Classical Quarterly **51.2** 423–434 (2001) *Printed in Great Britain*

WHY IS EVENUS CALLED A PHILOSOPHER AT *PHAEDO* 61c?

The concepts of philosophy and philosopher play a pivotal role in Plato's *Phaedo*. Socrates' so-called 'Apology' in this dialogue, that is the passage 63b–69e, is built around the question as to what it is to be a true philosopher. The philosopher is there described as disregarding the pleasures of food, drink, and sex (64d), as someone who does not care about his garments and shoes (64d), who has nothing in common with people that hanker for honour and money (68b–c), and whose whole life is devoted to a preparation for death (67e). It is only in the other world that he can hope to see his longing for insight (*φρόνησις*) fulfilled, not in this one (66e). We meet with a similar picture in the passage that concludes the Affinity Argument (80c–84b): the philosopher alone among mankind shall escape the cycle of births and sit with the gods (81a). Finally, at the end of the dialogue Socrates concludes his story about the destinies of the souls in the other world by telling his friends that those who have been sufficiently purified by philosophy shall live liberated from their bodies in marvellous dwellings for all time to come (114c).

Although the *Phaedo* is not the only dialogue where the concept of the philosopher plays an important role, the stress put upon the ascetic and otherworldly traits in the picture of the philosopher makes this dialogue unique among Plato's writings. Even in the lengthy discussion of the philosopher's character and socio-political role in the middle books of the *Republic* there is no indication that the philosopher expects to find the fulfilment of his longing for knowledge only in a future life. One might even wonder whether the philosopher whom we meet in the *Phaedo* could really take up the position of the philosopher-king prepared for him in Socrates' *kallipolis* in the *Republic*.

I

Given this singular picture of the philosopher in Plato's *Phaedo,* it is all the more astonishing that, at its first occurrence in this dialogue, the word *φιλόσοφος* is applied to a man who does not seem to fit the standards set up there for the philosopher at all, namely to the poet and sophist Evenus (61c6). Evenus is first mentioned at *Phaedo* 60d by Cebes, who tells Socrates that he has been asked by this man why Socrates wrote poems while in jail, which he had never done before. Cebes is sure that Evenus will ask him again and he wants to know what to tell him. Socrates explains that when writing poetry he did not want to compete with Evenus' poems, but that he did so in order to fulfil the order of a dream that asked him to practise *μουσική* (60e); although he had supposed throughout his life that doing philosophy was what he was asked to do by this vision, philosophy being after all the greatest *μουσική* (61a), he had thought it safe to comply with the dream's message by taking it in a literal way, hence his versifying of Aesop's tales and his hymn to Apollo (61b). This is what Cebes should tell the poet Evenus, and, Socrates continues, 'say good-bye to him, and tell him, if he's sensible, to come after me as quickly as he can. I'm off today, it seems—by Athenians' orders' (61b8–c1, trans. Gallop).

This message that Cebes is asked to deliver to Evenus prompts Simmias to interrupt the conversation between Socrates and Cebes, and it is in this exchange with Simmias

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that Evenus is called a philosopher. I quote the the text together with Gallop's translation:

Καὶ ὁ Σιμμίας, Οἷον παρακελεύῃ, ἔφη, τοῦτο, ὦ Σώκρατες, Εὐήνῳ. πολλὰ γὰρ ἤδη ἐντετύχηκα τῷ ἀνδρί· σχεδὸν οὖν ἐξ ὧν ἐγὼ ἤσθημαι οὐδ' ὁπωστιοῦν σοι ἑκὼν εἶναι πείσεται.

Τί δέ; ἦ δ' ὅς, οὐ φιλόσοφος Εὔηνος;

Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ἔφη ὁ Σιμμίας.

Ἐθελήσει τοίνυν καὶ Εὔηνος καὶ πᾶς ὅτῳ ἀξίως τούτου τοῦ πράγματος μέτεστιν. οὐ μέντοι ἴσως βιάσεται αὑτόν· οὐ γάρ φασι θεμιτὸν εἶναι.

'What a thing you're urging Evenus to do, Socrates!' said Simmias. 'I've come across the man often before now; and from what I've seen of him, he'll hardly be at all willing to obey you.'

'Why,' he said, 'isn´t Evenus a philosopher?'

'I believe so,' said Simmias.

'Then Evenus will be willing, and so will everyone who engages worthily in this business. Perhaps, though, he won't do violence to himself: they say it's forbidden.' (61c2–10)

Even if Simmias' bewilderment can be partly explained by his mistaken assumption that Socrates is asking Evenus to commit suicide, an assumption soon corrected by Socrates, his astonishment clearly implies that Evenus is a man who enjoys his life wholeheartedly, perhaps even that he is a sort of bon vivant. This alone would not square well with what Socrates will tell his friends about the philosopher in his ensuing 'Apology'.

