("d")
- Greek adds written vowels

Name	ca. 900 bc	PHOENICIAN		GREEK	
		800–600	Attic (400)	Name	
'älef	𐤀	Α	Α	alpha	
bēt	𐤁	Β	Β	bēta	
gīmel	𐤂	Γ	Γ	gamma	
dālet	𐤄	Δ	Δ	delta	
hē	𐤅	Ε	Ε	epsilon	
wāw	𐤆	Ϝ	Ϝ	(digamma)	
zajin	𐤇	Ϛ	Ϛ	zēta	
ḥēt	𐤈	Ϛ	Ϛ	ēta	
tēt	𐤕	Theta	Theta	thēta	
yōd	𐤍	Ϛ	Ϛ	iōta	
kaf	𐤏	Ϟ	Ϟ	kappa	
lāmed	𐤑	Ϻ	Ϻ	labda	
mēm	𐤒	Ϻ	Ϻ	mu	
nūn	߂	Ϻ	Ϻ	nu	
sāmek	߃	Ϻ	Ϻ	ksi	
'ayin	߄	܂	܂	omikron	
pē	߅	܂	܂	pi	
ṣādē	߆	܂	܂	(san)	
qōf	߇	܂	܂	(qoppa)	
rēš	߈	܂	܂	rhō	
śin/śin	߉	Ϛ	Ϛ	sigma	
tāw	ߊ	܂	܂	tau	
		܂	܂	upsilon	
		܂	܂	phi	
		܂	܂	chi	
		܂	܂	psi	
		܂	܂	ōmega	

# Other Evidence against the Dark Age?

Dipylon Amphora  
765-730 BCE  
Athens





# The *oikos*



the lowly *thete*  
(a person unattached to an *oikos* and/or  
owning no land)

# the lowly *thete*

Achilles' ghost to Odysseus, in the Underworld:

“I would rather follow the plow as a *thete* to another man, one with no land allotted him and not much to live on, than be a king over all the perished dead.”

- (*Od.* 11. 488-91)

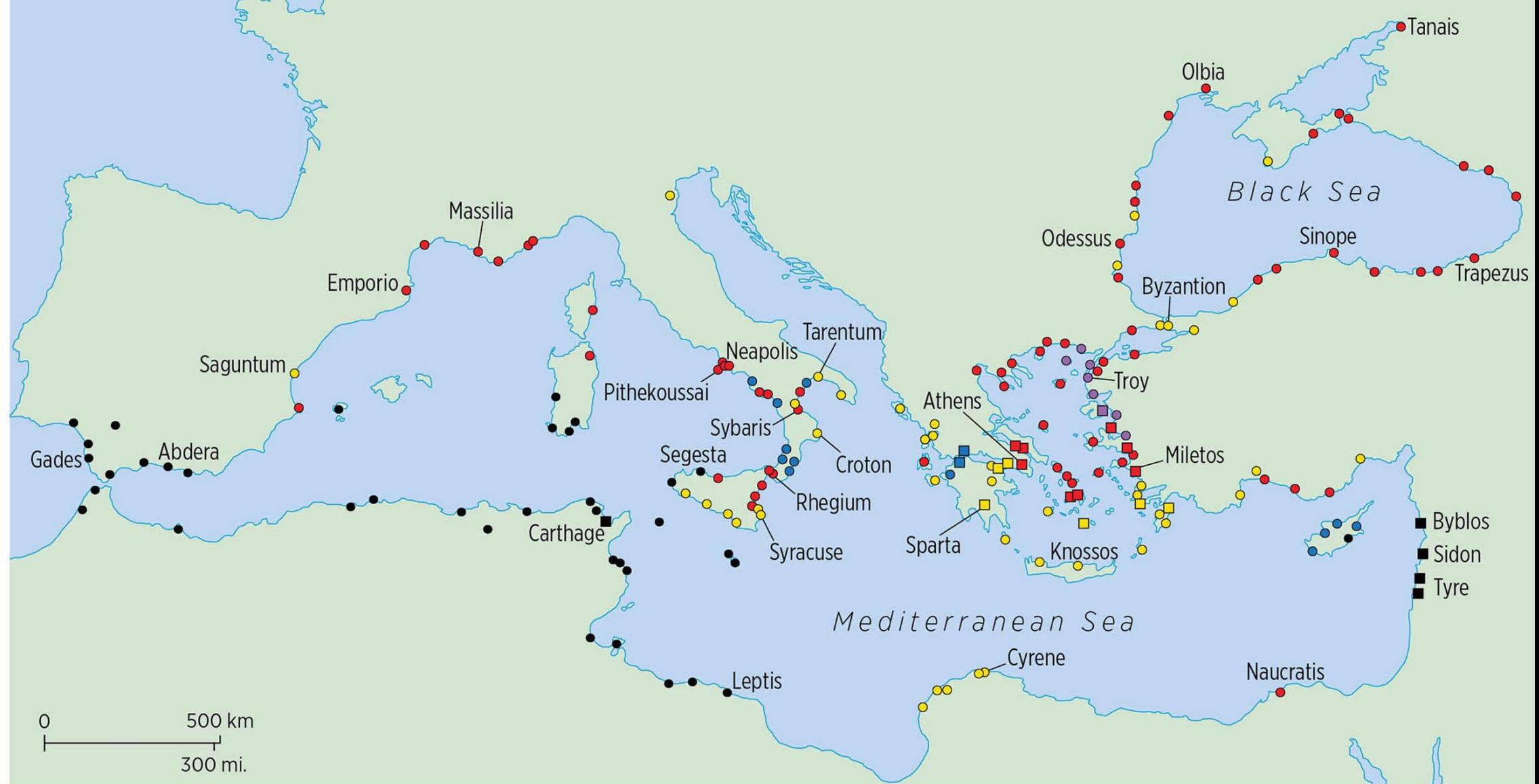
# Early Law from Dreros, Crete

“May God be kind (?). This has been decided by the city: When a man has been *Kosmos*, for ten years that same man shall not be *Kosmos*. If he should become *Kosmos* [again, before ten years are up], whatever judgments he gives, he himself shall owe double, and he shall be useless as long as he lives, and what he does as *Kosmos* shall be as nothing. The swearers (to this shall be) **the Kosmos, the Demioi, and the Twenty of the city.**”

