

# PHILOSOPHY

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# Textbooks

- ◇ A. Kenny, *Western Philosophy*, Oxford, 2010
- ◇ R. Popkin, A. Stroll, *Philosophy Made Simple*

# What is Philosophy

- ◆ **Philosophy** (from the Greek or *philosophía*, meaning "the love of wisdom") is **the study of knowledge**, or "thinking about thinking", although the breadth of what it covers is perhaps best illustrated by a selection of other **alternative definitions**

# Division of Philosophy

- ◇ Metaphysics: what sorts of things exist and what are their essential natures, what does it mean that something exist?
- ◇ Epistemology: what counts as genuine knowledge, what is Truth?
- ◇ Ethics: how one should live, what is good, evil?
- ◇ Aesthetics: what is beauty
- ◇ Logic: what are the correct principles of reasoning

# Philosophy and Sciences

- ◇ As used **originally** by the ancient Greeks, the term "philosophy" meant the **pursuit of knowledge for its own sake**, and comprised ALL areas of speculative thought, including **the arts, sciences and religion**
- ◇ **Philosophical questions** (unlike those of the sciences) are usually **foundational** and **abstract** in nature

# Pre Socratic Philosophy

- ◇ Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are the most famous but not the first.
- ◇ Usually we count the philosopher THALES as being the first true philosopher.
- ◇ Thales lived around 600BC and started the trend of western philosophical thinking.

# Why Look at the Pre Socratics

- ◇ The syllabus requires you to know elements of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.
- ◇ However, they produced their philosophy in reaction to and developing from that of the pre-Socratics.
- ◇ Really we identify the emergence of philosophy by 3 main traits...

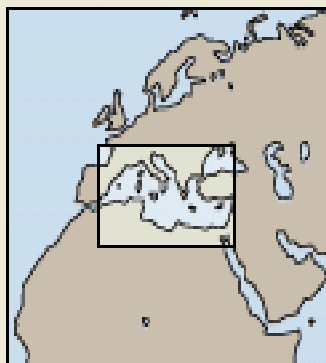
# What makes it philosophy?

- ◆ Speculative thinking expresses human curiosity about the world, striving to understand in natural (rather than super-natural) terms how things really are, what they are made of, and how they function.
- ◆ Practical thinking emphasizes the desire to guide conduct by comprehending the nature of life and the place of human beings and human behaviour in the greater scheme of reality.
- ◆ Critical thinking (the hallmark of philosophy itself) involves a careful examination of the foundations upon which thinking of any sort must rely, trying to achieve an effective method for assessing the reliability of positions adopted on the significant issues.

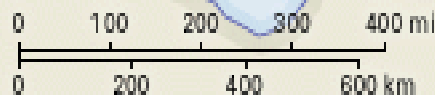


# The Family Tree

- ◇ Socrates taught Plato who taught Aristotle.
- ◇ Before Socrates were a wide group of philosophers known collectively as the pre-Socratics although they all had VERY different sorts of ideas.
- ◇ This history starts with Thales of Miletus...



	ELIS	City
	Euclid	Mathematician
	Modern	Boundaries



# Thales of Miletus

## c. 620 - c. 546 B.C

- ◇ Thales started asking questions about the nature of the world.
- ◇ Primarily he wanted to know what was the principle behind it: What was it made of, how was it made and what made it.
- ◇ This is both a scientific and philosophical question.
- ◇ The Greeks made no distinction between what we now see as different disciplines.
- ◇ Maths, Science, Philosophy, Music, Arts etc were all part of intellectual thought.
- ◇ The title they used was not philosopher (lover of wisdom) but *Sophos* (wise-person)
- ◇ Crucially, Thales was trying to move away from the mythical explanations of the world (Gods, Titans etc) to a **natural** explanation of the world.

# What did he decide?

- ◇ He concluded that there must be an underlying principle to all things and he concluded that this was water.
- ◇ In fact we don't know that he said this himself, only that Aristotle *says* that he said it:
  - ◇ Why would he say this?

# Water?

- ◇ '[Thales's] supposition may have arisen from observation . . . ' (Aristotle *Metaphysics* 983 b22)
- ◇ It was Aristotle's opinion that Thales may have observed, 'that the nurture of all creatures is moist, and that warmth itself is generated from moisture and lives by it; and that from which all things come to be is their first principle' (*Metaphysics*. 983 b23-25).
  - ◇ **Spontaneous Generation!**
- ◇ He declared: 'Besides this, another reason for the supposition would be that the semina of all things have a moist nature . . . ' (*Metaphysics*. 983 b26-27).

