

AntiSeneca

Post by “Hiram” of January 27, 2020 at 2:29 PM

Interesting that he includes Hegesias (a Cyrenaic) among the stoics and idealists.

It was against him that Anniceris wrote, when he proposed a philosophy of friendship (replacing Hegesias' misanthropy with philanthropy) and believed happiness to be attainable (replacing Hegesias' pessimism with optimism), and these developments make him THE CHAIN that connects the Cyrenaic tradition to the Epicurean tradition, so much so that scholars consider Anniceris a "proto-Epicurean".

Here are my notes on Hegesias from Lampe's book:

<https://theautarkist.wordpress.com/2016/07/15/cyr...-and-anniceris/>

Quote

Hegesias

Magnanimous people seem disdainful. - Hegesias

Hegesias had a huge difference of opinion with Anniceris on what makes up the ideal life. Among his anti-social views, we find that he believed that the sage is like a king, has no peer and can't have friends. He viewed all human relations as subject-object interactions and considered people to be merely instrumental. He also praised the virtue of detached enjoyment of courtesans and the treatment of women as sexual objects, with the understanding that the objectification was mutual.

[Lampe in *Ataraxia* \(2011\) p. 206](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0203114120) argues that “hero ethics” was domesticated by philosophers, and that Hegesias embodies a sort of “heroic code”, where the philosopher is likened to a king. The traditional Greek heroic code involved good reputation, tokens of honor, competition, and violence. This heroic code does not seem particularly hedonistic, and in fact seems to generate great pain and bring ruin to the people.

There is another instance where this ancient intellectual does not seem to fit the profile of a pleasure-seeker. Hegesias claimed that happiness (eudaimonia) was impossible, and his pessimism was notorious for having influenced some of his listeners to commit suicide, according to spurious surviving anecdotes.

Like Aristippus the Younger, Hegesias believed in a “comprehensive end”, which he defined as “no pain or distress”. He also did not differentiate between sources of pleasure and, in defence of his virtue of indifference, he once said:

It doesn't matter how much money you have, the rich don't experience pleasure differently from the poor ... Fame and ignominy are (also) indifferent to pleasure.

He argued that when we disdain fame, we become self sufficient in honor, and that since most people lack the intelligence to judge whether or not we're great, we should therefore live with indifference to fame (that is, *lathe biosas*).

He also argued (less convincingly) that slavery and freedom were equal and could afford similar amounts of pleasure. This, of course, is a questionable, perhaps a false, consolation.

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