

## Passion and Action

This is the final coursework sheet. It relates to the passions, how to practice the apathic life, and some ideas about the political views of the Stoics.

- 65A 1. In what sense are passions ‘irrational’ (ἄλογον, *alogon*) and ‘contrary to nature’ (παρὰ φύσιν, *para phusin*)?
- 65A 2.\* Why do appetite and fear ‘come’ before pleasure and distress (4)?
- 65BCG 3. What is the connection between the passions (πάθη, *pathê*) and opinions (δόξα, *doxa*)?
- 65A–F 4.\* Normal people have passions, the wise have ‘good feelings’ (εὐπαθείαι, *eupatheiai*). What do you think is the difference?
- 65J 5. Explain Chrysippus’ running analogy.
- 65 6.\* What, if anything, do you find attractive about the Stoic cognitive theory of the passions.
- 66 7. Select one extract and analyse it critically: what does the text say, and what does it mean; how does it connect to the other aspects of ethics; why is this a relevant passage; how should we interpret it?
- 67AB 8. What is in your view the most striking suggestion in Zeno’s *Republic*?
- 67FG 9. What is in your view the most striking suggestion in Chrysippus’ *Republic*?
- 67 10.\* What picture of the wise’s political engagement emerges from these sources?

*Background Information.* (a) The common translation of ‘passion’ is ‘emotion’. But this should not mislead us: a passion is a sort of ‘suffering’, that is, something that happens to us or something we undergo. The passions in this sense contrast with actions, the things we do and to some extent control. But the passions also contrast with reason: passions are *alogos* (ἄλογος), which means they are unreasonable or irrational (see LS65A6, B), they do not obey the (logical) rules of thought. The key idea is that the passions obstruct reasonable or rational, and thus virtuous, action. (b) The ‘fluttering’ reminiscent of bids in LS65A is Zeno’s metaphor for the precarious nature of the passions. (c) The terms ‘stretching’ and ‘shrinking’ can be read literally, since the soul is a pneumatic structure (blended with body) and hence tensed in certain ways. So, insofar as the passions are excesses, the *hégemonikon* (or mind) is tensed too much or too little—out of balance or unharmonious, so to speak.