



ΟΙ ΔΡΟΜΟΙ ΤΗΣ ΓΝΩΣΗΣ



National and  
Kapodistrian  
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Athens



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS  
MANAGING AUTHORITY

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# In the Paths of Greek Thought

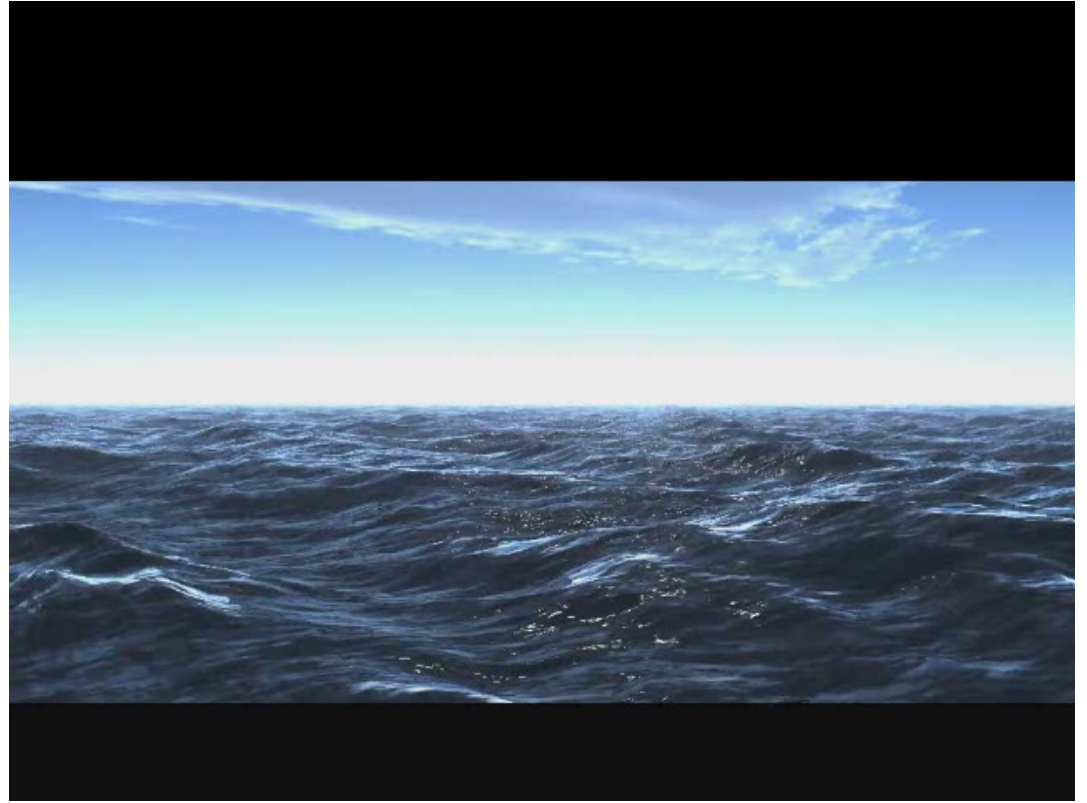
Summer Schools for Greek children, children from European high Schools and from Schools in America, Australia and Asia

The project “Academy of Plato: Development of Knowledge and innovative ideas” is co-financed from National and European funds through the Operational Programme “Education and Lifelong Learning”

# 1. PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

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- Pre-Socratic philosophers distinguish between natural – supernatural.
- They consider natural elements and abstract concepts as the principle of things.



Thales of Miletus (ca. 630-546 B.C. ) considers the water as the principle of all things.

**THALES**



Anaximander of Miletus (ca. 600-528 B.C.) thinks that the «The infinite» (ἀπειρον) is the first principle.

# ANAXIMANDER



Anaximenes of Miletus (ca. 600-528 B.C.) believes that the principle of the Cosmos is the air.

“As our soul being air holds us together and controls us, so does air encloses the whole world”

# ANAXIMENES

## **PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS** **(second generation)**

**Pythagoras of Samos (c.a. 570 BC)** regarded the world as a perfect harmony depending on numbers. He thinks that there are opposite forces of good and evil which confront each other and rule the world.



Heraclitus of Ephesus (at his heyday ca. 500 B.C. ) believes in the constant movement and change of beings. H considers fire as the principle fo everything.

