

HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

I. Geopolitical Background.

Consequences of the Alexandrian Empire:

- ▶ Tenor of the times: uncertainty in the face of cultural cataclysm.
- ▶ Shift from independent city states to *centralized* government.
- ▶ Philosophy becomes autonomous from politics.
- ▶ The search for **new foundations**: how to live the good life as *defined by the old values in the new order*.

II. Divisions of Philosophy.

Overall: a constriction & narrowing of questions
plus a fragmentation of philosophical perspective

1. Logic & Canonic
2. Physics
3. Ethics

III. Thematic Presuppositions.

1. Empiricism ▶ Elevation of sense-perception
2. Materialism ▶ Denial of the incorporeal
3. Naturalism ▶ Control of the passions
 (to free the soul from disturbances)

IV. Principal Schools.

Thematic	Scholastic	Figures	Crux
Constructive	Stoics	Zeno, Philo	Rational soul sublimates desire
	Epicureans	Aristippus, Epicurus	Appetitive soul liberates the mind
Destructive	Cynics	Antisthenes, Diogenes	Abandon philosophical questions
	Skeptics	Pyrrho, Sextus	Balance assent & denial

V. Principal Doctrines.

Philosophy as a Destructive Force

Cynics	Skeptics
Antisthenes - Diogenes	Academic Skeptics (Arcesilaus, Carneades) Pyrrhonian Skeptics (Pyrrho, Sextus)
From <i>kyon</i> (dog)	From Socratic Ignorance
Abandon philosophical questions; the first hippies—drop out; the good life lies in the sphere of the private	Pit opposing positions against one another to show the futility of reason, from which follows balance; <i>apatheia</i> .

Philosophy as a Constructive Force

Inquiry	Stoics	Epicureans
Logic	Sentence logic: atomic sentences & logical operators	Term logic: denotative definition via sense data
Epistemology	- "The graspable" = <i>gestalten</i> - clarity via system - wholism	- original data = percepts (physics) = feelings (ethics) - clarity via secure foundations - reductionism
Physics	Plenum	Atoms & void
Metaphysics	- Determinism - Teleology (intrinsic causes)	- Freedom (atomic "swerve") - Mechanical explanation (extrinsic causes)
Theology	Divine Logos	Divine Indifference
Ethics	To free the soul from disturbances via: Sublimation & bringing the will to acquiesce in necessary truths	To free the soul from disturbances via: Moderation & cultivation of the appetites