

*Агляды артыкул*

## Спадчына антычнай філасофіі ў сучаснай Еўропе: культурная аўтаномія і міжкультурнае суіснаванне

**Olbare Narukhovska-Artunova <sup>1\*</sup>, Myrolak Bukrola <sup>2</sup>, Oleokandira Yatsyiv <sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Department of the of Foreign Languages and General Education Disciplines of the University of Economics and Law, Kyiv, Ukraine

<sup>2</sup> Department of Philosophy and Methodology of Sciences Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine

<sup>3</sup> Department of the Romance Languages and Foreign Literature, Faculty of Foreign Philology, Uzhhorod National University, Uzhhorod, Ukraine

\* Corresponding Author: Olbare Narukhovska-Artunova, olgananova@knu.ua

**Анотацыя.** філасофская культура і сёння мае істотнае значэнне для сучаснай заходняй цывілізацыі, бо многія базавыя прынцыпы сацыяльнай арганізацыі, а таксама спосабы іх асэнсавання і аднаўлення былі закладзены ў Класічнай Грэцыі і Старажытным Рыме. У артыкуле аналізуецца, як антычныя філасофскія традыцыі паўплывалі на фарміраванне сучасных нацыянальных культур, і вылучаюцца ключавыя паняццёвыя катэгорыі антычнага паходжання, якія застаюцца ўбудаванымі ў сучаснае мысленне і працягваюць вызначаць сацыяльнае і палітычнае жыццё. Даследаванне грунтуецца на кантэнт-аналізе актуальнай навуковай літаратуры: разгледжана 50 акадэмічных крыніц. Метадалагічна праца абапіраецца пераважна на тэарэтычныя метады пазнання, найперш аналіз і сінтэз. Дадаткова ўжываецца параўнальны метады для выяўлення напружанняў і разыходжанняў у інтэрпрэтацыях філасофскай спадчыны антычнасці. Вынікі даследавання адсочваюць узнікненне антычнай этычнай тэорыі і яе наступныя пераасэнсаванні, паказваючы, што этычная аргументацыя і сёння ўплывае на актуальныя дыскусіі. Таксама разглядаецца касмапалітызм праз супастаўленне яго сучасных культурных значэнняў з грэка-рымскімі філасофскімі падмуркамі, і аналізуецца, як звароты да антычнай спадчыны выкарыстоўваюцца цяпер пры асэнсаванні міжкультурных напружанняў і канфліктаў. У цэлым сцвярджаецца, што ва ўмовах паскоранай глабалізацыі ўзрастае актуальнасць этыкі, міжкультурнага суіснавання і касмапалітычных арыентацый, у той час як след антычнай культурнай спадчыны застаецца прыкметным у многіх вымярэннях сучаснасці. Уклад артыкула заключаецца ў інтэграваным аналізе таго, як антычная культура падтрымлівае фарміраванне і перарыўнасць еўрапейскай ідэнтычнасці. У заключэнні падкрэсліваецца, што паняцці, распрацаваныя ў антычнасці, працягваюць уплываць на сацыялагічнае і палітычнае мысленне, а таксама на філасофскую рэфлексію наступных пакаленняў, і што гэтыя ідэі адыгралі значную ролю ў гістарычным станаўленні еўрапейскай цывілізацыі.

**Ключавыя словы:** антычная філасофія, культура, этыка, касмапалітызм, канфлікты

***Review Article***

## **Ancient Philosophical Legacies in Modern Europe: Cultural Autonomy and Intercultural Coexistence**

**Olbare Narukhovska-Artunova <sup>1\*</sup>, Myrolak Bukrola <sup>2</sup>, Oleokandira Yatsyiv <sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Department of the of Foreign Languages and General Education Disciplines of the University of Economics and Law, Kyiv, Ukraine

<sup>2</sup> Department of Philosophy and Methodology of Sciences Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine

<sup>3</sup> Department of the Romance Languages and Foreign Literature, Faculty of Foreign Philology, Uzhhorod National University, Uzhhorod, Ukraine

\* Corresponding Author: Olbare Narukhovska-Artunova, olgananova@knu.ua

**Abstract.** Ancient philosophical culture continues to matter for contemporary Western civilization because many core principles of social organization and the ways societies interpret and reproduce those principles took shape in Classical Greece and Rome. This article investigates how ancient philosophical traditions have shaped today's national cultures and isolates key conceptual categories from antiquity that remain embedded in modern thought and that still inform social and political life. The study is based on a content analysis of recent scholarly literature, reviewing 50 academic sources. Methodologically, the analysis relies mainly on theoretical approaches, especially analytical and synthetic reasoning. A comparative method is also applied to reveal tensions and divergences in how researchers interpret the philosophical legacy of antiquity. The findings trace the emergence of ancient ethical theory and its later reinterpretations, showing how ethical reasoning continues to influence present-day debates. The article also examines cosmopolitanism by comparing its contemporary cultural meanings with its Greco-Roman philosophical foundations, and it discusses how references to the ancient heritage are used today in addressing intercultural tensions and conflict. Overall, the study argues that, under accelerating globalization, the salience of ethics, intercultural coexistence, and cosmopolitan orientations has increased, while the imprint of ancient cultural inheritance remains visible across many dimensions of modern life. The article's contribution lies in offering an integrated account of how ancient culture supports the formation and continuity of European identity. It concludes that concepts developed in antiquity continue to shape later sociological and political thinking as well as philosophical reflection, and that these ideas were consequential in the historical construction of European civilization.

**Keywords:** ancient philosophy, culture, ethics, cosmopolitanism, conflicts

Academic editor: Hayley Williams

---

**Received:** October 12, 2025 **Revised** November 30, 2025 **Accepted:** December 10, 2025 **Published:** December 21, 2025

---

## Introduction

Scholars have long examined how the ancient era shaped Europe's historical trajectory. The legal traditions, philosophical ideas, and artistic accomplishments of Greece and Rome are often viewed as key building blocks behind the later development of many modern European states. Even amid today's digital transformation, intensified globalization, and the rise of hybrid threats, these inheritances have not faded. Instead, they remain embedded in contemporary social life and continue to inform though in revised and updated forms the value horizons and policy narratives associated with the European Union. The imprint of antiquity is also visible beyond Europe, particularly in the United States, Canada, and Australia, where European settlement carried Greco-Roman cultural references across the Atlantic and into the Pacific. Beyond the Euro-Atlantic sphere, elements of ancient cultural influence have circulated into parts of Asia and Africa as well. Since the campaigns of Alexander, the Great and the spread of Hellenistic political and cultural models, certain motifs of ancient thought and artistic expression were transmitted, adapted, and absorbed by distant civilizations, including those of India and China.

