Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is about the origin of our Western world-picture in Greek cosmology. The late Cornelis Verhoeven from the University of Amsterdam guided my first steps in the study of Anaximander, which in 1989 resulted in my doctoral dissertation on the translation and interpretation of the text of his only surviving fragment. At that time, I had the opportunity to discuss my earliest thoughts about Anaximander’s cosmology with the also late Jan van Paradijs, who was, being a famous astronomer himself, interested in ancient astronomy as well. With Robert Hahn from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, I have had intensive discussions for many years, by email and during visits, on the understanding of Anaximander’s cosmology. The fact that I disagree with a good deal of the tenor of his work does not diminish in the least the importance of this contact. I am especially grateful that he scrutinized the whole manuscript and made a lot of wise and helpful comments. This manuscript was already finished when his latest book, *Archaeology and the Origins of Philosophy*, appeared, on which I have been able, therefore, to insert only a few incidental remarks. For an extensive review, see Couprie (2010). Less frequent, but always stimulating, were the personal and email contacts with Gerard Naddaf from York University, Toronto. The book that the three of us wrote about Anaximander in 2003 has added much to my insights in ancient Greek cosmology. The exchange of thoughts by email with István Bodnár from Eötvös University, Budapest, Andrew Gregory from the University College London, and Carlo Rovelli from the Centre de Physique Théorique de Luminy, were very fruitful. The same holds especially for Dmitri Panchenko from the State University of St. Petersburg, who was so kind as to write a Foreword to my book. The contacts with Patricia O’Grady from Flinders University of South Australia at Adelaide were inspiring, although I fundamentally disagree with her interpretation of Thales. F. Richard Stephenson from the University of Durham kindly placed at my disposal his computer computations, based on the most recent insights, of some relevant solar eclipses. I was lucky to have had a couple of discussions with Teije de Jong from the University of Amsterdam on the prediction of eclipses as well as on the measuring of the size of the sun on a flat earth. I had
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