

Ancient Greece

TASK 1 : How could the landscape of Greece and the Aegean area influence the development of the first states in this area? Compare with what you know about the developments in Mesopotamia, Palestine, Egypt.

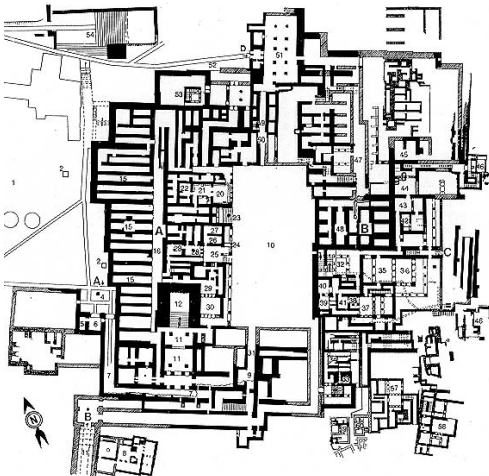
1. Minoan Crete (ca 3000-1500 BC)

The civilization of Minoan Crete remains in many respects mysterious. The origin of the inhabitants is unknown. Their style of writing **Linear A** and language has not been deciphered yet.

Because of this our main sources of information about Minoan Crete are archeology and Greek Myths.

TASK 2: What do you know about Crete from the Greek myths? Write down names, features, places.

- The king and his officials ruled the state, they were in charge of its economy, administration.
- Main source of income – trade, that means that they had a strong navy and developed crafts
- Influence over surrounding area – Greece dependent, boys taken as slaves, servants
- City states – palace economy
- Palaces – most famous **Knossos, Phaistos** – large, complicated – may have resembled a **labyrinth** to the Greeks
 - Not fortified, navy protected the state
 - Sanitation – flushing toilets, baths, sewers
 - Central heating
 - Wall paintings
 - In the middle a yard, ceremonial area – **arena for bull dancing**



- Bulls worshipped – bull dancers, acrobats, dancing round the bulls, jumping over them
- **Women equal to men** – praised highly
- Round 1500 BC an earthquake weakened the states and Greeks used the opportunity and get the area under their control



2. Mycenaean Greece (1,600 – 1,100 BC)

First settlements in the area of the Peloponnesus appeared round 3000 BC. They were under the influence of Crete

- 1,900 BC arrival of the Greek **Achaia** tribes from the north
- Nomadic tribes, culturally backward, destroy the former settlements
- Accepted the culture and lifestyle of the conquered area and developed their own style of writing **Linear B** – inspired by Linear A of Crete, but using Greek language
- 1,600 BC beginning of the **Mycenaean Culture**
- Influence of Crete, centres huge **fortified** palaces
- Fortifications built out of large stone blocks
- Use of metal, bronze, iron
- Trade with Syria, Italy, Egypt
- 12th century BC, Mycenaean civilization disappeared, reason unknown
- 1,100 BC arrival of the **Dorian** tribes from the north, they forced many other tribes out and so Greek settlement developed in Aegean Islands, Asia Minor, Cyprus

3. The Homeric Period (the Dark Ages) 1,100 – 800 BC

TASK 3: What associations do you have with the term Dark Ages? Write down your ideas.

From the archeological evidence we know that the great architecture, fine crafts and linear writing of the Mycenaean period disappeared. New wave of invaders – mainly **Dorians** – came. They were culturally backward. The cities disappeared and agriculture once again became the main source of income. People lived in villages. The power went to the hands of **kings and aristocracy**. The king (**basileus**) was usually the leader of the invading tribe and the aristocrats his best soldiers. For their service they were given land in the conquered area. Their political and economical power was based on **land ownership**. The other members of the tribe became **free citizens** with political rights. Usually they were peasants.

Our main source of information about this period are the long epic poems **the Iliad** and **the Odyssey** by **Homer**, written round 800 BC. They deal with earlier events of the end of the Mycenaean period, but tell us a lot about the society and its values. The story of the **Trojan War** can explain the origins of Greek settlement in Asia Minor.