Given this wide diffusion, it is reasonable to speak of antiquity's global reach in the modern world while also recognizing that the lessons drawn from Greco-Roman civilization were repeatedly reinterpreted, reshaped, and endowed with new meanings in different contexts. A fuller understanding of these long-term transformations requires further investigation, especially for clarifying the sources of modern "Europeanness" and for anticipating potential trajectories of its future development by reflecting on ancient experiences of political community and shared governance. Understanding how ancient culture shaped the emergence and consolidation of Europe's autonomous cultural traditions remains highly relevant in light of contemporary integration dynamics, the strengthening of democratic institutions, and ongoing efforts to balance power among different branches and levels of governance in Europe. It also matters for everyday social cohesion: Europe's multicultural reality requires workable forms of coexistence among diverse national communities and a cultural dialogue that can sustain cooperation without erasing difference. In this context, Greco-Roman experience is often treated as instructive because it generated influential approaches to managing interethnic relations and articulated durable ideals of equality and fairness. These considerations are particularly pertinent for Ukraine as it seeks closer integration with Europe and aims to align with shared norms of "coexistence" within a broader European community. More generally, questions about how national cultures absorb and reinterpret ancient legacies and how those legacies might be mobilized constructively today gain urgency in a globalized world where lessons from earlier historical models of plural living can inform current challenges. For these reasons, further research on the topic is both timely and necessary.

Equally important is examining the impact of ancient philosophy on contemporary debates about cultural autonomy. Cultural autonomy can be understood as the capacity of cultural communities and their expressions to maintain and develop their distinctive values, languages, traditions, rituals, and symbolic practices without coercive external direction or domination. This capacity is central to cultural plurality because each culture's identity is grounded in its particular constellation of norms, beliefs, and inherited meanings. When autonomy is protected, cultures can evolve on their own terms rather than being pushed toward assimilation by stronger external forces. Cultural autonomy also entails a collective right to recognize, safeguard, and transmit heritage often through legal and institutional mechanisms that defend language use, religious practice, artistic forms, and other culturally significant expressions. In the present era of globalization, the need for such protection becomes more pronounced: global cultural currents can enrich local traditions, but they can also marginalize or homogenize them, increasing the risk that smaller identities will be diluted or lost. Supporting cultural autonomy therefore requires deliberate commitments to sustaining cultural diversity while encouraging exchange and mutual influence on an equal footing, so that interaction does not become domination and dialogue does not become erasure.

This article examines ancient cultural practices and the ways they are reinterpreted and integrated in the contemporary world specifically, how Greco-Roman heritage is absorbed within national cultural contexts and what outcomes follow from that process. The analysis is intentionally multi-dimensional: it addresses not only artistic and cultural forms, but also the traditions of socio-political life that continue to matter for Europe today, including the European Union as a multinational political project. The cultural self-understanding of modern Europeans is likewise expressed through cross-cultural patterns that characterize contemporary society and that are often reproduced elsewhere through Westernization. At the root of these developments are philosophical ideas originating in antiquity, ideas that continue to shape collective mentality and ideology as well as everyday behavior, legal norms, and institutional arrangements. For that reason, interpreting ancient philosophical inheritance through the lens of present-day cultural dynamics is essential for making sense of contemporary society more broadly.

Accordingly, the study aims to evaluate the significance of ancient philosophical culture by situating it within modern national cultures and within the processes through which those cultures develop. This perspective makes it possible to explore cultural autonomy, while also tracing the historical evolution of European cultures whose trajectories remain intertwined through a long record of shared development. To realize this objective, the article addresses three interrelated tasks: (1) to examine the ancient understanding of ethics and its continuing reinterpretation in the present; (2) to explain the role of cosmopolitanism in contemporary culture in comparison with its Greco-Roman philosophical foundations; and (3) to identify key ancient approaches to intercultural conflict management that are still invoked or adapted in modern contexts.

## Materials and Methods

Research on how ancient philosophy continues to shape modern cultural change has attracted sustained attention across generations of scholars. Using a comparative perspective, Kahteran (2022) examines how philosophy developed in Southern Europe and argues that, for contemporary transcultural debates, transcultural frameworks are more productive than conventional comparative models. In this view, distinctive modes of philosophizing emerged through a triangular zone of interaction linking the Balkans, Greece, and Italy, where knowledge and ideas circulated through intercultural exchange. From a related angle, Apostolopoulou (2016) contends that Europe's identity understood historically, culturally, and politically draws on archetypal foundations rooted in ancient Greek culture.

Amsler et al. (1985) highlight how Greek thinkers elevated Logos to a central philosophical concern. Apostolopoulou (2016) stresses that translating Logos simply as “reason” or “rationality” is reductive because the term also carries meanings associated with the order of being, grounding principles, language, and argumentation (p. 118). Denyer (2016) further proposes that the contrast between Logos and myth helps generate the later idea of rationalism. Yet, even if Greek culture is frequently described as privileging reason, myth remains deeply embedded in it evident in the cultural authority of gods and heroes (Long, 2022b). Apostolopoulou (2016) also underscores a key discontinuity between antiquity and modern Europe: whereas ancient Greek culture is oriented to the “logic of forms,” European culture is oriented to the “logic of things” (p. 118). Long (2022a) suggests that rethinking inherited assumptions about divinity and reason supports an interpretive claim that human rationality can be understood as a quasi-divine capacity capable of improving life. In the same work, Long (2022a) characterizes ancient moral philosophy as a kind of “mathematics” that helps balance what benefits the self with what benefits others (p. 25). Earlier interpretive treatments of ancient Greek culture are also developed by Fagan and Russon (1997).

