Milesians – Material Monists – Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes

Thales fragments --

Arist. Met. i. 3 ; 983 b 6. . . . most of the early students of philosophy thought that first principles in the form of matter, and only these, are the sources of all things; for that of which all things consist, the antecedent from which they have sprung, and into which they are finally resolved (the substance persisting but changing in its attributes), this they say is the element and first principle of things. For there must be one or more than one nature out of which the rest come to be, while it is preserved. 983 b 18. As to the quantity and form of this first principle, there is a difference of opinion; but Thales, the founder of this sort of philosophy, says that it is water (accordingly he declares that the earth rests on water), getting the idea, I suppose, because he saw that the nourishment of all beings is moist, and that warmth itself is gene-rated from moisture and persists in it (for that from which all things spring is the first principle of them); and getting the idea also from the fact that the germs of all beings are of a moist nature, while water is the first principle of the nature of what is moist. And there are some who think that the ancients, and they who lived long before the present generation, and the first students of the gods, had a similar idea in regard to nature; for in their poems Okeanos and Tethys were [Page 3] the parents of generation, and that by which the gods swore was water,-the poets themselves called it Styx ; for that which is most ancient is most highly esteemed, and that which is most highly esteemed is an object to swear by. Whether there is any such ancient and early opinion concerning nature would be an obscure question; but Thales is said to have expressed this opinion in regard to the first cause.

Arist. (On the Heavens) (de Coelo) ii. 13; 294 a 28. Some say that the earth rests on water. We have ascertained that the oldest statement of this character is the one accredited to Thales the Milesian, to the effect that it rests on water, floating like a piece of wood or something else of that sort, whose nature it is to rest upon water, though none of them could rest on air. But this is to forget that the same thing may be said of the water supporting the earth as was said of the earth itself.

Arist. (On the Soul) (de Anima) i. 2; 405 a 19. And Thales, according to what is related of him, seems to have regarded the soul as something endowed with the power of motion, if indeed he said that the loadstone has a soul because it moves iron. i. 5 ; 411 a 7. Some say that soul is diffused throughout the whole universe; and it may have been this which led Thales to think that all things are full of gods.
Thales was the first of the Greeks to devote himself to the study and investigation of the stars, and was the originator of this branch of science; on one occasion he was looking up at the heavens, and was just saying he was intent on studying what was overhead, when he fell into a well; whereupon a maidservant named Thratta laughed at him and said: In his zeal for things in the sky he does not see what is at his feet. And he lived in the time of Croesus.

Anaximander Fragments

Of those who declared that the first principle is one, moving and indefinite, Anaximander . . said that the indefinite was the first principle and element of things that are, and he was the first to introduce this name for the first principle [i.e., he was the first to call the first principle indefinite]. He says that the first principle is neither water nor any other of the things called elements, but some other nature which is indefinite, out of which come to be all the heavens and the worlds in them. The things that are perish into the things out of which they come to be, according to necessity, for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice in accordance with the ordering of time, as he says in rather poetical language. (Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics 24.13 -21 = 12B1 + A9).

[The indefinite] does not have a first principle, but this seems to be the first principle of the rest, and to contain all things and steer all things, as all declare who do not fashion other causes aside from the infinite . . and this is divine. For it is deathless and indestructible, as Anaximander says and most of the natural philosophers. (Aristotle, Physics 3.4 203b 10-15 = 12A15).

Some, like Anaximander . . declare that the earth is at rest on account of its similarity. For it is no more fitting for what is established at the center and equally related to the extremes to move up rather than down or sideways. And it is impossible for it to make a move simultaneously in opposite directions. Therefore, it is at rest of necessity. (Aristotle, On the Heavens 2.13 295b11 -16 = 12A26).

