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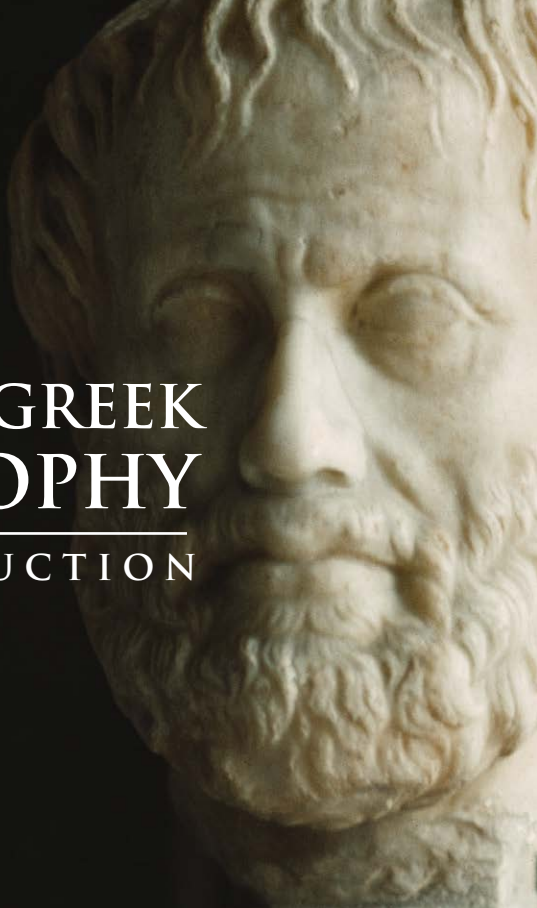
# ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY

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AN INTRODUCTION

Compiled by **Tom Griffith**  
and **Hugh Griffith**

Read by **Bruce Alexander**  
**Oliver Ford Davies**  
**Crawford Logan** and **cast**



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## CD 1

1	<b>Narrator:</b> Philosophy arises out of two fundamental questions:	6:00
2	<b>Diogenes:</b> After engaging in politics he became a student of nature.	6:16
3	From Book 9, on Heraclitus	4:58
4	From Book 2, on Anaxagoras	3:22
5	From Book 8, on Pythagoras	4:59
6	From Book 9, on Democritus	3:14
7	<b>Narrator:</b> In general, it is probably fair to say...	3:24
8	<b>Meno:</b> There will be no difficulty, Socrates...	7:41
9	<b>Socrates:</b> That would be your mode of speaking?	6:11
10	<b>Meno:</b> Well then, Socrates, virtue, as I take it...	4:44
11	So, the man proposes the death penalty	5:12
12	I can imagine someone saying...	5:03
13	I am now departing...	4:39
14	Suppose it's a total absence...	6:53

**Total time on CD 1: 72:48**

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## CD 2

1	<b>Meno:</b> And how will you enquire, Socrates...	5:58
2	I now want to know whether you still...	6:38
3	<b>Narrator:</b> There is an exact parallel here...	5:31
4	So, in his desire to create...	6:24
5	<b>Narrator:</b> Plato	7:37
6	Is not thirst the desire which the soul has...	8:01
7	Suppose that a man thinks he has done wrong	6:49
8	<b>Narrator:</b> So in the ideal city or state...	6:36
9	I dare say that you remember...	6:36
10	<b>Narrator:</b> Ideally, then, philosophers should...	7:04
11	<b>Narrator:</b> Not democracy, then...	4:47

**Total time on CD 2: 72:08**

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### CD 3

1	<b>Narrator:</b> Before we say that no-one...	7:50
2	The body is more like the other...	6:48
3	<b>Narrator:</b> The final selection from Plato...	6:45
4	By all means, he said, tell us...	6:48
5	You would say, would you not...	7:59
6	This entire allegory...	4:26
7	<b>Narrator:</b> It may be that, for Anglo Saxon...	7:00
8	<b>Aristotle:</b> All men by nature desire to know...	5:31
9	We have said in the Ethics...	6:23
10	The Nicimecion Ethics	3:42
11	<b>Aristotle:</b> And now let us revert to the good...	6:48
12	We must now enquire, concerning happiness...	5:50

