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Summary

THE CONCEPTION OF THE HEAVENS IN ARCHAIC IONIAN COSMOLOGIES

Current interpretations of the concept of heaven in Archaic Greece tend to work with the notion of a solid hemisphere stretching over a flat earth. If, therefore, thinkers of the Ionian school of philosophy also viewed heaven as one of the basic constituents of the world, it would have been the outermost periphery of the entire universe that had a particular composition. Moreover, given the meteorological background of archaic Ionian cosmologies, which envisages the movement of heavenly bodies only above the earth, one can assume that Ionian thinkers viewed the universe as closed and its space usually as stretching between a flat earth and heaven as its upper limit. The article argues, however, that heaven was not believed to be a hemisphere: analogically to earth, it was instead assumed to be flat or curved. A spherical conception of heaven, in which the idea of hemisphere rather anachronistically originated, emerges only later, in the work of thinkers of the so-called Italian school of philosophy, from which it passed into the works of Plato and Aristotle.

Keywords: cosmology; earth; heaven; heavenly bodies; universe

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