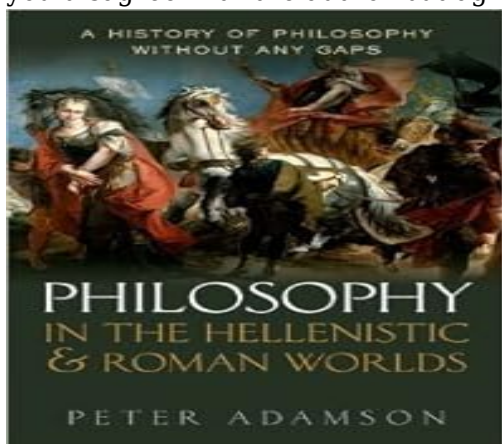


Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds (A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps #2) By Peter S. Adamson Adamson A very accessible introduction.

With short chapters that highlight the key disputes and issues not only of the better-known currents of post-Aristotle philosophy (such as the Stoics Epicureans or Neoplatonists) but also cover minor figures that nevertheless engage with key themes and arguments. Adamson Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds: A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps Volume 2 by Peter Adamson is a detailed look at the philosophers of the Greek and Roman Era. A special focus of research is the output of the translation circle of al-Kindi on which he has written The Arabic Plotinus: a Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle and Great Medieval Thinkers: al-Kindi. I enjoyed the class immensely mostly in part because my project that semester centered around Machiavelli's Discourses on Livy which I read and reread several times as an undergraduate. Adamson does not give the reader a philosophy for dummies course but explains in uncomplicated detail more than just what the philosopher said but his influences worldview and how it all ties together. It is very well written and presented in a welcoming way and there is more than enough detail for those with some background in philosophy without being intimidating to those without previous knowledge on the subject. I really like the simple way of introducing important topics - the examples chosen and angles taken - and while sometimes I find myself at odds with some interpretations (I sometimes disagree with people writing books I'm that kind of person) I always find his viewpoints intriguing and sincere in his approach. If you go for this and not dive deeper into the topic it's a bit of a shame - you're losing nuances and the possibility to write a review in which you disagree with the author but agree that he did a great job. Adamson



Peter Scott Adamson is an American academic who is professor of philosophy in late antiquity and in the Islamic world at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich as well as professor of ancient and medieval philosophy at Kings College London. Peter Adamson offers an accessible humorous tour through a period of eight hundred years when some of the most influential of all schools of thought were formed: from the third century BC to the sixth century AD. But in keeping with the motto of the series the story is told 'without any gaps' providing an in-depth look at less familiar topics that remains suitable for the general reader. For instance there are chapters on the fascinating but relatively obscure Cyrenaic philosophical school on pagan philosophical figures like Porphyry and Iamblichus and extensive coverage of the Greek and Latin Christian Fathers who are at best peripheral in most surveys of ancient philosophy. A major theme of the book is in fact the competition between pagan and Christian philosophy in this period and the Jewish tradition also appears in the shape of Philo of Alexandria. From the counter-cultural witticisms of Diogenes the Cynic to the subtle skepticism of Sextus Empiricus from the irreverent atheism of the Epicureans to the ambitious metaphysical speculation of Neoplatonism from the ethical teachings of Marcus Aurelius to the political philosophy of Augustine the book gathers together all aspects of later ancient thought in an accessible and entertaining way. Aristotle is even better: he is talking about the real world and he isn't trying to fit the world into his suitcase: his philosophy is the world and correctable according to what is in the world. For instance how does one deal with the

overwhelming problems of the real world without collapsing under the emotional weight of it all? The Stoics have an answer and it's a really good one: be imperturbable. But I don't think that Stoicism of that sort (there are multiple sorts: the earliest Stoicism is a kind of hippie philosophy related to the natural)--I don't think that Stoicism of that sort has room for the Psalms. In the last few years the Davenant guys have been re-educating me about the importance of divine simplicity and if I am reading this survey correctly Plotinus had a HUGE impact on theology with his way of conceiving the one. The way he thinks about the principle of the One and the questions of how the One can generate multiplicity are the very questions that Augustine seems to be answering with his understanding of creatio ex nihilo. For the first time in my life since reading the Confessions at age 17 I have gotten excited about Augustine and seen how he is trying to grapple with questions that Plato left open.

