

History, Culture, and Philosophy of the Ancient Greeks to The Hellenistic Period

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Early Bronze Age Greece: People from areas north of present-day Greece speaking a proto-Greek language came into the Greek peninsula from as early as 2200 to 1700 BCE, and displaced and interbred with the scattered indigenous populations (the Pelasgoi and the Leleges, among others). The proto-Greeks had some settled agriculture and metal working, but little industry or civilization.

Mycenaean Period, or Late Bronze Age Greece: An advanced bronze-age civilization flourished in the Peloponnese from 1400 to 1150 BCE, after the city of Mycenae came into prominence around 1580 BCE. Other important cities of this civilization included Thebes, Argos, and Pylos. The people of this civilization wrote Greek in a syllabic script, known to us as Linear B. Their cities were centralized and bureaucratic states, similar to contemporaneous states in Northern Syria and Mesopotamia. Mycenaean civilization came to an abrupt and violent end around 1200 BCE. Just what political or social upheaval led to the destruction of the palaces and the end of the Mycenaean civilization is unknown. Natural disaster, war, ecological collapse—each might have played a role.

After the fall of Mycenaean civilization, the Greek world entered a dark age. Greeks of the Archaic and Classical periods following the Dark Ages thought of the late bronze age as their Heroic Age but they knew little about the culture of their Mycenaean predecessors.

Dark Age or Obscure Era: After the fall of Mycenaean civilization, the Peloponnese entered a dark period of which little is now known. This period lasted some 400 years, until around 800 BCE. The people of this time were impoverished and most likely the population fell far below what it was during the Mycenaean Period. Literacy declined. Tribalism increased with the removal of central authorities, and tribes would migrate throughout the Peloponnese and the rest of Greece in search of food and land. There was much small-scale warfare. Between 1000 and 900 BCE, Greeks migrated into the coastal areas of Asia Minor (present day Western Turkey), and founded the Ionian cities that would flourish during the Archaic period.

Despite the famines and hardships the people had to endure, remarkable things happened during the Dark Age that laid the foundations for the great ages of Greece. 1) Poets began to busk from village to village, telling stories of gods and heroes. The oral literary traditions they started culminated in the Homeric poems. 2) Metallurgy improved dramatically. Ironwork developed, a major technological improvement over bronze, and methods of extracting silver from ore were refined. 3) Shipbuilding techniques steadily progressed. 4) Economic, political, and cultural institutions developed that were radically unlike those of the Mycenaean period and found nowhere else. 5) Toward 800 BCE, though maybe as late as 750 BCE, literacy reappeared and began to spread, this time with Greek written in a phonetic alphabet, rather than in a syllabic script.

Archaic Period: Around 800 BCE, prosperous city-states began to develop in the Peloponnese, in Euboea, and in Ionia. Iron, rather than bronze, was now the material of tools and weapons. Agriculture improved, famine and tribal warfare diminished, and industry and commerce began to come into their own. The Greeks began to sail throughout the Mediterranean and to found colonies and cities from the Black Sea in the East to Spain and North Africa in the West. This period lasted until around 500 BCE, with the start of the Persian Wars.

The Greeks from Archaic times on, despite their far-flung cities, were a coastal people; few Greek sites of the time were more than 25 miles from salt water. The Greek world that began to emerge in 800 BCE was not united politically or territorially, yet was remarkably uniform linguistically and culturally. Outside the Greek peninsula and the Aegean islands, Greek cities were in lands populated by non-Greeks, but there was little mixing of Greek and non-Greek. The Greeks traded mainly among themselves, but also sometimes with uncivilized people to the North and with the Lydians, the Persians, the Etruscans, the Phoenicians, and the Egyptians. Homer and Hesiod lived in the early centuries of the archaic period, and Thales and the other first philosophers lived at the end of its last century.

Homer: Author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (drawing on a previous oral tradition), perhaps from Ionia, thought to have lived around 750 BCE. (A few scholars doubt that any one person Homer ever existed; some hold that the Homeric poems are entirely the product of a folk oral tradition.) The action of the Homeric poems is set in the late days of the Mycenaean civilization and may involve actual events; there did exist a city Troy that was destroyed before 1200 BCE. But Homer drew on over 400 years of oral traditions in crafting his poems, and whatever kernels of historical truth they contain are obscured by much imagination and anachronism. The poems do not give a good picture of the ways and customs of Mycenaeans; the Greeks in them are more how Greeks of Homer's time would imagine Mycenaeans than they are like Mycenaeans themselves.

Hesiod: Boeotian farmer and poet, author of the *Theogony* (about the origin and character of the gods) and *Works and Days* (how to be an honest, hardworking farmer), thought to have lived around 700 BCE, a little later than Homer. Hesiod disliked the nobles and the sea, and perpetually feared disaster and poverty would overtake his farm. "A surly conservative countryman, given to reflection, no lover of women or of life, who felt the gods' presence heavy about him" (according to the *Oxford Dictionary*). Hesiod's telling of the myths is informed by his concern that the gods have stable personalities and a concern for justice. We find in Hesiod an early example of a Greek tendency toward system and coherence.

Lelantine War: Around 735 BCE, Chalcis and Eretria, two cities of Ionian Greeks on the island of Euboea, went to war with each other, apparently over disputes about trade with Greek cities on the mainland and in Ionia. Each side had many allies (Corinth, Samos, Sparta with Chalcis; Chios, Megara, Miletos with Eretria) and battles were fought throughout much of the Greek world. The war takes its name from the Lelantos River and its fertile plain, found between the two cities, a plain coveted by both cities and on which Chalcis won a battle. The war ended around 710 BCE. (Some scholars, though, think the Lelantine War was fought early in the 7th Century BCE.) It is not clear

who won; certainly both sides suffered heavily and their influence in the Greek world declined as a result of the war.

The Lelantine War was the first war pitting Greek against Greek that arose from more than a simple territorial dispute, that was not confined to a local area involving just two or three cities, and that lasted more than a few years. Its primary significance in the development of Greek ways of life is that it marked the first major use of hoplites, soldiers in armour who fought in formation. The hoplites were drawn from the social middle class of the city, from people wealthy enough to afford their armour and weapons and able to take time to train as members of units but not so wealthy as to be able to join the cavalry or to belong to the officer corps. The advent of the hoplite ended (at least on the field) the romance of the hero warrior who fought alone. Some scholars think that the hoplite experience in the Lelantine War was important in developing among the Greeks both the idea of political equality and the worth of the ordinary free-born individual.

Archilochus: Lyric poet of the late 8th or early 7th century BCE. His poems are sometimes satirical and often funny: “Some lucky Thracian has my noble shield....” Most of his work has been lost.

Sappho: Lyric poet from the island of Lesbos who flourished in the 7th or 6th century BCE. Her poetry expresses her love of women, girls, her students, and nature. Most of her work has been lost.

Presocratic philosophers: Philosophers active before (and some active at the same time as) Socrates, from late Archaic times to the Classical period. (Those philosophers contemporaneous with Socrates but who were aware of Socrates or of whom Socrates was aware are typically not counted presocratic.) The earliest presocratics were the first philosophers. No copies of texts by presocratics survived past the early middle ages. We today know what we do (which isn't much) of the lives, doctrines, and arguments of the presocratics only through quotations and reports in surviving texts by later writers, quotations and reports that are not always trustworthy. For some presocratics all we have is a name, for others not even that.

Philosophers tend to go their own way, not giving much thought to how their doctrines and arguments fit or fail to fit with doctrines or arguments typical of any school of philosophy. This was as true of the first philosophers as it is of contemporary philosophers. Still, it can sometimes be helpful in studying historically important philosophers to group two or more figures together as a school. Within presocratic philosophy, there are about seven different traditions of thought that we can call schools. Each school is marked by both the presence of certain core ideas and the absence of other ideas. The seven schools are: 1) the Ionian (or Milesian), which includes the philosophers Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, and Diogenes of Apollonia; 2) the Pythagorean, which includes Pythagoras and his disciples; 3) the Eleatic, which includes Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno, and Melissus; 4) the Heraclitean, from Heraclitus; 5) pluralism, which includes Empedocles and Anaxagoras; 6) atomism, which includes Leucippus and Democritus; and 7) sophism, which includes Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, and Hippias. (Some philosophers can be assigned to more than one school.) Each of these traditions of thought continued to find adherents through the times of Plato and Aristotle and well into the Hellenistic era.

Ionian or Milesian School: The first philosophers (they were physicists, astronomers, engineers, mathematicians, and men of business and politics as well as philosophers), in the early to mid 6th century BCE, who happened to reside in the Ionian city of Miletus, and then those who philosophized in their style. Ionia is the area on the western coast of Asia Minor, now part of Turkey. (The area came to be called Ionia because most of the Greeks who settled there were of the Ionian tribe.) The Greek cities of Ionia were, from the middle to the end of the Archaic period, among the most prosperous in the Greek world. Tradition has it that Thales was the teacher of Anaximander, and Anaximander the teacher of Anaximenes. Some commentators include Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia as later members of the Ionian school.

The Milesians were concerned with the nature of the universe, and attempted to understand it without recourse to supernatural or magical explanations. They looked for something permanent persisting through changes. They supposed that beneath the chaos of the world as it appears, there is unity and order and permanence. They thought they could find this permanent substance by discovering what the world is made of. Each developed a different account of what the ultimate substance is. The Milesians appear to have thought that they needed to describe a principle of cause as well as to describe the common substance of things, and they seem to have found this principle in either life or the gods, but this aspect of their thought was less central than their concern for substance.

