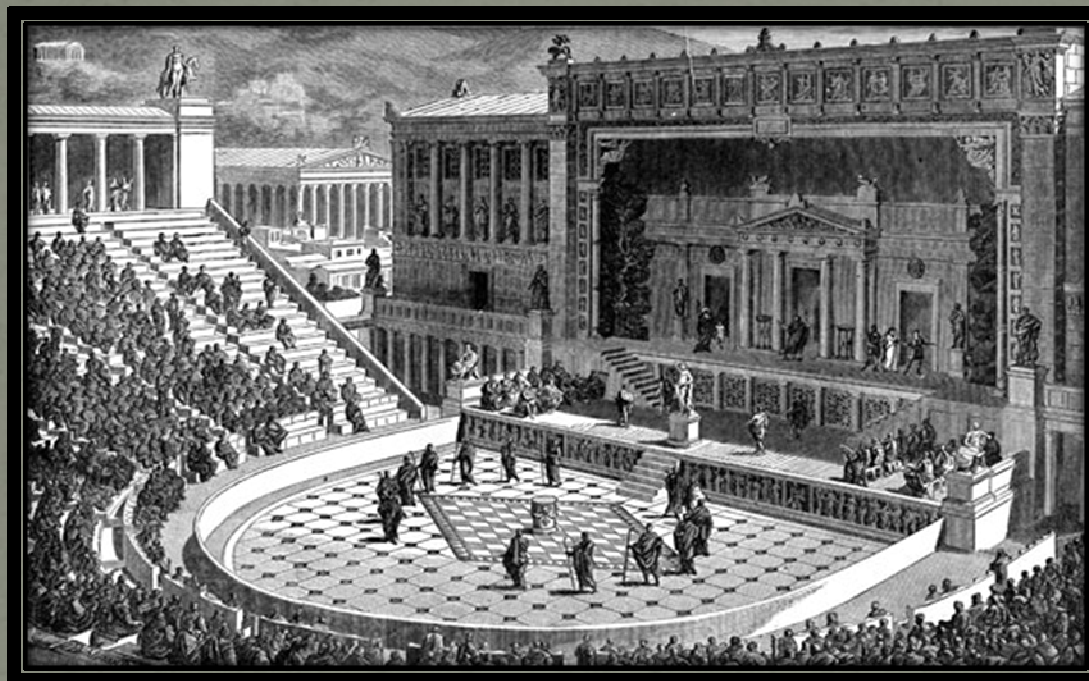
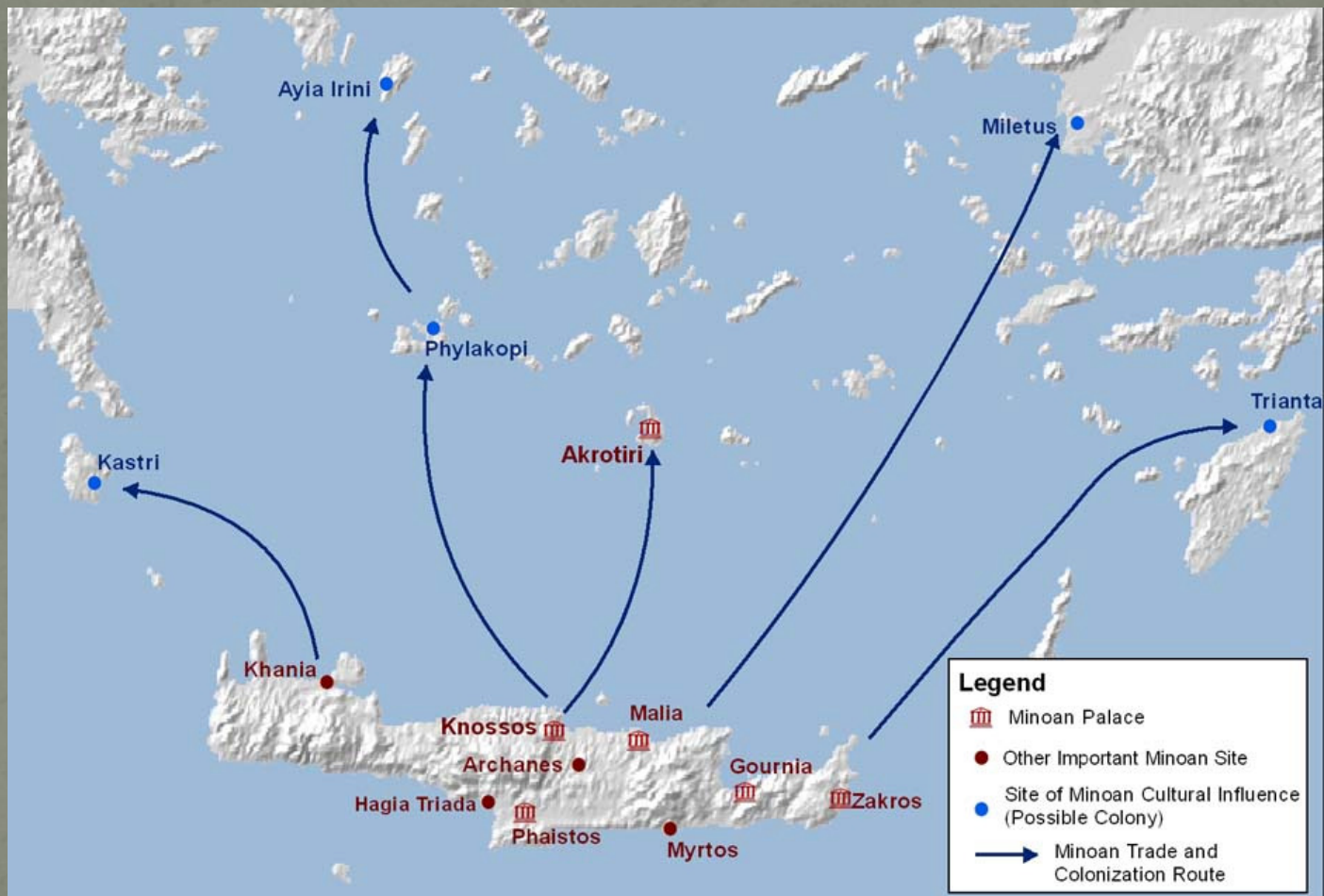


