

**SOCRATES OF ATHENS:  
EUTHYPHRO,  
SOCRATES' DEFENSE,  
CRITO,  
and the DEATH SCENE from  
PHAEDO**

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**PLATO**

Translated by Cathal Woods and Ryan Pack



2010, 2007

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## Introduction and Brief Bibliography

*Euthyphro*, *Socrates' Defense*, *Crito* and the death scene from *Phaedo* are among the most widely read of Plato's works. Their popularity is due to the character of Socrates, who in the course of these works is represented as being on the verge of indictment, as defending himself at trial, as considering escape from prison, and as willingly drinking the hemlock which kills him. The reason for this train of events, as Plato describes it, is Socrates' uncompromising search for wisdom and his determination to lead his life by the principles which seem best to him upon examination.

The trial and death of the historical Socrates took place in 399 BCE, when Socrates was seventy years old. (Plato was born about 427 and lived until 347.) There is much dispute as to the relationship between the Socrates depicted in these works and the historical Socrates. On this matter, the reader is encouraged to consult Debra Nails' entry on *Socrates* in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/socrates/> and consult the bibliography there for further references.

The brevity of the first three works also add to their appeal. *Phaedo* is a much longer and more complex work, and the death scene, which appears at its end, is added here to complete the narrative and round out Plato's portrait of Socrates. Due to the cohesion of their dramatic settings, the three short works are typically presented in the order *Euthyphro*, *Socrates' Defense*, *Crito*. However, while many common themes recur in each of the three, the topics discussed in them are quite different and there is no need to read them in that order. Indeed, the *Euthyphro*, which appears first in dramatic order, is the most difficult of the three and newcomers might well read it last.

The common themes include Socrates' emphasis on virtue and his search for guidance in it by an intellectual method called *elenchus*, which in turn is related to his search for definitions. These themes are to the fore in *Socrates' Defense*, which presents Socrates at trial. We see Socrates working with arguments, drawing contradictions from his interlocutor and deploying analogies. In *Crito* the argumentation is more deductive, proceeding from an agreed-upon first principle to subsequent theorems. For all of these matters, Paul Woodruff's entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia provides a good starting point. See <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-ethics-shorter/> .

## Introduction

*Crito* concerns the relationship between city and individual. The work depicts Socrates in prison, deliberating with his visitor Crito as to whether or not he should flee the jail and become an exile. Socrates disagrees with the verdict in his case, but nonetheless convinces Crito that he (Socrates) should remain in prison and be executed. While on many occasions in *Socrates' Defense* Socrates mocks his listeners and Meletos whom he cross-examines, in the *Crito* he appears willing to submit himself to the laws of Athens. This seemingly contradictory behavior is considered in Rosslyn Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied* (Rowman and Littlefield).

*Euthyphro* concerns itself with piety and the relationship between gods and humans. The critique offered by Socrates of Euthyphro's claim that pious things are pious because they are loved by the gods has become known as "The Euthyphro Dilemma" as it poses a fundamental question about the relation between piety (and goodness generally) and the divine. For a discussion, see the entries on Divine Command Theory at <http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/christian-ethics/divine-command-theory/the-euthyphro-dilemma/> .

The search for an understanding of the common nature of all pious things points to a singular kind, or type. This aspect of *Euthyphro* has been understood as anticipating Plato's work on forms. For more on Plato's wrestling with this problem, see R. E. Allan, *Plato's 'Euthyphro' and the Earlier Theory of Forms*, (Routledge), and R. M. Dancy, *Plato's Introduction of Forms*, (Cambridge University Press).

Useful collections of essays include *The Philosophy of Socrates*, edited by Gregory Vlastos, (University of Notre Dame Press) and *A Companion to Socrates*, edited by Ahbel-Rappe and Kamtekar (Blackwell).

## Notes on the Translation [2010]

The aim of the current collection is to provide modern English translations of this group of texts and make them available, singly and together, in digital format, freely (though with certain restrictions as outlined above), on the internet.

The translation aims foremost at accuracy and completeness, including the liveliness of the dialogue form. We have striven to preserve the natural flow of the speech. This both helps and, in a way, hurts the readability of the translation. After all, these texts portray people speaking and speaking to one another and humans are not always the most eloquent of speakers. This is recreated by Plato. *Socrates' Defense* is almost entirely comprised of Socrates speaking at length to his judges and so he sometimes finds himself, because he goes on for quite a while, and keeps inserting qualifications, and then loses his way, he moves to a new grammatical construction. Similarly, characters sometimes pile one clause on top of another. Usually these run-on sentences are easy to follow and the effect is often an increasing intensity, but once or twice in *Socrates' Defense* Socrates seems rather to be finding his way into an idea and is less than eloquent. Whether the character is in control or in difficulties, we have attempted to preserve his pattern of speech.

The general upshot of these considerations is that these translations are best taken at speaking speed.

The translations were made from the 1995 Oxford Classical Text of Duke, Hicken, Nicoll, Robinson and Strachan. (However, we prefer ἐρωῶντα τῷ ἐρωμένῳ at *Euthyphro* 14b4, retain οὐ at *Socrates' Defense* 27e7, and give ἀληθῆ λέγεις to *Crito* at *Crito* 48b1.)

The commentaries of Adam ([Euthyphro](#), [Apology](#), [Crito](#)) and Burnet (in *Plato: Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, Crito* (Clarendon Press)) proved invaluable throughout. In addition, for *Euthyphro*, some useful suggestions were found in [Graves](#), [Heidel](#), and [Wells](#); for *Socrates' Defense*, [Flagg](#), and Helm's *Plato: Apology* (Bolchazy-Carducci); for *Crito*, [Cron/Dyer](#), [Flagg](#), [Tyler \(revised edition\)](#), and [Wagner](#); and for *Phaedo*, [Stanford](#).

*Notes on the Translation*

Gratitude is expressed to Virginia Wesleyan College for support of both Woods and Pack during the original preparation of these translations in 2007.

A star (\*) in the text indicates a note. Notes can be found at the end of each dialogue.

Readers are encouraged to send corrections and comments. This is best done by e-mail, to cathalwoods at gmail dot com .

Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA. August 2010

**EUTHYPHRO**

ΕΥΘΥΦΡΩΝ

**PLATO**

ΠΛΑΤΩΝ

2a Euthyphro (Euth): What new thing has happened, Socrates, that you have abandoned your stomping grounds in the Lyceum\* and are now spending your time here, around the porch of the king\*? For surely you too are not involved in some suit before the king\*, as I am.

Socrates (So): No, Euthyphro, the Athenians don't just call it a suit, but a public indictment.\*

b Euth: What do you mean? Someone has indicted you, I suppose, since I certainly wouldn't accuse you of the opposite, you indicting someone else.

So: Certainly not.

Euth: So someone else is indicting you?

So: Absolutely.

Euth: Who is this person?

So: I don't know the man very well myself, Euthyphro; I think he is a young and unknown person. Anyway, I believe they call him Meletos. He is from the Pitthean deme\*, if you know of a Meletos from Pitthos with straight hair, not much of a beard, and with a slightly hooked nose.

c Euth: I don't know him, Socrates. But what charge has he indicted you on?

So: On what charge? It's no minor charge, I think, as it's no small thing for a young man to be knowledgeable about so important an issue. For he, he says, knows how the young are corrupted and who their corruptors are. He's probably somebody wise, and having seen how I in my ignorance corrupt the people of his generation, he is coming to tattle on me to the city, as though it were his mother. And he alone seems to me to be starting out in politics correctly, because the correct way is to first gives one's attention to how our young people will be the best possible, just as a good farmer probably cares first for his young plants, and after this to the others as well. And so Meletos too is presumably first weeding out we who corrupt the sprouting young people, as he puts it. Then after this it's clear that, having turned his attention to the older people, he will become a source of many great goods for the city, as is likely to happen to him when he starts off in this way.

d Euth: I wish it were so, Socrates, but I'm terrified that the opposite might happen. Because it seems to me that by trying to wrong you he is starting out by recklessly harming the hearth of the city. Do tell me, just what does he say you're doing to corrupt the young?

b So: Terrible things, you remarkable man, at least to hear him describe them, since he says I am a maker of gods, and because I make novel gods and do not acknowledge the old ones, he indicts me for their sake, he says.

c Euth: I understand, Socrates. It's because you say that divine sign\* comes to you occasionally. He has lodged this indictment because of your innovative religious ideas. And he is therefore coming to the court intending to slander you, knowing that such things are easily misrepresented to the many. Indeed in my case too, whenever I say something in the assembly about religious matters, foretelling the future for them, they ridicule me as a madman, and yet I said nothing that was not true in what I foretold. Even so, they envy all of us who are like this.



We should think nothing of them but fight them on their own ground.

d So: But my dear Euthyphro, being ridiculed is probably no big deal; indeed it seems to me that it doesn't matter much to the Athenians if they think someone is clever, provided that he is not capable of teaching his wisdom. But they become outraged with anyone they suspect of also trying to shape others in some way, whether because they are envious, as you claim, or for some other reason.

Euth: Which is why I have no great desire to have it put to the test, how they feel about me.

e So: It's probably because you seem to rarely make yourself available and appear unwilling to teach your wisdom, whereas I fear that, because of my love of people, I strike them as someone who is bursting to talk to everybody, and not just without demanding payment, but would even be glad to compensate anyone who was willing to listen to me. So as I was saying, if they intend to laugh at me, as you said happened to you, there would be nothing unpleasant about spending time in court playing around and laughing. But if they are going to be serious, in that case it's unclear how things will turn out, except to you prophets.

Euth: Well, it will probably be nothing, Socrates, and you will fight your case satisfactorily, as I think I will fight mine, too.

So: Yes, what exactly is your suit, Euthyphro? Are you defending or prosecuting it?

Euth: I am prosecuting.

So: Whom?

4a Euth: A man whom by pursuing I will again appear crazy.

So: But why? You're pursuing someone who flies?

Euth: He is long way from flying, since he happens to be well advanced in years.

So: Who is he?

Euth: My own father.

So: Your father, you fantastic fellow?!

Euth: Absolutely.

So: But what is the charge, and what are the circumstances?

Euth: Murder, Socrates.

b So: Heracles! I think most people wouldn't know how to act properly in such a case, since I don't think that just anyone could take care of this correctly, but only someone, I suspect, who has progressed a long way in wisdom.

Euth: By Zeus, a long way indeed, Socrates.

So: Surely the person killed by your father is one of your relatives? It must be, since you would not prosecute him for murder on behalf of a stranger?

c Euth: It's ridiculous, Socrates, that you think that it makes a difference whether the man killed is a stranger or a relative, and don't think it is necessary to watch only for this: whether the killer killed legally or not, and if it was legal, to let him go, and if not, to prosecute him, if the killer, that is, shares one's hearth and eats at the same table. Because the pollution is the same, if you are aware that you share the guilt and do not both purify yourself and prosecute him in law.

d The victim, as a matter of fact, was one of my laborers, and when we were farming in Naxos he was employed by us there. When he was drunk and had been provoked by another one of our household, he slit this man's throat. So my father bound his feet and hands, threw him into some ditch and sent a man here to inquire of the interpreter of religious law about what should be done. But during that time he paid no attention to the bound man and neglected him as a murderer and thought nothing of it if he died as well, which is in fact what happened, since he died of hunger and cold and confinement before the messenger returned from the interpreter.

e That's why both my father and my other relatives are angry, because I am prosecuting my father on behalf of a murderer, when he didn't kill him, they say, or if he did in fact kill him, well, since the man he killed was a murderer, one should not be concerned about such people—because, they say, it's unholy for a son to prosecute his father for murder, not really knowing, Socrates, how the religious law stands with respect to holiness and unholiness.

So: But before Zeus, Euthyphro, do you think you have such accurate knowledge about how the religious laws stand, about both piety and impiety, that, with these things having taken place in the way you describe, you are not afraid that by prosecuting your father you in turn might be committing an impiety?