The philosophies of the Milesians stand at the beginning of the venerable tradition of reductive and materialistic philosophical speculation, a tradition very much alive today in the attitudes and thought of J.J.C. Smart and Patricia and Paul Churchland, among others. Central to this tradition is the idea that there is a single privileged level of explanation, and that any explanation of phenomena not at this level either derives its legitimacy from an explanation at the privileged level or is actually not an explanation at all, but a pseudo-explanation. In this tradition there is little room for concepts of the form or structure within things or systems and even less for teleological concepts (concepts, that is, of purpose or goal or function).

No writings by Ionian philosophers have survived. Even by the time of Aristotle, just two centuries later, their own works had been lost; Aristotle knew their ideas only from secondary sources. Our knowledge of them comes entirely from third and fourth hand sources.

The Milesians are important and inspirational to us today as the first thinkers (of whom we know, at least) who attempted to dispense with myth and the supernatural in their attempts to understand things. They did not found cults dedicated to a master's vision but instead challenged each other to criticise their views and to develop better ones.

Thales of Miletus: Ionian thinker, generally accredited the first philosopher (also considered the first physicist and the first geometer), who lived in the early 6th century BCE, active perhaps until 580 BCE. We know little of his philosophy; his central doctrine is said to be that everything is composed of water. The typical anecdotes about philosophers as absentminded and unwordly were told even of the first philosopher, and were old hat before the time of Plato. (Another anecdote about Thales, though, portrays him as a business man who used his intelligence to make himself rich.)

Anaximander of Miletus: Ionian thinker, traditionally said to be a pupil of Thales, who lived from around 611 to 547 BCE. Attempting to improve on his teacher's account of the underlying order of things, Anaximander proposed that the one substance was the boundless (*apeiron*) and that it sustained four qualities, hot, cold, wet, and dry. Hot and cold are in tension, as are wet and dry, and from the conflicts between them come both cyclical and evolutionary change. The earliest tensions among the four qualities resulted in a vortex that created a cylindrically shaped cold, damp earth surrounded by the fiery, dry sun, moon, and stars. Anaximander reasoned that since there was no place for the earth to fall, it rests unsupported by anything. Anaximander held that life arose from heated slime, and humans and other terrestrial animals evolved from fish. What little evidence of his thought we have suggests that Anaximander was as brilliant a philosopher as any history has seen.

Anaximenes of Miletus: Ionian thinker, perhaps a pupil of Anaximander, died c. 502 BCE. The primary substance, of which all things are made, is air. Solid things are composed of condensed air, while fluids and vapours are composed of progressively more rarified air. Air in its most rarified form is the stuff of life. All changes are condensations or rarifications.

Aesop: A storyteller who lived as a slave on the island of Samos in the early 6th century BCE. He told moral fables that had animals as characters.

Pindar: Lyric poet, 518-438 BCE, who wrote grand choral hymns in celebration of victories.

Pythagoras of Croton: A cult leader, an Eastern Greek from Samos, who migrated early in life to Croton in southern Italy where he founded his school, active around 530 BCE. There's no telling where Pythagoras the man ends and the Pythagoreans, first his disciples and then the members of his school of thought, begin, especially given that Pythagoras himself might never have put pen to papyrus. The sect Pythagoras founded developed into a religious brotherhood that existed for many centuries after his death. Members of this sect were secretive and held themselves aloof from others, and sometimes were persecuted for their beliefs or behaviour.

Most likely Pythagoras himself was neither a philosopher nor a mathematician. The cult he introduced or developed had both an otherworldly and a political agenda and Pythagoras and his early followers came to hold a measure of political power in the Greek cities of Italy. Mathematicians were attracted to the number mysticism of Pythagoreanism; they tended to credit their discoveries to Pythagoras and that led to the idea that Pythagoras himself was a mathematician.

The Pythagorean philosophers held that even physical bodies are but number and ratio (this puzzling ontological claim might actually be the more reasonable doctrine that all physical phenomena are mathematically tractable), that the soul can break the cycle of reincarnation by purifying itself, and that both eating meat and eating beans corrupt the soul.

The Pythagorean philosophers can be contrasted with the reductionist and materialist Milesians by noting that their primary concern is with the forms that things and systems of things take. The essence of a thing or system is not to be had in what the thing is made of but how its components are arranged. How they are arranged can be described using the concepts of number and ratio. The principles of change and development in the universe, they said, are order,

proportion, and measure. All differences between things are essentially quantitative differences and, thus, can be expressed numerically.

Especially striking is the influence of Pythagorean ideas on medicine: physicians from Greek times through the middle ages to the present have thought of limit and order as creating harmony in the body, and have thought that health consists in maintaining the right quantitative relations among contrasting ingredients in the body.

The Pythagoreans were teleological thinkers, supposing that there was a point to existence and a proper way to live. The point of existence seems for them to have been to annihilate the self through its reabsorption in the One, the unity of existence. Unlike other religious sects, though, such as the sect of Orpheus, they rejected ritual and devotion as pathways to enlightenment but instead advocated the study of the form or structure of existence such that one could learn one's place in it. As well, they held that the study of order itself would make one orderly in one's soul. For the Pythagoreans, the universe is limited and ordered, and the good life for each individual is a life well-organized to fit within the order of the universe.

Mathematics is the science of order and form and, thus, is the route to understanding and enlightenment. The number one corresponds to the point, two to the line, three to the plane figure, four to the solid figure. Ten, being the sum of the first four counting numbers, is the perfect number. Perfect consonances are ratios involving these five numbers.

Xenophanes of Colophon: Social critic, critic of popular religion, and theologian, born in Colophon around 570 BCE, who held positions in courts throughout the Greek world, and who died around 470 BCE, having lived over a hundred years. Xenophanes expressed his views in elegiac and satirical poems.

A contemporary of Pythagoras, Xenophanes might have been a Pythagorean in his early days, but he evolved into a forerunner of Parmenides when he arrived at the conclusion that whatever is has always been and, therefore, the universe is One, a conclusion based on the argument that if there had ever been a time when nothing existed, then nothing could ever have come to exist. (Some identify Xenophanes as the founder of the Eleatic school.)

Xenophanes might well be the first critical theologian. Some of what he said would indicate that his theological views were pantheistic and, thus, consistent with his ontological contention that the universe is one and eternal. Other things he said, though, would tend to indicate that his views were vaguely monotheistic, with the one God existing somewhat separately from the rest of the world. God cannot be described, Xenophanes argues, for words were developed within this world and, thus, can apply only to the things of this world. God is known to us negatively, if at all. We can correctly say of God only that He is *not* limited, *not* embodied, *not* located in space or time, and so on. It is not clear that Xenophanes entirely rejected polytheism, though, or even that he had a definite conception of monotheism. It is possible that he held that there is a single chief god among other gods, and that the gods reside at the edge of the universe (it is doubtful that the thought of God as a spiritual being entirely distinct from creation ever occurred to him). In any case, the gods do not move, but work their will on the world directly through their minds.

Xenophanes's criticisms of popular religion stem from his theological views. He attacked the humanized gods of Homer and Hesiod, and ridiculed all forms of anthropocentrism in accounts of the gods. He opposed any form of polytheism in which the gods could be in conflict with each

other. (No doubt he would have ridiculed petitionary prayer or rituals intended to curry favour with the gods.) His criticisms of popular religion had an ethical point. He worried that anthropomorphism in religion leads to moral corruption by making divine such human qualities as greed, sloth, and vengefulness. In this, he anticipated Plato's attacks in *The Republic* on Homeric conceptions of the gods.

Xenophanes seems also to have arrived at certain epistemological conclusions from his theological reflections and studies of popular religion. While there is much about which people can have true or false beliefs, there is very little about which they can have knowledge. Moreover, we can have knowledge only in those areas in which we can verify our claims. Xenophanes's epistemological conclusions also have an ethical point: we must, as far as we can, avoid speculation and turn instead to research into verifiable claims; and, so far as we do speculate about things, we must be clear to ourselves and others that we are only speculating.

Classical Age: The fifth and fourth centuries, from the outbreak of the Persian Wars to the death of Alexander the Great and the beginning of the Hellenistic period (from about 500 BCE to after 323 BCE). This is the age of Greece in which the independent city states came into their own and industry, commerce, the arts, and philosophy flourished. (Of course, great poets and philosophers—from Homer to Pythagoras—lived also in the prior Archaic period, as we have seen.) It is also, though, a time of imperialism, slavery, and war, including the ruinous Peloponnesian War.

Persian Wars: The Persian empire pushed steadily westward throughout the 6th century BCE, and around the early 5th century BCE was exacting tribute from Greek cities in Ionia and elsewhere in Asia Minor. Perceiving that they themselves would soon be threatened by the Persians, Greek city-states from the Greek mainland and all over the Aegean banded together, and in 490 BCE full-scale war broke out between the Greeks and the Persians. The united Greek effort was first lead by Sparta, but soon came to be guided by Athens. It was during this time that Athens laid the foundation for its later empire. Hostilities continued on and off until 449 BCE, when the Persian invaders, exhausted by their futile project, gave up and returned East. Their common enemy repelled, the Greek city-states were free to resume their small-scale wars with each other. Herodotus, the "Father of History," took the Persian wars as his subject.

City-State or Polis: Basic unit of political and social organization during the late Archaic period and throughout the Classical period. Greece is a rocky country not much of which in ancient times could sustain agriculture. Arable land was available mainly in valleys and on a few interior plains. This meant that Greek communities were often isolated from each other. Their relative isolation encouraged them to develop on their own and to maintain their independence. It also fostered in them a degree of self-reliance. The democratic institutions typical of the city-state grew out of and then replaced the institutions of traditional aristocratic government and tyranny. (Aristocracy and tyranny did, though, survive throughout the Classical period in some Greek communities.) Though it developed in the valleys of Greece and Ionia, the city-state went with the Greeks to their colonies in Italy, North Africa, and elsewhere outside Greece.

