

Lecture:

SOCRATES, PLATO, AND THE LAWS OF ATHENS

In Plato's *Apology*, in front of the Athenian jury, Socrates answers the charges laid against him of corrupting the youth and of not acknowledging the gods of the state (24b9-c1). He rejects these accusations outright as a misrepresentation of his philosophic activities, which he is not prepared to abandon: 'I shall obey God rather than you' (29d3-4). This is a straightforward challenge to the Athenian legal system. So why then, in prison, two days before his appointed death, does Socrates in the *Crito* argue against escape by endorsing the authority of the Laws of Athens? Attempts to account for this major discrepancy have so far failed. My intention is to explore some of these failed attempts and then view the discrepancy within the framework of Plato's political aspirations prior to and after Socrates' death.

For Wilamowitz the problem of the discrepancy does not arise: as far as he is concerned, Plato's only intention in writing the *Crito* was 'to justify Socrates' conduct'ⁱ – 'philosophy, as we call it, is not present in it'ⁱⁱ. Friedländer sees it quite differently, and argues that in order to show that the philosopher dies voluntarily Plato in the *Crito* 'seized the moment when the temptation of life itself threatened to destroy the work of Socrates'.ⁱⁱⁱ Having elevated the *Crito* into the lofty sphere of philosophy, Friedländer does not see anything problematic in the relationship between the *Apology* and the *Crito*.^{iv}

František Novotný^v considers the two dialogues to represent two aspects of Plato's philosophic thought which has very little in common with the historical Socrates;^{vi} Plato's vision in both these dialogues is directed beyond the historical event of the trial to the realm that surpasses both personality and time.^{vii} In the *Apology* Plato presents the philosopher as an autonomous and completely free critic of mankind, whereas in the *Crito* he argues that as a citizen he must obey the laws: 'the latter is thus a necessary complement of the former'.^{viii}

Wilamowitz, Friedländer, and Novotný all fail to see how radical is Socrates' questioning of the legitimacy of the Athenian judiciary. He addresses the jury either as 'men of Athens' (ὧ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, e.g. 17a1, 18a7, e5, 20e4), or simply as

‘men’ (ὧ ἄνδρες, e.g. 19e4, 23a5), in stark contrast to his accuser Meletus, who addresses them as ‘judges’ (ὧ ἄνδρες δικασταί, 26d4). In the final part of the *Apology* Socrates states that only those who voted against the guilty verdict (τοῖς ἀποψηφισαμένοις, 39e-40a3) could rightfully (ὀρθῶς) be called judges (δικαστάς), thereby challenging the Athenian legal system itself.

In the twentieth century, the unconditional obedience to the laws of the country advocated by Socrates in the *Crito* began to cause unease among a growing number of Platonic scholars. Croiset says that the speech of the Laws in the dialogue ‘leaves doubts in the mind of a modern reader,’ and Russell notes that the *Crito* ‘is uncomfortable for the individualist’.^{ix} Thesleff goes so far as to reject Plato’s authorship of the *Crito*, which in his view ‘belongs to a period when Plato had turned his back on Athens or was, at least, strongly critical of its institutions’:

‘*Crito* is partly a reply to Polycrates who accused Socrates of despising the laws of Athens and who seems to have used the curious word διαφθορεύς [‘corruptor’], *Crito* 53b, cf. Themistius Or. 23, 296bc.’^x

Polycrates in his speech against Socrates mentioned the rebuilding of the walls of Athens by Conon, which took place six years after the death of Socrates (see Diog. Laert. ii. 39). Plato says in the *Seventh Letter* that in those days ‘the corruption of the written law and established custom was proceeding at an astonishing rate’ (SL 325d5-6, tr. W. Hamilton), and it is difficult to imagine, that he could have written the *Crito* under those circumstances. Let us therefore subject to scrutiny Themistius’ *Oration* 23, 296bc, to which Thesleff refers. Themistius says:

‘When Lycon and Anytus calumniated Socrates, and Meletus stood up indicting him (γρᾶψάμενος)^{xi} as a sophist and a corruptor of the young (διαφθορέα τῶν νέων), at that point Socrates was compelled to bring in front of the judges the god as the witness, but the judges, because of their want of sense, were momentarily misled and bewitched by the speech written by Polycrates.’^{xii}

Themistius mistakenly mentions Polycrates as the author of the speech against Socrates presented at the trial, but he assigns the term ‘corruptor’, διαφθορεύς, to Meletus’ formal charge against Socrates as we know it from the *Euthyphro* (1a6, 2c) and the *Apology* (24b9-10, c4) and not to Polycrates’ rhetorical piece. Thesleff’s attempt to solve the discrepancy is based on mistaken evidence. There is nothing ‘curious’ about the term ‘corruptor’, διαφθορεύς, for Euripides uses it (‘corruptor of friends’, φίλων διαφθορεῦ) almost thirty years before the trial and death of Socrates in his play *Hippolytus* (staged in 428 BC, l. 682).^{xiii}

Brickhouse and Smith dismiss the discrepancy between the *Apology* and the *Crito* as ‘a creature of modern scholarship’.^{xiv} They claim that the imaginary court’s ordering Socrates to give up philosophy ‘would have been illegal’ and that ‘the jury lacked any relevant authority to make it’ [*Socrates on Trial*, p. 143]. They therefore argue that ‘in vowing to disobey any such directive’ Socrates ‘is not vowing disobedience to the law or legal authority, and his vow therefore creates no conflict with the arguments in the *Crito*’ [p. 148]: ‘given the ways in which he construes his duties to the law and to the god, Socrates could not conceive of a situation in which they would come into conflict’ [p. 149]. They point out that ‘there is at least some evidence that Socrates believed that unjust laws would not really be laws at all’ [p.151]. In the *Hippias Major* Socrates maintains that ‘if the legislators miss the good, they have missed law and legality (284d4-7)’, and in the *Minos* he says that wrong decrees of the state cannot be regarded as laws (314e5-6).^{xv} The difficulty with Brickhouse and Smith’s argument is that the discrepancy between the *Apology* and the *Crito* becomes most apparent precisely at this point, for Socrates’ belief that unjust laws are not really laws underpins his defence in the *Apology*, while in the *Crito* he maintains that the laws are to be obeyed irrespective of whether they are right or wrong, just or unjust (*Cr.* 52a).