- BCH.61 [1937] 333/8, trans. Fornara, quoted at Mc. P. 107

# (Non-Iron Age Comparison: Law Code from Gortyn, Crete [5<sup>th</sup> C])





■ Ionian mother-city	■ Dorian mother-city	■ Achaian mother-city	■ Aeolian mother-city	■ Phoenician mother-city
● Ionian colony	● Dorian colony	● Achaian colony	● Aeolian colony	● Phoenician colony
Greek				

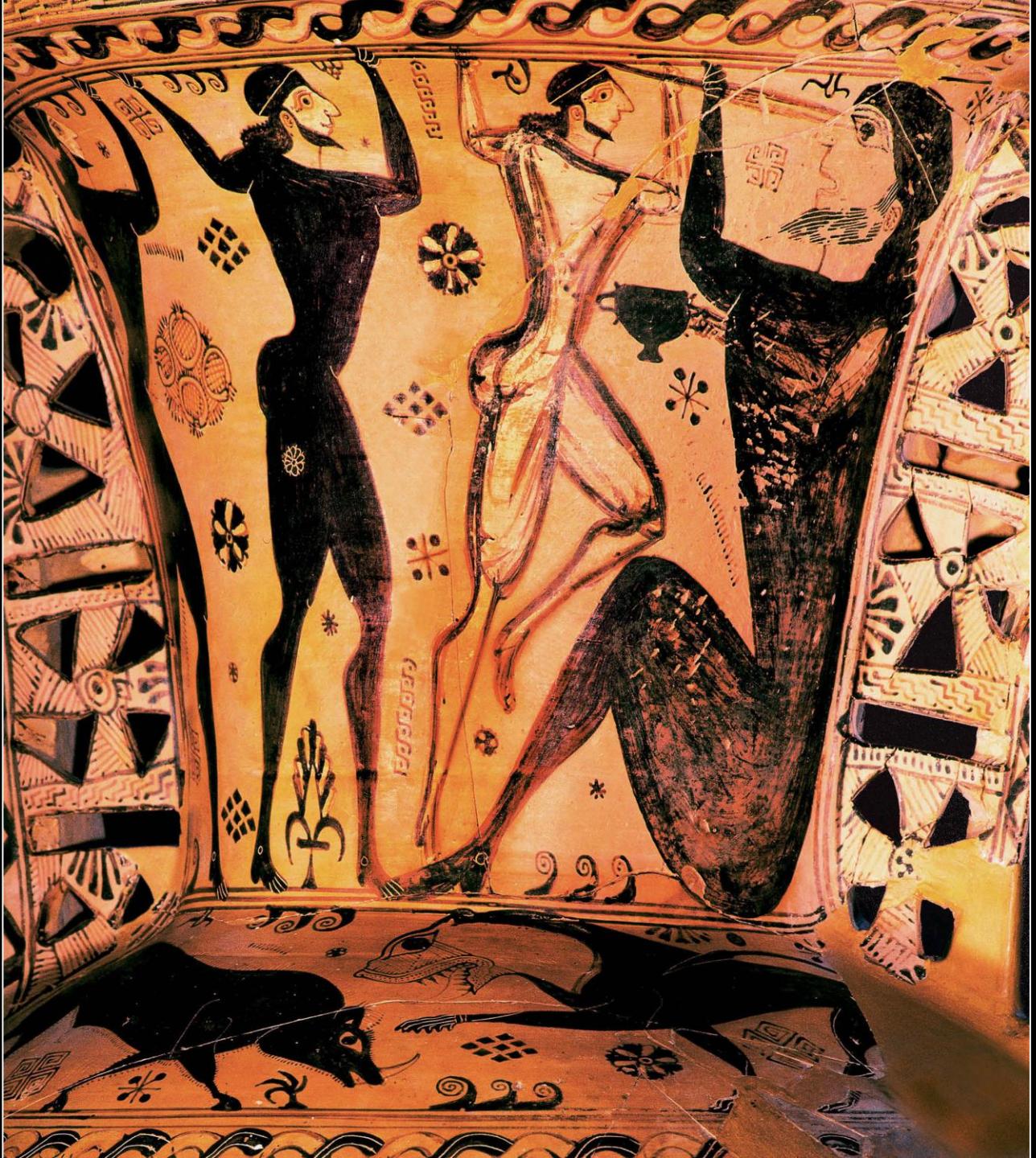
# Units of Identity in Migration from *Metropolis*

- *Ethnê* (s. *ethnos*) – people who asserted a common ethnic identity
- *Koinon* – political federations
- *Oikoi* (s. *oikos*) – households, including slaves

# Klēros



- *Agora*  
(marketplace)
- *Polis* (city-state or  
city)









LOS ANGELES  
MEMORIAL  
COLISEUM





# Pindar (6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> C)

“Creatures of a day! What is a person?  
What is a person not? A dream of a  
shadow  
is man.

But whenever there comes to mortals a  
gleam of splendor given by the gods,  
Then rests on them a beam of glory,  
and gentle is their life.”

- *Pythian Ode 8*, lines 95-8