Other contributions develop specific thematic lenses. Hillar (2012) discusses the significance of Logos for the formation of ancient civilization, while Chaudhri et al. (2022) address knowledge transformation in relation to representations of the universe. Mosyakova (2021) focuses on how ancient philosophical inheritance can be activated

for building a culture of autonomy. She argues that during antiquity when ideals of free life were articulated within the framework of law the modern notion of individuality was not yet fully conceptualized; consequently, the individual mind functioned as the primary instrument for engaging and exploring the world (Amsler et al., 1985). At the same time, Ancient Greek philosophy articulated foundational ideas of freedom and autonomy, presenting ordered coexistence as culturally valuable and treating it as a norm that stands in opposition to evil, deviation, and chaos (Mosyakova, 2021). Beyond the ancient period, Özgün (2022) addresses the meaning of medieval Christian ideology, Carelli (2016) surveys major approaches to studying ancient Greek philosophical thought, and Slabouz et al. (2021) explore linguistic philosophy in relation to the anthropological turn in cultural theory. For the purposes of this study, it is also necessary to clarify key features of how European culture has developed. Contemporary scholarship offers a wide range of interpretations of European identity, proposing different typologies and explicitly or implicitly evaluating its possible future directions. Importantly, not all approaches treat present-day dynamics as the central basis of that identity (Sassatelli, 2009). As Słomski (2003) notes, European identity is not framed primarily as a strictly scientific or philosophical “problem” to be solved, but rather as an ongoing theme of debate in modern academic discourse. In his view, a major source of European unity lies in the notion of a Christian community that historically underpinned European culture and civilization (Słomski, 2003, p. 13).

A significant portion of the literature links the formation of European identity to multiculturalism and the long-term evolution of intercultural coexistence. Parshyn and Mereniuk (2022), for instance, discuss multiculturalism by emphasizing its relevance to the medieval city as a social space in which plural communities interacted. Horyna (2020) traces the historical roots of contemporary European culture and identity, while Donnikova (2018) grounds the ethics of modern intercultural communication in an analysis of contemporary European intellectual works. Complementing these perspectives, Johansson (2022) examines how multiculturalism shapes modern social sectors by mapping both opportunities and emerging tensions. Kettani (2016) further specifies practical features and constraints related to implementing multiculturalist principles, whereas Kryvyzyuk et al. (2021) interpret multiculturalism as a defining condition of the postmodern environment. The conceptual and theoretical bases of multiculturalism are discussed in earlier work by Bergquist (1992).

Alongside these debates, many authors have also revisited how the concept of knowledge often linked to Logos is being redefined under contemporary global pressures and disruptions (Joas et al., 2019; Dovhan & Mikhailina, 2021). Renn (2020), for example, argues that a central task today is to reshape scientific thinking so it can respond more effectively to humanity’s shared challenges (p. 408). While he acknowledges that this ambition has precedents, he presents it as a renewed civilizational project that reconnects scientific inquiry with efforts to transform how humans relate to the world. Renn (2020) also frames the development of knowledge and mind as an evolutionary process that can be understood through the comparative analysis of historical epochs. Relatedly, Denning and Lewis (2020) emphasize how technological change conditions contemporary globalization, and Karimov et al. (2022) consider the role of knowledge within intercultural philosophical approaches. Despite this broad body of work, interpretations of ancient philosophical inheritance and the ways it is perceived, translated, and applied in modern contexts remain contested, indicating the need for more systematic and careful investigation.

## **Methods**

The research was implemented through a sequence of stages. First, the authors mapped and reviewed the contemporary scholarly base relevant to the topic. Second, they examined ethics as a core element in the philosophy of culture by interpreting how ancient philosophical ideas have been carried into modern contexts. Third, they analyzed cosmopolitanism by linking its present-day cultural meaning to its conceptual foundations in antiquity, and they assessed how these classical foundations resonate within modern European political thinking. Finally, the study

consolidates and synthesizes the main conclusions that emerged from these steps. To meet the study's objectives, the authors relied on general theoretical methods, primarily analysis and synthesis. An analytical approach was used to clarify how current scholarship understands the influence of ancient culture on the formation of European civilization and to define the content of the study's key concepts. Through content analysis of recent literature, the authors reviewed contemporary research and highlighted issues that remain important for further investigation. In addition, a comparative method was applied to surface points of disagreement and ambiguity in modern interpretations of how ancient cultural legacies continue to shape the present.

## Results

### *Ethics in the Philosophy of Cultures: Ancient Influence and Modernity*

A range of ideas that emerged in antiquity often intertwined with mythic, religious, and later theological modes of thinking helped shape the background assumptions of technogenic civilization and the development of modern science (Long, 2022b). One enduring value within this civilizational trajectory, formed through the historical blending of ancient thought, Christian cultural traditions, and scientific advances, is the view of nature as an ordered and intelligible domain. In classical terms, this order was frequently understood as evidence of a higher principle at work in the world and as a key expression of divine agency (Plato, 2016). Seen through the example of Socratic philosophy, Western culture's commitment to rational intelligibility became more than an abstract ideal: it evolved into a practical orientation that later underpinned scientific rationality. Within this intellectual frame, the human mind was increasingly conceptualized as participating in or mirroring a higher rational order, capable of grasping law-like structures in reality and interpreting the coherence of creation. Variations of this claim can also be found in earlier pre-Socratic reflections, and it became part of the broader movement that distinguished reason from purely mythic explanation (Denyer, 2016). Over time, such premises contributed to a distinctive form of rationality that would be institutionalized in early modern European science and, through it, become central to technogenic culture.

A particularly clear illustration of how ancient philosophical and theological discussions were transmitted, reworked, and absorbed concerns morality and the foundations of value. Early debates in Greek thought especially disputes over whether the good and the just are merely social conventions or whether they possess a status that exceeds human choice offered some of the earliest sustained, argumentative treatments of this problem. The confrontation between Socrates and the sophist Callicles is often cited as a formative moment in this tradition because it frames moral questions in terms of principled reasoning rather than mere rhetorical persuasion (Apostolopoulou, 2016).

Greek philosophy also placed strong emphasis on the conduct of the free person, a theme that remains relevant to modern humanism. Greek culture is frequently credited with bringing the individual to the foreground as a self-directing moral agent, and this reorientation continues to inform later ideas about dignity, autonomy, and responsible action (Mosyakova, 2021). In this tradition, the human spirit is treated as a locus of freedom, ethical life is linked to shared norms of practice, and civic relations are ideally organized around the interactions of equals. In fact, the protection of individual freedom was not only a philosophical aspiration but also a practical condition for the stability and proper functioning of the polis as a political community.