5a Euth: I would be of no use, Socrates, and neither would Euthyphro be better than the majority of men, if I did not have accurate knowledge of all such matters.

b So: In that case it would be excellent for me to become a student of yours, marvelous Euthyphro, and prior to this dispute with Meletos I will challenge him in this very way, saying that while even in the past I used to make knowledge of religious law my top priority, now, because he says I err by judging rashly and innovating with respect to the religious laws, I have also become your student. And I would say, "If you agree, Meletos, that Euthyphro is wise in such matters, then believe that I too worship properly and do not charge me. If not, see about bringing a charge against him, my teacher, rather than me, since he corrupts the elderly—me and his father—by teaching me and by rebuking and chastising him." And if he is not convinced by me and doesn't withdraw the charge or indict *you* in my place, shouldn't I say the exact same thing in court as I said in challenging him?

c Euth: Yes by Zeus, Socrates. If he tried to indict me I think I would uncover in what way he is unsound and we would find that the discussion in court would be about him, long before it was about me.

d So: And indeed, my dear Euthyphro, I recognize this and want to become a student of yours, seeing how practically everyone else and this person Meletos pretends not to notice you, but he sees through me so clearly and easily that he indicts me for impiety. So now, by Zeus, explain to me what you were just now affirming to know clearly: what sort of thing do you say holiness is, and unholiness, with respect to both murder and everything else? Or isn't the pious the same as itself in every action, and the impious in turn is the complete opposite of the pious but the same

as itself, and everything that in fact turns out to be impious has a single form with respect to its impiety?

Euth: It certainly is, Socrates.

So: So tell me, what do you say the pious is, and what is the impious?

Euth: Well now, I claim that the pious is what I am doing now, prosecuting someone who is guilty of wrongdoing, either of murder or temple robbery or anything else of the sort, whether it happens to be one's  
 e father or mother or whoever else, and the impious is failing to prosecute. For observe, Socrates, how great a proof I will give you that this is how the law stands, one I have already given to others as well, which shows such actions to be correct—not yielding to impious people, that is, no matter  
 6a who they happen to be. Because these very people also happen to worship Zeus as the best and most just of the gods, and agree that he put his own father in bonds because he unjustly swallowed his sons, and the father too castrated his own father for other similar reasons.\* Yet they are sore at me because I am prosecuting my father for his injustice. And so they contradict themselves concerning the gods and me.

So: Maybe this, Euthyphro, is why I am being prosecuted for this crime, that whenever someone says such things about the gods, for some reason I find them hard to accept? On account of which, I suppose, someone will claim I misbehave. So now if you, with your expertise in  
 b such matters, also share these beliefs with us, it's surely necessary, I suppose, that we too must agree, for indeed what *can* we say, we who admit openly that we know nothing about these matters? But before the god of friendship tell me, do you truly believe these things happened like this?

Euth: These and still more amazing things, Socrates, that the many are unaware of.

So: And do you believe there is really a war amongst the gods, with terrible feuds, even, and battles and many other such things, such as are  
 c recounted by the poets and the holy artists, and that have been elaborately decorated for us on sacred objects, too, and especially the robe covered with such designs which is brought up to the acropolis at the great Panathenaea?\* Are we to say that these things are true, Euthyphro?

Euth: Not only these, Socrates, but as I said just now, I could describe many other things about the divine laws to you in addition, if you want, which I am sure you will be astounded to hear.

So: I wouldn't be surprised. But you can describe these to me at  
 d leisure some other time. For the time being, however, try to describe more clearly what I asked you just now, since previously, my friend, you did not teach me well enough when I asked what the pious was but you told me that what you're doing is something pious, prosecuting your father for murder.

Euth: And I spoke the truth, too, Socrates.

So: Perhaps. But in fact, Euthyphro, you say there are many other pious things.

Euth: Indeed there are.

So: So do you remember that I did not request this from you, to

e teach me one or two of the many pious things, but to teach me the form itself by which everything pious is pious? For you said that it's by one form that impious things are somehow impious and pious things pious. Or don't you remember?

Euth: I certainly do.

So: So then tell me whatever this form itself is, so that, by looking at it and using it as a paradigm, I can declare anything of that kind that you or anyone else might do to be pious, and if it is not of that kind, that it is not.

Euth: Well if that's what you want, Socrates, that's what I'll tell you.

So: That's exactly what I want.

7a Euth: Well, what is beloved by the gods is pious, and what is not beloved by them is impious.

So: Excellent, Euthyphro! With this you have answered in the way I was looking for you to answer. Whether truly or not, that I don't quite know, but it's clear that you will spell out how what you say is true.

Euth: Absolutely.

So: Come then, let's look at what we said. An action or a person that is beloved by the gods is pious, while an action or person that is despised by the gods is impious. It is not the same, but the complete opposite, the pious to the impious. Isn't that so?

Euth: Indeed it is.

So: And this seems right?

b Euth: I think so, Socrates.

So: But wasn't it also said that that gods are at odds with each other and disagree with one another and that there are feuds among them?

Euth: Yes, it was.

c So: Disagreement about *what* is the cause of the hatred and anger, my good man? Let's look at it this way. If we disagree, you and I, about quantity, over which of two groups is greater, would our disagreement over this make us enemies and angry with each other, or wouldn't we quickly resolve the issue by resorting to counting?

Euth: Certainly.

So: And again if we disagreed about bigger and smaller, we would quickly put an end to the disagreement by resorting to measurement?

Euth: That's right.

So: And we would weigh with scales, I presume, to reach a decision about heavier and lighter?

Euth: How else?

d So: Then what topic, exactly, would divide us and what decision would we be unable to reach such that we would be enemies and angry with one another? Perhaps you don't have an answer at hand, so see while I'm talking whether it's the just and the unjust, and the noble and shameful, and the good and the bad. Isn't it these things that divide us and about which we're not able to come to a satisfactory decision and so become enemies of one another, whenever that happens, whether it's me and you, or any other men?

Euth: It is indeed this disagreement, Socrates, and over these things.

So: And what about the gods, Euthyphro? If they indeed disagree

over something, don't they disagree over these very things?

Euth: It's undoubtedly necessary.

e So: Then some of the gods think different things to be just, according to you, worthy Euthyphro, and noble and shameful and good and bad, since they surely wouldn't be at odds with one another unless they were disagreeing about these things. Right?

Euth: You're right.

So: And so what each group thinks is noble and good and just, they also love these thing, and they hate the things that are the opposites of these?

Euth: Certainly.

8a So: Then according to you some of them think that these things are just, while others think they are unjust, the things that, because there's a dispute, they are at odds about and are at war over. Isn't this so?

Euth: It is.

So: The same things, it seems, are both hated by the gods and loved, and so would be both despised and beloved by them?

Euth: It seems so.

So: And the same things would be both pious and impious, Euthyphro, according to this argument?

Euth: I'm afraid so.

b So: So you haven't answered what I was asking, you remarkable man. Because I didn't ask you for what is both pious and impious at once, and as it appears, both beloved and despised by the gods. As a result, Euthyphro, it wouldn't be surprising if in doing what you're doing now—punishing your father—you were doing something beloved by Zeus but despised by Kronos and Ouranos, and while it is dear to Hephaistos, it is despised by Hera, and if any other god disagrees with another on the subject, your action will also appear the same way to them.

Euth: But I believe, Socrates, that on this matter at least none of the gods will disagree with any other, that any man who has killed another person unjustly need not pay the penalty.

c So: What's that? Have you never heard any *man* arguing that someone who killed unjustly or did something else unjustly should not pay the penalty?

Euth: There's no end to these arguments, both outside and inside the courts, since people commit so many injustices and do and say anything to escape the punishment.

So: Do they actually agree that they are guilty, Euthyphro, and despite agreeing they nonetheless say that they shouldn't pay the penalty?

Euth: They don't agree on that at all.

d So: So they don't do or say *everything*, since, I think, they don't dare to make this claim nor do they argue that if they in fact are guilty they should *not* pay the penalty, but I think they claim that they're not guilty. Right?

Euth: That's true.

So: So they don't argue, at least, that the guilty person shouldn't pay the penalty, but perhaps they argue about who the guilty party is and what he did and when.

Euth: That's true.

So: Doesn't the very same thing happen to the gods, too, if indeed, as you said, they are at odds about just and unjust things, some saying that a god commits an injustice against another one, while others deny it? But absolutely no one at all, you remarkable man, either god or human, dares to say that the guilty person need not pay the penalty.

Euth: Yes. What you say is true, Socrates, for the most part.

So: But I think that those who quarrel, Euthyphro, both men and gods, if the gods actually quarrel, argue over the particulars of what was done. Differing over a certain action, some say that it was done justly, others that it was done unjustly. Isn't that so?

Euth: Certainly.

9a So: Come now, my dear Euthyphro. So that I can become wiser, teach me too what evidence you have that all gods think the man was killed unjustly, the one who committed murder while he was working for you, and was bound by the master of the man he killed, and died from his bonds before the servant could learn from the interpreters what ought to be done in his case, and is the sort of person on whose behalf it is proper for a son to prosecute his father and make an allegation of murder. Come, try to give me a clear indication of how in this case all gods believe beyond doubt that this action is proper. If you could point this out to me satisfactorily I would never stop praising you for your wisdom.

Euth: But this is probably quite a task, Socrates, though I could explain it to you very clearly, even so.

So: I understand. It's because you think I'm a slower learner than the judges, since you could make it clear to *them* in what way these actions are unjust and how the gods all hate such things.

Euth: Very clear indeed, Socrates, if only they would listen to me when I talk.

c So: Of course they'll listen, so long as they think you speak well. But while you were speaking the following occurred to me: I'm thinking to myself, "Even if Euthyphro convincingly shows me that every god thinks this kind of death is unjust, what more will I have learned from Euthyphro about what the pious and the impious are? Because while this particular deed might be despised by the gods, as is likely, it was already apparent, just a moment ago, that the pious and impious aren't defined this way, since we saw that what is despised by the gods is also beloved by them." So I acquit you of this, Euthyphro. If you want, let us allow that all gods think this is unjust and that all of them despise it. But this current correction to the definition—that what all the gods despise is impious while what they love is pious, and what some love and some hate is neither or both—do you want us to now define the pious and the impious in this way?

Euth: Well, what is stopping us, Socrates?

So: For my part nothing, Euthyphro, but see whether you will teach me what you promised as easily as possible by adopting this definition.

e Euth: I for my part affirm the claim that the pious is what all the gods love, and the opposite, what all gods hate, is impious.

So: Let's see again, Euthyphro, whether it's well stated. Or will we

be content to simply accept our own definition or the definition of others, agreeing that it is right just because somebody says it is. Or must we examine what the speaker is saying?

Euth: We must examine it. But I'm quite confident that what we have now is well put.

10a So: We'll soon know better, my good man. Think about this: Is the pious loved by the gods because it's pious, or it is pious because it is loved?

Euth: I don't know what you mean, Socrates.

So: I'll try to express myself more clearly. We speak of something being carried and of carrying, and being led and leading, and being seen and seeing, and so you understand that all of these are different from one another and in why way they are different?

Euth: I think I understand.

So: So there's a thing loved and different from this there's the thing that loves?

Euth: How could there not be?

b So: Then tell me whether what is carried is a carried thing because it is carried, or because of something else?

Euth: No, it's because of this.

So: And also what is led because it is led, and what is seen because it is seen?

Euth: Absolutely.

c So: So it is not that, because it is something seen, it is seen, but the opposite, that because it is seen it is something seen. And it is not because it is something led that it is led, but because it is led it is something led. And it is not because it is something carried that it is carried, but because it is carried, it is something carried. Is it becoming clear what I'm trying to say, Euthyphro? I mean this: that if something becomes or is affected by something, it's not because it is a thing coming to be that it comes to be, but because it comes to be it is a thing coming into being. Nor is it affected by something because it is a thing that is affected, but because it is affected, it is a thing that is being affected. Or don't you agree?

