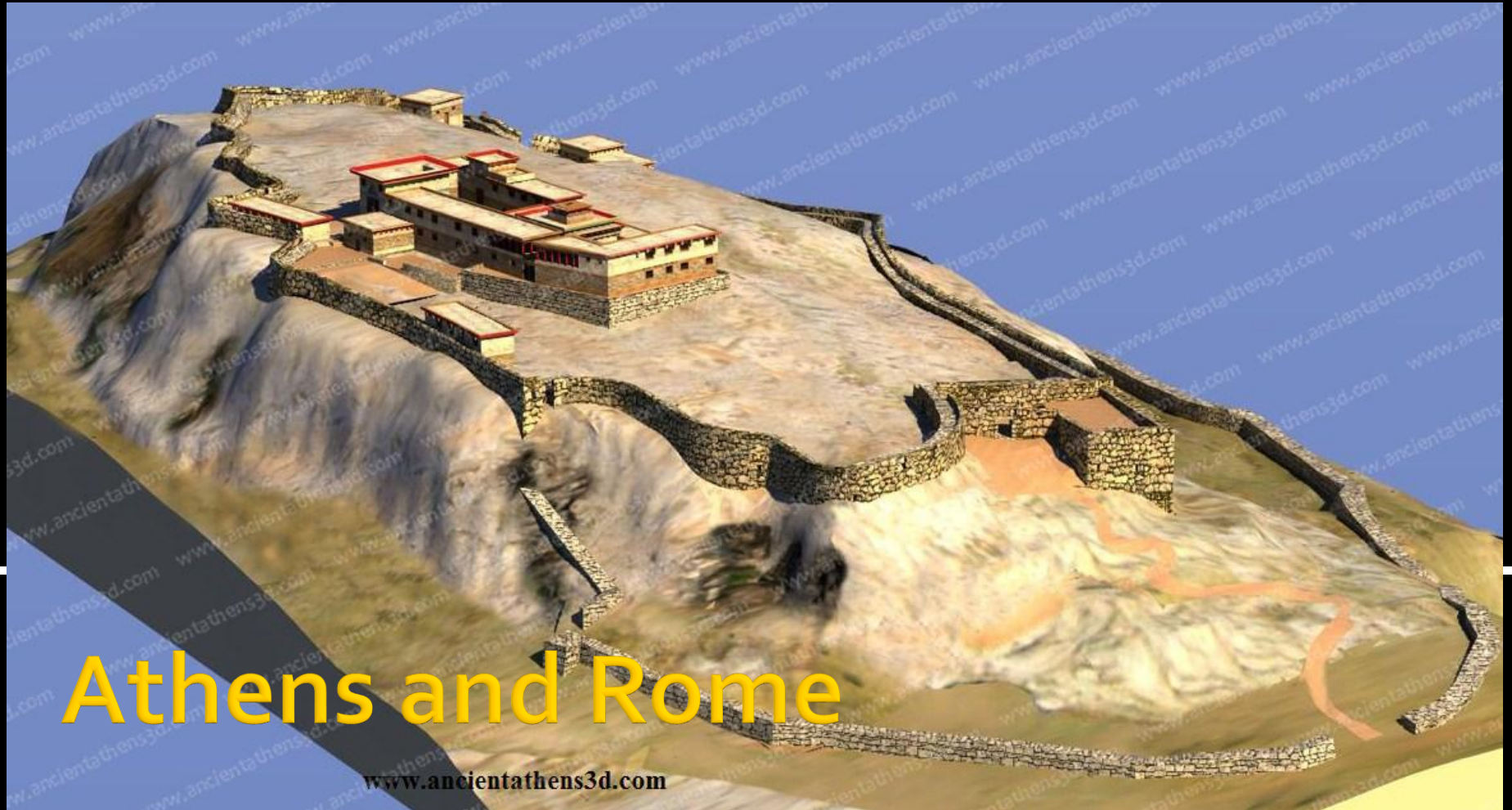


Athens Before Pericles

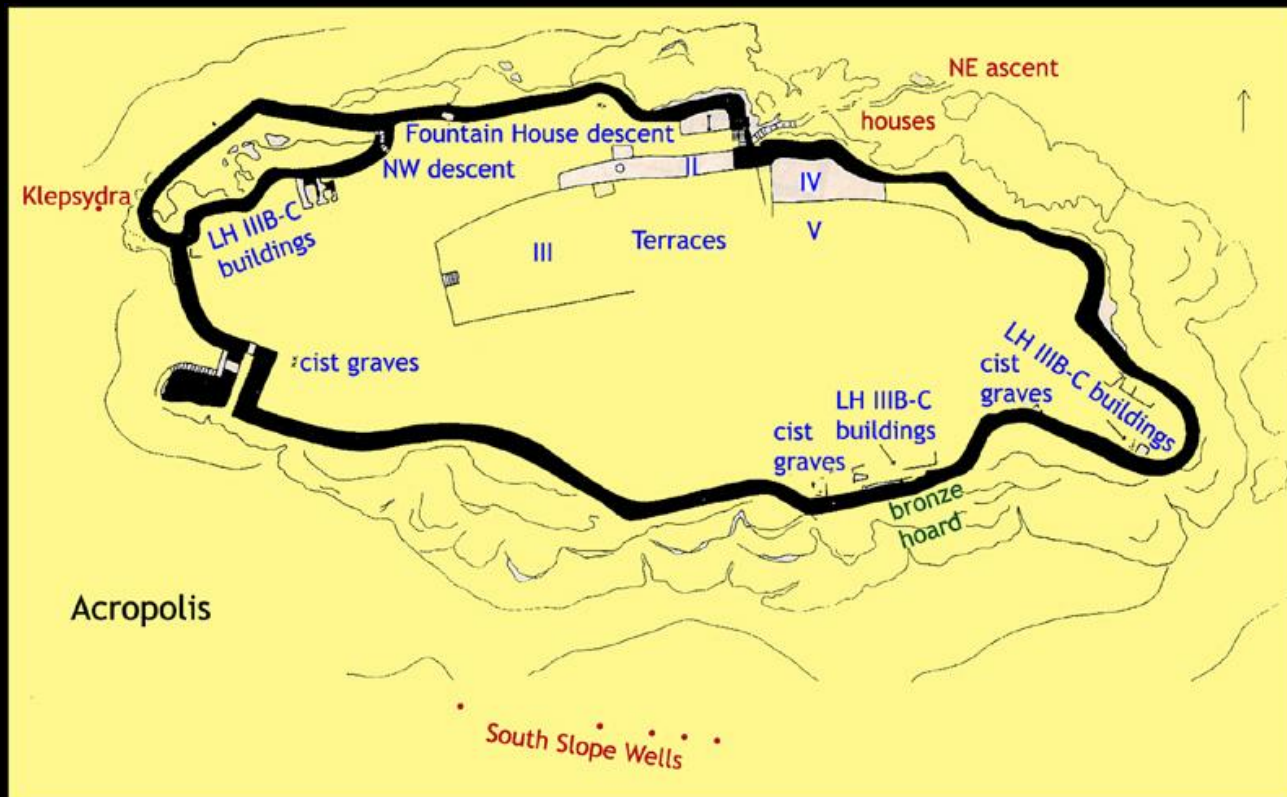


Athens and Rome

www.ancientathens3d.com

Bronze Age Athens

- Very patchy & little known:
 - Problems of urban archaeology
 - Continuous occupation over 4000+ years



Middle Bronze Age

