

The Early Stoics

The Cast of Significant Stoics – A Quick Reference & Chronology

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The Best of the Early Stoics: The Lives, Writings & Teachings of the Early Stoics.

The Cast of Significant Stoics

A Quick Reference & Chronology

THE EARLY STOA

—late fourth through the first half of the second century BC

ZENO OF CITIUM: the son of Mnaseas (or Demeas); born in Citium (Cyprus) c. 335 BC. Inspired by the ideas and example of Socrates, Zeno learned from the Cynic Crates of Thebes as well as other philosophers before setting out to found his own school around 300 BC. He lectured in a covered colonnade called the Painted Colonnade (*Stoa Poikilē*—hence the name Stoic or Stoicism) on the edge of Athens' marketplace. Zeno taught that happiness consists in virtue, which is a life in harmony with nature and thus in accord with reason. He emphasized the significance of learning how to gain true knowledge through dialectic and the importance of studying the nature of the cosmos and human life in order to better know how to live in harmony with nature. Zeno died in 263 BC.

CLEANTHES OF ASSOS: the son of Phantias; born in Assos (northwestern Turkey) c. 331 BC. Cleanthes followed Zeno of Citium as the second head of the Stoic school. Initially a boxer, he turned to Zeno of Citium and

philosophy when he moved to Athens. Renowned for his love of hard work, Cleanthes worked as a laborer to support himself. He wrote the *Hymn to Zeus*, which celebrates Zeus as the origin and leader of nature, guiding all things with a universal law. Cleanthes died in c. 232 BC.

CHRYSIPPUS OF SOLI: the son of Apollonius; born in Soli (Cilicia, in south-central Turkey) c. 280 BC. Chrysippus followed Cleanthes as the third head of the Stoic school. He significantly shaped and even reformulated Stoicism during his tenure as chief Stoic. He is known for his development of logic, and particularly for his system of dialectic. He also worked on the problem of fate and human responsibility. He is said to have written some-705 works, none of which wholly survive. Chrysippus died c. 207 BC.

PERSAEUS OF CITIUM: the son of Demetrius; born in Citium (Cyprus) c. 306 BC. Though the nature of his relationship with Zeno of Citium is unclear (whether he was a slave, scribe, or friend), Persaeus lived and studied with him. When, due to old age, Zeno of Citium declined King Antigonus' invitation to visit and instruct him, he sent two men in his place. Persaeus was one of them. He travelled to Macedonia and taught Antigonus' son, Halcyoneus. Persaeus died in the king's service in Corinth in c. 243 BC.

PHILONIDES of Thebes (Greece), **CALLIPUS** of Corinth (Greece), **POSIDONIUS** of Alexandria (Egypt), **ATHENODORUS** of Soli (Cilicia, in south-central Turkey), and **ZENO** of Sidon (Lebanon) were all third century BC students of Zeno of Citium.

ARISTON (ARISTO) OF CHIOS: the son of Miltiades; born in Chios (a Greek island) sometime in the third century BC. Ariston was a student of Zeno of Citium. Counted a heterodox Stoic, he focused on ethics, discarding both logic and natural philosophy.

APOLLOPHANES OF ANTIOCH: born in Antioch (southeastern Turkey, near Syria) in the early third century BC, Apollophanes studied with Ariston of Chios in Athens. He emphasized practical wisdom.

HERILLUS OF CARTHAGE: born in Carthage (Tunisia) sometime in the third century BC. Herillus was a student of Zeno of Citium. Considered a heterodox Stoic, he declared that knowledge is the goal of life.

DIONYSIUS OF HERACLEA (THE RENEGADE): the son of Theophrastus; born in Heraclea (in Bithynia, in north-western Turkey) c. 328 BC. Initially the student of Zeno, after a painful illness, he eventually went over to the Cyrenaic school, declaring pleasure to be the goal of life. Dionysius died c. 248 BC.

SPHAERUS OF BOSPORUS (OR OF BORYSTHENES): born c. 285 (or 265) BC. Having studied with Zeno of Citium, Sphaerus became Cleanthes' student upon Zeno's death. He visited the court of Ptolemy in Egypt in place of Cleanthes. Sphaerus died c. 221 BC.

ZENO OF TARSUS: born in Tarsus (south-central Turkey) sometime in the middle of the third century BC, Zeno of Tarsus followed Chrysippus as the fourth head of the Stoic school in 204 BC. Orthodox relative to most Stoic teachings, he seems to have questioned the great conflagration (*ekpurōsis*). Zeno died sometime in the second century BC.

DIOGENES OF BABYLON: born in Seleucia (near Babylon in Iraq) c. 240 BC. Diogenes was the student of

Chrysippus and then Zeno of Tarsus, whom he followed as the fifth head of the Stoic school. He is known for his visit to Rome in 155 BC as one of three Athenian philosopher-ambassadors. Diogenes died in 152 BC.

ANTIPATER OF TARSUS: born in Tarsus (south-central Turkey) sometime in the latter half of the third century BC. Antipater followed Diogenes of Babylon as the sixth head of the Stoic school. Antipater died sometime in the latter half of the second century BC.

BOETHUS OF SIDON: born in Sidon (Lebanon), Boethus was the student of Diogenes of Babylon. He flourished in the second century BC.

ARCHEDEMUS OF TARSUS: born in Tarsus (south-central Turkey) sometime in the first part of the second century BC, Archedemus likely studied with Diogenes of Babylon. He wrote *On Utterance* and *On Elements*.

HERACLIDES OF TARSUS: born in Tarsus (south-central Turkey), Heraclides was the follower of Antipater of Tarsus. He flourished in the second century BC.