**Total time on CD 3: 75:57**

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## CD 4

1	Book II, 1–3	6:06
2	Thus it is therefore...	5:54
3	Book VIII, 1–3	6:19
4	But must they not add that the feeling...	6:31
5	Book X, 1–3	4:39
6	What is there then of such a nature?	7:36
7	Book X, 6–7	4:34
8	Now, if Happiness...	5:45
9	<b>Narrator:</b> The Politics	5:31
10	Now, if in this particular science...	7:11
11	Book III, 6–7	6:31

**Total time on CD 4: 66:45**

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## CD 5

1	Book III, 11 & 13	7:47
2	Now, in general, a citizen is one who...	5:21
3	Book IV, 4	6:20
4	If, then, these things are necessary...	5:55
5	Book IV, 11–13	6:19
6	Those who made conquests in Greece...	5:50
7	Book VIII, 1–3	3:48
8	There are four things...	4:20
9	<b>Narrator:</b> The Stoics and the Epicureans	3:20
10	<b>Diogenes:</b> The ethical branch of philosophy...	6:19
11	Virtue, in the first place...	5:43
12	Of mental goods, some are habits...	6:10
13	The term 'indifferent' has two meanings	6:32

**Total time on CD 5: 73:54**

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## CD 6

1	According to the Stoics...	5:46
2	Also they say there are three emotional...	5:10
3	But Hericlaedes of Tarsus...	6:21
4	<b>Narrator:</b> Stoicism became very influential...	3:39
5	In the first place...	7:05
6	The repetition at such length...	5:48
7	Falsehood and error always depend...	7:27
8	We must consider the minimum...	5:39
9	Next, keeping in view our perceptions...	3:59
10	There is the further point to be considered...	6:01
11	There is yet one more point...	8:00
12	And, when once we have attained all this...	7:41
13	<b>Narrator:</b> So, is that it then?	2:24

**Total time on CD 6: 75:10**

**Total time on CDs 1–6: 7:16:42**

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# ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY

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## AN INTRODUCTION

Compiled by **Tom Griffith** and **Hugh Griffith**

The history of western philosophy, it has been said, is merely a series of footnotes to Plato and Aristotle. Of course, there is a touch of exaggeration here. The Greeks may have been clever, but they weren't *that* clever. Or at least, not obviously cleverer than Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Wittgenstein and a host of others who came up with some very intriguing ideas of their own. Still, the point remains. Plato and Aristotle were the first to produce well-reasoned theories that could provide coherent, sometimes even cogent, answers to the most intractable questions of our universe, relying on rational argument rather than the picturesque fables of mythology.

Those who came after found the ground already cleared, with signs posted to mark the limits of the territory and instructions for avoiding most of the possible traps.

Philosophy is an activity where having predecessors is an enormous help, particularly when you are sure they got the answer wrong. Aristotle spent much of his time correcting Plato (as he saw it), and before that Plato himself had found that demolishing old ideas was often the best way to start thinking about new ones. Exactly how these old ideas were originally expressed is not always easy for us to establish at a distance of some two and a half millennia. Apart from a few fragments, the texts of the earliest



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Greek philosophers have disappeared, so even when we are lucky enough to know something specific that they said, their reasons for saying it may still be hazy. Nor are there any neat lines dividing the various objects of their interest into separate disciplines. Astronomy, cosmology, religion and ethics are mingled together in this proto-philosophy.

