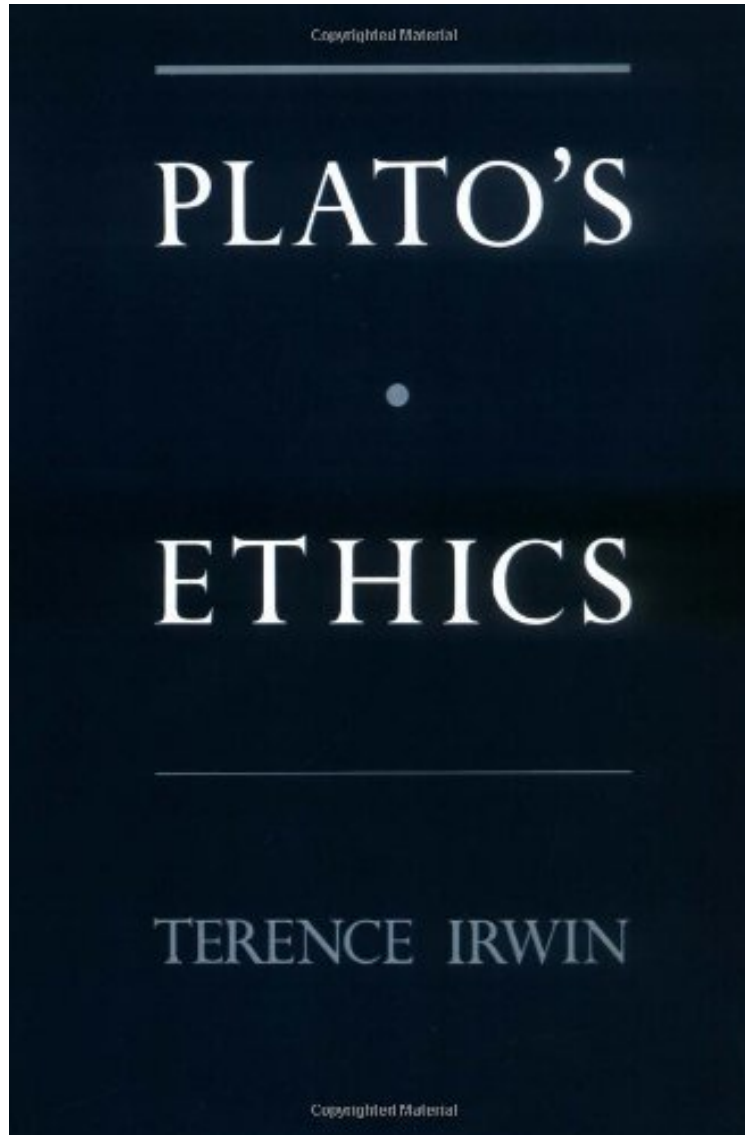


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## Plato's Ethics

*Terence Irwin*

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**Terence Irwin : Plato's Ethics** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Plato's Ethics:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Work ndash; Can be a Difficult Read at TimesBy ReaderOriginally published in 1995 Terence Irwin's 'Plato's Ethics' is as the title suggests an analysis of Platonic ethics; a sequel to his earlier text 'Plato's Moral Theory' (1977). A long time professor at Cornell and Oxford, Irwin is a leading contemporary classical scholar. How does Plato think one ought to live? This simple yet sublime question has exercised philosophers for nearly two and a half millennia. And, while at

face value this question can seem straight forward, it is, as those who have sought to answer it know, a complex question. A question that requires consideration of a range of related issues; what is the nature of Plato's work, how does one distinguish between Socrates and Plato, what is the relationship between Plato's ethics and his metaphysics and epistemology, etc.? I offer a few thoughts for potential readers/purchasers. First and foremost, this is an impressive contribution to Platonic scholarship; an erudite and comprehensive analysis of a vast amount of textual, linguistic and historic material. The author raises and responds to numerous interpretive nuances that would be overlooked by all but the most diligent scholars. Second, Irwin is a sober and measured commentator. He follows the standard evolutionary view of the Platonic corpus. A schema wherein Plato's thought/writing moves from an initial heavily Socratic position (e.g. Charmides, Laches, Euthyphro), to a refinement and critical assessment of these Socratic views (e.g. Gorgias and Meno) to an eventual articulation and refinement of his own views (e.g. Republic, Philebus, Laws). Irwin also takes Aristotle's seriously as a guide to understanding Plato. While there are periodic attempts to minimize the importance of Aristotle, Irwin argues that his ancient testimony should be taken seriously in the absence of compelling argumentation or evidence to the contrary. Third, with regard to drawbacks, though an excellent scholar Irwin's writing is labored at times. While it is worth the effort his diction is often awkward and can be challenging. Fourth and related to the previous point, a subsequent edition of the text would likely benefit from more structure, e.g. an explicit initial outline and more interim summaries. Overall, Plato's Ethics is a noteworthy contribution to Platonic scholarship by one of today's leading classical scholars; a text that warrants engagement by anyone seriously considering Platonic or Socratic ethics. While not an unduly technical work it is best suited for readers well acquainted with the Platonic corpus and relevant secondary literature. Readers interested in the subject of Platonic ethics may also enjoy Socrates, Plato and Their Tradition by Gregory Vlastos, and Plato's Ethics: An Overview by Dorothea Frede, available at the on-line Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Peter Albert McKay Fascinating! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By sue 234 The receiver loved it

This exceptional book examines and explains Plato's answer to the normative question, "How ought we to live?" It discusses Plato's conception of the virtues; his views about the connection between the virtues and happiness; and the account of reason, desire, and motivation that underlies his arguments about the virtues. Plato's answer to the epistemological question, "How can we know how we ought to live?" is also discussed. His views on knowledge, belief, and inquiry, and his theory of Forms, are examined, insofar as they are relevant to his ethical view. Terence Irwin traces the development of Plato's moral philosophy, from the Socratic dialogues to its fullest exposition in the Republic. Plato's Ethics discusses Plato's reasons for abandoning or modifying some aspects of Socratic ethics, and for believing that he preserves Socrates' essential insights. A brief and selective discussion of the Statesmen, Philebus, and Laws is included. Replacing Irwin's earlier Plato's Moral Theory (Oxford, 1977), this book gives a clearer and fuller account of the main questions and discusses some recent controversies in the interpretation of Plato's ethics. It does not presuppose any knowledge of Greek or any extensive knowledge of Plato.