# Heraclitus



“Fire gives rise to the sea and then to the earth”

**Heraclitus**





Empedocles of Acragas (middle 5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C. believes that earth, water and fire, they all combine and segregate creating the Cosmos. Love (Φιλία) and Strife (Νείκος) are the forces that cause the union and segregation.

# Empedocles



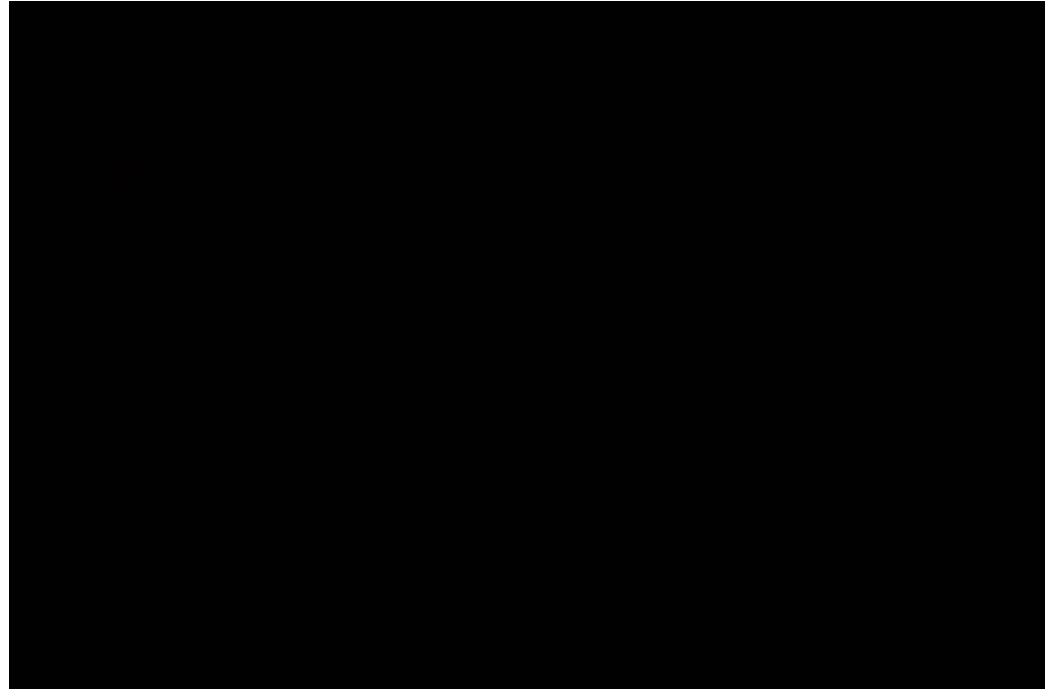
... Their eternal union and segregation is caused by two divine powers: LOVE (ΦΙΛΙΑ) and STRIFE (NEIKOYΣ)

# Empedocles



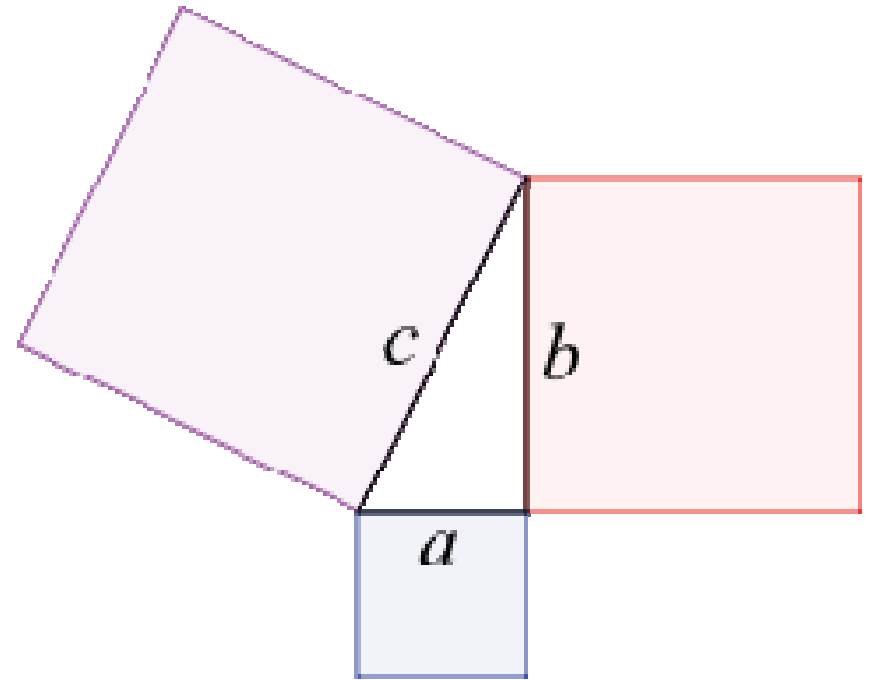
“NOUS (mind) orders all things, is the reason for the creation and birth of all things”