The impression of Evenus we get from Simmias' protest is confirmed by information concerning him which we can gather from other dialogues. The *Phaedrus* mentions him in a list of important teachers of rhetoric, that is, Theodoros of Byzantium, Gorgias, and Teisias (*Phaedr.* 267a). The *Phaedrus* also tells us that Evenus used his poetical skills to put some of his rhetorical devices for mnemotechnical reasons in versified form (267a). Evenus is further mentioned in Plato's *Apology* as the man to whom the rich Athenian Callias, who spent more money on sophists than all the rest (*Apol.* 20a), was willing to pay five minae for the education of his sons (*Apol.* 20b8). That seems to have been a rather large sum of money. Hence a man selling his talent for so much clearly comes rather close to the lover of money (*φιλοχρήματος*) whom, together with the lover of the body and the lover of honour, Socrates opposes to the philosopher at *Phaed.* 68b8–c3.

II

So why can Evenus, the poet, the teacher of rhetoric, and the sophist, the man selling his talents for a considerable amount of money, be called a philosopher in the *Phaedo*? How can this man's being a philosopher be reconciled with the picture of the philosopher that emerges from Socrates' teaching soon afterwards? These questions do not seem to have exercised many commentators. In the two extant Greek commentaries, which have both come down to us in incomplete form, the comments on this passage are missing. Olympiodorus, whose commentary starts with 61c9 has, at the very beginning of what remains of this work, a reference back to this remark in the *Phaedo*, but this does not tell us whether he saw any problem with Evenus being called a philosopher.

Most modern commentators do not address this question at all, even if they have something to say about the passage under discussion. Thus Burnet, commenting on *οὐ φιλόσοφος* at 61c6, has the following: 'as addressed to Pythagoreans, the word has a special sense, that of a man who follows a certain "way of life". It is much as if we

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

should ask: "Is he not a religious man?" '[1] Yet we should like to know whether Socrates wants to imply that Evenus is a man who follows the (Pythagorean?) way of life and, if so, how Socrates can do so, given what Simmias is going to say about Evenus.

Hackforth, in his translation-cum-commentary, has a rather lengthy note on the exchange between Socrates and Simmias that I quote in full:

> Evenus would no doubt have called himself by profession a σοφιστής, like Protagoras. But he would not have disclaimed being a φιλόσοφος, for a man can hardly profess to teach σοφία without being 'fond' of it. But there is no reason to suppose that σοφία and φιλοσοφία meant for him what they meant for the Socrates of our dialogue and for the Pythagoreans on whose doctrines Socrates will build; rather would they denote a humanistic culture designed to promote success in public life, as they did for Protagoras and later for Isocrates. A philosopher of that type will not be likely, as Simmias observes, to make all haste to follow Socrates.[2]

If Evenus can be supposed to see himself as a philosopher in this 'humanistic' sense of the word, Socrates' question as well as Simmias' answer would be quite misplaced. For the question Socrates addresses to Simmias entails that Evenus has to be a philosopher in a much stricter sense. And the answer given by Simmias as well as Socrates' comment upon it carry the same implication. Moreover, the last sentence in the text quoted from Hackforth is slightly misleading, since Simmias' observation upon Evenus occurs *before* Socrates raises the question of whether Evenus is a philosopher. Hence, Simmias' remark cannot be meant to tell us anything about 'a philosopher of that type', that is the humanistic philosopher. Thus, I do not think that Hackforth has done justice to the problem posed by this passage in the *Phaedo*.

Dixsaut, in the introduction to her recent commentary, quite pertinently observes that the question at *Phaed.* 61c6 is the first question posed by Socrates in the dialogue and that it allows 'la transition de l'entretien au dialogue proprement dit'.[3] Yet on the question itself, which 'concerne l'attribution à Evénos de la qualité de philosophe', she has only the further comment: 'La rectitude de cette attribution dépend de la bonne volonté d'Evénos à se lancer à la poursuite de Socrate.'[4] Yet how can we be sure about this 'bonne volonté d'Evénos' in face of Simmias' protest and of what else we learn about this man from other dialogues?

As far as I know, the only commentator to have tackled this problem is Rowe. Although I shall disagree with the solution, or rather the two different solutions, he proposes, Rowe can at least be credited with the realization that there is a question here to be answered. His first discussion is in his 1993 commentary where, commenting on lines 61c6–7, he has the following:

> φιλόσοφος: Simmias' reply suggests (c7: 'To me he seems so, at any rate') that Evenus may count as a φιλόσοφος or 'lover of wisdom' in the broad sense (cf. e.g. *Rep.* 475b τὸν φιλόσοφον σοφίας φήσομεν ἐπιθυμητὴν εἶναι, οὐ τῆς μέν, τῆς δ' οὔ, ἀλλὰ πάσης); but as S[ocrates] later argues at length (63e–69e), and as the question here in itself implies, his attitude towards death already shows him to be no philosopher in the true sense (cf. c8–9 πᾶς ὅτῳ ἀξίως τούτου τοῦ πράγματος μέτεστιν).