Aristophanes' *The Clouds*



Minoan civilization

2200-1500 BCE



Mycenaean civilization

1600-1200 BCE



 Greece in the Bronze Age. Three distinctive civilizations—Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean—developed around the Aegean Sea in the third and second millennia B.C.E.

Age of Heroes

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*



Historical timeline

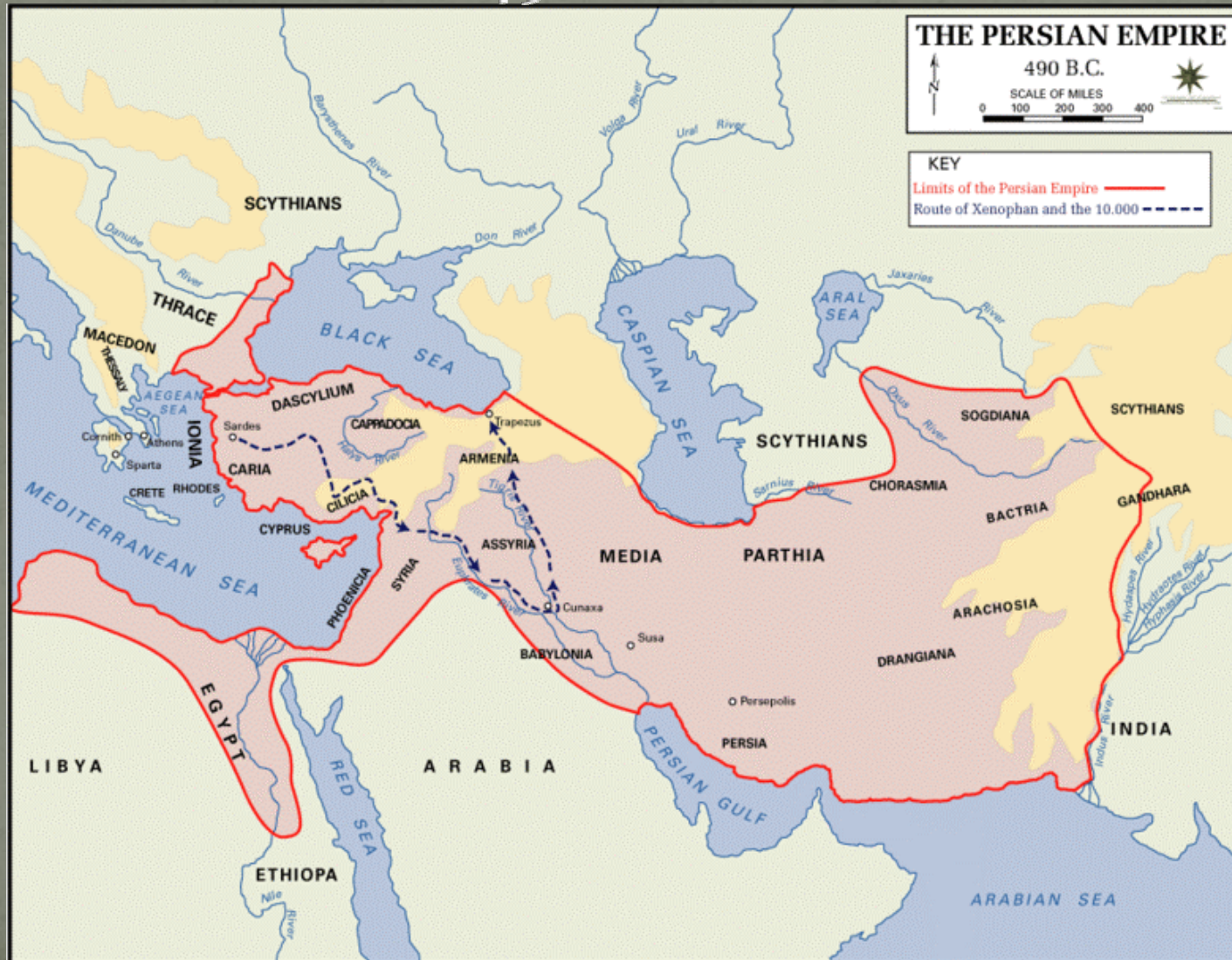
- Codification of laws by Draco
- Athenian democracy established by Solon
- Panathenaic Festival established
- Rule of tyrants in Athens
- 621 BCE
- 594 BCE
- 566 BCE
- 546-510 BCE

Historical timeline

