

# **Note on the Name "Philebus" As Used in Plato's "Philebus"**

**Post by "Elli" of October 24, 2019 at 5:12 PM**

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The text is basically Burnet's, but the readings of the manuscripts are taken from Diès's edition. All serious departures from Burnet are noted. Square brackets are used in the translation for either an alternative meaning or what has not been supplied in the Greek but has to be understood.

1. It is not known who either Protarchus or Philebus was. Philebus is a rare name in Greek at any period, and it does not occur at all in Classical Greek. It means "Lover of Youth," and Socrates alludes to this at 16B, 46B, and 53D.

2. The expression *kata noun* is literally "according to mind" or "according to reason," but, idiomatically, if it is coupled with the dative personal pronoun as here, it hardly differs from "according to your (my, his) inclination." In the *Symposium*, e.g., even though Aristophanes has denied any connection whatsoever between eros and mind, he grants at the end, in light of the improbability or rather impossibility of meeting up with one's true other half, that the second best is to get a beloved *kata noun* (193c5-8): there is no way that *kata noun* can be translated without falsifying Aristophanes' speech.

3. Of these three terms for pleasure, the infinitive *khairain* (to enjoy) is common in Plato (122 times all told and twenty-five times in the *Philebus*). *Hēdonē* (pleasure) occurs 244 times in the *Philebus*, but the corresponding verb *hēdesthai* is relatively rare (fifteen times in the *Philebus*, twenty-eight times elsewhere). *Terpsis* (delight) is the rarest, twice in the *Philebus* (here and at 19C) and twice elsewhere (*Phaedrus* 239A and *Laws* 669D); the corresponding verb *terpein* occurs six times in Plato and once in the *Philebus* (47B). We know from Aristotle *Topics* 112b21-26 that Prodicus tried to distinguish between joy (*khara*), delight (*terpsis*), and cheerfulness (*eu phrosunē*); and, in the *Protagoras* 337C, Prodicus distinguishes *hēdesthai* from *eu phraīnesthai* by assigning to the former corporeal plea-