Euth: I do

So: And is a loved thing either a thing that comes to be, or is affected, by some thing?

Euth: Certainly.

So: And does the same apply to this as the previous ones: it is not because it is a loved thing that it is loved by those who love it, but it is a loved thing because it is loved?

Euth: Necessarily.

d So: So what do we say about the pious, Euthyphro? Precisely that is it loved by all the gods, according to your statement?

Euth: Yes.

So: Is it because of this that it is pious, or because of something else?

Euth: No, it's because of this.

So: Isn't it because it is pious that it is loved, and it's not because it is loved that it is pious?

Euth: It seems so.

So: It must be that it's because it is loved by the gods that it is a loved thing and what is beloved by the gods is beloved?

Euth: How could it not?

So: So the beloved is not pious, Euthyphro, nor is the pious beloved by the gods, as you claim, but the one is different from the other.

e Euth: How so, Socrates?

So: Because we agree that the pious is loved because of this, that is, because it's pious, and we don't agree that it is pious because it is loved. Right?

Euth: Yes.

So: The beloved, on the other hand, because it is loved by gods, is beloved due to this very act of being loved, and it is not because it is beloved that it is being loved?

Euth: That's true.

11a So: But if the beloved and the pious were in fact the same, my dear Euthyphro, then, if the pious were loved because of being the pious, then the beloved would be loved because of being the beloved, and again, if the beloved was beloved because of being loved by gods, the pious would also be pious by being loved. But as it is, you see that the two are opposites and are completely different from one another, since the one is lovable because it is loved, while the other is loved because it is lovable.

b So I'm afraid, Euthyphro, that when you were asked what in the world the pious is, you did not want to reveal its nature to me, but wanted to tell me some one of its qualities—that the pious has this quality: it is loved by all the gods—but as for what it *is*, you did not say at all. So if I am dear to you, don't keep me in the dark but tell me again from the beginning what in the world the pious is. And we won't differ over whether it is loved by the gods or whatever else happens to it, but tell me without delay, what is the pious, and the impious?

Euth: But Socrates I have no way of telling you what I'm thinking, because somehow whatever I put forward for us always wanders off and doesn't want to stay where we put it.

c So: The things you say, Euthyphro, seem to belong to my ancestor Daidalos.\* And if I were saying them and putting them forward, perhaps you would be joking about how my works made of words run away even on me, on account of my relationship to him, and don't want to stay wherever a person might put them. But at present these propositions are yours, and so we have to find some other joke, since they don't want to stay put for you, as even you yourself admit.

d Euth: It seems to me that pretty much the same joke applies to what was said, Socrates, since I am not the inspiration for their wandering off and their refusal to stay in the same place. Rather, it seems to me that you are Daidalos, since they would stay in place just fine for me, at least.

e So: Then I'm afraid, my friend, that I've become more skilled than the man himself in the craft, to the extent that while he could only make his own works move, I can do so to others' works as well as my own. And to my mind this is the most exquisite thing about my skill, that I am unintentionally clever, since I wanted the words to stay put for me and to be fixed motionless more than to have the money of Tantalos and the skill



of Daidalos combined. But enough of this. Since I think you are spoiled, I myself will help you educate me about the pious. So don't give up the task. See whether you believe that everything pious is necessarily just.

Euth: I do.

12a So: And is everything just pious? Or is every part of piety just but the just is not the whole of piety, but some part of it is pious, and some other part is different?

Euth: I can't keep up with what you're saying, Socrates.

So: And yet you are younger than me by at least as much as you are wiser than me! But, as I say, you are spoiled by your abundance of wisdom. Pull yourself together, you blessed man, since what I'm saying is not difficult to get your head around. I mean, of course, the opposite of what the poet meant when he wrote: \*

Zeus who created it and who produced all of these

b You do not want to revile; for where there is fear there is also reverence.

I disagree with this statement of the poet. Shall I tell you how?

Euth: Yes indeed.

So: I don't think that "where there is fear there is also reverence " since I think many people who fear sickness, poverty and many other things feel fear, but they feel no reverence at these things they fear. Don't you think so, too?

Euth: Certainly.

So: Where there is reverence, though, there is also fear, for is there anyone who feels reverence and is ashamed at something who doesn't also feel fear and dread a reputation for cowardice?

c

Euth: He does indeed dread it.

So: So it's not right to claim that "where there is fear there is also reverence" but where there is reverence there is also fear, for reverence is not in fact everywhere fear is. I think fear covers more than reverence. reverence is a part of fear, just as oddness is a part of number, so that it's not the case that where there is number there is also oddness, but where there is oddness, there is also number. Do you follow now, at least?

Euth: I certainly do.

d So: This is the kind of thing I was talking about earlier when I was questioning you: where there is justice, is there also piety? Or is it that where there is piety, there is also justice, but piety is not everywhere justice is, since piety is a part of justice? Do you think we should speak in this way or in some other?

Euth: No, in this way. I think you're speaking properly.

So: Then see what follows this: if the pious is a part of the just, we must, it seems, discover what part of the just the pious might be. If you now asked me something about what we were discussing just now, such as what part of number the even is, and what number it happens to be, I would say that it would be the number that can be divided into two equal and not unequal parts.\* Doesn't it seem so to you?

Euth: It does.

e

So: So try to teach me in this way, Euthyphro, what sort of part of the just piety is, so that we can also tell Meletos not to do us wrong and

charge me with impiety, since I have already learned enough from you about what is holy and what is pious and what is not.

Euth: It seems to me now, Socrates, that holiness and piety is the part of justice concerned with attending to the gods, while the remaining part of justice is concerned with attending to human beings.

13a So: I think you put that well, Euthyphro. But I still need just one small thing: I don't know quite what you mean by "attending". Surely you don't mean that attending to the gods is like the other kinds of attending even though we do say so, such as when we say that not everybody knows how to attend to a horse, except the horse-trainer. Right?

Euth: Certainly.

So: Horse-training is attending to horses?

Euth: Yes.

So: And no one but the dog-trainer knows how to attend to dogs?

Euth: Right.

So: And dog-training is attending to dogs?

b Euth: Yes.

So: And cattle-herding is of cattle?

Euth: Absolutely.

So: Naturally, then, piety and holiness are of the gods, Euthyphro? That's what you say?

Euth: I do.

So: Then does all attending bring about the same effect? Something of the following sort: the good and benefit of what is attended to, in just the way you see that horses being attended to by horse-trainers are benefited and become better? Or don't you think they are?

Euth: They are.

c So: And dogs by the dog-trainer somehow, and cattle by the cattle-herder, and all the others similarly? Or do you think the attending is aimed at harming what is attended to?

Euth: By Zeus, I do not.

So: But at benefiting them?

Euth: How could it not be?

So: And since piety is attending to the gods, does it benefit the gods and make the gods better? Do you agree to this, that whenever one does something pious it results in some improvement of the gods?

Euth: By Zeus, no, I don't.

d So: Nor did I think that that's what you meant, Euthyphro—far from it, in fact—and so that's why I was asking what in the world you meant by "attending to the gods", because I didn't think you mean this kind of thing.

Euth: And you're right, Socrates. Because I mean no such thing.

So: Alright then. But what kind of attending to the gods would piety be, then?

Euth: The kind, Socrates, when slaves attend to their masters.

So: I understand. It would be a kind of service to gods, it seems .

Euth: Certainly.

So: Can you tell me about service to doctors, what end result is it a service aimed at? Don't you think it's at health?

- Euth: I do.
- e So: And what about service to shipbuilders? What end result is it a service aimed at?
- Euth: Clearly it's aimed at sailing, Socrates.
- So: And service to house-builders, I suppose, is aimed at houses?
- Euth: Yes.
- So: Tell me then, best of men, what end result is service to the gods a service aimed at? It's obvious that you know, since you claim to have the finest religious knowledge, at least, of any human.
- Euth: And as a matter of fact, Socrates, I speak the truth.
- So: So tell me, by Zeus, what in the world is that magnificent task which the gods accomplish by using us as servants?
- Euth: Many fine tasks, Socrates.
- 14a So: Well, and so do the generals, my friend. But nevertheless one could easily say what their key purpose is, that they achieve victory in war. Or not?
- Euth: How else could it be?
- So: And I think the farmers accomplish many fine tasks. And yet their key purpose is nourishment from the soil.
- Euth: Very much so.
- So: So what, then, about the many fine things that the gods accomplish? What is the key purpose of their labor?
- Euth: I said a little earlier, Socrates, that it is a great task to learn exactly how all these things are. But I will put it for you generally: if a man knows how to speak and act pleasingly to the gods in his prayers and sacrifices, those are pious, and such things preserve both his own home and the common good of the city. But the opposites of these pleasing things are unholy, which obviously overturn and destroy everything.
- b So: If you were willing, Euthyphro, you could have told me the heart of what I was asking much more briefly. But in fact you are not eager to teach me, that much is clear. Since now when you were just about to do so, you turned away. If you had stated your answer, I would already have gotten a satisfactory understanding of piety from you. But for the present, the lover must follow his beloved wherever he might lead. So what do you say the pious and piety are, again? Don't you say it's a certain kind of knowledge, of how to sacrifice and pray?
- c Euth: I do.
- So: And sacrificing is giving to the gods, while praying is making a request of the gods?
- Euth: Very much so, Socrates.
- d So: Based on this, piety would be knowledge of making requests and giving things to the gods?
- Euth: You have understood my meaning very well, Socrates.
- So: It's because I am eager for your wisdom, my friend, and pay close attention to it, so that nothing you might say falls to the ground. But tell me, what is this service to the gods? You say it is making requests of them and giving to them?
- Euth: I do.
- So: And proper requests would be requests for what we need from

them, asking them for these things?

Euth: What else?

e So: And again, giving properly would be giving what they happen to want from us, to give these things to them in return? Since to give a gift by giving someone what he has no need of would not be too skillful, I suppose.

Euth: That's true, Socrates.

So: So pioussness for gods and humans, Euthyphro, would be some skill of trading with one another?

Euth: If naming it that way is sweeter for you, call it "trading".

15a So: As far as I'm concerned, nothing is sweeter unless it is true. Tell me, how do the gods benefit from the gifts they receive from us? What they give us is clear to everyone, since every good we have was given by them. But what they receive from us, what good is it? Or do we fare so much better than them in the trade that we get everything that's good from them, while they get nothing from us?

Euth: But do you think, Socrates, that they gods are benefited by what they receive from us?

So: Well then what in the world would they be, Euthyphro, these gifts from us to the gods?

Euth: What else, do you think, but honor and admiration and, as I said just now, gratitude?

b So: So being shown gratitude is what's pious, Euthyphro, but it is neither beneficial to the gods nor dear to them?

Euth: I think it is dear to them above everything else.

So: So the pious is once again, it seems, what is dear to gods.

Euth: Very much so.

c So: Are you at all surprised, when you say such things, that your words seem not to stand still but to move around? And you accuse me of making them move around like a Daidalos when you yourself are much more skilled than Daidalos, even making things go around in circles? Or don't you see that our discussion has gone around and arrived back at the same place? You remember, no doubt, that previously the pious and the beloved by the gods seemed to us not to be the same but different from one another. Or don't you remember?

Euth: I certainly do.

So: Well, don't you realize now that you're saying that what is dear to the gods is pious? But is this anything other than what is beloved by the gods? Or not?

Euth: It certainly is.

So: So either what we decided then was wrong, or, if we were right then, we are wrong to think it now.

Euth: So it seems.

d So: We must begin again from the beginning to examine what the pious is, since as far as I am concerned, I am determined not to give up until I understand it. Do not scorn me, but applying your mind in every way, tell me the truth now more than ever. Because you know it if anybody does and, like Proteus,\* you cannot be released until you tell me, because unless you knew clearly about the pious and impious there is no

e way you would ever have tried to pursue your aging father for murder on behalf of a hired laborer, but instead you would have been afraid before the gods, and ashamed before men, to run the risk of conducting this matter improperly. But as it is, I am sure that you think that you have clear knowledge of the pious and the impious. So tell me, great Euthyphro, and do not conceal what you think it is.