The term "city-state" names not only a geographical entity, but also a style of government, one that includes democratic elements, and an ethos of citizenship and participation. "City" is

potentially misleading, for most of the citizens of any ancient Greek city were farmers living in rural areas. Urban areas were small, and contained civic buildings, temples, a market place, a theatre, sporting grounds, and not much else. Even in Athens, the most urbanized of the city-states, never more than 50% of the people (citizens and other inhabitants) were urbanites.

The city-state included both one or two small urban areas and a large rural area. The rural area extended as far as the arable land did.

Though it is difficult to spell out exactly how, the institution of the city-state was important in promoting and maintaining the dynamism and innovation that marked Greek society during the Archaic and Classical periods. To a large degree, the arts, the sciences, and philosophy all flourished within Greek society because of the inquisitive, industrious, and self-confident character of the ancient Greek people, a character developed and sustained by the demands of maintaining the city-state in a harsh land.

The institution of the city-state was weakened by the Peloponnesian War, and disappeared with the rise of Macedonia and Alexander's conquests.

Tyranny: A form of political and social organization that developed in the Dark Ages and Archaic periods, but was still found in some Greek communities even through the Classical period (an example is Syracuse). A tyrant of a city is simply a person powerful enough to set and enforce the laws of the community, laws that he need not apply to himself. The word does not have the implication that the tyrant tyrannizes the people of his community; a tyrant might well rule in their interests. The difference between a tyranny and a more-or-less democratic city-state is that the people in a tyranny are ruled by a person rather than by laws they themselves have fashioned.

Aeschylus: The founder of Greek tragedy, born c. 525 BCE, died c. 456 BCE, a witness to the collapse of tyranny and the rise of democracy in Athens, and a soldier in the Persian Wars. His plays give clear and strong voice to the idea that fate, or the will of the gods, works itself out through human affairs.

Heraclitus of Ephesus: Ionian (born in Ephesus) philosopher and misanthrope, disdainful of his noble birth but nonetheless a haughty aristocrat by temperament, born c. 535 BCE, died c. 475 BCE, who wrote in prose in an obscure oracular style, and who was called by some "the weeping philosopher" on account of his melancholy view of life (other nicknames included "the dark one" and "the riddler").

Heraclitus held that each thing is a combination of opposites, held together by strife. The world is marked by change and flux, and fire is its compelling force. All things live in conflict. Thus, conflict is essential to life and, therefore, is good. Indeed, strife is the essence of justice. And yet there is an underlying unity to the world, beneath the flux and the strife. This unity is the tension among opposites that keeps the whole together. Without tension, the parts of the world would come apart from each other and themselves disintegrate. Tension, or, again, strife, is the constancy underlying change.

For Heraclitus, the world is not ultimately a peaceful and harmonious whole, as the Pythagoreans would have it. For the Pythagoreans, cacophony, disorder, and encroachment threaten order and peace, whereas for Heraclitus order and peace are features of sleep or death while

encroachment and strife sustain wakefulness and life. Whatever lives, lives by the destruction of something else.

The world is also in itself intelligible, though very few people possess the quality of mind needed to comprehend it. The world is impregnated with Logos, that is, with an account of itself, and a wise person who listens carefully can hear it give its account of itself. The world speaks, but it neither deceives us nor reveals itself to us in what it says. Instead, in speaking it indicates what its account of itself is to those attuned to understand it.

Heraclitus held that the senses are themselves no guide to the Logos of things, but that only reason is. This is not to say that Heraclitus was a sceptic about knowledge gained in experience. On the contrary, Heraclitus held that only through experience could there be any knowledge of things at all. His point is that any deliverance of sense must first be questioned, interpreted, and organized by reason before it can be known as true or rejected as illusory and false. The Logos, he said, is common to all, but few of us are in firm contact with it, as most people prefer to live among the illusions of sense.

Perhaps Heraclitus's most memorable saying is that one cannot step twice into the same river. (On the other hand, he also said up or down, it's still the same road.)

Parmenides of Elea: Philosopher from Elea in southern Italy, the first and greatest of the Eleatic school, born c. 510 BCE and active into the middle of the 5th century BCE, a younger contemporary of Heraclitus who wrote in conscious opposition to Heraclitus's central doctrine that reality is constantly in flux. Parmenides was a would-be shaman or mystic in the style of Pythagoras. He was admired widely for his character and the quality of his life. He wrote a long hexameter poem analysing the term "to be." Parmenides is generally held to have been an exceedingly bad poet. On the other hand, despite his unfortunate decision to express himself in poetry, he was a profound and profoundly important philosopher. Parmenides's absolute monism to this day remains attractive to many philosophers, and those who would reject it are duty-bound to show where Parmenides's arguments (and those of other Eleatic philosophers) go wrong.

That the world is a plurality of objects in space and time is an illusion of sense experience, according to Parmenides; reason instructs us that existence is a timeless unity. Movement and change are strictly impossible; reality, then, is a single, motionless, unchanging substance, which can be referred to as the One. Parmenides reasons that since movement and change would involve a transition from that which is not to that which is, neither movement nor change can occur, for that which is not—which is the starting point of movement or change—cannot exist. What-is-not, the point from which change must begin, is nothing, but nothing cannot exist, for if it did exist it would be something and, thus, not be nothing; therefore, change cannot occur, for there cannot exist any point of departure for change. —Is this argument just word-play? If it is, then where is the mistake in it?

Parmenides may have distinguished two different worlds, the world of reality in itself and the world of appearances, or, better to have distinguished how the one world really is from how that world appears to us. Of the world of appearance, or the world as it appears, there can be no true descriptions and, thus, no knowledge. The world of reality, or the world as it is, can be truly described and known, but only by reasoning, and specifically reasoning about the concept of existence or being. (Parmenides, then, went further than Xenophanes and Heraclitus, each of whom

distrusted the senses but yet allowed that, properly used, they could give rise to knowledge. Parmenides went further than this, for he maintained that no belief formed in sense experience, no matter how carefully it was formed, could possibly be true.) A set of serious questions is raised by the distinctions Parmenides draws: What is the relation between the world as it is and the world as it appears to us? Why do we not see the world as it is? And how does the world as it is give rise to the world of appearance? Parmenides's own thought on these questions was expressed in the second part of his poem, most of which has been lost to us.

Other Eleatic philosophers, especially Zeno, developed ingenious arguments meant to demonstrate the unreality of time and change—or, at least, to show that supposedly commonsense ideas about time and space give rise to paradox and inconsistency. Philosophers have been thinking hard about Parmenidean ideas and arguments for millenia. Plato's debt to Parmenides is as great as his debts to Pythagoras and Heraclitus, and is exceeded only by his debt to Socrates. Aristotle, for his part, spent much effort responding to Eleatic arguments. The most impressive recent revival of Parmenidean ideas has been that produced by the British philosopher J.M.E. McTaggart.

Anaxagoras of Clazomenae: Born in Clazomenae in Ionia c. 500 BCE, resided in Athens for most of his life, died in Lampsacus c. 428 BCE, a friend of Pericles and a prominent intellectual in Athens during its golden age, an astronomer, political counsellor, and archetypal wise man, and a materialist philosopher in the style of the Milesians. Anaxagoras might have been put on trial for impeity, just as Socrates would be three decades later, perhaps for denying the divinity of the sun and moon. (Anaxagoras said that the moon is a stone in the sky, bigger than the Pelopponese.) Though acquitted, he fled Athens for Lampsacus, where he died shortly afterwards. Anaxagoras was the first of the great philosophers to live and work in Athens.

In the beginning, according to Anaxagoras, there existed a uniform mixture of all the physical stuffs out of which everything is made. This original mixture is infinite in quantity and, thus, is an inexhaustible source of stuff. Our world of definite and distinct things arose from out of the original mixture by the workings of a few universal principles or laws. All bodies, then, are organized aggregates of the stuffs in this mixture and are simply manifestations of potentials within the mixture (that is, there is no force or intelligence not already within the stuff itself that guides changes in distributions, aggregations, or organizations of stuff). Anaxagoras appears to endorse a sort of causal determinism: given the stuff as it is at any one moment and the physical laws that inhere in it, the way the stuff is at next moment is the only way it could have been.

A legacy of the original mixture is that everything contains a portion of everything else; that different things have different qualities is a result of the fact that the same stuff is present in different things in different quantities. Moreover, it is only because everything contains a portion of everything else that different things can interact and phenomena such as deriving nutrition from food can occur.

Though he rejects Parmenides's thesis that all is One, Anaxagoras follows Parmenides in holding that plurality cannot arise from singularity, for what-is cannot come from what-is-not. That is why the original mixture, though uniform, must already be a plurality of stuffs.

The force or intelligence within stuff that accounts for organization and change is mind. Mind is a pure stuff that does not mix with other stuffs, unlike the other stuffs. His doctrines regarding mind seem out of keeping with the materialistic tenor of his thought, but Anaxagoras

might have deemed it necessary to posit mind as a stuff in order to account for the apparently teleological features of the world, such as life and purposeful behaviour. Even so, Socrates, for one, held that Anaxagoras didn't give mind its due. Socrates mocks Anaxagoras's materialism in the *Phaedo* (at 97c ff) for excluding explanations of things in terms of purposes and values. Socrates says that for Anaxagoras the reason Socrates is sitting in jail is that Socrates's bones and muscles are arranged thusly and so, and not that Socrates's enemies have had him condemned in order to rid themselves of him and that Socrates has accepted the sentence of death as the right thing for him to do.