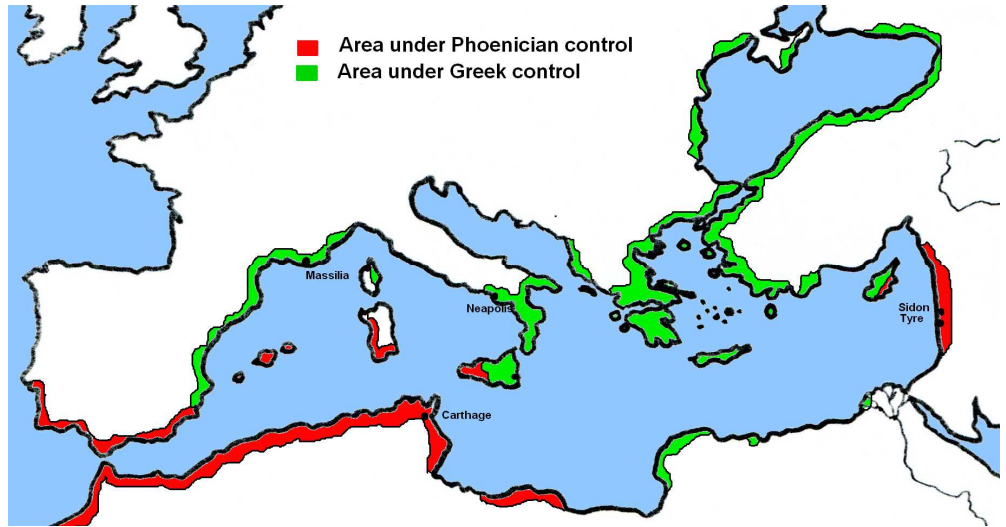
Towards the end of the Dark ages the situation changed:

- The first cities and city states – **Poleis** (singular Polis) – were established
- To administer the poleis the Greeks accepted the Phoenician style of alphabet, but with Greek letters
- Trade and crafts becoming more important
- The system of government changing as the economical power was no longer based only on land ownership

Most of the changes were due to a process called the Great Greek Colonization

The Great Greek Colonization (1,100 – 500 BC)

- There were several reasons for the colonization. Lack of land caused the first wave establishing settlements on the Aegean islands and the coast of Asia Minor. Other reasons were overpopulation, social tensions, trade etc.
- Colonies were established in Sicily and Southern Italy (Magna Graecia), Southern France, Spain, North Africa, Bosphorus, Black Sea
- The mother city - **Metropolis** – kept control over the newly established cities (apoikia)
- To maintain the contacts and trade a navy was needed
- Trade brought more goods to the poleis
- The ship owners, builders, traders, craftsmen were becoming prosperous
- Economic power of the newly rich classes was not based on land ownership and soon they demanded political power corresponding to their wealth
- Because of this tension between the aristocracy and the newly rich new forms of government appeared



4. Systems of Government

TASK 4: Match the systems of government with the definitions. The Greek vocabulary will help you.

Monarchy – a monarch	The rule and absolute power is given to one man, though he has no legal right for it	<i>monos</i> = one <i>arkho</i> = rule <i>oligoi</i> = few <i>aristos</i> = best <i>kratos</i> = power <i>demos</i> = people <i>anarkho</i> = no rule
Oligarchy - oligarchs	The state is ruled by a few influential men, not necessarily members of noble families	
Aristocracy – aristocrats	The state is ruled by people, they choose their representatives for main offices	
Democracy – democrats	There seems to be no rule. Things are in a complete mess.	
Anarchy	The state is ruled by members of the traditional noble families	
Tyranny – a tyrant	the state is ruled by a king, from a royal dynasty	

5. Archaic Period (800 – 500 BC)

During this period most of the **poleis** – city states developed.

The most important city states were **Athens, Sparta, Thebes, Corinth, Megara**

Most of the city states, with the exception of **Sparta** went through more or less the same development. The former village communities were changing into larger political units – **poleis**. The society and the system of government was changing too.



TASK 5: Use the atlas and mark on the map the main Greek poleis.

TASK 6: Can you suggest what would be the most typical way from monarchy to democracy many of the city states followed?

Include the systems of government mentioned above and suggest why the system of government was changing.

Use clues from the part on the Greek Colonization. You can check your ideas in the part on Ancient Athens.