Rowe's explanation of the passage thus contains two claims: (i) that Simmias understands the word 'philosopher' in a broad sense, namely that of a lover of knowledge quite generally; and (ii) that 'the question here in itself implies' that Evenus' 'attitude

[1] J. Burnet, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford, 1911), 18.
[2] R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedo* (Cambridge, 1955), 34, n. 3.
[3] M. Dixsaut, *Platon: Phédon* (Paris, 1991), 76.
[4] Ibid.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

towards death shows him to be no philosopher in the true sense'. I think that both claims are mistaken.[5]

As to (i), we should notice first that the word is used by Socrates in order to counter a claim by Simmias that, for all he knows about Evenus (and he is acquainted with him), this man will not follow Socrates to the other world. Notice, too, that the wording of Socrates' question is such as to make it clear that he expects an affirmative answer. There can hardly be any doubt that for Socrates Evenus *is* a philosopher. As Socrates' further comment at 61c8–10 shows, his understanding of this word has precisely the implication that a philosopher will want to follow the dying Socrates, even if suicide is not the way to do so. Now, if Simmias were indeed to understand the word 'philosopher' in Socrates' question in a quite general sense, then he would have misunderstood his partner, because the rather harmless general sense of 'lover of wisdom' will by no means carry the implication that it clearly has for Socrates. Hence we should expect him at least to utter a word of protest at the consequence Socrates is going to draw from his concession. Yet there is nothing of the sort. Moreover, both Socrates and Simmias are in broad agreement about what constitutes a philosopher, as can be seen from the fact that Socrates needs no argument at all to get Simmias to concede the points about the philosopher's disdain for the pleasures of food, drink and sex at 64d–e. Such a disdainful attitude is certainly not implied in the concept of a lover of wisdom.

As to (2), the question here, which, after all, is raised by Socrates, certainly does not in itself imply that Evenus' attitude towards death shows him to be no true philosopher. This may be implied in Simmias' remark about Evenus, but Socrates' question is raised as a countermove against the underlying assumption in Simmias' protest. There would be no point in Socrates raising this question at all, if he were not convinced that Evenus is indeed a philosopher.

Rowe may have realized the weakness inherent in his first answer to the problem raised by this passage, for in a later publication he offers a different interpretation. This is given only in a passing remark and Rowe does not support it by an argument. In his paper 'Philosophie et Littérature dans le *Phédon*', which came out in 1995, Rowe has the following:

> . . . on peut supposer que Socrate tient Philolaos (par opposition à Evénos auquel cette qualité vient d'être ironiquement refusée) pour un véritable philosophe.[6]

There is certainly no doubt that Philolaus, who is mentioned by Socrates only a few lines after our passage, is indeed regarded as a true philosopher. But I do not see that there is any irony in Socrates' remark concerning Evenus, nor do I see that he is here *denied* the quality of being a philosopher, 'ironiquement' or otherwise. For whenever we find Socrates speaking tongue in cheek, whenever he does use irony, his use of irony is directed against someone else's pretending to be or to know more than he actually is or does know. A case in point is another mention of Evenus by Socrates in the *Apology* (20b). Socrates there tells his Athenian judges about a conversation with

[5] C. Rowe, *Plato:* Phaedo (Cambridge, 1993), 123. I shall ignore Rowe's further claim that 'as S[ocrates] later argues at length (63e–69e) . . . his [*sc*. Evenus'] attitude towards death already shows him to be no philosopher in the true sense'. Socrates' later *arguments imply* that Evenus' attitude towards death shows him to be no true philosopher, but Socrates does *not argue* there to the effect that Evenus' attitude, etc. I take it that Rowe's wording here is unfortunate.

[6] C. Rowe, 'Philosophie et littérature dans le *Phédon*', in M. Dixsaut (ed.), *Contre Platon II: Le Platonisme renversée* (Paris, 1995), 271–91; the passage quoted at 278.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Callias whom Socrates had questioned about the education of his two sons in matters of their excellence as men and as citizens. When Callias told Socrates that he hired Evenos from Paros for five minae as a teacher in these matters, Socrates continues: 'I called Evenus blessed (*τὸν Εὔηνον ἐμακάρισα*), if he really was in possession of this art and taught so reasonably' (*Apol.* 20b8–c1). This praise clearly is meant to be ironic, and it is directed as well against the presumption on the side of Evenus to be in possession of a *techne* of human excellence as against Callias' belief that he has found a teacher of excellence.

Another case is the reply Socrates gives to Thrasymachus at *Rep.* 1.336d–337a. Socrates there fends off an attack by Thrasymachus, who in quite an arrogant manner had criticized the foregoing discussion between Socrates and Polemarchus (cf. 336c–d). Socrates explains to Thrasymachus that, if there had been any faults in their previous argument, this would be due to their ignorance, not to any attempt to deceive the partner. And Socrates concludes this remark by saying: 'Hence it is far more likely that we deserve pity from clever men (*δεινοί*) like you than that we deserve strictures' (336e10–337a2). Addressing Thrasymachus as a *δεινός* is a way of speaking ironically; and here again irony is used as a weapon against the arrogance, the pretence of cleverness on the part of this sophist.