Weiss argues that the ‘moral perspective’ of the Laws in the *Crito* ‘stands in stark opposition to the Socratic point of view’.^{xvi} She states that ‘the *Apology* and the *Crito* are in complete accord as long as the Laws are seen to be on the same side as the judges, and Socrates to be opposed to both’ [p. 105, n. 32]. She therefore disassociates Socrates’ arguments against his escape from prison from those of the Laws. In her view, the latter are created for the benefit of Crito, ‘a fool’,^{xvii} who ‘remains unresponsive to Socrates’ arguments’:

‘A despairing Socrates, no longer harbouring even the faintest hope that his own preferred method of enquiry will succeed with Crito, steps aside and entrusts the discussion to someone else, to the personified Laws. It is up to them now to persuade Crito that escape would be wrong – because Socrates himself could not. But the Laws succeed where Socrates fails because the Laws offer arguments that Socrates could never offer.’ [p. 4]

‘It is not until *Cr.* 50a4-5, where Crito finally confesses that he cannot answer because he does not understand, that Socrates faces squarely the reality that he cannot fruitfully conduct with Crito a philosophic investigation into the question of escape [p. 82] ... He accepts now, for the first time, that Crito will not be persuaded through rational argument. It is at this point that Socrates makes the

greatest sacrifice for his friend: he steps aside, transferring the argument to the Laws. The Laws will speak to Crito in a way that Crito understands.’ [p. 83]

Weiss argues that Crito’s words ‘I have no answer to what you ask, Socrates, for I do not understand’ (50a4-5) refer to the whole preceding discussion, invalidating all Crito’s previous affirmative answers to Socrates’ questions. Let me therefore mention the principles with which Crito had previously agreed:

Life is not worth living if that part of us is corrupted, which injustice deforms, but justice benefits (47d6-7).

Not life as such, but a good life is to be valued most of all (48b5-6).

The good, just, and honourable life is one and the same (48b8).

We must never commit injustice intentionally (49a4).

Committing injustice can never be good and honourable (49a5-7).

Contrary to the opinion of the many, we must not commit injustice in return for injustice inflicted upon us (49b10-11).

Socrates asks Crito: ‘If you abide by the aforesaid principles, listen to that which follows’ (49e2-3). Crito replies: ‘I do abide by them and I share your opinion concerning them’ (49e4). Socrates asks ‘Ought one to do things which one had agreed on (ἂν τις ὁμολογήσῃ) with someone (τῷ)?’ (49e5-7) Crito answers: ‘One ought to do them’ (49e8). Socrates asks:

‘Leaving this place without persuading the city, do we wrong anybody (τινας)^{xviii}, to wit those whom (οὓς)^{xix} we ought least to wrong, and do we abide by our just agreements, or do we abandon them?’ (49e8-50a3).

Crito replies: ‘I have no answer *to what you ask* (πρὸς ὃ ἐρωτᾷς, 50a4), for I do not understand’. Crito could not answer the question, for when he had asked Socrates whether he was not afraid that his friends and followers might suffer because of his escape (44e-45a), Socrates insisted that the only question that really mattered was whether escaping was a just or an unjust thing (48c-d). It could not occur to him that Socrates was referring to the Laws of Athens as those who would be wronged by the escape. Socrates had to explain:

‘But look at it in this way. If the Laws and the state would come and interrogate me ...’ (50a6-8).

Weiss argues that when Socrates asks Crito whether ‘one ought to do the things one has agreed on with someone’ (49e6), he is not preparing the ground for the entry of the Laws, but referring to the *Apology*:

‘There is in fact something – something of which Crito is well aware – that perfectly fits this description: the thing that Socrates has agreed upon with the Athenians is that he will “abide by my penalty” *Ap.* 39b6)’. [p. 74]

But when Socrates says in the *Apology* ‘and I shall abide by my penalty’, he does not thereby enter into an agreement with anybody. He merely reflects on the situation in which the death sentence has left him in contrast to the situation in which it has left his accusers:

‘And I depart from here condemned by you to death, my accusers depart condemned to villainy and injustice by the truth. *And I abide by my penalty and they by theirs*’ (39b6).

Key to Weiss’ argument is the view that Socrates’ approval of Achilles in the *Apology* as a man ‘determined to risk his life rather than “to live as a bad man and not to avenge his friends” (*Ap.* 28d1)’, is ‘merely apparent’ [p. 9], for

‘Whatever it is that motivates Achilles, it is not justice. As becomes clear in the *Crito*, vengeance, for Socrates, has no part in justice [p. 9, n. 5].’

What Socrates in the *Apology* in fact imagines Achilles as saying is ‘Let me die forthwith, having exercised justice (δίκην ἐπιθείς) against the perpetrator of injustice (τῷ ἀδικοῦντι, 28d2).’

Weiss is not the only one to misrepresent this crucial statement. Jowett’s nineteenth century translation has Socrates’ Achilles say ‘Let me die forthwith and be avenged of my enemy’, as does Novotný’s twentieth century Czech translation.^{xx} How is it possible that Weiss, Novotný, and Jowett can depart, in unison, so far from the original? Homer’s Achilles is motivated by the imperative of avenging the death of Patrocles, without any reference to justice: ‘Let me die forthwith since I have failed to save my friend from death’ (*Il.* 18. 97-8). Our modern consciousness, formed by Plato’s *Crito* on the one hand, and by the *New Testament* on the other, cannot view the death to which Achilles submitted Hector in revenge for Hector’s killing of Patrocles as an exercise of justice.

Socrates’ picture of Achilles in the *Apology* as that of a demigod (ἡμίθεος, 28c1) exercising justice against the perpetrator of injustice comes at the crucial point in

Socrates' Defence. Socrates has finished with his accuser Meletus: 'I have said enough in answer to the charge of Meletus' (28a, tr. Jowett), gives up on defending himself and begins to address as perpetrators of injustice all those in the jury, who in his view intend to condemn him to death, and all those in the courtroom, in the Assembly, and in Athens at large who condemn him in their thoughts:

'I have incurred many violent enmities; and this is what will be my destruction if I am destroyed; - not Meletus, nor yet Anytus, but the envy and detraction of the many (τῶν πολλῶν, 28a).^{xxi}

Against all these he is going to exercise justice with his censure of their ways.

In the nineteenth century, Grote perceived the contrast between the *Apology* and the *Crito* most acutely. He says about the *Apology*:

'In defending himself before the Dikasts [the judges, the men of the jury], Sokrates had exalted himself into a position which would undoubtedly be construed by his auditors as disobedience and defiance to the city and its institutions ... In the judgment of the Athenian Dikasts, Sokrates ... had put himself above the laws; thus confirming the charge which the accusers advanced.'^{xxii}

Concerning the *Crito* he says:

'This dialogue puts into the mouth of Sokrates a rhetorical harangue forcible and impressive, which he supposes himself to hear from the personified Nomos [Law] of Athens, claiming for herself and her laws plenary and unmeasured obedience from all her citizens, as a covenant due to her from each. He declares his own heartfelt adhesion to the claim. Sokrates is thus made to express the feelings and repeat the language of a devoted democratical patriot' [p. 302].