Zeno of Elea: Eleatic philosopher, born in Elea in Southern Italy c. 488 BCE, student, associate, and (favourite) disciple of Parmenides, creator of as many as forty arguments meant to defend Parmenidean absolute monism by showing that the assumption of plurality leads to absurdity or at least to paradox. Zeno was close to Parmenides when Parmenides was old, and would often accompany him on his travels and assist him in his political and pedagogical work. After Parmenides's death, Zeno continued as a professional teacher of philosophy, perhaps instructing Pericles during a stay in Athens. Zeno is said to have been a courageous patriot and champion of freedom, risking and, perhaps, even losing his life defending his native land from a tyrant.

Zeno's philosophical endeavours seem to have been entirely negative. He did not develop or modify Parmenides's idea that all is One, but simply constructed arguments against the commonsense reaction to Parmenides that *of course* motion and time and difference and change are all real features of the world.

The most famous of Zeno's surviving arguments might be that of Achilles and the tortoise. Suppose out of sportingness to the slower tortoise, Achilles gives him a head-start of two or three yards in their hundred-yard dash. Clearly, in order to overtake the tortoise, Achilles must first reach the position from which the tortoise began. But by the time Achilles reaches that position, the tortoise will be somewhat further ahead from that place. So now Achilles must reach the tortoise's current position. But by the time Achilles does that, the tortoise will be somewhat further ahead of that place. And so on. On the assumption, then, that space exists and can be traversed—that is, that change can occur within it—, Achilles can never overtake the tortoise. The assumption that change is possible has led to the paradoxical result that Achilles can never overtake the tortoise. That assumption, then, is no more plainly true than is Parmenides's claim that change is impossible.

Another famous surviving argument is that of the arrow. We might suppose that an arrow can be in flight such that its position in space changes at every moment. But really, says Zeno, we must agree that at each moment the arrow is at rest, for at each moment it occupies a space equal to its own size, and that is what it is for something to be at rest. Since at each moment the arrow is at rest, it cannot be in flight, given that to be in flight is the opposite of being at rest. Thus, the assumption that change occurs leads us to the absurd conclusion that the arrow is both in flight and at rest.

Zeno's arguments appear to be variations on a single theme. That theme, the ur-argument, is this: If time or space exist, then there exist finite units of time or space. A finite unit of something is either indivisible into smaller units or not. If it is not indivisible, and so is divisible, it must be infinitely divisible, for half of it can itself be divided into halves, and so on. But no finite unit could be composed of an infinite number of parts, for infinite parts mean an infinite whole. If, on the other

hand, it is indivisible, then it must be without magnitude, for any magnitude can be divided. If it is without magnitude, though, it must be merely a point. But a single point in space or time is not a unit of space or time, for units consist of that which is bounded by two points. And so, either way, on the assumption that space or time exists, we land in paradox. The claim that neither time nor space exists, then, is at least no more paradoxical than the assumption that either does exist.

These arguments, one might well feel, are fallacious. The difficulty, and the philosophical interest, is in saying in what the fallacy in them consists.

Athens: City-state in Attica, by the mid 5th century BCE the commercial, financial, political, military, artistic, literary, architectural, and intellectual centre of Greece. Its importance to the commercial, artistic, and intellectual life of the Greek speaking world extended well into the Roman era, ending only with the rise of Constantinople. During the time of Pericles, it drew artists and intellectuals and entrepreneurs from throughout the Greek world, much as New York did from the 1950s to the early 1990s, and as Rome and Paris and London each had in their own day. During the time of its political and military dominance, it controlled, often with naked force, a far-flung group of cities called the Athenian League or the Delian League, and was the great sea power in the Mediterranean. Long before Athens became itself the centre of philosophical inquiry in the Greek world, Athenian political and cultural supremacy served philosophy by enabling philosophical ideas to travel great distances, from Ionia to Italy to Macedonia. Democratic institutions, though they excluded slaves, women, and resident aliens, and though they were occasionally usurped by oligarchs, were more deeply entrenched in Athens than in other Greek city-states. Socrates and Plato were Athenians by birth; Aristotle resided in Athens most of his life.

Though it remained an important centre well into the Roman era, Athens never fully recovered from its total defeat by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War. Athens resisted Macedonian rule longer than the other city-states, but finally, in 322 BCE, it surrendered its political independence and came fully under the sway of Alexander the Great's successors. Its last act as an independent city-state was to hand over Demosthenes, the loudest advocate of Athenian independence, to the Macedonians to be executed.

Athenian democracy had its roots in the Archaic period of Greece. In 594 BCE, the aristocracy of Athens asked Solon to reform the government by writing a set of laws. Solon's reforms limited the political prerogatives of the aristocracy and increased the power of lower class citizens (remember, of course, that "citizen" applies only to free and native born (though sometimes naturalized) adult males). Most remarkable, though, is that the citizens sought to govern themselves through a system of impersonal laws. Solon was sought not as a powerful leader to rule them, but as a wise man who could describe a structure through which they could rule themselves.

The road from Solon's Athens to Athens at its most democratic was not straight and smooth. But when it was clearly and securely a democratic polity, from around 507 BCE through the Peloponnesian War to around 322 BCE just after the time of Alexander (over 180 years, with two short interruptions, the oligarchic coup in 411 BCE and the rule of the Thirty Tyrants in 404-403 BCE), its political institutions looked like this: All legislative power resided in the Assembly. All citizens were potentially members of the Assembly; to be a member of the Assembly, all a citizen had to do was to show up at the Pnyx (a hill near the Acropolis) on the day the Assembly met. The Assembly typically had thousands of members (a quorum was 6000). The Assembly would meet

four or more times a year, at the bidding of an executive group called the Council. The Council consisted of 500 citizens chosen by lot to serve a one year term. Whenever Council members thought that some matter needed to be decided, the Council would call for a meeting of the Assembly. The Council was charged with drawing up a rough agenda for the meeting. One member of the Council, chosen by lot, was named Chair of the meeting. Any citizen could speak at the Assembly, or introduce a motion. Matters were decided by majority vote. Officials to execute the Assembly's decisions were mainly chosen by lot, though some positions (general in the army, for instance) were elected positions. There were no bounds on what areas of life could be touched by legislation, and there was nothing like judicial review of Assembly decisions.

Judicial power in trials resided in the jury. Juries were composed of as many as 501 citizens, chosen by lot when a magistrate (also chosen by lot) declared that a matter was to go to trial. Simple majority vote at the trial determined the verdict.

Council members, holders of executive offices, and jurors were paid for their work, but at a rate no greater than that earned by a common skilled labourer. This meant that a poor citizen would not be harmed financially when drafted for political office, while a rich citizen could not benefit financially.

It was political institutions like these that made the Sophist movement important. Political leaders in Athens, and to some extent also in other Greek city-states, were not people with power to create laws or policies, as political leaders in our democracies are (Greek democracy was direct democracy, not representative democracy). Political leaders were not office holders and, thus, had no more power than any other citizen. A political leader was simply someone who proposed a programme to the Assembly, and whose programme the Assembly supported. Pericles, for instance, occupied no specific political office; he wasn't a president or prime minister. (He was, though, for most of his career, either an elected magistrate or a general.) Pericles simply proposed policies or actions to the Assembly, spoke on behalf of his policies, spoke against rival policies, and over a span of years the Assembly tended to go along with his proposals. This meant, then, that to be a political leader, a citizen must have the ability to persuade his listeners to support his programme, especially over whatever rival programme is also under consideration. Now, if people know what their true interests are, and the proposal on the table is clear to them, they'll know whether they should support it or not. On the other hand, people are often open to persuasion through flattery or rhetoric, and often are not perceptive enough to understand the full implications of a proposal. A person skilled in rhetoric and in reading his audience could move the Assembly to act in ways that would benefit him, whether it benefitted the citizens generally or not. The Sophists offered themselves as able to teach people how to steer democratic institutions in the directions they desired.

Pericles of Athens: Born in 495 BCE, the most influential politician and successful statesman in Athens during its golden age, who died, in 429 BCE, during the plague that swept Athens after the first year of the Peloponnesian War. During his pre-eminence in Athens, Pericles commanded armies in four wars. He argued successfully for Athens to pursue an imperialist foreign policy. He commissioned, on behalf of the Athenians, the Parthenon and other buildings, and he was friends with leading artists, playwrights, and philosophers of the day.

Sophocles: Tragic dramatist at Athens, born c. 496 BCE, died 406 BCE, active in politics and religion, whose introduction of a third character into the story greatly expanded the resources of tragedy. His plays present tragedy as an inevitable outcome of the protagonist's lack of insight into his own character.

Sparta: Athens was not the only important city-state of the Classical era. Other culturally, economically, and politically significant city-states included Corinth, Thebes, Syracuse (a tyranny), and Chalcis. These city-states, and the characters of their people, differed from each other in many ways, but each was typically Greek in organization and ethos. The great exception among Greek city-states was Sparta, a polity unlike any other that existed then or, despite attempts to imitate it, has existed since.

Sparta was located inland on the large Greek peninsula known as the Peloponnese, in the area called Laconia (from which comes the adjective "laconic," meaning concise or brief when speaking) and near the region called Messenia. In Archaic times, Sparta played a leading role in poetry, music, and seafaring, and even politically in the development of a few institutions that would become typical of the democratic city-state in Classical times. But after 600 BCE Sparta became a xenophobic, militaristic society, and then began to stagnate. It was always a small community, but as a militaristic society its population began a steady decline, and it contributed to the world no further cultural or technological innovation. The Spartans held Messenia and the rest of Laconia by conquest, and turned the inhabitants of these lands into *helots*, or serfs working the land, and *perioeci*, or craftsmen and traders who served Spartan needs. The Spartans themselves were soldiers and the wives and children of soldiers. Spartans were trained in military discipline and obedience from an early age, and lived as adults in barracks with little personal property or individual freedom. They were the only caste of professional soldiers in a world of citizen armies and the occasional mercenary. They formed a closed society, and shunned contact with the outside world. Officially they sought to acquire only enough food and material goods to ward off hunger and want, but unofficially many sought to acquire wealth, often by accepting bribes from their underlings and from foreigners. They spent their time keeping out foreign influences, overseeing the serfs and directing their craftsmen, and putting down one revolt after another.