In antiquity, cultural norms were expressed through interconnected moral and legal rules that organized social life and regulated relations among citizens. The idea that individuals are accountable for what they do and must answer for their choices can be traced in early literary foundations, including Homer, whose narratives portray heroes guided by moral obligations as they struggle for the welfare of their communities (Mosyakova, 2021). Later, reflections on responsible and free conduct took a different direction in Sophist thought. Figures such as Antiphon, Protagoras, and Alcidamus advanced the claim that all human beings are equal by nature, regardless of whether they are Greek or

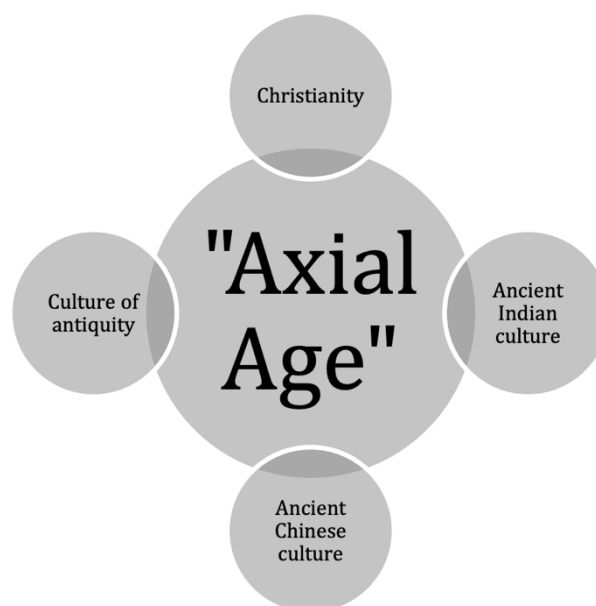
“barbarian.” From this standpoint, inequality is not rooted in nature but produced by the laws of the polis. Political law, in their critique, often compels people to act in ways that conflict with natural inclinations, thereby reframing how origin, status, and civic membership shape the individual’s position in society. Ideas about obedience to law and personal responsibility before legal norms also appear in Pythagorean traditions. Pythagoras is associated with the view that weakness or powerlessness is a form of evil and that a person cannot flourish without education and guidance, implying that moral formation is inseparable from disciplined instruction (Mosyakova, 2021). Heraclitus likewise emphasizes lawfulness, arguing that individuals should recognize their place within an overarching order aligned with the principles of Logos, since the universal provides a model worth following. In his view, Logos functions as the ultimate source of law, and civic life depends on citizens aligning themselves with this higher order; by contrast, lawlessness disrupts the universal law and fractures proper relations among people.

The theme of human choice and moral agency is further developed in Democritus, who associates ethical life with rational self-governance and treats the rational person as a standard for judgment and action the “measure of things” (Kedar & Hon, 2020). He is also credited with early distinctions between outward conduct and inward motivation, suggesting that moral evaluation involves not only what individuals do but also what they intend and desire. In this line of reasoning, goodness is not exhausted by avoiding injustice; it also requires refusing to cultivate the desire to commit it (Mosyakova, 2021). The same logic implies that integrity and corruption can be inferred not merely from actions, but from the orientation of a person’s will and appetites. Classical philosophers challenged and reworked many Sophist claims. Aristotle, for instance, links social stability to political arrangements that allow participation, choice, and a degree of freedom, yet he simultaneously acknowledges hierarchical dependence among persons within the social order. For Aristotle, virtue occupies a central role, and it is understood less as an inborn quality than as a cultivated disposition of the soul developed through habituation and practice (Djijian & Hovhannisyan, 2020). Socrates, by contrast, places knowledge at the core of ethical life: moral action is grounded in understanding, whereas wrongdoing stems from ignorance. On this view, self-mastery and therefore genuine freedom emerges through knowledge that enables individuals to govern their own impulses and decisions (Mosyakova, 2021; Dashchenko, 2022). Plato pursues a complementary project by seeking a universal basis for aligning justice with personal virtue through philosophical dialogue. He argues that social development requires individuals to restrain narrow self-interest and that laws should be designed to elevate both private conduct and collective life (Plato, 2021).

The incorporation of ancient perspectives into later philosophical reflection has long been a major route through which European scholars have interpreted the world and its historical development. A well-known example is Karl Jaspers’ discussion in *The Axial Age*, where he considers Christianity’s distinctive significance for Europeans while also stressing that this trajectory speaks most directly to Christian experience; other religions and belief systems, he argues, follow different paths of understanding and interpretation. Drawing on a broad reading of historical and cultural evidence, Jaspers identifies what he calls the “axial age” a pivotal period in which the contours of the modern human being were formed. He places this epoch roughly between 800 and 200 BCE (Jaspers, 2021). Jaspers associates this era with several defining characteristics. Most notably, it marks a time when influential sages, teachers, and philosophers emerged across multiple regions of Europe and Asia. In China, major figures such as Confucius, Mo Di, Zhuangzi, and Laozi, along with diverse philosophical schools, contributed to the consolidation of foundational intellectual traditions. In India, the Upanishadic corpus took shape, and Buddhism arose through the teaching of the Buddha. In Iran, Zarathustra articulated a moral framework structured around the opposition between good and evil. In Palestine, prophetic traditions developed that later became central within the religious history linked to Christianity (Horyna, 2020; Jaspers, 2021). Meanwhile, the Greek world produced epic and tragic literature alongside formative philosophical and scientific contributions associated with Homer and the tragedians, and with thinkers such as

Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Plato, as well as historians like Thucydides and scientific innovators such as Archimedes (Horyna, 2020; Jaspers, 2021).

For Jaspers, what unifies these developments is the intensified emergence of reflective thinking. This shift did not merely add new doctrines; it opened enduring ethical and cultural questions that would shape human history for centuries. As reflective inquiry expanded, competing schools and interpretations multiplied, prompting debates over spiritual meaning, fundamental oppositions, and the structure of reality. Jaspers describes this proliferation as producing a kind of spiritual turbulence yet precisely this disruption, in his view, became the condition for intellectual dynamism and historical movement (see Figure 1).



