

“Cosmopolitans and Unmet Friends”

Eric Brown (Washington University, St. Louis)

Abstract

It is commonplace for Greek philosophers to say that fellow-citizens of a good city are friends and that friends have to be acquaintances. It follows from these that there are limits on the size of a good city. But the Stoics say that the whole world is a city. Do they flout the commonplaces, or are they not really serious about their cosmopolitan claim? They flout the second commonplace, but they take pains to show that they respect the reasons that underpin it. On their view, the essence of friendship does not require acquaintance, but it does require commitments and dispositions that most people associate with acquaintance.