Abstracts for Ancient Philosophy Workshop for Female Graduate Students and Early Career Researchers

Simona Aimar: ***'Technē as a Science for Aristotle'***

Aristotle claims that *technē* is productive knowledge (*poiētikē epistēmē*). It is tempting to think that here '*epistēmē*' is used loosely, and thus productive knowledge is far away from any form of scientific knowledge. We argue that in fact for Aristotle productive bodies of knowledge are bodies of knowledge that can be modelled in terms of *demonstrations.* The relevant notion of demonstration is the same one Aristotle uses to account for the science of nature (*physikē epistēmē*), namely that of demonstrations with premises that are true either of necessity or for the most part. In this sense, for Aristotle *technē* is as scientific as the natural sciences are. We consider how Aristotle conceived of the relation between *technai* and other sciences and how he can tell technical and natural sciences apart. Our interpretation also explains the sense in which technical knowledge is productive. Technical demonstrations effectively break down a task into a set of sub-steps. For example, the demonstrations that constitute the art of house-building show you what steps you need to follow in order to build a house. So technical knowledge is productive because its demonstrations are *production-guiding*.

Katharine O'Reilly: ***'Cicero Reading the Cyrenaics on the Anticipation of Future Pain'***

A common reading of the Cyrenaics is that they are a school of extreme presentists when it comes to pleasure, recognising only the pleasure of the present moment, and advising against turning our attention away from present pleasure in favour of past or future pleasure. Yet, rather problematically for those who consider the Cyrenaics extreme presentists, they have some strange advice about future pain, as reported by Cicero (*Tusculan Disputations* III.xiii.28-29). Cicero's testimony tells us that the Cyrenaics advised followers to anticipate future harms in order to lessen the unexpectedness of them when they occur. It's a puzzle, then, how they can consistently hold the attitude they do to our concern with our present selves, and yet endorse the practise of dwelling on possible future painful scenarios. In order to establish that this is a puzzle, though, we must first be convinced that Cicero's report is true. As the evidence stands, Cicero is our only clear source for the Cyrenaic advice concerning the anticipation of future pain. Further, scholars have noted reasons to be suspicious of the reliability of his report. I will discuss the doubts over the veracity of Cicero's testimony, and why they ultimately fail to undermine Cicero as a source for Cyrenaic thought. Defending Cicero as a source removes a barrier to taking seriously an aspect of Cyrenaic psychology which could radically alter our understanding of their views.

Margaret Hampson: ***'The Learner's Motivation in Aristotelian Habituation'***

Moral virtue is, for Aristotle, a state to which an agent's motivation is central. For anyone interested in Aristotle's account of moral development, this invites reflection on two questions: how is it that virtuous motivational dispositions come to be established? And what contribution do the moral learner's existing motivational states make to the success of her habituation? I argue that views which demand that the learner act with virtuous motives if she is to acquire virtuous dispositions misconstrue the structure of the habituation process, and obscure Aristotle's insight that the very practice of virtuous actions affords a certain discovery and be transformative of an agent's motivational states. I sketch an account of this process, and a novel interpretation of the contribution to this that a learner's existing motives make.

Sybilla Pereira: ***'Epistemic Agency and Truth in Plato's*** **Gorgias***'*

In the *Gorgias* Socrates points out to his interlocutors that they do not believe what they claim (and appear to think) they believe (474b-c, 475e, 481d-482c, 495e, 513c). They might not know it, but they agree with Socrates in recognising p) that suffering injustice is better than committing it. And so, Socrates adds, does everybody else, regardless of what they might say (474b). Socrates appears to believe this to be the case because he is strongly committed to the truth of p), as he affirms once he has obtained Polus' agreement through the elenctic method (475e). He seems to believe that because p) is true everyone ultimately believes that p). This appears to be a fallacious claim and a dubious argumentative move on Socrates' part. In my presentation I will discuss possible ways of making sense of the conception of epistemic agency and its relation to truth that seem to underlie this argumentative strategy. In what sense might Polus, as he asserts not-p), believe p)? I shall then evaluate the question of what dialectical function this strategy might play in Socrates' attempts to persuade his interlocutors.

Ellisif Wasmuth: ***'What the many know and teach: language/games in the*** **First Alcibiades***'*

In this paper, I will look closely at two Stephanus pages of the *First Alcibiades*: 110b1-112a9. In this passage, Socrates grants that the many have some knowledge – what Alcibiades calls knowing Greek (τὸ ἑλληνίζειν ἐπίστασθαι) – and he gives a brief account of what this knowledge consists in. The account, however, is somewhat puzzling. The contrast Socrates draws between what the many know – language – and what they do not know – for instance justice – is only vaguely set out, and he seems to reduce language to a simple language game of fetching things like sticks and stones. Joe Mintoff is one of the few people – apart from Proclus and Olympiodorus – who have discussed this part of the *Alcibiades*. He argues that while the many know and agree about language, they do not know or agree about justice. He thus interprets Socrates as claiming that there is a clear distinction between the knowledge involved in knowing a *language* and knowledge of the *things* that the language-users speak about. I will argue that the text challenges this view in a way that suggests a continuum between basic language use and philosophical inquiry or dialectic. According to this view, gaining knowledge of a language, and learning, or inquiring, about the things talked about are, at least ideally – that is, within virtuous linguistic communities – two sides of the same coin. Dialectic, one could say, goes all the way down.