Anaximenes (give one of the specific and “sensible” elements all of the traits that Anaximander gave to apeiron)

Anaximenes . . like Anaximander, declares that the underlying nature is one and boundless, but not indeterminate as Anaximander held, but definite, saying that it is air. [BTW – the term Anaximenes uses is ‘aer’ and is more of a dense mist than the term ‘air’ usually signifies]. It differs in rarity and density according to the substances it becomes. Becoming finer it comes to be fire; being condensed it comes to be wind, then cloud, and when still further condensed it becomes water,
then earth, then stones, and the rest come to be out of these. He too makes motion eternal and says that change also comes to be through it. (Theophrastus, quoted by Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics* 24.26 – 25.1 = 13A5)

Anaximenes . . . said that the principle is unlimited [boundless] air, out of which come to be things that are coming to be, things that have come to be, and things that will be, and gods and divine things. The rest come to be out of the products of this. The form of air is the following: when it is most even, it is invisible, but it is revealed by the cold and the hot and the wet, and movement. It is always moving, for all the things that undergo change would not change unless it was moving. For when it is dissolved into what is finer, it comes to be fire, and on the other hand air comes to be winds when it becomes condensed. (Hippolytus, *Refutation* 1.7 1-3 = 13A7)

Anaximenes determined that the air is a god and that it comes to be and is without measure, infinite and always in motion. (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.10.26 =13A10)

Or as Anaximenes of old believed, let us leave neither the cold nor the hot in the category of substance, but hold them to be common attributes of matter which come as the results of its changes. (Plutarch, *The Principle of Cold*)

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**Pythagoras and Pythagoreans**

First he declares that the soul is immortal; then that it changes into other kinds of animals; in addition that things that happen recur at certain intervals, and nothing is absolutely new; and that all things that come to be alive must be thought akin. Pythagoras seems to have been the first to introduce these opinions into Greece. (Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 19 = 14.8a)

There are two kinds of the Italian philosophy called Pythagorean since two types of people practiced it, the *akousmatikoi* and the *mathematikoi*. Of these, the *akousmatikoi* were admitted to be Pythagoreans by the others, but they did not recognize the *mathematikoi*, but claimed that their pursuits were not those of Pythagoras, but of Hippasus . . . . The philosophy of the *akousmatikoi* consists of unproved and unargued *akousmata* to the effect that one must act in appropriate ways, and they also try to preserve all the other sayings of Pythagoras as divine dogma. These people claim to say nothing of their own invention, and say that to make innovations would be wrong. But they suppose that the wisest of their number are those who have got the most *akousmata*. (Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* 81, 82 = 18, 2 = 58C4)
Heraclitus fragments

“all the laws of men are nourished by one law, the divine law (logos?)”

1. Although this Logos is eternally valid, yet men are unable to understand it -- not only before hearing it, but even after they have heard it for the first time. That is to say, although all things come to pass in accordance with this Logos, men seem to be quite without any experience of it - at least if they are judged in the light of such words and deeds as I am here setting forth.

1a.. (cited as part of the above...) My own method is to distinguish each thing according to its nature, and to specify how it behaves; other men, on the contrary, are as neglectful of what they do when awake as they are when asleep. (1)

2. We should let ourselves be guided by what is common to all. Yet, although the Logos is common to all, most men live as if each of them had a private intelligence of his own. (2)

3. Men who love wisdom should acquaint themselves with a great many particulars. (35)

4. Seekers after gold dig up much earth and find little. (22)

5. Let us not make arbitrary conjectures about the greatest matters. (47)

6. Much learning does not teach understanding, otherwise it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, Xenophanes and Hecataeus. (40)

7. Of those whose discourses I have heard there is not one who attains to the realization that wisdom stands apart from all else. (108)

8.. I have searched myself. (101)

9. It pertains to all men to know themselves and to be temperate. (116)

10. To be temperate is the greatest virtue. Wisdom consists in speaking and acting the truth, giving heed to the nature of things. (112)
11. The things of which there can be sight, hearing, and learning ---- these are what I especially prize. (55)