**Anaxagoras**



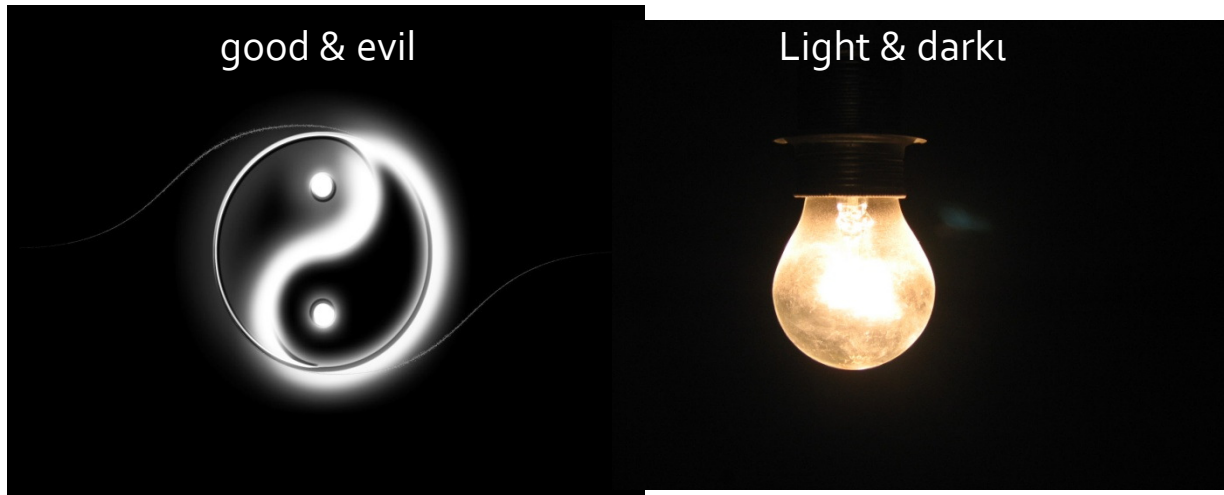
“The harmony of the Universe comes from numbers”

**PYTHAGORAS**



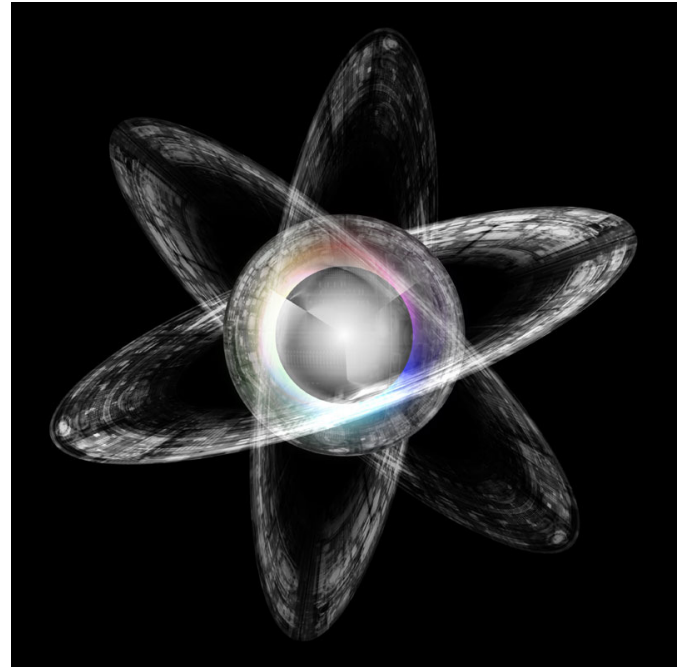
“The sum of the areas of the two squares on the legs ( $a$  and  $b$ ) equals the area of the square on the hypotenuse ( $c$ )”

# PYTHAGORAS



“Opposite forces of good and evil confront each other and rule the world”

**PYTHAGORAS**



**Democritus of Abdera (born ca. 460 B.C.)** believes that material is consisted of the atoms which cannot be divided. Atoms are in constant move and they collide creating all things.

