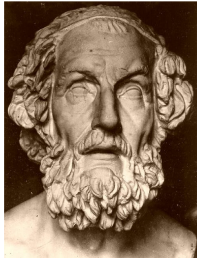


# ARCHAIC AGE OF GREECE

(800-500 BC)



*Homer, according to legend, was blind. He composed the two epic poems (the Iliad and the Odyssey), focusing on the Trojan War and its aftermath. This was the first European literature.*

- Far more than a good war story (which it was), the *Iliad* also examined the tensions between the individual and society, as seen in how Achilles' feud with Agamemnon hurt the Greek war effort.
- Presocratic philosophers (*phusikoi*)
  - Rejected earlier myths of Homer and Hesiod about gods
  - Insisted upon physical explanations for the creation of the universe, and people
  - Insisted upon using logic, rejected the argument from authority
    - Zeno (ca. 495-430 BC) used some interesting paradoxes to prove that nothing ever really changed, and that you couldn't trust even your senses, but had to use reason
    - Democritus (c. 460-370) taught the atomic theory
- Adoption of Phoenician alphabet, rapid and widespread use of writing
- Increase in trade, and the use of gold and silver as money (instead of barter, and pricing items in terms of oxen)
- Use of the hoplite phalanx formation
- Evolution from monarchy (see *Iliad*) to aristocracy
- *Stasis* (civil discord) between rich and poor
  - Gave the Greeks motivation for colonization
  - Gives rise to tyrannies in many Greek cities
  - Reforms of Solon and Cleisthenes in Athens
  - Spartan solution