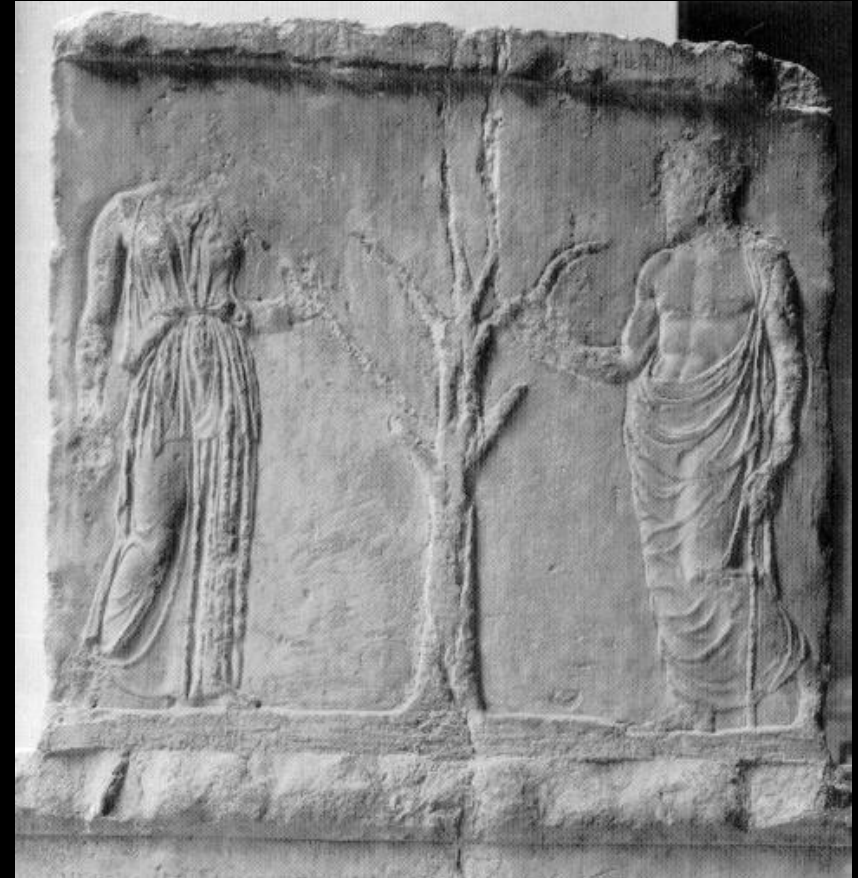
- c.2000-1050 BCE
- Arrival of the Greeks?
- Thriving community with evidence from Acropolis & Agora:
 - Wells on north slope
 - Deposits of Grey Minyan pottery on north & south slopes & summit
 - Habitation in area of Erechtheion
 - 5 MH cist graves