Yet in the passage under discussion in the *Phaedo*, there is no indication that Evenus *pretends* to be a philosopher. His name has been introduced into the conversation at Athens as that of a poet, not as that of a philosopher. Nothing we have learned so far about this man would make us expect that he would lay claim to this title. Nor does Socrates' question at 61c6 state or imply that Evenus (rightly or wrongly) pretends to be a philosopher. Socrates' question is quite factual and does not imply anything as to beliefs Evenus may hold about himself. Moreover, if Socrates' question was meant ironically, then Simmias' reply, 'So I believe', would seem out of place; he would have missed the irony supposed to be implied in Socrates' question.

So I conclude that there is no reason to explain away the use of the word *philosophos* when applied to Evenus as a case of irony. We have to take this term at its face value.

III

Now if Socrates is not using irony when calling Evenus a philosopher, if Socrates means what he says, then how are we to explain the apparent discrepancy between Socrates' description of the philosopher that follows almost immediately after this exchange with Simmias, and the fact that Simmias characterizes Evenus as someone who would not be willing to follow the dying philosopher Socrates? Even if we allow that Simmias' protest may in part be due to his taking the Socratic advice as an incitement to commit suicide, the way Simmias talks about Evenus taken together with what else we know about this man from other dialogues very strongly suggests that he does not fit the picture of the philosopher Socrates is soon about to deliver. So how are we to resolve this puzzle?

I shall argue that Evenus is called a philosopher because and insofar as he is represented as a member of the Pythagorean community. In order to reach this conclusion I shall try to show two things: firstly, that we have reason to believe either that Evenus had strong connections with the Pythagoreans, or, at least, that Plato's contemporary readers could be expected to see him as strongly connected to the Pythagoreans; secondly, that we have reasons to believe that the term 'philosophers' was used to refer to the Pythagoreans, by themselves as well as by others. If these two

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

claims can be made good, then this short exchange about Evenus being a philosopher at the beginning of the philosophical discussions proper in the *Phaedo* makes perfect sense in the wider strategy of the dialogue. For what we find here is a contrast between Evenus, who is nominally a (Pythagorean) philosopher, but, as transpires from Simmias' remark, does not seem to live up to the standards of the Pythagorean community, on the one hand, and Socrates, who is represented as a follower of the Pythagorean creed in what follows, but who cannot lay claim to belong to the Pythagoreans in any formal sense, on the other. Evenus, who is nominally a Pythagorean, serves as a foil to a Socrates imbued with the true spirit of Pythagoreanism. After all, the story of Socrates' last day is delivered by Phaedo to the Pythagorean Echecrates and his friends in Phlius.

Now, is there any evidence that allows us to take Evenus to be a Pythagorean or to have any contacts with the Pythagoreans of his time? I think there is, although it is only circumstantial. Evenus is a native of Paros, one of the Cycladic islands (cf. *Phaedr.* 267a). This island in the Aegean seems to have had a rather strong Pythagorean community from the beginnings of Pythagoreanism down to Socrates' day. In the long list of Pythagoreans attached to Iamblichus' *De Vita Pythagorica* (*V.P.* c. 267) we find ten Parians listed as Pythagoreans. No other Greek city outside Magna Graecia can claim to count so many Pythagoreans among its inhabitants.[7] Argos, which comes next in the series of cities outside the Greek west as to the number of Pythagoreans, gets six men plus two women, for Sparta we have three men and three women, and the same number is given to Samos, the home island of Pythagoras. All other cities in mainland Greece and in the Greek east which turn up in Iamblichus' list (eight altogether) have even less than that. Some of the Pythagoreans allotted to Paros in this list are mentioned by Iamblichus as having been active in Italy (Alcimachus *V.P.* c. 257, Deinarchus *V.P.* c. 257 and 263, Meton *V.P.* c. 257); thus it is possible that these men were refugees from Italy. On the other hand, it is implied in the story related at *V.P.* c. 239 that Thymaridas is a native of Paros. An Italian Pythagorean, Thestor of Poseidonia, who knew from hearsay that Thymaridas of Paros was also a Pythagorean and that this man had fallen into utter poverty, sailed to Paros to save him from destitution and bought back all of Thymaridas' former possessions. All this evidence points to a strong and early influence of Pythagoreanism in Evenus' home island.