To appreciate the unique situation in which Socrates stands in the *Crito*, we must view it against the background of his friends' attempt to smuggle him out of prison. Socrates' words '*I abide by my penalty*' in the *Apology* imply that he was prepared to face death. Indeed, earlier on in the *Apology* he declared that he preferred death to exile (*Ap.* 37b-e). How then was it possible that Socrates' followers and friends became so engaged in arranging for him to escape?

Socrates on his last day, in the *Phaedo*, may help with the answer. Socrates is asked why he began to compose poetry in prison, never having done so before (*Phd.* 60c-61a). Socrates answers that in his previous life he had a recurrent dream, in which he was commanded to make *mousikê*, which he took as an exhortation to do philosophy. After his imprisonment it occurred to him that the dream might have meant *mousikê* as it is normally understood, that is poetry. It appeared to him necessary not to

disobey as it was safer not to go off before he'd fulfilled a sacred duty by making verses and thus obeying the dream (*Phd.* 60e-61b). Socrates' proclamation at the trial '*I will engage in philosophy as long as I can breathe*' (*Ap.* 29d) was founded in his conviction that the god, through oracles and dreams, had commanded him to be engaged in philosophy (*Ap.* 33c5). In prison, facing death, Socrates lost his conviction that philosophy was his god-given vocation. Is it any wonder that Socrates' friends and followers did not view Socrates' '*I abide by my penalty*' as irrevocable?

The *Apology* provides the evidence as to why the imprisoned Socrates began to doubt that philosophy was his god-given task. In his Defence he identified philosophy with 'examining myself and others' and proclaimed that 'the unexamined life is not worth living' (38a), well aware that these philosophic examinations led to his having many enemies of the worst and most dangerous kind (22e-23a), brought upon him his indictment (21b), and ultimately resulted in his death sentence (39c-d). Socrates told the jury: 'No man who sets himself firmly against you or any other multitude, honestly striving to keep the state from many lawless and unrighteous deeds, will save his life' (31e, tr. B. Jowett). His announcement 'I shall never act differently, not even if I have to die many times' (30b) caused a great uproar, for his next words were: 'Stop shouting, men of Athens' (30c). What future life did his philosophy promise for his disciples, if it would only bring them enmity, trials, and death?

After Socrates was found guilty, he was expected to tell the court what punishment he considered to be appropriate. Instead, he declared that the right reward for him^{xxiii} would be free meals in the Prytaneum, the Town Hall of Athens, so that he could devote all his time to his philosophic activities, freed from all material concerns (*Ap.* 36d). Addressed to the jury, Socrates' proposal was preposterous. Were not his friends entitled to take it as a challenge, directed at them, to help him escape from prison and arrange for him a situation free from material concerns, which would allow him to devote himself fully to philosophy, be it in Megara, where his followers Euclides and Terpsion lived, or in Thebes with Cebes and Simmias, or in Thessaly where Crito had rich and influential friends? To justify his proposal, Socrates declared that with his philosophic examinations he was bringing true happiness to men, unlike the victors in the Olympic games who were honoured with free meals in the Prytaneum although they were bringing them only an appearance of happiness (*Ap.*

36d). Did not his friends have the right to expect that he would welcome escaping from prison so that he could resume bringing true happiness to them? And when in the end he proposed to pay as a penalty as much money as he could afford, that is one mina, amending the proposal to thirty minae after the intervention of Plato, Crito, Critoboulus and Apollodorus (*Ap.* 38b), was it not clear that he wished to avoid the death penalty?

We can infer from the *Crito* that Socrates during his imprisonment was full of doubts. Crito's words 'let me entreat you once more to take my advice and escape' (ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐμοὶ πιθοῦ καὶ σῴθητι, 44b6, tr. Jowett), are testament to the fact that Socrates knew about his friends' preparations for escape. Full of indecision, he did not try to stop them. That this was so is clear from Crito's words:

'Make up your mind then, or rather have your mind already made up, for the time of deliberation is over, and there is only one thing to be done, which must be done this very night, and if we delay at all will be no longer practicable or possible; I beseech you therefore, be persuaded by me, and do not say me nay.'
(46a4-8, tr. Jowett)

Socrates was not far from winning the case, as can be seen from his surprise at the small difference between the number of votes cast against him and the number of votes absolving him from guilt (35e-36a). Had he devoted some consideration to his followers' future life in the city, he would have won. What prospects did he open for them with the prophecy he addressed to those who sentenced him to death?

'I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my departure punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me surely awaits you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose: far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained: and as they are younger they will be more severe with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you will stop all censure of your lives, you are mistaken.'
(39c-d, tr. B. Jowett)

Had Plato written this prophecy after Socrates' death, he would have knowingly put into his mouth a false prophecy, for in the decade that followed Plato and the other leading disciples of Socrates engaged in philosophic activities quite different from the prophesied antagonistic encounters. They became teachers of virtue, which they advertised as the attainment of happiness.^{xxiv} This means that only during the time of Socrates' imprisonment Plato could have written the prophecy in the belief that it

would be fulfilled, nay, in the conviction that he began to fulfil it by writing the *Apology*.

The question of the relevance of the prophecy for the dating of the *Apology* has never been raised by scholars, simply because of the belief that Plato began to write his dialogues only after the death of Socrates. This belief was inaugurated by Grote, who proclaimed:

‘Plato did not publish any dialogues during the life of Socrates. An interval of fifty one years separates the death of Socrates from that of Plato. Such an interval is more than sufficient for all the existing dialogues of Plato, without the necessity of going back to a more youthful period of his age.’^{xxv}

What were the grounds on which Grote decided to date all Plato’s dialogues after the death of Socrates? Concerning Socrates he wrote:

‘Everyone who chose to hear him might do so without payment and with the utmost facility. Why then should any one wish to read written reports of his conversations? ... Again, as to fictitious dialogues (like the Platonic) employing the name of Socrates as spokesman – such might doubtless be published during his lifetime by derisory dramatists for the purpose of raising a laugh, but not surely by a respectable disciple and admirer for the purpose of giving utterance to doctrines of his own. ... Still less credible is it that Plato during the lifetime of Socrates should have published such a dialogue as the *Phaedrus*, wherein we find ascribed to Socrates, poetical and dithyrambic effusions utterly at variance with the real manifestations which Athenians might hear every day from Socrates in the market-place.’ [pp. 199-200]