- First tragedy performed at Dionysian Festival
- 534 BCE
- Cleisthenes introduces further democratic reforms
- 508 BCE
- Persian Wars
- 490-479 BCE

Persian Empire

490 BCE



Persian War



Post-Persian War: Sparta v. Athens



Inevitable Conflict

Sparta

- Monarchy
- Conglomeration of villages with dual kings
- Conservative society
 - Militaristic (hoplites)
 - Independent women
 - Slaves/ *helots* (majority)
- Confederation

Athens

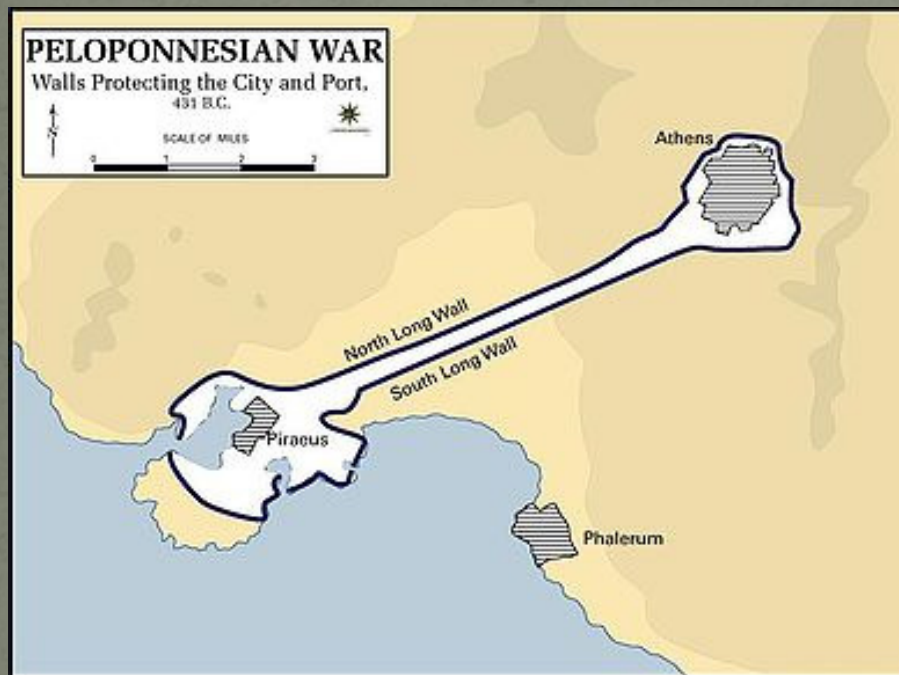
- Democracy
- Polis with surrounding urban center
- Progressive society
 - Inclusivity of citizenship
 - Naval power
 - Trading power
- Delian League

