

SOCRATES, PHILOSOPHERS AND DEATH: TWO CONTRASTING ARGUMENTS IN PLATO'S *PHAEDO*

At *Phaedo* 63A–B5 Socrates undertakes to defend himself against the charge of being too ready to leave his friends in this life and the gods that he acknowledges to be good masters, and at 69D7–E2 he proclaims his defence to be completed.¹ Most commentators hold, or at any rate assume, that the intervening pages comprise a single unfolding argument, but in this article I argue that they comprise two, two moreover that are different in character and mutually isolated. The first, which runs from 64C2 to 68C4, is largely philosophical, the second, which runs from 68C5 to 69E2, is largely religious.² The 'religious argument', despite what might be termed its 'formal importance',³ is short, less than lucid, and relegated to second place. The 'philosophical argument' is long,⁴ a model of clarity, and accorded pride of place.⁵

I start by looking at the preliminary discussion between Socrates, Cebes and Simmias that eventuates in Socrates' argumentation (61B7–64C2), and in doing this I attempt to show how it is that two arguments arise rather than one. I then go on to analyse the arguments in turn, keeping close to the text to make clear how I understand the train of Socrates' thought and how I construe the key passages that are controversial.⁶

¹ References to the Platonic text in this article are to J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera* (Oxford, 1900).

² It might be thought illicit to distinguish between 'religious' and 'philosophical' in the context of the *Phaedo*. However, while the dialogue is permeated with Orphic, Pythagorean and other religious doctrines about the nature and future of the human soul and its relations to the gods, it also contains what may properly be regarded as philosophical assertions and arguments concerning the nature of knowledge, reality, human beings and the moral order of the universe. The fact that these assertions and arguments are the outcome of Plato's own reflections on Orphic and other teachings does not deprive them of their philosophical standing. See W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (London, 1950), 331, where he refers to Socrates' belief that there is a life to come and one better for the good than for the bad: 'Socrates wants to prove it, and therein he shows his difference from the rest. The belief itself was abroad already.'

³ Its 'formal importance' lies in its constituting the defence that Socrates is explicitly asked to undertake (63A4–B2), the defence moreover that in the outcome he explicitly claims to have undertaken (69D7–E2).

⁴ It is approximately four times as long as the religious argument.

⁵ The philosophical argument might with justification be called the 'Platonic argument', resting as it does upon ideas that are essentially Platonic: in particular on the idea of the philosopher as a passionate lover of wisdom, truth and being (*Phd.* 66E3, 68A2, 66B7; cf. *Resp.* 490A–B, 501D), and on the doctrine of Forms 'qui forme la base de toute la philosophie platonicienne' (R. Loriaux, *Le Phédon de Platon*, vol. 1 [Namur, 1969], 88). For a discussion of the relation between Plato's beliefs and those of the historical Socrates, see W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1969), 349–59, esp. 351–5. (Cf. R. S. Bluck, *Plato's Phaedo* (London, 1955), 7–18; R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedo* (Cambridge, 1955), 3–6, 48–51.)

⁶ It will be useful if I list in advance some of the principal scholars, past and present, with whose views I am at variance, though the importance of the points that I am now to make will become clear only as my argument unfolds. Loriaux (n. 5), 43–111, esp. 43, 74, 88, the scholar who provides the most systematic analysis of the part of the *Phaedo* that concerns me in this paper, treats 61B7–69E5 (the passage starting with Socrates' advice to Evenus and ending with what Socrates gives as the conclusion of his 'defence') as 'Part One' of the dialogue, and divides

I

The preliminary discussion (61B7–64C2)

After asserting that Evenus, like all who engage worthily in philosophy, will follow him in death as soon as possible (61B7–C9), Socrates adds that Evenus will doubtless⁷ not commit suicide (οὐ βιάσεται αὐτόν), since that, it is said, is wrong (61C9–10).⁸ This prompts Cebes to ask what Socrates means by saying that suicide is wrong while also saying that a philosopher will be willing to follow in the steps of the dying; and, when Socrates answers this question by appealing to the belief that there are gods who possess and care for us,⁹ Cebes rejoins that in such a case it makes no sense for philosophers¹⁰ not to grieve at dying and leaving the service of the best of masters. This rejoinder is subsequently applied to Socrates himself, Simmias charging him with lack of concern at leaving his friends and his good masters, and it is this that

this 'Part One' into three main sections: *Mise au point préliminaire* (which he gives as 61C–63E), *L'argumentation de Socrates* (which he gives as 63E–66A), and *Conclusions* (which he gives as 66B–69E). As even the words he chooses reveal, Loriaux considers this part of the dialogue to contain a *single* piece of argumentation (which he identifies as 63E–66A), everything else being either preliminary or conclusional, and he treats 68C5–69E2, which I consider to be a distinct and second argument, as part of Socrates' conclusions. Bluck (n. 5), esp. 46–7, treats 64A–69E as a single defence and argument. J. Burnet, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford, 1911), 11, 27, treats 59C8–63E8 as a preliminary narrative, and the whole of 63E8–69E5 as a single ἀπολογία, which he identifies as arguing that 'the philosopher will not fear death; for his whole life has been a rehearsal of death'. D. Gallop, *Plato: Phaedo* (Oxford, 1975), 86, treats 63E8–69E5 as a single 'passionate apologia for the philosophic life' (cf. his note at 69A6–C3). Hackforth (n. 5), 41–57, treats 64C–69E as a single argument, but experiences noticeable difficulty in explaining how what he calls the 'new matter' introduced at 68B8 fits into it. J. E. Raven, *Plato's Thought in the Making* (Cambridge, 1965), 81, treats 60B–69E as constituting a single argument, which he characterizes as 'essentially religious' and as reaching the conclusion that the life of the philosopher is a constant rehearsal of death. Finally, of the two most recent commentators, M. Dixsaut, *Platon: Phédon* (Paris, 1991) at 76–87, esp. 76, 78, 83, divides Socrates' defence along much the same lines as I do, and in particular treats 68B–69E as a separate section, but she does not see it as a *separate argument*, and in her lengthy analysis she does not even mention the conclusion that Socrates himself explicitly draws (a point that I shall return to later). C. J. Rowe, *Plato: Phaedo* (Cambridge, 1993), 135, 138 (n. at 64C10) treats 64A4–69E5 as a defence of the proposition that the true philosopher will look forward to his death, but, like Loriaux, he sees 66B3–69E2 as making up a set of conclusions.

⁷ The word ἵσως here marks a stylistic understatement (cf. 61D10, 67B1), used as elsewhere 'urbanitatis et modestiae causa etiam in re certa' (G. Stallbaum, *Platonis Phaedo* [London, 1833], 37).

