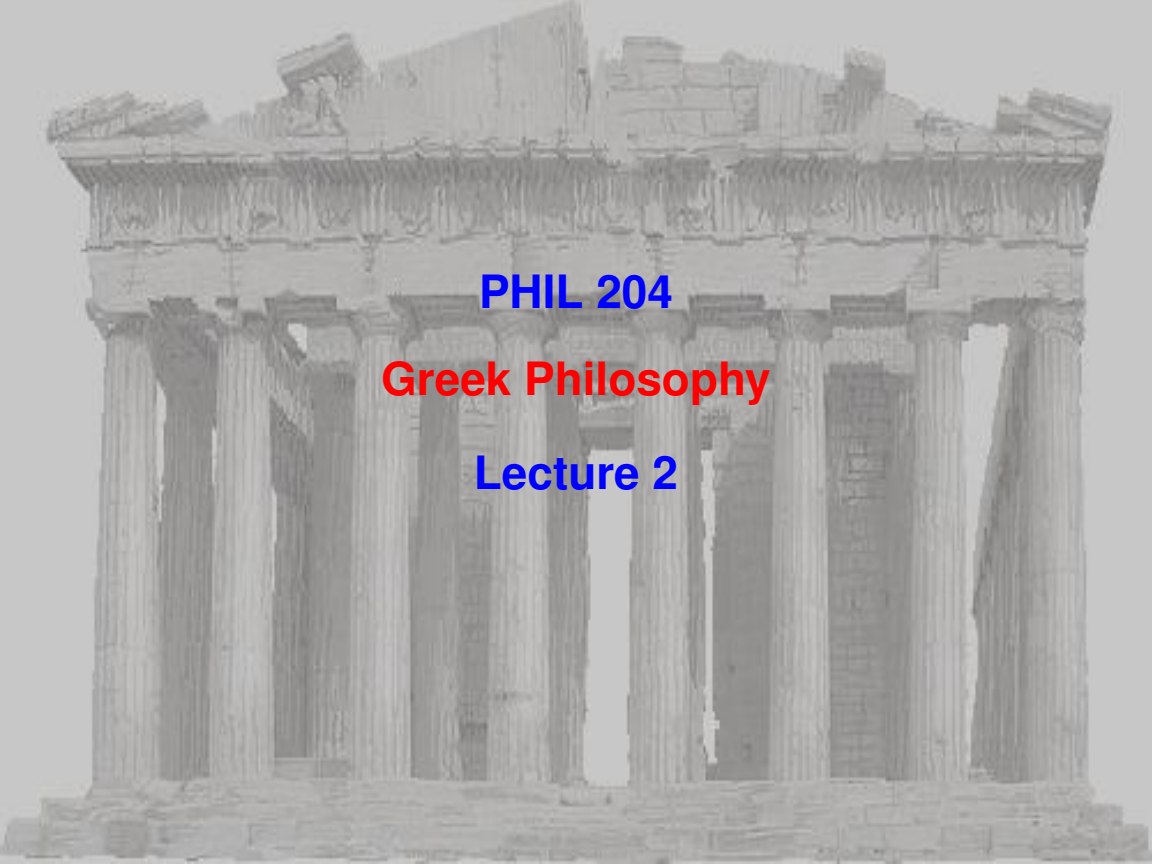


PHIL 204

Greek Philosophy

Lecture 2

Greece in the Archaic Age
political structure in 750-490 BCE
MACEDONIA
THESSALY
AETOLIA
BOEOTIA
ATTICA
Athens
ACHAEA
ARCADIA
Corinth
Argos
ARGOLIS
SPARTA
LESBOS
Mytilene
PHRYGIA
MYSIA
LYDIA
Ephesus
Miletus
CARIA
Delos
Halicarnassus
RHODES
Lindos
CRETE
Cities
Districts where many city-states developed
Districts where old tribal organization persisted

Heraclitus of Ephesus c.535-c.475BCE

Thales

Anaximander

Anaximenes

Heraclitus

} **Ionian Philosophers**

Heraclitus' Key Ideas:

Opposition, Change, Order

1. **The world is governed by reason (the *logos*).**

2. **The *logos* is hidden from men**
   (but not from Heraclitus?)