Age of Pericles: Route to War 458-446 BCE



- Sparta attempts to prevent rebuilding Athens' walls
- Spartan helot revolt
- Athens dominates/abuses Delian League
- Spartan allies: disadvantaged in trade
- Athens v. Sparta, Corinth, Aegina

Results of “First Peloponnesian War”



- Fortification of Athens
- Transfer of Delian treasury to Athens
- Respect for alliance system
- Athens abandons any land in Peloponnesia
- Proposed 15 years of peace

Age of Pericles: Golden Age of Athens



- 447 BCE: Construction of Parthenon begins
- 445-426 BCE: Herodotus writes his Histories
- Public works programs to feed the poor
- Athenians to live without paying taxes
 - Delian League funds?
 - Profits of Athenian merchants?

Peloponnesian War

431-404 BCE



Pericles' Strategy



- Avoid conflict with superior Spartan *hoplites* on land
- Defense
 - Retreat within Athens' walls
- Harrass by sea
 - Enemy trade routes and coastal cities
 - Prolong war beyond Spartan ability to continue

Peloponnesian War

431-404 BCE

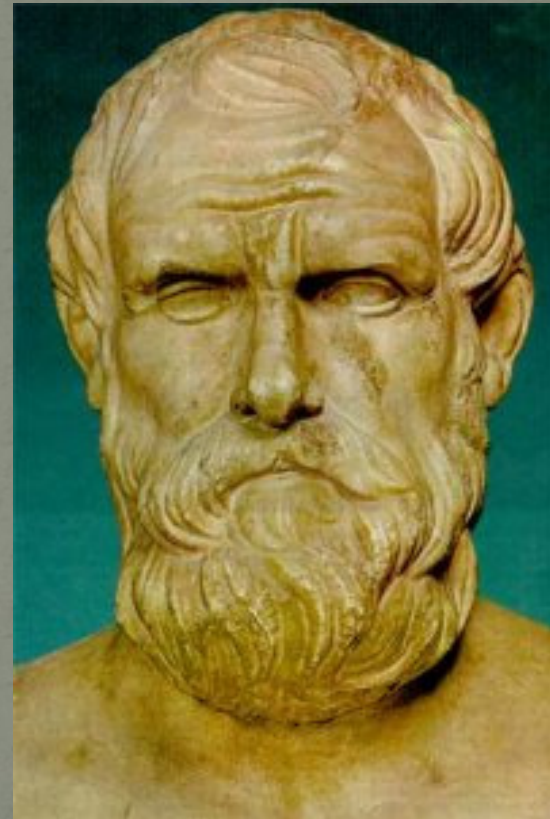
- Dependence on grain from Egypt & the Crimea
 - Olive farms and vineyards destroyed
- Property values decline
- Population decline
 - 431 BCE- 172,000 citizens
 - 425 BCE- 116,000
- Plague of Athens begins-- 430 BCE
 - Pericles voted out of office and fined—dies in 429 BCE
- Athens suit for peace rejected