⁸ That suicide is wrong was Orphic and Pythagorean teaching (*Crat.* 400C; *Phd.* 61E6–8). See W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1962), 167, 310–11; cf. Rowe (n. 6), n. at 61D6–7.

⁹ Socrates says that according to a secret doctrine men are in a sort of prison (φρουρά, 62B4), and although he adds that this doctrine is not easy to understand, he treats it with sympathy (it appears to him, he says, to be μέγας, 62B5), and he avowedly believes that men are the chattels of the gods. On the Orphic doctrine of φρουρά, see Burnet (n. 6), n. ad loc.; Hackforth (n. 5), 36, n. 2; Loriaux (n. 5), n. ad loc. For a discussion of the doctrines of Orphics, Pythagoreans, Eleusinians and others, and on the peculiar relevance of these to the *Phaedo*, see Guthrie (n. 8), 181–306; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1975), 338–40; Hackforth (n. 5), 4–5, 15, 29, 35 (nn. 1, 2), 42; Loriaux (n. 5), 110–11; Rowe (n. 6), 6–7.

¹⁰ It is clear from the context that by τοὺς φρονιμωτάτους at 62D4 Cebes means the philosophers. See Burnet (n. 6), n. ad loc.

Socrates is referring to when he says: 'I take you to mean that I must defend myself against this charge, as if we were in a court of law (63B1–2).'¹¹

Socrates begins his defence (63B4–9) by conceding that it would be wrong of him (ἡδίκουν ἂν, 63B8–9) not to grieve at death if he did not believe that he would soon be with other gods, wise and good, and with other men,¹² other men moreover who are better than those on earth.¹³ But that is what he does believe. He believes, though not with certainty (οὐκ ἂν πάννυ δισχυρισαίμην, 63C1–2), that he will be with good men, and he believes with as much certainty as is possible that he will be with gods who are in every way good masters. It is because of this (διὰ ταῦτα, 63C4), he says, that he is less disposed to grieve than he would otherwise be, and he confidently believes¹⁴ that there is a life to come (εἶναι τι τοῖς τετελευτηκόσι, 63C5), a life to come, moreover—as is said of old (ὥσπερ γε καὶ πάλαι λέγεται, 63C6)—much better for the good than for the wicked.¹⁵

On hearing this, Simmias observes that, if Socrates can persuade his hearers of what he has just said (ἐὰν ἅπερ λέγεις ἡμᾶς πείσῃς, 63D2),¹⁶ this will serve as his defence (ἀπολογία, 63D2). What he wishes Socrates to do,¹⁷ then, is to justify his belief that he will be with good gods and good men in the life to come; and this indeed is what Socrates takes himself called upon to do, as is made clear later on in the dialogue when he comes to sum up. 'That is the defence I offer', he says, 'to show that I have reason (εἰκότως) not to take it hard or grieve at leaving you and my masters here, believing as I do (ἡγούμενος) that I shall find good masters and friends there (κακεῖ) no less than here (69D7–E2).'

What so far has happened, then, is this. Socrates starts out by making an affirmation of a general nature, that if Evenus is a philosopher, he will, like any genuine philosopher, follow him as soon as he can, and this is taken to mean that a philosopher will meet death willingly and gladly (ῥαδίως ἂν ἐθέλειν, 62C10; cf.

¹¹ Loriaux in his otherwise careful and detailed notes passes no comment on what is said at 63B1–2 about the defence that Socrates understands himself called upon to make 'ὥσπερ ἐν δικαστηρίῳ', nor on Simmias' mention of an ἀπολογία at 63D2. These passages in my view are crucial to an understanding of what Socrates is called upon to defend, since, taken with their contexts, they indicate what he himself acknowledges to be what he is challenged to defend. More important, they bring out what he needs to argue for if he is to meet the *explicit* charge made against him by Simmias at 63A8–9—and what he does eventually argue for in the 'religious argument'.

¹² Throughout this discussion I make use of 'man' and 'men', because to do otherwise would be seriously to misrepresent Plato's thought (see, e.g., his use of ἀνδρας at 63C1, ἀνδρί at 67C2). Concerning the belief that Socrates expresses here, cf. *Ap.* 41A–C (where Orpheus is mentioned).

¹³ This is *prima facie* unflattering to Simmias and his companions, but there is no reason to believe, *pace* Rowe (n. 6), n. at 63B8, that Socrates did not value individuals as individuals. It is, after all, other individuals, gods and men, that he says he looks forward to being with in the next life. His metaphysical analysis of the nature of individuals may not be satisfactory, but whose is? For an example of Socrates' concern for individuals in the smallest of details, see 115A7–8.

¹⁴ According to Burnet (n. 6), n. ad loc. and Loriaux (n. 5), n. ad loc., in the context of Orphic and secret doctrines the words εὐελπισ, ἐλπίζω and their cognates express belief as well as hope.

¹⁵ This is Pythagorean teaching and also (as is clear from 69C6–7) Orphic. See Burnet (n. 6), n. ad loc.; Guthrie (n. 8), 158, 166; Loriaux (n. 5), 110.

¹⁶ Rowe (n. 6), at 63C8–9, takes τὴν διάνοιαν ταύτην to refer to Socrates' thought about 'how it is better for the good man to die'. I take it to refer to the whole of what Socrates says at 63B5–C7 (about his going to be with other good gods and men, and so on). The same applies to κοινόν at 63D1 and to ἅπερ λέγεις at 63D2. I see no grounds for restricting Simmias' reference to Socrates' last few words. Surely Simmias wants to hear the whole of Socrates' position defended.

¹⁷ And Socrates says that he will try (πειράσσομαι, 63D3).

ἀσμενοι, 68A1). But this affirmation is put aside for the moment, as Socrates turns unexpectedly to a discussion of the wrongness of suicide, a discussion that ends in his undertaking to defend himself against the charge of lightly quitting his friends and gods by arguing for the quite specific affirmation that he himself will be with other gods and men in the life to come.

At this stage, then, a charge has been laid against Socrates that he is lightly quitting good masters and friends, and we know what his defence is to be. It is to be that he has reason to believe that he will meet with good masters and friends in the life to come. But, just as he is about to argue for this, he is interrupted by Crito—who relays the message that, if Socrates continues his discussions, he will become excessively heated and so require a larger draught of poison.

This interruption occasions an important change in the discussion's direction.¹⁸ For Socrates unexpectedly returns to the general theme of the philosopher's willingness to die, apparently forgetting his affirmation about other gods and men. A man who spends his life in philosophy, he now declares, has reason to be confident that he will secure a very great good after death, adding that a philosopher spends his life in training for death and would therefore be foolish to complain when it comes. This serves to introduce a fully argued case for the general affirmation that the philosopher faces death willingly and gladly.