This picture of Socrates fails to take into account the testimonies of Socrates’ contemporaries, the writers of comedies, according to whom Socrates exercised influence on writers of tragedies. In Callias’ *Captives* character A asks ‘Pray why so solemn, why this lofty air?’ Character B answers ‘I’m helped by Socrates’ (Σωκράτης γὰρ αἴτιος). Mnesimachus suggests that Socrates ‘provides the firewood’ (τὰ φρύγαν’ ὑποτίθησι) for Euripides’ play the *Phrygians* (δρᾶμα τοῦτ’ Εὐριπίδου), speaking pointedly about Euripides in the singular, but when he speaks of Euripides in the plural as ‘engines riveted by Socrates’ (Εὐριπίδας σωκρατογόμφους), he points to tragic poets as a whole (Diog. Laert. ii. 18, tr. Hicks). In Aristophanes’ *Birds* everybody (ἄπαντες ἄνθρωποι) had emulated Socrates (ἔσωκρατοῦν, 1282) before the City in the Clouds was built. In Plato’s

Symposium Socrates lectures Agathon and Aristophanes on the art of writing both tragedies and comedies.

Concerning Plato, Grote derives his most important argument from Plato's *Seventh Letter*, which he misrepresents in two respects. He claims that Plato actively participated in the government of the aristocrats, and he says that after the death of Socrates Plato gave up on politics and began to write his dialogues. Concerning the first, he writes:

‘[Plato] tells us himself, that as a young man he was exceedingly eager, like others of the same age, to meddle and distinguish himself in active politics ... Plato further tells us that when (after the final capitulation of Athens) the democracy was put down and the government of the Thirty established, he embarked in it actively under the auspices of his relatives (Critias, Charmides, & c., then in the ascendant).’ [p. 202].

Plato does not say that he embarked actively in the government of the Thirty, but rather, ‘I watched with the keenest interest to see what they would do’ (αὐτοῖς σφόδρα προσεῖχον τὸν νοῦν, τί πράξοιεν, *SL* 324d6). The question is what prevented Plato from positively responding to the call of his friends and relatives among the Thirty when at that time his desire to engage in politics was at its highest. I believe that at that time Plato was writing the *Phaedrus*; let me therefore devote a few paragraphs to its dating and to its place within the framework of Plato's philosophic and political aspirations as I find them reflected in the dialogue.

The *Phaedrus* must have been published prior to the death of Polemarchus who was executed by the Thirty, for Polemarchus is presented in the dialogue as an exemplary follower of philosophy; Socrates prays to God that Lysias may emulate his brother Polemarchus so that Phaedrus and Lysias may live their lives devoted to philosophy (257b). Its publication after the death of Polemarchus would have made a mockery of the proclamation that philosophy provides its followers with a happy life here on earth, which Socrates pronounced before referring to Polemarchus (256a-b). Nor could the dialogue be published before the end of the Peloponnesian War, as Socrates refers in it to Simmias from Thebes (242b3), who could not visit Athens during the war.^{xxvi} On this evidence, the dialogue was published in the early days of the Thirty. The question remains what compelled Plato to write it, when we know from the

dialogue itself that Socrates held writing in low esteem (cf. *Phaedrus* 274a-278e). To answer this question, we must view the *Phaedrus* against the background of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, the comedy staged shortly before the final defeat of Athens, in 405 BC.

In the *Frogs*, Aeschylus has won the contest of playwrights in the underworld and is returning to Athens to save the city. The chorus praises his sharp intellect (1482-3) and wisdom (1490), delighted not to sit any more around Socrates in idle talk, having thrown away the art (ἀποβαλόντα μουσικήν, 1491-2). Diogenes Laertius says that

‘when Plato was about to compete for the prize with a tragedy, he listened to Socrates in front of the theatre of Dionysus, and then consigned his poems to the flames ... From that time onward, having reached his twentieth year (so it is said), he was the pupil of Socrates’.^{xxvii}

It would have occurred in 407 BC, shortly before Aristophanes began to write the *Frogs* (Plato was born in 427 BC, see Diog. Laert. III. 2); it therefore must have been Plato, alongside Socrates and Euripides, against whom the chorus directed its comic song. *Frogs* was performed on stage to thousands of Athenians, and was much admired.^{xxviii} The only fitting response to it had to be put in writing. In the *Phaedrus* Plato demonstrated that philosophy was the greatest art, μουσική. In its light, Socrates was turning his followers towards μουσική, not away from it.^{xxix}

Plato's self-appointed task in the *Phaedrus* is ‘to vindicate the pursuit of philosophy’, as Hackforth felicitously characterizes its main purpose.^{xxx} This task had to be completed before Plato could enter politics, as Plato himself indicates in the opening scene of the *Phaedrus*. Socrates divines that Phaedrus had been entertained by Lysias with a feast of eloquence. Phaedrus replies: ‘You’ll learn if you have time to come along and listen.’ Socrates answers: ‘In Pindar’s words (κατὰ Πίνδαρον), I should account it a concern (πρᾶγμα) even above my pressing obligations (καὶ ἀσχολίας ὑπέρτερον) to hear how you and Lysias passed your time’ (227b). Taken literally, these words are disingenuous, for as the dialogue proceeds, Plato makes it abundantly clear that his opinion of Lysias is very low. That Socrates knows him well, is indicated by Socrates’ opinion concerning him at the beginning of the dialogue, by his remarks concerning him throughout the dialogue, and by his unfavourable comparison of him with Isocrates at the end of the dialogue (279a). The key to Socrates’ words can be found in his reaction to the rhetorical piece with which Lysias entertained

Phaedrus: ‘There is something welling up within my breast, which makes me feel that I could find something different, and something better, to say’ (235c5-6, tr. Hackforth). When Socrates says that he finds it a concern even above his pressing obligations to hear how Phaedrus and Lysias passed their time, the dialogue in its entirety unfolds in front of Plato. Plato’s contemporaries had a clue to the quotation from Pindar, for we know from Aristotle that the Greeks viewed political activities as pressing obligations, ἀσχολία.^{xxxvi} Active participation in the government of the Thirty was the pressing obligation that Plato postponed in order to complete the *Phaedrus*, his more pressing concern.