Examples of Grey Minyan ware

LBA: Age of Heroes

- Catalogue of ships: Iliad Book 2
- Legendary rulers of Athens:
 - Aegaeus, Theseus, Erechtheus
- Memory of heroes & ancestry of site?
 - “strong-built house of Erechtheus” (Odyssey 7.78-81)
- Folk memory of time before Theseus when city only comprised Acropolis & area to south (Thucydides 21.15.3)
 - Fits with the archaeological evidence



Athena and Erechtheus

Mycenaean Athens

- Main phase of construction in LH IIIB
- 5 artificial terraces created for construction of palace

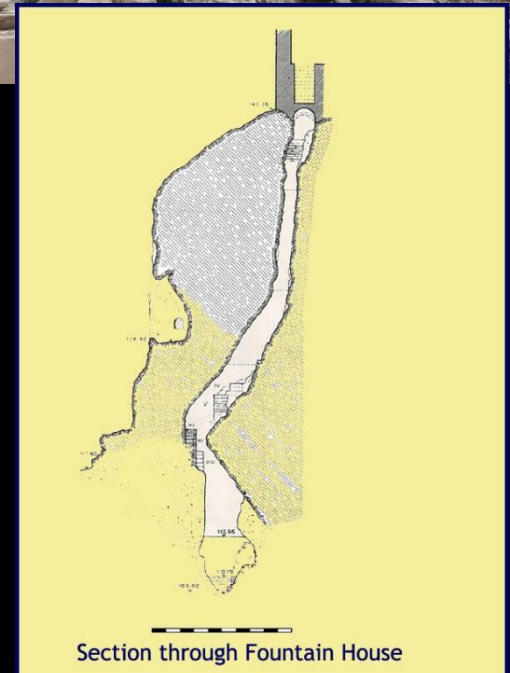
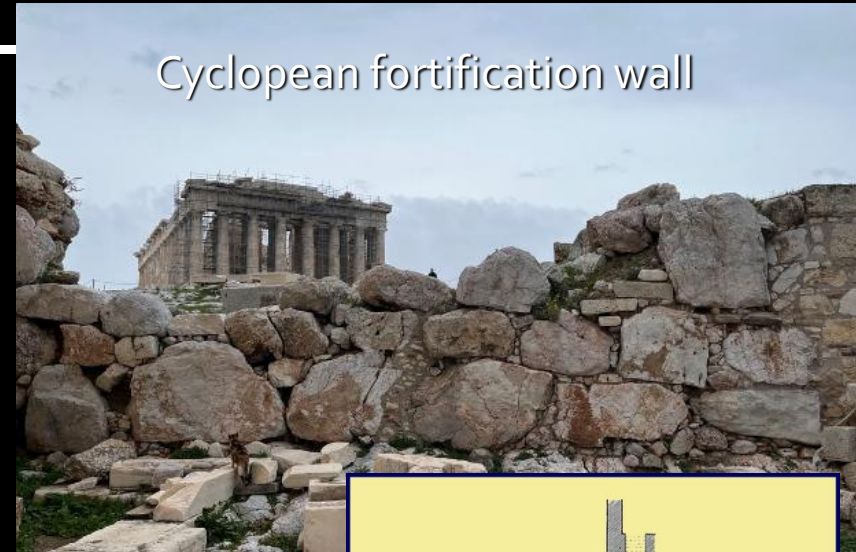


Artist's reconstruction of palace and fortification walls

South Slope Wells

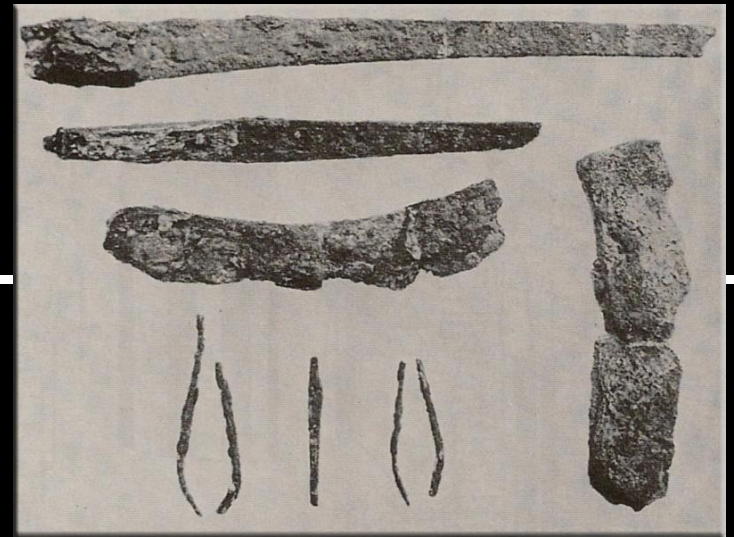
Mycenaean Athens

- Fortified stronghold
- Cyclopean fortification wall
 - 760m in length, 10m high, 3.5-6m thick
- Subterranean well on north slope:
 - Natural fissure 30m deep & 1-3m wide
 - 8 flights of steps (wood & marble) down to a circular well shaft