# Change

- ◇ Thales knew that heat could return metals to a liquid state.
- ◇ Water exhibits sensible changes more obviously than any of the other so-called elements, and can readily be observed in the three states of liquid, vapour and ice.
- ◇ The understanding that water could generate into earth is basic to Thales's watery thesis.

# How can water become Earth?

- ◆ At Miletus it could readily be observed that water had the capacity to thicken into earth. Miletus stood on the Gulf of Lade through which the Maeander river emptied its waters.
- ◆ Within living memory, older Milesians had witnessed the island of Lade increasing in size within the Gulf, and the river banks encroaching into the river to such an extent that at Priene, across the gulf from Miletus the warehouses had to be rebuilt closer to the water's edge.
- ◆ To Thales water held the potentialities for the nourishment and generation of the entire cosmos.

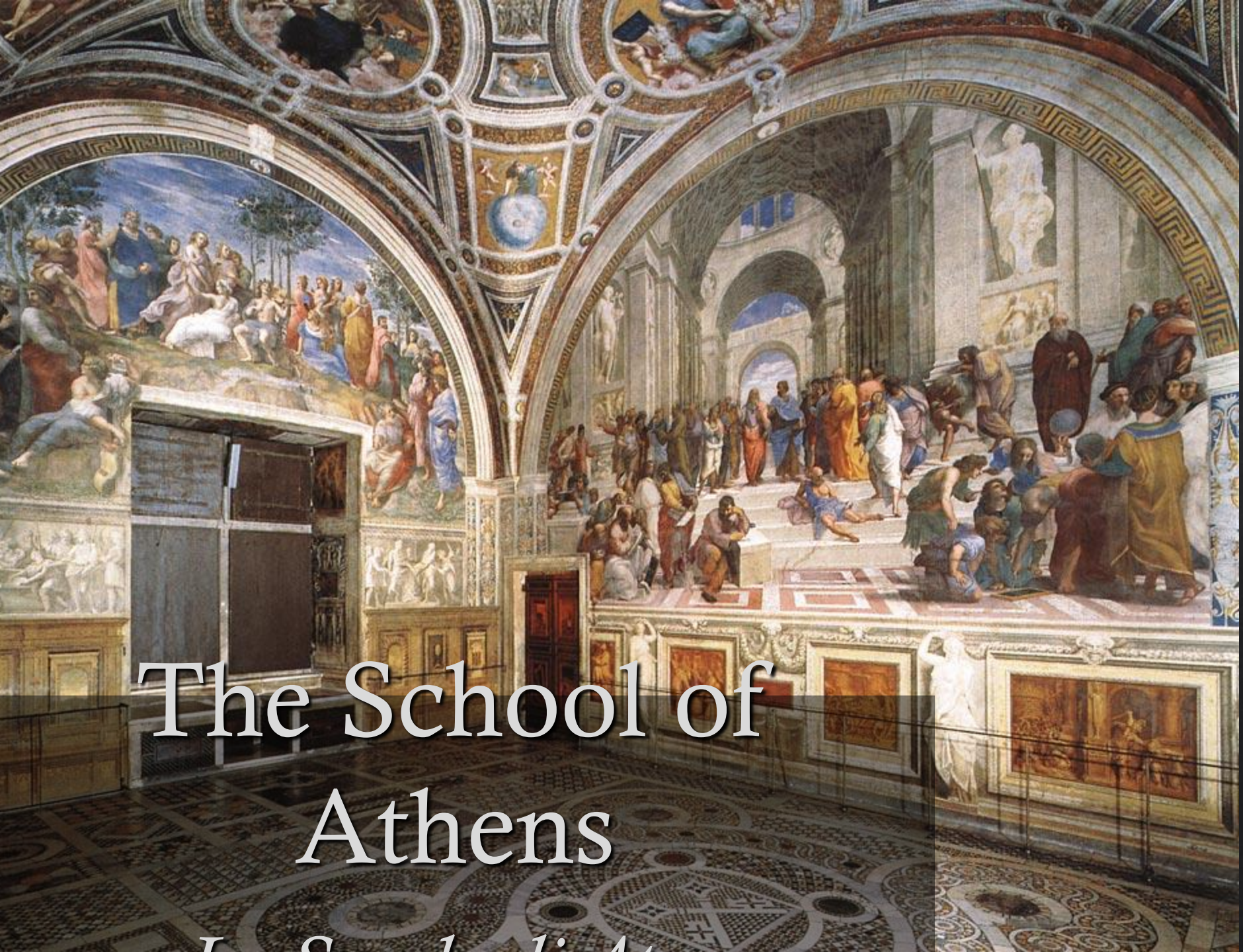
# Obviously he was wrong...

