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Plato's Phaedo

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LAST MODIFIED: 23 AUGUST 2017

DOI: 10.1093/OBO/9780195389661-0272

Introduction

Plato's *Phaedo* is set on the last day of Socrates' life, ending with his moving death scene. The dialogue is one of Plato's literary masterpieces, with classic discussions of forms, the immortality of the soul, and the value of the philosophical life. It is typically considered one of Plato's middle-period dialogues due to its contrast between forms and sensible things, defense of the immortality of the soul, interest in natural science, and engagement with Pythagorean ideas. The primary interlocutors are Socrates, Simmias, and Cebes. Early in the dialogue, Socrates suggests that the poet Evenus should follow him in death. This shocks Simmias, leading Socrates first to defend the claim that a philosopher's soul would be better separated from its body, and then the claim that the soul is immortal. Socrates' four arguments for the immortality of the soul rely on considerations about the nature of change, causation, and the contrast between forms and sensible things. The two parts of the *Phaedo* that have received the most scholarship since the 1950s—among the most scholarship on any topic in ancient philosophy—are Socrates' second argument for immortality, the Recollection Argument, which discusses central issues in Plato's metaphysics and epistemology, and the so-called Autobiographical Section, which discusses Socrates' earlier interest in natural science, the method of hypothesis, and his approach to providing causes. The dialogue ends with a long myth followed by Socrates' death scene. For more on Plato, see the separate *Oxford Bibliographies* in Classics article "Plato."

General Overviews

The books in this section have chapters on different sections of the dialogue. Some, such as Bostock 1986, skip significant sections of the text. Dorter 1982 is one of the best places to look for discussions of literary features of the dialogue, and Frede 2005 provides a comprehensive account of the dialogue in German. Müller 2011 is the most recent collection of articles on the *Phaedo*. Pakaluk 2003 (in the Defense Speech) and Kamen 2013 (in the Death Scene) are articles that offer more-comprehensive readings of the dialogue.

Bostock, David. 1986. *Plato's Phaedo*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Strongly influenced by mid-20th-century analytic approach to ancient philosophy. It focuses on reconstructing Plato's arguments for the immortality of the soul and finds all of them wanting.

Dorter, Kenneth. 1982. *Plato's Phaedo: An interpretation*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press.

An insightful book that focuses on the literary aspects of the dialogue.

Frede, Dorothea. 2005. *Platons Phaidon*. 2d ed. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

A general introduction to the dialogue that does not substantially engage with secondary literature; instead, provides basic accounts of the dialogue's main ideas.

Müller, Jörn, ed. 2011. *Platon Phaidon. Klassiker Auslegen 44*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

A collection of essays commissioned and organized to provide a comprehensive reading of the dialogue. Most essays are in German, with a few in English.

Editions, Translations, and Commentaries

The most recent edition of the Greek is Duke, et al. 1995, and the most thorough discussion of the text is Verdenius 1958. In English, the best translations are Sedley and Long 2010 and Gallop 1975, each of which is significantly better than the widely used translation by G. M. A. Grube. Gallop 1975 has an indispensable commentary. For philological concerns, Burnet 1911 tends to be most useful, although Rowe 1993 also offers valuable guidance. Ebert 2004 provides an innovative and comprehensive commentary with a good translation. Loriaux 1969–1975 offers the most extensive commentary in any language, although the French translation in Dixsaut 1991 is better. Trabattoni 2011 is the most recent commentary and engages closely with the secondary literature. Damascius's and Olympiodorus's commentaries (Westerink 1977, Westerink 1976) provide Neoplatonic readings of the dialogue.

Burnet, John, ed. 1911. *Plato's Phaedo*. Oxford: Clarendon.

While Burnet's treatment of Pythagoreanism is now out of date, his commentary is still very valuable, especially on philological matters.

Dixsaut, Monique, ed. and trans. 1991. *Platon, Phédon*. Paris: Flammarion.

A good translation with extensive notes.

Duke, E. A., W. F. Hicken, W. S. M. Nicoll, D. B. Robinson, and J. C. C. Strachan. 1995. *Platonis opera. Vol. 1, Tetralogias I–II continens*. Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis. Oxford: Clarendon.

Does not deviate substantially from Burnet's older edition (Burnet 1911). Nonetheless, the most up-to-date text.

Ebert, Theodor. 2004. *Phaidon: Übersetzung und Kommentar. Platon Werke 1.4*. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

A thorough discussion of the dialogue. Instead of providing a line-by-line discussion of difficult sentences (as Burnet, C. J. Rowe, and to some degree David Gallop do), it offers general discussions of the text, broken down into roughly one-page sections.

Gallop, David, ed. and trans. 1975. *Plato Phaedo*. Oxford: Clarendon.

A translation with insightful and thorough philosophical commentary on the *Phaedo*. The first commentary to consult on

philosophical matters.

Loriaux, Robert, ed. and trans. 1969–1975. *Le Phédon de Platon*. 2 vols. *Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de Namur 45*. Namur, Belgium: *Secretariat des Publications, Facultés Universitaires*.

A translation and the most extensive commentary in any language, providing extensive alternate interpretations of individual passages.

Rowe, C. J., ed. 1993. *Plato: Phaedo*. *Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics*. Cambridge, UK: *Cambridge Univ. Press*.

Greek text and commentary. A useful complement to Burnet 1911. Engages with more-recent scholarship and provides more discussion of the literary elements of the dialogue.