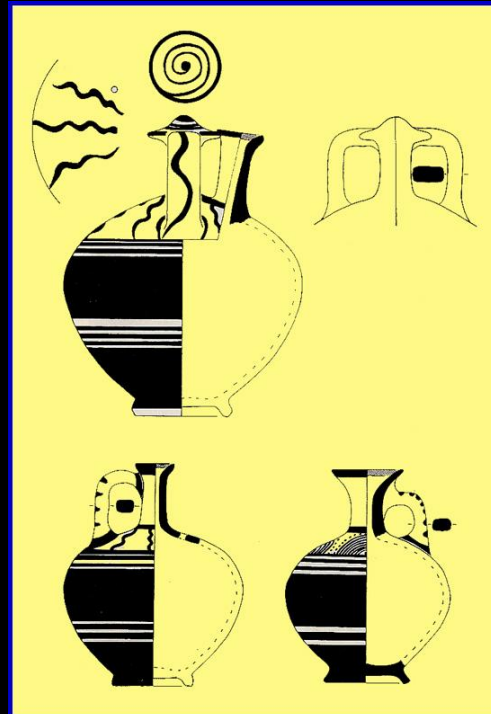


End of LBA

- Very sketchy evidence
- LH IIC: Bronze hoard by southern fortification wall
- Submycenaean: 14 cist graves
- Establishment of new cemetery at the Kerameikos:
 - Very poor: a few pots, & bronze pins & fibulae



Bronze hoard



Submycenaean
pottery



Cist grave

Early Iron Age

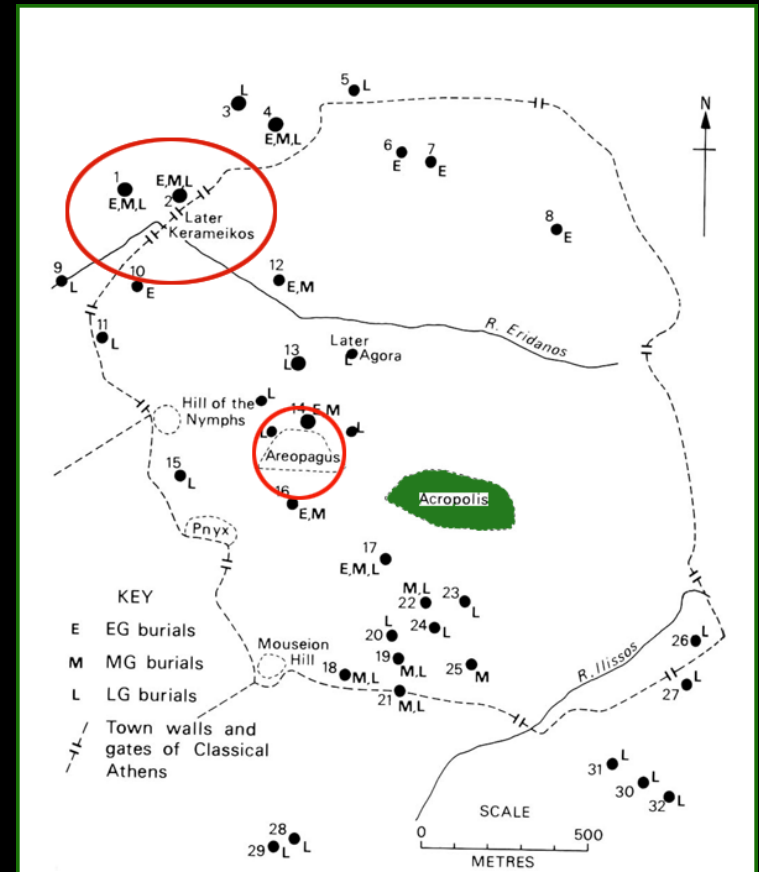
- Geometric period:
 - PG: 1050-900 BCE
 - EG: 900-850 BCE
 - MG: 850-760 BCE
 - LG: 760-700 BCE
- Greek “Dark Ages”:
 - *Synoecism*: decline in number of settlements & villages grouping together for protection
 - Disappearance of palaces along with literacy, elite arts, pictorial representation
 - Breakdown of long-distance trade



MG amphora

Early Iron Age Athens

- Still patchy but more, funerary evidence from Athens beyond Acropolis:
 - Kerameikos
 - Areopagus
- Development of cult of Athena on Acropolis



Iron Age Athens

Early Geometric Burials

- EG: introduction of cremation for adults
- Funerary feast & provision of food for after-life
- Gendered burials:
 - Cremation urns & grave goods:
 - Wealthy male burials: warrior equipment
 - Female burials: pottery & simple personal adornment



Areopagus funerary urn

Early Geometric Burials

- Very little wealth removed from circulation & placed in graves
- Some differentiation of grave goods
 - High quality decorated pottery
 - Certain investment in terms of funerary ritual: cremation & feasting
 - Very rare imports (Cyprus)
- What do these practices tell us?



