Xenophanes of Colophon- The Father of Epistemology

(c.560 - c.470 B.C.)

Table of Contents

XENOPHANES OF COLOPHON- THE FATHER OF EPISTEMOLOGY ..................... 1
(c.560 - c.470 B.C.) ..................................................................................... 1
I. Historical Background .................................................................................. 1
II. Chronology .................................................................................................. 2
III. Intellectual Setting ..................................................................................... 2
V. Famous Sayings/Quotes .............................................................................. 2
VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................................................... 3

I. Historical Background

N/A
II. Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Intellectual Setting

N/A

IV. Notable Ideas and Achievements

Xenophanes was a pre-Socratic philosopher, cosmologist, and theologian. He is best remembered for being the author of the first known discussion of epistemology. According to him, it is not sufficient to ‘speak what is completely true’ to claim knowledge (Honderich, 2005). He also held that there was no possibility of ‘knowledge outside the realm of direct experience. He proposes to put in place ‘opinions resembling the things which are true’, that are directly obtained from the world known through experience.

In terms of theology, he is most notoriously known for remarking that each race represented their gods in their own image, and concluded that, if horses could draw, they would draw their gods looking like horses (Lesher, 1992). He also attacked the established traditional stories about the Greek gods as immoral. He advocated replacing such mysticism with a transcendent monotheism.

V. Famous Sayings/Quotes

“The Aethiopians sat that their gods are snubbed-nosed and black-skinned and the Thracians that theirs are blue-eyed and red-haired. If only oxen and horses had hands and wanted to draw with their hands to make works of art that men make, then horses and would draw the figures of their gods like horses, and oxen like oxen, and would make their bodies on the model of their own.”

~ Xenophanes (Toynbee, 1972)
VI. Bibliography