Sedley, David, and Alex Long, eds. 2010. *Plato: Meno and Phaedo*. Translated by Alex Long. *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy*. Cambridge, UK: *Cambridge Univ. Press*.

Overall the best translation of the *Phaedo* into English, although it is still well worth consulting alongside Gallop 1975.

Trabattoni, Franco, ed. 2011. *Fedone*. Translated by Stefano Martinelli Tempesta. Turin, Italy: *G. Einaudi*.

Text, translation, and commentary. Engages closely with other scholarship, defending Trabattoni's overall view that Plato is a skeptic about the possibility of human knowledge.

Verdenius, W. J. 1958. Notes on Plato's *Phaedo*. *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser. 11.3: 193–243.

Discusses a variety of philological questions. The most extensive discussion of manuscript readings and emendations.

Westerink, L. G., ed. 1976. *The Greek commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*. Vol. 1, *Olympiodorus*. Amsterdam: *North-Holland*.

This commentary, along with Damascius's (Westerink 1977), offers a Neoplatonic approach to the *Phaedo*. Each is insightful and very different from 20th and 21st-century scholarship. Cuts off at 79e.

Westerink, L. G., ed. 1977. *The Greek commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*. Vol. 2, *Damascius*. Amsterdam: *North-Holland*.

This commentary, along with Olympiodorus's (Westerink 1976), offers a Neoplatonic approach to the *Phaedo*. Each is insightful and very different from 20th and 21st-century scholarship.

Central Topics

The works in the next four subsections discuss topics that cut across the dialogue. After these are works that discuss particular arguments or stretches of text, listed under Discussions of Particular Parts of the Dialogue. There is significant overlap between these, so consult the cross references.

Ethics of the *Phaedo*

The ethics of the *Phaedo* has received less attention than many other parts of the dialogue, although in the 21st century there has been growing interest. Gosling and Taylor 1982 provides a general account of pleasure in the *Phaedo*, and Bobonich 2002 gives a general account of the ethics of the *Phaedo*, each set within the larger context of Plato's corpus. Woolf 2004 argues that Socrates does not defend asceticism, whereas Ebrey 2017 argues that he does. Vasiliou 2012 and Kamtekar 2016 discuss how ethical ideas in the *Phaedo* relate to those in other dialogues. See also the articles listed in the Defense Speech.

Bobonich, Christopher. 2002. Philosophers and non-philosophers in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*. In *Plato's utopia recast: His later ethics and politics*. By Christopher Bobonich, 1–88. Oxford: Clarendon.

Provides a rare overall account of the ethics of the *Phaedo*, set up within the book to contrast with the ethical account in Plato's *Laws* and other late dialogues.

Ebrey, David. 2017. The asceticism of the *Phaedo*: Pleasure, purification, and the soul's proper activity. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 99.1: 1–30.

Argues that Socrates thinks that we must actively avoid bodily pleasure and pain because these make it more difficult for us to achieve our proper goal of grasping the truth, and in fact make us not even want to achieve this goal. Provides a new interpretation of the philosopher's desire to be dead.

Gosling, J. C. B., and C. C. W. Taylor. 1982. *Phaedo*. In *The Greeks on pleasure*. By J. C. B. Gosling and C. C. W. Taylor, 83–95. Oxford: Clarendon.

Careful account of pleasure in the *Phaedo*, set within the context of an overall account of pleasure in Plato's works.

Kamtekar, Rachana. 2016. The soul's (after-)life. *Ancient Philosophy* 36.1: 115–132.

Argues that Plato's accounts of the afterlife treat the consequences of virtue and vice in ways that are meant to inspire reflection about one's moral character. Provides an account of how this fits with Plato's account of reincarnation in the *Phaedo*, as well as his account of the fate of the soul in the final myth.

Vasiliou, Iakovos. 2012. From the *Phaedo* to the *Republic*: Plato's tripartite soul and the possibility of non-philosophical virtue. In *Plato and the divided self*. Edited by Rachel Barney, Tad Brennan, and Charles Brittain, 9–32. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Argues that in the *Phaedo* Socrates distinguishes between four things that make a claim to virtue: slavish virtue, habituated virtue, what lovers of wisdom have, and the genuine virtue that comes from true wisdom. Defends the view that the unified soul in the *Phaedo* does not allow for the sort of education and development of habituated virtue found in the *Republic*.

Woolf, Raphael. 2004. The practice of a philosopher. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26:97–129.

Argues that Socrates' apparent asceticism in the *Phaedo* is, for the most part, only apparent. On Woolf's account, Socrates' primary goal is to devalue the activities that involve pleasure and pain. But Woolf argues that after the affinity argument, Socrates presents a secondary argument that supports a form of asceticism.

Forms in the *Phaedo*

The *Phaedo* contains one of Socrates' longest and most developed discussions of forms. Forms are discussed in the Defense Speech, Recollection Argument, Affinity Argument, Autobiographical Section, and the Final Immortality Argument. Irwin 1999 situates Plato's discussion of forms in the *Phaedo* within his view of forms in the early and middle dialogues. The account in Nehamas 1975 is one of the most discussed and influential in modern scholarship. Devereux 1994 addresses whether Plato accepts immanent forms in the *Phaedo*, and Herrmann 2007 provides a philological examination of Plato's terms for forms. See also the separate *Oxford Bibliographies* in Classics article "Plato's Metaphysics."

