

**Ἐν Εἰκόσι Σκοπεῖν**  
**Studying in Images:**  
**Plato's *Phaedo* and the Role of Images in Philosophy**

ABSTRACT

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Images play a central role in philosophical understanding in Plato's dialogues. Indeed, Plato's Socrates likens his method of searching for understanding to 'studying in images' (ἐν εἰκόσι σκοπεῖν) (*Phaedo*, 100a2). This dissertation offers an examination of 'studying in images.' In the *Phaedo*, Plato makes great use of images; Socrates, in that dialogue, also suggests (99d4-100a3) that philosophy requires involvement with images. Thus, the *Phaedo* provides an excellent focus to this discussion of Plato on images. Through considering the ways images are used in the *Phaedo*, the understanding of images evident in other works by Plato, and the use of images in understanding Plato's forms, one comes to see the central role of images in philosophy. A focus on images aids in understanding reality; such a focus also helps elucidate difficult sections within the *Phaedo*. Through coming to see the central role images play, one must conclude that philosophical understanding needs images. Philosophy depends upon images.

Chapter 1 looks at images in the *Phaedo*, and attempts to understand the use of images in that dialogue. The complexities of that discussion make an examination of Plato's treatment of images in other dialogues useful—Chapter 2, therefore, focuses on the treatment of images in the *Sophist*, *Cratylus*, *Seventh Letter*, and *Republic*. Chapter 3 explores the role that the image relationship plays in illuminating the relation between forms and particular sensible things. Although this use of images in understanding the relation of particulars and forms seems to invite the so-called 'third man' regress, the regress can be resisted; the image model should be retained. Chapter 4 argues that the image relationship can be applied in helpful ways to the ontology of the *Phaedo*. In particular, an understanding of the image relationship helps elucidate some difficult passages in the dialogue. Finally, Chapter 5 confronts one further difficulty that arises from my view of the role of images in Platonic philosophy: Plato may—especially in the *Republic*—suggest that understanding must leave images behind, a thesis at odds with my own. I answer the objection, defending a continued reliance on images.