A. Ancient Athens

- Originally ruled by kings
- In the mid 8th century BC **Eupatrides** (aristocrats, land owners) seized power
 - 9 top officials – **Archons**
 - named for one year service
 - religious and army leaders
 - judges – interpreted common laws
 - **Areopagos** – committee of elders
 - gave advice to archons
 - court of justice
 - foreign relations
 - name officials
- Athens missed the first wave of colonization and so there was not a period of early tyranny like in other Greek poleis. The social conflict between the aristocrats and the other free citizens was developing anyway.

- **Draconian laws (621 BC)** – set of extremely strict laws, which Archon Draco believed could prevent further social clashes.
- **Solon's reforms (594-593 BC)**

Solon was elected as an Archon with exceptional powers to reach a compromise between social classes – aristocrats and other free citizens, especially the newly prosperous traders.

 - he abolished **debt slavery** (if you were not able to repay your loan, you were sold with your family)
 - new constitution, he divided society into four groups according to their **wealth** – the **richest, but not only aristocrats could hold the office of Archons**. It was a step forward to democracy but it satisfied only the rich.
 - the poor could take part in the Public Assembly – **heliaia**
- **Tyranny of Peisistratos and his sons (546 – 510 BC)**

This was a way to solve the social clashes between the aristocrats and the others.

 - Limited power of the aristocrats
 - Supported small farmers
 - Supported art and literature – good period for the development of Athens
 - His sons **Hippias** and **Hipparchos** were not so successful, overthrown **510 republic begins**
- **Cleisthenes's Reforms (509 – 508 BC)**
 - new constitution – divided people into groups according to the **place, where they lived**
 - new regions **10 Phylae** with approximately the same number of inhabitants. Each Phylae is divided into **3 Trittias** (1 city, 1 seashore, 1 mainland)
 - new government – **Council of 500** – 50 members from each phylae, approved all laws, suggestions, each day a chairman (= prime minister) was chosen
 - public assembly **Ecclesia** – all free male citizens could attend, voted for new laws
 - independent courts of justice **Heliaia**
 - institution of **Ostracism**
- with Cleisthenes and his reforms the **Classical period** began

TASK 7: *Can you suggest examples from Czech history that would be parallel to Athenian development of democracy? Add the time references.*

11th - 8th century - Monarchy in Athens

8th-6th century - Rule of Aristocracy

621 Draconian Laws

594 Solon's Reforms

546 Tyranny of Peisistratos

509 Cleisthenes's Reforms

Now compare how long it took us and the Greeks to reach democracy.

B. Ancient Sparta

Old men: 'We once were young, brave and strong.'

Young men: 'And we're so now.'

Children: 'But we'll be the strongest soon enough.'

From an old Spartan song sung at public festivals

TASK 8: What have you heard about the life in ancient Sparta?

The **Dorian** invaders conquered **the Peloponnesus** and subdued the original inhabitants of the area. The **Spartans** never mixed with the original inhabitants and so three social classes appeared.

- **Social classes in Sparta:**

- **Spartans** – had full rights, were soldiers serving in the army or retired soldiers (about 9,000 in the first years, after the wars of the 5th century only about 1,000)
- **Perioici** (sg. Perioicos) – foreigners, trade and crafts, not full political rights
- **Helots** – slaves, the original inhabitants, given as property belonging to the land to Spartans (ca 400,000)

- **System of Government:**

2 kings (king = basileus), military leaders, the best, most experienced soldiers

Gerusia – council of elders – 28 wise old men (over 60) + the 2 kings, proposed new laws, advised the kings

5 Ephors – judges, executive power, the right to dismiss kings, leaders of the assembly

The Assembly – all free Spartans can attend

- **Spartan Military Democracy**

The **Spartans** were all the time in the state of emergency – ready for war. This was caused by the constant threat of **Helot** rebellion. Their lifestyle and system of education were completely military.