Devereux, David T. 1994. Separation and immanence in Plato's theory of forms. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 12:63–90.

Argues that Socrates is committed to "inherent" forms in the *Phaedo* (i.e., that in addition to the form of largeness, there is also within each large thing an inherent form of largeness). Addresses the related question of whether he thinks of forms as "separate."

Herrmann, Fritz-Gregor. 2007. *Words & ideas: The roots of Plato's philosophy*. Swansea, UK: Classical Press of Wales.

Provides a philological study of the key terms Plato uses to describe forms in the *Phaedo*, such as *eidos*, *idea*, *ousia*, and *methechein*. The most valuable feature of the work is that it gathers together the pre-Platonic uses of these key terms, drawing from the full range of Greek texts.

Irwin, Terence. 1999. The theory of forms. In *Plato 1: Metaphysics and epistemology*. Edited by Gail Fine, 143–170. Oxford Readings in Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

A general account that situates Plato's discussion of forms in the *Phaedo* within his early- and middle-period dialogues. Builds toward Irwin's interpretation of the so-called compresence of opposites (the view that sensible things are both *F* and *un-F*). A good place to start.

Nehamas, Alexander. 1975. Plato on the imperfection of the sensible world. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 12.2: 105–117.

Classic statement of a now-popular approach to understanding why Plato is committed to "self-predication" (i.e., the claim that "Equality is equal" or "Justice is just"). On Nehamas's account in this article, Socrates is saying that justice is essentially just. Develops ideas found in earlier scholarship, including Gosling 1965 (cited in Recollection Argument).

Religion and Pythagoreanism in the *Phaedo*

There are a number of references to Pythagorean ideas in the *Phaedo*, along with people and places associated with Pythagoreans. Burnet 1911 (cited in Editions, Translations, and Commentaries) is an example of the older approach to Plato's connection to Pythagoreanism, which was very credulous of reports on Pythagoreans. For many decades, scholars swung to the other extreme, denying that we could make much of Plato's Pythagorean references. The groundbreaking Huffman 1993 is an example of the newer, more critical approach, which still allows for positive claims to be made about Pythagorean views. Carl Huffman examines our evidence about Philolaus, who is mentioned early in the dialogue (61e). Betegh 2014 provides a nuanced account of how to think about Pythagoreanism and Orphism; Horky 2013 discusses in general how Plato relates to Pythagoreanism. For more on the connections to Orphism and Pythagoreanism in the dialogue, see also Ebert 2004 (cited in Editions, Translations, and Commentaries), Ebrey 2017 (cited in Ethics of the *Phaedo*), Sedley 1995 (cited in Literary Elements and

Characters), Ebert 2001 (cited in Opening of the Dialogue), Kingsley 1995 and Betegh 2006 (cited in the Myth), and Crooks 1998 (cited in the Death Scene). Morgan 2010 and Kamen 2013 (the latter cited in the Death Scene) bring out other, non-Orphic and non-Pythagorean religious ideas in the *Phaedo*.

Betegh, Gábor. 2014. Pythagoreans, Orphism, and Greek religion. In *A history of Pythagoreanism*. Edited by Carl A. Huffman, 149–166. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.

A nuanced introduction to how Pythagoreans and Orphism relate to Greek religion more broadly. Nicely illustrates the way that contemporary scholars are viewing the relation between Pythagoreans and Orphism, and the amount of variety that existed within the Pythagorean communities.

Horky, Phillip Sidney. 2013. *Plato and Pythagoreanism*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

The book as a whole argues that the mathematical Pythagoreans, such as Philolaus, were trying to provide explanations for the things taken to be facts by the Pythagoreans, but that Plato and Aristotle thought their explanations were insufficient or methodologically unsound. Chapter 5 discusses the Autobiographical Section of the *Phaedo*, arguing that Socrates is drawing on and responding to Pythagorean growth arguments in developing his notion of number.

Huffman, Carl A. 1993. *Philolaus of Croton: Pythagorean and Presocratic*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.

A groundbreaking, comprehensive work that carefully presents a new collection of Philolaus's fragments and offers a sober account of what we can reconstruct of Philolaus's views.

Morgan, Kathryn A. 2010. The voice of authority: Divination and Plato's *Phaedo*. *Classical Quarterly* 60.1: 63–81.

Argues that Socrates in the *Phaedo* provides a reinterpretation of how divination works. According to Morgan, Socrates takes up cryptic comments, much as he does with the Delphic Oracle's pronouncement in the *Apology*, and shows how they reveal important philosophical truths.

Literary Elements and Characters

The *Phaedo* is one of Plato's literary masterpieces. The classic place to start is Dorter 1982 (cited in General Overviews). Nails 2002 provides a general resource on the people in Plato's dialogues, while Sedley 1995 discusses the main interlocutors in the dialogue, and Boys-Stones 2004 discusses the narrator, Phaedo. Jansen 2013 discusses the overall drama of the dialogue. See also Rowe 1993 (cited in Editions, Translations, and Commentaries) and the sections Opening of the Dialogue, the Myth, and the Death Scene.

Boys-Stones, George. 2004. Phaedo of Elis and Plato on the soul. *Phronesis* 49.1: 1–23.