Against all this it could be argued that Iamblichus is a late writer and, hence, that his report should not be relied upon too much. However, the list of Pythagoreans in *V.P.* c. 267 quite probably goes back to Aristoxenus, who is a contemporary of Aristotle: no name turns up of someone who lived later than Aristoxenus, although in Iamblichus' book itself later Pythagoreans are also mentioned.[8]

Moreover, in yet another source there is evidence for an influence of Pythagoreanism in Paros down to the time of Evenus. As emerges from a passage in Polyaenus (*Strat.* 5.2.22), Parian Pythagoreans were actively supporting sentiment in southern Italy against Dionysius I (who came to power in Syracuse in *c.* 406/5). Polyaenus mentions the name of an otherwise unknown Euephenus.[9] If we take these two sources

[7] This remains true even if we omit the name of Timaeus which, as claimed by Diels, may have crept into this list of Parian Pythagoreans from the following line, quoting the Locrian ones (cf. 1.447 DK). W. Burkert thinks that this conjecture by Diels is 'arbitrary' (*Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* [Cambridge, MA, 1972], 105, n. 40).

[8] Thus E. Rohde, 'Die Quellen des Iamblichus in seiner Biographie des Pythagoras', in id., *Kleine Schriften* II (Tübingen, 1901), 171. Rohde has been followed by Burkert (n. 7), 105, n. 40.

[9] Melbert, the editor of Polyaenus' *Strategemata* in the Teubner edition (Leipzig, 1887),

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

together, they suggest very strongly a continuous influence of Pythagoras and his followers in Paros during the fifth century.

Now, as I said, all this evidence clearly is circumstantial when we are to draw a conclusion as to Evenus' connection with Pythagoreanism. And there is no other evidence about Evenus that would support an inference as to Evenus' relations to Pythagoreanism; his few extant poems do not show any specifically Pythagorean traits. That, however, is something to be expected given Simmias' remarks on him in the *Phaedo*. Yet it seems not unreasonable to infer that an intellectual originating from Paros who was to achieve some prominence as a poet and rhetor in Athens will have come under the influence of the Pythagoreans active in his home island before he set out to Athens. Hence, even if Evenus was not a member of the Pythagorean community (whatever that may have meant at the time), Plato could easily present him as such to his contemporary readers, given Evenus' Parian background.

Yet, granted that Evenus is likely to be a Pythagorean or to have connections with the followers of Pythagoras in his home island, how can we be sure that Socrates, when referring to Evenus as a philosopher, means to address him in this quality, that is as a Pythagorean? This brings me to my second claim, namely that we have reason to believe that the Pythagoreans referred to themselves and were referred to by others as 'philosophers'. Now the question of whether the term 'philosopher' was indeed applied to the followers of Pythagoras is entangled with another one, namely the question of who was the first to use the concept of philosophy and philosopher. This problem has been quite hotly debated among classical scholars, and Burkert has strongly argued in favour of a Platonic origin of the word philosophy as against a Pythagorean one.[10] What Burkert and his critics discuss is a famous story reported by Diogenes Laertius (1.12 and 8.8), by Iamblichus (*V.P.* 58) as well as by Cicero in his *Tusculan Disputations* 5.3.8–9. Cicero, who is also our earliest source, gives the fullest version of the story. He has been praising the merits of philosophy (*T.D.* 5.3.7) and then goes on to remark that, although philosophy is of venerable age, its denomination is of recent origin; he gives a list of men of old who were considered to be wise, called σοφοί by the Greeks, *sapientes* by the Romans, a designation they held down to the time of Pythagoras (*T.D.* 5.3.7–8). Pythagoras, Cicero continues,

reports a conjecture by Patakis who proposes to read Εὐηνὸς (*sic!*) instead of Εὐήφενος. However, the name does occur twice in this passage and, although Εὐήφενος is attested nowhere else, the word seems to be correctly formed from ἐυ- together with (τὸ) ἄφενος (wealth, riches) with a lengthening of the α to an η.