Their political arrangements combined monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy. Historical circumstance had given them two hereditary kings, who, along with 28 males elected for life from citizens over 60, formed the Council of Elders. A general Assembly of citizens past the age of majority would meet to vote for or against policies introduced by the Council. Executive and judicial power resided in the five annually elected ephors, who supervised affairs of state and sat as judges.

Though militaristic and possessing the strongest land force in the Greek world, the Spartans were not expansionist, being quite satisfied simply to hold Messenia and Laconia. But they were suspicious of their neighbours and especially of Athens, the great sea power. And so, in 431 BCE, the Spartans attacked Athens in what might now be called a preemptive strike (though some scholars say the Athenians, especially Pericles, did much to encourage the attack), ultimately plunging the entire Greek world into war. Sparta emerged victorious thirty-seven years later, only to fall into anarchy and then to be defeated by Thebes in 371 BCE. Finally, in the third century, Sparta was torn apart by a vicious civil war and collapsed.

The Spartans seem very different from what we think of as typical Greeks, even the Greeks living in undemocratic tyrannies. They were not artists or scientists or mathematicians or entrepreneurs or philosophers. They appear to us to be a society from a science-fiction nightmare. Yet, the myth of Sparta captivated Plato and many other Greeks and non-Greeks throughout the centuries. Sadly, even today the heroic ideal of the closed militaristic or fascist state, with its no-frills efficiency and discipline and unity, continues to appeal to many.

Euripides: Tragic dramatist resident in Athens, born c. 485 BCE, died c. 406 BCE, who introduced elements of realism into Greek tragedy and had a concern for feminine psychology and abnormal or emotionally-charged states of mind.

Empedocles of Acragas: Philosopher, poet, and democratic political leader, a prolific author with a wide knowledge of science and medicine, a leading citizen of Acragas (Agrigentum) in Sicily, born there c. 484 BCE, died c. 424 BCE (according to legend, by jumping into Mt. Etna). Empedocles was also something of a mystic and shaman, credited with halting an epidemic by changing the direction from which the poisonous winds were blowing, and famous as a figure of romance in his pursuit of Pausanias, his beloved.

Empirical study of the things of the world can bring us true knowledge, said Empedocles, so long as we are careful to distinguish veridical seeing from illusion and to subject the deliverance of sense to critical and generalizing reason. True knowledge, though, is not knowledge of the things we see, but of what stands behind the world of appearance and explains it. Still, it is only through empirical study that we can attain true knowledge. Attaining knowledge is an accomplishment; for that reason, the task of the teacher is simply to guide the student in the use of his senses and reason so that the student comes to know for himself.

Empedocles begins his physical theory with the Eleatic doctrine that what is must be, and has not been created and cannot be destroyed. But to this doctrine he adds a pluralistic ontology of four elements or, better, four roots: earth; air; fire; and water. (This ontology of the four elements became canonical in Greek science and was endorsed by Aristotle. It proved influential in the ancient world and beyond, especially in medicine, where it became the theory of the four humours.) As roots, the elements give rise to the things of the world through mixing with each other, though some things, the sun, for instance, are made of a single element. The idea of roots contains the idea of potentiality. Each element has its own set of natural tendencies (for instance, the natural tendency of fire is to move upwards). In addition, the four elements, and the things made of them, interact with each other according to the laws of love and strife. Love unifies that which is dissimilar, while strife divides that which is similar. It is through the motive force of love or strife that processes involving two or more elements occur.

Empedocles seems to have identified the gods with the elements and to have thought of their individual tendencies and of love and strife as energy or spirit. To live successfully—that is, to live a life in which one finds meaning and contentment—one must increase one's unity with the rest of existence; to do this, one must ally oneself with love. The soul survives the death of the body and is reborn in a new body at the same level of unity with the world it attained in its previous incarnation. (Love is especially strong in healers; the souls of physicians are at a high plane of incarnation.)

Through good living, one can eventually become one with the gods. Nonetheless, strife can never be totally overcome, and so the world, though it can be better or worse, can never be perfected.

Empedocles may have been the first physicist to have had a clearly elemental view of substances and things, and as such paved the way for atomism. As well, as a biologist, he seems to have conjectured that a primary mechanism of organic evolution is natural selection. (That species evolve had already been conjectured by Anaxander.) As a philosopher, though, parts of Empedocles's thought seem inconsistent with other parts, or at least his explanations of how they are consistent have been lost to us. Along with Parmenides, Empedocles rejected the idea of void or nothingness; but then how can he hold that motion is real? And how can the universe vary over time in the amount of love and strife it contains? Finally, what are souls, and how do they relate to the elements and the forces?

Melissus of Samos: Naval officer and strategist, responsible for the victory of the Samian fleet over Athens in c. 442 BCE, whose floruit is given as 440 BCE, and about whom little else is known, not even his approximate dates. Melissus was a philosopher of Parmenidean views, perhaps the last of the Eleatics.

Melissus wrote a treatise in which he posited as a premise that something exists. He then attempted to show that from this premise can be deduced the following: that what exists was not created and cannot be destroyed; that it is without spatial limit; that it is eternal; that it is single; that it is homogenous in substance, unchanging, and unmoving. His arguments to these conclusions are more like Parmenides's arguments than Zeno's, though they tend to involve the idea that something cannot come from nothing rather than Parmenides's favourite thesis that what-is-not cannot be. One exception, in that it draws attention to a paradox, might be his argument that the real is known by reason, not by the senses. This argument can be run using any quality supposedly registered by sense. Our senses tell us at one moment that, for instance, the thing in front of us seems to be dry, and then they tell us at another moment that that thing seems to be wet—that is, to be not-dry. But we know that to say that something *is* some way is to say that it is that way essentially; and a thing cannot be some way essentially and then lose that way of being while remaining the very same thing. Thus, the way things seem to be, as conveyed by the senses, might not be the way they in fact are. Only reason itself can penetrate to how they are.

Melissus was not a greatly original thinker, although he might well have disagreed with Parmenides on one or another point of metaphysics, and although he was more concerned than Parmenides had been to bring out the epistemological implications, the implications for the possibility and nature of knowledge, of the metaphysical doctrine of absolute monism. He appears, though, to have been a clear and rigorous thinker, much less obscure than Parmenides (and less irritatingly clever than Zeno). Most importantly, to Melissus is due the explicit formulation of the thesis that movement requires matter and void, a thesis as important to the atomists as to the Eleatics.

Critics have attempted to raise a chuckle by noting that someone who doesn't think things move or that anything ever happens also managed to defeat an Athenian fleet.

Leucippus of Abdera: The founder of Atomism, about whom little is known, not even his dates or where he was born (it might have been Melitus, but then again it might have been on the other side of the world, in Elea). He studied at Elea, maybe under Zeno after Parmenides's death. He

developed his atomistic doctrines and the arguments in favour of them as early as 470 BCE, perhaps while residing in Abdera. He was reported to have been a prolific writer, though very few fragments of his work remain (though some fragments attributed to Democritus might actually belong to Leucippus).

Democritus of Abdera: Born into a wealthy family c. 493 BCE in the northern Greek city of Abdera, Democritus was a scientist, traveller, geographer, and scholar as well as a philosopher. Reputed to be a modest man despite his great learning and intellect, he died c. 404 BCE. Democritus is said to have encountered Leucippus when the former was a young man and before the latter settled in Abdera, and to have acquired from him both the desire to philosophize and the rudiments of atomism. (Some scholars, though, wonder whether Leucippus actually existed, and hypothesize that “Leucippus” is really just a pen-name used by the young Democritus.) The story goes that having decided to become a philosopher, Democritus set off for Athens intending to study in the select circle under Anaxagoras. Apparently Democritus failed the audition, or otherwise displeased Anaxagoras, for Anaxagoras rejected his application. Deeply hurt by this outcome, Democritus set out on his travels, determined to best Anaxagoras by acquiring even more knowledge and understanding than that great philosopher had. Democritus sojourned in Egypt and Ethiopia, and might have visited as far east as India. Years later, when well enough accomplished to face Anaxagoras, Democritus returned to Athens only to find that Anaxagoras had departed the city and died, and that nobody remembered or cared that Anaxagoras had rejected him. Democritus moved back to Abdera, became a teacher (Protagoras might have been one of his students), gave up his footloose ways, and patiently worked out his philosophy and wrote on the many other subjects that interested him. Apparently he never lost his grudge against Anaxagoras, for he would abandon his cool, moderate tone when writing of him, and he even went so far as to accuse the Clazomenean of plagiarism.

Most of the testimony about and fragments of Democritus concerns the art of living and ethics, and most of that consists in sound, though conservative, advice as to how to find contentment in life. (A fair proportion of this advice is attributed to someone named “Democrates,” who may or may not be Democritus.) At the philosophical level, Democritus appears to hold that the best life for a person to lead is a life of quiet contentment and joy. Democritus says that longer-lasting pleasures are superior to more intense but short-lived pleasures in fostering such a life. He also proposes that no one could have sufficient reason to promote another person’s good, or to promote the general good, when doing so would jeopardize one’s own contentment. Democritus’s reflections on value and the good life reveal the same cast of mind as do his reflections on nature and metaphysics, but there are no very strong philosophical connections between them.

Some central doctrines of Democritus’s atomism and their associated arguments are these: All that exists is matter and void. Void is simply empty space, that is, space devoid of matter. Void exists only as lack of matter or emptiness, but even a void will have length and volume, and, thereby, is not equivalent to Parmenides’s nonbeing, which cannot be. Space (and perhaps time) is infinite in all directions. All matter is composed of atoms. Each individual atom is totally without internal void; thus, it cannot be divided or destroyed. And since nothing can come from nothing, no atom was ever created but each has always existed. Atoms are infinite in number and come in a range of sizes from absolutely tiny to enormous, and in an infinite assortment of shapes.

