

Anaximenes

- An-axe-ZIM-eh-knees
- Flourished c. 546 (about 24 years younger than Anaximander)
- He probably died around 528 BCE
- Anaximander's pupil
- His archê is *air* (aer)

Anaximenes

- Anaximenes determined that air is a god and that it comes to be and is without measure, infinite and always in motion.

Cicero (Cohen, 13)

Anaximenes

- 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.

Anaximenes

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.

Anaximenes

Recall that Anaximander thought of all the basic stuff of the cosmos as the “unlimited” and that he saw the basic qualities of the world as **opposites** which were in conflict.

Anaximenes

Anaximenes, on the other hand, envisions the elemental stuffs and qualities as being on a continuum of existence.

Key concept:
Rarefaction and Condensation

Condensation is the process by which a gas or vapor changes to a liquid.

So, FIRE changes into AIR, which is transformed into WIND and then CLOUD. From CLOUD, "FIRE" changes into WATER, then EARTH and last STONE.

Anaximenes

For rarefaction we go in reverse:

Rarefaction is the decrease in density and pressure in a medium.

Anaximenes

Air is the *archê* for Anaximenes probably because he thought it was the element from which the others arose through the process of rarefaction and condensation.

Anaximenes

On Anaximenes' view, everything originated out of air. Everything was made from air.

Anaximenes

Air and Soul

ether = upper reaches of the atmosphere
(such as the top of Mt. Olympus)

aer = the mixture of mist, vapor and air
that is around mortals.

Anaximenes

Just as our soul (*psychê*), being air (*aer*), holds us together and controls us, so do breath (*pneuma*) and air (*aer*) surround the whole cosmos (*kosmon*).

(Aetius Cohen, 12)

Cosmogony

To paraphrase Anaximenes . . .

- All things are produced by condensation and rarefaction of air.
- Motion exists from eternity
- When the air “felts” the first thing to come into being is earth.
- Everything else is generated from the earth.

Cosmogony

- The sun is “earth” but because of its rapid motion it obtained greater heat.
- Heavenly bodies come into being from earth through the exhalation arising from it.
- When the exhalation is rarefied fire comes into being, and from fire raised on high the stars are composed.

Anaximenes' Greatest Hits

Summary of Anaximenes' achievement: See **Barnes, *Presocratics*, p. 47:**

“We need not embrace Anaximenes' conclusions in order to admire his principles and his methodology: observations of a puzzle situation lead him to form explanatory theories of successively greater generality.

Anaximenes' Greatest Hits

And the final theory has many of the hallmarks of science: it is highly general; it is devastatingly simple; it explains the original puzzle; and it applies to, and can therefore be tested against, a mass of superficially unconnected phenomena.”