# DEMOCRITUS



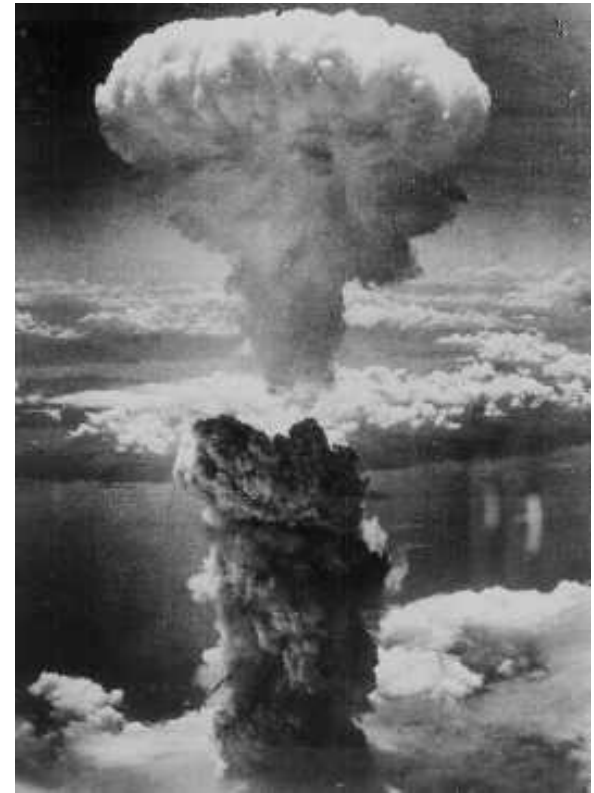
...if, however, they are divided, they could cause the greater good...

**DEMOCRITUS**



...or the greatest evil”

**DEMOCRITUS**



# Sophists

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- They appear in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.
- They take philosophical thought away from the study of natural phenomena and the search for the principle of beings to questions concerning the man himself and the society.
- They challenge traditional beliefs and form new concepts about truth, knowledge, virtue, justice, nature, law.



### **Protagoras of Abdera (ca. 480-412 BC.)**

- He spent a large part of his life traveling and teaching
- He thinks that every person forms his opinion about things according to his own perception
- He claims that everyone can be taught the «εὐβουλία», gaining thus the ability to manage his personal affairs and in the same time play an active role in public affairs.
- He neither accepts nor rejects the existence of gods.

# **PROTAGORAS**



### **Gorgias of Lentinoi (ca. 490-395 B.C)**

- He dealt with rhetoric which he systematized.
- For Gorgias rhetoric is a producer of persuasion («πειθούς δημιουργός»)
- He believed that speech gives man the power to achieve his purpose persuading others.
- Gorgias was the first to express the idea of uniting all Greeks.

# **GORGIAS**



## **Antiphon (middle of 5<sup>th</sup> cent)**

- He deals with the opposition between nature and law.
- He thinks that all men, barbarians and Greeks, wealthy and poor, free and slaves are by nature equal.

# **ANTIPHON**

- Socrates never wrote anything
- We only learn about his life and his work from his student's writings, mainly those of Plato and Xenophon.
- Socrates is the main character of all the dialogues of Plato, except from the work named "Nomoi"
- Socrates sought for the definition of every moral concept.
- Through dialogue and discussion he sought for the absolute truth about good and evil, justice and injustice, virtue and vice.

# SOCRATES

- Plato was a student of Socrates.
- In his work he reflects the teaching of Socrates, but he also expresses his own philosophical ideas.
- He was mainly interested in political issues and especially in formulating and proposing the best system of governance. In his “Res Publica” he described his ideal constitution.
- The theory of “Ideas” holds an important place in Plato’s philosophical system. The only real beings are called by the philosopher IDEAS. They are placed in a world beyond the one that we perceive with our senses, a world that man can reach only with his mind.
- Around 390 B.C. he founded school, named Academia, which lasted until 529 A.D.