Each atom is in motion. Atoms move at speeds from infinitely slow to infinitely fast. No individual atom ever either speeds up or slows down.

Objects are aggregations of atoms. Atoms aggregate mechanically, by becoming entangled with each other (imagine a hook-shaped atom catching a crescent-shaped atom). As voidless and ultimate, atoms cannot attract or repel each other at a distance, nor can they adhere to each other. When they collide, atoms either do not become physically entangled and, so, bounce off each other, or they become entangled. When a fast and a slow atom become entangled, the fast atom whirls around the slow one and, thereby, its speed is conserved.

All change is ultimately change of position, that is, the movement of an atom into what formerly was void. Without void, space would be full already and, thus, no movement or any change could occur (as Milesus had noted). All change occurs simply according to the mechanical movements of atoms.

Significantly, Democritus did not complicate his system by positing intelligence or spirit as a force either within the atoms themselves or above them as somehow guiding them. Each atom, in its encounters with other atoms, does what it must do, given merely its size, shape, and speed; the world we inhabit is just the macroscopic result of the blind bumpings and entanglements of atoms. Previous philosophers, even those of materialistic bent, had had recourse at some place in their systems to intelligence or spirit; Democritus might well, then, have been the first thorough-going physicalistic philosopher. (As such, he was respected and despised by Plato.) Sensation, perception, belief, thought, reasoning, and emotion were all, for Democritus, the work of the passing of fire atoms through specific structures. There are no disembodied spirits, no migrating souls, no afterlives, for when the structures break down and the body dies, the fire atoms are left without appropriate channels to traverse. Democritus was a determinist, in that the atoms behave as they do of necessity, and the world we experience must be just as it is, given how the atoms are behaving. But Democritus can also be said to hold that atoms are blind and that all happenings are merely random events, in that there is no purpose to existence or goal to which events are leading.

Democritus held that the world of objects and events of which we have perceptual and other beliefs is an effect of the world of atoms, and, thus, that it does not exist in the full way that the world of atoms does. Ordinary beliefs, then, are at best true by convention only. This does not mean that the senses lie, only that they are incapable of delivering us the deep truth of things. Still, in order to get to the deep truth of things, we have to begin with our beliefs about ordinary objects.

Democritus's value theory was taken up and expanded by Epicurus and Epicureans in the years after Aristotle. His atomism was also adopted by Epicurus, but in a bowdlerized form. For Epicurus, what was important in Democritus's metaphysics was merely the thesis that events happen mechanistically on the basis of prior events and that they are not guided by any internal or external purpose or design. Atomism in modern physics, though it is more or less descended from it, is unlike Democritean atomism primarily in that it conceives of ultimate particles more as points or fields than as little bits of matter, and in that it makes do with a finite number of types of ultimate particle. It differs also in so far as it allows that forces as well as particles exist and that perhaps void doesn't.

Diogenes of Apollonia: Born in Apollonia, a colony of Miletus on the Black Sea, c. 460 BCE, a sometime resident of Athens during his adulthood, mocked by the comic playwright Aristophanes

(along with Socrates) in *The Clouds*. Much of Diogenes's thought concerned biology and medicine, and he also wrote on astronomy and meteorology, but apart from some comments on physiology, his views on these topics are lost to us.

Diogenes was a philosopher in the materialist mode of the Ionians. His doctrines were reminiscent of Anaximenes's. Diogenes held that all matter must be the same in essence, for were more than one element to exist, then things made of different elements could not affect each other. Bone, for instance, could not grow from the nutrients in food if bone and the nutrients in food are made of different elements. Diogenes agreed with Anaximenes that the single substance or element was air, and that all things are simply air that has been to various degrees condensed or cooled, or rarified or warmed. Air is also the substance of spirit or intelligence, the most rarified or warm air being life itself.

Be careful! Diogenes of Apollonia is one of at least four different ancient writers called "Diogenes." The others are Diogenes of Sinope, also known as Diogenes the Cynic, a philosopher of greater renown than Diogenes of Apollonia, who was born c. 412 BCE, and who lived as an older contemporary of Aristotle; Diogenes Laertius, who around 250 CE wrote *Lives of the Philosophers*, a book containing significant testimony about and fragments by presocratic and other philosophers; and Diogenes of Oenoanda, a follower of Epicurus who lived during Roman times. Most often, the name "Diogenes," when standing alone, refers to Diogenes of Sinope, that is, to Diogenes the Cynic.

Peloponnesian War: In 431 BCE, threatened by growing Athenian power, Sparta, the dominant city-state of the area known as the Peloponnese, attacked Athens, a city in the area known as Attica. Because of alliances and military ambitions, the war eventually involved almost all of the Greek world, from the Black Sea to Africa to Spain, though most land battles were fought in Attica and the Peloponnese. With but a couple interruptions, the war lasted until 404 BC. The Persians interceded financially on the Spartan side in the last years of the war, recovering for themselves in the bargain a few Greek cities in Ionia, and this enabled Sparta to win. Athens was utterly defeated in the war, but Sparta was bankrupted, and the entire Greek world was left in shambles. The excellent Thucydides had nearly finished his history of the Peloponnesian War when he died, in 400 BCE.

Scholars debate the significance of Sparta's victory in the war. All agree that the war was ruinous, but some think it good, all things considered, that Athens did not win. They argue that Greek ways of life would have suffered had the Athenian empire survived, as empire is inconsistent with the freedom and diversity at the heart of Greek accomplishment. Others, though, think that had Athens won and remained strong, the Greek world would have been able to protect itself from the Macedonians and other would-be conquerors.

Sophists: Professional teachers of politics, rhetoric, and business, and instructors in self-help and the art of living, who went from town to town selling instruction to the sons of the wealthy. The sophists appeared on the scene around 450 BCE, and the movement began to die out around 400 BCE. The Sophists were indirectly a product of the democratic institutions within the Greek world, and especially at Athens, institutions that enabled any citizen to speak at political gatherings and to try to influence the decisions of the assembly. A citizen able to discern what the majority in the assembly wanted to hear and to speak to their concerns would stand a good chance of getting his programme accepted by the assembly. The sophists taught rhetoric, among other things, and this

inspired Socrates to charge them with caring only about techniques of persuasion, not about truth or goodness. Socrates held that they instructed the sons of the wealthy on the most efficient means of getting their wishes for policy fulfilled, whether those wishes promoted the interests of the majority or the impartial good or not. The Sophists, Socrates said, taught would-be demagogues how best to pander to the masses so to further their own selfish ends. Socrates's charge is not wholly unearned, but it should be tempered by remembering that the Sophists were also interested in teaching practical matters in business, household management, and the art of living.

Sophists about whom at least a little is known today include Protagoras of Abdera, Gorgias of Leontini, Prodicus of Ceos, Hippias of Elis, Diagoras of Melos, Callicles, Antiphon, and Thrasymachus of Chalcedon.

The closest modern-day equivalents to the Sophists are public relations or marketing specialists and political consultants. These are people who have no strong political convictions themselves, or at least not during their professional moments, but who rent to the highest bidder their expertise in reading the mood of the people, whether as electors or consumers, and in selling programmes to them. There is also a strong echo of the Sophists in the modern-day traditions of self-help books and motivational speakers, those from whom, for a fee, one gets expert advice on the art of living and encouragement to get going and make a success of oneself.

Many of the sophists, Protagoras (480 BCE to 411 BCE) and Gorgias (483 BCE to 378 BCE) chief among them, were also philosophers. Their philosophical positions were typically relativistic, meaning that right and wrong are matters only of either custom or positive law, or amoralistic, meaning that there is no right or wrong at all but only relations of power. These philosophical positions would tend to legitimate the Sophists' conception of their job as non-ideological political consultants and instructors in how to be happy whether one's worthy of happiness or not.

Diagoras of Melos, "Diagoras the Atheist": Perhaps a student of Democritus, Diagoras was a Sophist and poet who lived in Athens until after 416 BCE. Diagoras enjoyed mocking religious belief. When a friend offered as an argument that the gods exist the fact that people in trouble who have prayed to the gods were rescued and now light votive candles, Diagoras asked what of those who prayed but were not rescued? On a ship during a storm, Diagoras heard the conjecture that the gods were angered that Diagoras was on board. Diagoras asked if the other ships out in the storm had a Diagoras on them as well. Diagoras cut a wooden Heracles into pieces, put the pieces on his fire, hung a pot of turnips above the fire, and said to the burning statue "Perform your thirteenth labour; cook me my turnips!" Diagoras fled Athens fearing for his life after his comment that the fact that a particular iniquity went unpunished shows that the gods do not exist. The iniquity he had in mind might have been the murder of the people of Melos by the Athenians. He made good his escape but history records no more of his life.

Socrates of Athens: Philosopher, born 469 BCE, executed (commanded to drink hemlock) 399 BCE, after having been found guilty of disbelieving in the gods of the city and corrupting the city's youth. Socrates is reported to have been short, round, snub-nosed, and rather ugly; he is also said to have been a neglectful husband and father. Socrates wrote nothing himself, but discussed in the marketplace with citizens of Athens questions of virtue and human nature. His method was to elicit a definition of an ethical or evaluative term such as "courage" or "justice" or "piety" from his

interlocutor, and, through questions and subtle suggestions, to lead that interlocutor into a contradiction. In doing so, he sought to demonstrate to that interlocutor that he, the interlocutor, actually didn't know what courage or justice or piety was. Socrates would not then instruct the interlocutor, for Socrates maintained that he, too, did not know what the thing in question was. Early in his life, Socrates said, the oracle at Delphi pronounced him the wisest of men; late in life, Socrates continued, he came to accept that the oracle was right, in that he, Socrates, knew that he knew nothing, whereas other men lived under the misapprehension that they did know something or other.