Grave goods, Kerameikos

Rich Lady of the Areopagus

- c.850 BC major social changes
- Lavish funerary display
 - 34 decorated vases (all but 9 smashed on funerary pyre)
 - Elaborate cremation urn
 - Granary model representing the **pentakosiomedimnoi**
- Access to imported luxuries:
 - Ivory seal
 - Gold earrings
 - Faience necklace with bead of variegated glass

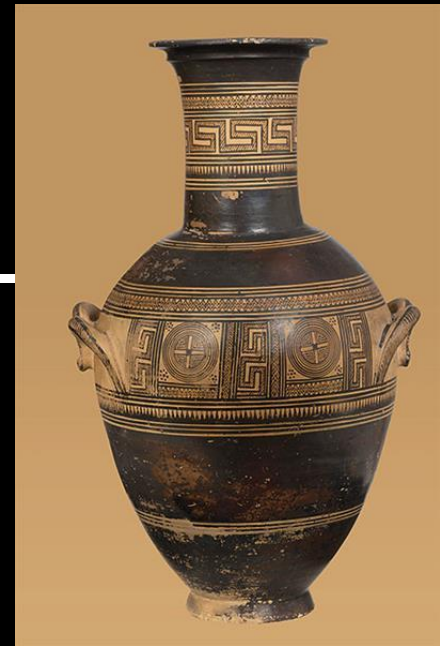


Middle Geometric Period

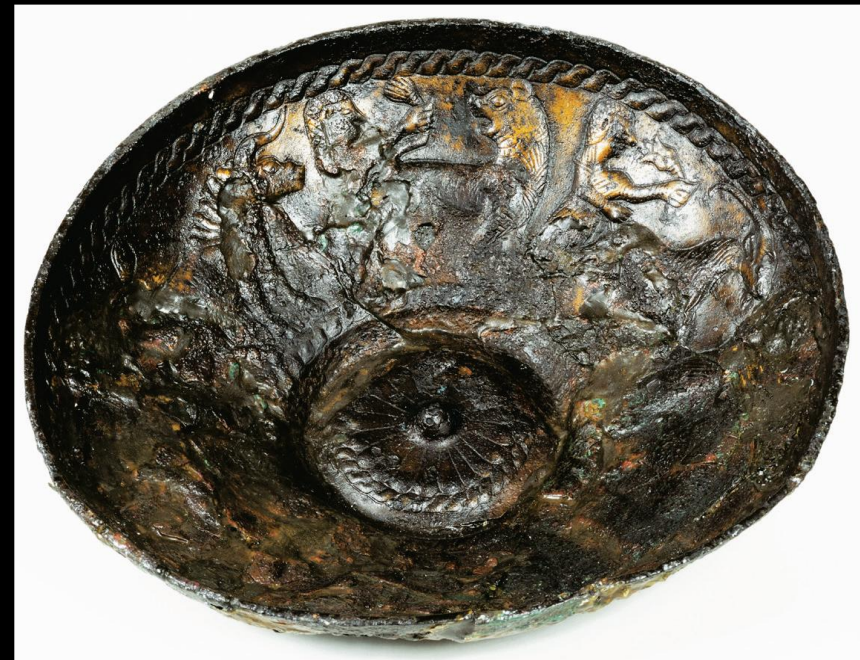
- Increasing wealth & funerary display
 - Personal adornment: sheet gold diadems
 - Ivory seals
 - Weapons
 - Phoenician bronze bowl
- Increasing trade east



