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**THE UNDERSTANDING OF CAUSE BY PRESOCRATICS.
THE TRANSITION FROM ἀρχή TO αἰτία**

SUMMARY

The primary ideal of philosophical investigations was focused on seeking for causes which existed in the world of nature. First attempts were concentrated on discovering a basic constructive element (proto-element), which also was to be the primitive principle (ἀρχή) of life and transformations in the world. That current was represented by such philosophers as Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras or Diogenes of Apollonia, who endeavored to describe the reality and its intrinsic processes in a broader causal context. They emphasized material and dynamic causes for originating things and keeping them in existence – causes which transcended a homogeneous principle. The variety of phenomena in the world demanded to seek for causes of different kinds, and became a significant step for understanding the reality in a strictly philosophical way. With having distinguished functions of causes, mentioned thinkers gave a solid foundation for understanding cause as αἰτία in later philosophy (of Plato and Aristotle). According to first philosophers, however, the existence and function of causes remained completely dependent on the material component of the reality, which proved that pre-Socratic philosophy was entirely dominated by the physical view of the world.

KEY WORDS: arche, aitia, cause, principle, matter, presocratics.

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