

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
M PHIL EXAMINATIONS 2003
for internal students

POST-ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY

Candidates should answer THREE of the following questions. Please avoid overlap in your answers.

1. What is the connection between Epicurean atomism and the Epicurean view that sensation is the criterion of truth?
2. 'When pain has been completely removed, pleasure is subject to variation but not increase.' How coherent is the Epicurean account of pleasure?
3. EITHER (a) Assess the following claim: 'A genuine sceptic, according to Sextus Empiricus, does have beliefs, but beliefs that are not dogmatic.'

OR (b) Explain the philosophical difference between Academic and Pyrrhonist scepticism.
4. EITHER (a) Explain the role of the natural instinct for self-preservation in Stoic ethical arguments.

OR (b) 'Perfect reason is virtue.' Can the Stoics defend this claim against sceptical attack?
5. Explain the philosophical significance of the Stoic claim that a drop of wine can mix with the whole sea.
6. Give a critical analysis of the following passage:

The following three propositions mutually conflict: 'Every past truth is necessary'; 'Something impossible does not follow from something possible'; and 'There is something possible which neither is, nor will be, true'. Diodorus saw this conflict and exploited the convincingness of the first two to establish the conclusion that 'Nothing which neither is nor will be true is possible'. Now some will retain the pair 'There is something possible which neither is, nor will be, true' and 'Something impossible does not follow from something possible', but deny that 'Every past truth is necessary'. This seems to have been the line taken by Cleanthes and his circle, and was in general endorsed by Antipater. Whereas others will

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retain the other pair that 'There is something possible which neither is,

nor will be, true' and 'Every past truth is necessary', but hold that something impossible does follow from something possible (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.19).

7. For Plotinus, in what sense is the One 'free' in emanating the intellect?

8. Give a critical analysis of the following passage:

Our awareness of the One is not by way of reasoned knowledge or of intellectual perception, as with other intelligible things, but by way of a presence superior to knowledge. The soul experiences its falling away from being one and is not altogether one when it has reasoned knowledge of anything, for reasoned knowledge is a rational process, and a rational process is many. The soul therefore goes past the One and falls into number and multiplicity. One must therefore run up above knowledge and in no way depart from being one, but one must depart from knowledge and things known, and from every other, even beautiful, object of vision. For every beautiful thing is posterior to the One, and comes from it, as all the light of the day comes from the sun. Therefore Plato says, 'it cannot be written or spoken' but we speak and write impelling towards it and wakening from reasoning to the vision of it, as if showing the way to someone who wants to have a view. For teaching goes as far as the road and the travelling, but the vision is the task of someone who has already resolved to see (Plotinus VI, 9, 'On the Good').

9. What is philosophically significant about Porphyry's arguments that we should not sacrifice or eat animals?

10. The Neoplatonist commentators on Aristotle differ from Aristotle in their conceptions

of the physical universe: matter, motion, space and time. Addressing yourself to some

or all of these topics, say to what extent these conceptions constitute an advance on

Aristotle's theories.

11. EITHER (a) Assess the Neoplatonists' account of how there can be evil in the world,

even though it is generated by an entirely good First Principle.

OR (b) Assess Augustine's account of how there can be evil in the world, even

though God is providential and omnipotent.

12. Does Boethius successfully explain how freedom can be compatible with divine foreknowledge?

END OF PAPER