- To avoid envy between Spartans the land was divided into equal plots given to Spartans with the Helots working for them – providing food.
- Every year there was a new redistribution of the plots
- All Spartans were equal
- Spartans were not allowed to sell their plots.
- All Spartan men were professional soldiers, the best infantry – **Hoplites**
- Sparta never had city walls – the soldiers were the walls of the state

- **Military Education**

- Babies examined to check whether they were strong enough
- Boys lived with their mothers until the age of 7, then 7-30 together in army barracks
- Severe discipline, training, encouraged to steal from the Helots
- Army service 20-60
- Marriage compulsory but almost no family life, main meals together in barracks
- Girls – main task to produce strong, fit babies

C. Greek Religion

Greek religion was **polytheistic** and **anthropomorphic**. This means that the Greek gods looked like and behaved like people- had arguments, formed alliances, had children, manipulated people. This fact is important to understand the essence of Greek culture – **glorification of man**, his achievements, his body. If gods act like people, people become their own gods – celebrate themselves.

The story of Greek gods may help us understand the development of Greek society.

- **The first generation of gods**

At first there was chaos. Then Gaia (the Earth) had 12 children (giants) with Uranos (the Sky). Gaia didn't like Uranos's cruelty towards their children so she asked her son Kronos to overthrow Uranos. He did so but was cursed by Uranos that his fate will be the same.

- **The second generation of gods**

Kronos the main god – Golden Age, no wars, conflict. He had 6 children with Rhea. He remembered his fathers curse, got scared and swallowed 5 of his 6 children. Only the last one, **Zeus**, was hidden by Rhea, survived and then overthrew Kronos.

- **The third generation of gods**

Zeus created people – several generations/stages

- Silver Age – people fighting, killing each other
- Bronze Age – warlike people
- Age of Heroes – gods interfered with people
- Iron Age – wars, destruction
- New Age

The main Greek Gods:

TASK 9: Do you know the main Greek gods from the old Greek myths? Who was a god of what?

Zeus

Apollo

Helios

Poseidon

Artemis

Hermes

Hades

Athena

Dionysos

Hera

Aphrodite

TASK 10: *From what we have learned so far can you figure out how the story of the Greek gods corresponds with the history of Ancient Greece? Can you identify any similarities – especially with the third generation of gods?*

D. Culture of the Archaic Period

Greek culture of the Archaic period is closely linked to the religious concepts. Most artistic forms are inspired by **Greek Myths** and the legendary heroes like Prometheus, Heracles, Theseus, Achilles, Odysseus etc.

Literature:

Iliad and **Odyssey** – most famous heroic epic poems by **Homer**, 8th century BC

Hesiod – ‘Theogonia’ – myths about the creation of world and gods

‘Works and Days’ – stresses the quality of rural life in contrast to the greed of aristocracy

Lyric poets: Arkhilokhos, Alkaios, Sappho expressed **individualism** (getting stronger with the development of poleis)

Philosophy:

Natural philosophy, Ionic Philosophers, Miletos, **Thales**, **Anaximander**, **Anaximenes** – looking for the basic principle of our existence, origins of our world – 4 elements

Herakleitos, fire, struggle of opposing forces

Pythagoras – number is the basis of everything

Painting:

Geometrical style – vases – geometrical ornaments, schematized people, animals

Oriental Influence – **black-figure vases** then **red-figure vases**

Sculptures:

Influence of the monumental Egyptian sculptures, showing no emotion

Typical features – boy **kouros**, girl **kore**

Architecture:

The most typical were the stone temples built in three styles **Doric**, **Ionic**, and **Corinthian**

Olympic Games:

There were not only gymnastic games as the most famous Olympic games, but also hippic games (horse riding) and artistic games (for poetry, music, dance and oratory – most famous in Athens)

776 BC the first games in Olympia, then every 4 years, Peace declared for the time of the games so that the best athletes from all poleis could take part in it, great prestige for winners and their states

Disciplines: running (stadium), pentathlon (running, jumping, discus throwing, javelin throwing, wrestling), free style, ‘boxing’, running with arms, chariot racing, horse racing



6. Classical Period (500 – 338 BC)

There were four main parts of this period: Graeco-Persian Wars, Athens of Pericles, Peloponnesian War and Crisis of the Poleis.