Euth: Well, some other time, then, Socrates, because I'm in a hurry to get somewhere and it's time for me to go.

16a So: What a thing to do, my friend! By leaving, you have cast me down from a great hope I had, that I would learn from you what is pious and what is not, and, most of all, would free myself from Meletos' charge, by showing him that, thanks to Euthyphro, I had already become wise in religious matters and that I would no longer speak carelessly and innovate about these things due to ignorance, and in particular that I would live better for the rest of my life.

### NOTES

- 2a *Lyceum*. A gymnasium outside the walls of Athens.
- 2a *the porch of the king*. The "porch" is a covered walkway in the Athenian *agora* (marketplace or forum. See the "Stoa Basileios" on the [map](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Agora_of_Athens) at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient\\_Agora\\_of\\_Athens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Agora_of_Athens).)
- 2a *before the king*. The 'king' was one of nine *archons* or magistrates. At this stage of the proceedings, accusations would be lodged and testimony recorded from those involved and from witnesses. The king archon was in charge of religious matters. Socrates is there because he has been charged with a religious crime—of not acknowledging the gods of the city; Euthyphro is there because he believes that his father, as a murderer, is polluting the religious spaces of the city, which then needs to be purified. (See 4c and [Athenian Constitution 57](#). (On-line at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/medieval/athe6.htm#57>.)
- 2a *a public indictment*. It was up to individuals (in Socrates' case, Meletos, along with Anytos and Lycon) to bring cases on behalf of the city.
- 2b *deme*. An administrative region of Attica.
- 3b *divine sign*. See *Socrates' Defense* 31b and 41a-c.
- 6a *Zeus ... his father ... his father ...* . For the stories of Zeus, Kronos and Ouranos, see Hesiod's *Theogony* lines 154-182 and 453-506. (On-line at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hesiod/theogony.htm> )
- 6c *robe ... great Panathanaea?* The Panathanaea was a celebration of Athena's, birthday, held annually, with a larger ("great") celebration every four years. A new robe would be presented to the statue of the goddess Athena.

- 11c *Daidalos*. The statues of the mythical Daidalos were said to be so life-like that they appeared to move. Daidalos is most famous for making wings for himself and his son Icaros to use to escape from Crete.
- 12a-b The quote is from Stanisos' *Cypria*, a collection of tales describing the events prior to where the *Iliad* begins. (Not available on-line.)
- 12d *divided into two equal and not unequal parts*. Literally "isosceles and not scalene". Presumably because isosceles triangles have two equal legs.
- 15d *Proteus*. A mythical sea god who could change shape. Menelaus had to hold on to Proteus as he changed shape in order to get him to prophesy. (See [Odyssey 4.398-463](#). For an on-line version, see [www.tonykline.co.uk/PITBR/Greek/Odyssey4.htm# Toc90267397](http://www.tonykline.co.uk/PITBR/Greek/Odyssey4.htm#Toc90267397) )

# **SOCRATES' DEFENSE**

(The Apology of Socrates)

ΑΠΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΣΩΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ

**PLATO**

ΠΛΑΤΩΝ

17a           What you felt, men of Athens,\* on account of my accusers, I do not know. But I, even me, I almost forgot who I was because of them, so persuasively did they speak. And yet they have said practically nothing true. I was especially amazed by one of the many lies they told, the one in  
 b           because I am a skilled speaker. Their lack of shame—that they would be exposed immediately by what I do, when I show myself not to be a clever speaker at all—this seems to me to be most disgraceful of them. Unless of course they mean to call "clever" someone who speaks the truth. Because if they mean this, I would admit that I am indeed an orator, but not by their standards.

          So as I say, these men have said little or nothing that is true, whereas from me you will hear the whole truth. Not, by Zeus, beautified  
 c           speeches like theirs, men of Athens, and not ornamented with fine phrases and words, but you will hear me say the words that come to me at random—for I believe what I say is just—and let none of you expect otherwise. After all, it would surely not be fitting, gentlemen, for someone of my age to come before you composing speeches, as it might be for a young man. And this most of all, men of Athens, I beg and request of you: if in these speeches you hear me defending myself in the words I also usually say in the marketplace by the tables, where many of you have heard me, as well as elsewhere, don't be surprised and don't make a  
 d           disturbance because of it. Because this is exactly how it is: I have now come before the court for the first time, at seventy years of age.\* So I am simply a stranger to the manner of speech here. And so, just as you would certainly have sympathy for me if I actually happened to be a stranger and spoke in the accent and manner in which I had been raised, I now  
 18a          particularly ask you for this just request, at least as it seems to me, to disregard my manner of speech—maybe it's better, maybe it's worse—and to consider the following alone and pay attention to it: whether I say just things or not. For this is the virtue of a judge, while of an orator is to speak the truth.

          It is right for me to defend myself, Athenian men, first against the earliest untrue accusations alleged against me and the earliest accusers, and then against the later accusations and the later accusers. For many of  
 b           my accusers came to you many years ago now, saying nothing true, and I fear these more than Anytos and his friends, though indeed they are dangerous too. But these men are more dangerous, gentlemen, the one's who, taking most of you aside from childhood, persuaded you and made accusations against me that not in fact true, that there is a certain Socrates, a clever man, a student of things in the sky, who has investigated everything under the earth and makes the weaker speech the stronger.  
 c           These people, men of Athens, having spread this allegation, are my fearsome accusers, for those who have heard them think that the people who study these things do not acknowledge the gods either. Moreover, these accusers are numerous and have been making accusations for a long time now. And what's more, they spoke to you at an age when you would be liable to believe them, some of you being children and youths, crudely making accusations against an absent person with no one else to make a



rebuttal.

d What is most unreasonable is that one can't know and name the names of these people, except that one happens to be a comic playwright.\* These people who misled you with envy and slander—and others who, having themselves been persuaded, then persuade others—all of these are hardest to deal with. For it is not possible to summon them here to court or to cross-examine any of them, but it is necessary to defend myself just as if shadow-boxing, and conduct a cross-examination without anyone responding. So you too must accept that my accusers are two-fold, as I said, those who accused me recently and those whom I mentioned from e long ago, and believe that I must first defend myself against the latter. For you heard their accusations against me sooner and much more often than those of the later people.

19a Well then. I must make a defense, men of Athens, and in such a short time must try to banish this prejudice from you that you have held for a long time. I would like it to turn out this way, that I would succeed in defending myself, if that would be better for both you and me. But I think this is difficult, and just what it is I'm attempting doesn't escape me at all. Nevertheless, let the case proceed in whatever way the god favors; I must obey the law and make my defense.

b Let us consider, then, from the beginning, what the charge is, from which the accusation against me arose, and which Meletos believed when he brought this charge against me. Well then. What precisely do the accusers say when they accuse me? Just as if they were charging me, it is necessary to read out their indictment: "Socrates is guilty of meddling, of c inquiring into things under the earth and in the heavens, of making the weaker speech the stronger and of teaching these very things"—something like this. For even you yourselves have seen these things in the comedy of Aristophanes, a certain Socrates being carried around up there, insisting that he walks on air and spouting off a lot of other nonsense that I do not claim to know anything about, either great or small. I don't speak in order to dishonor such knowledge, if someone is wise about such things—in case I would somehow be prosecuted by Meletos on yet more charges—but in fact I have nothing to do with them, men of Athens, and I call on the majority of you as witnesses, and I expect you to teach and inform one d another, those of you who have ever heard me in discussion—and this includes many of you—tell one another if any of you heard me ever discussing such things, either a lot or a little, and based on this you will realize that the same is true of the other things that the many say about me.

e But really none of this is the case, and if you have heard from anyone that I endeavor to teach people and make money, this is certainly not true. Though again I think that it is a fine thing if an individual is able to teach people,\* such as Gorgias of Leontini and Prodikos of Chios and Hippias of Elis. For, each of these people, gentlemen, going into each of the cities, to the young—who could associate with whomever they want from 20a their own citizens for free—they convince them to leave their company and join them, paying them money, and to feel grateful in addition!

For that matter, there is currently another wise man, from Paros, who I have discovered is in town because I happened to meet a man who

b has paid more money to sophists than all the others combined, Kallias, son of Hipponikos. So I asked him—because he has two sons—"Kallias", I said, "If colts or calves had been born to you as sons, we could find and hire a trainer who would make them well-bred regarding the appropriate virtue; he would be some horse-trainer or farmer. But as it is, since they are humans, whom do we have in mind to hire as a trainer for them? Who is knowledgeable about such virtue, of the human being and of the citizen? Because I assume you have looked into it, since you have sons. Is there someone," I said, "or not?" "Certainly," said he. "Who?" I said, "And where from? And for how much does he teach?" "Euenos, Socrates," he said, "From Paros; for five mina."\* And I considered Euenos blessed, if he really c has this skill and teaches for such a sweet-sounding price. I at any rate would take pride in myself and be boastful, if I knew these things. But in fact I don't know them, men of Athens.

d Perhaps some one of you might respond "But Socrates, what is *your* profession? Where have these slanders against you come from? For surely it's not by busying yourself with the usual things that so much hearsay and talk has arisen, but by doing something different from most people? So tell us what it is, so that we don't judge your case rashly." The person who says this seems to me to speak justly, and I will try to show you what it is, precisely, that won me this reputation and prejudice.

e Listen, then. And while I will perhaps appear to some of you to be joking, rest assured that I will tell you the whole truth. For I, men of Athens, have acquired this reputation due to nothing other than a certain wisdom. What sort of wisdom is this? Quite likely it is human wisdom. There's a good chance that I actually have this kind of wisdom, while those men who I was speaking of just now might perhaps be wise with a wisdom more than human, or I don't know how I should put it, for I certainly don't have it, and whoever says I do is lying and is saying it as a slander against me. But don't interrupt me, men of Athens, not even if I strike you as talking big. The story I will tell you is not my own, but I will refer you to a trustworthy source for what I say, because I will present to you as a witness of my—if it is wisdom of a sort and of what sort it is—the god in Delphi.\*

21a You know Chairephon, I presume. He was a companion of mine from youth and a comrade of yours in the democracy\* and joined you in the recent exile and returned with you. And you know how Chairephon was, how zealous he was about whatever he pursued, and so for example when he went to Delphi he was so bold as to ask this—and, as I say, don't interrupt, gentlemen—he asked if there was anyone wiser than me. The Pythian then replied that no one was wiser. And his brother here will bear witness to you about these things, since he himself has died.

b Think about why I mention this: I am going to teach you where the prejudice against me came from. Because when I heard this I pondered in the following way: "Whatever does the god mean? And what riddle is he posing? For I am not aware of being wise in anything great or small. What in the world, then, does he mean when he says that I am wisest? For certainly he does not lie; it is not permitted for him." And for a long time I puzzled over what he means.

c Then, very reluctantly, I embarked on some sort of trial of him. I went to one of the people who are thought to be wise, hoping to refute the oracle there if anywhere, and reply to its response: "This man here is wiser than me, though you said I was." So, scrutinizing this fellow—there's no need to refer to him by name, he was one of the politicians with whom I experienced something of the following sort when examining him, men of Athens—in talking with him it seemed to me that while this man was considered to be wise both by many other people and especially by himself, he was not. And so I tried to show him that he took himself to be wise, but was not. As a result I became hated by this man and by many of those present.

d And so, as I was going away, I was thinking to myself "I am at least wiser than this man. It's likely that neither of us knows anything worthwhile, but whereas he thinks he knows something when he doesn't know it, I, when I don't know something, don't think I know it either. It's likely, then, that by this I am indeed wiser in some small way than this man, in that I don't think myself to know what I don't know." Next, I went to another one of the people thought to be wiser than him and things seemed the same to me, and so I made an enemy of him as well as of many others.

e So, after this, I now went to one after another, realizing with pain and fear that I was becoming hated. But nevertheless I thought it necessary to consider the god's oracle to be of the utmost importance, so I had to continue going to all of the people thought to know something, looking into what the pronouncement means. And by the dog, men of Athens, because I must tell you the truth, I really had something like the following experience: in my divine search those held in highest esteem seemed to me to be lacking just about the most, while others thought to be poorer were better men as far as wisdom is concerned.