- ◇ But... Belief in generation of earth from water was not proven to be wrong until 1769 following experiments of Antoine Lavoisier, and spontaneous generation was not disproved until the nineteenth century as a result of the work of Louis Pasteur!



# The Big Questions

- ◇ From where does everything come?
- ◇ From what is everything created?
- ◇ How do we explain the plurality of things found in nature?
- ◇ How might we describe nature systematically?



# The School of Athens

# The School of Athens

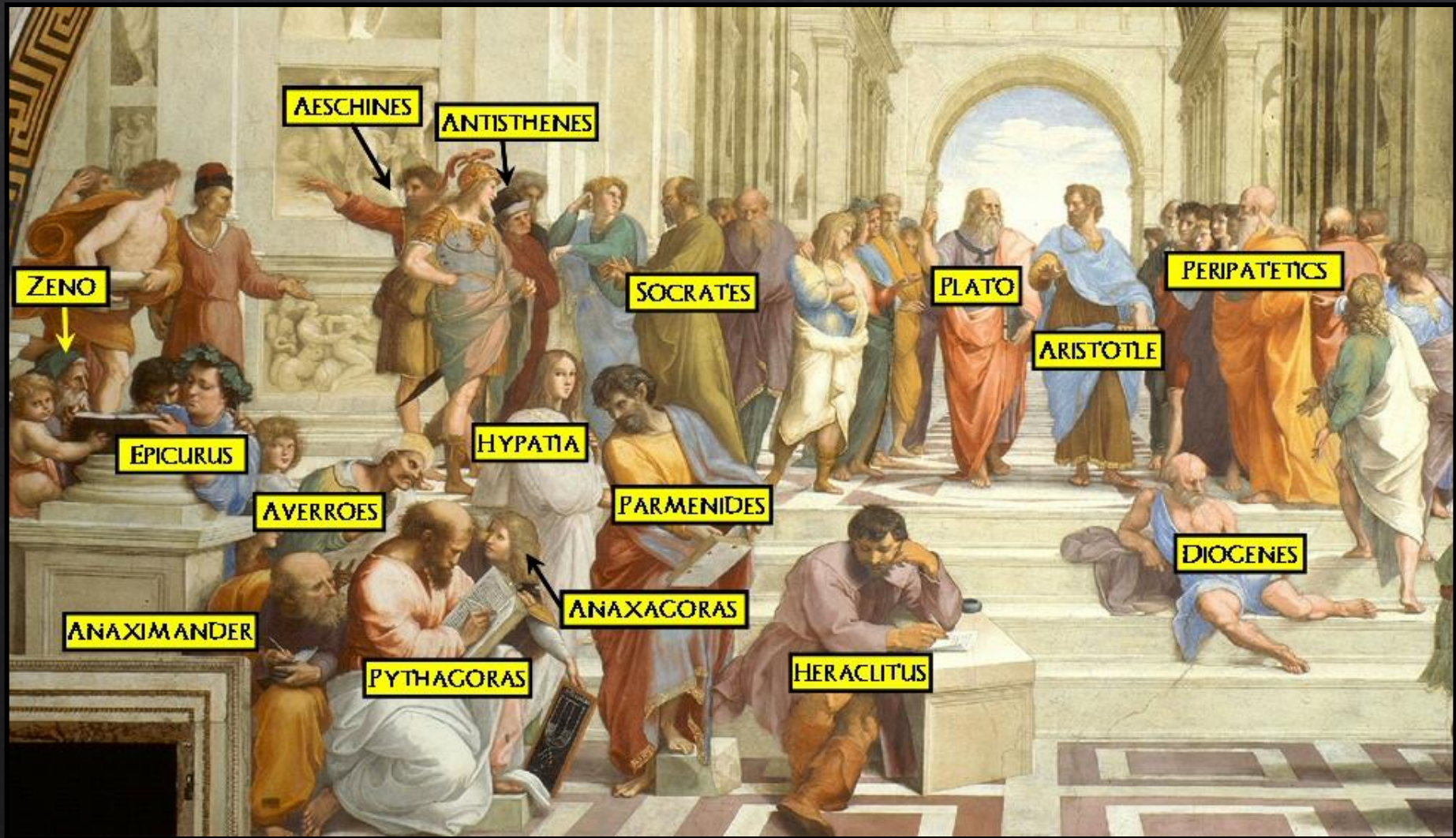
- ◆ The School of Athens, or in Italian, is one of the most famous paintings by the Italian Renaissance artist Raphael (1483 – 1523).
- ◆ It was painted between 1510 and 1511 as a part of Raphael's commission to decorate with frescoes the rooms now known as the Stanza della Signatura, in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican.
- ◆ The "School of Athens" is one of a group of four main frescoes on the walls of the Stanza (those on either side centrally interrupted by windows) that depict distinct branches of knowledge.
- ◆ Each theme is identified above by the phrases: *“Seek Knowledge of Causes”*, *“Divine Inspiration”*, *“Knowledge of Things Divine”*, *“To Each What Is Due”*.
- ◆ Accordingly, the figures on the walls below exemplify Philosophy, Poetry, Theology, and Law.