Examines our evidence of the historical Phaedo, who was himself an author of Socratic dialogues. Argues that Phaedo thought that the soul is able to master the body, but the soul cannot change the body's nature. Suggests that Plato chose to make Phaedo the narrator in part because Phaedo's own views are close to those that Plato wants to emphasize and explore in the *Phaedo*.

Jansen, Sarah. 2013. Plato's *Phaedo* as a pedagogical drama. *Ancient Philosophy* 33.2: 333–352.

Provides a general account of drama and argues that the *Phaedo* is a drama that aims to change the character of the audience so that they pursue philosophy.

Nails, Debra. 2002. *The people of Plato: A prosopography of Plato and other Socratics*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

An indispensable resource, providing a basic account of what we know about each person mentioned in Plato's dialogues.

Sedley, David. 1995. The dramatis personae of Plato's *Phaedo*. In *Philosophical dialogues: Plato, Hume and Wittgenstein*. Edited by Timothy J. Smiley, 3–26. *Proceedings of the British Academy* 85. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Classic article that argues that Simmias and Cebes should be clearly distinguished as interlocutors. One central thesis is that Socrates is showing Simmias and Cebes that the only satisfying way to reach Pythagorean views is by using Platonic ideas.

Discussions of Particular Parts of the Dialogue

Those interested in a particular part of the dialogue should also consult the general books and commentaries mentioned in General Overviews and Editions, Translations, and Commentaries. Some parts of the *Phaedo* have a massive secondary literature, whereas other parts are relatively neglected. In the former case, the bibliography is simply a starting point for exploration.

Opening of the Dialogue

The opening of the dialogue (57a–61c) starts in the outer frame and then quickly turns to Socrates discussing his dreams and poetry. Burnyeat 1997, Betegh 2009, and Ebert 2001 each discuss a different aspect of the opening. Dorter 1982 (cited in General Overviews) examines the way that Socrates is made to parallel Theseus. Boys-Stones 2004 and Sedley 1995 (both cited in Literary Elements and Characters) discuss *Phaedo* as a narrator and the importance of the early mentions of Greek geography, respectively. Kamen 2013 (cited in the Death Scene) discusses the importance of *Phaedo* and Aesop both being freed slaves, and how this fits within the later discussions of slavery in the dialogue.

Betegh, Gábor. 2009. Tale, theology and teleology in the *Phaedo*. In *Plato's myths*. Edited by Catalin Partenie, 77–100. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Notes that when Socrates constructs a fable for Aesop, he provides a non-mythological claim and then its mythological version. Uses this to provide a general account of Plato's etiological myths and then argues that this sheds light on the autobiographical section of the *Phaedo*.

Burnyeat, Myles F. 1997. First words: A valedictory lecture. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 43:1–20.

Argues that the beginnings of Platonic dialogues are frequently an image of the philosophical ideas found within them. Discusses the fact that the first word of the *Phaedo* is "itself" (*autos*), a term that plays a central role in the dialogue: Socrates discusses at length what the soul does itself, as well as equality itself, beauty itself, and, in general, the forms themselves.

Ebert, Theodor. 2001. Why is Evenus called a philosopher at *Phaedo* 61c? *Classical Quarterly* 51.2: 423–434.

Argues that Evenus was likely a Pythagorean and that the term "philosopher" was used by Pythagoreans to refer to themselves.

Concludes that Socrates is asking whether Evenus is a Pythagorean, and that Socrates then argues that Evenus is not living up to the Pythagorean ideals.

The Defense Speech

Socrates' first argument in the dialogue is that suicide is generally prohibited; he then turns to defending himself against the charge that he is too accepting of his death (61c–69e). Most discussions of this part of the dialogue also discuss Socrates' ethical account that comes after the affinity argument and so are found in *Ethics of the *Phaedo**. Warren 2001 and Cooper 1989 (the latter cited in *Ancient Reception of the *Phaedo**) discuss Socrates' arguments against suicide, and Weiss 1987, Sedley 2014, and Vasiliou 2012 (the last cited in *Ethics of the *Phaedo**) discuss the famous “exchange passage.” Pakaluk 2003 argues that the defense speech argues for a claim relied on in the subsequent immortality arguments.

Pakaluk, Michael. 2003. Degrees of separation in the *Phaedo*. *Phronesis* 48.2: 89–115.

Defends the view that in order to appreciate Socrates' immortality arguments, we must recognize that Socrates accepts “substance dualism” in the defense speech. Provides an account of this as playing a pivotal role in the overall dialogue.

Sedley, David. 2014. The unity of virtue after the *Protagoras*. In *Unité et origine des vertus dans la philosophie ancienne*. Edited by Bernard Collette-Dučić and Sylvain Delcomminette, 65–90. *Cahiers de Philosophie Ancienne* 23. Brussels: Editions Ousia.

A short but excellent discussion of the exchange passage within a larger discussion of the unity of virtue.

Warren, James. 2001. Socratic suicide. *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 121:91–106.

Provides an account of how Socrates' arguments against suicide are compatible with his claim that the true philosopher desires to be dead, and, more broadly, with Socrates' claims in the defense speech.

Weiss, Roslyn. 1987. The right exchange: *Phaedo* 69a6–c3. *Ancient Philosophy* 7:57–66.

Classic discussion of the exchange passage. Argues that Socrates allows for virtue without wisdom and that the ascetic reading of the passage is incorrect.