22a I have to represent my wanderings to you as though I were undertaking various labors in order to find oracle quite irrefutable. After the politicians I went to the poets, including those of tragedies and those of dithyrambs\* and others, so that there I would catch myself being more ignorant than them. Reading the works which I thought they had really labored over, I would ask them what they meant, so that at the same time I might also learn something from them. I am ashamed to tell you the truth, gentlemen, but nevertheless it must be told. Practically anybody present, so to speak, could have better explained what they had written. And so again I quickly realized the following about the poets: that they do not write what they write because of their wisdom but because they have a certain nature and are possessed, like the seers and fortune-tellers, who also say many fine things but know nothing about what they're saying. It seemed clear to me that the poets had undergone a similar experience. And at once I understood that, because of their writing, they thought themselves to be wisest of all men even about other things that they weren't. So as a result of this I went away thinking that I was superior to them in the same way as I was to the politicians.

b So finally I went to the crafters, because I was aware that while I knew practically nothing, I knew that I would find that they knew many

d fine things. And in this I was not mistaken—they knew things I didn't and  
 in this they were wiser than me. But, men of Athens, the noble crafters  
 seemed to me to have the same flaw that the poets also had. Because each  
 of them performed his craft well, he considered himself to be most wise  
 about the greatest things—and this sour note of theirs overshadowed their  
 wisdom. And so I asked myself on behalf of the oracle whether I would  
 e prefer to be just as I am, neither being at all wise in the ways that they are  
 wise nor ignorant in the ways they are ignorant, or to be both, which they  
 are. And I answered myself and the oracle that it would be best for me to  
 be as I am.

23a As a result of this quest, men of Athens, a lot of hatred developed  
 against me, and of the most challenging and oppressive kind, so that from  
 it many slanders arose, and I gained this reputation of being wise. For on  
 each occasion the bystanders thought that I myself was wise about the  
 matter that I was examining the other person about. But in fact it's likely,  
 gentlemen, that in truth the god is wise, and by this pronouncement he  
 means the following: human wisdom is worth little or nothing. And he  
 appears to be taking me as an example, speaking of this man Socrates,  
 b even using my name, just as if he said "Human beings, he among you is  
 wisest who knows like Socrates that he is actually worthless with respect  
 to wisdom." That's why, both then and now, I go around in accordance  
 with the god, searching and making inquiries of anyone, citizen or  
 stranger, who I think is wise. And if I then think he isn't, I assist the god  
 and show him that he is not wise. And because of this busyness I lack the  
 time to participate in any public affairs worth mentioning or for private  
 business, but I am in great poverty because of my service to the god.

c Furthermore, the young people follow me around of their own  
 accord, those with the most leisure, the sons of the very wealthy. They  
 delight in hearing me examine people and they often imitate me, having a  
 go at examining others afterwards. And, I think, they discover a great  
 number of people who think they know something but know little or  
 nothing. As a result, then, the people who are examined by them grow  
 angry with me, but not them, and they say that Socrates is a most vile  
 d person and corrupts the young. And whenever anyone asks them what he  
 does and what he teaches, they have nothing to say and are ignorant, but,  
 so as to not appear at a loss, they say these things that are handy against all  
 philosophers, about "the heavenly things and the things under the earth"  
 and "not acknowledging the gods" and "making the weaker speech the  
 stronger". I believe it's because they don't want to tell the truth, that they  
 are obviously pretending to know something even though they know  
 nothing. Since they are ambitious and impetuous, I think, and there are  
 e many of them and they speak about me ruthlessly and persuasively, they  
 have filled up your ears, badmouthing me violently for a long time. On the  
 strength of this Meletos attacked me along with Anytos and Lykon,  
 Meletos complaining on behalf of the writers, Anytos on behalf of the  
 24a crafters and the politicians, and Lykon on behalf of the orators.

As a result, as I said in the beginning, I would be amazed if I could  
 rid you of this slander in such a short time, since it has become so  
 powerful. This, I assure you men of Athens, is the truth, and in speaking I

b conceal nothing, either big or small, or hold anything back. Indeed I am quite aware that I am hated on account of these very things, which is an indication that I tell the truth, and that this is the slander against me and that these are the causes. And if you inquire into these things, either now or later, this is what you'll find.

c Concerning the charges of my initial accusers, let this defense before you be enough. Next I will try to defend myself against Meletos, the good and patriotic man, or so he says, and the later accusers. And once more, as though they are different accusers, let's take up their indictment in turn. It goes something like this: he says Socrates is guilty of corrupting the young and not acknowledging the gods that the city does, but other strange spiritual things. The complaint is something along these lines. Let's examine this complaint point by point.

He says that I am guilty of corrupting the young. But I say, men of Athens, that Meletos is guilty, that he jokes in earnest, by carelessly bringing a person to trial, pretending to be serious about and to trouble himself over various matters, none of which was ever an interest of his. This is how it is, as I will try to demonstrate.

d Socrates (So): Here, Meletos, do tell me: Don't you take as your highest priority how the young will be as good as possible?

Meletos (M): I certainly do.

So: Come now, tell these men, who makes them better? It's clear that you know. It's a concern of yours, since upon discovering the one who corrupts—me, as you claim—you bring me in front of these people here and accuse me. Come, state who is the one who makes them better and reveal to them who it is. ... You see, Meletos, that you are silent and unable to speak? Doesn't it seem shameful to you, and sufficient proof of exactly what I'm claiming, that it meant nothing to you? So tell us, my good man, who makes them better?

M: The laws.

e So: But that's not what I'm asking, best of men, but what man, whoever knows this very thing—the laws—in the first place?

M: These men, Socrates, the judges.

So: What do you mean, Meletos? These men can educate the young and make them better?

M: Definitely.

So: All of them, or some can and others can't?

M: All of them

25a So: Well done, by Hera! And what a great number of benefactors you speak of. What next? Do these listeners make them better or not?

M: These too.

So: Who else? The councilors?

M: Even the councilors.

So: Well, then, Meletos, surely those in the assembly, the assemblymen, they don't corrupt the young people? So do they all make them better, too?

M: These too.

So: Every Athenian, it seems, makes them fine and good except for me, and I alone corrupt them. Is this what you mean?

M: That's exactly what I mean.

b So: You charge me with a great misfortune. But answer me: Do you think it's the same with horses? That those who make them better consists of everyone, while one person is their corrupter? Or isn't it the complete opposite of this: one individual can make them better, or very few, the horse-trainers, while the many corrupt the horses if they deal with them and use them? Isn't this how it is, Meletos, concerning both horses and every other animal? ... It certainly is, whether you and Anytos agree or disagree. It would be a great blessing for the young if only a single person corrupted them, and all the others benefited them. But, Meletos, you have c sufficiently demonstrated that you never before cared about the young, and you clearly reveal your indifference and that you have given no thought at all to the matters you indict me on.

Still, before Zeus, Meletos, tell us whether it is better to live among good citizens or wicked ones? ... Answer, my good man—I'm not asking anything difficult, you know. Don't the wicked always do something bad to those who are constantly closest to them, while the good do something good?

M: Certainly.

d So: But is there anyone who wishes to be harmed by those he associates with more than he wishes to be helped? ... Keep answering, my good man, for the law also requires you to answer. Is there anyone who wants to be harmed?

M: Of course not.

So: Come then, do you bring me here on charges of intentionally or unintentionally corrupting the young and making them worse?

M: Intentionally, I say.

e So: What then, Meletos? Are you so much wiser at your age than I am at mine that you know that the wicked always do something bad to those who are very close to them, and the good do good, while I, on the other hand, have fallen into such great ignorance that I don't also know this, that if I make one of my associates bad, I risk being harmed by him? And yet I would do this great evil intentionally, as you claim?

26a I don't believe you, Meletos, and I think that no one else does, and either I do not corrupt, or if I do corrupt, I do so unintentionally, so that you are lying either way. If I corrupt unintentionally, the procedure is not to prosecute me here for such offenses, but to take me aside privately and teach and admonish me, since it is clear that if I learn, I will cease doing what I do unintentionally. You, however, fled from me and were unwilling to associate with me and teach me, but prosecuted me here, where the procedure is to prosecute those who need punishment rather than instruction.

b And so, men of Athens, what I was saying is now clear, that Meletos never troubled himself about these matters in the slightest.

Nevertheless, tell us, Meletos, how do I corrupt the young, according to you? Or rather, isn't it clear from the indictment you wrote that I corrupt them by teaching them not to acknowledge the gods that the city recognizes, but other strange spiritual things? Don't you say that I corrupt them by teaching these things?

M: That's absolutely what I'm saying.

c So: But by the gods, Meletos, the very gods that the discussion is currently about, speak even more clearly to me and these people here, because I can't tell whether you mean that I teach them to believe that there are some gods—and so I would believe there are gods and am not entirely godless and am not I guilty of such—but not, however, the gods that the city believes in but others, and this is what you prosecute me for, that they are different, or, whether you mean that I do not acknowledge the gods at all and teach this to others?

d M: That's what I mean, that you don't acknowledge the gods at all.

So: Incredible Meletos, why do you say that? I don't believe the sun, or even the moon, to be gods, like other men do?

M: No, by Zeus, judges, since he says that the sun is a stone and the moon is earth.

e So: Do you think you are prosecuting Anaxagoras, my dear Meletos? Do you have so much contempt for these men, and think them to be so unfamiliar with literature that they do not know that the books of Anaxagoras of Klazomenai\* are full of such claims? And what's more, do you think that the young learn from me what anyone who buys them at some time for a drachma, at most, on the floor of the agora can mock Socrates for if he pretends they are his, especially when they are so distinctive? By Zeus, is this how I appear to you? Believing that there are no gods?

M: You certainly don't, by Zeus; none whatsoever.

27a So: You are unbelievable, Meletos, and in truth unbelievable to yourself, I think. For the man seems to me, Athenian men, to be exceedingly arrogant and uncontrolled, and clumsily lodged this indictment out of hubris and lack of discipline and youthful zeal. He appears to be testing me, as though setting a riddle: "Will the wise Socrates realize that I am being facetious and contradicting myself, or will I deceive him and the other listeners?" For it looks to me as though he is saying contradictory things in his indictment, just as if he said "Socrates is guilty of not acknowledging the gods, and of acknowledging the gods." This is just like a riddler.

b Now join me in examining, gentlemen, in what way he seems to be saying these things. And you, Meletos, answer us. And as I begged of you at the beginning, gentlemen, remember not to interrupt if I speak in my customary way.

c Is there anyone, Meletos, who believes there are human matters, but does not believe in humans? ... Gentlemen, make him answer and not digress about other things. Is there anyone who does not believe there are horses, but believes there are equestrian matters? Or that there are not flute-players but in flute-playing matters? ... There is not, best of men—since you are unwilling to answer I will answer on behalf of you and these others. But at least answer the next question: Is there anyone who believes there are spiritual matters but does not believe there are spirits?

M: There is not.

So: How delightful, that you answered reluctantly when compelled by these men. And so you say that I acknowledge and teach about spirits,

d and whether they be novel or ancient I at any rate believe in spiritual matters, according to your accusation, and you even swear this in the indictment. But if I believe in spiritual matters, I absolutely must believe in spirits too. Isn't that so? ... Of course it is. I take it that you agree, since you're not answering. Now don't we think the spirits to be gods or the children of gods? Do you agree or not?