Source: compiled by the authors based on Jaspers (2021)

**Figure 1.** Schematic model of axial time

This intellectual and cultural dynamism generated a set of foundational categories that continue to resonate in artistic expression, contributed to the formation of major world religions, and helped establish a more universal horizon for thinking about humanity. As these new conceptual frameworks took hold, the older myth-based explanation of reality began to lose its dominance, and philosophical inquiry together with the schools that institutionalized it became a decisive force in weakening the authority of myth as the primary worldview (Jaspers, 2021). In Jaspers' account, the Axial Age also marks the beginning of "history" in a stronger sense: not merely a sequence of events, but a meaningful portrayal of the world as it came to be understood through reflective human consciousness. Although different peoples interpreted this historical awareness in distinct ways, its underlying universal character gradually became recognizable across cultures (Shpachynskyi & Huliamova, 2021). A similar universalization occurred in the domain of ethics: moral questions and normative expectations increasingly came to be framed in terms that could be shared, debated, and justified beyond local mythic narratives.



Through these shifts, humanity acquired more convergent patterns of development, including transformed ideas about political organization and statehood. Jaspers suggests that prior to this turning point, human communities largely lived within inherited belief systems that defined their world without sustained critical reflection. While the Axial transformation began in relatively limited geographic areas, its consequences ultimately extended far beyond their points of origin. Even though many civilizations have since disappeared and others have risen in their place, Jaspers maintains that the intellectual achievements of that epoch continue to be felt globally.

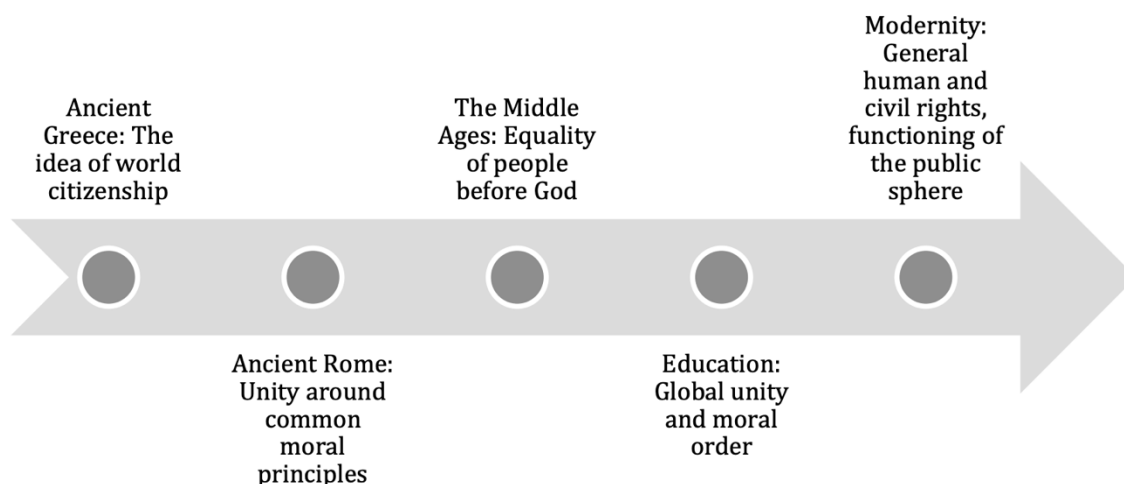
### ***Cosmopolitanism as a Philosophical Idea from Antiquity to the Present***

Contemporary societies are increasingly shaped by multicultural realities. Across the European Union, large numbers of residents have diverse national origins, and Europeans themselves display substantial cultural and psychological variation. The EU's well-known motto, "Unity in Diversity," signals an aspiration to cultivate cultural plurality while acknowledging difference and sustaining tolerance within shared civic limits. At the same time, as integration deepens, Europe is often imagined as a common "home" in which people including those living beyond the continent may identify with a broader European civic identity. A similar dynamic is frequently observed in the United States, where the nation is historically framed as a "melting pot" and where the idea of a shared homeland across multiple cultural backgrounds can appear even more pronounced. Yet modern globalization is also widely associated with cultural Westernization, particularly Americanization, understood as the global diffusion of the "American way of life" and its pressure on other national identities (Jung, 2020). For this reason, cosmopolitanism is often discussed in relation to the United States, even though its philosophical roots extend far earlier and are grounded in ideas developed within the ancient world and later European thought.

In classical philosophy, cosmopolitanism was advanced as a concept of world citizenship: the claim that human beings belong, in a morally significant sense, to a single community beyond local political borders. Thinkers such as Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and Epicurus are frequently associated with this orientation, which elevates universal moral principles above narrow cultural or national divisions (Mosyakova, 2021; Sellars, 2022). Closely related is the philosophical defense of what contemporary language would call tolerance. Ancient philosophers repeatedly argued that respect for differing views and cultural practices is necessary for coexistence, and they foregrounded open dialogue and mutual understanding rather than coercion as preferred routes for addressing conflict between groups (Stankiewicz, 2018).

Historically, the cosmopolitan impulse is often traced to ancient Greece, where Diogenes of Sinope famously described himself as a "citizen of the world," rejecting the idea that identity should be confined within ethnic, civic, or cultural boundaries. In Greco-Roman philosophy particularly Stoicism cosmopolitanism was articulated through appeals to natural law and the fundamental unity of humankind (López-Astorga, 2022). Stoic thinkers such as Seneca and Marcus Aurelius emphasized universal ethical standards and a form of moral responsibility that extends beyond one's local community (Stankiewicz, 2018; Karimov & Bekbaev, 2022). During the Enlightenment, cosmopolitan themes were reworked in debates about freedom, equality, tolerance, and the moral basis of international order. Philosophers such as Voltaire, Kant, and Rousseau explored questions of global unity and the conditions under which cooperation across states might be justified. In the twentieth century, cosmopolitan thought was further renewed through new concerns with rights, citizenship, and transnational legitimacy. Hannah Arendt examined the fragility of rights without political belonging and reflected on possibilities for global solidarity grounded. During the Enlightenment, cosmopolitan themes were reworked in debates about freedom, equality, tolerance, and the moral basis of international order. Philosophers such as Voltaire, Kant, and Rousseau explored questions of global unity and the conditions under which cooperation across states might be justified. In the twentieth century, cosmopolitan thought was further renewed through new concerns with rights, citizenship, and transnational legitimacy. Hannah Arendt

examined the fragility of rights without political belonging and reflected on possibilities for global solidarity grounded in law and institutional protection. Jürgen Habermas, in turn, emphasized the role of communicative reason and proposed the “public sphere” as a space of public dialogue where collective opinion is formed and where societies debate socio-political issues and future trajectories (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The Evolution of the Concept of “Cosmopolitanism” in European Philosophical Thought

In this longer perspective, modern cosmopolitanism can be seen as an extended evolution of an ancient philosophical intuition one that was already partially realized during the Hellenistic period. As Greek influence expanded, philosophical ideas circulated into the eastern Mediterranean and beyond, interacting with local cultural patterns and being reshaped over time. This historical process illustrates that cosmopolitanism is not simply a modern political slogan but a durable intellectual tradition whose meanings have been repeatedly adapted as cultures encountered one another across shifting geopolitical contexts.