12. Eyes are more accurate witnesses than ears. (101a)

13. Eyes and ears are bad witnesses to men having barbarian souls. (107)

14. One should not act or speak as if he were asleep. (73)

15. The waking have one world. in common, whereas each sleeper turns away to a private world of his own. (89)

16. Whatever we see when awake is death; when asleep, dreams. (21)

17. Nature loves to hide itself (123)

18. The lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, but gives signs. (93)

19. Unless you expect the unexpected you will never find truth, for it is hard to discover and hard to attain. (18)

20. Everything flows and nothing abides;. Everything gives way and nothing stays fixed.

21. You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters and yet others go ever flowing on. (91, 12)

22. Cool things become warm, the warm grows cool; the moist dries, the parched becomes moist. (126)

23. It is in changing that things find repose. (8~)

24. Time is a child moving counters in a game; the royal power is a child's.(52)

25. War is both father and king of all; some he has shown forth as gods and others as men, some he has made slaves and others free. (53)

26. It should be understood that war is the common condition, that strife is justice, and that all things come to pass through the compulsion of strife. (80)
27. Homer was wrong in saying, "Would that strife might perish from amongst gods and men. For if that were to occur, then all things would cease to exist.

28. There is exchange of all things for fire and of fire for all things, as there is of wares for gold and of gold for wares. (90)

29. This universe, which is the same for all, has not been made by any god or man, but it always has been is, and will be -- an ever-living fire, kindling itself by regular measures and going out by regular measures. (30)

30. The phases of fire are craving and satiety. (65)

31. It throws apart and then brings together again; it advances and retires. (91)

32. The transformations of fire -- first, sea; and of sea, half becomes earth and half the lightning-flash. (31)

33. When earth has melted into sea, the resultant amount is the same as there had been before sea became hardened into earth. (31, ctd.)

34. Fire lives in the death of earth, air in the death of fire, water in the death of air, and earth in the death of water. (76)

35. The thunderbolt pilots all things. (64)

36. The sun is new each day. (6)

37. The sun is the breadth of a man's foot. (3)

38. If there were no sun, the other stars would not suffice to prevent its being night. (99)

39. The boundary line of evening and morning is the Bear; and opposite the Bear is the boundary of bright Zeus. (120)

40. The fairest universe is but a heap of rubbish piled up at random. (124)

41. Every beast is driven to pasture by a blow (11)
42. You could not discover the limits of soul, even if you traveled by every path in order to do so; such is the depth of its meaning. (45)

43. Soul is the vaporization out of which everything else is composed; moreover it is the least corporeal of things and is in ceaseless flux, for the moving world can only be known by what is in motion.()

44. Souls are vaporized from what is moist. (12)

45. Soul has its own inner law of growth. (us)

46. A dry soul is wisest and best. (or) The best and wisest soul is a dry beam of light. (11~)

47. Souls take pleasure in becoming moist. (77)

48. A drunken man has to be led by a boy, whom he follows stumbling and not knowing whither he goes, for his soul is moist. (117)

49. It is death to souls to become water, and it is death to water to become earth. Conversely, water comes into existence out of earth, and souls out of water. (36)

50. Even the sacred barley drink separates when it is not stirred. (125)

51. It is hard to fight against impulsive desire; whatever it wants it will buy at the cost of the soul. (85~

52. It would not be better if things happened to men just as they wish. (110)

53. Although it is better to hide our ignorance, this is hard to do when we relax over wine. (95)

54. A foolish man is a-flutter at every word. (87)

55. Fools, although they hear, are like the deaf: To them the adage applies that when present they are absent. (34)

56. Bigotry is the sacred disease. (46)
57. Most people do not take heed of the things they encounter, nor do they grasp them even when they have learned about them, although they think they do. (17)

58. If all existing things were smoke, it is by smell that we would distinguish them. (7)

59. In Hades souls perceive by smelling. (98)

60. Corpses are more fit to be thrown out than dung. (96)

61. Human nature has no real understanding; only the divine nature has it. (78)

62. Man is not rational; there is intelligence only in what encompasses him.

63. What is divine escapes men's notice because of their incredulity. (86)

64. Although intimately connected with the Logos, men keep setting themselves against it. (72)

65. As in the nighttime a man kindles for himself (haptetai) a light, so when a living man lies down in death with his vision extinguished he attaches himself (haptetai) to the state of death; even as one who has been awake lies down with his vision extinguished and attaches himself to the state of Sleep. (26)

66. Immortals become mortals, mortals become immortals; they live in each other's death and die in each other's life. (62)

