



## ZENO OF CITIUM (335–263 B.C.)

Founder of **Stoic** philosophy, born at Citiium on Cyprus, probably of Phoenician ancestry. In 313 he went to Athens to attend the Platonic Academy, but converted to Cynicism, in which vein he wrote his earliest treatises.

He taught in the *Stoa Poikile* (Painted Porch) at the foot of the Acropolis in Athens, where he drew many listeners. When Antigonus Gonatas, king of Macedonia, invited him to his court in Pella, he dispatched a disciple instead of going in person, breaking **Plato's** and **Aristotle's** tradition of serving tyrants. Zeno's complete philosophical system borrowed physics from Heraclitus and Aristotelian logic from Antisthenes and Diodorus the Megaran, but it was his ethics, according to which virtue is the only good and vice or moral weakness the only real evil, that comforted many during the wars and tyrannies of the successors of **Alexander the Great**, the late Roman Republic, and the Empire. A protégé of the Scipios, Paenatius of Rhodes (ca. 150 B.C.), introduced Stoic **philosophy to Rome** and harmonized it with the *mos maiorum* to make it the favorite philosophy of Romans until the third century when **Neo-Platonism** replaced it.

Antigonus of Carystus named Zeno as having been an exclusive boy-lover with no interest in women. Ethically Zeno regarded the choice of sexual object, whether male or female, as a purely personal matter. No objective criteria, he opined, can be adduced for preferring either homosexuality or heterosexuality. What is important is the management of one's life in accordance with enlightened

self-interest. Zeno was also one of the first Greek philosophers to end his life by **suicide** when he believed that his usefulness was at an end, an example emulated by such followers as Cato the Younger and Seneca the Younger, the most famous Roman adherents except for the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, himself also an expounder of Stoicism.

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## ZOROASTRIANISM

The most important indigenous religion of ancient **Iran**, Zoroastrianism bears on the history of homosexuality because of its crucial influence on this aspect of **Judaism** and its sacred writings, as well as on the folk angelology and demonology of the intertestamental period and later centuries. The religion of Zoroaster survives today among the small Parsi community in India.

Although it reached its apogee during the Achaemenid Period (ca. 550–330 B.C.), the roots of Zoroastrianism extend much further back into Persian religious traditions relating to nature worship and good and evil spirits, and beyond these to **Aryan (Indo-European)** mythology with its division of celestial beings into two warring classes. This ancient dualism appeared in Greek mythology as the gods versus the titans, and in Indian tradition as the gods (*devas*) versus the demons (*asuras*), but in Persia the labels were reversed, so that the Aryan asuras became the good *ahuras* and the devas became the evil *daevas*. The prophet Zoroaster (from a