Cleon

- prosecutes and replaces Pericles (d. 429 BCE)
 - anti-nobility
 - fierce hatred of Sparta
 - charismatic
 - “sycophantic”
- 429 BCE: Recommends execution of all Mytilene males
- 425 BCE: co-general of land victory @ Sphacteria
 - Spartan prisoners taken
 - Changed course of war
 - Personal glory—free meals at the prytaneum
- 425 BCE: Prosecutes Laches after unsuccessful expedition to Sicily

Aristophanes

- 447 – 388 BCE (?)
- Athenian--Son of Phillippus
- Early plays establish him as Master of Old Comedy
 - The Banqueters (427 BCE)
 - The Babylonians (426 BCE)
- 40 plays in 40 years
 - 11 extant
 - Only Old Comedy plays extant



Old Comedy/ Aristophanes' style

- Diverse audience
- Complex structure
- Pushed humor to its limits—from situational to ribald
 - Caricature, satire, ribald humor
- Diverse poetic forms
- Gods, politicians, ordinary people = targets
 - Emphasis on real people and local events
- “licensed buffonery”
- Close to slander/ libel

The Acharnians (425 BCE)

7th year of the war

- Insists that the miseries consequent on the War especially affecting the rural population
- Satires the tragedian Euripides
- Dikaiopolis wins a private peace treaty with Sparta
 - Ambassador from Persia
 - Grandee from Persia w/ effete Athenians as eunuchs
 - Corrupt mercenaries
 - Acharnian farmers/
ex-soldiers
 - General Lachamus



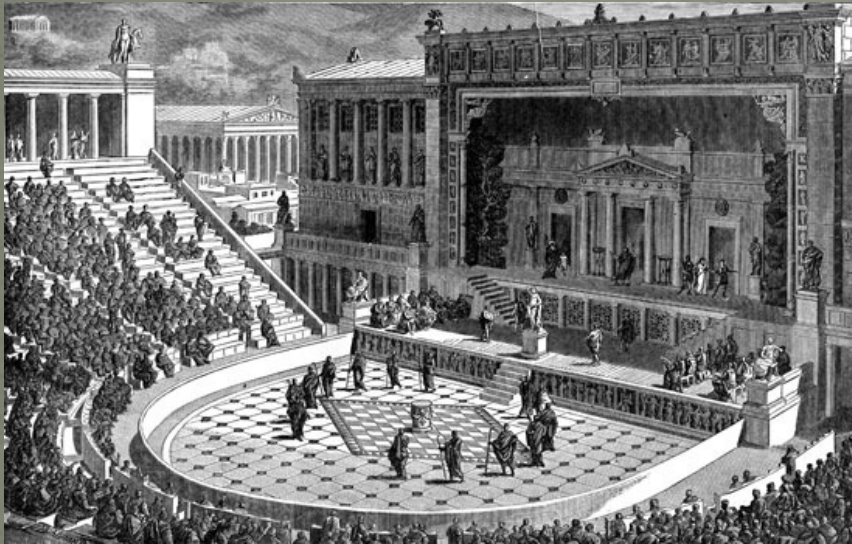
The Knights (424 BCE)

8th year of the war

- Attacks Cleon, the Progressives, and the War policy
 - Agoracritus, vies w/Cleon for the confidence & approval of Demos (“The People”)
 - Agoracritus emerges triumphant from a series of contests and restores Demos to former glory



Athens, 434 BCE



- Cleon in power (d. 422 BCE)
- General Laches persuades Athenian Assembly for truce with Sparta
 - Truce violated by Sparta

The Clouds (423 BCE)

