

Schedule:

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2012

- 2:00 Welcome Professor Ruth Scodel
- 2:10 Classical Greek Origins of the Doctrine of Natural Law Professor Lloyd Weinreb
- Respondent Amy Pistone
- Discussion
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 Virtue, why bother? 'Aristotelian' account of moral motivation Professor Brad Inwood
- Respondent Daniel Drucker
- Discussion
- 4:05 Closing Remarks Professor Ruth Scodel
- Reception in Assembly Hall

2012 Symposium Committee Members:

Ruth Scodel, Sara Ahbel-Rappe, Victor Caston, Bruce Frier and George Platsis

Lloyd L. Weinreb

*Dane Professor of Law at
Harvard Law School*

CLASSICAL GREEK ORIGINS OF THE DOCTRINE OF NATURAL LAW

The doctrine of natural law originates in the idea of normative natural order, which emerged clearly in fifth century Athens. It affirmed that nature—what there is—is ordered normatively. This idea is expressed in the great tragedies, most notably those of Sophocles. After the fifth century, it was incorporated into the Stoic doctrine of the Logos. It was picked up by Cicero, whose Latin expression of it in the first century gave rise to what may properly be called a doctrine of natural law, later adapted by Thomas Aquinas to the teachings of the Christian church. Today, natural law is widely regarded as a school of jurisprudence which affirms that true law conforms to moral precepts and that a rule that does not so conform is not law properly so called. The original Greek notion of normative natural order persists not in the doctrine of natural law but in the idea of justice.

RESPONDENT: Amy Pistone

Graduate Student, Classical Studies

The ideas expressed in the lecture are discussed at greater length in Lloyd L. Weinreb, *Natural Law and Justice* (1987) and *Oedipus at Fenway Park: What Rights Are and Why There Are Any* (1994).

Brad Inwood

*Professor of Philosophy and Classics
at the University of Toronto*

VIRTUE: WHY BOTHER? AN 'ARISTOTELIAN' ACCOUNT OF MORAL MOTIVATION

Why should one be virtuous? Always a tough question, but even tougher if what we're really asking is why one should go through all the hard work and training demanded to acquire a virtuous disposition. Ancient moral theorists made it clear that virtue, though natural in some sense, doesn't come without effort. The reason why people should go to the trouble of learning to be good is often thought to be obvious in a eudaimonistic context. If happiness is the human telos it is the natural fulfillment of our nature. Who wouldn't want to fulfill their nature? It might be the case that the motivating reason for the pursuit of virtue was thought to be too obvious to need discussion, but nevertheless it is striking how rarely ancient writers provide a substantive, non-question-begging account of the psychological motivation for acquiring virtue (as opposed to the philosophical motivation one might have for promoting a virtue-based moral theory). One later Aristotelian author actually provides an explicit argument on this point, in chapter 3 of the doxographical account of ethics found in Stobaeus' Anthology (often called 'doxography C'). Though largely neglected, this theory persuasively connects the reason one has to become virtuous to a standard and plausible ancient account of human nature. In this paper I present the argument, show how it is meant to work, and defend it as the most explicit and plausible strategy for connecting a theory of human nature with the demands of virtue offered by the mainstream ancient philosophical tradition.

RESPONDENT: Daniel Drucker

Graduate Student, Philosophy

THE ENDOWMENT

The Arthur and Mary Platsis Endowment for the Greek Legacy is a gift to the University that enhances Classical and Modern Greek Studies at the University of Michigan.

ARTHUR AND MARY PLATSIS, immigrants from the island of Crete in Greece, exemplified the finest traditions of modern Hellenism, including hard work, service to their adopted homeland, and a commitment to education. This commitment was maintained by each one of their three children and six grandchildren, all of whom earned university degrees. Arthur Platsis demonstrated his devotion to the United States by proudly volunteering for military service with the 32nd Michigan Infantry in World War I. Upon his return, he served as head chef at the American Legion Hospital in Battle Creek, Michigan, that cared for veterans who suffered the effects of poison gas attacks. Mary Platsis also demonstrated her desire for serving others through volunteering for the Red Cross, founding the Battle Creek Friends of Greece during World War II that shipped clothes to her war torn homeland, and providing relief to the orphanages of Kandanos and Sougia, the village of her grandfather, from 1945-1947, under the United Nations Relief and Reconstruction Act.

It is in the spirit exemplified by these two individuals that their son, George Platsis, created the Arthur and Mary Platsis Endowment. Funds from this endowment will serve two main purposes: an annual symposium and student prizes for work relating to the Greek Legacy. Symposia will discuss values and virtues associated with the Greek tradition such as the pursuit of excellence, moderation, idealism, self-knowledge, rationalism, endless curiosity, democracy, freedom and individualism.

ABOUT PROFESSOR WEINREB:

Lloyd L. Weinreb is Dane Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, where he has taught since 1965. He has a B.A. degree from Dartmouth College, B.A. and M.A. degrees from Oxford University, and the LL.B. degree from Harvard University. After law school, he clerked for J. Edward Lumbard, chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and for Justice John M. Harlan on the Supreme Court of the United States. He was for one year a Special Assistant in the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice, before returning to Harvard Law School as a member of the faculty. He has been a professor since 1968.

Professor Weinreb currently teaches courses in Criminal Law and Constitutional Criminal Procedure. For many years, he taught courses in Intellectual Property. He has also taught a course in political philosophy called Law and Social Order at Harvard College. He reads classical Greek.

ABOUT PROFESSOR INWOOD:

Brad Inwood is University Professor of Classics and Philosophy at the University of Toronto, where he has taught since 1982. He took his first degree in Classics at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario and did graduate work at the University of Toronto and Cambridge University. In addition to a Mellon postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford he has held research fellowships at the National Humanities Centre in North Carolina and at the Centre for the Advanced Study of Behavioural Science at Stanford University.

He has published widely on Stoicism, especially Seneca, and on the Presocratic poet Empedocles. His current work is focused on the Aristotelian tradition in ancient ethics.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Department of Classical Studies
2160 Angell Hall, 435 S. State St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003

734.764.0360 | lsa.umich.edu/classics

The GREEK BACKGROUND of NATURAL LAW

Sunday
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*11th Annual Arthur and
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on the Greek Legacy*

DEPARTMENT of
CLASSICAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