In Pindar’s Ode both the postponed ‘pressing obligation’ and the ‘more pressing concern’ are of great importance. Pindar was to write a paeon on Apollo – this was the pressing obligation – but writing the Ode for Herodotus of Thebes, who won the chariot race at the Isthmian games, appeared to be a concern (πράγμα) even more pressing (καὶ ἀσχολίας ὑπέρτερον). ‘With divine help,’ Pindar strives to ‘yoke together the particular ends of both these gracious tasks’ (ἀμφοτερῶν τοι χαρίτων ζεύξω τέλος, *Isth.* 1, 6-7). In quoting Pindar, Plato indicates that he faces a similar dual task: to vindicate philosophy and to make his contribution to politics. If the aristocrats were to transform the life of the city ‘from life plagued by injustice (ἐκ τινος ἀδίκου βίου) into life governed by justice’ (ἐπὶ δίκαιον τρόπον ἄγοντας διοικήσειν τὴν πόλιν, *Seventh Letter* 324d4-5), as Plato hoped they would, they had to acquire and use a new type of rhetoric, which would be far superior to that of the Athenian demagogues. The second part of the dialogue is devoted to the task of reforming rhetoric.

Now let us consider Grote’s second misinterpretation, his claim that after the death of Socrates did Plato give up on politics and begin writing:

‘Four years after the restoration of democracy, came the trial and condemnation of Socrates. It was that event which finally shocked and disgusted Plato, converting his previous dissatisfaction into an utter despair of obtaining any good results from existing governments. From thenceforward, he turned away from practice and threw himself into speculation ... The death of Socrates left that venerated name open to be employed as spokesman in his dialogues.’ [pp. 203-4]

Contrary to Grote’s interpretation, Plato in the *Seventh Letter* says something quite different: after the death of Socrates he ‘did not stop looking to see if there was any

likelihood of improvement’ and ‘postponed action till a suitable opportunity should arise’ (*SL* 325e7-326a2).

Plato is quite precise about his giving up on politics:

‘Finally I came to the conclusion that the condition of all existing states is bad – nothing can cure their constitution but a miraculous reform assisted by good luck – and I was driven to assert, in praise of true philosophy, that nothing else can enable one to see what is right for states and for individuals, and that the troubles of mankind will never cease until either true and genuine philosophers attain political power or the rulers of states by some dispensation of providence become genuine philosophers. This was the state of mind in which I paid my first visit to Italy and Sicily.’ (*SL* 326a2-b6, tr. W. Hamilton)

In the opening paragraph of the *Letter* Plato says that he was about forty – σχεδὸν ἔτη τετταράκοντα γεγονῶς – when he went on his first visit to Sicily (*SL* 324a6). This would mean he gave up on politics and left Athens more than ten years after Socrates’ death,^{xxxii} and that there are a number of Plato’s dialogues which must be dated prior to Socrates’ death, for they not only appear to be inconsistent with his political aspirations after Socrates’ death but are equally inconsistent with the years marked by his preoccupation with the ideal state in which philosophers would rule, as embodied in the *Republic*. In the *Laws*, the work of his old age, he proclaims: ‘the paradigm of a political constitution is nowhere else to be seen’ (παράδειγμά γε πολιτείας οὐκ ἄλλη χρὴ σκοπεῖν, 739 e 1-2).

After the death of Socrates, ‘Plato and the rest of the philosophers’ went into exile in Megara.^{xxxiii} I believe that it was there that Plato wrote the *Crito*, putting forward the ethical and political significance of Socrates’ refusal to save his life by escaping from prison. It is noteworthy that although a number of Socrates’ friends and followers took part in preparations for Socrates’ escape (45b5), Crito is the only one from Athens who is named; Simmias and Cebes, who are also named, were from Thebes and faced no danger of being prosecuted in Athens. Crito was prepared to lose his property and even his life in order to secure Socrates’ escape (*Crito* 44e2-45a3); his fear that people might blame him for his failing to do so overrode any concerns for his own personal safety (*Cr.* 44b5-c5). We may therefore presume that Crito stayed in Athens and freely talked about his role in the preparations for Socrates’ escape and about Socrates’ decision to die rather than violate the laws of Athens. The dialogue

celebrates Crito's courage and his dedication to Socrates and at the same time tests and prepares the ground for Plato's safe return to Athens.

There is an imbalance in the way Socrates' fate twice interfered with Plato's political aspirations, which requires explanation. The first interference happened during the reign of the Thirty:

‘they tried to send a friend of mine, the aged Socrates, whom I should scarcely scruple to describe as the most upright man of that day, with some other persons to carry off one of the citizens by force to execution, in order that, whether he wished it, or not, he might share the guilt of their conduct.’ (*Seventh Letter* 324d8-325a1, tr. J. Harward)

The second interference happened after the restoration of democracy:

‘once more it happened that some of those in power brought my friend Socrates ... to trial before a court of law ... condemned and executed.’ (*Seventh Letter* 325b5-c2, tr. J. Harward)

In the first case Plato was ‘disgusted and withdrew from any connection with the evils of those days’ and ceased thinking of a career in politics (*SL* 325a4-5); he ‘began to be moved again by the desire to take part in public and political affairs’ (*SL* 325a7-b1) only after the restoration of democracy. To the second incident he reacted differently. The execution of Socrates was only one of those things, which together with his observations concerning current politicians, laws and customs, led progressively to his realization that doing politics in the right way was very difficult in the given circumstances:

‘As I observed these things (ταῦτα) and the men engaged in political activities, and the laws and the customs, the more I investigated them and advanced in life, the more difficult it appeared to me to exercise political authority in the right way ... so that, although I was at first strongly driven towards engagement in politics, as I looked at these things and saw them driven in all directions, I ended up being dizzy’ (*SL* 325c5-e3).

But even then he did not give up on Athenian politics:

‘I did not stop looking whether these very things and the whole political constitution might not improve, waiting again for opportunities for political action’ (*SL* 325e3-326a2).

The question is, why Plato did cease thinking about a career in politics after the first incident, which happened during the reign of the oligarchs, and why did he for so long persist in looking for opportunities to get involved in politics after the execution of

Socrates by the democrats? To find the answer, we must view the first incident in the light of the *Apology*, the second in the light of the *Crito*.