It introduces what I call Socrates' philosophical argument.

II

*Socrates' philosophical argument (64C2–68C4)*¹⁹

Socrates opens his case for saying that the philosopher faces death willingly and gladly by obtaining agreement on the proposition that there is a thing called death, which he defines as the separation of soul from body and the subsequent existence of each by itself (64C4–8).²⁰ He next proposes three reasons for saying that the philosopher will seek this separation and free himself as far as possible from the body (64C10–66A8).

The first reason (64D2–65A8) is that the philosopher has little interest in the pleasures of food, drink and physical love, and little interest in the external

¹⁸ One effect of this interruption is to focus our attention on Socrates' dedication to philosophical argument and on his calm in the face of death (see, e.g., Hackforth [n. 5], 40, n. 1; Loriaux [n. 5], n. ad loc.; Rowe [n. 6], n. ad loc.). But a more important effect is to facilitate the change in Socrates' train of thought.

¹⁹ What is said *before* this argument is strongly Orphico-Pythagorean in setting and in doctrine. Phaedo addresses Pythagoreans at Phlius; Cebes and Simmias are Socrates' interlocutors (but see Rowe [n. 6], 7); the doctrine of the wrongfulness of suicide is Pythagorean and Orphic; the doctrine of the remuneration of the good is Orphico-Pythagorean. What comes *after* the philosophical argument is even more plainly Orphico-Pythagorean, particularly in its talk of mysteries and purification. By contrast, while Orphico-Pythagorean doctrines may originally have occasioned some of what is asserted in the philosophical argument, they are not part of that argument. (I certainly do not believe with Burnet [n. 6], xliii, that the theory of Forms is essentially Pythagorean.) For some useful comments on this, see Bluck (n. 5), 47, 52, n. 1, and see my n. 2 above.

²⁰ For comments on whether or not this seriously begs the question about the future life of the soul, see Gallop (n. 6), ad loc.; Hackforth (n. 5), 44, n. 1; Rowe (n. 6), ad loc.

adornment of the body. Indeed he despises all of these, except in so far as they are indispensable, and because of this he seeks to turn from the body to the soul.²¹

The second reason (65A9–65D3) is that the body hinders the search for wisdom (*φρονήσεως*, 65A9).²² Neither sight nor hearing, nor *a fortiori* any other faculty of sense, provides truth (*ἀλήθειαν*, 65B2), as is attested by the repeated assertion of even the poets that sight and hearing do not furnish accurate information.²³ Indeed the soul is deceived (*ἐξαπατᾶται*, 65B11) when it undertakes an enquiry in partnership with the body.²⁴ If the soul attains to truth at all, then, or has anything of reality revealed to it (*κατάδηλον αὐτῇ γίγνεται τι τῶν ὄντων*, 65C2–3), this is when it makes use of reason (*ἐν τῷ λογίζεσθαι*, 65C2);²⁵ and it does this best when, undisturbed by sight or hearing, pleasure or pain, it reaches out to reality (*ὀρέγεται τοῦ ὄντος*, 65C9) as far as possible alone. It is because of this that the philosopher's soul despises the body, attempting to escape from it and to be alone (65C11–D2).²⁶

The third reason (65D4–66A10) is that there are such things as 'the just itself', 'the beautiful itself' and 'the good itself',²⁷ the *being* (*οὐσίας*, 65D13) of which—that is, what each of them is (*ὁ τυγχάνει ἕκαστον ὄν*, 65D13–E1)²⁸—is not apprehended by bodily vision or any other sense.²⁹ Their full truth (*τὸ ἀληθέστατον*, 65E1–2) is not contemplated by means of the body, and indeed the only man to grasp their being

²¹ These assertions are not rejected by those who are present, and Socrates does not say why the philosopher despises bodily pleasures and finery. Further, although some allowance must be made for 'rhetorical' exaggeration in what Socrates says, none of those present nor anyone else familiar with Socrates' way of life and teaching would have been surprised at his assertions. He himself showed considerable, though by no means total, indifference to bodily sensations and clothing (see e. g. *Symp.* 219E–220C), and his teaching as recorded in *Grg.* 499Cff. is that no bodily pleasures are good in themselves, while some of them are positively bad. Further, the lumping together of external finery with bodily pleasures suggests that all are in some sense trivial compared with the proper concerns of the philosopher.

²² See Hackforth (n. 5), 45, n. 1.

²³ On the difficulty, if not impossibility, of saying who the poets are that Plato has in mind, see Hackforth (n. 5), 45, n. 2; Loriaux (n. 5), n. ad loc. Hackforth is probably right in saying that there are specific poets that Plato has in mind but we do not know who they are. But for a different view see R. D. Archer-Hind, *The Phaedo of Plato* (London, 1894), n. ad loc.; W. D. Geddes, *The Phaedo of Plato* (London, 1863), n. ad loc.; Stallbaum (n. 7), n. ad loc. On the word 'even' (*καί*, 65B3), see Hackforth (n. 5), 45, n. 2.

²⁴ In all of this we again have to allow for rhetorical exaggeration. The fundamental point is that the senses are inadequate when it comes to establishing what 'really is'. The fact that exaggeration is involved is clear from Socrates' belief that the senses aid us in recollection (74Bb4–6). See Gallop (n. 6), n. at 65B1–7; Rowe (n. 6), at 65Bb10–11ff.

²⁵ The sense of *λογίζεσθαι* here is the general one of thinking without the use of the senses (for alternative expressions see 65E3, 65E7, 66A1), not 'calculate'. See Burnet (n. 6), n. ad loc.; Hackforth (n. 5), 46, n. 1; Loriaux (n. 5), n. ad loc.

²⁶ Socrates does not stop to justify his assertions concerning the various hindrances of the body in the soul's search for wisdom, but again his companions agree with him.

²⁷ At 65D12–E1 largeness, health, strength and all the rest are added. For comments on this addition as well as on the Forms and the theory of Forms in general, see Burnet (n. 6), 33–4; Gallop (n. 6), n. at 65D–E5; Guthrie (n. 9), 340–1, n. 2; Hackforth (n. 5), 50–1; Loriaux (n. 5), 83–5; Rowe (n. 6), 7–8.

²⁸ In the words of Geddes (n. 23), n. ad loc., this appended clause is an epexegetis explanatory of *οὐσία*.

²⁹ When Socrates at the beginning of this discussion asks if 'we say that there is a just itself' and so on, the replies given by Simmias (*φαμέν μέντοι νή Δία and πῶς δ' οὐ*; at 65D6 and 65D8) seem to indicate that reference is being made to a familiar doctrine. Moreover, the enthusiasm with which Simmias agrees to what Socrates then goes on to say (*ὑπερφύως . . . ὥς ἀληθῆ λέγεις*, 66A9) would scarcely be warranted if this did not concern a doctrine well aired in the past.

