

Diogenes of Oinoanda And the Timing of Causes

Post by "Cassius" of October 12, 2022 at 9:29 AM

This is probably a gross oversimplification, but what we have generally understood about the Cyreniacs was that they were focused on immediate pleasures (probably more bodily than mental, but possibly both) and they rejected the idea of calculating out over time the expected benefit from activities that in the short term are painful(??)

This seems to be an articulation of the Epicurean response in which Diogenes was emphasizing that current actions can bring important current pleasure even when the physical results of those actions happen far in the future. Sort of a "time preference" analysis in which the emphasis remains on the total expected resulting pain vs pleasure, but which emphasizes that great pleasure can come from current thinking about actions that will produce results that may be greatly delayed in time (and that might not even come until after our death, but that we get great pleasure in thinking forward about them).

By rejecting this idea the Cyreniacs were locking themselves into "the pleasure of the moment" while the Epicureans were working toward a much more expansive definition and analysis of total pleasures.

Anyone have a thought on whether that is the direction?