

is but a fragment of what there was. By then, the concepts and doctrines of Stoic and Academic epistemology were assimilated in the philosophical common ground and were poised to have a lasting influence.²³

Stoics distinguished two knowledge-like states: *cognition* and *knowledge*.²⁴ By “knowledge”, they meant rich systems of cognitions that are immune to objections.²⁵ That is close to Plato’s and Aristotle’s picture of expert knowledge.²⁶ Stoics treated it as an ideal that few, if any, had ever reached. Though they use the ordinary Greek word for knowledge we would rather call that *wisdom* or *science*.²⁷ By “cognition”, however, they meant something much more like what we would ordinarily call “knowledge”.²⁸ Here we are interested in their theory of “cognition”, and we will simply call it *knowledge*.²⁹

Knowledge is assent to a cognitive impression (LS 40B). Impressions are quite literally images imprinted into the mind. They have content. We can assent to them, that is, believe their content, or not.³⁰ Among impressions,

²³See Frede (1987, 176). The last head of Plato’s Academy, Philo, relaxed scepticism to the point of allowing the formation of “convincing” opinion (see below note 72). That was widely perceived to make the Academic doctrine unstable and apparently prompted the departure of two talented pupils who founded influential schools. Aenesidemus founded a ‘proper’ Sceptical school, the Pyrrhonist one, to which Sextus Empiricus (second century CE) belonged. Antiochus founded a new dogmatic Academy that adopted the Stoic’s conception of knowledge—presented as Plato’s own. See Long and Sedley (1987, 449). Thus Epicureans aside, all major schools in the first century BCE inherited the conception of knowledge from the Stoic-Sceptic debate. The neo-Platonic school in particular would influence Augustine whose *Contra Academicos* was in turn the main source on scepticism for early medieval authors.

²⁴See e.g. LS 41A. The word translated as “cognition” is *katalēpsis*, a neologism that literally means *apprehension* or *grasping*. Cicero translates *perceptio*, whose original meaning is taking, collecting (as in “perceiving taxes”). “Knowledge” is *epistēmē*.

²⁵See LS 41A, 41B, 41C, 41H and Annas (1990, 187-188). “Immune to objections” corresponds to the Stoic phrase “firm and unchangeable by reason”, which Long and Sedley (1987, 257) interpret as being “impregnable to any reasoning that might be adduced to persuade a change of mind”.

²⁶See Fine (2003, 114-5) on Plato’s coherentism about “knowledge” and Barnes (1993, xii-xiii) and Burnyeat (1981) on Aristotle’s demonstrative conception of “knowledge”.

²⁷See Barnes (1980, 204): “The verb ‘*epistasthai*,’ and its cognates ‘*epistēmē*’ and ‘*epistēmōn*,’ are not philosophical neologisms; they occur frequently in Greek literature from Homer onwards, and they are there correctly translated by ‘know’ and its cognates.” In the Stoic context, Long and Sedley nevertheless translate *epistēmē* as “scientific knowledge” (Long and Sedley, 1987, 257).

²⁸Long and Sedley (1987, 257): “It would be possible to translate *katalēpsis* by ‘knowledge’ in many contexts”. See also Annas (1990, 184-185, 189).

²⁹For overviews of Stoic epistemology see Long and Sedley (1987, sections 39-42), Annas (1990) and Frede (1999). The account below essentially follows Frede’s (1987; 1999). Reed (2002b, 150n7, 153n14) suggests that Frede shifted views on whether the Stoics added their third clause as a further requirement (in Frede, 1987) or as a clarification of the first two (in Frede, 1999). We should distinguish two issues here: whether satisfying the first two clauses was supposed to *entail* satisfying the third and whether the third clause is was supposed to *clarify* of the first two. What matters for my purposes is the *entailment* issue, for if early Stoics defended an account on which “cognitions” could violate the third clause they were *not* Classical Infallibilists. Fortunately Frede answered that question positively in both works: see Frede (1987, 165) (“the Stoics think that any impression which satisfies the first two conditions will in fact also satisfy the third”) Frede (1999, 312) (“Given that the third clause is treated as merely clarificatory and redundant”). The “clarification” issue has no impact on our discussion and the account below is neutral on it.

³⁰See Frede (1987, 152-157). It is controversial whether Stoics thought that all impressions come from the senses, though that is definitely their paradigmatic case (see Brennan, 1996 for discussion). Reed (2002b, 169-70) suggests that Stoics only loosely talk of impressions as having content: strictly speaking, they are associated with one or several propositions which are themselves content (or