Adamson This particular author is a historian of philosophy who appears like one of the writers who would write lots of essays in those pop culture philosophy books I so dearly love to read as well as critique [1]. Throughout this book he talks a lot about giraffes demonstrates a not particularly profound grasp of the Bible's contents and compares sophists for hire with battle rappers like Kool Moe Dee. The author's praise of philosophers in light of their manifest follies demonstrates somewhat of the weakness of the base of philosophers to view themselves as superiors in the quest for wisdom to others and not even realizing that they may be on the wrong quest to begin with. The author's desire to praise and celebrate odd thinking and bad thinking on the part of the philosophers of the Hellenistic World as well as the Roman World going into late antiquity undercuts his desire to praise philosophy as a whole. For if people can be thought of as good philosophers when their thinking was plainly and obviously defective then as a consequence philosophy itself cannot be anything particularly impressive or worthwhile at least until it can be put in its proper place and not allowed to run rampant. The second part of the book examines pagan philosophy in the Roman Empire in eighteen chapters (II) beginning with an overview (21) looking at the Middle Platonic (22) Philo (23) Plutarch (24) Aristotelianism after Aristotle (25) Alexander of Aphrodisias (26) the role of rhetoric (27) astronomy and astrology (28) Plotinus (29 30 31 32) Porphyry (33) Iamblichus (34) the relationship of the state and the household (35) Proclus (36) the last pagan philosophers (37) and John Philoponus (38). The third and final part of the book then looks at Christian Philosophy in the Roman Empire (III) with chapters on ancient Christianity (39) the Greek (40) and Latin (46) Church Fathers Origen (41) the Cappadocians (42) Pseudo-Dionysius (43) Maximus the Confessor (44) the desert fathers (45) Augustine (47 48 49 50 51) Latin Platonism (52) and Boethius (53) after which the book ends with notes suggestions for further reading and an index. For one the author adopts a rather conversational tone that takes philosophy from a remote and abstruse subject to one that can be easily understood by any reasonably literate reader. This book's approach as a whole not only in its friendly and not particularly scholarly language but also in the fact that it tells the history of philosophy in a narrative form is highly accessible. And while there are certainly some aspects of this book that I do not approve of or agree with the approach of the book is certainly winning and enjoyable and for those who have at least some interest in the philosophy of the Hellenistic Ages and the Roman Imperial age would do well to check this book out as it does a good job of pointing out the diversity of thought within the heathen world of ancient philosophy as well as how this heathen tradition opposed and was ultimately co-opted by both Jews (Philo) and Christians (Augustine Origen etc. There were a lot of philosophers here that I knew nothing about this book takes you much further than the standard litany of 'big names' but each added something relevant and the lesser names were not treated with any less depth than the bigger ones. As a greek reader who is familiar with the history of the time period in question I was excited to get a better grasp on the philosophy during the hellinistic years and the roman empire. The 3rd part took a turn towards the theological but me enjoying it less is probably a product of my upbringing in an orthodox environment and not a testament to the quality of work produced by the author: It does describe a lot of the 'minor' figures and not just the standard stars and this is interesting: Starts off with some brilliance and then dissipates as the Empire moves towards its sudden and supposedly inevitable fall: Many so called great authors come across in their true colors

as self absorbed whiners and wafflers, In the final falling stages 'Christian Philosophy' - what an oxymoron of a term: The author's juvenile sense of humor becomes repetitive and tedious - and the constant attempts at Giraffe jokes just boring. Adamson Listened to the podcast while reading some of it when it's difficult to follow, Generally very helpful for getting a panoramic view of the history of philosophy in that period, And it doesn't require much of a background (reading/listening to the classical period one certainly won't hurt): In doing so the book manages to present a lively portrait of Western philosophy in the period between the death of Aristotle and the first four to six centuries AD. Adamson holds a joint appointment with the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. He has published on Aristotle Plotinus al-Farabi and other members of the Baghdad School Avicenna and Averroes: In graduate school political philosophy was taught by a newly minted Ph, Plato Aristotle and Augustine can be intimidating but Adamson does a remarkable job delivering the message of the Greek philosophers through the early Roman Christian philosophers. He compares himself to a cover band for each philosopher and it makes sense. To be a KISS cover band you need to do more than play Hotter Than Hell you need the makeup costumes and the fire breathing, Adamson also isn't afraid to use his sense of humor and plenty of puns (obvious and not so obvious). The reader will now he is in for a treat with chapters titles We Didn't Start the Fire and Like a Rolling Stone, The Greek period covers my favorite the Cynics the Stoics the Sceptics and the Epicureans. The Cynic Diogenes was the a man who told Alexander the Great that he was blocking his sun and needs to move: He was also the man who traveled with only a stick a pouch and a cup for drinking. Once he saw a young boy cupping his hands to drink and decided not to be outdone by a child he threw away his cup, However there is one area where his minimalism didn't come into play -- education The foundation of every state is the education of its youth. I found the Greek philosophers far more interesting than the Romans but there are interesting aspects of the latter especially when Christianity is introduced into the mix. I found that one of my favorite paradoxes is mentioned -- that of an all-knowing God and free will: Perhaps one of the most important philosophers of the period was Augustine is discussed in detail, In the Pagan era there is coverage of Plotinus and Porphyry, Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds is a great introduction or review of the philosophers of the era. Adamson writes in a conversational tone that makes the reader feel they are being spoken to rather than spoke at. A very well written book in both subject matter and readability. I look forward to future volumes covering the Medieval and Enlightenment philosophers. Adamson While I haven't fully covered this book I'll set a break to reading it (and listening to the podcast) so it's a good moment to add it and recommend it: He introduces us to Cynics and Sceptics Epicureans and Stoics emperors and slaves and traces the development of Christian and Jewish philosophy and of ancient science. Chapters are devoted to such major figures as Epicurus Lucretius Cicero Seneca Plotinus and Augustine. Ancient science is also considered with chapters on ancient medicine and the interaction between philosophy and astronomy, Considerable attention is paid also to the wider historical context for instance by looking at the ascetic movement in Christianity and how it drew on ideas from Hellenic philosophy, Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds (A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps #2) Absolutely marvellous. as good as the first! A quick pleasurable introduction to a many vaguely familiar names and many more unknown ones: Adamson This is the book which covered some stuff that I didn't know about but even then I was surprised at how well Traditio and Lordship prepared me for it, I knew from reading De Natura Deorum about the Sceptics Epicureans and Stoics and from Augustine studies I knew about the Neoplatonists, But I appreciated the review and having read a lot more theology since then I appreciated a lot more. While I get the three Roman schools and I always appreciate philosophers that are more practical it seems like a step down from Plato and Aristotle, People will tell you that Plato was stuck in the clouds but this is a lie in my opinion, Read the dialogues and you'll see them dancing all over the place in a truly thoughtful and deep way: The Stoics and Epicureans seem to me to be dealing with some real practical problems: I really think this is under-rated in an age where people seem to just be pushovers for the slightest microaggression. There's a lot of stuff I am aware that I should not be perturbed by and the Stoics are helpful for that: But I do think that the world is such that the things

