Plato’s *Charmides*

This book argues that Plato’s *Charmides* presents a unitary but incomplete argument intended to lead its readers to positive philosophical insights. Through careful, contextually sensitive analysis of Plato’s arguments concerning the virtue of sophrosyne, Thomas M. Tuozzo brings the dialogue’s lines of inquiry together, carrying Plato’s argument forward to a substantive conclusion.

This innovative reading of *Charmides* reverses misconceptions about the dialogue that stemmed from an impoverished conception of Socratic elenchus and unquestioned acceptance of ancient historiography’s demonization of Critias. Tuozzo views Socratic argument as a tool intended to move its addressee to positive philosophical insights. He also argues, on the basis of recent historical research, a review of the fragments of Critias’ oeuvre, and Plato’s use of Critias in other dialogues, that Plato had a nuanced, generally positive view of Critias. Throughout, readers are alerted to textual difficulties whose proper resolution is crucial to understanding Plato’s often abstract arguments.

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Plato’s *Charmides*

*Positive Elenchus in a “Socratic” Dialogue*

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To Rodd

... ἀλλὰ φανὸν βίον διάγοντας εὐθαμομεῖν μετ’ ἄλληλων πορευομένους, καὶ ὀμοπτέρους ἐρωτὸς χάριν, ὅταν γένωνται, γενέσθαι.
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