

The Early Stoics

The Virtues and Vices

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"No kind of philosophy is more profitable ... than the philosophy of the Stoics." —Thomas James

"Stoicism is the greatest system of organized thought which the mind of man had built up for itself in the Greco-Roman world. ... It represents a way of looking at the world and the practical problems of life which possesses still a permanent interest for humankind, and a permanent power of inspiration." —Gilbert Murray

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This item comes from the Cave's
The Best of the Early Stoics: The Lives, Writings & Teachings of the Early Stoics.

The Early Stoics

The Virtues and Vices

*The following virtues and vices appear in the various sources included in this volume (The Best of the Early Stoics). Definitions are those provided by the same. If a virtue or vice is not defined, that is because it remains undefined in the sources.**

PRIMARY VIRTUES

Practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) is the knowledge of good and bad things and what is neither; it has to do with duties or fitting activities; it is knowledge of what one should do, and what one should not do, and neither.

Courage (*andreia*) is the knowledge of what is fearful and what is not fearful and what is neither; it has to do with situations demanding patient endurance (*karteria*).

Moderation (*sōphrosunē*) is the knowledge of what is to be chosen and what is to be avoided and what is neither; it has to do with human impulses.

Justice (*dikaiosunē*) is the knowledge of the distribution of valuable things to each man; it has to do with the distribution of things.

SECONDARY VIRTUES

Good counsel (*euboulia*), which is the knowledge by which we see what to do and how to do it if we are to act in a useful and profitable manner, and **understanding** (*sunesis*) follow upon practical wisdom.

Good order or **discipline** (*eutaxia*) and **propriety** or **decorum** (*kosmiotēs*) follow upon moderation.

Unshakeable determination (*aparallaxia*) and **vigor** (*eutonia*) follow upon courage.

Equality (*isotēs*) and **fair-mindedness** (*eugnōmosunē*) follow upon justice.

Magnanimity (*megalopsuchia*) is the knowledge or habit that makes one superior to whatever commonly happens to base and excellent men.

Self-control (*enkrateia*) is an unbeatable disposition relative to those things that are in accord with right reason or a habit that is never conquered by pleasure.

Patient endurance (*karteria*) is the knowledge or habit that suggests what we must—and what we must not—abide by and endure, and what is neither.

Ready-mindedness (*anchinoia*) is a habit that discovers the appropriate thing to be done at any moment.

Frugal, thrifty: (*eutelēs*); simple, frugal (*litos*).

Self-sufficiency, independence (of others) (*autarkeia*).

Love of hard work (*philoponia*); **diligent**, industrious (*philoponos*).

PRIMARY VICES

Folly (*aphrosunē*). **Cowardice** (*deilia*). **Immoderation** (*akolasia*). **Injustice** (*adikia*).

SECONDARY VICES

Lack of self-control (*akrateia* or *akrasia*). **Slow-mindedness** (*bradunoia*). **Bad counsel** (*kakoboulia*).

DIALECTICAL VIRTUES

Dialectic (*dialektikos*) enables one to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and to judge well between what is merely plausible (*pithanos*) and what is ambiguously expressed.

Freedom from rashness or **deliberateness** (*aproptōsia*) is the knowledge of when one should assent to something or not.

Discretion or **levelheadedness** (*aneikaiotēs*) is a strong rational stance relative to what merely seems to be so as not to be taken in by it.

Irrefutability (*anelenxia*) is strength in arguments so that one is not drawn over by the argument to the opposite side.

Earnestness or **absence of frivolity** (*amataiotēs*) is the habit of referring presentations to right reason.

* For the broader context and a deeper understanding of how the Greeks thought about virtue, see the Cave's *Aretē: Excellence or Virtue: What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Aretē*.

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

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