Cyclical Argument

The first of Socrates' immortality arguments (69e–72d). There has not been much scholarly discussion of it, but it is discussed in the books and commentaries listed in *General Overviews* and *Editions, Translations, and Commentaries*. Gallop 1982 focuses more on how it functions as an argument for immortality; Sedley 2012, on its account of change.

Gallop, David. 1982. Plato's “cyclical argument” recycled. *Phronesis* 27.3: 207–222.

Responds to a criticism by Jonathan Barnes of Gallop's reading of the cyclical argument in Gallop's commentary. Argues that the cyclical argument genuinely is supposed to establish the immortality of the soul, and provides an account of how the argument fits within the context of the dialogue as a whole.

Sedley, David. 2012. Plato's theory of change at *Phaedo* 70–71. Paper presented at a symposium held 3–7 June 2009 in Delphi, Greece. In *Presocratics and Plato: A Festschrift at Delphi in honor of Charles H. Kahn*. Edited by Richard Patterson, Vassilis Karasmanis, and Arnold Hermann, 147–163. Las Vegas, NV: Parmenides.

Argues (1) that the cyclical argument is worth considering as what is perhaps the earliest account of the logic of change, and (2) that Socrates is trying to show the scientific respectability of belief in Hades and the Pythagorean and Orphic ideas about reincarnation. Develops an interesting account of opposites as converse contraries.

Recollection Argument

The recollection argument (72d–77d) has perhaps the largest literature of any argument in ancient Greek philosophy. Some scholars think that it provides one of Socrates' only arguments for the existence of forms; whether or not this is correct, it is important for understanding Platonic epistemology, and its complexity leads to a number of interesting interpretive questions. It is hard to find a discussion of Plato's forms that does not discuss it at least briefly; it is discussed at length in Irwin 1999 and Nehamas 1975 (both cited in *Forms in the Phaedo*). Ackrill 1973 and Gosling 1965 are classic articles that started the current debates, Scott 1999 raises an important alternate reading of recollection, and Kelsey 2000 and Sedley 2007 are interesting and provocative more-recent articles on the topic.

Akrill, J. L. 1973. *Anamnesis in the Phaedo: Remarks on 73c–75c*. In *Exegesis and argument: Studies in Greek philosophy presented to Gregory Vlastos*. Edited by Edward N. Lee, Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, and Richard M. Rorty, 177–195. Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum.

Provides a close reading of the passage and raises a number of influential puzzles about it.

Gosling, J. C. B. 1965. Similarity in *Phaedo* 73b seq. *Phronesis* 10.2: 151–161.

Argues that Socrates is not saying that the equal sticks are deficiently equal, or less equal than equality itself. Develops a general account of what is involved in the process of recollection.

Kelsey, Sean. 2000. Recollection in the *Phaedo*. *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 16:91–121.

Maintains, contrary to the more-recent scholarly tendency, that Socrates does hold onto a doctrine of “transcendent” forms. Develops the view that the recollection argument starts from the assumption that forms exist, and then argues that they must be transcendent.

Scott, Dominic. 1999. Platonic recollection. In *Plato 1: Metaphysics and epistemology*. Edited by Gail Fine, 93–124. Oxford Readings in Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

An extract from his book that discusses recollection in the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus*. Argues against the “Kantian” interpretation that recollection is involved in all of our judgments, and instead in favor of the view that recollection is supposed to be a philosophical accomplishment.

Sedley, David. 2007. Equal sticks and stones. In *Maieusis: Essays in ancient philosophy in honour of Myles Burnyeat*. Edited by Dominic Scott, 68–86. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

A close commentary on the most discussed section of the text, 74a9–c6, where Socrates distinguishes the equal sticks from equality itself. Among other things, argues for the reading found in two of the three families of manuscripts, according to which Socrates is saying that equal sticks appear equal *at one time* and unequal *at another*.

Affinity Argument

Like the cyclical argument, the affinity argument (77d–80b) has not received much scholarly attention. Apolloni 1996 and Lorenz 2009 discuss what it tells us about the nature of the soul. Irwin 1999 (cited in *Forms in the Phaedo*) and Mann 2000 examine what it tells us about the forms. After the argument (80b–84b), Socrates returns to many of the ethical claims he made earlier in the defense speech. Passages from this section are discussed in each of the entries listed under Ethics of the *Phaedo*.

Apolloni, David. 1996. Plato's affinity argument for the immortality of the soul. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34.1: 5–32.

Provides a close reading of the argument, defending the view that it is much stronger than has been supposed and that it anticipates some modern arguments for dualism. Discusses also Simmias's and Cebes's responses to the argument.

Lorenz, Hendrik. 2009. Ancient theories of soul. In *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. Edited by Edward N. Zalta. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ.

A general article on ancient theories of the soul that contains a significant discussion of the affinity argument. First published in 2003.

Mann, Wolfgang-Rainer. 2000. *The discovery of things: Aristotle's Categories & their context*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.

See in particular Part II ("Plato's Metaphysics and the Status of Things"), sections 7–9. Discusses the affinity argument as part of a general account of forms and participants in Plato's work. Focuses on Plato's claim that forms are uniform (*monoeides*) and sensible things are multiform (*polueides*). Argues that Plato is drawing on an Anaxagorean model of participation. For that idea, see also Furley 1976 (cited in Autobiographical Section).