# PLATO

- **Aristotle was a student of Plato.**
- **He was an acute observer of external; reality and he was interested in a lot of fields.**
- **He dealt with logic, physics, biology, ethics, psychology, political phylosophy.**
- **Key principles of Aristotle's thought.**
  - **Nature has determined a purpose for all things, a final destination towards which everything is moving, in order to arrive in its completion.**
  - **Human Behavior, as well as political life, should stay wihtin the limits of mean, avoiding both excess and deficiency.**
  - **Polis is by nature prior to the individual**
  - **“Man is by nature a political animal”, destined to live in a political society. He must, therefore, make every effort to achieve virtue, in order to lead his polis to happiness (Ευδαιμονία)**

# ARISTOTLE

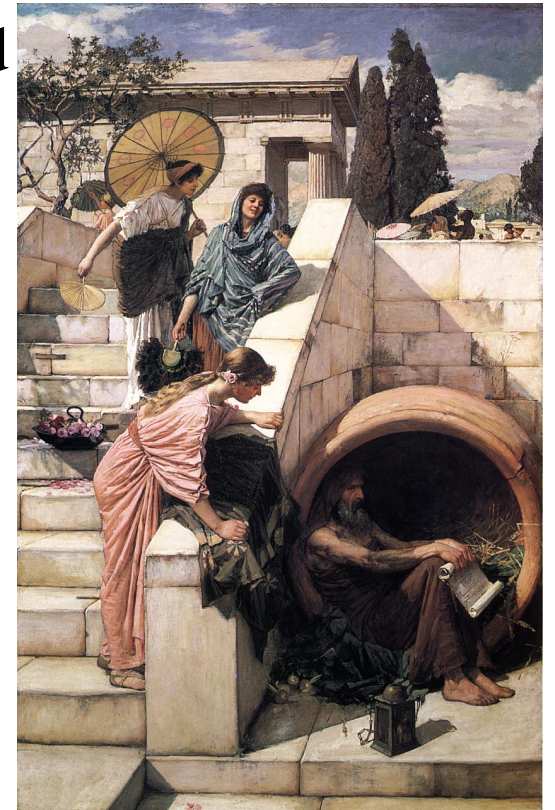


## 2. HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

- Main features of the Hellenistic period are religious disbelief and a general pessimism.
- Hellenistic philosophy is still concerned with the same questions raised by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Philosophers want to answer the question: how shall a man live and die?
- What real happiness is about and how can a man get to it?

## a. CYNICS

- The philosophical school of Cynics was founded, around 400 BC., in Athens by **Antisthenes**, a student of Socrates.
- The most famous Cynic was Diogenes, a student of Antisthenes. They say that he lived in a barrel and had nothing in his possession, but a chiton, a stick and a bag for his bread.





- Man's happiness lies in natural life and only with self-sufficiency, simplicity, self-awareness and exercise can someone attain it.

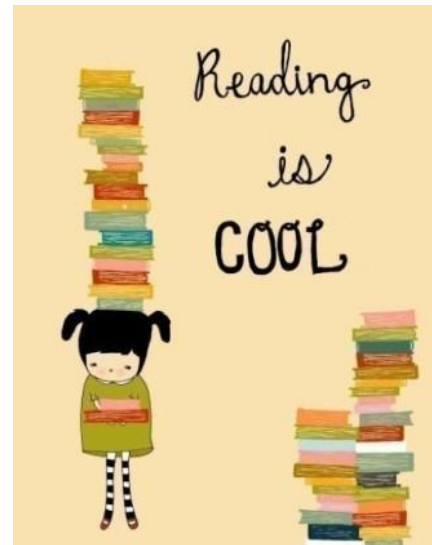
## DIOGENES

## **b. STOICS**

- The first Stoics appeared in Athens around 300 BC. The father of Stoic philosophy was Zeno, who was born in Cyprus and ended up in Athens after a wreck. Zeno used to gather his audience in a portico («ΣΤΟΑ»), after which his followers were named.
- The Stoics believed that all the people have a common logic («λόγος»). They thought that every man is a miniature of the whole world, a “microcosm” that reflects the “macrocosm”
- The law of nature, from which all humans come, makes them all equal to each other.