A. Persian Wars (499 – 449 BC)

a. Phase One – Ionian Revolt

- Greek cities in Asia Minor revolted under the lead of **Miletos** against Persian Rule, taxes, foreign armies stationed in the cities
- Athens sent help
- Persians win and consider Athenian help as an excuse to punish and attack Greece

b. Darius the Great vs. Athens

- 492 BC Persian fleet destroyed in a storm
- 490 BC battle of **Marathon** – Athenians under Milthiades defeated Persians

c. Xerxes I. vs. Greek League

Xerxes decided for safer, but longer land passage to Greece, crossed the Bosphorus, and marched on Athens

- 480 BC battle of **Thermopylae** pass, Spartans under Leonidas fought Persians, all died
- Athens evacuated, then sacked, burned by Persians
- 480 BC naval battle of **Salamis** – Athenians under Themistocles managed to defeat Persian navy
- 479 BC battle of **Plataea** – Spartans defeated Persian Army
- Persians leave Greece, Spartans out of war, reached their aim so it was no longer interesting for them

d. Persians vs. the Delian League

- Fought in the Aegean Sea and Asia Minor
- Athens became the leader of the Delian Naval League
- 449 BC – peace treaty – Greek cities in Asia Minor independent of Persia



TASK 11: Mark on the map the scenes of the most famous places and battles of the Persian Wars.

Athens, Sparta, Ephesus, Marathon, Thermopylae, Salamis, Plataea, Delos, main routes of Persian advance

B. Athens of Pericles (443 – 429 BC)

a. Golden Age of Democracy

- **Ecclesia** (Assembly) – executive, legislative power, **all men** over 20 could take part
- **The Committee of 500** – members chosen by elections for one year, each Phylae 50 members, rule 1/10 of the year
- **Offices** – all offices were paid so that not only the rich could hold the office
Most important the **10 strategists** – military commanders, but thanks to Persian wars in fact the **government** of Athens (**Pericles** held the office for 14 years)
- **Heliaia** – court of justice, each year 6000 Athenians chosen to serve in **Juries** (with odd number of members) deciding on guilt or innocence
- **Golden Age of Art**

Athenian Society:

- **Athenians** – full political rights, can hold offices
- **Metoikoi** (sg. Metoikos)- foreigners living in Athens, had to pay extra monthly tax – metoikon
- **Slaves** – possession of owners, sold and bought on markets, no family names, not allowed to marry
- **Women** – subject to their husbands. Lived in separate parts of houses, didn't take part in public life

Delian Naval League

- Athens turned it into their naval empire, other members Athenian provinces
- Athens incredibly rich and the most influential polis
- Opposition to Athenian monopoly growing

TASK 12: *How democratic was Athenian democracy? Put down the main strengths and limitations of their system.*

C. Peloponnesian War (431 – 404 BC)

- most Greek poleis alarmed by the growing power of Athens – they formed **Peloponnesian League** under the lead of Sparta
- 431 war began – Athens weakened by plague (Pericles died of plague) and revolts of the suppressed members of the Delian League
- Athens stronger at sea, Sparta on Land – 421 peace
- Athenian radicals wanted revenge – started fighting again
- 404 naval battle at Aigospotamoi – Athens defeated, occupied by Sparta – Spartans installed the reign of 30 tyrants

D. Crisis of Poleis (404 – 338 BC)

Greek poleis weakened by constant struggles, attempts to get the others under their control

- 404 – 371 domination of Sparta
- 371 – 362 domination of Thebes under **Epaminodas**
- 362 – 338 no **hegemon** – weak city states, crisis of poleis

Two different attitudes advocated by two famous orators:

Demosthenes – advocated Democracy, small poleis, traditional values
– famous speeches against **Philip of Macedon**

Isocrates – in favour of unification of poleis under a strong leadership

- 338 BC battle of **Chaeronea** – **Phillip of Macedon** defeated the Greek city states
- 337 BC **Corinthian League** – a federation of Greek poleis under Macedonian lead against Persia

7. Hellenistic Period (338 – 0)

Greek culture spreads over the Persian Empire – **Hellenistic Culture** – Greek culture, language and lifestyle dominant though enriched by many influences

Phillip II. Of Macedon (359-336 BC)