Objections, Misology, and the Soul as a Harmony

Simmias and Cebes each raise objections to the affinity argument. After stating their objections, Socrates tells them to avoid being misologues—haters of argument, analogous to misanthropes. Then he argues against Simmias's proposal that the soul is like a harmony. This stretch of text (84c–95e) is another that is relatively underexplored, although more recently there have been a few articles on misology, including Woolf 2007 and Miller 2015. Taylor 1983 is a rare article on Simmias's proposal that the soul is like a harmony; it is criticized in Young 2013. Sedley 1995 (cited in *Literary Elements and Characters*) argues that Philolaus held that the soul is a harmony and that Plato is suggesting that this view is incompatible with Philolaus's Pythagorean commitments. Caston 1997 and Warren 2006 (both cited in *Ancient Reception of the Phaedo*) examine the *Phaedo*'s discussion of the soul being like a harmony in their accounts of later ancient responses to this part of the *Phaedo*.

Miller, Thomas. 2015. Socrates' warning against misology (Plato, *Phaedo* 88c–91c). *Phronesis* 60.2: 145–179.

Argues that Socrates presents misologists as protoskeptics, and that Socrates has some sympathy for their views. Ends with an account of how the misologists' view relates to the later ancient skeptics.

Taylor, C. C. W. 1983. The arguments in the *Phaedo* concerning the thesis that the soul is a *harmonia*. In *Essays in ancient Greek philosophy*. Vol. 2. Edited by John P. Anton and Anthony Preus, 217–231. Albany: State Univ. of New York Press.

Argues that Socrates does not distinguish between three possible meanings of the claim that the soul is a *harmonia*. Carefully works through each of Socrates' objections.

Woolf, Raphael. 2007. Misology and truth. *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 23:1–16.

Discusses misology within the larger context of Plato's attitude toward truth in the *Phaedo*. Distinguishes between Simmias's view of truth, Socrates' view, and the position Socrates attributes to philosophers. Argues that Socrates is not committed to truth for its own sake but instead is committed to the truth of the states of affairs that he values.

Young, Douglas. 2013. Soul as structure in Plato's *Phaedo*. *Apeiron* 46.4: 469–498.

Targets those accounts such as Taylor 1983 that see a conflict between (a) Socrates' arguments against the soul being like a *harmonia* and (b) Socrates' acceptance of tripartition in the *Republic*. Argues that according to the *harmonia* theory the soul is a structure, whereas according to the tripartition theory the soul is something that *has* a structure.

Autobiographical Section

Socrates' intellectual autobiography (95e–102a) raises a number of hotly debated topics: how Socrates thinks of *aitiai* (typically translated as “causes,” although this is called into question in Vlastos 1969), the relation between causation and the good, Socrates' rejection of material causes, whether Socrates' second sailing is supposed to be a “second best,” the method of hypothesis, and forms as causes. There is a substantial literature on each of these topics; thus, these articles are simply a place to start. For the debate about how Socrates thinks of *aitiai*, and how to understand forms as causes, see Vlastos 1969 and Sedley 1998, continued in Menn 2010 and Ebrey 2014. For the question of how to understand the method of hypothesis, see Robinson 1953, Kanayama 2000, and Bailey 2005. For Socrates' appropriation of Anaxagoras, see Furley 1976 along with Mann 2000 (the latter cited in Affinity Argument). See also Betegh 2006 and Sedley 1989 (both cited in the Myth), which argue that Socrates' myths illustrate how *nous* (reason) could operate as a cause.

Bailey, D. T. J. 2005. Logic and music in Plato's *Phaedo*. *Phronesis* 50.2: 95–115.

Begins with a clear description of the difficulty interpreting the method of hypothesis in the *Phaedo*. Argues that the solution is to be found in Socrates' idea of claims harmonizing (*sumphonein*), and provides an account of this that draws on contemporary philosophy of science.

Ebrey, David. 2014. Making room for matter: Material causes in the *Phaedo* and the *Physics*. *Apeiron* 47.2: 245–265.

Argues that Socrates rejects “material” causes such as bones and sinews not because these are not teleological, but instead because they would do as good of a job explaining one effect as their opposite. Goes on to argue that Socrates is committed to

this requirement about opposites because he is committed to there being only one cause for each thing to be explained.

Furley, David J. 1976. Anaxagoras in response to Parmenides. In *Special issue: New essays on Plato and the pre-Socratics. Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 6.S2: 61–85.

Considers Anaxagoras's idea that ordinary sensible things have a share of the ontologically basic pure stuffs. Argues that this serves as a model for Plato's idea that sensible things have a share of the forms.

Kanayama, Yahei. 2000. The methodology of the second voyage and the proof of the soul's indestructibility in Plato's *Phaedo*. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 18:41–100.

Provides a detailed account of Socrates' method in his second voyage, including a long discussion of the method of hypothesis, arguing that this method is applied in the final immortality argument. Also argues that in general in ancient literature, and in particular here, the term "second voyage" referred to a more laborious attempt to get to the same destination, not to a second best.

Menn, Stephen. 2010. On Socrates' first objections to the physicists (*Phaedo* 95 E 8–97 B 7). *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 38:37–68.

Considers why Socrates is puzzled by the initial proposed causes that he discusses early in his autobiography. Maintains that Socrates is drawing on Epicharmus's growth arguments to raise puzzles about how there can be identity through time despite change. Argues both against Vlastos 1969 and Sedley 1998. See Horky 2013 (cited in Religion and Pythagoreanism in the *Phaedo*) for another argument that Socrates is engaging with Epicharmus's growth argument here.

