

## MAIN ISSUES OF ANTIQUE PHILOSOPHY

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**Introduction.** Antique philosophy arose in the 6th century BC and continued throughout the Hellenistic and period in which Greece and most Greek-inhabited lands were part of the Roman Empire. Philosophy was used to make sense out of the world using reason. It dealt with a wide variety of subjects, including astronomy, mathematics, political philosophy, epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, ontology, logic, biology, rhetoric and aesthetics. Greek philosophy has influenced much of Western culture since its inception. Alfred North Whitehead once noted: “The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato”. Clear, unbroken lines of influence lead from ancient Greek and Hellenistic philosophers to Roman philosophy, Early Islamic philosophy, Medieval Scholasticism, the European Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment. Greek philosophy was influenced to some extent by the older wisdom literature and mythological cosmogonies of the ancient Near East, though the extent of this influence is debated. The classicist Martin Litchfield West states, “contact with oriental cosmology and theology helped to liberate the early Greek philosophers’ imagination; it certainly gave them many suggestive ideas. But they taught themselves to reason. Philosophy as we understand it is a Greek creation”. Subsequent philosophic tradition was so influenced by Socrates as presented by Plato that it is conventional to refer to philosophy developed prior to Socrates as pre-Socratic philosophy. The periods following this, up to and after the wars of Alexander the Great, are those of “Classical Greek” and “Hellenistic philosophy”, respectively.

**Aim.** The main issues of Antique Philosophy, and its effect on other areas.

**Materials and methods.** This article is based on some philosophers’ sayings and scientific articles.

**Results and discussions.** The philosophical tradition of ancient Greece continued to influence thinkers in many cultures throughout history. Roman scholars and philosophers continued to debate, analyze, and write about the ideas the Greeks had explored. The European Renaissance, which lasted from the 1400s to the 1600s, was characterized by a deep interest in the works of both Plato and Aristotle. The use of Latin as a scholarly language continued well after the fall of the Roman Empire. Translations of Greek works into Latin were used by scholars in many parts of the world. Aristotle, in particular, influenced the work of many later thinkers, including

the theologian Thomas Aquinas and the Muslim philosopher IbnRushd (known in the West as Averroës).

Is ancient Greek philosophy before Socrates and schools contemporary to Socrates that was not influenced by him? The inquiries of these early philosophers spanned the workings of the natural world as well as human society, ethics, and religion, seeking explanations based on natural principles rather than the actions of gods.

Thales of Miletus, regarded by Aristotle as the first philosopher, held that all things arise from a single material substance, water. Thales inspired the Milesian school of philosophy and was followed by Anaximander. He began from the observation that the world seems to consist of opposites (e.g., hot and cold), yet a thing can become its opposite (e.g., a hot thing cold). Therefore, they cannot truly be opposites but rather must both be manifestations of some underlying unity that is neither.

Xenophanes was highly influential to subsequent schools of philosophy. He was seen as the founder of a line of philosophy that culminated in Pyrrhonism, possibly an influence on Eleatic philosophy, and a precursor to Epicurus' total break between science and religion.

Pythagoras is said to have been a disciple of Anaximander and to have imbibed the cosmological concerns of the Ionians, including the idea that the cosmos is constructed of spheres, the importance of the infinite, and that air or aether is the arche of everything. Pythagoreanism also incorporate dasceticideals, emphasizing purification, metempsychosis, and consequently a respect for all animal life; much was made of the correspondence between mathematics and the cosmos in a musical harmony. Pythagoras believed that behind the appearance of things, there was the permanent principle of mathematics, and that the forms were based on a transcendental mathematical relation.

Contrary to the Milesian school, which posits one stable element as the arche, Heraclitus taught that *panta rhei* ("everything flows"), the closest element to this eternal flux being fire. All things come to pass in accordance with Logos, which must be considered as "plan" or "formula", and "the Logos is common». He also posited a unity of opposites, expressed through dialectic, which structured this flux, such as those seeming opposites in fact are manifestations of a common substrate to good and evil itself.

The first person to call themselves a sophist, according to Plato, was Protagoras, whom he presents as teaching that all virtue is conventional. It was Protagoras who claimed that "man is the measure of all things, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not," which Plato interprets as a radical perspectivism.