Why exactly Socrates was condemned by the court is far from clear; rarely in Athens were people charged with impiety or corrupting the young, rarely were those so charged convicted, and maybe only once before had anyone so charged and convicted been executed. One theory is that Socrates's doubts about democracy—Socrates might have thought that democracy was mob rule by the ignorant—, and his ties with some of the Thirty Tyrants who ruled Athens for a short period after the Peloponnesian War, aroused the enmity of officials after democracy was restored.

As a figure in the history of philosophy, Socrates is important for turning philosophy toward ethical and political problems, and toward a concern to discover the nature of the good life. He also introduced into philosophy epistemological issues about the possibility and nature of knowledge of virtue and the good. Most presocratic philosophy was metaphysical—that is, it attempted to describe the large structures of reality, and gave little thought to the issue how best to live one's life (this isn't entirely true, for both the Pythagoreans and Heraclitus, and Democritus as well, were certainly concerned both with ethics and with how to live, though in the main they were metaphysicians). Socrates asked about meaning and purpose, not about the nature of substance or about efficient causation. When he asked why a person stood up, he rejected as irrelevant answers that described the contraction of muscles and the arrangement of bones.

Socrates's main philosophical doctrine, so far as he promulgated any positive philosophical doctrine at all, was that the virtues were one and the same as knowledge. One is not a just person unless one knows what justice is, one is not a courageous person unless one knows what courage is, and so on. And it turns out that if one knows what justice is one must also know what courage is, and what each of the other virtues is as well, for knowledge of any virtue is simply knowledge of how to act. Moreover, only the just person—or, actually, the virtuous person—can lead a good life, a life of happiness and contentment. But knowledge of the nature of virtue, indeed knowledge of anything at all, is difficult to obtain. Very few of us have any knowledge at all, as Socrates shows when his interlocutors descend into confusion and contradiction under the pressure of his questioning. Our first step on the road to knowledge, which should be important to us as it is the road to the good life, is to acknowledge our vast ignorance.

Socrates rejected both philosophies supportive of Sophistry. Against relativism, the doctrine that knowledge of ethics is simply knowledge of customs or of laws, and, thus, is easy to obtain, Socrates held that knowledge of ethics is knowledge of the universals behind particulars and, for that reason, difficult to obtain. Against amoralism, the doctrine that there is no ethical reality of which one could have knowledge, that there is just sociological and psychological reality, Socrates held that justice and virtue were indeed real things. Sophistry was not just false, though, according to Socrates, but pernicious, for its misconceptions would prevent people from ever gaining knowledge of virtue and, thereby, from ever living lives of deep happiness and contentment.

Socrates is important to philosophy also for the method by which he philosophized. That method involves serious and patient discussion with one or more interlocutors, and not simply reading what others have written and then adding to the corpus of philosophical writings. A philosopher must ask the right question at the right time and follow the argument wherever it goes.

Socrates attracted a following of younger men, men who would spend their free time talking to him and listening to his discussions in the marketplace with important Athenians and whomever happened along. Some of these young men became significant philosophers in their own right after Socrates's death. Most notable, of course, is Plato, but Euclid of Megara, Antisthenes the Cynic, and Aristippus of Cyrene are others within Socrates's circle who went on to be important and original philosophers themselves.

Euclid of Megara: An older contemporary of Plato and, like Plato, early in his career as a disciple of Socrates, born c. 450 BCE, died c. 375. Euclid is the founder of the Megarian school, a school that flourished into the 3rd century BCE. Drawing on both Parmenides and Socrates, Euclid held that being is one and is identical to the idea of the good and that virtue is identical to knowledge. (Euclid of Megara is *not* Euclid the mathematician, who was born in 300 BCE.)

Though we know many names of philosophers in the Megaran school from its inception to its demise (Eubulides, Stilpo, Diodorus Cronus, Cleinomachus, Panthoides), no writings by Megarans have survived.

Antisthenes the Cynic: Born 440 BCE, died 370 BCE, a follower of Socrates and, later, the founder of his own school and philosophical tradition. Antisthenes was the founder of Cynicism, so-called either because of the name of the place where Antisthenes taught or because his ragged clothes and manners put the Athenians in mind of dogs. Antisthenes taught that virtue was all important, and that the good life consists in freedom from want. Since one can have more control over oneself than over the world, the way to free oneself from want is not to try to acquire the things one wants, but rather to divest oneself of one's desires. Cynicism was taken up by Diogenes the Cynic, a student of Antisthenes (and reportedly the only person who did not abandon Antisthenes when, as an old man, Antisthenes became crotchety and abusive). Cynicism was an important school of thought during early Hellenistic times.

Aristippus of Cyrene: Another member of the circle around Socrates, born c. 435 BCE in Cyrene, a Greek city in North Africa, died 356 BCE, the founder of the Cyreniac school of philosophy. Aristippus held that the end or point of life was one's own pleasure, and indeed one's own present sensual pleasure. The wise person, Aristippus said, goes for the pleasures at hand rather than for possibly greater future pleasures. Aristippus disdained convention when convention interfered with pleasure. He taught in exchange for money, as did the sophists, and at least one of his students was female, his daughter Arete. His grandson, also called Aristippus, developed and systematized Cyrenaic ideas after the death of Aristippus the elder.

Plato: Plato's real name is "Aristocles." "Plato" is a nickname, meaning something like "broad-shouldered," and bestowed on the teen-aged Aristocles in virtue of his skill as a wrestler. (This might be a tall tale. Some scholars say "Plato" was Plato's name all along.) Plato was born, in 429

BCE, to wealth and nobility, with family ties to Pericles and other Athenian aristocrats and leaders. He died, in his 80s, in 347 BCE, having lived through the middle decades of the decline of Athens after the Peloponnesian War. While a young man, Plato was a devoted follower of Socrates, and he attended his trial. He was as handsome and graceful as Socrates was ugly and bulky. He travelled from Athens only a few times, most significantly twice to Syracuse, where both times he barely escaped with his life. His writings are the first philosophical works to have survived in their original form; we possess today some twenty complete and uncorrupted works by Plato. He wrote in dialogue form, usually with Socrates as his main character. His early writings, termed “Socratic dialogues,” though they were composed after Socrates’s death, are generally thought to present an accurate picture of the historical Socrates’s concerns and philosophical method. Plato’s own thinking comes to centre stage in the middle works, beginning with the *Phaedo* or *Symposium* or the *Protagoras*, and including the *Republic*. Plato founded a school, the Academy, in Athens, often called the first university, which survived until 529 CE.

King Philip II of Macedonia: Having defeated Athens and Thebes at the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE, Philip became the most important political and military power in Greece. He was assassinated in 336 BCE. Macedonia, a non-Greek province on the outskirts of the Greek world, had been a backwater until its kings began to take advantage of the political and economic void in Greece in the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War.

Aristotle: A Greek born in Stagira, near Macedonia, in 384 BCE, the son of King Philip’s physician, Aristotle settled in Athens as a young man of 18, joined the Academy, and studied under Plato. At the death of Plato, Aristotle was passed over in favour of Plato’s sister’s son, Speusippus, to be the new head of the Academy. Having been snubbed by the Academy, Aristotle founded his own school, the Lyceum. He returned to Macedonia briefly to tutor the adolescent son of King Philip II, but his contact with the future Alexander the Great might have been minimal (scholars are divided on the matter of Aristotle’s relation to Alexander). Alexander’s exploits fuelled anti-Macedonian sentiment in Athens, and Aristotle fled the city after Alexander’s death, fearing for his life. He died just a short time later, in 322 BCE.

Aristotle made signal contributions to all areas of philosophy, and was a significant scientist as well, contributing mainly to biology. History was as unkind to Aristotle’s writings as it was kind to Plato’s: apart from a pamphlet on the constitution of Athens, what we call Aristotle’s works are merely his and his students’ lecture notes, fleshed out and organized by editors. Aristotle is said to have been bald and beady-eyed with skinny legs, though a snappy dresser. He is said also to have spoke either with a lisp or in a thick provincial accent.

Alexander the Great: A military leader as skilled as any the world has seen (though his father, Philip II, was no slouch as a general), and a man fond of the grape, Alexander was born in 356 BCE. He inherited his father’s realm in 336 BCE, when he was barely out of his teens. After subduing some restive Greek cities, he set in motion his father’s plan to invade Persia. He managed to conquer Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and to make inroads into Bactria and the Punjab, before dying in Babylonia of a fever, in 323 BCE, while just in his early 30s. His entire reign was spent fighting to expand his empire. That empire fell apart with his death, divided among his generals and

would-be successors, being too vast and heterogenous to be manageable as a whole. Alexander's conquests made Greek the common language of the whole Eastern Mediterranean, and introduced aspects of Greek culture throughout the area.

The Hellenistic Era: Until the advent of Macedonian hegemony, the city-state was the unit of political and economic organization among the Greeks. The time of the city-states is known as the Classical Age of ancient Greece. Macedonia imposed kingship and empire on the Greek world, and finished off the city-states as important political units, though they were already weakened and corrupted by the Peloponnesian War. The Hellenistic era begins with the death of Alexander the Great, in 323 BCE, when Greek language and culture began to dominate among non-Greeks, and ends in 31 BCE, as the Eastern end of the Mediterranean comes under Roman rule after the battle of Actium. Throughout the Roman era following the Hellenistic, though, the culture and language of the Eastern Roman empire remained markedly Hellenistic.