Robinson, Richard. 1953. Hypothesis in the *Phaedo*. In *Plato's earlier dialectic*. 2d ed. By Richard Robinson, 123–145 Oxford: Clarendon.

Classic statement of the difficulty interpreting the method of hypothesis in the *Phaedo*. Argues that Socrates' metaphor of accord is "careless and vague," referring to different processes in different places.

Sedley, David. 1998. Platonic causes. *Phronesis* 43.2: 114–132.

An important account of Platonic causes, quite different from the one defended in Vlastos 1969. Argues that in the *Phaedo* a cause is the thing responsible for a given effect. Uses this to motivate an account of like causing like and the prohibition on opposites causing opposites.

Vlastos, Gregory. 1969. Reasons and causes in the *Phaedo*. *Philosophical Review* 78.3: 291–325.

Very influential article that argues that the semantic range of *aitia* is much greater than that of "cause." According to Vlastos, early in Socrates' autobiography he was interested in physical *aitiai* and confused them with logical *aitiai*. Maintains that forms are *aitiai* in the sense of logical (or logico-metaphysical) explanations.

The Final Immortality Argument

After Socrates and his interlocutors agree that forms are causes, Socrates discusses the forms in us and the so-called

sophisticated causes such as fire and fever, leading him into his final immortality argument (102b–107b). The place to start for thinking about the final immortality argument is Frede 1978, still mostly accepted in Denyer 2007 and Sedley 2009. For a discussion of immanent forms, see Devereux 1994 (cited in *Forms in the Phaedo*). The classic discussion of the “sophisticated causes” is Vlastos 1969 (cited in Autobiographical Section), although Denyer 2007 argues we should not consider them to be causes. For an account of how the final argument draws on the earlier method of hypothesis, along with a general account of the final argument, see Kanayama 2000 (cited in Autobiographical Section).

Denyer, Nicholas. 2007. *The Phaedo's final argument*. In *Maieusis: Essays in ancient philosophy in honour of Myles Burnyeat*. Edited by Dominic Scott, 87–96. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

A general account of the final argument. Argues that things such as “fire” and “fever” need not be considered causes.

Frede, Dorothea. 1978. *The final proof of the immortality of the soul in Plato's Phaedo 102a–107a*. *Phronesis* 23.1: 27–41.

Classic paper on the final immortality argument that defends it against various objections, providing a subtle reading of how it works. Frede ends with an explanation of where she thinks the argument fails.

Sedley, David. 2009. *Three kinds of Platonic immortality*. In *Body and soul in ancient philosophy*. Edited by Dorothea Frede and Burkhard Reis, 145–161. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Argues that Socrates' conclusion that the soul is indestructible is not strictly part of the final argument; instead, it is part of Socrates' attempt, following completion of his demonstration of its essential immortality, to show that the soul must retreat to Hades upon death.

The Myth

After the final immortality argument, Socrates provides an account of the afterlife and how this relates to the nature of the earth (107c–115a). In different ways, Partenie 2009 and Kamtekar 2016 (the latter cited in *Ethics of the Phaedo*) situate ideas in the myth within the context of Plato's other dialogues. Kingsley 1995 sees Plato as drawing directly on Pythagorean and Orphic ideas in the myth, whereas Betegh 2006 argues that Socrates is rejecting certain Orphic ideas and accepting others on the basis of which fit with his other philosophical commitments. Sedley 1989 argues that the myth illustrates the sort of teleological causes described in his autobiography.

Betegh, Gábor. 2006. *Eschatology and cosmology: Models and problems*. Paper presented at the second Symposium Praesocraticum, held 16–18 September 2004 at the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, Italy. In *La costruzione del discorso filosofico nell'età dei presocratici / The construction of philosophical discourse in the age of the Presocratics*. Edited by Maria Michela Sassi, 27–50. Pisa, Italy: Edizioni della Normale.

Argues that in pre-Socratic cosmology there is both a “journey model” and a “portion model” of how the soul relates to the cosmos. Some Orphic fragments use a portion model to account for the afterlife, but what we find in the *Phaedo* is a journey model that is found in other fragments. Explains how the journey model better fits Socrates' philosophical commitments and how central features of the myth are a result of this model.

Kingsley, Peter. 1995. *Ancient philosophy mystery, and magic: Empedocles and the Pythagorean tradition*. Oxford: Oxford

Univ. Press.

See chapters 7–12. Carefully builds the case that the myth makes a number of specific allusions to the geography of Sicily and southern Italy, as well as to several Pythagorean ideas. Over several chapters, Kingsley proceeds to argue that Plato took the myth from an older, Orphic poem that put forward western Pythagorean ideas, and that this poem was likely *Krater* by Zopyrus of Tarentine Heraclea.

Partenie, Catalin. 2009. Introduction. In *Plato's myths*. Edited by Catalin Partenie, 1–27. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.

A useful overview of Plato's myths and the various ways that interpreters have tried to understand them.

Sedley, David. 1989. Teleology and myth in the *Phaedo*. *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 5:359–383.

This groundbreaking article argues that the final myth picks up on each of the programmatic features that Socrates was looking for in the “teleological science” described in the autobiographical section. On Sedley's account, the myth sketches how these features could be met by an account of the natural world.