The Socratic philosophers in ancient Greece were Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Numerous subsequent philosophical movements were inspired by Socrates or his younger associates. Plato casts Socrates as the main interlocutor in his dialogues, deriving from them the basis of Platonism (and by extension, Neoplatonism). Plato's student Aristotle in turn criticized and built upon the doctrines he ascribed to Socrates and Plato, forming the foundation of Aristotelianism.

Socrates, believed to have been born in Athens in the 5th century BC, is remembered for his teaching methods and for asking thought-provoking questions. Instead of lecturing his students, he asked them difficult questions in order to challenge their underlying assumptions — a method still used in modern-day law schools. Because Socrates wrote little about his life or work, much of what we know comes from his student Plato.

Plato was an Athenian of the generation after Socrates. He studied ethics, virtue, justice, and other ideas relating to human behavior. Following in Socrates' footsteps, he became a teacher and inspired the work of the next great Greek philosopher, Aristotle. Plato's dialogues feature Socrates, although not always as the leader of the conversation. (One dialogue, the *Laws*, instead contains an "Athenian Stranger"). Along with Xenophon, Plato is the primary source of information about Socrates' life and beliefs and it is not always easy to distinguish between the two. The political doctrine ascribed to Plato is derived from the *Republic*, the *Laws*, and the *Statesman*. The first of these contains the suggestion that there will not be justice in cities unless they are ruled by philosopher kings. Plato's dialogues also have metaphysical themes, the most famous of which is his theory of forms. It holds that non-material abstract (but substantial) forms (or ideas), and not the material world of change known to us through our physical senses, possess the highest and most fundamental kind of reality.

Aristotle is often portrayed as disagreeing with his teacher Plato (e.g., in Raphael's *School of Athens*). He criticizes the regimes described in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, and refers to the theory of forms as "empty words and poetic metaphors". He is generally presented as giving greater weight to empirical observation and practical concerns.

Cynicism was founded by Antisthenes, who was a disciple of Socrates, as well as Diogenes, his contemporary. Their aim was to live according to nature and against convention.

The Cyrenaics were founded by Aristippus of Cyrene, who was a pupil of Socrates. The Cyrenaics were hedonists and held that pleasure was the supreme good in life, especially physical pleasure, which they thought more intense and more desirable than mental pleasures.

Many different schools of thought developed in the Hellenistic world and then the Greco-Roman world. There were Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Syrians and Arabs who contributed to the development of Hellenistic philosophy.

After returning to Greece, Pyrrho started a new school of philosophy, Pyrrhonism, which taught that it is one's opinions about non-evident matters that prevent one from attaining eudemonia.

Epicurus studied in Athens with Nausiphanes, who was a follower of Democritus and a student of Pyrrho of Elis. He accepted Democritus' theory of atomism, with improvements made in response to criticisms by Aristotle and others. His ethics were based on "the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain".

The founder of Stoicism, Zeno of Citium, was taught by Crates of Thebes, and he took up the Cynic ideals of continence and self-mastery, but applied the concept of apatheia (indifference) to personal circumstances rather than social norms, and switched shameless flouting of the latter for a resolute fulfillment of social duties. Logic and physics were also part of early Stoicism, further developed by Zeno's successors Cleanthes and Chrysippus.

During the Middle Ages, Greek ideas were largely forgotten in Western Europe due to the Migration Period, which resulted in a decline in literacy. In the Byzantine Empire Greek ideas were preserved and studied, and not long after the first major expansion of Islam, however, the Abbasid caliphs authorized the gathering of Greek manuscripts and hired translators to increase their prestige.

Islamic philosophers such as Al-Kindi (Alkindus), Al-Farabi (Alpharabius), Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) reinterpreted these works, and during the High Middle Ages Greek philosophy re-entered the West through translations from Arabic to Latin and also from the Byzantine Empire. The re-introduction of these philosophies, accompanied by the new Arabic commentaries, had a great influence on Medieval philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas.

**Conclusions.** The Conclusion argues that the historical importance of Socrates, unquestionable though it is, does not exhaust his significance, even for a secular, non-ideological age. As well as a historical person and a literary persona, Socrates is an exemplary figure, who challenges, encourages, and inspires. The Socratic method of challenging students to examine their beliefs, to revise them in the light of argument, and to arrive at answers through critical reflection on the information presented goes far beyond pedagogical strategy. 'The unexamined life is not worth living for a human being' expresses a central human value: the willingness to rethink one's own assumptions, thereby rejecting the tendency to complacent dogmatism.