There was no essential disagreement between these pioneer speculators about what they could see or hear going on around them. The appearances, or 'phenomena' (to use their own word), were plain enough, give or take a few mirages in the desert or straight sticks suddenly looking bent when placed in water. But appearances were not sufficient to explain what the reality was like. Viewed simply as appearances, they were for ever changing. Clouds formed and dropped rain, seeds grew into trees, fruit ripened and then rotted, wood thrown on a fire burst into flames and turned into ash. Yet beyond or behind this ceaseless bustle, there seemed to be something constant that endured. How was it possible that everything was always changing but the world remained

the same? More than any other, it was this contradiction that prompted the first rather haphazard musings on the first principles of a theory of nature. There must be a basic substance, said Thales, from which everything is derived, and this is water. Not water, said Anaximenes, but air. Impossible, said Parmenides; the basic substance, being the only thing that truly exists, must be single, indivisible, motionless and perfect. Therefore all change is an illusion. On the contrary, said Democritus. The world is made up of an infinite number of tiny atoms, scattered through a vast void and perpetually in motion. And so it went on.

If talk of atomic particles sounds surprisingly similar to the standard model of our own physics, that is certainly fascinating; but it does not mean that any of these early philosophers were scientists, as we would now understand the term. They did not carry out experiments or make controlled observations in order to confirm or disprove their hypotheses. Their concern was to order the world conceptually in a way that would accommodate nature's whirls and flurries

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without inviting chaos. Although this kind of thinking was rarefied, it was not carried out in ivory towers. Greek philosophers tended to form schools around themselves, whose influence extended right into the daily workings of the cities where they lived. Thales gave advice to the Ionian Greeks, living on the western coast of Asia Minor, on forming a political federation with a single capital; Parmenides was said to have framed the laws for his own city of Elea in southern Italy; Empedocles was a strong supporter of the democratic principle, who was offered, and turned down, the kingship at Acragas in Sicily.

No one expected that any philosopher in these times would prefer to withdraw from the world's affairs in order to enjoy peace and quiet. In the case of Socrates, the appetite for social involvement led him all the way to trial, condemnation and execution, an extraordinary fate for someone who was quite devoid of personal ambition. But the Athenians were never slow to make an example of their philosophers, especially those who appeared hostile to their beloved

democracy. Anaxagoras, teacher and friend of Pericles, had also been found guilty of impiety, some time around 450 B.C., though unlike Socrates he agreed to play by the unwritten rules of this particular game, which laid down that whatever sentence might be passed, the accused was welcome to escape his punishment so long as he went to live somewhere else. Aristotle, in his turn, was forced to leave Athens at the end of his life, in 323 B.C. to save himself from a prosecution for impiety; as usual the charge was a cover for a different grievance, in this case Aristotle's long association with the hated kings of Macedon.

Individual philosophers might come and go, but their influence lived on in the schools they had founded. Athens remained the main centre of instruction, as home to all the most important centres of inquiry: Plato's Academy, Aristotle's Lyceum, the Garden of Epicurus and the Stoa of Zeno. The names of these last two will not qualify for inclusion in any university course of western philosophy, yet their competing ideas about the best way to lead one's life continued to give

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inspiration and guidance to ordinary Greeks and Romans for hundreds of years after their deaths. Tradition, as so often, has distorted their message. Epicurus did not believe the pleasures of food and sex were the most important things in life; the Stoics did not simply exhort us to grin and bear it. For a truer account, listen on.

## Notes by Hugh Griffith

## Cast

Bruce Alexander	<b>Socrates</b>
Oliver Ford Davies	<b>Diogenes Laertius</b>
Crawford Logan	<b>Aristotle</b>
Ian Marr	<b>Meno</b>
Louis Williams	<b>Boy</b>
Andrew Wincott	<b>Narrator</b>



**Bruce Alexander** is best known as Superintendent Mullett in *A Touch of Frost* and has appeared in many other TV shows such as *Berkeley Square*, *Casualty* and *Peak Practice*. He has also played major roles in the theatre, notably with the RSC. He is a director of ACTER, which annually tours Shakespeare to US campuses. He has featured in the Naxos AudioBooks recordings of *Macbeth* and *Oedipus*, and also reads Plato's *The Republic* for Naxos AudioBooks.