## c. Epicureans

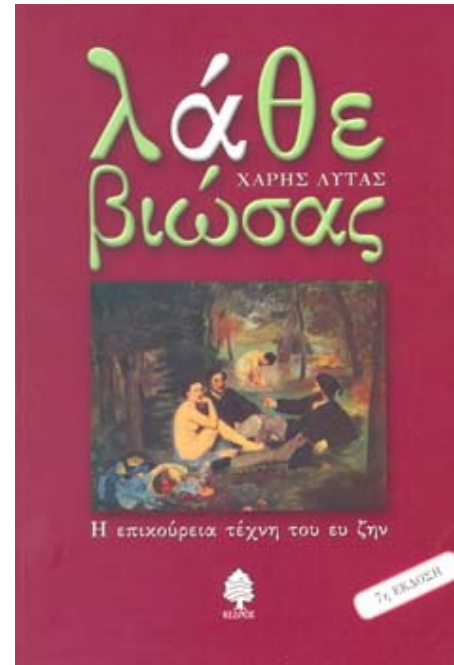
- In contrast to Stoics, Epicureans were not at all interested in politics and society. “Live Hidden” («λάβε βιώσας»
- Around 300 B.C. Epicurus founded his school. He believed that the real purpose of life is found in seeking as much pleasure as possible. According to him “pleasure” is the greater good and “pain” is the ultimate evil.
- The Epicurean pleasure was not only aesthetic but also spiritual.
- There is no reason to fear the Gods.
- Epicurus summed up his philosophic thinking in what he himself called “the four- medication”
- Death is not to be feared.
- Good can be easily reached.
- Evil can be easily be sustained.



- In order to be happy, man should seek pleasure either aesthetic or spiritual.

**EPICURUS**





In order to be happy, man should live withdrawn from public affairs, to attain equanimity.

EPICURUS

## **d. Neo-Platonism**

- **The most remarkable of the philosophical movements of Late Antiquity was inspired by the platonic theory of Ideas. That's the reason that it is known as Neo-Platonism.**
- **The most important Neo-platonic philosopher was Plotinus (ca. 205-270).**
- **According to the platonic theory of Ideas, the world is divided in two parts: the world of Ideas and the world of senses. Plato made the same distinction between the human soul and the human body in which the soul lives.**
- **Plotinus believed that the world unfolds between two poles. At one end there is a divine light, called One, and some times God. At the other reigns the total darkness, where the light of the One does not reach.**
- **According to Plotinus' theory, the divine light of the One lights our soul, while material, which does not have real existence, is identical to the dark.**





- The divine light of the One lights our soul, while matter is the dark, that does not have real existence.

PLOTINUS

# 3. Byzantine Philosophy

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- During the period of the Byzantine empire there are no autonomous philosophies or autonomous philosophical systems. There is certainly some production of works based on the philosophical tradition of Platonism, Aristotelianism, Neo-Platonism, Stoicism and other ancient philosophies of antiquity, but what prevails is Patristic, Christian thought and Theology.
- Philosophical concerns revolve around determining the existence of the Divine Trinity, the formulation of the Christian doctrine and principles.
- Patristic philosophy 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> cent. Major Representatives:
  - Basil of Caesarea, bishop of Caesarea since 370 (+379),
  - Gregory of Nazianzus, Patriarch of Constantinople in the years 380-381 (+390)
  - Gregory of Nyssa (bishop of Nyssa, Cappadocia (+after 394))



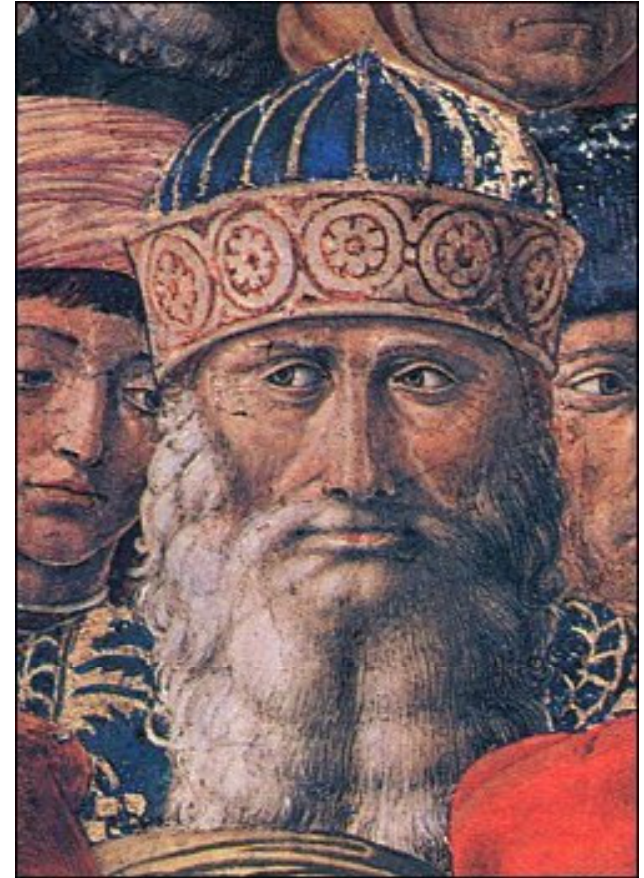
“No one can harm the man who does himself no wrong”