[Theory of unifying logos.]

‘Logos’ in Greek ‘ratio’ in Latin can mean:

Speech

Account

Reason

Definition

Measure

Reckoning

Proportion

Heraclitus' Key Ideas:

3. Everything in the world is a dynamic union of opposites.

[Theory of the unity of opposites.]

Heraclitus' Key Ideas:

4. **Everything is continually changing - like a river.**

   [**Theory of flux.**]

5. **Fire Monist: the world is ever-living fire.**

6. **Rejection of myths.**

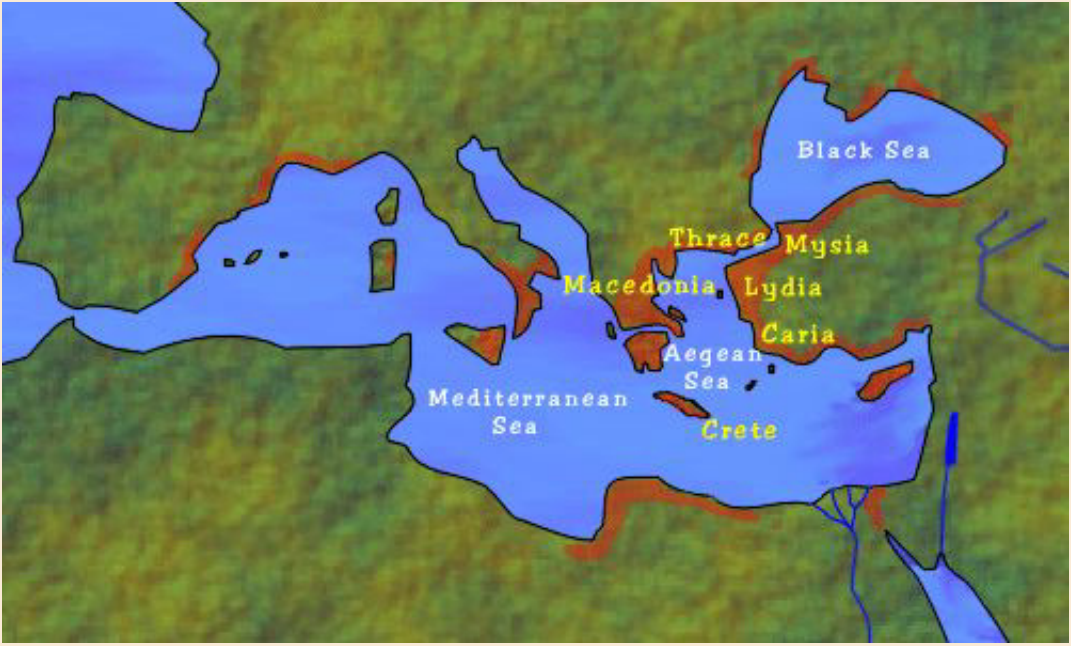
The Principle of Non-contrariety

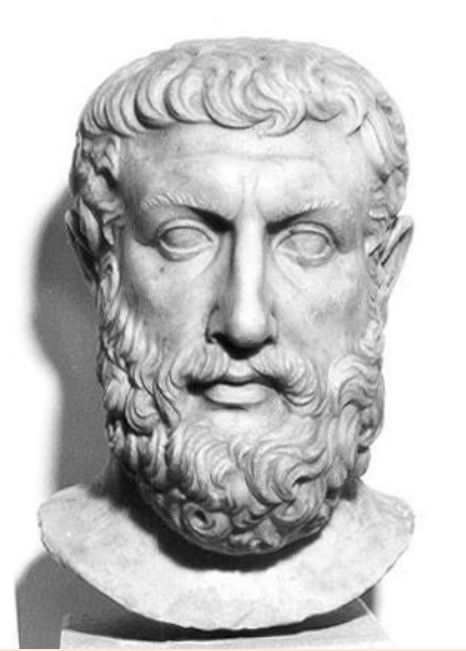
Nothing can at the same time both be some thing and not be that thing.

Nothing can at the same time both have some feature and not have it.

