

A Stoic Diogenes: Ancient Cynicism Through the Eyes of Epictetus and Julian

In this paper, I analyze how the characterization of Diogenes by Greek-speaking Stoic philosophers of the Roman Empire reflects the values of Stoicism and the Roman Empire, as well as the philosophical culture of the Second Sophistic itself. To do this, I begin by examining Epictetus' *Discourses* and Julian's *Orations*, focusing specifically on the features of Diogenes and his philosophy these authors exploit or promote and which they suppress or excuse. For example, both Epictetus and Julian promote the image of a very pious Diogenes, a man whose philosophy finds its origins in a deity and thus venerates that deity. They also emphasize Cynic parrhesia, cosmopolitanism, and asceticism while simultaneously giving them a distinctly Stoic flavor. On the other hand, they actively suppressed some central tenets of Diogenes' philosophy, such as his characteristic shamelessness, which were antithetical to Stoicism and Roman decorum.

In the second half of the paper, I examine why these authors chose to portray Diogenes this way; how rewriting Diogenes allowed them to reap the benefits of Stoicism's link to a venerated philosophical past while also distancing themselves from oft-denigrated contemporary Cynics. Contemporary Cynics were a repository in which these authors could place all of Cynicisms un-Roman and un-Stoic features, while Diogenes acted as a receptacle for those features the authors found more palatable. With this examination, I show that Epictetus and Julian were not simply imitating the philosophers of the past, as many like to accuse Second Sophistic philosophers of doing, they were innovating.