“Nothing is more fallacious than wealth. It is a hostile comrade, a domestic enemy”

**JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**



- A Greek philosopher and politician
- A staunch defender of the natural and cultural continuity of Hellenism. “We are Greeks, like our language and our traditional cultural witnesses” («εσμέν Έλληνες το γένος, ως η τε φωνή και η η πατριος παιδεία μαρτυρεί»). He was an admirer of Plato.



PLETHO GEORGIOS GEMISTUS

- He taught in the “Pandidacterion”, the university of Constantinopla, where he had acquired the honorary title of “Concul of philosophers”.
- Psellos belonged to the most active intellectuals of his era and hoped that he could bring a drastic effect in his time.
- In his “Chronography”, he describes the years 976-1078, based on his personal observation. Psellos presents facts as the result of strong personal conflicts, emotions and intrigues. Divine Providence does not intervene.

## MICHAEL PSELLOS



# Modern Greek Enlightenment

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- **Eugenios Voulgaris** (1716-1806). His liberal ideas paved the way for the Greek Enlightenment.
- **Adamantios Koraes**. Influenced by the liberal ideas of Enlightenment, he fought with his writings in favor of the cultural renaissance of Greece. His main concern was the cultural development of Greeks, which he considered as a prerequisite for freedom and independence.



- **Regas Pheraios (1757-1798)**. He is inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution and envisions a future, where all nations of Balkans of the Ottoman Empire “Bulgarians and Arvanites, Armenians and Greeks (Ρωμηοί)”, as he writes in his Thourio, will establish a modern democratic state with economic freedom.

