

<p>Institution: King's College London</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 32 Philosophy</p>
<p>Title of case study: History of Philosophy without Any Gaps Podcasts</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The project makes accessible the history of philosophy 'without any gaps' to a global audience. It capitalises on one of the Unit's research strengths, the history of philosophy, and brings this expertise to the general public maintaining a high level of intellectual rigour while making it accessible both intellectually and practically, thus maximizing reach. The public has access to the research through a series of podcasts (downloadable audio content) available on the project's website: www.historyofphilosophy.net, via software like iTunes. The podcasts are free to download and have been accessed more than 4 million times by thousands of listeners around the world. Because of their detail and format (often interviews) the podcasts convey advanced ideas and the fruits of recent research to this broad audience. The impact of the project lies in its ability to present our intellectual heritage in an accessible form, transforming the imaginations and sensibilities of individuals, enriching and expanding their lives and, given the nature of the topics discussed, informing and influencing their intellectual, cultural and personal development.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>(1) The podcasts produced up to the end of the assessment period centre on Prof. Adamson's main areas of research interest: ancient philosophy, including late antiquity and Islamic philosophy. The inclusion of the latter links the podcasts to Prof. Adamson's Leverhulme-funded research project 'Natural Philosophy in the Islamic World', which has provided resources for the production of the podcast. One of the central motivations of the project has been to bring knowledge of these areas to a wide audience, since they are little known outside of specialist academia. Although the podcasts are aimed at a wide audience, the episode scripts themselves constitute an original research contribution. The scripts will appear in revised form as a multi-volume series with Oxford University Press, to be called <i>A History of Philosophy</i>. The first volume will cover the Pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle, and will be published in early summer 2014.</p> <p>(2) The podcasts also draw extensively on previously published research by Prof. Adamson and other members of the King's philosophy faculty. Numerous episodes (both scripted and interviews) disseminate the research on the history of philosophy by King's faculty. Current and former King's staff who have appeared on the podcast are Prof. MM McCabe (at King's since 1990), Dr. Raphael Woolf (at King's since 2006), Prof. Richard Sorabji (retired from King's in 2000), Dr. Frisbee Sheffield (temporary lecturer at King's during the period), Dr. Fiona Leigh and Dr. John Sellars (both previously assistants to Prof. Sorabji's Commentators Project). For instance, in episode 6, Prof. McCabe discusses her influential view that Heraclitus' fragments need to be read as an invitation to a kind of 'dialogue' with the reader; in episode 50, three current King's ancient philosophers discuss work they have done on Aristotle's reaction to Plato; in episodes 17 and 72, Dr. Woolf draws on his published studies of Socrates and Cicero. Similarly, the podcasts have allowed Prof. Adamson to give other scholars from outside King's a chance to disseminate the fruits of their research. Interviews on ancient philosophy have featured Malcolm Schofield, David Sedley, George Boys-Stones, Serafina Cuomo, R.J. Hankinson, and numerous others.</p> <p>Prof. Adamson's own research became especially important for the podcasts starting with episodes which aired in spring of 2013, when he reached philosophy in the Islamic world. A major goal of the podcasts is to disseminate Prof. Adamson's work on philosophy in the late ancient and Islamic traditions, by first building an audience through episodes on classical philosophy, and then covering late antiquity and the Islamic world in considerable detail. To give just one example, Prof. Adamson is the author of a monograph on al-Kindi, the first Muslim philosopher, and the podcasts will give him an opportunity to disseminate this research to a wide audience. The same point goes for Plotinus, Avicenna, Averroes and other philosophers dealt with in Prof. Adamson's publications. Some indication of the tight relationship between his research and the podcasts is the 'further reading' recommended on the podcasts' website, which indicates primary and secondary literature for listeners to pursue further, and on which the episodes were based. As of episode 120, the further reading nearly always includes one or more of Adamson's publications, the relevant</p>

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episodes being partly or wholly concise presentations of these publications.

Prof. Adamson is Professor of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy at King's, and Professor of Late Antique and Arabic Philosophy at the LMU in Munich. He began at King's in 2000.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

The following list indicates the underpinning research relevant to selected podcast episodes. In fact this is a small sample, as Adamson's publications on Islamic philosophy have provided the basis for more than a dozen episodes on this topic. A fuller picture can be had by looking at the 'further reading' after each episodes on the website.

3.1 P. Adamson, 'Posterior Analytics II.19: a Dialogue with Plato?' in *Aristotle and the Stoics Reading Plato*, ed. V. Harte, MM McCabe, R.W. Sharples and A. Sheppard, London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2010, 1–19 [episodes 36 & 50].

