I want to begin my contribution from consideration of the title of Professor Meinwald’s paper: *What do we think we are doing? ‘We’ here are participants in an inquiry into Plato’s philosophy, however we conceive his philosophical contribution.*

I think what we are doing is: Philosophy.

Let me tweak this way of putting my answer: what the study of Plato is ultimately for is philosophical activity. And while I am cautious in averring that Plato strongly believes (*diissuxrizesthai*) anything, I think he strongly believes that philosophizing is the best thing one can do.

Like Meinwald, I want to offer some reflections on the prompt that brings us together for this workshop—*What in your opinion are the appropriate or correct principles for the study of Plato’s philosophy?* In thinking about how to respond to this question I wonder whether different principles apply to the study of other historical figures. Maybe different principles apply to the study of the philosophy of Socrates, who wrote nothing, or the philosophy of Chrysippus, no complete work of whose is transmitted to us. At another extreme, as it were, different principles might apply to the study of a philosopher who leaves behind, in addition to a large corpus of published professional writing, volumes of letters, unpublished works of varying degrees of completeness, notes, drafts and so on. We could lay her esoteric against her exoteric works; see how works evolved from notes, to drafts, to treatise, etc. Add to all the above a doxographical tradition, understood here to include reports from others about what a figure wrote or said or meant. Contrast these cases with the study of a (fictional?) philosopher whose single treatise we might find in a monastery about whom no one else comments in the historical record. And then we might wonder whether it makes any difference whether the philosopher we are studying is dead. Truth is,