(τοῦ ὄντος, 66A8), if any does, is one who approaches them as far as possible by thought alone, not dragging the senses along with his reasoning (μετὰ τοῦ λογισμοῦ, 66A1). Such a man sets about tracking down each component of reality (τῶν ὄντων, 66A3) as it is by itself alone, and does so by means of thought alone, freed from the body that disturbs and prevents the soul from attaining to truth and wisdom (ἀλήθειάν τε καὶ φρόνησιν, 66A6). It is because of this that the philosopher seeks release, as far as is possible, from eyes and ears, and in a manner of speaking from the entire body (66A3–5).³⁰

Socrates follows this up by saying that those who are true philosophers will, in the light of what has now been said (ἐκ πάντων τούτων, 66B1),³¹ address one another in the following way.³² As long as the body accompanies our enquiries, they will say, we shall not fully (ἱκανῶς, 66B6) obtain what we desire, namely the truth (τὸ ἀληθές, 66B7). For the body, owing to its need for nourishment, its illnesses, loves, desires, fears and fantasies, hinders the pursuit of reality (τῇν τοῦ ὄντος θήραν, 66C2) and, as the saying goes, makes it impossible for us to think (φρονῆσαι, 66C5) at all;³³ and, when we do have leisure to engage in philosophy, the body obtrudes itself upon our enquiries, preventing us from attaining to the vision of truth (καθορᾶν τὰληθές, 66D7). Plainly, then, if we are to have pure knowledge (καθαρῶς τι εἶσεσθαι, 66D8), our soul must be free from the body and contemplate things by itself; and

³⁰ It is at this point that the third reason ends. That there *are* three distinct reasons is clear from the words οὐκοῦν καὶ ἐνταῦθα at 65C11. These words show that two reasons have already been given, and Socrates at once goes on to another. The first reason, as has been seen, is distinct enough: philosophers think little of the body simply as such (64D2–65A8). The second focuses on the interference of the body and its desires with the philosopher's thought (65A9–65D3), while the third focuses on the objects of the philosopher's thought as non-sensible entities (65D4–66A10). But the second and third cover a lot of the same ground: in particular, both are concerned with the philosopher's desire for wisdom and knowledge in the form of a clear and unimpeded grasp of truth (ἀλήθεια [or cognates], 65B2, 65B9/65E2, 66A6) and reality (τὰ ὄντα [or cognates], 65C3, 65C9/66A3, 66A8). I consider the three reasons to make up only a part of the 'philosophical argument' (together with the proposition that death is a separation of soul from body), and everything that follows, up to 68C4, to be largely an explication of them. By contrast, Loriaux sees them as three different minor premises of a single and complete argument, the major of which is that death is the separation of soul from body. As I mentioned earlier (n. 6), this argument is the only one that Loriaux recognizes in what he calls 'Part One' of the dialogue, and he treats the passages that I consider to constitute the 'religious argument' as belonging to what he calls the 'conclusions' (Loriaux [n. 5], 43–111, esp. 109–11). (Although Loriaux sometimes speaks of the three reasons as 'trois raisons', he also speak of them as three 'arguments' (81, 83), but the fact that he further speaks of them as 'trois mineures' having 'une majeure' (79, 87) plainly indicates that he sees them as part of what would normally be referred to as one argument.)

³¹ According to Loriaux (n. 5), 88, 109, it is at this point (66B1) that the long conclusion to Socrates' argumentation begins ('l'exposé se termine alors par une longue conclusion'). But the mutual address of the true philosophers constitutes not a conclusion from what has already been said, but an endorsement and in part an explication of it. According to my analysis, the conclusion to the philosophical argument is reached at 68C4, and the conclusion to the religious argument at 69E2.

³² This mutual address is principally a dramatic way of making the point that the true philosophers are aware that it is only when they die that they will acquire wisdom in full. Such awareness is a necessary condition of their being justified in facing death gladly.

³³ In this context φρονῆσαι (66C5) is used in its popular sense, although Socrates no doubt has the philosophical sense in mind as well. See Loriaux (n. 5), n. ad loc. Stallbaum (n. 7), n. ad loc., takes a different view, commenting as follows on τὸ λεγόμενον (66C4): 'h.e. ut saepe a nobis, qui sumus philosophi, dictitari solet. Nam de proverbiali sententia vulgi hoc loco cogitari non potest.'

consequently it is only when we die that we shall acquire wisdom³⁴—that of which we claim to be passionate lovers (*ἐρασταὶ φρονήσεως*, 66E3)³⁵—since it is only when we die that our soul will exist by itself. Meanwhile, we come closest to acquiring knowledge in this life when associating as little as possible with the body and keeping ourselves *pure* of it (*καθαρεύμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ*, 67A5–6). Being pure and free from the foolishness of the body, we may reasonably expect to be with and have knowledge of all that is pure,³⁶ by ourselves alone.³⁷ This surely (*ἴσως*, 67B1)³⁸ is the truth of the matter,³⁹ for it is not right that those who are not pure should apprehend the pure (*μὴ καθαρῷ γὰρ καθαρὸν ἐφάπτεσθαι μὴ οὐ θεμιτὸν ᾗ*, 67B2).

This address of the philosophers is noteworthy principally for its account of philosophers as passionate lovers of wisdom and desirous of truth,⁴⁰ but it merits attention too for its repeated use of the word 'pure' and the cognates of 'pure'.⁴¹ Knowledge of pure reality, by which is meant knowledge of reality free from association with the physical, is said to be accessible only to souls that are pure, by which is meant souls that are free from association with the body.⁴² But in their last sentence the philosophers are made to introduce a religious nuance, observing that it is not *right* (*θεμιτὸν*, 67B2) that those who are not pure should apprehend the pure. This religious nuance, slight in itself, foreshadows a significant change of direction later on.⁴³

³⁴ I.e., the *fullness* of wisdom (W. J. Verdenius, 'Notes on Plato's *Phaedo*', *Mnemosyne* 11 [1958], n. ad loc.).

³⁵ The expression *ἐρασταὶ φρονήσεως* (66E3) is not, as has been suggested (Burnet [n. 6], n. ad loc., n. at 67A7, and Loriaux [n. 5], n. ad loc.), 'une sorte de paraphrase' of the word *φιλόσοφοι*. For *φιλόσοφοι* is relatively mild in tone—'caring greatly for wisdom', or even 'fond of wisdom'—*ἐρασταὶ φρονήσεως* is not (*ἔρως* is not *φιλία*). Dixsaut (n. 6]) rightly translates: 'ce que nous désirons et dont nous affirmons que nous sommes amoureux'. Cf. Rowe (n. 6), at 68A1–2.