# The School of Athens

- ◆ The School of Athens has philosophy "or at least ancient Greek philosophy, as its subject and its overhead label, "*Causarum Cognitio*" tells us what kind, as it appears to echo Aristotle's emphasis on wisdom as knowing why, hence 'knowing the cause'.
- ◆ Commentators have suggested that nearly every great Greek philosopher can be found within the painting, but determining which are depicted is difficult, since Raphael made no designations outside possible likenesses, and no contemporary documents explain the painting.







AESCHINES

ANTISTHENES

ZENO

SOCRATES

PLATO

PERIPATETICS

ARISTOTLE

EPICURUS

HYPATIA

PARMENIDES

AVERROES

DIOGENES

ANAXIMANDER

ANAXAGORAS

HERACLITUS

PYTHAGORAS

# Pre Socratics

- Philosophy and Science were not originally separate
- They were "born together" in the beginning of the 6th century B.C. and they both involved a transition from a *theistic* toward a *natural* way of thinking about the world
- As Greece is a mountainous and rather barren country, its inhabitants have been forced to seek new lands that would offer them work and prosperity



# Greek Colonies

- In the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Before Christ), it is a winding series of coastal colonies, extending from the coast of Asia Minor to Africa, to Spain and to southern Italy
- Among the Greeks which have contributed greatly to the formation of philosophy are the Ionians, which was spread through *Asia Minor*, the islands of the *Aegean Sea (Ionia)*, and *southern Italy and Sicily*.

# 3 First Philosophers

- It is among the colonies of Asia Minor that the story of philosophy begins, in the city of Miletus where the first three Western philosophers were born and lived:
- Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes
- They sought the PRIMARY SUBSTANCE

# Thales(625-545 BC)

- Thales is said to have declared the primary substance is water
- He held that the transformation of this fundamental substance is the source of all living things
- Everything is made of water

# Anaximander (610-547 BC)

- Primary Substance: Boundless, changing, undefined. He used the greek word „apeiron”
- He thinks it is an error to identify the ultimate material of the universe with one of the elements we can see around us in the contemporary world such as water or fire
- The fundamental principle of things, he said, must be boundless or undefined (apeiron)
- It is an „Everlasting stuff”. He doubted whether any fundamental substance would exist in an observable *pure* form.

# Anaximenes (585-525 BC)

- Primary Substance: Air- all matter is composed of air
- Air is central for life- all known living creatures need air to survive

# Heraclitus (540-480 BC)

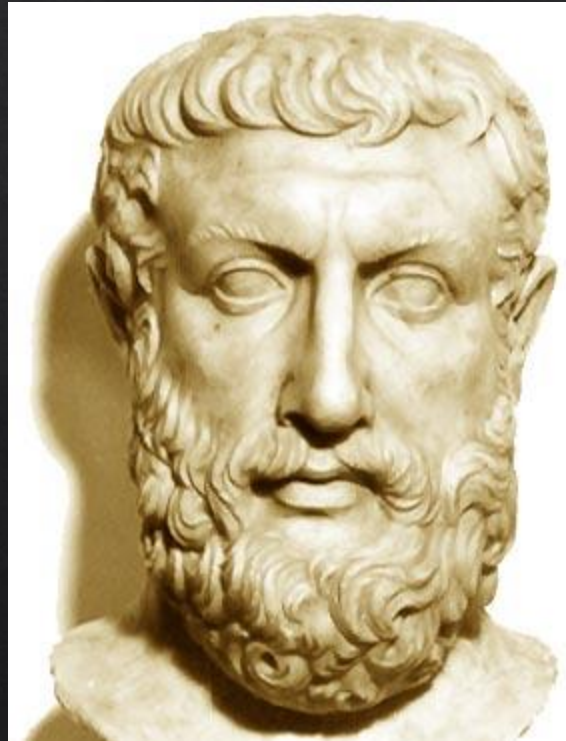
- ◇ Heraclitus was the first philosopher we know of to both *emphasize the general process of change* and to *carefully analyze particular manifestations* there of
- Heraclitus was looking for more than than the Primary Substance- he was looking to explain change.
- He wanted to account for *transformations*.
- (e.g., ice to water and water to clouds).