3.2 P. Adamson 'Plotinus on Astrology', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 35 (2008), 265–91 [episode 85 on astronomy, astrology, and ancient philosophy].

3.3 P. Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: a Philosophical Study of the 'Theology of Aristotle'* (London: 2002) [episode 122].

3.4 P. Adamson and P.E. Pormann (trans.), *The Philosophical Works of al-Kindī* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012) and P. Adamson, *Al-Kindī* (New York: OUP, 2007) [episode 123].

3.5 P. Adamson, 'Knowledge of Universals and Particulars in the Baghdad School', *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 18 (2007), 141–64. [episodes 128 & 129].

Examples of underpinning research by other King's staff who have appeared as interview guests include:

3.6 MM McCabe (as MM MacKenzie), 'The Moving Posset Stands Still: Heraclitus fr. 125', *American Journal of Philology* 1987, 542–55 [she explains the textual emendation proposed here in episode 6].

3.7 R. Woolf, 'Socratic Authority', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 90 (2008), 1–38 [episode 17].

Grant information: Half of the funding for the podcasts comes from King's College London; the other half comes from the Leverhulme Trust. The podcasts are intended also specifically as a platform for research into natural philosophy in the Islamic world, for which Prof. Adamson received a grant of £250K from the Leverhulme Trust. The grant period is Oct 1 2010–Sept 30 2013. Thus the launch of the podcast was timed to coincide with the beginning of this funded project.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The podcast project has benefited thousands of users internationally, inspiring them, enriching their lives and informing and influencing their intellectual, cultural and personal development. This has been made possible by the way in which the project makes high-level research physically and intellectually accessible. The format of the podcast series makes it possible to convey advanced and detailed philosophical research findings to a broad audience. Moreover, the podcasts are easily and freely available, as they can be downloaded from an RSS feed (via software such as iTunes). This has ensured that the podcasts have reached a broad audience, both in academic and non-academic settings. The total **number of downloads** as of July 31, 2013 was over **4 million** for 139 episodes – an average of almost 30,000 downloads per episode. Within 1–2 weeks, an episode will typically be downloaded about 7,000 times. The podcast homepage has been viewed just under 600,000 times. Total views for each episode are available amongst the sources in 5 below, but here is a sample of relevant statistics: the first episode has been viewed on the website about 38,000 times, an early interview with MM McCabe on Heraclitus 10,000 times, a more recent episode on al-Kindi about 3,000 times. This indicates how many times people have listened to episodes streaming directly off the website, as opposed to downloading them.

In light of these statistics it is clear that the podcasts have thousands of regular listeners. This impression is confirmed by the facebook fan page of the podcasts, which has over 4000 fans; and the Twitter account (@HistPhilosophy) maintained by Prof. Adamson which has about 2600 followers. Both the facebook page and Twitter account are used to publicize new episodes, to interact with listeners and answer questions, and to disseminate related information such as

philosophy events in London and beyond.

Because podcasts can be accessed globally, listeners have written from far-flung places like Australia, Canada, Mexico, Norway and Russia. Two listeners got in touch from Brazil and Korea to ask about translating the podcasts into Portuguese and Korean. Many listeners indicate that they are not academics – for instance one listener said that they enjoyed listening while driving their UPS truck, another wrote to say that they are writing a blog about their attempts to replicate the educational experience of a BA using only freely available internet resources, and that with the help of this podcast they are ‘majoring in philosophy.’

The impact of the podcasts is also shown by hundreds of comments on iTunes, the podcasts website, facebook page, and direct emails to Prof. Adamson. These illustrate the fact that the podcasts produce great excitement and inspiration in regular listeners of all ages and backgrounds, and have been taken up in formal education from secondary to university graduate levels. Here is a small sample that provides an indication of the nature and significance of the impact:

‘Hopefully it won't sound void if I say that the world is a better place with you (and your podcast) around. Now, I know what you're thinking: that I must be listening to them from time to time! Well no, actually I listen to an episode a day, and then again and again; and every time there's a new aspect, a new idea popping up from among the layers of your argumentative discourse: Antiquity revived.’

‘Your work has rekindled my love of thinking.’

‘I have just started listening to your series from the beginning, and I find all the podcasts magnificent! Listening to the program on Heraclitus while doing the dishes really lights up that menial task. The program on Xenophanes was brilliant.’

‘My highest education is a Bachelor of Commerce in 1973 and while it did not include any philosophy courses, for some reason I have a general curiosity about the subject. I'm now retired and two years ago audited a one semester introductory course but for various reasons have not been able to take more - but will.’