### ***Coexistence and Resolving Contemporary Cultural Conflicts: Ancient Roots in European Political Thought***

Cultural differences continue to generate conflict across the world, which is why questions of how such tensions can be managed and resolved remain widely debated. In these debates, the underlying definition of “culture” is not a minor issue it directly shapes how multicultural conflicts are interpreted and what kinds of solutions appear possible. Approaches that seek to preserve cultural diversity face serious limitations if they refuse to treat cultures as distinguishable formations, because without some notion of cultural boundaries it becomes difficult to explain why conflicts arise, how they are sustained, or what exactly is being threatened. On the other hand, the opposite claim that cultures have no distinctive features at all can also obstruct inquiry. If cultural difference is dismissed in advance, the rationale for protection, recognition, or mediation is weakened, and meaningful dialogue tends to collapse before it begins.

A more workable orientation can be framed through the ancient Roman maxim *audi alteram partem* (“let the other side also be heard”), which demands that both perspectives be taken seriously. Applied to multicultural conflict, this principle supports approaches that search for an alternative model of cultural interaction so long as the model is conceptually coherent because such a framework can provide a shared reference point from which dialogue may move forward. In this spirit, some scholars propose viewing cultures in a way that is structurally comparable to individuals, enabling cultures to be described as units with internal organization and identifiable communication patterns (Evink, 2020).

Within this line of thinking, the model assumes a dual structure: a boundary that appears “trivial” on the surface, but that encloses internal tensions analogous to the conflicts found within personal autonomy (Waseem, 2022). At the individual level, such tensions emerge from the interplay between the self and external conditions, including pressures, constraints, and meanings that may be suppressed or only partially articulated (Oancea & Bridges, 2009). Managing these tensions requires self-referential choices decisions that relate back to one’s own identity and commitments and the capacity to make such decisions is often treated as central to autonomy. By analogy, multicultural conflict can be understood as a context that pushes cultures to define and negotiate their own boundaries through communicative relationships among members of the same cultural community. Conflict, in this sense, prompts processes of self-classification: individuals begin to identify themselves in terms of group membership, and these identifications help organize the distinction between “internal” cultural communication and interactions that take place across cultural lines (Štědroň & Štědroň, 2018). Even if members disagree about who fully belongs, claims of membership still shape communication patterns and can reinforce a culture’s internal unity, including its internal disagreements much like the “unity of conflict” often observed within persons.

Against this backdrop, intercultural dialogue becomes a central practical necessity. How such dialogue is conducted can be interpreted through insights derived from ancient philosophical traditions. Classical thinkers especially Plato and Aristotle developed early accounts of civic deliberation in which citizens exchange reasons, test arguments, and work toward shared understanding before collective decisions are made. Translated into contemporary multicultural settings, this legacy highlight openness to alternative beliefs, respect for reasoned exchange, and the capacity to engage others through dialogue rather than coercion principles that remain foundational for coexistence in culturally plural societies.

## Discussions

Ethics, intercultural coexistence, and cosmopolitanism have become especially salient under contemporary globalization and the broader structural shifts that accompany it. Many scholars plausibly trace key features of these debates to legacies rooted in antiquity (Slabouz et al., 2021; Chaika et al., 2021). At the same time, it is equally necessary to acknowledge intellectual layers from other periods and cultural traditions that complicate and sometimes challenge the privileged status often granted to Greco-Roman philosophical ideals when interpreting today’s socio-political landscape (Pae, 2020). With regard to ethics, researchers frequently underline the continuing relevance of ancient philosophical foundations for modern social life, yet there is no single consensus about how decisive ethics is for contemporary society or how it should be framed. It is therefore important to recognize arguments that emphasize Christianity’s formative influence on ethical principles (Edwards, 2022). Christianity, as both a religious tradition and a worldview with philosophical dimensions, emerged within the ancient historical horizon; however, ethical thought was also substantially reshaped by medieval and early modern philosophers, including later developments associated with Protestant ethics. These traditions did not merely preserve ancient moral ideas they reinterpreted them and introduced positions that, in important respects, diverged from the Greco-Roman inheritance. Taken together, such

historical layering supports broader claims about the gradual construction of universalistic conceptions of humanity (Jaspers, 2021).

Within this discussion, Jaspers' account is often treated as one of the late twentieth-century European attempts to conceptualize a shared human commonality (Baruchello, 2021; Frances, 2021). His approach assigns particular weight to cultural and religious determinants of development, prioritizing them when explaining universality in ways that do not simply mirror political evolution. Yet Jaspers' framework also leaves unresolved questions. It does not clearly explain why the transformations associated with the "Axial Age" occurred when they did, nor does it provide robust criteria for identifying whether a comparable "new axial age" could arise or how it might be recognized. In this sense, his interpretation remains largely retrospective: writing from a twentieth-century vantage point, he looks back and highlights the significance of earlier turning points. A defining feature of this reading is its focus on the ethical maturation of the person and on the consolidation of philosophical images of the world (Bondar, 2022). Moreover, it emphasizes interaction among philosophical cultures, within which antiquity functions as one component of a wider historical configuration rather than a self-sufficient source.

Cosmopolitanism, similarly, contains points that remain open to dispute (Carelli, 2016). The ancient "world" was imagined through hierarchical distinctions Greeks, Romans, and "barbarians" and even when non-Greeks were increasingly incorporated into public life over time, participation in cosmopolitan cultural space was often effectively restricted to those who could operate within Greek or Latin linguistic worlds. Modern cosmopolitanism, by contrast, is strongly associated with English as a dominant medium of global communication, yet the status of English is neither uniform nor equally accepted across contexts. Current events also demonstrate how cosmopolitan rhetoric can be instrumentalized or distorted. The Russian aggression against Ukraine illustrates how chauvinistic projects can invoke language and identity claims as a basis for imposing "comfort" or "freedom" for one group within another's social space. More broadly, in contemporary political settings especially under dictatorial regimes appeals to "mutual respect" or "honoring traditions" can be repurposed into mechanisms of domination, cultural erosion, and coercive control rather than genuine reciprocity.