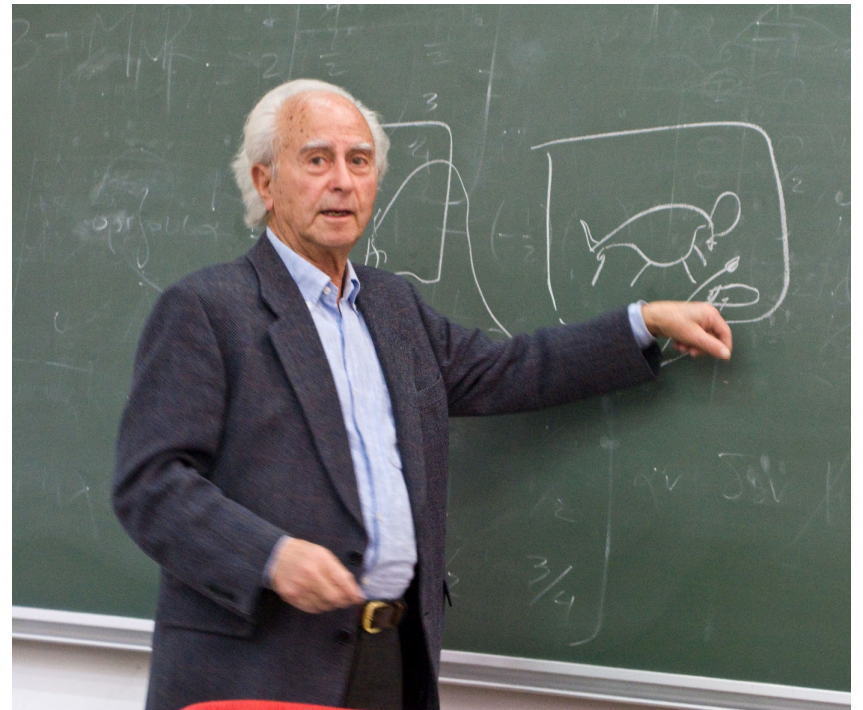




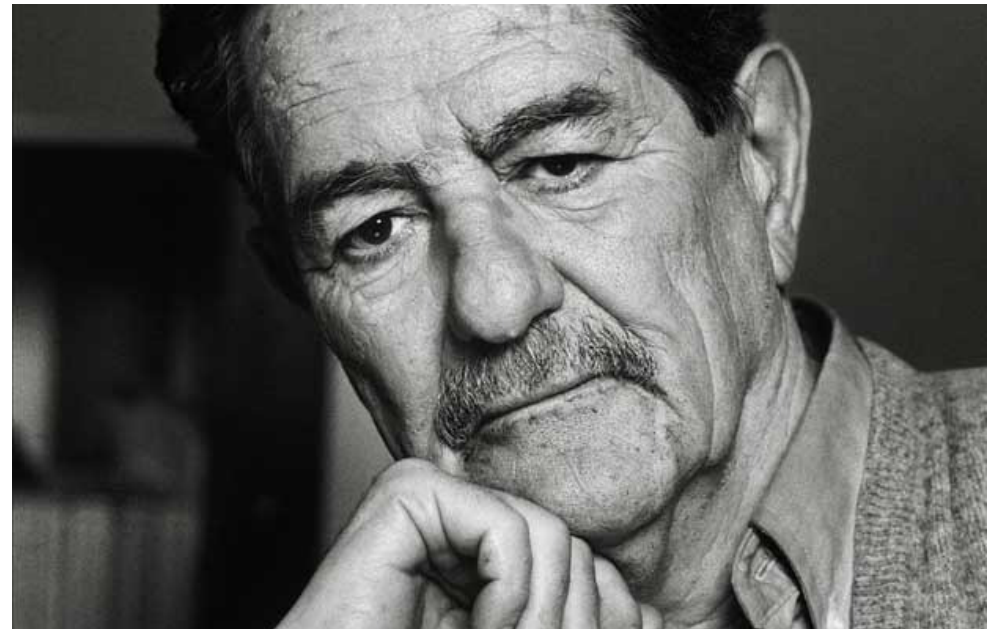
## 4. MODERN GREEK PHILOSOPHY

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- **Eutichis Bitsakis** was born in 1927. His thought revolves around the opposition of Being and Becoming and the relationship between science and philosophy.

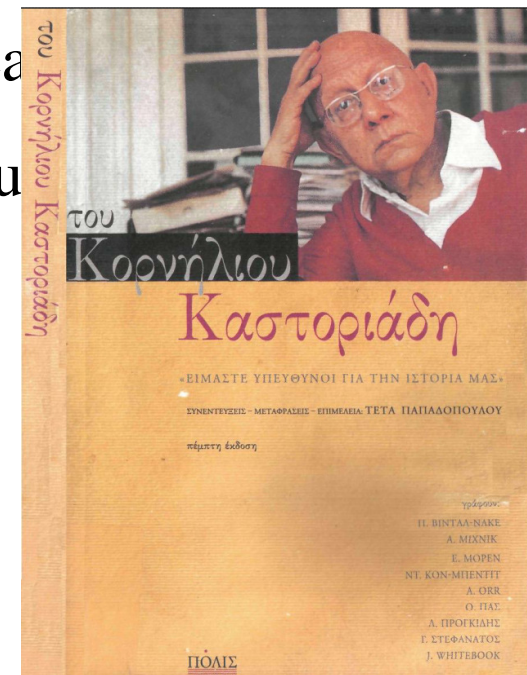


- **Kostas Axelos (1924 - 2010)** was a modern Greek thinker and philosopher. His thought revolves dialectically and synthetically around the thought of Pre-Socratics, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud.



## Cornelios Castoriades (1922-1997)

- In the work of Castoriades, the concept of “Autonomy” holds a fundamental position, indeed, to such an extent that he was called the “Philosopher of Autonomy”. He is mainly concerned with political act, with which the society creates its own laws and institutions as well as the means to “legitimize” them, the answer, that is, to the question “these laws should be just?”.



## **Euangelos Papanoutsos (1900 - 1982)**

- Greek pedagogue, philosopher and essayist of the 20th century.
- His thought revolved around questions ethics, aesthetic, science, knowledge, education.





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