‘Thanks for the excellently accessible podcasts - combined with Librivox audio versions of the primary texts they open up a whole new world.’

‘Thanks very much for your wonderful podcast. It's very accessible. I began listening to it with little interest of the subject, now I head straight to the philosophy section when I walk into a bookstore. I've bought the 'The Presocratic Philosophers' as recommended and the 'Complete Works of Plato’.’

‘I recently came across your philosophy podcast, and wanted to express my thanks for doing such a good job, on such a worthy task. Until very recently I was a stranger to philosophy, but since taking a course on Roman history at university I've begun to open the door to its vaulted treasures. It feels like I'm still only peeking through a crack in the door - much of the information in your podcast is entirely new to me - yet the position I'm in is a deeply exciting one.’

‘I am thoroughly enjoying the podcasts. At age 72 I have ‘suddenly’ discovered Philosophy and am quite taken by Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas. The sessions on Aristotle have been a big assist to my organizing my reading of his works. Please continue. From: Fan in California.’

‘Just want to thank you for this. I think this is needed for this society. This site was introduced to me by my uncle who found you. I had been interested before, so I was gladly ready to start the podcast. I really like it. Now I am reading St. Thomas and I can't wait before you get there, and on other great philosophical figures.’ [From a 12 year old listener.]

‘After 3 months of exclusive listening to your podcast on my regular commute, I have finally caught up with your most recent podcast... As one who had never before studied anything philosophical (or historical, for that matter!), your podcast has opened a fascinating world to me and I am ever so grateful.’

‘I would just like to add my voice to the chorus of thanks and congratulations you are deservedly receiving. As a teacher myself, I particularly admire your skill at explaining complex concepts succinctly and clearly without the need to 'talk down'. Your use of humour and links to modern examples is so well-judged and skilful, and leads to a rapid and complete engagement with the subject.’

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'I've recently dived into the podcast, and I've enjoyed it immensely! I've just begun graduate school in Greek and Latin, but I don't have a strong philosophy background (my undergraduate degree was Computer Science). I have always enjoyed philosophy though, and the podcast has been both a delight and a way to make up for lost time! Keep up the excellent work!'

'I have been listening intently. I use it as I drive to and from work where I take 000 calls. It means I can still believe that reason still exists.'

'I graduated with a degree in philosophy in 2009 and, as I'm sure is true of most philosophy graduates, I now live a life where opportunities to discuss (let alone 'do') philosophy are rare. These podcasts are just the thing I needed to keep the topics fresh in my mind, and keep me encouraged to continue my study, if only informally.'

'Loved it! I'm a mailman, not a scholar... Will be listening to the entire library.'

'I'm 19 years old and have recently developed a passing interest in philosophy. Before I go ahead and start to learn on a more in-depth level about particular philosophers, I'm trying to develop a good core knowledge of the whole subject. That way, I can choose which aspects appeal to me the most and find some more specialised material on them. Your podcast series is a brilliant starting point for me, since you talk in a way that even somebody, like me, who is not a student in the subject can understand. You don't assume that the person listening to the podcast is already educated in philosophy like some of the other resources that I have found do.'

'I thought you might like to know that alongside Nigel Warburton's Philosophy Bites your podcasts are also becoming part of my A-Level teaching and that my students are making use of them to get insights and opinions I have not offered. I merely provide a sheet of timed questions and some headphones and set them off. Happily several have then gone on to listen to all those others not immediately relevant.' [From a UK secondary school Philosophy teacher].

A fuller impression of comments and exchanges between Prof. Adamson and listeners can be found on: www.historyofphilosophy.net/comments; or on the facebook page and Twitter accounts.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

5.1 Page 'snap shots' of statistics for the website, the RSS feed and iKing's are available, showing the total number of downloads up to July 31, 2013 standing at over 4 million, and giving an exact breakdown for each episode. This illustrates the reach of the project's impact.

5.2 The comments page already mentioned, and the facebook page, are publicly available and can be used to gauge audience participation and reaction, which are an indication of the significance of the project's impact : <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-History-Of-Philosophy-With-No-Gaps/163670583644929?v=info>

5.3 The feedback function in the iTunes store also displays ratings and customer reviews by country. This evidence supports claims about the significance and reach of the project's impact: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/history-of-philosophy/id396903391>

5.4 Sample discussions with listeners on Reddit are also available and the Twitter feed is @HistPhilosophy. These discussions themselves constitute further pathways to impact, as well as giving an indication of the project's significance for its users.

5.5 The well-respected Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy has added links to podcast episodes on several pages, see e.g. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pythagoras/> under 'internet resources.' This increases dissemination and, therefore, reach for the project's impact.