[10] Cf. W. Burkert, 'Platon oder Pythagoras? Zum Ursprung des Wortes "Philosophie"', *Hermes* 88 (1960), 159–77. Against Burkert, R. Joly has tried to defend the Pythagorean origin of the word in: 'Platon ou Pythagore? Héraclide Pontique, fr. 87–88 Wehrli', *Latomus* 114 (1970), 136–48. Even before Burkert, W. Jaeger, in his paper 'Über Ursprung und Kreislauf des philosophischen Lebensideals' ([1928], republished in W. Jaeger, *Scripta Minora* 1 [Rome, 1960], 347–93) had contended that the story in Heraclides cannot be historical and that making Pythagoras the inventor of the βίος θεωρητικός is in fact a *Rückübertragung* (projecting back) onto Pythagoras of what came to be an ideal in Plato's Academy (cf. Jaeger [1960], 354–5; an English translation of this essay by Jaeger is annexed to the English edition of Jaeger's *Aristotle*). As against Jaeger's contention, R. Joly had written his paper 'Le thème philosophique des genres de vie dans l'Antiquité classique', *Mémoires de l'Academie* (Brussels, 1956); two years later, in 1958, J. S. Morrison attacked Jaeger's thesis in his article 'The origins of Plato's philosopher-statesman', *CQ* 52 (1958), 198–218. Burkert's 1960 essay is mainly directed against Joly and Morrison. The Pythagorean origin of the word φιλόσοφος has also been defended by Cornelia J. De Vogel in her book, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* (Assen, 1966), 97–102.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(as Plato's pupil Heraclides of Pontus, a man among the best of the learned, informs us) is said to have come to Phlius and to have had erudite and lengthy discussions with Leon the ruler of the Phliasians. Leon, as the story goes, was astonished at his wit and elegance; and so he asked Pythagoras which was the art that he trusted most. Pythagoras however replied that he was not an expert in any art but was a philosopher. Leon, who was amazed at the novelty of this word, asked him who philosophers were and in what they were different from other people. Pythagoras is said to have replied that the life of human beings seemed to him like a festival which was held with the most splendid games before a crowd from all over Greece: for on this occasion some men try to win the fame and distinction of a crown with their trained bodies; others are led there because they want monetary profit from buying and selling; yet there is also a third class of visitors, all of them free-born men, who are not in search of fame or gain but who have come to see the spectacle and to watch what is done, and how, attentively. In a similar manner we human beings have come into our lives from another life and nature, just like coming from another town to a crowded festival. Some of us are enslaved to fame, others to money; yet there are also a tiny few who, disregarding all other pursuits, study the nature of things closely. They have chosen for themselves the name 'lovers of wisdom', for that is the meaning of 'philosophers'; and just as at a festival it is most becoming for a free-born man to watch the games without trying to acquire anything for himself, so in human life the study and knowledge of the nature of things is far better than all other pursuits. (*T.D.* 5.3.8–9)

The two reports in Diogenes Laertius are much shorter; but they do not differ from Cicero's report in any important respect. At 8.8, Diogenes names as his source Sosicrates' *φιλοσόφων Διαδοχαί*, whereas at 1.12 he agrees with Cicero in quoting this story from Heraclides, but in addition he names the work by Heraclides from which it is taken: the *De Mortua* (*περὶ τῆς ἄπνου*). At 1.12, however, Diogenes does not mention the comparison of the philosophers with the spectators at the Great Games. Since Sosicrates is a writer of the second century B.C. he may very likely have taken this report from Heraclides. In all three texts the interlocutor of Pythagoras invariably is Leon. Iamblichus has the comparison with the visitors of the Great Games, but he does not mention an interlocutor to whom the story is told; hence, in all probability his ultimate source is also the story told by Heraclides.

Now, I take it that Burkert's use of this story as indicated in the title of his paper is wrong-headed in two ways. First of all, what we find reported from Heraclides cannot be used to tell us something about the origin, the *Ursprung* of the word 'philosophy'. There is no mention of the word *φιλοσοφία* or its Latin transliteration in the conversation between Pythagoras and Leon in any of the four texts. What the story is about, is the usage and meaning of the word *φιλόσοφος*. In Cicero as well as in the two texts in Diogenes Laertius and the chapter in Iamblichus, Pythagoras is the first to call himself a philosopher. Hence, it is not the word 'philosophy', but the word 'philosopher' whose origin the story related in Heraclides is meant to tell.

The second fault I find with Burkert's claim and also with the discussion in Joly is the use both authors want to make of this story in order to decide the question of whether Plato or Pythagoras was the first to use the word in question. It is very likely that the story in Heraclides about the conversation between Pythagoras and the tyrant Leon is part of the lore surrounding Pythagoras, and hence it is hardly of substantial historical value. Now, since Plato's use of the word 'philosopher' (or for that matter 'philosophy') is amply attested, and since for Pythagoras we have only a record of dubious value, it is quite clear who will be the winner of the contest if the question is narrowed down to Plato or Pythagoras as the (first) users of the word in question.[11]

[11] However, even if we deny the claim that Pythagoras was the first to use the word *φιλοσοφία*, it does not follow that Plato was the first to do so. The word is also used by two contemporary

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Yet the story is not just a story about Pythagoras and his use of the word 'philosopher'. The comparison of the types of human life with the visitors who come to the Great Games for different reasons is meant to explain why certain people call themselves philosophers, what is meant by that designation, and why they have chosen the best lot for their life. That is the real upshot of the text under discussion. The two texts where this comparison is made part of Pythagoras' answer to Leon, that is Cicero and D.L. 8.8, both end with a reference to the 'philosophers'. Iamblichus (*V.P.* 58) has replaced this reference by a reference to a way of life for man (*τρόπος ἀνθρώπου*) and he opposes the philosophical mode of life to the people that are interested in money or honour. If this is the upshot of the comparison put into Pythagoras' mouth in all three authors, then it seems more appropriate to put the above question in a different manner, that is Plato or the Pythagoreans. Even if the story in Heraclides is a fiction (and that again need not imply that it is a fabrication by Heraclides), it seems quite likely that the people calling themselves 'philosophers' were the followers of the man who in this story explains which men can claim to be philosophers. Thus, even if the story in Heraclides cannot be used to support any claim as to Pythagoras' usage or understanding of the word 'philosopher', it still offers some evidence for the fact that there were followers of this man who liked to call themselves 'philosophers'. Since even at the time Heraclides was writing there were still followers of Pythagoras around, for example the ones mentioned as the last ones Aristoxenus could meet, namely the Pythagoreans at Phlius (cf. D.L. 8.46), it is not very likely that he should tell a story where Pythagoras explains which men can call themselves philosophers while Pythagoras' actual followers were not among them.