M: Yes indeed.

So: Well then, if I believe in spirits, as you say, then if, on the one hand, the spirits are gods of some sort, this is why I say you are riddling and being facetious, in that while I don't believe in gods, at the same time again I do believe in gods, since I indeed believe in spirits.

e If, on the other hand, the spirits are certain illegitimate children of gods—either by nymphs or by some others that they're said to come from—who among men would think the children of gods exist, but not gods? Similarly, it would be strange if someone believed in the children of horses, or of asses too, namely mules, but did not believe in horses and asses.

28a And so, Meletos, it must be that you brought this indictment in order to test us about these things, or were at a loss as to what true crime you might charge me with. How you could persuade anyone with even a little intelligence that one and the same man does not believe in both spiritual and divine matters, or again that this same man believes in neither spirits nor gods nor heroes—it's not possible!

b And so, men of Athens, it seems to me that it doesn't take much of a defense to show I am not guilty of what Meletos charges me with, and even this is enough. What I said earlier, on the other hand—that a great hatred of me arose and from many people—you know well to be true. This is what convicts me, if indeed it convicts me, and not Meletos or Anytos, but the slander and malice of many people. And I know that these people have convicted, and will convict, many other good men; there is no fear that they will stop with me.

c Perhaps then someone might say "Aren't you ashamed, Socrates, that you engaged in the kind of practice as a result of which you now risk dying?" In reply to this I would justly say, "You do not speak well, Sir, if you think a man who is worth anything must take the risk of living or dying into account, rather than looking to this alone, whether when he acts he acts justly or unjustly, and does the deeds of a good or bad man. For those demigods who met their ends in Troy would be fools according to you, especially the son of Thetis,\* who thought so little of the risk in comparison with enduring some disgrace that, when his mother, a god, told him, when he was eager to kill Hector, something like this, as I recall: "Son, if you avenge the slaying of your comrade Patroclus and kill Hector, you will be killed—because immediately after Hector," she said, "your fate is at hand", but he, hearing this, belittled death and the danger and feared much more living as a coward and not avenging his friends, and said "May I die at once, having served justice to the unjust, and not remain here, a laughing stock by the curved ships, a burden upon the earth." Do you think he cared about death or danger?"

This is how it is, men of Athens, in reality. Wherever someone



e positions himself, thinking it to be for the best, or is positioned by his officer, he must, it seems to me, remain there and face the danger, and not  
 e something terrible, men of Athens, if I abandoned my station for fear of  
 either death or some other thing, when I was under orders from god to live  
 my life, as I believed and accepted, seeking wisdom and examining both  
 myself and others, but, when the officers whom you elected to command  
 me in Potidea and Amphipolis and at Delium were positioning me, I  
 29a remained and risked dying where these men stationed me, just like anyone  
 else. It would be terrible, and truly under these circumstances someone  
 could justly bring me to court for not believing that there are gods by  
 defying the oracle and fearing death and thinking myself to be wise when I  
 am not.

Indeed, to fear death, gentlemen, is nothing other than to regard  
 oneself as wise when one is not; for it is to regard oneself as knowing what  
 one does not know and no one knows whether death is not the greatest of  
 all the goods for man, but they fear it as if they knew it to be the greatest of  
 b evils. And indeed, how could this ignorance not be reproachable, the  
 ignorance of believing one knows what one does not know? But I,  
 gentlemen, am perhaps superior to the majority of men to this extent and  
 in this regard, and if indeed I seem to be wiser in any way than anyone, it  
 would be in this, that I am not so certain about how things are in Hades  
 and I do not think that I know.

But wrong-doing and defiance of one's superiors, whether god or  
 man, *that* I know to be evil and shameful. So I will never fear nor flee  
 things that for all I know could turn out to be good, rather than the evils  
 c that I know to be evil. So if you now acquitted me—rejecting Anytos, who  
 said that either I should not have been brought here to trial in the first  
 place, or, now that I have, executing me is unavoidable, and who tells you  
 that if I were acquitted, your sons, practicing what Socrates teaches, will at  
 once be thoroughly corrupted—if, referring to this, you said to me,  
 "Socrates, we are not at present persuaded by Anytos and we acquit you,  
 on the following condition, however, namely that you no longer spend  
 your time on this quest and search for wisdom, and that if you are caught  
 d still doing this, you will die"—if, as I was saying, you were to acquit me on  
 these conditions, I would say to you, "I cherish and love you, men of  
 Athens, but I am more obedient to the god than to you, and so long as I  
 have breath and am able I will not cease seeking wisdom and appealing  
 and demonstrating to every one of you I come across, saying my  
 customary things: "Best of men, you are an Athenian, of the greatest and  
 most renowned city in regard to wisdom and power. Are you not ashamed  
 that you care about how you will acquire as much money as possible, and  
 e reputation and honor, while you do not care or worry about wisdom and  
 truth and how your soul might be as good as possible?"

And if one of you disputes this and says that he does care, right  
 away I will not let him go or leave him but will question and cross-  
 examine and refute him, and if he does not appear to possess virtue, but he  
 30a says he does, I will reproach him for considering the most valuable things  
 to be of least importance and the most worthless to be of the greatest

importance. I will do this for anyone I meet, young and old, stranger and citizen, though more for the citizens, insofar as they are closer to me in blood.

b Rest assured that the god command this, and I believe there has never been a greater good for the city than my service to the god. For I go around doing nothing other than persuading you, both young and old, not to care for your wealth and well-being ahead of or as intensely as caring for how your soul might be as good as possible, saying "Virtue does not come from wealth, but from virtue come wealth and all other human goods, both private and public." So if I corrupt the young by saying these things, they would be harmful; but if anyone claims that I say anything different than this, he is talking nonsense. "Men of Athens," I would say, "either be persuaded by Anytos, or not, or acquit me, or not, in light of the fact that I would not act differently, not even if I am destined to die again and again."

c Do not create a disturbance, men of Athens, but stick to what I begged of you, not to make a disturbance at what I say but to listen, since I think by listening you might even be helped. For I am about to say a few other things to you at which you will perhaps cry out; but don't do this, no matter what. Rest assured that if you kill me for being the kind of person I describe, you will not harm me more than yourselves. Neither Meletos or Anytos can do me any harm, it is not possible, since I think it is not permitted for a better man to be harmed by a worse one. He might kill or exile or disenfranchise me, but while he, probably, and many another, might think somehow that these are great evils, I do not. But it is a much greater evil to do what this man here is doing right now, attempting to put a man to death unjustly.

d Indeed, men of Athens, I am making a defense hardly at all for my own sake, as someone might suppose, but for yours, in case you do something wrong concerning the god's gift to you by condemning me. If you were to execute me you would not easily find another person like me, who is literally—although it is rather funny to say—attached to the city by the god as though to a horse that's great and noble though somewhat sluggish because of its size and needing to be provoked by a sort of gadfly, which is just the way, I think, the god attached me to the city, the sort of person who never ceases provoking you and persuading you and reproaching each one of you the whole day long everywhere I settle. You won't easily get another person like this, gentlemen, and if you are persuaded by me, you will spare me. Alternatively, being annoyed just like people roused from sleep, you might perhaps swat me, and persuaded by Anytos would put me to death without a second thought. And then you could live out your days in slumber, unless out of his concern for you the god sends you someone else.

e 31a You can tell from the following that I am the kind of person who is given by the god to the city: it is not human to disregard all my affairs and to endure the neglect of my household for so many years now but always to be acting for your sake, going to each person privately just like a father or elder brother, urging you to pay attention to virtue. If I had gained something from these actions and received payment for inciting you in this

c way, they would make some sense. But you yourselves see now that my accusers, while so shameless in everything else, in bringing this particular charge lacked the audacity to present a witness to the effect that I ever charged anyone a fee or asked for one. Yet I provide adequate witness that I am telling the truth, I believe: my poverty.

d Perhaps it might be thought strange that I privately go about giving advice and getting myself involved, while publicly I do not dare go to our assembly to advise the city. The reason for this is something you have often heard me mention in many places, that something divine and spiritual comes to me, which Meletos jokingly included in the indictment. This has been coming to me as a kind of voice, beginning in childhood, and, whenever it comes, it always diverts me from what I am about to do, but never urges me on. This is what prevented me from doing anything political, and I think it was entirely right to oppose me. Rest assured, men of Athens, if I had long ago tried my hand at political matters, long ago I would have perished and benefited neither you nor myself. And do not be offended by my telling the truth; there is no man who could save himself from you or any other populace while honestly opposing you and hindering many unjust and unlawful things from happening in the city. 32a Rather, someone who genuinely fights for what is just, if he wishes to survive even for a short time, must engage in private practice but not in public politics.

b I will provide you with ample evidence for this; not words, but what you admire, deeds. Listen to what happened to me, so that you may know that I did not fear death over justice and yield to anyone, though I might then lose my life by not yielding. What I will relate is tiresome and lawyerly, but true. I, Athenian men, never held any other office in the city except being on the council. And it so happened that our tribe, Antiochis, was presiding when you resolved to judge as a group—contrary to law as you all came to realize later—the ten generals who did not rescue the people forsaken in the naval battle. At that time I alone of the committee members was opposed you to you doing anything contrary to the laws and I voted against it. With the orators ready to indict and arrest me and you inciting them and raising a ruckus, I thought it more important for me to risk everything with law and justice on my side than to side with you, for fear of imprisonment or death, when you were contemplating unjust actions. c

d This was when the city was still a democracy. But again, when the oligarchy came to power, the Thirty summoned me and four others into the Rotunda and ordered us to bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis for execution; they made many such demands of a lot of other people, in order to tarnish as many as possible with their guilt. Then once again I demonstrated, not in speech but in action, that I couldn't care less about death, if it's not too blunt to say, but I care the world about this: avoiding doing anything unjust or unholy. That regime did not intimidate me into doing something unjust, even though it was so powerful. And so when we exited the Rotunda, the other four left for Salamis and brought back Leon, but I left and headed home. And I might have been put to death for this, if the regime had not been quickly overthrown. And there are many who

e will bear witness to these events before you.

Do you think I would have lasted for so many years if I had engaged in politics and, acting in the manner worthy of a good man, I came to the aid of the just decisions and rightly made them my utmost concern? Far from it, men of Athens, and neither would any other man.  
 33a Throughout my whole life, I have shown myself to be the same sort of man in public, if I really did anything, as in private, never conceding anything illegal either to those who clearly slander me by saying they are my students, or to anyone else.

I have never been anyone's teacher, but if anybody desired to listen to me talking and fulfilling my mission, whether young or old, I never rejected anyone. Nor do I converse if I receive money but refuse to if I  
 b don't, but I allow rich and poor alike to question me, and likewise if anyone wishes to hear whatever I have to say in reply. And if any of them turn out to be good, or not good, I cannot justly be held responsible. I never promised any instruction to any of them nor did I teach them, and if someone says that he learned anything from me or heard privately what all the others did not hear, rest assured that he is not speaking the truth.

But why then do people enjoy spending a lot of time with me? You  
 c have heard why, men of Athens—I told you the whole truth. It is because they enjoy hearing me expose those who think themselves wise but are not, for it is not unpleasant. I was commanded to do this, as I say, by the god, both in oracles and dreams and in every way that any divine fate at all ever ordered a man to do anything whatsoever. This is the truth, men of  
 d Athens, and easily tested. Because if I am indeed corrupting some of the young and have corrupted others, then of course if any of them realized when they were older that I recommended something evil at some point when they were young, they should now come forward and accuse me and avenge themselves. If they themselves were reluctant, someone from their family, a father or brother or some other relative, should call it to mind and take revenge, if they ever suffered any evil at my hands.