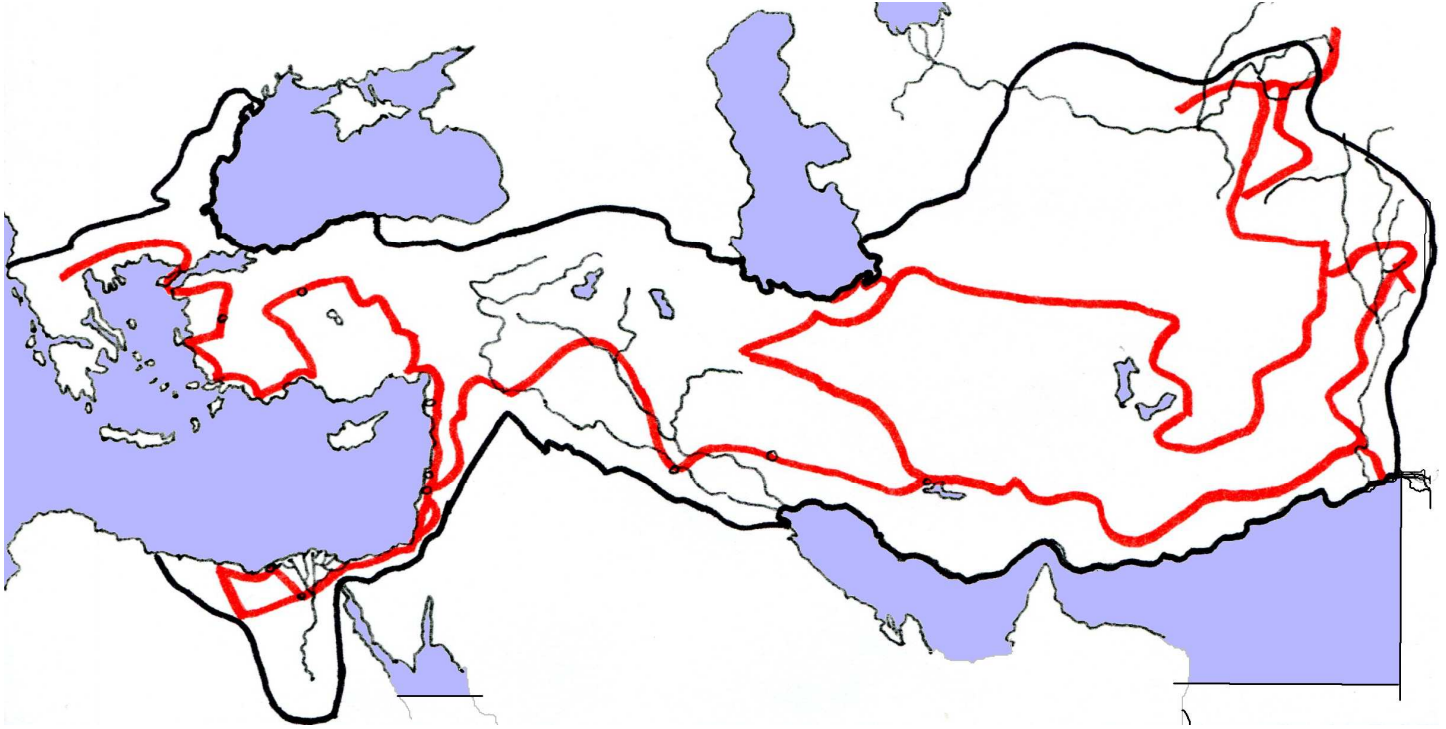
- Managed to dominate Greece
- Reformed Macedonian Army – main tactics use of **Phalanx** – squares of 16 rows, trained to move in any direction, use of two handed pikes
- Gathered a powerful army, ready to invade Persia
- 336 BC murdered

Alexander the Great (336 – 323 BC)