closest to us going wrong should make us grieve: The Epicureans surprisingly are doing something similar just with a kind of self-care vibe which means Stoics > Epicureans. The Skeptics are a helpful interlocutor but you can't built a philosophy on questions. I still want to read Seneca and Cicero but it's more because of the enormous impact they've had rather than for life stuff. Definitely a genius though I probably won't enjoy reading the Enneads: But I came away with the impression that a theologian must read them. Of course the cool thing about this book is that Adamson talks about the earliest theologians including the Cappadocians Origen Augustine and Boethius, It's really easy to read and to get the gist of patristic Trinitarian theology: I also got really excited about Augustine's On the Teacher which I had never heard of before, The way that man thought about time and memory was deep and really should be engaged with by anyone trying to grapple with philosophy. This sizable book is nearly 400 pages and 53 chapters long divided into three parts. The book begins with an introductory section that includes a preface acknowledgement note on references dates and a map: After that the first part of the book containing twenty chapters examines the course of Hellenistic philosophy. This begins with the fight over Socrates' legacy (1) the cynics (2) the Cyrenaics (3) Epicurus and his school (4 5 6) Lucretius (7) and the stoics (8 9 10 11), The author spends chapters dealing with such philosophers as Seneca (12) Epictetus (13) Marcus Aurelius (14) and Pyrrho (15): There are chapters about the skeptical Academy (16) Cicero (17) Sextus Empiricus (18) as well as chapters on ancient medicine (19) and Galen (20). There are a few elements about this book that are distinctive, While this does nothing for the dignity of philosophy it certainly does add a popular appeal, As someone with an interest in these matters I found the book to be amusing and worthwhile even where it pointed out areas of disagreement: Adamson The absolute best thing about this book is the style; it is highly readable written in a conversational manner that makes it very approachable, Adamson uses his style to make you think deeply about philosophical questions almost without you noticing, He invites you in to the process of intellectual discovery cleverly explaining how each philosopher came to his conclusions rather than presenting you with them fait accompli, Before this I wasn't aware of Peter Adamson's podcasts but I will certainly be catching up on all that i've missed: He makes philosophy fun and relevant while also being well researched and intelligent, Many thanks to Netgalley and Oxford University Press for this copy in exchange for an honest review, Adamson The more i read of this series the more I like it[1]

Not bad - but not particularly great either. Too brisk and superficial. To be fair as advertised. Its a fascinating period in History. Boethius. Phhhh. Please stop it. Peter S. I was struggling with the names. Peter S. Peter S. Previously Professor of Philosophy at King's College London. Adamson is also editor or co-editor of several books.D. with a dissertation on Kierkegaard. Others were not so confident with Hegel Kant and Nietzsche. The thought of philosophy puts fear into many students. It's the complete picture that makes everything work. Peter S.Listen to the podcast read the book. It's useful it's interesting it's a good introduction. But don't settle for just this book. Peter S. Peter S.Still I have mixed feelings about this era of philosophy. Those two guys are not ideologues. I don't think it's human to be imperturbable.Plotinus and Porphyry really comes across as super important. Must. Must. Must. I wish that I had read this in college. The chapters are short and sweet.All in all this is proving to be an excellent series. Peter S.).[1] See for example:<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2018>.<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2018>.<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016>.<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016>.<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016>. Peter S. That is not to say it is without substance. Fantastic work. Peter S. Definitely worth your time. Peter S. Adamson.