The Death Scene

At the end of the moving death scene (115b–118a), Socrates' last words are, “Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius. All of you must pay the debt and not overlook it” (118a7–8). These last words have spawned a large literature, spurred on by Most 1993. Glenn Most influentially argues against the traditional view that Socrates means that death has cured him of the disease created by the body. Crooks 1998 and Kamen 2013 also do not accept the traditional reading but provide interesting alternatives to Most's account.

Crooks, Jamie. 1998. Socrates' last words: Another look at an ancient riddle. *Classical Quarterly* 48.1: 117–125.

Argues against Most 1993 point by point, and in favor of a proposal originally by Jeff Mitscherling. There is evidence that Pythagoreans forbade the sacrifice of cocks. Crooks defends the view that in his last words Socrates is pushing Simmias and Cebes to give up part of their Pythagoreanism in favor of “Socraticism.”

Kamen, Deborah. 2013. The manumission of Socrates: A rereading of Plato's *Phaedo*. *Classical Antiquity* 32.1: 78–100.

Discusses notions of good and bad slavery throughout the *Phaedo*, setting this within the context of Greek practices of freeing slaves. Provides evidence that Asclepius is a common god to invoke when a slave is freed, and then argues that Socrates' last words are saying that they owe Asclepius a sacrifice since Socrates has been freed from the slavery of the body.

Most, Glenn W. 1993. A cock for Asclepius. *Classical Quarterly* 43.1: 96–111.

Influential article argues that Socrates' last words refer to Socrates' deathbed vision that Plato has been healed. According to Most, Socrates is saying that they should all be thankful because this will allow Plato to be Socrates' heir and legitimate successor.

Ancient Reception of the *Phaedo*

The *Phaedo* is referred to by name by Aristotle several times and has continued to be discussed ever since. Ebrey 2014 (cited in Autobiographical Section) provides an account of why Aristotle allows for material causes, whereas Socrates rejects them in the *Phaedo*. Cooper 1989 examines Socrates' discussions of suicide alongside later authors, including the Neoplatonic commentators. Both Caston 1997 and Warren 2006 examine later ancient discussion of Simmias' proposal that the soul is like a harmony. Sedley 1993 argues that the Stoics were influenced by the *Phaedo* in a variety of ways. The contributions in Delcomminette, et al. 2015 discuss a variety of different ancient responses to the *Phaedo*. The two longest ancient responses to the *Phaedo* are the commentaries by the Neoplatonists Damascius and Olympiodorus (see Westerink 1976 and Westerink 1977, both cited in Editions, Translations, and Commentaries).

Caston, Victor. 1997. Epiphenomenalisms, ancient and modern. *Philosophical Review* 106.3: 309–363.

While framed around 20th-century discussions of epiphenomenalism, this is primarily an account of the *harmonia* theory in the *Phaedo*, Aristotle's discussion of it in *De anima* I.4, and how different Peripatetics developed different strands of Aristotle's thinking. Argues that the “unsung heroes” are the Peripatetics, who either rejected Aristotle's arguments and embraced epiphenomenalism or developed and embraced a robust emergentism.

Cooper, John. 1989. Greek philosophers on euthanasia and suicide. In *Suicide and euthanasia: Historical and contemporary themes*. Edited by Baruch A. Brody, 9–38. *Philosophy and Medicine* 35. Dordrecht, The Netherlands, and Boston: Kluwer Academic.

Examines the *Phaedo*'s discussion of suicide and then goes on to consider suicide in *Laws* X as well as in Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Neoplatonists, including Neoplatonic commentators on the *Phaedo*. Argues that Socrates is not strongly committed to the arguments against suicide in the *Phaedo*.

Delcomminette, Sylvain, Pieter d'Hoine, and Marc-Antoine Gavray, eds. 2015. *Ancient readings of Plato's Phaedo*. *Philosophia Antiqua* 140. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill.

Most of the contributions in this volume discuss how a different ancient philosopher—or ancient philosophical school—responded to the *Phaedo*. Half the contributions are in French, half in English.

Gertz, Sebastian Ramon Philipp. 2011. *Death and immortality in late Neoplatonism: Studies on the ancient commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*. Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill.

An examination of Damascius's and Olympiodorus's commentaries. Rather than providing a comprehensive discussion, focuses on seven topics the author thinks are particularly interesting, such as their accounts of suicide, the myth, and the afterlife.

Sedley, David. 1993. Chrysippus on psychophysical causality. Paper presented at the fifth Symposium Hellenisticum, held 17–25 August 1989 at the Château de Syam, Syam, France. In *Passions & perceptions: Studies in Hellenistic philosophy of mind; Proceedings of the fifth Symposium Hellenisticum*. Edited by Jacques Brunschwig and Martha C. Nussbaum, 313–331. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.

An “extended commentary” on Cicero's *De fato* 7–9 that argues that the Stoics were influenced by the *Phaedo* in several ways, including the *Phaedo*'s views on suicide, causation, the soul's disincarnate existence after death, and the ordering of souls by purity in the final myth.

Warren, James. 2006. Psychic disharmony: Philoponus and Epicurus on Plato's *Phaedo*. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 30:235–259.

Philoponus, in his commentary on the *De anima*, says that Epicurus objected to Socrates' arguments against the view that the soul is a harmony. Warren asks why Epicurus did this, given that he also does not accept that the soul is a harmony. He argues that it was important for Epicurus's own account to make clear the right way to reject this theory.

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