67. There await men after death such things as they neither expect nor have any conception of. (27)

68. They arise into wakefulness and become guardians of the living and the dead. (63)

69. A man's character is his guardian divinity. (119)

70. Greater dooms win greater destinies. (25)

71. Justice will overtake fabricators of lies and false witnesses. (28)
72. Fire in its advance will catch all things by surprise and judge them. (66)

73. How can anyone hide from that which never sets? (16)

74. (When visitors unexpectedly found Heraclitus warming himself by the cooking fire) Here, too, are gods. (~)

75. They pray to images, much as if they were to talk to houses; for they do not know what gods and heroes are. (5)

76. Night-walkers, magicians, bacchantes, revelers, and participants in the mysteries What are regarded as mysteries among men are unholy rituals.(14)

77. Their processions and their phallic hymns would be disgraceful exhibitions were it not that they are done in honor 0[[sterling]] Dionysos. But Dionysos in whose honor they rave and hold revels, is the same as Hades. (15)

78e When defiled they purify themselves with blood, as though one who had stepped into filth were to wash himself with filth. If any of his fellow-men should perceive him acting in such a way, they would regard him as mad. (5, ctd.)

79. The Sibyl with raving mouth utters solemn, unadorned, unlovely words, but she reaches out over a thousand years with her voice because of the god within her. (92)

80. Thinking is common to all. (113)

81. Men should speak with rational mind and thereby hold strongly to that which is shared in common ---- as a city holds on to its law, and even more strongly. For all human laws are nourished by the one divine law, which prevails as far as it wishes, suffices for all things, and yet is something more than they are (114)

82. The people should fight for their law as for their city wall. (44)

83. Law involves obeying the counsel of one. (33)

84. To me one man is worth ten thousand if he is first-rate. (49)
85. The best of men choose one thing in preference to all else, immortal glory in preference to mortal good; whereas the masses simply glut themselves like cattle. (29)

86. Gods and men honor those slain in battle. (24)

87. Even those who are most in repute know and maintain only what is reputed. (28)

88. To extinguish hybris is more needed than to extinguish a fire. (43)

89. It is weariness to keep toiling at the same things so that one becomes ruled by them. (84b)

90. Dogs bark at a person whom they do not know. (97)

91. What sort of mind or intelligence have they? They believe popular folktales and follow the crowd as their teachers, ignoring the adage that the many are bad, the good are few. (104)

92e Men are deceived in their knowledge of things that are manifest, even as Homer was who was the wisest of all the Greeks. For he was even deceived by boys killing lice when they said to him: What we have seen and grasped, these we leave behind; whereas what we have not seen and grasped, these we carry away." (56)

93. Homer deserves to be thrown out of the contests and flogged and Archilochus too. (42)

94. Hesiod distinguishes good days and evil days, not knowing that every day is like every other. (106)

95. The Ephesians had better go hang themselves, every man of them, and leave their city to be governed by youngsters, for they have banished Hermadorus, the finest man among them, declaring: "Let us not have anyone among us who excels the rest; if there should be such a one, let him go and live else-where." (121)

96. May you have plenty of wealth, you men of Ephesus, in order that you may be punished for your evil ways (125a)
97. After birth men have the wish to live and to accept their dooms; then they leave behind them children to become dooms in their turn. (20)

98. Opposition brings concord. Out of discord comes the fairest harmony. (8)

99. It is by disease that health is pleasant, by evil that good is pleasant, by hunger satiety, by weariness rest. (111)

100. Men would not have known the name of justice if these things had not occurred. (23)

101. Sea water is at once very pure and very foul: it is drinkable and healthful for fishes, but undrinkable and deadly for men. (61)

102. Donkeys would prefer hay to gold. (9)

103. Pigs wash in mud, and domestic fowls in dust or ashes. (37)

104. The handsomest ape is ugly compared with humankind; the wisest man appears as an ape when compared with a god --- in wisdom, in beauty, and in all other ways. (82, 83)

105. Man is regarded as childish by a spirit (daemon), just as a boy is by a man. (79)

106. To God all things are beautiful, good, and right. Men, on the other hand, deem some things right and others wrong. (102)