Socrates says in the *Apology*:

‘When the oligarchy of the Thirty was in power, they sent for me and four others into the rotunda, and bade us bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis, as they wanted to put him to death. This was a specimen of the sort of commands which they were always giving with the view of implicating as many as possible in their crimes ... the strong arm of that oppressive power did not frighten me into doing wrong; and when we came out of the rotunda the other four went to Salamis and fetched Leon, but I went quietly home. For which I might have lost my life, had not the power of the Thirty shortly afterwards come to an end.’
(*Apology* 32c4-d8, tr. B. Jowett)

Socrates made it abundantly clear by his action that he wanted to have nothing in common with the oligarchs, and Plato followed his example. In the *Apology*, Socrates’ response to the accusations brought against him at the trial by the leading democrats was on a par with his response to the oligarchs; he recalled the incident as proof that no man can save his life if he genuinely fights for justice, be it under an oligarchy or a democracy (*Apology* 31d-32a). When Plato wrote this down in the *Apology*, he himself undoubtedly believed that this was the end of his political ambitions. But something momentous happened that changed his mind.

By rejecting escape and facing death in obedience to the laws Socrates dramatically transformed the situation. The Laws appeal to Socrates as the exemplary man who truly pursued virtue (ὁ τῆ ἀληθείᾳ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐπιμελόμενος, 51a6-7), insisting that ‘one ought either to persuade the fatherland or obey its commands’ (ἢ πείθειν ἢ ποιεῖν ἃ ἄν κελεύῃ, *Cr.* 51b2-3). Having thus made themselves open to persuasion, the Laws reemphasize this point:

‘whether in battle or in court of law, or in any other place, everyone must do what his city and his country order him; *or he must change their view of what is just*’ (ἢ πείθειν αὐτὴν ἢ τὸ δίκαιον πέφυκε, 51b8-c1).

They return to the motive of persuasion a few lines later:

‘He who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the state, and still remains, has by so doing entered into an implied contract that he will do as we command him. And he who disobeys us is ... wrong ... because having made an agreement with us that he will duly obey our commands, he neither obeys them *nor convinces us if we do something wrong* (οὔτε πείθει ἡμᾶς, εἰ μὴ καλῶς τι ποιούμεν, 51e1-7)^{xxxiv}

Putting these words into the mouth of the personified Laws, Socrates critically revises his attitude to politics. By arguing against escape and by sealing his arguments with his death Socrates made a powerful contribution to Athenian political life. In his discussion with Crito Socrates endeavoured to turn his followers towards the task of positively influencing life in Athens on the basis of those moral principles they had agreed on in all their previous discussions. By doing so he did his best to change the minds of the Athenians concerning himself and his disciples, and thus prepare the ground for political engagement on the part of his followers. This was his legacy.

As the *Crito* testifies, Plato responded positively to Socrates' call. His most pressing task was to bring Socrates' scathing criticism of the Athenian democracy publicly pronounced by him at the trial and immortalized in the *Apology* within the framework of the obedience to the laws upheld by Socrates' death. This task befell the personified Laws. To succeed, they had to obtain from Socrates two major concessions. He had to revise both his criticism of Athenian education and his view that only those members of the jury can be rightly called judges, who pronounce correct verdicts.

Concerning the first point, the Laws ask:

‘Do you have any objection to urge (μέμψη τι) against those of us who after birth regulate the nurture and education (τροφήν τε καὶ παιδείαν) of children, in which you also were educated (ἐν ἧ καὶ σὺ ἐπαιδεύθης)? Did not the laws, which have the charge of education, rightly (καλῶς) command your father to educate you in art ((παιδεύειν ἐν μουσικῇ) and gymnastic?’

Socrates answers unequivocally: ‘Rightly’ (Καλῶς) (*Cr.* 50d5-e1).

Concerning the second point, the Laws begin harshly:

‘You cannot suppose that you are on equal terms in matters of right and wrong, or think that you have a right to do to us what we are doing to you ... because we think right to destroy you, do you think that you have any right to destroy us in return, and your country as far as in you lies?’ (*Cr.* 50e5-51a5, tr. Jowett).

Socrates fully accepts that the Laws are right in speaking thus, and Crito cannot but agree with him. On this basis the Laws refer to Socrates' Defence speech, to strengthen their argument:

‘You might in the course of the trial, if you had liked, have fixed the penalty at banishment; you might then have done with the state's assent what you are now setting out to do without it. But you pretended that you preferred death to exile,

and that you were not unwilling to die. And now you have forgotten those words (ἐκείνους τοὺς λόγους).^{xv} Having thus brought the *Apology* clearly to the fore, the Laws argue that if Socrates transgresses against them by escaping, ‘you will confirm in the minds of the judges (τοῖς δικάσταῖς) the justice of their own condemnation of you’ (53b7-c1). In other words, if Socrates confirms his loyalty to the Laws and rejects escape, he will prove the judges to have been wrong. But even if thus the judges will be proved wrong, they will remain judges in the eyes of the Laws; this is how Socrates now views the matter (ὅσα γε τὰ νῦν ἐμοὶ δοκοῦντα, 54d5-6). The Laws on their part then maintain that Socrates will depart from life unjustly sentenced (ἡδίκημένος) by men (ὑπ’ ἀνθρώπων), not by the Laws (οὐχ ὑφ’ ἡμῶν τῶν νόμων, 54b8-c1). In the *Crito* Plato thus rehabilitated Socrates and the *Apology*. Jointly, the *Apology* and the *Crito* then could contribute to and take part in the intellectual, moral, and political freedom within which Athenian democracy thrived for decades to come.

ⁱ ‘Ueber den Kriton ist kaum etwas zu sagen, so deutlich ist, dass er gar keine andere Absicht hat, als die Handlungsweise des Sokrates zu rechtfertigen.’ Wilamowitz, *op.cit.* p. 55.

ⁱⁱ ‘Philosophie, was wir so nennen, steckt im Kriton nicht.’ U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Platon*, 2nd ed. vol. ii, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, Berlin 1920, p. 56.

ⁱⁱⁱ Friedländer, *op. cit.* p. 173.

^{iv} Friedländer dismisses the relationship between the two with one sentence: ‘Unique as this work [*Crito*] seems to be, it is related to other dialogues, even if we disregard its natural affinities with the *Apology*.’ (*Op. cit.* p. 173-174) He then goes on to explore the relationship between the *Crito* and the *Protagoras*, the I. book of the *Republic*, *Euthyphro*, *Hippias Major*, and the *Gorgias* (*op. cit.* p. 173-178).

^v František Novotný was an eminent Czech interpreter and translator of Plato.