³⁶ The words *μετὰ τοιούτων* at 67A8 do not refer to persons but to the Forms. The context favours this view, and certainly it contains nothing to warrant a conclusion concerning persons. See Archer-Hind (n. 23), n. ad loc.; Loriaux (n. 5), n. ad loc. For the opposite view, see Burnet (n. 6), n. ad loc. Hackforth (n. 5), ad loc., translates 'we may expect to join the company of the purified'.

³⁷ This time *εὐλικρινές* is used (67B1), and this is important in putting beyond doubt the meaning of *καθαρός* as used so far.

³⁸ See n. 7 above.

³⁹ There is difference of opinion over the meaning of *τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν ἴσως τὸ ἀληθές*, 67B1. Archer-Hind (n. 23), n. ad loc., and Hackforth (n. 5), 48, n. 1, excise the words as constituting a gloss. Loriaux (n. 5), n. ad loc., argues that what Socrates means is 'et ce qui est sans mélange, c'est bien cela, le vrai'. (Cf. Burnet [n. 6], n. ad loc.; Rowe [n. 6], n. ad loc.) However, while acknowledging that Loriaux's arguments have considerable force, I think it more plausible to take what is said to mean, as Gallop (n. 6) translates: 'and that, I dare say, is what the truth is'. If Loriaux were right, the *γάρ* in the following sentence would be hard to make sense of.

⁴⁰ It is worth reflecting in advance on the fact that philosophers are said to be passionate lovers of wisdom, *not* of gods and men. This implies that they should be more impressed with an argument showing that they are likely to attain to wisdom than with an argument showing that they are likely to be with other gods and men.

⁴¹ See 66D8, 66E5, 67A5, 67A7, 67B2.

⁴² Cf. 65E6–66A10.

⁴³ That is, it foreshadows the religious argument. But it does no more than foreshadow it. For, while the words 'purification' and 'pure' were traditionally associated with Pythagorean, Orphic and other religious beliefs, so that their use prepares the mind for a transition to an argument based on religious beliefs, Socrates makes no use of religious notions here: in fact he is shortly to make plain that by purification he means what we might term epistemological preparation for wisdom (66E2–67C3).

Socrates now looks back on the case that has been argued, bringing its more important points to the fore, and stating what he takes to be its conclusions (67B7–68C3). If what has been said is right (*εἰ ταῦτα ἀληθῆ*, 67B7), he says, there is good reason to believe that anyone arriving where he himself is now going will, if anywhere, acquire in full measure what has been the object of his and his companions' preoccupation in this life (*πραγματεία ἡμῖν*, 67B10), and accordingly he makes his journey with high hopes, as will any man who believes his mind to be prepared by having been as it were purified (*παρεσκευάσθαι ὥσπερ κεκαθαρμένην*, 67C2–3).⁴⁴ And purification (*κάθαρσις*, 67C5) turns out to be what he and his companions have all along been speaking of,⁴⁵ namely the soul's freedom and separation from the body, its gathering itself together, and its dwelling alone as far as this is possible. But this is what is called 'death', and it would be absurd of philosophers, given that freedom and separation from the body is their principal object, to complain when this approaches: absurd if they were not glad to go (*εἰ μὴ ἄσμενοι ἐκεῖσε ἵοιεν*, 67E9–68A1)⁴⁶ where there is good hope of their gaining what throughout their lives they have passionately longed for (*οὐ διὰ βίου ἥρων*, 68A1–2), wisdom and the release from what they are hostile to. Indeed anyone who complains at the approach of death is not a philosopher at all, but a lover of the body (68B8–C1). With these words Socrates completes his argument for saying that philosophers will meet death gladly.

This argument, the 'philosophical argument', may now be summarized in the following form.

Death is the separation of soul from body.

Only after the separation of soul from body will it be possible to acquire the fullness of wisdom.

The philosopher is a passionate lover of wisdom.

The philosopher is aware of the fact that it will be possible to acquire the fullness of wisdom only after the separation of soul from body.

The philosopher meets death gladly.

This shows at a glance that the argument is not about the claim that Socrates is to be with other gods and men in the life to come. Yet that is what he promised to argue for when he undertook to defend himself against the charge of lightly quitting his gods and friends here. It is beginning to look as if he has abandoned that promise altogether.

But now, almost at the eleventh hour, he redeems it.

⁴⁴ Loriaux (n. 5), n. ad loc., remarks here that the word *ὥσπερ* (67C3) 'souligne l'accommodation que fait Platon des termes religieux'. If by this he means that Plato is adapting religious terms to his philosophical purposes, he is surely right.

⁴⁵ The words *ὅπερ πάλοι ἐν τῷ λόγῳ λέγεται* (67C5–6) are the subject of difference of opinion. Some scholars take them to refer to Orphic or Orphico-Pythagorean doctrines: e.g. Bluck (n. 5), 52, n. 1; Burnet (n. 6), n. ad loc. For the meaning that I assume in the text above, see Gallop (n. 6), 227, n. 11; Hackforth (n. 5), ad loc.; Loriaux (n. 5), n. ad loc.; Verdenius (n. 34), n. ad loc. But see in particular the remarks of Loriaux (n. 5), 95.

⁴⁶ Cf. *ἄσμενος* at 68B2.

III

*Socrates' religious argument (68C5–69E2)*⁴⁷

Towards the end of the philosophical argument, Socrates proclaims more than once that philosophers and philosophers alone do not fear death (67D12–68C1).⁴⁸ He now asserts that it follows from this ($\alpha\rho'$ οὐδὲν, 68C5) that what is called courage belongs especially to philosophers. By contrast, all other men do fear death, so that their courage when facing death is due to fear of yet greater ills: their courage is one of fear and cowardice.⁴⁹ Similarly, temperance belongs especially to philosophers, indeed uniquely to philosophers, since these alone are not disturbed by desires but despise them. By contrast, all other men are not really temperate at all, because their 'temperance' consists in mastering pleasures of one kind as a result of being mastered by pleasures of another. They are temperate through intemperance ($\delta\iota'$ ἀκολασίαν, 69A3–4).⁵⁰

This 'exchanging' of pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, and fears for fears, continues Socrates, is not real virtue. Real virtue consists in the acquisition of wisdom ($\phi\rho\acute{o}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$, 69A10);⁵¹ and, as a consequence of this, if we are to attain to real virtue,