Rejected by Heraclitus?

Philosophy moves west.





Parmenides of Elea born c. 520BCE

Parmenides (fl. c. 485bc)

Problem: ‘What is ultimately real?’

Ionian answer:

Some kind of physical stuff out of which everything is ultimately made.

Parmenides initiates an entirely new approach.

Parmenides' New Question:

What is required in order to be real?

Parmenides' Answer:

There is no unreality at all in what is ultimately real.

Parmenides proposes an analysis the CONCEPT of reality:

There can be no non-being in being.

Non-being cannot be thought or spoken of.

There can be no distinction at all in reality:

Suppose something ultimately real were both

A* and *B

it would be both:

A* and Not-*A

so there would be:

Being *A* and Not-Being *A*

so:

Being and Not-Being

So it would not be ultimately real.

[A] What is ultimately real isn't in time:

(1) its not true that it was

and

(2) it's not true that it will be

since

(3) it is *now* all together

and

(4) it is *now* one

and

(5) it is *now* continuous

for

(6) it did not come to be

[since]

(7) it did not grow from something

[since]

(8) it is not sayable or conceivable that it grew from what is not

for

(9) it is not sayable or conceivable that it is not

(9)

↓ [**for**]

(8)

↓ [**since**]

(7)

↓ [**since**]

(6)

↓ [**for**]

(3) & (4) & (5)

↓ [**since**]

(1) & (2)

(10) if (10a) it began from nothing,

then (10b) something impelled it to be at a particular time

[**But nothing impelled it to be at a particular time**]
(= not (10b))

thus

either (11) it fully is or (12) it is not at all

and

(13) what is cannot come from something other than itself

so

(14) it does not come to be or perish

if (10a), then (10b); but not (10b)

$\downarrow$ **[so]**

[**Not (10a)**]

$\downarrow$ **[so]**

(13) and (Either (11) or (12))

$\downarrow$ **[so]**

(14)

Parmenides' Conclusions

What Ultimately Real Is:

A Plenum = It is entirely full of what is

Continuous

Unchanging

Without beginning and end

Lacks nothing

Complete in every direction

Like a perfect sphere

The Importance of Parmenides

(1) First to offer an account of the concept of reality.

(2) First to offer a sustained argument for the nature of ultimate reality.

(3) The argument seems to show that ultimate reality is entirely simple.

Greek philosophers after Parmenides

(1) Had to find something which satisfied Parmenides' account of ultimate reality.

(2) Give an account of change.

(3) Had to argue for their claims.

Two responses to Parmenides:

1. **Plato's solution:**

Distinguish the physical world, the world of appearance from the realm of ultimate reality, i.e. the realm of being.

The physical world is contradictory, it is changing, it is in flux.

Reality, or being, is unchanging, it outside of space and time.

2. Find something in the physical world which has the properties of what is ultimately real.

Examples:

a. The Atomists: Ultimate being $=$ atoms

- they are eternal $+$ spatially indivisible.

b. Aristotle: Ultimate reality = prime matter

$+$ physical forms.

Ancient Atomism

Leucippus (5thC.BCE) and Democritus (494-404?BCE)

Distinguish between being $=$ atoms and non-being $=$ void

Both are ultimately real.

An atom is an imperceptibly small, indivisible, solid body.

Atoms contain no non-being separating them into corporeal parts

Atoms are indivisible - physically (and logically?)

Atoms do not come into being or cease to exist.

Atoms move in the void

Atoms are of various different shapes

There are infinitely many atoms

Perceptible, macroscopic bodies, are temporary collections of atoms

Perceptible qualities, such as colour, arise from the combination of atoms.

The atoms themselves do not have these qualities.

Pythagoras (fl. 540BCE) and the Pythagoreans

Believed

(1) In the transmigration of Souls

(2) That numbers are the Ultimate Reality

(3) That there are a series of basic oppositions.

(i) limited and unlimited

(ii) odd and even

(iii) one and plurality

(iv) right and left

(v) male and female

(vi) resting and moving

(vii) straight and curved

(viii) light and darkness

(ix) good and bad

(x) square and oblong