^{vi} R. E. Allen in his introductory ‘Comment’ on the *Apology* vindicates its historicity: ‘The strongest external evidence for the accuracy of Plato’s account is Isocrates’ *Antidosis*. Isocrates knew Socrates and admired him, as the *Antidosis* shows. There is an ancient tradition that he was deeply grieved at Socrates’ death and put on mourning for him; in the circumstances, that would be no light thing to do. There is no reason to suppose that Isocrates was not thoroughly familiar with the circumstances of the trial: born in 436 B.C., he was at the time of the trial a grown man. The *Antidosis* was written in around 354 B.C., and it is surely no accident that Isocrates, in construing a defense of his own life and career by imagining himself as a defendant on trial for corrupting the youth and making the worse argument the better, should echo the *Apology* of Plato, and constantly so. But Isocrates surely meant to compare himself to Socrates, not to Plato’s portrait of Socrates. It follows that Isocrates, who was in a position to know, must have supposed Plato’s *Apology* essentially accurate to the speech which Socrates gave. There is no good evidence that the *Apology* is inaccurate. There is good evidence that the *Apology* is accurate. Therefore, as a matter of best evidence, we must accept the *Apology* as accurate.’ R. E. Allen, *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. i., Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1984, pp. 77-8.

^{vii} František Novotný, ‘Úvod’ k *Obraně v: Platón, Euthyfrón, Obrana Sókrata, Kritón*, ed. OIKOYMENH, Praha, 1994, p. 38.

^{viii} František Novotný, ‘Úvod’ ke *Kritónu*, *op. cit.* p. 75-6.

Xenophon and Aeschines can be referred to in support of the claim that the sentiments which Plato in the *Crito* puts into the mouth of Socrates, represent the sentiments with which the historical Socrates endeavoured to imbue his friends and followers.

Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* presents us with a picture of a teacher of an Armenian noble Tigranes in whom ‘no one can fail to recognize Socrates himself’ (Walter Miller, ‘Introduction’, Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, The Loeb Classical Library edition, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2001, first printed 1914, p. ix.) . The father of this noble was jealous of his son’s attachment to his teacher,

accused him of corrupting his son (διαφθείρειν αὐτὸν ἔφη ἐμέ) and put him to death. Tigranes says that when his teacher was about to be put to death, he told him: ‘Be not angry with your father, Tigranes, for putting me to death; for he does it, not from any spirit of malice, but from ignorance (ἀγνοία), and whatever wrong men do from ignorance (ὅποσα δὲ ἀγνοία ἄνθρωποι ἐξαμαρτάνουσι), I believe they do it quite against their will (ἀκούσια ταῦτ’ ἔγωγε νομίζω)’ Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* III. i. 38.

Diogenes Laertius says that Idomeneus, who wrote a book about the disciples of Socrates in the third century BC, asserted ‘that the arguments used by Crito, when in the prison he urges Socrates to escape, are really those of Aeschines’ (εἶναι Αἰσχίνου, III. 36). There is little doubt that Aeschines, a close associate of Socrates, was among the philosophers who retired to Megara together with Plato after the death of Socrates, whereas Crito stayed at home. We may presume that at the time when Crito and Aeschines tried to persuade Socrates to escape Plato was preoccupied with the *Apology*, and with preparations for Socrates’ escape and for their joint forthcoming exile. It was thus only in Megara that he could properly listen to Aeschines’ account of Socrates’ reasons for choosing death rather than doing anything illegal, and realize their significance. The reasons for his putting the arguments into the mouth of Crito rather than Aeschines were obvious: Crito was prepared to risk anything rather than be viewed as a man who did not do his utmost to save Socrates, his life-long friend, from death (*Cr.* 44e-45a). Idomeneus’ assertion that Plato put the arguments into the mouth of Crito ‘because of his enmity to Aeschines’ (διὰ τὴν πρὸς τοῦτον δυσμένειαν, III. 36) merely suggests that Aeschines begrudged the fame that Plato in the dialogue bestowed on Crito instead of himself, finding it safe to do so; thanks to the *Crito* Socrates’ friends and followers were in the eyes of the Athenians transformed from men undermining the laws into their champions.

^{ix}The *dialogues of Plato*, vol. 1, tr. B. Jowett, edited by R. M. Hare & D.A. Russell, Sphere Books Ltd, 1970, p. 86.

^x H. Thesleff, ‘Platonic Chronology’, *Phronesis* 34 (1989), p. 21, n. 76. Themistius, a 4th century A. D. philosopher and rhetorician, mistakenly believes that Polycrates wrote his *Accusation of Socrates* for Meletus. The mistake goes presumably back to Hermippus, a 3rd century B. C. biographer (see Diog. Laert. ii. 38).

^{xi} The term γραψάμενος is a technical term for an indictment. In Plato’s *Euthyphro* Socrates informs Euthyphro that he is standing in the Porch of the King Archon because of the indictment (γραφῆν, 2a6) he faces. Euthyphro then asks ‘So it appears that someone indicted you (σε γέγραπται) with an indictment (γραφῆν, 1b1)?’ Socrates informs him that it was Meletus (2b9). Euthyphro asks ‘What indictment (τίνα γραφῆν) did he indict you with (σε γέγραπται, 2b12-c1)?’ Socrates answers by ironically praising Meletus as an expert, who knows ‘how the young are corrupted and who are those who corrupt them’ (τίνα τρόπον οἱ νέοι διαφθείρονται καὶ τίνες οἱ διαφθείροντες αὐτούς, 2c4-5). Euthyphro then asks ‘In what does he say that you corrupt the young (διαφθείρειν τοὺς νέους, 3a9)?’ In the actual indictment Socrates is accused of ‘corrupting the young’ (τοὺς νέους διαφθείροντα, *Apology*. 24b9).

^{xii} Themistius, *Or.* 23, 296b,17-24: Σωκράτης ἐκεῖνος πρὸ μὲν τοῦ οὐκ ἐξέφαινε τοῦ Πυθίου τὴν μαρτυρίαν, ἐπεί δὲ αὐτὸν Λύκων τε καὶ Ἄνυτος διεβαλλέτην καὶ Μέλητος ἐφειστήκει γραψάμενος ὡς σοφιστὴν καὶ διαφθορέα τῶν νέων, τότε δὲ συνηναγκάσθη τοῖς δικασταῖς ἀναβιβάσασθαι μάρτυρα τὸν θεόν. ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οἱ δικασταὶ ὑπ’ ἀγνωμοσύνης τὸ παραυτικά ἐξηπατήθησαν καὶ ἐγοητεύτησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ὃν ξυνέγραψε Πολυκράτης.

^{xiii} The ancient writers of comedies, contemporaries of Socrates, testified to Socrates’ strong influence on Euripides, calling the latter ‘an engine riveted by Socrates’, as Hicks renders Εὐριπίδης σωκρατογόμφους (Diog. Laert. ii.18).

^{xiv} T. C. Brickhouse and N. D. Smith, *Socrates on Trial*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989, p. 138.