## Heraclitus: 2 main ideas

- (1) the ***Heraclitean doctrine of flux*** (which viewed the whole cosmos as in a constant state of change). He expressed this view poetically as a metaphor: "You cannot step twice into the same river; for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you."
- (2) his ***disagreement with Thales*** about the basic fundamental element. For Heraclitus, the fundamental element of the universe was ***fire*** (not water)

# Parmenides (504-456 BC)

- All of reality is changeless. The universe is one; change and motion is an illusion





# Parmenides (504-456 BC)

- All of us, although we seem individual, are part of one great unity or whole- the universe

# Zeno of Elea (490-430 BC)

- Zeno's Paradox. He attempts to show that motion is impossible. He claims that you can never move from one point to another, because first you would have to get  $\frac{1}{2}$  way to that point, and then  $\frac{1}{2}$  way again, and then  $\frac{1}{2}$  way again... in an infinite series of divisions

# Empedocles (490-435 BC)

- True reality is changeless. But apparent change in objects is not an illusion.
- Change is caused by changes in the position of the four basic elements- earth, fire, water and air
- Love and strife (hate)  
are the forces of change

# Anaxagoras (500-428 BC)

- Claims that the universe is composed of infinitely small particles;
- (Nous)- Greek for Mind; mind is what gives matter form, what moves the world
- The universe is one

# Monism

*Monism* we are all part of the whole- except: ***nous***  
(mind)

Nous is a special substance that is present only in living beings and distinguishes them from dead matter. The force vital

Dualism- reality is composed of 2 substances

# Mind over Matter

- Physical objects are infinitely divisible, as such he is not an atomist
- Mind is uniform (indivisible) and present in both animals and man
- The seeming superiority of man's intellect is due to mere bodily differences (such as hands). Mind is also the *source of all motion*

# Atomists



# Atomists

- The atomist held that all matter is composed of physical atoms
- These atoms are tiny, imperceptible, indestructible, indivisible, eternal and uncreated
- How they combine and interact explain different forms and types of matter.
- Matter is made up of little units called atoms
- Around 1803, John Dalton developed an atomic theory to explain the ratios in which elements combine to form compounds. It was the cornerstone for modern atomic theory



# Dalton's atomic theory

- ◇ 5 main points of Dalton's atomic theory:
  - 1. Elements are made of extremely small particles called atoms.
  - 2. Atoms of a given element are identical in size, mass, and other properties: atoms of different elements differ in size, mass, and other properties.
  - 3. Atoms cannot be subdivided, created, or destroyed.
  - 4. Atoms of different elements combine in simple whole-number ratios to form chemical compounds.
  - 5. In chemical reactions, atoms are combined, separated, or rearranged

# Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans

- ◇ Little is known of his life. Pythagoras (fl 580-500, BC) was born in Samos on the western coast of what is now Turkey
- ◇ He met Thales, likely as a young man, who recommended he travel to Egypt. It seems certain that he gained much of his knowledge from the Egyptians, as had Thales before him

# The Pythagorean School

- ◇ The school of Pythagoras was every bit as much a religion as a school of mathematics. For example, here are some of the rules:
- ◇ The Pythagorean school regarded men and women equally.
- ◇ They enjoyed a common way of life.
- ◇ Property was communal.
- ◇ Even mathematical discoveries were communal and by association attributed to Pythagoras himself -- even from the grave. Hence, exactly what Pythagoras discovered personally is difficult to ascertain.

# The Pythagorean Philosophy

- ◇ The dictum of the Pythagorean school was All is number
- ◇ What this meant was that all things of the universe had a numerical attribute that uniquely described them. For example,
- ◇ The number one : the number of reason.
- ◇ The number two: the first even or female number, the number of opinion.
- ◇ The number three: the first true male number, the number of harmony.

# Classical Period of Greek Philosophy

- ◇ Socrates
- ◇ Plato
- ◇ Aristotle