IV

Yet we do not have to rely entirely on conjectures about what can be extracted from the story in Heraclides. For there is other evidence to support the claim that the Pythagoreans referred to themselves as 'philosophers'. Among the titles attested for Zeno of Elea in the Suda, there is one that says: *Against the Philosophers* (*πρὸς τοὺς φιλοσόφους*). The title clearly is polemical and the work is directed at people that were known to be (to call themselves) 'philosophers'. Given Zeno's Italian background, it seems at least likely that this title is evidence for a work by Zeno attacking people in Italy, and the Italian Pythagoreans seem to be the most plausible candidates for these 'philosophers', *if* we can rely on the testimony of the Suda. So much seems even to be granted by Burkert, who, however, thinks that this is a spurious attribution, for the following reasons.

Firstly, according to Burkert, from Plato to Simplicius only one book by Zeno was known.[12] This claim by Burkert is certainly wrong, since Diogenes Laertius speaks of Zeno's 'books' (D.L. 9.26). Burkert later weakened this claim to the contention that Plato *and* Simplicius knew only one book by Zeno.[13] As for Plato, even if one grants that Plato's *Parmenides* speaks of only one book by Zeno, why should Zeno, who is in his forties in the fictitious situation presupposed in this dialogue (cf. *Parm.* 127b4), not

writers: firstly, Isocrates (born 436 B.C.) uses it several times (cf. 2.35, 5.84, 7.45, 10.6, 10.67, 13.209, 15.270). The rhetor Alcidamas ap. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.3.1406b11–12 calls philosophy a 'bulwark of the law' (*ἐπιτείχισμα τῷ νόμῳ*). It seems unlikely that both writers should have used a word only recently coined by Plato.

[12] Burkert (n. 10), 170. [13] Burkert (n. 7), 285 n. 38.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

have been able to write more books later in life? People do sometimes write books after the age of forty. Thus, the *Parmenides* cannot be used to support the claim that Zeno is the author of only one book. What is more, even this dialogue offers evidence to the contrary: the *Parmenides* has Pythodoros speak of the writings (*γράμματα* 127c3, d3) which Zeno has brought to Athens for the first time. It is only in the ensuing discussion with Socrates that the text Zeno has been reading is referred to as a 'writing' in the singular (*γράμμα* 128a3, b8, c3, d3; *σύγγραμμα* 128a6). Hence, Plato cannot be used to exclude the possibility that Zeno may have written a book *Against the Philosophers*.[14]

As for Simplicius, by the time he was writing (after A.D. 533) there may indeed have been only one book by Zeno, but this could simply be due to the fact that others had been lost over the centuries. Yet, although Simplicius refers to one book by Zeno ('his book to which Plato refers in the *Parmenides*', *In Arist. Phys.* 99.7–9), he nowhere states or implies that Zeno wrote only one book. Thus, Simplicius does not offer evidence either for Zeno's authorship of only one book.

Burkert´s second reason against the attribution of the title in the *Suda* to Zeno seems to be no stronger than the first:

> one might say that, just as Sextus Empiricus divided philosophy into logic, physics, and ethics, and wrote books *πρὸς λογικούς*, *πρὸς φυσικούς*, *πρὸς ἠθικούς* (*Math.* 7–11), so Zeno wrote *πρὸς τοὺς φιλοσόφους*, but this is an indication of content, which became a title only in the *Suda*; it has nothing to do with Pythagoreans.[15]

The title mentioned in the *Suda* is one of four, the other three being: *Ἔριδες* (*Quarrels*), *Ἐξήγησις τῶν Ἐμπεδοκλέους* (*Interpretation of the Poems by Empedocles*), *Περὶ φύσεως* (*On Nature*) (cf. Zeno A2 DK). It seems quite unlikely that all these titles are mere indications of content, even if *On Nature* is a title used by the doxographers for any work dealing with natural philosophy. However, what may be true for a very common title, may still not hold for a title like *Against the Philosophers*: after all, Zeno was seen as a philosopher in later antiquity, and at a later date it must have seemed quite strange to have a philosopher write against the philosophers. This improbability also lends support to the genuineness of the title. Moreover, even if we are ready to grant that this title is a mere indication of content, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that the word 'philosopher' must have been part and parcel of the text whose content is indicated in this phrase.