^{xv} To this can be added Xenophon who adduces young Alcibiades’ questioning of Pericles on ‘what a law is’ as proof that Socrates’ influence on the former was positive. In answer to Alcibiades, Pericles defines laws as ‘the rules approved and enacted by the majority in assembly, whereby they declare what ought and what ought not to be done’. Alcibiades asks: ‘Do they suppose it is right to do good or evil?’ Pericles answers: ‘Good, of course, young man, - not evil.’ Alcibiades then asks whether the enactments of oligarchy are laws and Pericles answers that ‘whatsoever the sovereign power in the State, after deliberation, enacts and directs to be done is known as a law’. Alcibiades then asks whether the enactments of a despot are to be regarded as laws, and Pericles answers ‘whatever a despot as ruler enacts is also known as law’. Alcibiades then asks: ‘But force and the negation of law, what is that?’ (Βία δὲ καὶ ἀνομία τί ἐστίν). Pressed by Alcibiades, Pericles cannot but agree that ‘whatever a despot by enactment constrains the citizens to do without persuasion is the negation of law’, that the same

applies to the enactments of oligarchy, and finally that ‘everything that men constrain others to do without persuasion, whether by enactment or not, is not law, but force’. Alcibiades concludes: ‘It follows then, that whatever the assembled majority, through using its power over the owners of property, enacts without persuasion is not law, but force’. (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I. ii. 41-5, tr. O. J. Todd in the Loeb Classical Library edition of Xenophon.)

^{xvi} Roslyn Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied, An Analysis of Plato’s Crito*, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 3.

^{xvii} See Weiss, Ch. 8: ‘A Fool Satisfied’, *op. cit.* pp. 146-160.

^{xviii} *Tinas* is the accusative plural of the indefinite pronoun *tis*, that is ‘any one’, ‘some one’.

^{xix} *Hous* is the accusative plural of the relative pronoun *hos*, that is ‘who’.

^{xx} ‘Na místě at’ jsem mrtev vykonaje pomstu na škůdci.’ Novotný, *op.cit.* p. 56. H. N. Fowler translates: ‘Straightway,’ said he, ‘may I die, after doing vengeance upon the wrongdoer.’ (In The Loeb Classical Library edition of Plato). H. Tredennick translates: ‘Let me die forthwith,’ said he, ‘when I have requited the villain.’ (In *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, Princeton University Press, 1963, 7th printing 1973). M. Croiset translates: ‘que je meure sur-le-champ, pourvue que je punisse le meurtrier.’ (In Guillaum Budé ed, of Plato, Paris 1953). The nearest to the original is R. E. Allen: ‘Straightway let me die,’ he said, ‘exacting right from him who did wrong.’

^{xxixxi} Tr. Jowett, with a minor change. Jowett translates the closing words of the quotation ἡ τῶν πολλῶν διαβολή τε καὶ φθόνος ‘the envy and detraction of the world’.

^{xxii} George Grote, *Plato and the other companions of Sokrates*, vol. i. 2nd ed., London, John Murray, 1867, p. 301.

^{xxiii} The word τιμᾶσθαι in the words of Socrates’ accuser, and generally in the context of a court trial means ‘to estimate the penalty’, but its basic meaning is ‘to estimate what is proper’, and it is this meaning in which Socrates takes it.

^{xxiv} See Isocrates, *Against the Sophist* 3-5; cf. my ‘Plato versus Isocrates: an ancient dispute on philosophy and rhetoric’, the second chapter of the second volume of *The Lost Plato*, on line at www.juliustomin.org.

^{xxv} George Grote, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-5.

^{xxvi} According to the ancient biographic tradition the *Phaedrus* was Plato’s first dialogue. I have defended the ancient dating of the *Phaedrus* in *The Lost Plato*, online at www.juliustomin.org. See especially Ch. 2 ‘A critical review of doctrinal arguments for and against the late dating of the *Phaedrus*’, Ch. 3 ‘Stylometric arguments for and against the late dating of the *Phaedrus*’, Ch. 4. ‘The dating of the *Phaedrus*, ancient sources’, and Ch. 5 ‘The Charmides and the *Phaedrus*’. See further my articles ‘Dating of the *Phaedrus* and interpretation of Plato’, *Antichthon* 22 (1988), 26-41; ‘A preliminary to the study of Plato’, *Symbolae Osloenses* 67 (1992) 80-8; ‘Plato’s first dialogue’, *Ancient Philosophy* 17 (1997), 31-45; ‘Joining the beginning to the end’, *The Republic and the Laws of Plato*, Proceedings of the first Symposium Platonicum Pragense, OIKOYMENH (1998), 201-16; ‘Plato’s disappointment with his Phaedran characters and its impact on his theory of psychology’, *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 50, No 2, (2000).

^{xxvii} Diog. Laert. III. 5, tr. R. D. Hicks.

^{xxviii} See Hypothesis I to Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, l. 6-7: οὕτω δὲ ἐθαυμάσθη τὸ δρᾶμα διὰ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ παράβασιν ὥστε καὶ ἀνεδιδάχθη, ὡς φησι Δικαίαρχος (‘The play was so admired because of its parabasis that it was staged again, as says Dicaearchus.’)

^{xxix} Cf Plato, *Phaedrus* 48d; 459d; 278b-c.

^{xxx} R. Hackforth, *Plato’s Phaedrus*, Cambridge 1952, p. 9.

^{xxxi} See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177 b 6-18.

^{xxxii} According to Apollodorus Plato was born in 427 BC (Diog. Laert. III. 2). According to the alternative date that Diogenes gives, Plato was born 429 BC (Diog. Laert. III.3), in which case he was thirty when Socrates died, and definitely abandoned his political ambitions ten years after the death of Socrates.

^{xxxiii} See Diog. Laert. ii. 106 and iii. 6. J. Burnet notes that Diogenes’ statement ‘that, just after the death of Socrates, Plato retired with other Socratics to Megara, the home of Euclides, rests on the authority of Hermodorus, who was a disciple of Plato and wrote a book about him.’ J. Burnet ‘Introduction’, *Plato’s Phaedo*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1911, repr. 1977, p. ix, n. 1.

^{xxxiv} Translation Jowett, with the exception of the last clause. Jowett translates οὕτε πείθει ἡμᾶς, εἰ μὴ καλῶς τι ποιούμεν ‘nor convinces us that our commands are unjust.

^{xxxv} Plato, *Crito* 52c3-8, tr. Jowett with a minor difference. Jowett translates ἐκείνους τοὺς λόγους: ‘these fine sentiments’.