APOLLODORUS OF ATHENS: born in Athens c. 180 BC, Apollodorus studied with Diogenes of Babylon. He lived in Alexandria for a time, working as a scholar. Apollodorus died sometime after 120 BC.

APOLLODORUS OF SELEUCIA: born in Seleucia (near Babylon in Iraq) sometime in the second century BC. He was a student of Diogenes of Babylon. He is significant as one of Diogenes Laertius' many sources.

THE MIDDLE STOA

—the second half of the second century to the end of the first century BC

PANAETIUS OF RHODES: the son of Nicagoras; born in Rhodes (a Greek island off southwestern Turkey) c. 185 BC. Panaetius was the student of both Diogenes of Babylon and Antipater of Tarsus. He moved to and was influential in Rome mid-second century. He followed Antipater of Tarsus as the seventh head of the Stoic school in 129 BC. Like Zeno of Tarsus, he doubted the great conflagration (*ekpurōsis*). He also questioned the effectiveness of divination. Panaetius died in 109 BC.

POSIDONIUS OF APAMEA: born in Apamea (Syria) c. 135 BC. Posidonius was the student of Panaetius. After living and studying in Athens, he moved to Rhodes. Subsequently, Rhodes became the center of Stoicism. Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* 7.54) includes him with "the older Stoics" —older or earlier, that is, relative to Diogenes Laertius' time (third century AD). Posidonius died c. 51 BC.

HECATON (HECATO) OF RHODES: born in Rhodes sometime in the first century BC, Hecaton was the student of Panaetius of Rhodes.

ANTIPATER OF TYRE: born in Tyre (Lebanon) sometime in the first century BC, Antipater introduced Cato the Younger (Marcus Cato) to Stoicism. He died c. 44 BC.

MARCUS PORCIUS CATO (CATO THE YOUNGER): born in 95 BC. Marcus was a Roman statesman who held various political offices in the Roman *cursus honorum* (the typical political career path). One of the earliest Stoics in the

Roman Republic, he was perhaps the most archetypical *Roman* Stoic. Cicero uses him as the Stoic voice to “expound the whole system of Zeno and the Stoics” in his *On Ends*. He died in 46 BC.

ARIUS (AREUS) DIDYMUS: born in Alexandria (Egypt) sometime in the first century BC. Focusing on practical moral philosophy, Arius spent time counseling the Roman emperor Augustus. He wrote a consolation for Livia Drusilla (Julia Augusta, the wife of Augustus) on the occasion of the death of her son Nero Claudius Drusus.

ATHENODORUS OF TARSUS: the son of Sandon; born in Tarsus (south-central Turkey) sometime in the first century BC. Like Arius Didymus, he was a court philosopher to Augustus. He was a friend of Cicero.

EUDROMUS: The dates of the Stoic Eudromus are uncertain. He wrote a work titled, *Ethical Elements*.

CRINIS: The dates of the Stoic Crinis are uncertain. He wrote a work titled, *Art of Dialectic*.

THE LATE STOA

—the late first century BC to the last quarter of the fifth century AD
(roughly coinciding with the time of the Roman Empire)

SENECA (THE YOUNGER): the son of Seneca the Elder; born in Corduba (Córdoba, Spain) between 4 BC and 1 AD. Seneca practiced and wrote about Stoicism as a politician and writer. He served as tutor and advisor to the Roman emperor Nero. He is known for his many tragedies, his several consolations, his letters to Lucilius, as well as his essays on many topics, including anger, the shortness of life, tranquility, and happiness. Implicated in the Pisonian conspiracy of 65 AD, Seneca was forced to commit suicide.

MUSONIUS RUFUS: born in Vulsinii (Italy) before 30 AD. Influential in Rome, he was banished a number of times by different emperors, including in 65 AD after the Pisonian conspiracy. Though he did not write down his own works, many of his sayings and discourses survive. He died sometime before 102 AD.

EPICTETUS: born in Hierapolis in Phrygia (western Turkey). Though a slave in Rome for a portion of his life, Epictetus was nevertheless allowed to study philosophy with Musonius Rufus. At some point his master Epaphroditus (who had been Nero’s slave) liberated him. When he was banished from Rome c. 90 AD, Epictetus travelled to and settled in Nicopolis in Epirus (Greece), where he opened a school of philosophy. Epictetus is known for his *Discourses* and *Handbook (Enchiridion)*, which were composed and recorded by his student Arrian (c. 90-160 AD). The longest extant Stoic works, both emphasize ethics. Key points include the idea that we should judge and act based upon what is up to us (such as opinions, beliefs, and desires) versus what is not up to us (such as material possessions, reputation, and status). It is oftentimes our judgment about something that is upsetting rather than the thing itself. It is important to be people of integrity, to live simply, and to put a hold on pleasure, always respecting the faculty of judgment, our ruling principle. And whatever we do, in whatever situation, we should always ask, “What would Socrates or Zeno [of Citium] do?”

HIEROCLES: the Stoic Hierocles wrote the *Elements of Ethics* sometime prior to 150 AD, a work that deals with, among other matters, one’s natural relationship to oneself, and one’s relationship and duty to others.

THE CAST OF SIGNIFICANT STOICS ▪ A QUICK REFERENCE & CHRONOLOGY

MARCUS AURELIUS: born in Rome in 121 AD. Marcus Aurelius spent much of his time as Roman emperor (161-180 AD) defending the Roman Empire against invasions in the east and west. Trained in Stoicism, he is known for his journal of meditations, *To Himself* (often titled, *Meditations*), in which he contends that happiness is knowing that one is part of a good and natural whole, which is ordered and guided by providence or universal reason rather than chance.

So ends this item. See you in **another reading or item** from the Cave.

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