

Sedley On Diogenes of Oenoanda, Pleasure vs Virtue, and Textual Reconstruction

Post by "Cassius" of July 20, 2019 at 10:25 AM

I have just posted a couple of items on an article by David Sedley entitled "[Diogenes of Oenoanda on Cyrenaic Hedonism](#)." The abstract of the article does not give much indication of its content, and certainly not its full value. Now that I have had the chance to read it, I see several aspects that are important not to miss:

1. It contains an excellent argument against those who try to argue that since Epicurus held virtue and pleasure to be so closely related, it is OK for us to aim at virtue as a goal. I am going to clip the heart of Sedley's attack on that view and attach it here, because this error is a continuing problem.

2. What the article is really about is that Sedley argues that some of the parts of the Inscription that are otherwise confusing make more sense when read as an attack on the Cyreniaks, rather than on the Stoics. He focuses on the section on causes that precede, concur with, or follow the pleasures they generate as targeted not at Stoics, but at Cyreniaks. Sedley makes a lot of sense, and for those of us who are into the details, the article is well worth reading for this material.

3. In making the point that Martin Ferguson Smith probably has his reconstruction (or at least his commentary) slightly off, Sedley is providing an excellent example of how we need to be **very** careful in working with fragmentary texts. If so excellent an expert as MFS can misconstrue fragmentary texts, how easy it is for those of us who have not devoted our lives to study of the texts to make errors of our own when the texts that we have are in pieces or missing!