PAPER TOPICS I

Here are some possible paper topics. You can answer them as written, amend them as you please, or ignore them completely and come up with your own topic.

1] Using the Meno and the selections from Aristotle, come up with a *classificatory scheme* of types of definition (not just a *list*, but a schema based on genus/species/differentia or some other organizational method). Then discuss Euclid's definitions in terms of this classificatory scheme.

2] Make an argument for or against the possibility of 'essential' definition (or, between 'for' and 'against', an argument that it is not possible to achieve an 'essential' definition, yet it is still important to attempt it). Use definitions from the authors we have read to illustrate your argument.

3] Of two proofs that equally prove a proposition, is it possible that one will show better 'why' the proposition is true? If so, give the criteria for greater and lesser explanatory power in a proof. Use actual proofs from Euclid to make your case.

4] Assuming that the treatment of the question of knowledge, definition, and human moral excellence together in the *Meno* is not accidental, why do you think that Plato considers this an essential bundling of questions?

5] Do Euclid and Aristotle agree on the nature of definition (you'll have to extrapolate a concept of definition from Euclid).

6] Do Plato and Aristotle (from what you've seen) have the same concept of knowledge?

7] What is Quality and what is Quantity? How are they distinguished? List the properties that Aristotle gives of each, prioritized as to how close they are to the essence of the concept, and then give arguments about how these criteria do in fact express the essence of the concept (e.g. is the fact that quantity does not admit of degrees just a 'brute fact' about quantity, or does it allow us to say something about what quantity, essentially, is?)

ES.2H3 Ancient Philosophy and Mathematics
Fall 2009