Finally, the ideals of coexistence and multiculturalism are also approached with caution in parts of the literature. Democratic states in Europe and North America have developed legal and institutional mechanisms aimed at regulating pluralism, protecting rights, and managing diversity. Yet at the level of global governance within international organizations such as the United Nations dialogue and coordination often become more difficult, particularly when binding and effective decisions are required (Colvin, 2013). Recent conflicts underscore that power politics still operates: actors may treat war as an instrument of foreign policy, and in such circumstances the normative commitments of intercultural coexistence and peaceful dialogue can be overridden. Where regimes define themselves in opposition to European democratic traditions, respect for philosophical-cultural achievements that underpin coexistence may be correspondingly weak, and the practical space for dialogue can narrow sharply.

## Conclusions

The philosophical culture of antiquity substantially shaped how later scholars and societies came to understand modern national cultures and the dynamics through which those cultures evolve. Ideas articulated in the ancient world exerted a lasting influence on the sociological, political, and philosophical imagination of subsequent generations, and they became part of the intellectual foundation upon which European civilization was constructed. At the same time, contemporary European "culturedness" is also expressed through cross-cultural patterns that structure everyday life today and that are frequently reproduced elsewhere through broader processes of Westernization.

Several classical concepts remain particularly consequential. Ethical thought, first systematized in Greco-Roman contexts and later profoundly reworked across subsequent historical periods, continues to inform modern moral reasoning. Cosmopolitanism is likewise salient in the present, especially as globalization intensifies cultural interchange: national cultures increasingly absorb external influences, encouraging notions of shared humanity and “world citizenship.” While early formulations of such ideas appeared in ancient Greece, their later development produced modern philosophical perspectives that often echo without simply replicating ancient ideals. In a similar way, ancient reflections on conflict and its resolution retain practical relevance: contemporary political culture frequently relies on deliberation, debate, and reason-giving as preferred mechanisms for managing disagreement.

That said, the applicability of ancient experience is most direct within Europe and within societies historically shaped by European settlement and institutional transmission. Ancient ideas have also been transformed by the emergence of fundamentally new state forms, administrative systems, technologies, and global interdependence. Yet many basic patterns of human motivation, judgment, and social behavior remain recognizable, which helps explain why classical categories can still illuminate present challenges. In European governance, institutions such as the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe exemplify procedures that channel disputes into negotiation and scrutiny rather than direct coercion developments reinforced by post-1945 commitments to peaceful coexistence and by deeper globalization. For these reasons, ancient philosophical frameworks remain useful for interpreting current realities, even though they have not been equally internalized worldwide, where other intellectual lineages sometimes lead to different normative priorities and political styles. Looking ahead, a promising research agenda is to map cultural synergy and reciprocal influence under conditions of digitization where technology accelerates information flows, reshapes identity formation, and modifies how traditions circulate within modern social and political institutions. A second productive direction is to compare key ancient concepts with their partial, uneven realization in contemporary life, clarifying both continuities and limits. On this basis, the present study can serve as a platform for more extended, comparative investigation.

## References

- Amsler, M. (1985). [Review of the book *Language and logos: Studies in ancient Greek philosophy presented to G. E. L. Owen*, by M. Schofield & M. Nussbaum]. *Language*, 61(1), 217. <https://doi.org/10.2307/413443>
- Apostolopoulou, G. (2016). From ancient Greek *logos* to European rationality. *Wisdom*, 7(2), 118–130. <https://doi.org/10.24234/wisdom.v7i2.144>
- Baruchello, G. (2021). [Review of the book *Philosophy of globalization*, by C. Roldán, D. Brauerb, & J. Rohbeck]. *The European Legacy*, 26(7–8), 829–830. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2021.1905240>
- Bergquist, J. M. (1992). German Americans. In J. D. Buenker & L. A. Ratner (Eds.), *Multiculturalism in the United States: A comparative guide to acculturation and ethnicity* (pp. 53–76). Greenwood.
- Bondar, O. (2022). Between existentialism and anti-existentialism. *Wisdom*, 21(1), 204–216. <https://doi.org/10.24231/wisdom.v21i1.605>
- Carelli, P. (2016). Teaching ancient Greek philosophy as a non-Western tradition. *ASIANetwork Exchange: A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts*, 23(2), 150–163. <https://doi.org/10.16995/anc.150>
- Chaika, O., Savytska, I., & Sharmanova, N. (2021). Revisiting term studies in modern poly-cultural and poly-lingual contexts: Methodological approach. *Wisdom*, 19(3), 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.24234/wisdom.v19i3.530>
- Chaudhri, V. K., Baru, C., Chittar, N., Dong, X. L., Genesereth, M., Hendler, J., Kalyanpur, A., Lenat, D. B., Sequeda, J., Vrandečić, D., & Wang, K. (2022). Knowledge graphs: Introduction, history, and perspectives. *AI Magazine*, 43(1), 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aaai.12033>

