

Sophia Stone, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Lynn University

ΜΟΝΆΣ, ODD NUMBERS
AND ΨΥΧΗ IN PLATO'S
PHAEDO

What is the soul?

- ⦿ “...Is [it] always unchanging and constant, or is it different at different times?
- ⦿ Can [it], ever admit any sort of change?
- ⦿ Or [is the soul] uniform and independent, remain unchanging and constant, never admitting any sort of alteration whatever?”
- ⦿ But what about the many [souls]?
- ⦿ What about the many [souls]? What about all the things that are called by the same name as those real beings?
- ⦿ Are *they* constant, or in contrast to those is it too much to say that they are never identical with themselves nor identically related to one another?

Aristotle's *Metaphysics* A6

- ⦿ "...he states that besides sensible things and Forms there exists an intermediate class, the objects of mathematics, which differ from sensible things in being eternal and immutable, and from the Forms in that there are many similar objects of mathematics, where each Form is itself unique." 987b15-18 Trans. H. Tredennick

Euclid's Elements VII

⦿ Def. 2

- Ἄριθμὸς δὲ τὸ ἐκ μονάδων συγκείμενον πλῆθος.
- 'number' is composed of a plurality of units
 - [Number is a limited multitude]

Euclid's Elements VII

⦿ Def. 1

- Μονάς ἔστιν, καθ' ἣν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ἓν λέγεται.
- A unit is that which each of the things is called one.

Euclid's Elements VII

⦿ Def. 6

- Ἄρτιος ἀριθμός ἐστὶν ὁ δίχα διαιρούμενος.
- An even number is [that which can] be divided into two.

Euclid's Elements VII

⦿ Def. 7

- Περισσὸς δὲ ὁ μὴ διαιρούμενος δίχα ἢ ὁ μονάδι διαφέρων ἄρτίου ἀριθμοῦ.
- An odd number is that which cannot be divided into two OR [that which] differs from an even number by a unit.

Analogy

- Just as there is nothing intrinsic that makes a body alive, there is nothing intrinsic to a number—only an even one—that makes it have an equal collection of units.

Analogy

- ⦿ Yet there is a nec. connection with a soul's participation in the Form Life, which makes the soul "alive" just as
- ⦿ There is a nec. connection with a unit's participation in the Form Odd, which makes the unit 'odd'.

Skipped section:

- ◎ Plato avails himself two ontological distinctions of arithmos:
 - Collections of sensible particulars
 - Uses the neutered plural
 - Collections of units
 - Uses the feminine singular

Final Proof

1. When objects lose or gain characteristics, they undergo change (103b2-31)
2. When objects lose their essential characteristics, they cease to exist (103e2-103e5)
3. There are some objects that never lose their essential characteristics (103e6-104b1)

Final Proof

4. ἡ τριὰς and ἡ ψυχὴ never lose their essential characteristics, 'odd' and 'life' (104a3-8, 105d2-3)
5. What never loses its essential characteristic will always exclude that essential characteristic's opposite from coming into being in that object. (104c7-d3)
6. The opposite of odd is even, opposite of life is death (104d12-14, 105d6-9)

Final Proof

7. Whatever never loses its essential characteristic is everlasting (106a1)
8. Whatever loses its essential characteristic is not everlasting (106b3-c8)
9. Soul never loses its essential characteristic life (105d3-34)
10. Whenever a living body loses its soul, it dies (106e3)

Final Proof

11. Whatever has as its essential characteristic, life, is immortal (premises 1-6)
12. Whatever is immortal is everlasting (premises 7-11)

Therefore: A living body is neither immortal nor everlasting (106c5). Soul, itself by itself, is immortal and everlasting (106e9-107a)

An ontological distinction

- ⦿ Τὰ τρία [Socrates]
- ⦿ ἡ τριάς [Soul of Socrates]