

THE GENESIS OF GREEK SCIENCE IN "THE INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURE OF ANCIENT MAN"*

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We must abandon the old idea of Graeco-European science as unique and independent.

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Introduction

In contrast to historians of philosophy who generally tend to be enthusiastic in reading peculiarity, uniqueness and originality into, or out of, Greek thought,² historians of science, on the

* This paper is a slightly enhanced version of Chapter 3 ("Arguments from Comparative History of Science") of my master's thesis "The Genesis of Greek Philosophy and Science: An Outline of the Case for the Revisionist Viewpoint" (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1999). The phrasing of the second half of the paper's title is borrowed from Henri and H. A. Frankfort et al., *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1977), although, as shall be seen, I do not at all subscribe to the Frankforts' notion of the Greeks' "peculiar intellectual courage" by which myth was entirely overcome in their speculative thought; see *ibid.*, 373, henceforth cited as *Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*. A chronological note: throughout this paper, unless in citations, all dates are qualified as BCE (before Common Era) or CE (Common Era) instead of BC or AD, as the case may be.

¹ "Greek Astronomy and Their Neighbours," in *History of Oriental Astronomy*, Proceedings of an international astronomical union colloquium no. 91, eds. G. Swarup, A. K. Bag, K. S. Shukla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 73; henceforth "Greek Astronomy."

² A good sampling of their hellenocentric attitude can be assessed in Frederick Coplestone, *A History of Philosophy*, 9 vols. (London: Search Press, 1946-75), 1:10, 14-16, henceforth *History of Philosophy*; W. T. Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1960), 17; J. C. Stobart, *The Glory that was Greece: A Survey of Hellenic Culture and Civilization* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1911), 5; Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Simon &

whole,³ are more ready to acknowledge, even to emphasize,

Schuster, 1972), xiv, 3, henceforth *History of Western Philosophy*; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 6 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1: 34-38; John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1945), 15-24; Julian Marias, *History of Philosophy* (New York: Dover Publications, 1967), 4, 9-10; W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), 1: 1-10; S. E. Stumpf, *Philosophy: History & Problems* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1994), 3-4. Similar internalist approach to "The Background of Greek Science and Philosophy" can be clearly discerned in the otherwise useful and critical textbook on philosophy of science by Marx W. Wartofsky, *Conceptual Foundations of Scientific Thought: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science* (New York: MacMillan; London: Collier MacMillan, 1968), 69-70. See also Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London: Routledge, 1993), 3; his unrelenting philhellenic assertiveness is proudly expressed in his enthusiastic review of G. E. R. Lloyd's relatively recent book, *The Revolutions of Wisdom: Studies in the Claims and Practices of Ancient Greek Science* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), in the *Times Literary Supplement* (London), 16-22 December 1988, p. 1392, where he says: "It is unfashionable to speak of a greek 'miracle'....But let the pendulum of fashion swing as it may, the Greeks invented science and philosophy," cited in Robert Palter, "Black Athena, Afro-centrism, and the History of Science," in *History of Science* 31 (1993), 287 n. 211, and in "Black Athena, Afrocentrism, and the History of Science," in *Black Athena Revisited*, eds. Mary R. Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 266 n. 88, henceforth *BAR*. I am indebted to Professor Dr. Paul Lettinck of ISTAC, my thesis supervisor, for drawing my attention to the last book. Similarly, see also Antony Flew, *An Introduction to Western Philosophy* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988), 36; G. H. Clark, "The Beginnings of Greek Philosophy," in *A History of Philosophical Systems*, ed. Fern Vergilius (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950), 70; G. H. Lewes, *The Biographical History of Philosophy* (Farnborough, Hants.: Gregg International, 1970), 3; G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane, 3 vols. (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1955; New York: Humanities Press, 1963), 1: 149. This last reference is also cited in Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, vol. 1, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece: 1784-1985* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 295, henceforth *BA I*; and in Coplestone, *History of Philosophy*, 1: 10.

³ Among the notable exceptions are G. E. R. Lloyd, *Early Greek Science*: