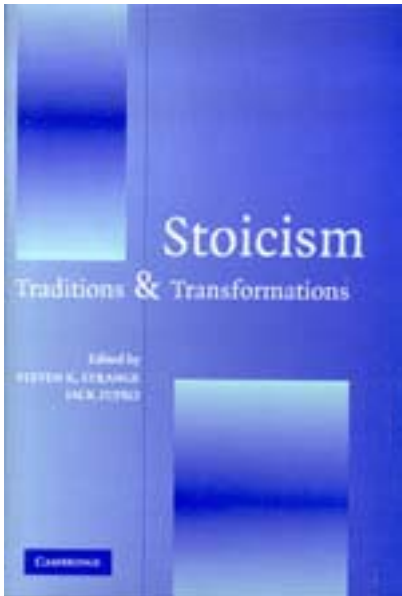


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Strange, Steven K., and Jack Zupko, eds.

Stoicism: Traditions and Transformations

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This book is a scattered collection of essays, most of which were presented at the Leroy E. Loemker Conference at Emory University, 31 March–2 April 2000. One was presented on other occasions as well (that by Brad Inwood); one was a chapter in a book (that by A. A. Long), and one was published in the *Journal of Political Philosophy* (8 [2000]; that by Martha Nussbaum). This information about provenance appears partly in the acknowledgments (ix) and partly in preliminary notes at the bottom of the first page of the chapters in question. Most chapters have no such note and would presumably belong immediately to the conference. This conference is called the “Second Leroy E. Loemker Conference” in one place (250) but in another just the “biennial” conference. Similarly, the subtitle of the book, with its plural “traditions,” is explained (2) as referring to the collected essays published now, while elsewhere (250) it appears as the subtitle of the conference itself. It is odd that the conference is not described. If the principle of collection was not presence at the conference, then it would help to have some account of what it was. The introduction does not supply this lack.

The introduction describes a low and a high road for discussing the “influence of Stoicism on Western thought” (1–2). The high road, of tracing the descent of remarks by ancient Stoics to later thinkers, is rejected in favor of the low road, or looking at “broader tendencies and trends.” This low road, which relies on a “looser, somewhat more

impressionistic reading,” is said to be the “only road” because the literary evidence of ancient Stoicism is fragmentary. Having established this necessity, the introduction then tells the reader that some of the essays even so “do follow the high road” (2).

These observations reveal looseness in the editing: the essays vary in purpose, audience, and topic (apart from an interest in Stoicism), and the introduction does little to bring them together. It must suffice that they are presented in chronological order of their content. They are: (1) “The Socratic Imprint on Epictetus’ Philosophy,” by A. A. Long; (2) “The Stoics on the Voluntariness of the Passions,” by Steven K. Strange; (3) “Stoicism in the Apostle Paul: A Philosophical Reading,” by Troels Engberg-Pedersen; (4) “Moral Judgment in Seneca,” by Brad Inwood; (5) “Stoic First Movements in Christianity,” by Richard Slorabji; (6) “Where Were the Stoics in the Late Middle Ages?” by Sten Ebbesen; (7) “Abelard’s Stoicism and Its Consequences,” by Calvin Normore; (8) “Constancy and Coherence,” by Jacqueline Lagrée; (9) “On the Happy Life: Descartes vis-à-vis Seneca,” by Donald Rutherford; (10) “Psychotherapy and Moral Perfection: Spinoza and the Stoics on the Prospect of Happiness,” by Firmin DeBrabander; (11) “Duties of Justice, Duties of Material Aid: Cicero’s Problematic Legacy,” by Martha Nussbaum; and (12) “Stoic Emotion,” by Lawrence C. Becker.

Several of the first essays will be of interest to New Testament scholars. A. A. Long shows how Epictetus uses the Socratic method of dialectic to impart his own Stoic ideas, while at the same time appealing to Socrates as a model of Stoic morality. Steven K. Strange and Richard Slorabji give accounts of Stoic morality with philosophical and psychological insight. Stoicism evidently supposed that the will cooperated with the impressions of the senses, or the mind. Those impressions might be involuntary, but since the will passed its own judgment on the impressions, there was a rationale for thinking that behavior was voluntary. As such it could properly be praised or blamed. Brad Inwood elaborates on this very point. Of course, ideas about praise and blame, the will, and how a person can become good are central to Paul’s arguments. Troels Engberg-Pedersen provides an exegesis of Gal 5:13–26. A person must understand what the good really is, and when the right understanding is coupled with the voluntary judgment of the will, it becomes possible to choose what is right and to escape wrongdoing. This argument runs in the same direction as Paul’s, though in different words. Engberg-Pedersen says that the “single most important” contribution he has made to New Testament studies is showing that Paul has “an easy acquaintance with certain basic ideas in Aristotelian and Stoic ethics” (75, 70). The chapter in this collection certainly points this way, even though it is not directed to New Testament scholars. The bibliography in any case refers to a book by Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (T&T Clark, 2000), and another edited by him, *Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Westminster John Knox, 2001).

Jacqueline Lagrée and Lawrence Becker, like Strange and Slorabji, write about Stoic morality, formulated as it was with a philosophical framework. Their essays are removed chronologically from the New Testament period, but the discussion is penetrating and interlocks with the concerns expressed there. In this way, one goal of the book editors (Strange and Zupko), which was to show the continuing vitality of the Stoic tradition, is achieved.

The essay by Martha Nussbaum is the longest chapter in the book. As has been noted, it was published in the *Journal of Political Philosophy*. It is a rehearsal and criticism of Cicero's idea of the duties that people owe to others. The duties of justice are what we might call human rights and those of material aid are making some provision for the poor. The salient question is why the duties of justice ("mainly . . . refraining from certain acts: aggressive war, torture, rape, and the like" [230]) seem to apply everywhere, while duties of material aid (beneficence) seem easy to confine to one's own group, that is, family or nation. Nussbaum thinks that Cicero's attempt to distinguish the two duties fails and that the responsibility of material aid cannot be dismissed with his rubric. Indeed, if we think we ought to protect the human rights of persons outside our own borders, then we must recognize that it costs money to secure these rights, for example, to pay judges. The exhortation is that those who feel the weight of duty should not "fall back on the Ciceronian doctrine . . . but continue our work" (245). Nussbaum's essay is eloquent and important, although it is different in tone and purpose from the rest of the book.

Such a difference in tone and purpose suggests once again that the impression of editorial haste and resulting incoherence in this volume is not a complete illusion. There is a wide variation in vocabulary, from the unexplained use of the phrase "the hexis quality" (150), to a reference to realists as "thing-people" (6), to "Spinozistic" meaning of, or like, Spinoza (210). Again, the bibliography lists works inconsistently: Abelard is found at Abelard and then at de Rijk; Seneca is at Seneca, but Augustine at Pinborg. Positively, however, the collection does exhibit the variety of Stoic traditions, as well as their relevance to New Testament studies at least.