- Colvin, S. (2013). The Indo-European beginnings. In *A brief history of ancient Greek* (pp. 1–16). John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118610695.ch1>
- Dashchenko, H. (2022). Legitimation process of female poetry during the Tang Dynasty (618–907). *Journal of Narrative and Language Studies*, 10(19), 109–125. <https://nalans.com/index.php/nalans/article/view/551>
- Denning, P. J., & Lewis, T. G. (2020). Technology adoption. *Communications of the ACM*, 63(6), 27–29. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3396265>
- Djijian, R., & Hovhannisyan, H. (2020). Axioms of philosophy in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. *Wisdom*, 16(3), 7–17. <https://doi.org/10.24234/wisdom.v16i3.395>
- Donnikova, I. A. (2018). Moral search in multicultural communication. *Anthropological Measurements of Philosophical Research*, (14), 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.15802/ampr.v0i14.150545>
- Dovhan, B., & Mikhailina, T. (2021). Fourth-generation digital human rights through the prism of transhumanism. *Entrepreneurship, Economy and Law*, (1), 171–175. <https://doi.org/10.32849/2663-5313/2021.1.30>
- Edwards, J. (2022). Multilingualism in modern Europe. *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics*, 8(1), 153–165. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jhsl-2021-0014>
- Evink, E. (2020). The idea of Europe in a post-European era. *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, 81(3), 211–226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21692327.2020.1753094>
- Fagan, P., & Russon, J. (1997). Interpreting ancient Greek culture: Two classicists reply. In *History as the story of freedom* (pp. 109–111). Brill. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004493681\\_016](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004493681_016)
- Frances, B. (2021). Philosophical proofs against common sense. *Analysis*, 81(1), 18–26. <https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/anaa039>
- Hillar, M. (2012). The *logos* in Greek culture. In M. Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity* (pp. 6–35). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139003971.004>
- Horyna, B. (2020). The origins of modern cross-cultural European interpretations of Chinese philosophy: New thoughts on China in the work of G. W. Leibniz. *Human Affairs*, 30(2), 146–163. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humaff-2020-0015>
- Jaspers, K. (2021). The axial period. In K. Jaspers, *The origin and goal of history* (pp. 8–29). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003133674-3>
- Joas, C., Krämer, F., & Nickelsen, K. (2019). Introduction: History of science or history of knowledge? *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 42(2–3), 117–125. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bewi.201970021>
- Johansson, T. R. (2022). In defence of multiculturalism – theoretical challenges. *International Review of Sociology*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2022.2045141>
- Jung, S. (2020). The modern and post-modern of modern cultural heritage. *Asian Comparative Folklore*, 72, 129–160. <https://doi.org/10.38078/acf.2020.10.72.129>
- Kahteran, N. (2022). Doing philosophy comparatively in Southern Europe: Western, Mediterranean, Islamic and other perspectives in engagement. *Comparative Philosophy: An International Journal of Constructive Engagement of Distinct Approaches Toward World Philosophy*, 13(2). [https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014\(2022\).130206](https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014(2022).130206)
- Karimov, R., & Bekbaev, R. (2022). The traditionalism of René Guénon in the discourse of philosophy of history and social anthropology. *Wisdom*, 21(1), 194–202. <https://doi.org/10.24231/wisdom.v21i1.712>
- Kedar, Y., & Hon, G. (2020). Law and order: Natural regularities before the scientific revolution. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 81, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2020.02.002>
- Kettani, H. (2016). History and prospect of Muslims in Western Europe. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 56(5), 1740–1775. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-016-0253-4>

- Kryvyzyuk, L., Khrypko, S., & Zabolotnyuk, V. (2021). Multiculturalism of virtual communities in the field of information security in the postmodern world. *Wisdom*, 19(3), 127–138. <https://doi.org/10.24234/wisdom.v19i3.523>
- Long, A. A. (2022a). Ancient philosophy's hardest question. In A. A. Long, *Selfhood and rationality in ancient Greek philosophy* (pp. 25–57). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198803393.003.0003>
- Long, A. A. (2022b). Finding oneself in Greek philosophy. In A. A. Long, *Selfhood and rationality in ancient Greek philosophy* (pp. 7–49). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198803393.003.0002>
- López-Astorga, M. (2022). Stoic logic from the theory of mental models. *Wisdom*, 21(1), 27–37. <https://doi.org/10.24231/wisdom.v21i1.741>
- Mosyakova, I. (2021). Aktualizatsiia spadshchyny davnikh myslyteliv dlia rozvytku kultury avtonomizatsii bahatoprofilnoho zakladu pozashkilnoi osvity: Kontsept "Svoboda" [Update of the heritage of ancient thinkers for developing a culture of autonomy: The concept of "Freedom"] [PDF]. [https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/735100/1/%E2%84%96\\_32.pdf](https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/735100/1/%E2%84%96_32.pdf)
- Oancea, A., & Bridges, D. (2009). Philosophy of education in the UK: The historical and contemporary tradition. *Oxford Review of Education*, 35(5), 553–568. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980903216291>
- Özgün, U. (2022). Testing the borders of tolerance: Chivalry glazed with monstrosity, violence and cruelty in *Richard Coeur de Lyon*. *Journal of Narrative and Language Studies*, 10(19), 150–164. <https://nalans.com/index.php/nalans/article/view/506>
- Pae, H. K. (2020). The East and the West. In H. K. Pae, *Literacy studies* (pp. 107–134). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-55152-0\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-55152-0_6)
- Parshyn, I., & Mereniuk, K. (2022). The Muslims in medieval Lviv: Linguistic, historical contexts. *Journal of Narrative and Language Studies*, 10(19), 138–149. <https://nalans.com/index.php/nalans/article/view/498>
- Plato. (2016). Plato's cave (excerpt from *The Republic*). In S. Schneider (Ed.), *Science fiction and philosophy* (pp. 26–29). John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118922590.ch3>
- Plato. (2021). *Republic*. Independently published.
- Remn, J. (2020). *The evolution of knowledge: Rethinking science for the Anthropocene*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691185675>
- Sassatelli, M. (2009). Imagined Europe: Narratives of European cultural identity. In M. Sassatelli (Ed.), *Becoming Europeans* (pp. 19–45). Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230250437\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230250437_2)
- Sellars, J. (2022). Stoicism. In D. Jalobeanu & C. T. Wolfe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of early modern philosophy and the sciences* (pp. 2026–2031). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31069-5\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31069-5_10)
- Shpachynskiy, I., & Huliamaova, K. (2021). Katehoriia "znannia" v abrysi filosofii osvity [The category of "knowledge" in the outline of the philosophy of education]. *Molodyi vchenyi (Young Scientist)*, 1(89), 256–260. <https://doi.org/10.32839/2304-5809/2021-1-89-50>
- Slabouz, V., Butko, Y., Mozhovyi, L., Nikitina, N., & Matoryna, N. (2021). Linguistic philosophy in the context of the anthropological turn of culture. *Wisdom*, 19(3), 45–53. <https://doi.org/10.24234/wisdom.v19i3.497>
- Stomski, W. (2003). Philosophy of culture and European identity. *Forum Philosophicum*, 8, 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.5840/forphil200383>
- Stankiewicz, P. (2018). Modern stoicism and the responsibility for the global polis. *Studies in Global Ethics and Global Education*, 8, 54–62. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0012.0388>
- Štědroň, B., & Štědroň, J. (2018). Towards evolutionary politology. *Politické vedy*, 21(3), 145–164. <https://doi.org/10.24040/politickevedy.2018.21.3.145-164>
- Waseem, A. (2022). Globalization and innovative performance: An analysis of moderating role of intangible knowledge assets of a country. *Journal of Globalization Studies*, 13(2), 133–151. <https://doi.org/10.30884/jogs/2022.02.09>