

Thales of Miletus Encyclopedia Article

Thales of Miletus

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Thales of Miletus

625?-547? B.C.

Greek natural philosopher, engineer, and mathematician whom later Greek mathematicians credit with bringing Egyptian mathematics to Greece, thereby founding the study of Greek geometry. He is considered the first philosopher to suggest natural, rather than supernatural, causes for events such as earthquakes. He thought water was the basic element that all others were created from. A wealthy engineer and politician, he is said to have successfully predicted an eclipse in 585 B.C., and was possibly the teacher of Anaximander. None of his writings survive.