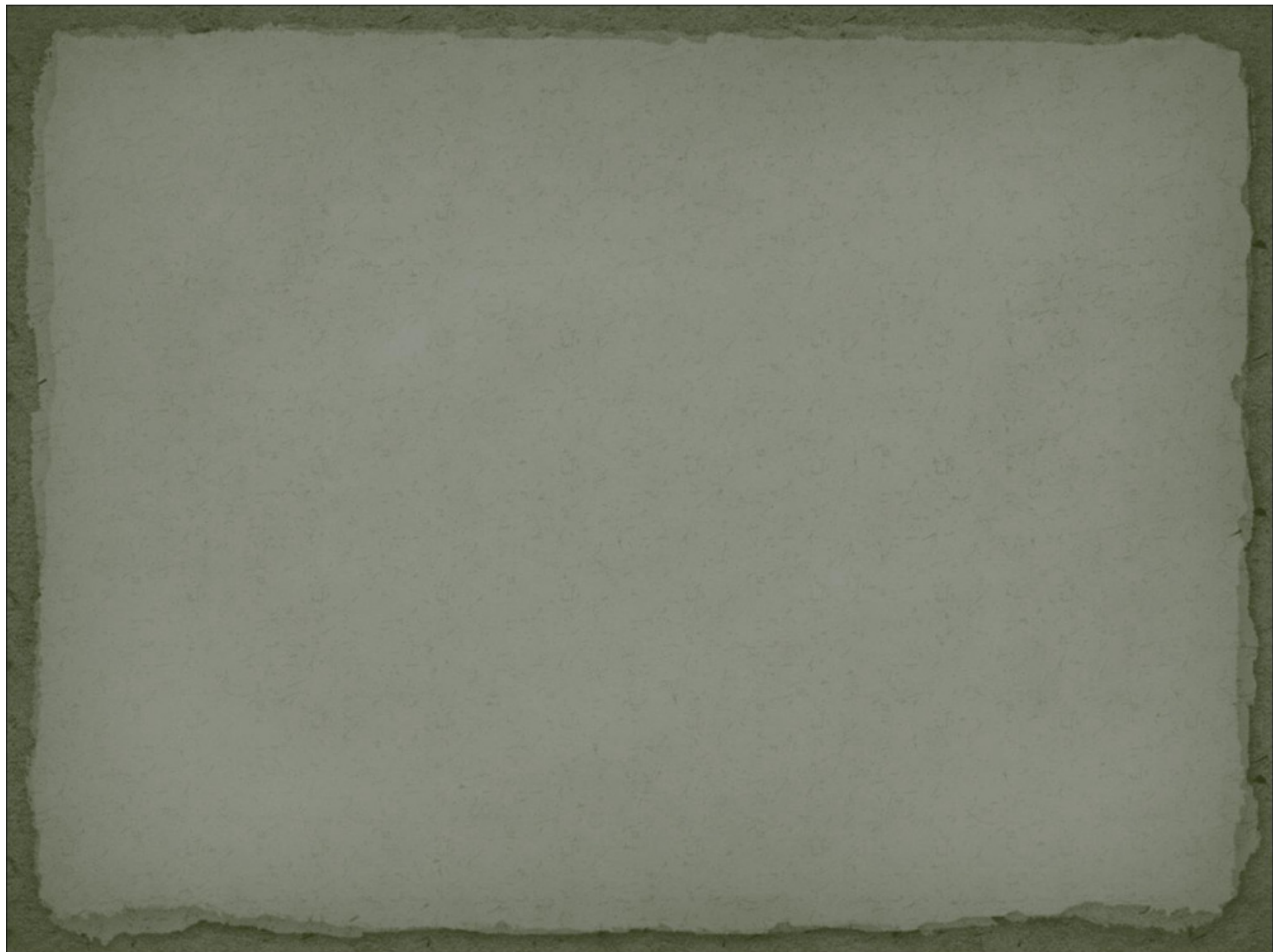
9th year of the war

- Satirizes Socrates, the sophists, and the “New Education”
- Unsuccessful in March, 423 BCE at Great Dionysia
- Revised to get a better response by reader (420-413 BCE)



Focus Questions

- What is Old Comedy? How is this play representative of this dramatic genre?
- Why does Aristophanes ridicule Socrates and the sophists in this play?
- Does this play contribute to the death of Socrates?
- Why did *The Clouds* place last in the Dionysian competition in Athens in 423 BCE?
- How effective is this play for modern readers?



Chronology of the plays



- *The Wasps* (422 BCE)
10th year of the war
- *Peace* (421 BCE)
11th year of the war
- *The Birds* (414 BCE)
18th year of the war
- *Lysistrata* (411 BCE)
21st year of the war

Chronology of the plays

- The Women celebrating the Thesmophoria
 - (411 BCE)
 - 21st year of the war
- The Frogs (405 BCE)
 - 27th year of the war
- The Assemblywomen (392 BCE)
- Wealth (Plutus) (388 BCE)