Yet we can gather further evidence for the Pythagoreans being called and calling themselves 'philosophers'. The rhetor Alcidamas is quoted in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* with the following remark: 'At Thebes, as soon as the leading men became philosophers, the city flourished' (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.23.1398b9). Alcidamas quite probably is referring to the effects of the arrival in Thebes of Philolaus and Lysis, Pythagoreans who had to flee from Italy; Lysis, after all, had the role of tutor to Epaminondas. Here again, we meet with the word 'philosophers' as a designation of people who were Pythagoreans or who came under the influence of Pythagoreanism.

[14] Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1980), 264–5 also credit Zeno with more than one book.

[15] Burkert (n. 7), 285, n. 38

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

V

Now if we take this evidence together, the occurrence of the word *philosophoi* in a title of a work by Zeno, active long before Plato, and its use by Alcidamas, who can hardly reflect an influence of Plato or the Academy, and if we take into account what seems to be the upshot of the story told by Heraclides, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that 'philosopher' was a word used to denote the Pythagoreans. It should be noticed that this use of a generic term to designate a specific group does not turn this term into a proper name *sensu stricto*; what we have in such a case is the usage of a word in an emphatic sense, used in this sense of the group in question. A similar case is the use of 'les philosophes' for the intellectuals in the French Enlightenment.

Hence, given Evenus' Parian background and the probable use of the word 'philosopher' for the Pythagoreans, when Socrates confers the title 'philosopher' on Evenus at *Phaed.* 61c, he seems to refer to his being a Pythagorean. This conclusion can also be confirmed by the context of the *Phaedo* passage itself. For when Socrates, after this exchange with Simmias, is asked by Cebes how one is to understand the seemingly inconsistent claims that, on the one hand, suicide is forbidden and, on the other, the philosopher wants to follow the dying man (cf. 61d3–5), he brings in the name of the Pythagorean Philolaus as an authority on such matters (cf. 61d6–7). In doing so, he renders explicit what was presupposed in his use of the word 'philosopher' for Evenus as implying a willingness to follow the dying, namely that we are dealing with Pythagorean conceptions. Why else should a Pythagorean be brought in as someone from whom Simmias and Cebes might have learned 'about such matters' (*περὶ τῶν τοιούτων* 61d6)? Notice the use of the plural here: Philolaus is someone who may teach us not only about the reasons for the prohibition of suicide, but also about the philosopher's willingness to follow the dying. This in turn implies that Philolaus had something to say about what it means to be a philosopher and, since he could hardly use this term without applying it to himself, that this word was used by the Pythagoreans to refer to themselves in their capacity of adhering to the philosophical creed of their community. Thus, quite apart from the evidence we have found in other authors for the application of the term 'philosopher' to Pythagoreans, the *Phaedo* itself provides evidence to the same effect.

VI

Now if we are meant to read the word 'philosopher' at *Phaed.* 61c as a 'Pythagorean' term, this will have consequences for our understanding of the dialogue as a whole. It has always been acknowledged that Pythagorean ideas have a certain role to play in the *Phaedo*. Yet if even a concept so central to the discussions in this dialogue as that of philosopher and philosophy has to be understood against its Pythagorean pedigree, then we should, in spite of our meagre knowledge of early Pythagoreanism, pay more and serious attention to the Pythagorean elements in this dialogue and take them to be such and not as mere pigments added to Platonic conceptions. After all, Phaedo's report of Socrates' last day and death is delivered to a Pythagorean community, to Echecrates and his friends in Phlius. Moreover, it is Socrates who knows something about the tenets of Philolaus' philosophy, and it is Socrates who later on tells his Athenian listeners about the incorporations of human souls in animal bodies according to the way of life they have led in their lives as human beings, clearly a Pythagorean conception. Hence, these Pythagorean elements should not be attributed to Simmias and Cebes, whose acquaintance with Philolaus is only

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press

alluded to in order to show that Socrates has a better knowledge of Pythagorean philosophy then they. Above all, we should heed the fact that it is Socrates who brings in the (Pythagorean) term 'philosopher', that it is Socrates who is able to develop the connotations of this term and who insists on having lived the life of such a philosopher (cf. 69d).

Yet we should notice as well that this Socrates, so well acquainted with the teachings of Pythagorean philosophy, is also the Athenian dialectician ready to listen to and to discuss the arguments against the immortality of the soul brought forward by his friends from Thebes. A proper understanding of Plato's *Phaedo* may well depend on a proper assessment of the two roles Socrates is made to assume in this dialogue: the role of a Pythagorean *philosophos* as well as the role of someone able and willing to put quite fundamental convictions of the Pythagorean creed to the test of dialectical argument.[16]

Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg THEODOR EBERT
trebert@phil.uni-erlangen.de

[16] I am grateful to Klaus Döring, Oliver Primavesi, Christopher Rowe, Hermann Weidemann, and to an anonymous referee for this journal for criticisms and useful suggestions, and to Michael Beany for deleting mistakes and inelegancies from my English.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/51.2.423 Published online by Cambridge University Press