⁴⁷ According to Rowe (n. 6), ad loc., it is at 68C5–6 that Socrates 'begins the last stage of his defence, against the charge that the philosopher deserves death as a punishment—rather than as a reward, as he has so far argued (cf. 64B).' Olympiodorus, *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, vol. 1, ed. L. Westerink (Amsterdam, 1976), 8, §1(45), by way of explaining how what now follows fits into the defence, says that at 65A9ff. Socrates discusses the virtue of wisdom, and now goes on to discuss the other virtues, courage and temperance (justice supervening). In short, Olympiodorus is attempting to give unity to the defence by fitting everything into the framework of the virtues. Dixsaut (n. 6), 83–7, gives a lengthy analysis of this part of the dialogue, but does not mention the conclusion that Socrates himself explicitly draws about his going to be with other good masters and friends. In fact the way in which she describes the conclusion of Socrates' defence is hard to take in (p. 86). 'Moyen de purification de l'âme', she says, 'la pensée est aussi moyen de son unification, par enthousiasme et non par ascétisme, et, si l'on peut dire, par excès et non par défaut, par surabondance et non par défiance envers sa propre nature, ses propres penchants ou ses propres forces. Telle est en tout cas l' "opinion" (*dóxa*, 69d) de Socrate, et ainsi finit son "apologie" (69e).' It is not easy to see how Dixsaut arrives at the assertion that *this* is how Socrates' defence ends.

⁴⁸ The words τοῖς οὕτω διακεμένοις (68C6) refer back to 67E4–68B6, where it is argued several times over that the philosopher does not fear death.

⁴⁹ The focus on death does not mean that courage is not related to other fears. The idea is that if one does not fear death, *a fortiori* one will not fear other evils.

⁵⁰ Loriaux (n. 5), 99, asserts that the virtues of courage and temperance are not chosen at random, since both will be defined at *Resp.* 442B–D as the dominance of the λογιστικόν. This seems implausible to me, since apart from wisdom itself, there are no virtues in Plato's traditional scheme other than courage, temperance and justice. But justice also is mentioned (69B3), and it too can be defined in terms of the dominance of the λογιστικόν, since justice according to the *Republic* is that state of soul in which each part fulfils its proper function, and it is the function of the λογιστικόν to dominate. For other accounts of how justice fits in, see Olympiodorus (n. 47), 8, §1(45); Rowe (n. 6), 150, at 69B1–3. My own view is that courage and temperance are singled out simply because a discussion of them follows naturally from what has already been said concerning the philosopher.

⁵¹ Gallop (n. 6), n. at 69A6–C3, says that here, and generally in the dialogue, $\phi\rho\acute{o}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ 'is a solemn term for the condition of the soul for which the philosopher yearns (66e3, 68a2, 68a7, 68b4), attainable only in communion with the Forms (79d1–7)'. Dixsaut (n. 6), 336, n. 104, affirms that $\phi\rho\acute{o}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ is not a virtue here, not the 'vertu de prudence, ou sagesse pratique au sens aristotélicien', but the sort of apprehension of immortal reality described at *Phd.* 79D. In similar vein Loriaux (n. 5), n. at 69A10, affirms that $\phi\rho\acute{o}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ 'a toujours, dans ce texte, le sens de sagesse et de pensée (cf. 65a), de sagesse philosophique'. By contrast, Rowe (n. 6), 151, n. at 69C1,

we must exchange pleasures, pains and fears for wisdom.⁵² Further, since real courage, real temperance and real justice, in short (συλλήβδην, 69B3) real virtue, are accompanied by wisdom, merely to exchange pleasures for pleasures or pains for pains without wisdom is an illusory façade of virtue, fit only for slaves. In fact, real temperance, justice and courage are states of *purification* from pleasures, pains and fears (κάθαρσις, 69C1), and wisdom itself is a process of *purification* (καθαρμός, 69C2–3).⁵³

What this shows is that philosophers and only philosophers are *pure*, because only they possess real virtue; which, far from being the exchanging of bodily pleasures, pains and fears, is a purification from these. And only philosophers possess real virtue, only they are really courageous, temperate (and just),⁵⁴ because only they seek wisdom, which is the key to real virtue and the only true means of attaining it.⁵⁵ In this they contrast with the rest of men, because the rest of men merely exchange bodily pleasures, pains and fears of one kind for those of another, and consequently possess but an illusory façade of virtue.

Having given these reasons for the assertion that philosophers, by contrast with the rest of men, are pure—that they constitute ‘the purified’—Socrates concludes his argument with the following words (69C3–69E2).

And so it looks as if (κινδυνεύουσι) in fact those (καὶ . . . οὗτοι)⁵⁶ who established our mystery-rites are not men without merit (οὐ φαῦλοί τινες εἶναι),⁵⁷ but in reality have a hidden meaning in what they have long been saying (πάσαι ἀνίττεσθαι)⁵⁸ when asserting that whoever

asserts that ‘wisdom’ here is ‘not the complete understanding of things which was talked about earlier (since that was said to be inaccessible to the philosopher while still alive), but simply a clear-minded appreciation of what is truly valuable’. I see no reason to think that Rowe is right here, since the ‘wisdom’ that was talked about earlier *is* accessible to philosophers in this life, though not with the fullness that they may look forward to in the life to come (see 65E2–4, 66A7–8, 67A2–6). Further, the kind of wisdom that is at the heart of true virtue, which only the philosopher attains to, is precisely knowledge of such things as the nature of justice, and that knowledge is comprised in the wisdom talked about earlier on (see esp. 65D4–66A10).

⁵² For a discussion of πρὸς ἀρετήν (69A6–7) and the exchanging of pleasures and the rest for wisdom (69A6–C3), see Loriaux (n. 5), 102–3, contra Burnet (n. 6), n. ad loc.; cf. Verdenius (n. 34), n. ad loc.

⁵³ Καθαρμός is the process or the rite of purification, κάθαρσις the end state. See Burnet (n. 6), n. ad loc.; Loriaux (n. 5), 107; Stallbaum (n. 7), n. ad loc.; Verdenius (n. 34), n. ad loc. (For the opposite view, see Archer-Hind [n. 23], n. ad loc.; Geddes [n. 23], n. ad loc.) The characterization of wisdom as itself a sort of purification focuses on its negative role: positively, it is the soul’s apprehension of the Forms (79D6–7). See Hackforth (n. 5), 5; Loriaux (n. 5), at 69A10.

⁵⁴ Justice is added without comment. One can only suppose that in the context justice means, as it does at *Resp.* 442E–443B, something like an inner disposition (δύναμις, 443B5) not to steal, not to neglect one’s parents, not to commit adultery, and so on.

⁵⁵ As Loriaux (n. 5), 107, n. at καθαρμός, notes: ‘La sagesse philosophique est donc ici présentée comme le moyen véritable d’obtenir cette purification qu’est la vraie vertu’. See also Loriaux (n. 5), 105–6. For some interesting comments on the philosopher and the pursuit of pleasure, see Gallop (n. 6), 103.