In any case, many of them are present here, whom I can see. First there is Crito here, who is my contemporary and from my district and the  
 e father of this man, Critoboulos. Next there is Lysanias of Sphettos, father of Aeschines here. Also, this here is Antiphon of Kephissos, father of Epigenes. These others have brothers who spent their time in this way: Nikostratos son of Theozotides, brother of Theodotos—Theodotos who died, which means that he could not have begged him not to testify—and Paralios here, son of Demodokos, whose brother was Theages. And here is  
 34a Adeimantos, son of Ariston, the brother of Plato here, and Aiantodoros, brother of this man, Apollodoros. I have many others I could mention to you, some of whom Meletos certainly should have brought forth as a witness during his own presentation. If he forgot then, let him call them now—I yield my time—and let him speak if he has anyone of this kind.

Instead you will find the complete opposite of this, gentlemen; they  
 b are all ready to help me, the corruptor, the one who harms their kin, as Meletos and Anytos claim. Those who were corrupted perhaps would have a reason to help me. But the uncorrupted, who are already old men and who are their relatives, do they have any other reason for helping me

except the right and just one, that they know just as well as Meletos does that he is lying, while I tell the truth?

c Well then, gentlemen. This is roughly what I should say in my defense and maybe other similar points. One of you might be angry when he is reminded of his own conduct—if he begged and beseeched the judges with many tears when fighting a lesser contest than this one, bringing forth his children so that they would especially pity him, and other members of his family and many friends, whereas I will do none of this, even though I run, I might suppose, the ultimate risk. Someone who realized this might be more hard-hearted towards me and resenting this  
d might cast his vote in anger. If this is really how any of you feel—I don't expect that it is, but if so—it seems reasonable for me to say to that person "I, Sir, have a family, you know, and was born neither "from oak or from rock" this is again an expression of Homer,\* but from human beings, so that I have a family too, and indeed sons, gentlemen, three of them, one already a teenager and two who are children. But nonetheless I will not beg you to acquit me by bringing any of them here."

e So why then won't I do any of these things? Not out of stubbornness, men of Athens, nor out of disrespect for you. Whether or not I am confident in the face of death is another story, but with respect to reputation, both mine and yours and the whole city's, I don't think it's right for me to do any of these things at my age and with my reputation. Be it true or false, at any rate people have decided that Socrates is in fact  
35a superior to most men in some respect and if any of you acted like that while thinking himself to be superior either in wisdom or courage or in any other virtue, it would be shameful. I have often seen some people like this when they are on trial, thinking themselves to be something, carrying on remarkably, as though they thought that something terrible would happen if they die, as if they would be immortal if you did not kill them.

b And these people seem to bring shame upon the city, so that some stranger might think that the foremost of the Athenians in virtue, whom the Athenians nominate ahead of themselves for offices and other honors, they are no better than women. Those of you who are thought to be something in any way whatsoever, men of Athens, should not do these things, and if we do them you should not permit it but make this very thing clear, that you will more readily convict a person who puts on these miserable theatrics and makes a laughingstock of the city than one who holds his peace.

c Apart from reputation, gentlemen, I do not think it is right to beg the judges nor to be acquitted by begging, but to teach and persuade instead. The judge does not sit for this reason, to hand out justice as a gift, but for the purpose of judging the case. He did not swear to do favors for whomever he feels like, but to judge according to the laws. We should not accustom you to breaking your oath and neither should you accustom yourselves; neither of us would then be acting piously. Do not, then, men of Athens, expect that I should act towards you in a way that I think is  
d neither fine nor just nor holy, especially when, by Zeus, I am charged precisely with impiety by Meletos here. Clearly, if by begging I persuaded and convinced you who had sworn an oath, I would be teaching you to

think that the gods do not exist, and in defending myself I would obviously be accusing myself of not acknowledging the gods. But this is not at all how things are, since I believe, men of Athens, whereas none of my accusers believe. And I trust you and the god to decide my case in whatever way you think is best both for me and for you.

[The judges vote and Socrates is found guilty by 280 votes to 220. The next stage of the trial involves each side proposing a penalty. The prosecution proposes the death penalty.]

e  
36a            Many other things contribute to my lack of anger, men of Athens, over what has just happened, that you found me guilty, and I am not surprised that what happened happened. Indeed, I am much more amazed at the final number of each of the votes, since I, at least, did not think it would be by such a small margin, but by a large one. It now appears that if only thirty votes had changed sides, I would have been acquitted. I myself think that I was acquitted of Meletos' charges, and not just acquitted—it is clear to everyone that if Anytos and Lykon had not joined him in accusing me, he would have owed a thousand drachmas for not receiving a fifth of the votes.\*

b  
                  The man proposes death as my penalty. Well then. Shall I make a counterproposal to you, Athenian men? Or is it clear what I deserve? What, then? What do I deserve to suffer or pay, knowing that I have not gone about quietly throughout my life but I have paid no attention to what the masses care about, money and estate and generalships and political power and other offices and clubs and political parties present in the city, realizing that in reality I am too honorable a person to pursue these things and survive. I did not participate in the things that it would likely have helped neither you nor myself for me to get into, but I set about accomplishing the greatest good, as I declare, by going to each of you privately, trying to persuade each one of you not to put concern for any of his own affairs ahead of concern for how he himself might be as good and wise as possible, nor to put political influence ahead of the city itself, and to care for other things in the same way—what do I deserve for being such a person? Something good, men of Athens, if I must indeed make a proposal truly in accordance with merit. And more than that, some good which fitting for me. What then is fitting for a poor man in need of a benefactor to be at leisure to instruct you? There is nothing more fitting, Athenian men, than to feed such a man at the prytaneum, even more so than if one of you had won a race on a single horse, or in a two- or four-horse chariot at Olympia. For while he makes you think that you are happy, I make you happy, and while he does not need the nourishment, I do. So if I must propose a penalty according to justice based on merit, I propose this, dinner in the prytaneum.

c  
d  
e  
37a

                  Perhaps in saying this I seem to be speaking to you in about the same way as I spoke about pitying and imploring—out of arrogance. But it is not because of that, Athenian men, but more because of the following sort of thing: I am convinced that I wrong no man willingly. But I cannot convince you of this, since we have been talking it over with each other for

b only a short time, whereas, I think, if your practice was the same as other people's, to deliberate about death penalty cases not just for one day but for many, you would be convinced. But, as it stands, it's not easy to demolish great prejudices in a short time.

c Since I am convinced that I do no wrong, I am far from wronging myself and saying against myself that I deserve something bad and proposing something of the sort for myself. Why should I? Because I'm afraid of something? So that I can avoid what Meletos proposes for me, when I claim not to know whether it is good or bad? Should I choose something that I am sure is something bad instead of this, and propose it as a penalty? What? Prison? And why must I live in the prison, enslaved to the authorities who are periodically appointed, the Eleven?\* Or how about a fine, with imprisonment until I have paid? But in my case this is the same as what I just said, since I don't have money to pay with.

d Well then, shall I propose exile? You would probably accept this. But I would have an excessive love of life, men of Athens, if I were so stupid that I was unable to infer from the fact that you, my fellow citizens, could not bear my discussions and speeches, but they became so burdensome and so resented that you now seek to be free of them—would others willingly put up with them? Far from it, men of Athens. It would be a fine life for me, a man going into exile at my age, to spend my life being driven out and traipsing from one city to another. I'm quite sure that wherever I might go, the young will listen to me speak, just like here. And if I drive them away, they themselves will persuade their elders to drive me away; and if I don't drive them away, their fathers and relations will do so on their behalf.

e Perhaps someone might say, "Can't you live quietly and peacefully in exile, Socrates, for our sake?" This is the hardest thing of all to make some of you believe. For if I say that this would be to disobey the god and so, because of this, I cannot live peacefully, you would think I was being ironic and not believe me. If instead I say that in fact this is the greatest good for a man, to talk every day about virtue and the other things you hear me converse about when I examine both myself and others—the life without examination being not worth living for a man—you would believe this even less if I said it. As I say, this is how things are, gentlemen; it is not easy to persuade you.

38a And besides I am not accustomed to thinking of myself as worthy of anything bad. If I had money, I would propose as much money as I could pay, since it wouldn't harm me at all. But as it is I don't have it, unless you are willing to propose as much as I can pay. And perhaps I could somehow pay you a mina of silver. So I propose that amount. ...

b Plato here, Athenian men, and Crito and Critoboulos and Apollodoros, they order me to propose thirty minas, and they guarantee it. So I propose that amount, and these men will be dependable guarantors of your silver.

[The jury votes in favor of the death penalty, 360-140.]

c You will gain the reputation and responsibility among those who wish to criticize the city, men of Athens, for putting Socrates to death, a wise man—they say I am wise, even if I am not, those people who wish to rebuke you—just so you could gain a little time, whereas if you had waited a short time, this would have happen for you of its own accord, since you see that I am already advanced in years and that death is near. I say this  
d not to all of you, but to those who voted to execute me.

And I say the following to those same people: perhaps you think, gentlemen, that I was condemned because I lacked the words that would convince you, as if I thought I must do and say everything possible to escape the charge. Far from it. I was condemned by a lack, certainly not of words, but of audacity and shamelessness and my unwillingness to say to you what would be sweetest for you to hear—to hear me lamenting and wailing and doing and saying many other things that are unworthy of me,  
e as I say, which you are used to hearing from other people. But I did not think at the time that I should do anything slavish on account of the danger.

Nor do I now regret how I defended myself—I would much rather choose to die having made that kind of defense than live having made the other kind. Neither on trial nor in war should I or anyone else resort to this  
39a so that he avoids death by doing everything possible. Indeed, in battles it often becomes clear that a man could escape death by throwing aside his arms and begging his pursuers for mercy, and there are many other ways of fleeing death in each dangerous situation, provided one has the audacity to do and say anything.

b It's not that it's not difficult to escape death, gentlemen, but it's much harder to escape villainy, since it runs faster than death. And now, because I am a slow old man, I am being overtaken by the slower of the two, and my accusers, because they are clever and keen, by the swifter, by wickedness. And I am going away now, having been condemned to death by you, while they have been condemned to wickedness and injustice by the truth. And both I and they will keep to our punishment. I suppose this is how it had to be, and I think it's reasonable.

c Next, I want to foretell the future to you my condemners, since I am now at the moment when men especially prophesy, whenever they are about to be put to death. I declare that retribution will come to you swiftly after my death, you men who have killed me, more troublesome, by Zeus, than the retribution you took when you sentence me to death. You have done this just now trying to avoid giving an account of your life, but I think the complete reverse will occur. You will have more prosecutors,  
d who I was holding back until now, though you did not notice, and by as much as they are younger they will be more troublesome, and you will be more enraged. If you think that killing people will prevent anyone from rebuking you for not living properly, you are not thinking straight, since this escape is scarcely possible nor noble, whereas escape from the other is noblest and easiest, not cutting down others but equipping oneself so that one can be as good as possible. With this prophecy to you who sentence me, I depart.

e I would gladly discuss with those who acquitted me, on behalf of



40a what has come to pass, while the officials are busy and I am not yet on my way to the place where I must die when I arrive. Wait with me, gentlemen, for that long, since nothing prevents us from chatting together while we can. Since you are my friends, I want to show to you the meaning of what just happened to me.

b Something surprising happened to me, judges—and by calling you "judges" I would be using the word appropriately. Always in the past my usual divine prophetic sense was very strong and would even oppose me on detailed points if I was about to do something improper. But what happened to me just now, as you yourselves see, was what people might think, and do think, to be the worst of evils. And yet the sign of the god has not opposed me either when I left home at dawn, nor when I arrived here in court, nor at any point during my speech when I was about to say something, whereas in many other speeches it has often stopped me, right as I was speaking. But now in this affair it has not been opposed to anything I have said or done.

c So what do I take to be the cause of this? I will tell you. There's a good chance that what has happened to me is a good thing and that we understand death incorrectly, those of us who think death is something bad. I have strong evidence for this, since it is impossible that my customary sign would have failed to oppose me, unless I was about to do something good.

