

BA EXAMINATION 2009

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

Optional subject (k): Post-Aristotelian Philosophy

Tuesday, 5 May 2009: 10am-1pm

Answer THREE questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1. EITHER (a) 'Nothing comes into being from what is not.' Explain the role of this claim in the Epicurean account of the nature of things.

OR (b) 'Not only must we deny cutting into smaller and smaller parts to infinity... but also we must not consider that in finite bodies there is traversal to infinity, not even through smaller and smaller parts.' What does this tell us about Epicurean atoms?
2. How successfully do the Epicureans argue against a teleological explanation of the universe?
3. Explain and assess Diodorus' Master Argument and Chrysippus' response to it.
4. 'Epicurus used to say that all sensibles are true.' How does Epicurus' account of sensibles fit with his scientific methodology?
5. Describe the Stoic account of the cognitive impression. How effective were the Academic Sceptics' arguments against it?
6. Can a Pyrrhonist recommend the suspension of judgement without being dogmatic?
7. Can what is indifferent have value? Discuss with reference to the Stoic view.
8. What is the Stoic view of the role of emotions in the good life? Is it plausible?

TURN OVER

9. EITHER (a) 'The removal of all pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures' (Epicurus, *Key Doctrine* 3). Discuss.

OR (b) How persuasive are Epicurean arguments that death is not to be feared?

10. Can Epicurean theory find room for an adequate conception of friendship?

11. Does Plotinus give good grounds for distinguishing Intellect (*nous*) from the One?

12. Critically comment on the following passage:

But the greatest objection of all is this. If one grants that the objects of thought are as completely as possible outside Intellect, and that Intellect contemplates them as absolutely outside it, then it cannot possess the truth of them and must be deceived in everything it contemplates. For they would be the true realities; and on this supposition it will contemplate them without possessing them, but will only get images of them in a knowledge of this sort. If then it does not possess the true reality, but only receives in itself images of the truth, it will have falsehoods and nothing true. If, then, it knows that what it has is false, it will admit that it has no part in truth; but if it does not know even this, and thinks it has the truth when it has not, the falsehood in it will be doubled and will set it far away from the truth. (This is the reason, I think, why there is no truth in the senses, only opinion: opinion is opinion because it receives, and what it receives is different from that from which it receives it.) So if there is not truth in the Intellect, then an intellect of this sort will not be truth, or truly Intellect, or Intellect at all. But then truth will not be anywhere else either. (Plotinus, *Enneads* V.5.1)

13. What were Plotinus' reasons for postulating a soul which is 'undescended', i.e. in permanent contact with Intellect?

14. Critically discuss Plotinus' identification of matter as the principle of evil.

15. EITHER (a) Who had the better of the debate between Porphyry and Iamblichus over what attitude Platonists should have about pagan religious practices?

OR (b) Does Porphyry make a convincing case that a philosopher should not eat meat?

16. Is Philoponus effective in his attempt to undermine arguments for the eternity of the world?

END OF PAPER