Gold diadems



Cremation urn



Phoenician bowl, Kerameikos

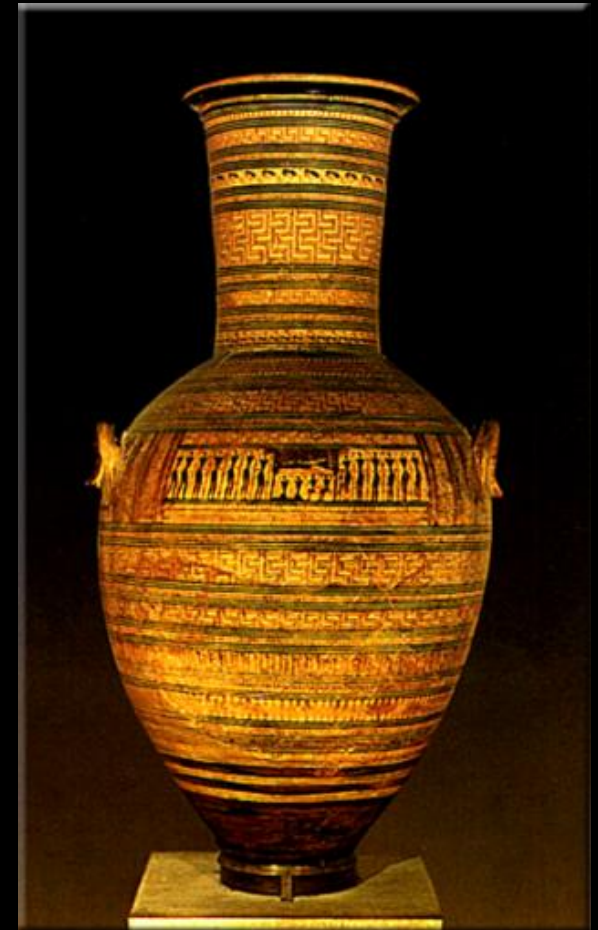
Late Geometric Burials

- Inhumation (in wooden coffin) replaces cremation for adults
- Funerary feasts: ash with burnt sherds & animal bones
- Increasing disposal of wealth:
 - Jewellery,
 - Bronze cauldrons (male),
 - Ivory seals & figurines (female)
 - Clay Pyxides (female)



Late Geometric

- Monumental figured vases used as funerary monuments:
 - Cremation urns, grave markers & marking route to cemetery
 - Especially commission for burial of *aristoi*
- Decorated with scenes illustrating funerary ritual:
 - *Prothesis, ekphora*
 - Chariot races, mourners
 - Scenes from Homeric epic