⁵⁶ In line 69C3 the first καὶ means ‘and so’, the second ‘in fact’ (not ‘even’). See Verdenius (n. 34), n. ad loc.

⁵⁷ In the opinion of Geddes (n. 23), n. ad loc., there is in the expression οὐ φαῦλοί τινες (69C4) ‘probably an appeal against the disrepute into which the subject of oracles and the mysteries had been brought by the base forgeries of Onomacritus (Herod. VII, 6)’. This could be part of what Socrates has in mind.

⁵⁸ Cf. Olympiodorus (n. 47), 1, §13(8): ἔθος δὲ ἦν τοῖς Πυθαγορείοις δι’ ἀνιγμάτων λέγειν. (See Loriaux [n. 5], n. at 61D.)

arrives in Hades uninitiated shall lie in mud,⁵⁹ while one who arrives there purified (κεκαθαρμένος) and initiated shall dwell with gods (μετὰ θεῶν). For there are indeed (εἰσὶν γὰρ δῆ)⁶⁰—as [ὥς]⁶¹ those who are concerned with the mysteries say—‘many that bear the wand, but few that are Bacchoi’;⁶² and these, I believe, are such men as have pursued philosophy aright, among whom I have striven all my life and in every way possible to be numbered. ... That, then, is my defence (ταῦτ’ οὖν . . . ἀπολογούμαι), Simmias and Cebes, to show that I have reason not to take it hard or grieve at leaving you and my masters here, believing as I do (ἡγούμενος) that I shall find good masters (δεσπόταις) and friends there (κάκει) no less than here.

The general line of reasoning here is easy enough to follow. It is that because philosophers are the truly purified (an assertion already argued for), they are the ones who will ‘dwell with gods’, and because of this Socrates *qua* philosopher has good reason not to grieve at leaving his present friends and gods. The detail is less easy to construe. Socrates quotes with approval⁶³ the words of those who founded ‘our’ mystery-rites,⁶⁴ but his approval is conditional upon there being a hidden meaning to their words. The reason for this is that the words themselves can be understood, and doubtless were understood in Socrates’ day by preachers and preached-to alike,⁶⁵ as an assertion that those who perform merely external rites of purification will dwell with gods. But the idea behind such a doctrine is abhorrent to Socrates,⁶⁶ because of which he endows the words with a meaning of his own, suggesting with some irony that what the words really mean is that only those who are *truly* purified will dwell with gods, not the many who are only ritually purified.⁶⁷ The justification that he

⁵⁹ According to Olympiodorus (n. 47), 8, §7(48), the doctrine concerning mud is Orphic (cf. *Resp.* 363D5–6).

⁶⁰ The γάρ (69C8) here is important because it indicates that what follows is Socrates’ justification for saying that those who established the mystery-rites *have a hidden meaning in what they said*. In other words, γάρ relates back to αἰνίττεσθαι at 69C5. Unaccountably, Bluck (n. 5) in his translation leaves it out altogether, as does H. Tredennick, *Plato: The Last Days of Socrates* (Harmondsworth, 1954).

⁶¹ If the word ὥς (69C8) is excised, no difference is made to the argument.

⁶² As has often been pointed out, according to Olympiodorus (n. 47), 8, §7(48), the original hexametric verse was πολλοὶ μὲν νερθηκοφόροι, παῦροι δέ τε βάκχοι. (See, e.g. Burnet [n. 6], n. ad loc.; Geddes [n. 23], n. ad loc.) It is obvious from the context that the νερθηκοφόροι are those who do *no more than* carry the wand: that is, those who engage in no more than external and superficial practices. The βάκχοι, by contrast, are the true worshippers: πάντας τοὺς τελούντας τὰ ὄργια (see Burnet [n. 6] n. ad loc.). More generally, to quote the words of Geddes (n. 23), 37: ‘the proverb was applied to the frequency of profession and the rarity of reality’. Dixsaut (n. 64), 86, seems to suggest that Socrates has more in mind than this general sort of proverb: ‘Selon l’antique formule (69c), celui qui, sa vie durant, s’est occupé à philosopher droitement est un initié, un Bacchant: la purification peut aussi consister en une possession divine, un enthousiasme: elle est tout le contraire d’un calcul qui cherche à gagner au change.’

⁶³ They are οὐ φαῦλοι (69C4).

⁶⁴ The word ‘our’ (ἡμῖν, 69C3) may refer to the rites that Socrates and his companions were familiar with.

⁶⁵ See Burnet (n. 6), n. at 69C4: ‘It is plain that Socrates did not think much of the actual Ὀρφεοτελεσταί of his time, who are described in the *Republic* (364e3 sqq.) in terms which suggest the itinerant friars, pardoners, and traffickers in indulgences of the later Middle Ages.’ Guthrie (n. 2), 321, observes more mildly: ‘From references in Plato the conclusion may be drawn that the Orphic life was intended to include moral uprightness, though it is obvious that many minds felt only the need for mechanical ritual and that there were priests who were not above trading upon their superstitious fears’ Cf. Dixsaut (n. 6), 337–8, n. 105

⁶⁶ Particularly given his tireless insistence on taking care of the soul and on the soul’s inner state of virtue. (See, e.g. *Phd.* 114D8–115A2; *Ap.* 30A7–B2.) For some useful comments see Bluck (n. 5), 47, 195–6, n. 5.

⁶⁷ The irony lies principally in the contrast between what the preachers and the preached-to understand and what Socrates says is the real meaning.

advances for this interpretation is a further saying of those concerned with the mystery-rites, that there are 'many that bear the wand, but few that are Bacchoi', the second half of which he interprets to mean that there are only a few that are purified, these being the true philosophers.⁶⁸ Finally, on the strength of all this he draws the conclusion that, because he has always striven to be a philosopher, he himself has good reason not to grieve at leaving his present friends and masters, believing as he does that in the life to come he is to find other good masters and friends.

The argument may be put in the following form:

- [1] Philosophers and only philosophers possess true virtue (68C5–12, 68D2–69B5).
- [2] To possess true virtue is to be truly purified (69B8–C3).
- [3] Philosophers and only philosophers are truly purified ([1] & [2]).
- [4] Philosophers are few (64B).
- [5] The truly purified are few ([3] & [4]).
- [6] The few that are truly purified are identical with the few that are philosophers ([3] & [5]).
- [7] Those who arrive in Hades truly purified will dwell with gods (69C3–7).
- [8] Those that arrive in Hades destined to dwell with gods are the few that are truly purified (the Bacchoi) (69C3–D1).
- [9] The few that are truly purified are the philosophers ([6] & 69D1–2).
- [10] It is the philosophers who will dwell with gods ([8] & [9]).
- [11] Socrates has always striven to be a philosopher (69D2–4).
- [12] Socrates has good reason to believe that he will dwell with gods ([10] & [11]).
- [13] Socrates has good reason not to bear ill or grieve at leaving his present friends and masters ([12] & 69D7–E1).