Philosophy continued to flourish for the first couple centuries of the Hellenistic period, but then declined. While much philosophy during early Hellenistic times continued in the traditions of the presocratics, Plato, and Aristotle, there arose also the traditions of Epicurus, the Stoics, and the sceptics. Important philosophers of the Hellenistic Era include Anaxarchus, Pyrrho, Epicurus, Zeno, Cleanthes, Theophrastus, Carneades, and Chrysippus.

Philosophy declined as Greece gave way to Rome as thinkers turned their attention to practical matters in technology and engineering and politics and law. The more abstract philosophical endeavours of metaphysics, epistemology, and value theory were eclipsed by advice and maxims in the art of living.

Further Reading

M.I. Findley, *The Ancient Greeks* (Peregrine Books, 1963), combines a short history of the ancient Greeks to the Hellenistic period with chapters on aspects of Greek culture, including Greek philosophy.

H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (Penguin Books, 1962) is an exciting book that provides more detail than does Findley's book. A.R. Burns, *The Pelican History of Greece* (Penguin Books, 1975) is also very good. J.K. Davies, *Democracy and Classical Greece* (Fontana, 1978) doesn't really say much about democracy in Greece, but instead gives a political and military history of the constant feuding and fighting among the city-states of the Greek world. Davies agrees that the Peloponnesian War led inevitably to the decline of Greece, but he adds that had Athens won the war even early after it began, still Greece would have declined, as the spirit of the Greeks was incompatible with empire, even one centred on Athens.

A terrific study of culture and politics from the Archaic to the early Classical period is W.G. Forrest, *The Emergence of Greek Democracy 800-400 BC* (World University Library, 1966).

Recent books that take account of current developments in archaeology include Sarah B. Pomeroy, Stanley M. Burstein, Walter Donlan, and Jennifer Tolbert Robers, *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* Second Edition (Oxford University Press, 2008), and I. Morris and B. Powell, *The Greeks: History, Culture, and Society* (Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2006).

A fascinating and sometimes wild account of the spirit of the Greeks is given in Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way* (Norton, 1948). Hamilton finds in the Greeks the perfect union of spirit and mind, a union never achieved before the Greeks and only once in history (the Italian Renaissance) achieved after them.

A detailed and rigorous study of political philosophy from Homer to the Hellenists is T.A. Sinclair, *A History of Greek Political Thought* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).

Two very good short overviews of Greek philosophy from Thales to Aristotle are:

F.M. Cornford, *Before and After Socrates* (Cambridge University Press, 1932).

W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers: From Thales to Aristotle* (Harper and Row, 1950).

Books that attempt to reconstruct the thought of individual presocratic philosophers and then to interpret it critically include:

Robert S. Brumbaugh, *The Philosophers of Greece* (George Allen & Unwin, 1966).

John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (Adam and Charles Black, 1930).
Felix M. Cleve, *The Giants of Pre-Sophistic Greek Philosophy* (Volumes One and Two) (Martinus Nijoff, 1965).
Edward Hussey, *The Presocratics* (Duckworth, 1972).
A.A. Long, editor, *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1999).
Joseph Owens, *A History of Ancient Western Philosophy* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959).
G.F. Parker, *A Short Account of Greek Philosophy* (Edward Arnold, 1967).

The following contain translations of fragments by and testimony concerning presocratic philosophers, with introductions to the thought of each philosopher by the editors:

G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, and M. Schonfield, eds., *The Presocratic Philosophers* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1983).
Robin Waterfield, editor and translator, *The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and the Sophists* (Oxford, 2000).
Philip Wheelwright, editor and translator, *The Presocratics* (Odyssey, 1966).

Most of the books on presocratic philosophy held by the Patrick Power library have call-numbers between B 165 and B 288. And don't hesitate to consult the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (call number B 41 E5) or the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/>).

Time Line of Greek Philosophers and Events in the History of Greece Until the Hellenistic Period

“c.”=*circa* (pronounced “care-ka” or “sir-ka”), meaning around that time.

The dates assigned in this time line to the philosophers, poets, and other figures are their floruits, the time at which they flourished, supposedly the year in which they were about forty years old and at the height of their powers and influence.

The names of philosophers are in bold.

Almost all dates are approximations, sometimes from scant evidence; many of these dates are controversial among scholars.

2800 to 1600 BCE: Early to Middle Bronze Age among Greek-speaking tribes living on the mainland of present-day Greece and islands in the Aegean Sea

1600: Late Bronze Age begins

1400 to 1200: Mycenaean Period; Trojan War

1200: Total collapse of Mycenaean civilization, end of Bronze Age

1200 to 800: Dark Age, literacy disappears, poverty

c. 800: Beginning of Archaic Period, iron replaces bronze, return of literacy (now with a phonetic alphabet), development of independent city-states, expansion to Ionia, some expansion to the West

776: First Olympic Games

c. 750: Homeric poems

c. 735-710: Lelantine War

c. 700: Hesiod

c. 675: Lycurgus (who might be mythical) reforms Sparta’s constitution

c. 660: Archilochos writes earliest surviving personal poetry

- c. 650: Tyranny (dictatorship) replaces Aristocracy as principle form of government in many of the city-states
- c. 620: Dracon's code of laws at Athens, spread of the ideal of rule by law (Dracon's name survives in our term "Draconian")
- 594: Solon reforms Athenian law, promotes ethos of rule of law, and establishes institutions tending toward democracy; democratic ethos begins to spread throughout city-states
- c. 580: **Thales** of Miletus, the first philosopher and scientist
- c. 570: **Anaximander** of Miletus (c. 611-c. 547)
- c. 550: **Anaximenes** of Miletus (dies c. 502)
- c. 545: Persia conquers Lydia and occupies Greek cities in Ionia; these cities are required to pay tribute to Persia
- c. 530: **Pythagoras** of Croton [not actually himself a philosopher, but the originator of a school that later included philosophers]; **Xenophanes** of Colophon (c. 570-c. 470)
- c. 508: Constitutional reforms by Cleisthenes in Athens
- c. 500: **Heraclitus** of Ephesus (c. 535-c. 475); end of Archaic Period, beginning of Classical Age
- 499: Ionian cities revolt from Persia, beginning of Persian Wars
- 494: Collapse of Ionian revolt, Miletus destroyed
- 490: First Persian invasion of mainland Greece, Persians routed by Athens at Marathon (6,000 Persians killed, 192 Athenians killed)
- c. 490: **Parmenides** of Elea (born c. 510)
- c. 485: Aeschylus, founder of Greek tragedy (c. 525-c. 456)
- 481: Formation, under Sparta, of Greek League to resist further Persian invasions
- 480 to 478: Much fighting in mainland Greece and the Aegean between Greeks and Persians; Athens, in virtue of its fleet, supercedes Sparta as leader against Persians
- 478: Athens forms Delian League, beginning of the Athenian Empire

c. 470: **Anaxagoras** of Clazomenae (c. 500-c. 428); **Leucippus** of Abdera

469: Victory over Persians at Eurymedon (Cyprus), end of Persian threat to Greece

465: Rise of Pericles at Athens

c. 460: **Zeno** of Elea (b. c. 488)

c. 456: Sophocles (c. 496-c. 406), second of the three great tragedians

c. 450: **Empedocles** of Acragas (c. 484-c. 424); the rise of the **Sophists**

449: Official end of Persian Wars

c. 445: Euripides (c. 485-c. 406), the third of Greece's three great tragedians

c. 443: Pre-eminence of Pericles at Athens

c. 440: **Melissus** of Samos; **Democritus** of Abdera (c. 493-c. 404); **Protagoras** of Abdera (480-411); **Webkinz** invented

431: Peloponnesian War begins

430: **Diogenes** of Apollonia; **Gorgias** of Leontini (483-378)

429: Death of Pericles

425: **Socrates** of Athens (469-399)

416: Athens destroys Melos; **Diagoras** flees Athens

411: Democracy overthrown in Athens

410: Democracy restored in Athens

c. 410: Aristophanes (c. 450-c. 385), comic playwright and satirist on topical themes; **Euclid** of Megara (c. 450-c. 375)

404: Peloponnesian War ends in victory for Sparta; democracy replaced in Athens by rule of the 30 Tyrants; **Antisthenes** the Cynic (c. 440-c. 370); **Aristippus** of Cyrene (c. 435-356)

403: Democracy restored in Athens

- c. 400: **Arete** born, daughter of Aristippus, the first known woman philosopher
- after 400: The decline of the Sophists
- 399: Execution of Socrates
- 388: **Plato** of Athens (429-347) founds the Academy
- c. 380: **Anaxarchus**, a Democritean and companion of Pyrrho, born (dies c. 320)
- c. 372: **Diogenes** of Sinope (the Cynic) (c. 412-323)
- c. 370: **Theophrastus**, follower of Aristotle, born (dies c. 288)
- c. 360: **Pyrrho** of Elis, founder of Pyrrhonian scepticism, born (dies 270)
- 358: Philip II becomes King of Macedonia
- 350: **Aristotle** of Stagira (384-322) founds the Lyceum
- c. 341: **Epicurus**, founder of Epicureanism, born (dies 270)
- 338: Philip II defeats Athens and Thebes at the battle of Chaeronea; Greece comes under Macedonian control
- 336: Eighteen-year-old Alexander (356-323) inherits his father's realms on the death of Philip II and soon begins his journey of conquest
- 335: Alexander puts down the revolt of the Greek cities; Alexander sets out to conquer Persia
- c. 334: **Zeno** of Citium, founder of Stoicism, born (dies c. 262)
- 323: With the death of Alexander the Great begin the Wars of the Successors (the Diadochi), wars fought among Alexander's generals for parts of the empire Alexander had created. The Classical Age of Greece ends (some scholars say it ended at the battle of Chaeronea) and the Hellenistic Era begins
- 322: Athens surrenders its independence