LG funerary vase

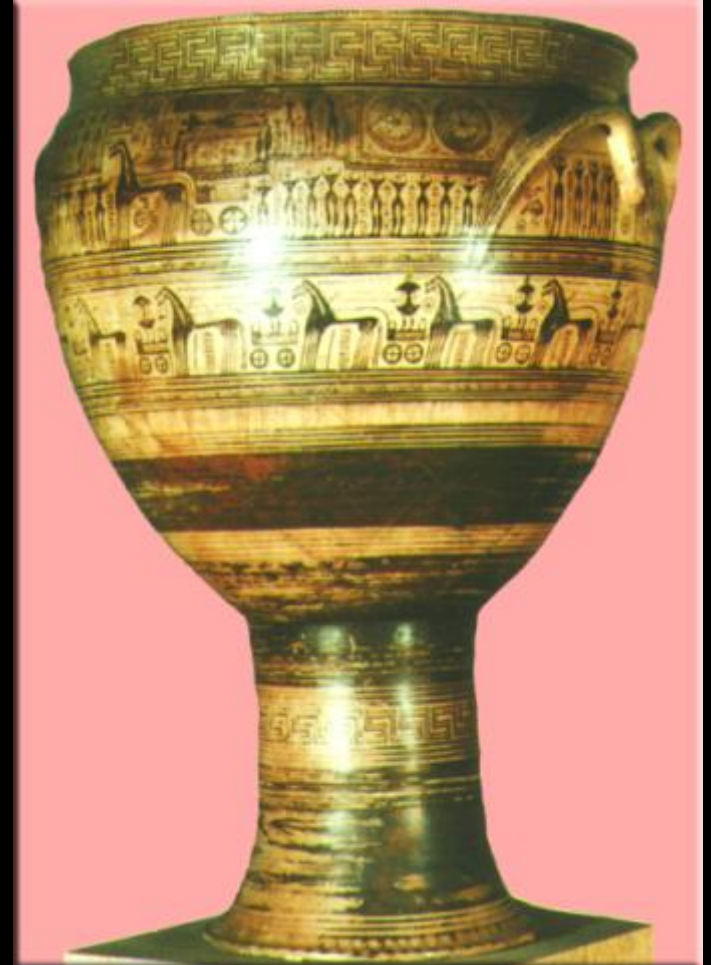
Late Geometric Ritual



Prothesis



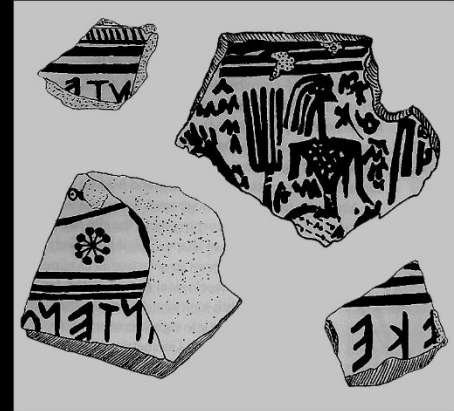
Ekphora



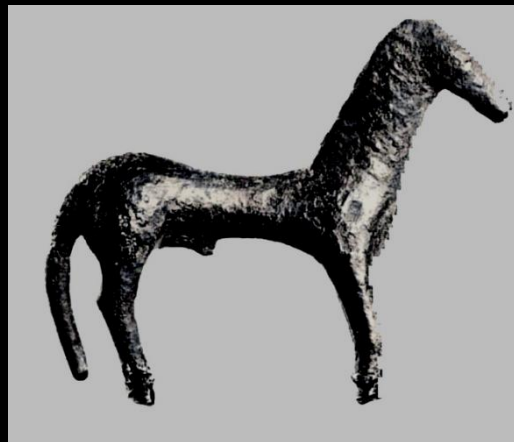
Ekphora & chariot race

Late Geometric Acropolis

- Open-air cult place?
- Large quantities of fragmentary LG pottery
 - Grave markers from a subsequently levelled cemetery?
 - Dedications to Bronze Age tombs (hero cult)?
 - Prizes in athletic contests (funerary games)?
 - Early dedications at a cult site (established c. 750 BC)
- Bronze figurines & tripods



Dipylon sherds



Bronze figurines

Athens and the Rise of the Polis

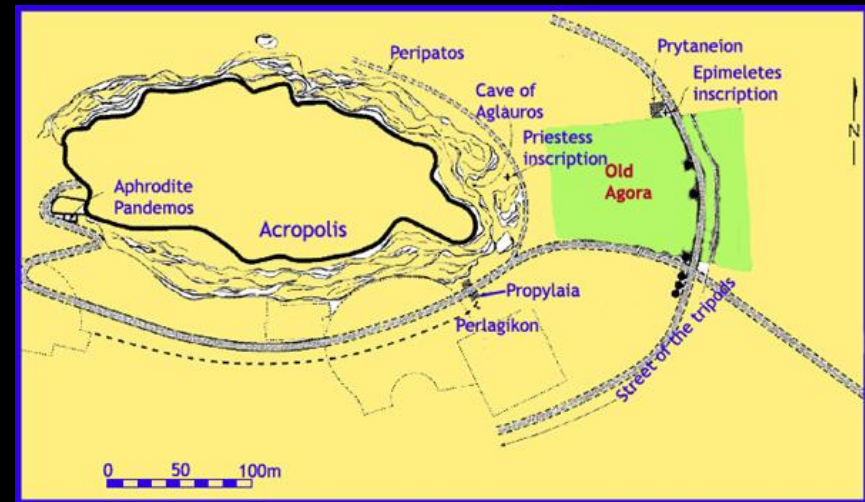
- EG-MG surviving burials represent only a portion of the Athenian population:
 - The *aristoi*
- Greater number of LG burials:
 - Increase in population?
 - Or changing social & burial practices?
- By c.740 BC fewer kraters & pyxides:
 - Decline of Athenian aristocracy



Pyxis: Rich lady of the Areopagus

Archaic Athens

- c.700-480/479 BC
- Evidence mainly from Acropolis
- By 7th century BC a small religious site with little deposition of material wealth
 - Pottery
 - A handful of bronze tripod fragments (in comparison with 70+ pieces in 8th century)
 - Some Oriental imports



Athena Polias?

- Late 8th-7th century:
construction of first temple
to Athena
 - Modest provincial polis
temple
 - Home of ancient olivewood
statue of Athena Polias
- Little survives:
 - 2 poros-limestone column
bases south of Erechtheion
 - Decoration: marble plaques
with incised sphinxes &
bronze acroterion?



Bronze acroterion

6th Century Athens

- Dramatic change in the appearance of the Acropolis: “peopled in stone”:
 - Dedication of life size statues
 - Sanctuaries focus of elite display
 - Associated with sumptuary laws preventing the lavish funerary display



Moschophoros, dedicated by Rhonbos

Korai

- Draped female sculptures appear c. 560-550 BC
 - Embody aristocratic ideal of female beauty
 - Arrhephorai: priestesses
- Dominate the sculptures dedicated on Acropolis
- Largely survive in *bothroi*