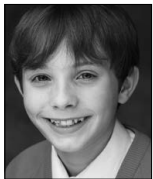
Oxford Doctor of Philosophy and former Edinburgh University lecturer **Oliver Ford Davies** has, over the last forty years, become one of our most esteemed theatrical and television actors. He spent 12 years with the RSC performing in over 25 productions and won the Olivier Award for Best Actor for *Racing Demon* whilst at the National Theatre. His television work includes five series of *Kavanagh QC*, *Inspector Morse*, *David Copperfield* and *Sparkling Cyanide*; his films include *The Mother*, *Johnny English*, *Mrs Brown* and *Atonement*.



**Crawford Logan** is Scottish, lives in Scotland, and has been involved with a number of sagas over many years, including *The Archers*, *Dr Who*, *EastEnders*, *The Mousetrap* and *The Forsyte Saga*, all 2500 pages of it. He is married with very grown-up children, cooks, supports Stirling Albion FC, occasionally succeeds in making proper contact with a golf ball, and believes musicians to be as superhuman as Beowulf, which he has read for Naxos Audiobooks.



**Ian Marr** trained at Rose Bruford College and has since worked extensively in the theatre, from repertory to major tours. He has also written, directed and appeared in numerous pantomimes. His most recent television appearance was as Munroe in *Blue Murder* and on audio, as Ike in *Doctor Who: The Sword of Orion*.



**Louis Williams** was born in Hokeido, Japan and moved to England when he was five. He became interested in acting when he was seven, when he was cast as the Gingerbread Man in the school play. When he was eleven he joined a local theatre group and appeared in many shows, including *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Railway Children*, *Bugsy Malone*, *Dream Nights* and *Material Girls*. In 2006 he won a place at the Sylvia Young Theatre School in London. Since then his credits include *The X Factor*, *The Royal Variety Performance*, various BBC Radio dramas, and *A Voyage Around My Father* with Derek Jacobi at the Wyndhams Theatre, London.



**Andrew Wincott** has worked with numerous theatre companies. Leading roles include Tartuffe (*Tartuffe*), Rochester (*Jane Eyre*), Alec (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*), Vronsky (*Anna Karenina*), the Actor (*The Woman in Black*), Mercutio (*Romeo and Juliet*), Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*), Jaques (*As You Like It*), Milo (*Sleuth*), HJ (*The Aspern Papers*), Louie (*Lost In Yonkers*), Marco (*A View From The Bridge*), Charteris (*The Philanderer*), Harold (*Black Comedy*) and Moon (*The Real Inspector Hound*). For BBC Radio 4 he is perhaps best known as the voice of Adam Macy in *The Archers*.

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## Credits

Produced by Roy McMillan  
Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios, London  
Edited by Rachel Smith

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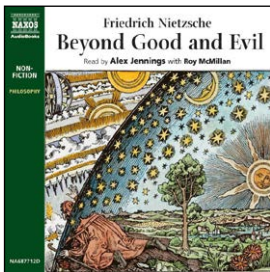
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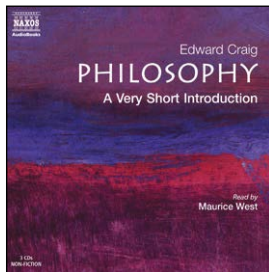
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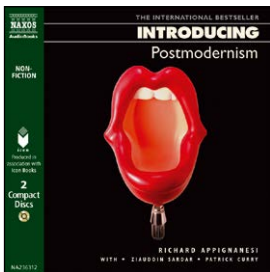
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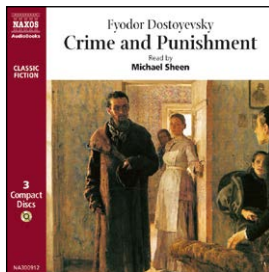
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