

“A Unified Notion of Cause,” *Rhizomata: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science* (2018): 65-86.

[Abstract] Contrary to their predecessors, the Stoics put forward a unified notion of cause: a cause is a bodily because-of-which ($\delta\iota' \acute{\omicron}$). Against the backdrop of Plato's and Aristotle's influential views, this is an original proposal. It involves the rejection of an earlier trend, according to which causes and explanations are closely associated. It also involves a pulling apart of causes and principles. And it comes with a charge against Plato and Aristotle, namely that they introduce a swarm of causes, a *turba causarum*.

The Stoics, I argue, develop three Socratic premises. (1) A cause is a maker. (2) Causes and effects must differ in kind. (3) Reason operates as a cause in the universe in that it operates, at the same time and qua a person's reason, as the cause of human actions. In effect, the Stoics advance a theory of the movements in the world—human and otherwise—that has an extraordinary degree of unity.

With this reconstruction, I turn against interpretations that follow the Aristotle commentator Alexander, who claims that it is the Stoics who end up with a swarm of causes. I also reject the view that Sextus Empiricus presents “the” Stoic theory of causation when he says that “every cause is a body which becomes the cause to a body of something incorporeal” (M 9.211–2). Commentators have failed to explore the difference between the causality of the active principle, which involves only one cause, and the causality of compounds, which involves several causes. The unified notion of cause as a bodily because-of-which is basic, I submit, because it accommodates both.