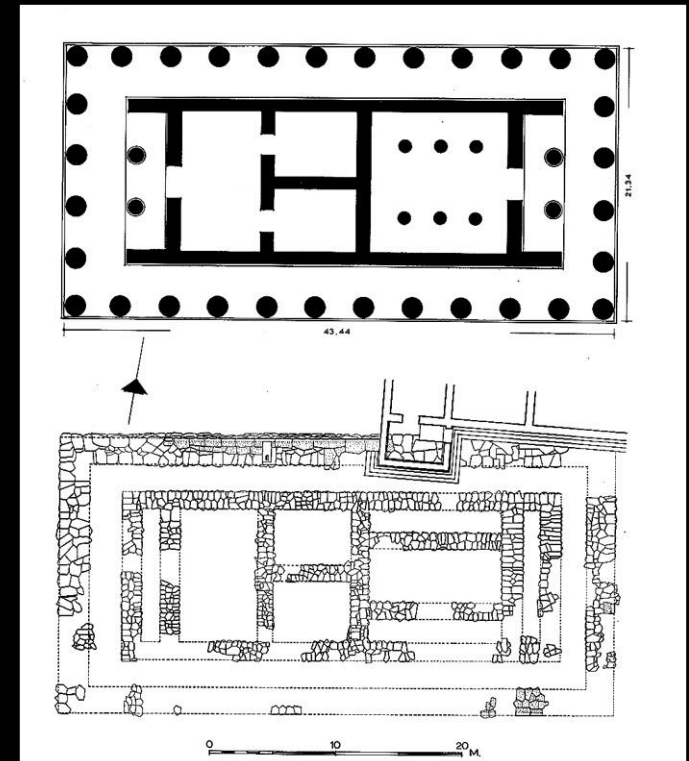
c.530



500-490

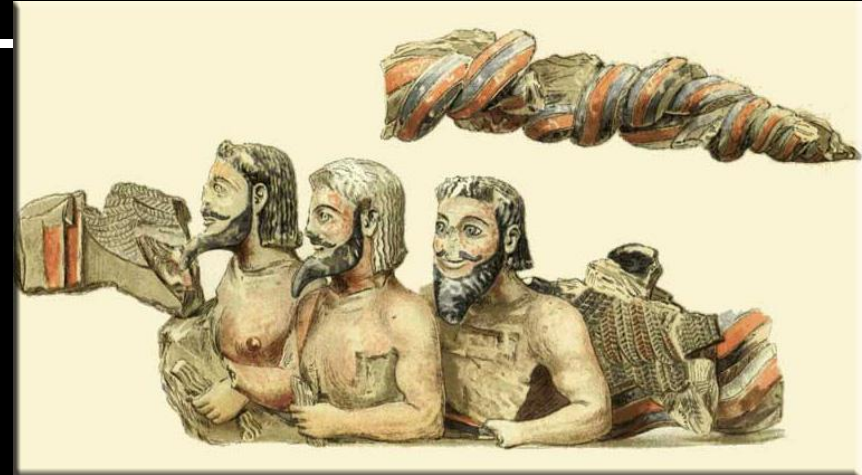
Peisistratid Acropolis

- 560s-550s: burst of building activity
 - Construction of ramp up the West slope & movement of main entrance from East side
 - Construction of sanctuary of Athena Nike. Altar block: "Altar of Athena Nike, Patro[k]ledes set it up"
 - Construction of Hekatompedon temple of Athena Polias above Mycenaean palace



Athena Polias

- Αρχαίος νέος built in 6th century
- Use of limestone & marble for pediments & metopes
- East pediment:
 - 2 lions savaging a bull
 - “blue-beard”: three-headed sculpture of uncertain identity
- Housed the ancient olive wood statue of Athena

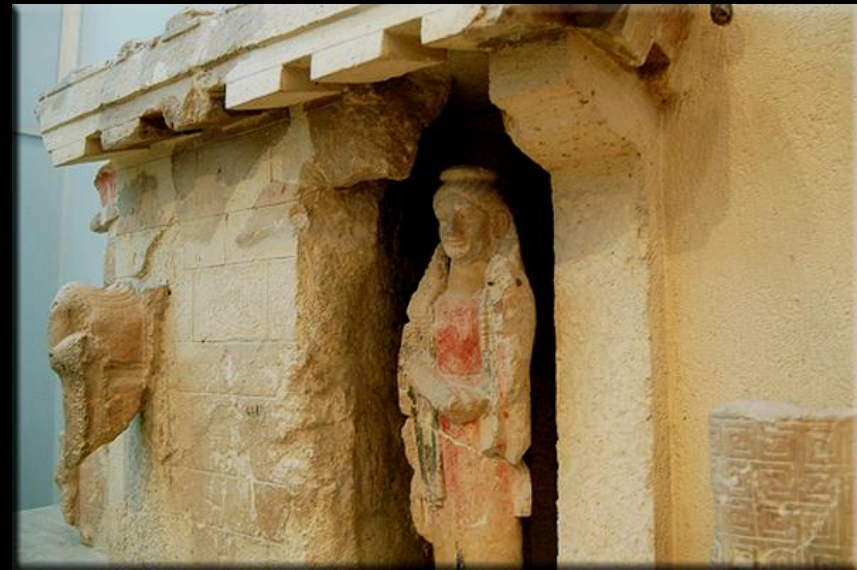


Pedimental sculptures



Olive Tree Pediment

- Olive tree pediment:
 - Sculpture from another building
- Represents the Acropolis itself
 - Mythological or representation of the Panathenaic procession?
 - Tree representing Athena's sacred olive
 - Foreshadows famous Parthenon frieze



Olive tree pediment

Summary

- Very patchy evidence: urban archaeology & covered by important later archaeological sites
- Throughout much of Bronze Age? A cultural backwater?
- LH IIIC/Submycenaean: Athens begins to increase in political & economic importance
- Early Iron Age: Athens increasingly wealthy and in contact with East Mediterranean
- Archaic Athens:
 - Dependent on archaeological evidence
 - Date of construction of the polis temple is problematic