The core of the argument, then, is this:

Philosophers and only philosophers are truly purified.

Those and only those that arrive in Hades truly purified will dwell with gods.

Philosophers and only philosophers, among whom Socrates is numbered, will dwell with gods.

Socrates has good reason not to bear ill or grieve at leaving his present friends and masters.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Symp.* 218B3–4: πάντες γὰρ κεκοινωνήκατε τῆς φιλοσόφου μανίας τε καὶ βακχείας. When identifying the Bacchoi with true philosophers as those who will dwell with gods, Socrates does not have in mind the even more hidden meaning that to dwell with gods is to become a god, a Bacchos. For what he set out to show was that he would have gods who are good masters in the life to come, corresponding to those that he has in this life; and, whatever he means by having good masters in this life, he does not mean that in this life he is a god or in some sense one with god, even if in fact he believes that. However, according to Dixsaut (n. 6), 51, in her comments on 69C, the being with gods (la 'compagnie des dieux') seems to imply, if not a union or a fusion, at least a return to the divine order. She then goes on to say: 'Les sentences vont dans le sens d'un mysticisme qui n'est certes pas celui de Platon, mais auquel il peut reconnaître une valeur qui n'est "pas négligeable."' Later on she comments (338–9, n. 107; cf. 86) that 'le philosophe est, à sa manière, un possédé du dieu ou au moins du divin (voir l' "assimilation au divin" de *Théétète* 176b)'. This is true, and it is also true, as she points out (51), that the Orphics and Pythagoreans hoped to attain to union with the divinity (cf. Guthrie [n. 2], 325–6), but there is no reason to think that this is what Socrates has in mind here. For a summary of Guthrie's view on the meaning of the lines 69C3–D2, see W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*² (London, 1952), 243. Guthrie and Dixsaut (n. 6), 50, both relate what is said at 69C6–7 to what is said at 63C.

There are many unsatisfactory features to this argument,⁶⁹ and much of it is open to challenge.⁷⁰ But what is not open to challenge is that it is different from the philosophical argument in its premises and conclusion. It is also different from it in its religious aura, resting as it does upon religious beliefs, quoting religious sources, and arriving at a religious conclusion.⁷¹

IV

I wish to end this article by drawing attention to the fact that Socrates' 'philosophical' and 'religious' arguments, assuming now that there are these two, are more than distinct. They are mutually isolated, Socrates taking little or no account in his religious argument of points that he establishes in his philosophical argument.⁷²

In his philosophical argument he establishes that philosophers are pure, being free from association with the body in so far as this is possible.⁷³ But in his religious argument he makes no use of this, arguing the point all over again that philosophers are pure.⁷⁴ Similarly, in his philosophical argument he establishes that philosophers possess wisdom;⁷⁵ but he makes no use of this either, arguing in his religious argument, as though for the first time, that philosophers possess wisdom. Finally, in his philosophical argument he establishes in effect that he has good reason not to grieve at leaving his friends and gods here below, that good reason being that he is soon to gain what he has all along striven for, wisdom and truth. In his religious argument he pays no attention to this, but concludes that he has good reason not to grieve, on the grounds that he is soon to be with other good gods and friends.

This conclusion, it is worth adding, is not only virtually redundant, given that the philosophical argument already furnishes Socrates with the best of reasons for not grieving at death, but it is disappointing in itself, it is ill-supported and it is even bewildering. It is disappointing precisely because the hope of being with other friends and gods is trivial compared with the hope of attaining to wisdom, the love of the philosopher's life. It is ill-supported because nothing in it is said to warrant the hope of meeting with other friends. And it is bewildering because it suggests no explanation

⁶⁹ E.g., no basis is given for Socrates' belief that he will meet with other *friends* in the life to come, nor do we know how he infers from the doctrine that the purified will dwell with gods that those gods will be good *masters*. Nor again do we know why Socrates should want such masters in the life to come, or indeed what they would do.

⁷⁰ Plato is not unaware of this. As soon as Socrates' defence is concluded, Cebes goes back to the first of the beliefs expressed by Socrates, namely the belief that there is a future life for humans, and it is very natural that he should do this, given that he and others present at Socrates' trial had heard Socrates speak there with such caution about the life to come. But while Cebes is right to fasten on this fundamental point, it is not the only point that he could have fastened on. He could equally have fastened on Socrates' reliance on religious sayings or on his assumption that in the life to come the philosopher will continue to need gods as masters. See n. 69 above.

⁷¹ Its main conclusion is that Socrates will find other gods who are good masters in the life to come.

⁷² There are of course assumptions and even assertions common to both arguments: for example, the assertion that philosophers are courageous and temperate. My point in this section concerns what is 'established' independently in each argument.

⁷³ See Section II of this article: the whole of the philosophical argument is an attempt to show that the philosopher shuns the body in every way possible and is therefore pure.

⁷⁴ Given what he has already established concerning the purity of philosophers before 68C5, he could have proceeded immediately to the Orphic saying about the pure being with gods.

⁷⁵ At any rate they come as close as is possible in this world to acquiring wisdom, i.e., knowledge of true reality (79D1–7). See, e.g. 65E2–4, 66A7–8, 67A2–6, and n. 52 above.

of why a philosopher upon reaching the fullness of wisdom should need gods to be his masters (δεσπόταις, 69E2) or should welcome being their slaves.⁷⁶

Why then did Plato make use of the religious argument at all? No doubt because he was anxious to reinforce the case for saying that Socrates was not irreligious.

To sum up. Contrary to what is usually assumed, Socrates' defence in the *Phaedo* comprises two distinct arguments. One of these, constituting the formal case for the defence, is largely religious. The other is largely philosophical. The philosophical argument, despite constituting no part of the defence narrowly understood, is a better argument and is rightly given pride of place. Finally, the two arguments are not only distinct but on several points mutually isolated.

If these conclusions are right, Socrates would undoubtedly have welcomed their being brought to his notice.⁷⁷ In any event he would have thought them worth discussing.⁷⁸

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⁷⁶ That the relation is one of masters and slaves is clear from 62D6–Ee3.

⁷⁷ See *Phd.* 62E8–63A3; cf. *Grg.* 458A2–5.

⁷⁸ I am grateful for the suggestions of a very thoughtful referee, and for hours of discussion with Dr E. E. Sleinis.