



In the Light of Science: Our Ancient Quest for Knowledge and the Measure of Modern Physics

Demetris Nicolaides

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The birth of science in ancient Greece had a historical impact that is still being felt today. Physicist Demetris Nicolaides examines the epochal shift in thinking that led pre-Socratic philosophers of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE to abandon the prevailing mythologies of the age and, for the first time, to analyze the natural world in terms of impersonal, rationally understood principles. He argues not only that their conceptual breakthroughs anticipated much of later science but that scientists of the twenty-first century are still grappling with the fundamental problems raised twenty-five hundred years ago.

Looking at the vast sweep of human history, the author delves into the factors that led to the birth of science: urbanization, the role of religion, and in Greece a progressive intellectual curiosity that was unafraid to question tradition.

Why did the first scientific approach to understanding the world take place in Greece? The author makes a convincing case that, aside from factors of geography and politics, the power of the Greek language and a cultural proclivity for critical thinking played a large role.

In the Light of Science is a unique approach to the history of science revealing the important links between the ancient past and the present scientific endeavor to understand the universe.

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