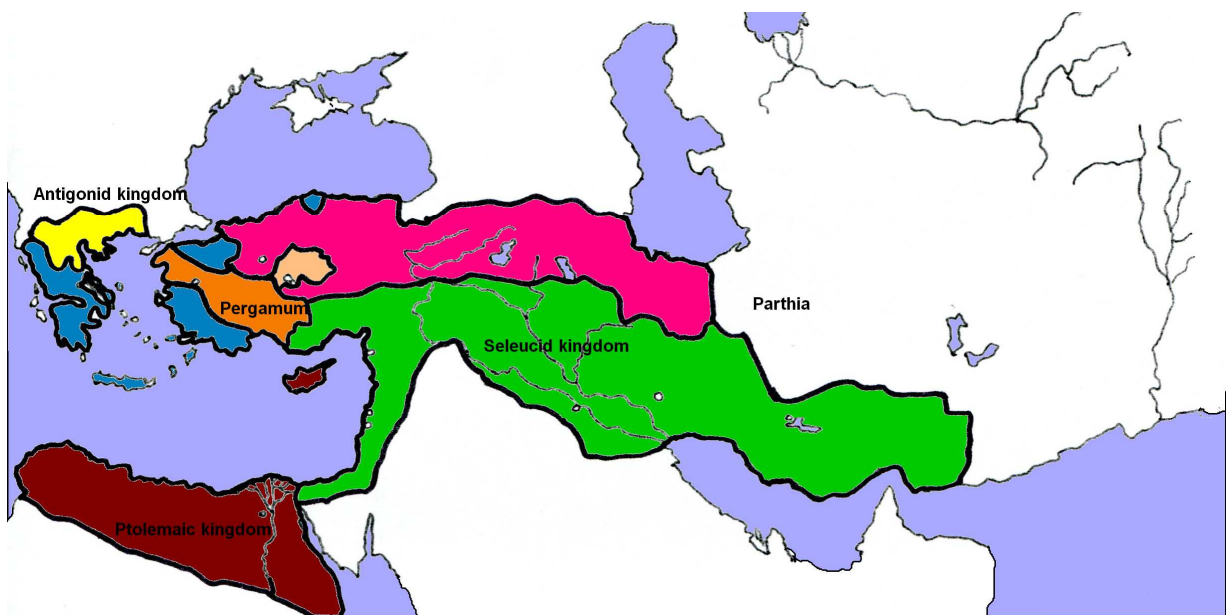
- Only 20 when he became king - suppressed the rebellion of Thebes and made the Greeks join his campaign against Persia
- Defeated the Persian **Darius III**. In several battles (334 Granicus, 333 Issus) though he had only about 50,000 men against the Persian army of about a million soldiers
- 332 BC entered Egypt – 331 BC founded **Alexandria**
- **331 BC** decisive battle at **Gaugamela** – Darius murdered by his generals while escaping
- 331 BC conquered the Persian capital **Susa** and burned the other capital, **Perseopolis**
- He made **Babylon** the new capital of his empire

- Alexander's ambition was to rule over the whole world (as predicted by Egyptian priests) and so went on an expedition to China, India, but had to return
- Alexander died in Babylon in **323 BC**

TASK 13: Mark the map with the places of the most famous battles and places he visited.



After his death his empire fell apart into several parts ruled over by his generals – successors (**diadochi**). The most famous were **Ptolemy** in **Egypt** (Ptolemaic Kingdom), **Seleucos** in **Syria** and **Persia** (Seleucid kingdom) and **Antigonos** in **Macedonia** (Antigonid kingdom)



8. Culture of the Classical and Hellenistic period

The key feature of classical Greek art was **humanism** (glorification of man, his body and mind), **individualism**, and **materialism**. It is necessary to stress that it did **not mean consumerism**. The Greeks were modest, not living in excess and the biggest honour was to perform citizen's duties and serve the state (Sparta as the extreme case)

The next typical feature of Greek art is **balance, harmony and order**.

Architecture: temples, most famous **Parthenon** in Athens, Acropolis, **amphitheatres** (great acoustics up to 12,000 spectators)

Sculpture:

statues showing emotions, strain, perfect anatomy

Pheidias (Parthenon, Zeus in Olympia), **Myron** (Discobolos), **Polycleitos** (Doryphoros – ideal young man)

Theatre:

tragedies **Aeschylus** (Persians, Oresteia), **Sophocles** (Antigone, Oedipus the King), **Euripides** (Medeia, Iphigenia)

Comedies: **Aristophanes** (Lysistrata)

Philosophy:

Sophists: questions of everyday life, politics, ethics, rhetoric - Gorgias, Prothagoras, **Socrates**

Plato (427-347) theory of ideas

Aristotle (384-322) logic, ethics, politics, physics – teacher of Alexander the Great

History:

Hecataios of Miletos – myths of the heroes, description of known lands

Herodotos (485-425) Persian wars

Thucydides (460-365) Peloponnesian war

Xenophon (430-355)

Medicine:

Hippocrates (5th century BC)- his famous oath, scientific medicine, trying to find the reasons of diseases and the best way to treat them