

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

577 0165

MA Examination
for Internal Students

PHILOSOPHY

Greek Philosophy: Plato and Aristotle

Monday 2 June 2008: 2.30 – 5.30pm

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1. Critically assess the role played by hedonism in Socrates' argument against weakness of will (*akrasia*) in the *Protagoras*.
2. What does the demonstration with the slave in the *Meno* actually show about the nature and contents of the mind?
3. Comment critically on the following passage:

“These are the reasons why trying to get a greater share than most is said to be unjust and shameful by law and why they call it doing what’s unjust. But I believe that nature itself reveals that it’s a just thing for the better man and the more capable man to have a greater share than the worse man and the less capable man. Nature shows that this is so in many places; both among the other animals and in whole cities and races of men, it shows that this is what justice has been decided to be: that the superior rule the inferior and have a greater share than they. For what sort of justice did Xerxes go by when he campaigned against Greece, or his father when he campaigned against Scythia? Countless other examples could be mentioned. I believe that these men do these things in accordance with the nature of what’s just – yes, by Zeus, in accordance with the law of nature, and presumably not with the ones we institute’’. (Plato, *Gorgias* 483c-e)

4. EITHER (a) Does Socrates offer a convincing account of the city’s virtues in *Republic IV*?
OR (b) ‘It is perfectly possible for an individual the parts of whose soul are doing their own work to act unjustly. Therefore Socrates’ account of the just individual in *Republic IV* fails.’ Discuss
5. Is the distinction between knowledge and belief *Republic V* persuasive? If so, how? If not, why not?
6. Are there good reasons for rejecting *Republic IV*’s arguments for dividing the soul into three parts?
7. EITHER (a) In what sense is a Platonic Form supposed to be a cause?
OR (b) Can the theory of Forms survive the attack in the *Parmenides*?
8. ‘According to Aristotle, a fulfilled life consists in acting in such a way as to express the good character which one has.’ Discuss.

9. To what extent does Aristotle's account of friendship acknowledge that what it is reasonable to do may not always be what promotes individual well-being?
10. How well does Aristotle explain moral failure?
11. Under what conditions does Aristotle think that I know something in the strict sense? Are these conditions too demanding?
12. What does the distinction between matter and form explain that could not have been explained using only the resources of Aristotle's *Categories*?
13. Does Aristotle successfully explain how god could be the first cause of all motion, given that all god does is think?
14. What does it mean to say that the soul is the first actuality of the living body? Is Aristotle's discussion of thinking compatible with this definition of soul?
15. Assess Aristotle's arguments for the claim that certain natural phenomena require teleological explanations.

END OF PAPER