107. Doctors cut, burn, and torture the sick, and then demand of them an undeserved fee for such services. (58)

108. The way up and the way down are one and the same. (60)

109. In the circumference of the circle the beginning and the end are common. (103)

110. Into the same rivers we step and do not step. (49a)
III. For wool-carders the straight and the winding way are one and the same. (59)

112. The bones connected by joints are at once a unitary whole and not a unitary whole. To be in agreement is to differ; the concordant is the discordant. From out of all the many particulars comes oneness, and out of oneness comes all the many particulars. (10)

113. It is one and the same thing to be living and dead, awake or asleep, young or old. The former aspect in each case becomes the latter, and the latter becomes the former, by sudden unexpected reversal (88)

114. Hesiod, whom so many accept as their wise teacher, did not even understand the nature of day and night; for they are one. (57)

115. The name of the bow is life, but its work is death. (48)

116. The hidden harmony is better than the obvious. (54)

117. People do not understand how that which is at variance with itself agrees with itself. There is a harmony in the bending back, as in the cases of the bow and the lyre. (51)

118. Listening not to me but to the Logos, it is wise to acknowledge that all things are one. (50)

119. Wisdom is one and unique; it is unwilling and yet willing to be called by the name of Zeus. (32)

120. Wisdom is one ---- to know the intelligence by which all things are steered through all things. (41)

121. God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, satiety But he undergoes transformations, just as (.........) when mixed with is named according to the particular aroma which it gives off. (67)

122. The sun will not overstep his measures; if he were to do so, the Erinnyes, handmaidens of justice, would seek him out for punishment (94)

123. All things come in their due season. (100)
Even sleepers are workers and collaborators in what goes on in the universe.

Eleatic Philosophy: Parmenides -

1. Come now, I will tell you ... the only ways of inquiry there are for thinking: the one, that it is and that it is not possible for it not to be, is the path of Persuasion (for it attends upon Truth), the other, that it is not and that it is necessary for it not to be, this I point out to you to be a path completely unlearnable, for neither may you know that which is not (for it is not to be accomplished) nor may you declare it. [2=B2]

2. For the same thing is for thinking and for being. [3=B3]

3. That which is there to be spoken and thought of must be. For it is possible for it to be, but not possible for nothing to be. [6=B6]

4. For in no way may this prevail, that things that are not, are. But you, bar your thought from this way of inquiry, and do not let habit born from much experience compel you along this way to direct you sightless eye and sounding ear and tongue, judge by reason the heavily contested testing spoken by me. B7

5. There is still left a single story of a way, that it is. On this way there are signs exceedingly many – that being ungenerated it is also imperishable, whole and of a single kind and unshaken and complete. Nor was it ever nor will it be, since it is now, all together one, continuous. For what birth will you seek for it? How and from where did it grow?

Thus it must either fully be or not. Nor will the force of conviction ever permit anything to come to be from what is not beside it.

In this way, coming to be has been extinguished and destruction is unheard of. Nor is it divided, since it all is alike; nor is it any more in any way, which would keep it from holding together, or any less, but it is all full of what is. Therefore, it is all continuous, for what is draws near to what is. But unchanging in the limits of great bonds, it is without start or finish, since coming to be and desctuction were banished far away and the true conviction drove them off.

Remaining the same in the same and by itself it lies and so statys in the bonds of a limit, which pens it in all round, since it is right for what is to be not incomplete; for it is not lacking; if it were, it would lack everything.
Thinking and the thought that it is are the same. For not without what is, in which it is expressed, will you find thinking; for nothing else either is or will be except that which is, since Fate shackled it to be whole and unchanging; wherefore it has been named all things mortals have established, persuaded that they are true – to come to be and to perish, to be and not [to be], and to change place and alter bright color. But since there is a furthest limit, it is complete, on all sides like the bulk of a well-rounded ball, evenly balanced in every way from the middle; for it must be not at all greater or smaller here than there. For neither is there what is not – which would stop it from reaching its like – nor is what is in such a way that there could be more of what is here and less there, since it I all inviolate; for equal to itself on all sides, it meets with its limits uniformly.
[8=B8]