Let us also consider how there is great hope that it's a good thing in the following way: Now, death is one of two things, since it's either a kind of not being, and the dead person has no perception of anything, or, according to what is said, it is a certain change and migration of the soul from its place here to another place.

d And if it is the absence of perception and the kind of sleep when someone sleeps without having any dreams, death would be a wonderful gift—because I think if someone took that night when he slept so soundly that he did not have a dream and compared the other nights and days of his life with this night, and when he looked, had to say how many days and nights he had lived in his life that were better and more sweet than this night, I think that he, not only a private citizen but the great king, would find it easy to count them in comparison with other days and nights—if death is like this, I claim it is a gift, since all of time would seem to be nothing more than a single night.

e If, in turn, death is a kind of migration from here to another place, and what's said is true and perhaps all of the dead are there, what greater good could there be than this, judges? If someone arrived in Hades, having moved on from these so-called judges here, he will find those who were truly judges, who are also said to judge there, Minos and Rhadamanthos and Aiakos and Triptolemos and as many other demigods who were judges in their own life-times. Would it be unpleasant to depart? Or on the other hand, to spend time with Orpheus and Musaios and Hesiod and Homer, how much would any of you give? I am willing to die many times  
41a if this is true, since I personally would find life there to be most amazing, if I could meet with Palamedes and Ajax, son of Telamon, and any of the other ancients who was put to death by an unjust decision, and measure  
b

my experience against theirs. I think it would not be unpleasant. And the greatest thing would be examining and tracking down which of them is wise and who thinks so but isn't, just like I do to people here.

c How much, judges, would you give to quiz the leader of the great army against Troy, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, or many others one might mention, both men and women, with whom it would be indescribably marvelous to debate there and pass the time and investigate? I should certainly hope that the people there would not put someone to death for that, since the people there are happier than those here in other respects and are even immortal for the rest of time, if what is said is true.

d And so you too must be optimistic about death, judges, and hold this one thing to be true, that for a good man there is nothing evil either in living or dying. And neither do their deeds go unnoticed by the gods. My own actions did not happen by themselves, but it is clear to me that it was to my advantage to die now and be released from my troubles. Because of this, my sign never deterred me and I am not at all angry at those who voted against me and not much at my accusers, even though they did not vote against me or accuse me with this in mind, but instead did so  
e intending to harm me, and they deserve to be blamed for this.

42a Nonetheless, I request the following from them: look after my sons, when they have grown, gentlemen. Take your revenge by giving them the same trouble I gave you, if they seem to prioritize money or anything else ahead of virtue or if they think they are something when they are not. Reproach them as I reproached you, that they do not care about what they ought to and that they think they are something special when they are worth nothing. If you would do this, I will have been served justice by you, along with my sons.

And now it really is time to depart, I to be executed and you to continue living. But which of us goes to a better life is unclear to everyone except to the god.

## NOTES

- 17a *men of Athens*. The proper form of address is "gentlemen jurors", which Socrates uses later. (See 40a.)
- 17d *seventy*. The year is 399 BCE, which puts Socrates' birth at 469 BCE. Other references to Socrates' age are made by him at 17c, 25d, 34e, 37d, *Crito* 43b, 49a, 52e
- 18d *a comic playwright*. In his play *Clouds* of 423, Aristophanes had portrayed a Socrates who was head of a 'Thinkery' of students engaged in natural science and cosmological speculation, and in argumentation. His name is given in 19c. The caricature seems to be a combination of two types: the natural scientist and the sophist, for which see the next note.
- 19e-20a *able to teach ... a wise man*. The names given are all names of *sophists* (20a), teachers of rhetoric, typically, for a fee.
- 20b *five mina*. (See also 38b for "a mina of silver".) A mina was 100 silver drachmas (see 26e, 36b) and a drachma was equivalent to 6 obols. Daily earnings ranged from 2-6 obols. Admission to the theatre was two obols. Pay for being a judge (jury duty) was two obols.
- 20e-21b *Delphi ... Pythia*. At Delphi one could ask questions of the god Apollo via his oracle, a priestess known as the Pythia.
- 21a *in the democracy ... in the recent exile*. Athens was subject to violent political turmoil between rival factions who wanted to restrict the ruling positions to a small number (oligarchs) or broaden it to more (democrats). See also 32c.
- 22a *dithyramb*. A hymn to Dionysus, sung by a chorus.
- 26d *Anaxagoras of Klazomenai*. A natural scientist who lived from 500 to 428 BCE. An associate of Pericles. He was charged, like Socrates, with impiety, and was sentenced to exile.
- 28c-d The son of Thetis is Achilles. His reply to his mother's prophecy is from *Iliad* 18.98.
- 34d *expression of Homer*. From *Odyssey* 19.163.
- 36a-b *a fifth of the votes*. 280 votes divided by 3 accusers is 93.33 votes each, less than 1/5 of 500. Burnet (p. 229) states that the guilty verdict was due to "the special position of Anytus, who was notoriously a moderate man."
- 37c *The Eleven*. Elected officials in charge of prisons, executions and confiscations. See [Athenian Constitution 52](#) at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/medieval/athe6.htm#52>.

**CRITO**

ΚΡΙΤΩΝ

**PLATO**

ΠΛΑΤΩΝ

- 43a Socrates (So): Why have you come at this hour, Crito? Or isn't it still early?  
 Crito (Cr): It certainly is.  
 So: About what time is it?  
 Cr: Just before dawn.  
 So: I'm surprised that the prison guard was willing to admit you.  
 Cr: He is used to me by now, Socrates, since I visit here so often. And besides, I have done him a good turn.  
 So: Did you get here just now or a while ago?  
 Cr: Quite a while ago.
- b So: So how come you didn't you wake me up immediately, but sat by in silence?  
 Cr: By Zeus, no, Socrates. I wish I myself were not so sleepless and sorrowful, and so I have been marveling at you, when I see how peacefully you've been sleeping. I deliberately didn't wake you so that you would pass the time as peacefully as possible. Even before now I have often thought you fortunate on account of your demeanor towards your entire life, and even more so in your present misfortune, how easily and calmly you bear it.  
 So: It's because it would be out of tune, Crito, to be angry at my age if I must finally die.
- c Cr: And yet others of your age, Socrates, have been caught up in such misfortunes, but their age does not prevent any of them from being angry at his fate.  
 So: That's true. But why did you come so early?  
 Cr: Carrying troubling news, Socrates, though not for you, as it appears, but deeply troubling for me and all of your friends, and I, it seems, am among the most heavily burdened.  
 So: What is it? Has the ship arrived from Delos,\* upon whose arrival
- d I must die?  
 Cr: No, it hasn't arrived, but it looks like it will arrive today, based on what some people who have come from Sounion\* report, who left it there. It's clear from this that it will arrive today, and you will have to end your life tomorrow, Socrates.  
 So: May it be for the best, Crito. If this pleases the gods, so be it. However, I don't think it will come today.
- 44a Cr: Where do you get your evidence for this?  
 So: I will tell you. I must be put to death sometime the day after the ship arrives?  
 Cr: That's what the authorities in these matters say, at least.  
 So: In that case, I don't think it will arrive this coming day, but the next. My evidence is something I saw in a dream a little while ago during the night. It's likely that you chose a very good time not to wake me.  
 Cr: Well, what was the dream?  
 So: A woman appeared, coming towards me, fine and good-looking, wearing white clothing. She called to me and said, "Socrates, you shall arrive in fertile Phthia on the third day."\*
- b Cr: What a strange dream, Socrates.  
 So: But obvious, at least as it appears to me, Crito.

Cr: Too obvious, perhaps. But, my supernatural Socrates, even now listen to me and be saved. I think that if you die it won't just be *one* misfortune. Apart from being separated from the kind of friend the like of which I will never find again, many people, moreover, who do not know me and you well will think that I could have saved you if I were willing to spend the money, but that I didn't care to. And wouldn't this indeed be the most shameful reputation, that I would seem to value money above friends? For the many will not believe that it was you yourself who refused to leave here, even though we were urging you to.

So: But why should we, blessed Crito, care so much about the opinion of the many? The best people, who are more deserving of our attention, will believe that the matter was handled in just the way it was.

Cr: But surely you see, Socrates, that we must pay attention to the opinion of the many, too. The present circumstances make it clear that the many can inflict not just the least of evils but practically the greatest, when one has been slandered amongst them.

So: If they were of any use, Crito, the many would be able to do the greatest evils, and so they would also be able to do the greatest goods, and that would be fine. But as it is they can do neither, since they cannot make a man either wise or foolish, but they do just whatever occurs to them.

Cr: Well, let's leave that there. But tell me this, Socrates. You're not worried, are you, about me and your other friends, how, if you were to leave here, the informers would make trouble for us, about how we stole you away from here, and we would be compelled either to give up all our property or a good deal of money, or suffer some other punishment at their hands? If you have any such fear, let it go, because it is our obligation to run this risk in saving you and even greater ones if necessary. So trust me and do not refuse.

So: I certainly am worried about these things, Crito, and lots of others too.

Cr: Well don't fear them. Indeed, some people only need to be given a little silver and they're willing to rescue you and get you out of here. And on top of that, don't you see how cheap those informers are and that we wouldn't need to spend a lot of money on them? My money is at your disposal, and is, I think, sufficient. Furthermore, even if, because of some concern for me, you think you shouldn't spend my money, there are these visitors here who are prepared to spend theirs. One of them has brought enough silver for this very purpose, Simmias of Thebes, and Kebes too is willing, and very many others. So, as I say, don't give up on saving yourself because you are uneasy about these things.

And don't let what you said in the court get to you, that you wouldn't know what to do with yourself as an exile. In many places, wherever you go, they would welcome you. And if you want to go to Thessaly, I have some friends there who will think highly of you and provide you with safety, so that no one in Thessaly will harass you.

What's more, Socrates, what you are doing doesn't seem right to me, giving yourself up when you could have been saved, ready to have happen to you what your enemies would urge—and did urge—in their wish to destroy you.

d In addition, I think you are betraying your sons, whom you could raise and educate, by going away and abandoning them, and, as far as you are concerned, they can experience whatever happens to come their way, when it's likely that as orphans they'll get the usual treatment of orphans. One should either not have children or endure the hardship of raising and educating them, but it looks to me as though you are taking the laziest path, whereas you must choose the path a good and brave man would choose, especially when you keep saying that you care about virtue your whole life long.

e So I am ashamed both on your behalf and on behalf of us your friends, that this whole affair surrounding you will be thought to have happened due to some cowardice on our part: the hearing of the charge in court, that it came to trial when it need not have, and the legal contest itself, how it was carried on, and, as the absurd part of the affair, that by some badness and cowardice on our part we will be thought to have let  
46a this final act get away from us, we who did not save you, nor you save yourself, when it was possible and we could have done so if we were of the slightest use. So see, Socrates, whether this is both evil and shameful, for you and for us as well. Think over—or rather, there's no longer time for thinking but only for deciding—this one consideration, because everything must be done this coming night; if we hang around any longer it will be impossible and we'll no longer be able to. So in every way, Socrates, believe me and do not refuse.

b So: My dear Crito, your eagerness would be worth a lot if it were in pursuit of something righteous, but the more it is not, the more difficult it is to deal with. We must therefore examine whether we should do this or not, because as always, and not just now for the first time, I am the sort of person who is persuaded in my soul by nothing other than the argument which seems best to me upon reflection. At present I am not able to  
c abandon the arguments I previously made, now that this misfortune has befallen me, but they appear about the same to me, and I defer to and honor the ones I did previously. If we have nothing better than them to offer under the present circumstances, rest assured that I will not agree with you, not if, even more so than at present, the power of the multitude were to spook us as though we were children, imposing chains and deaths and monetary fines upon us.

d What's the most reasonable way we can examine this matter? If we first resume this argument that you give about reputations, whether it was correct on each occasion when we said that one must pay attention to the opinions of some people and not to others'? Was this the correct thing to say before I had to die, whereas now it has become obvious that it was mentioned instead for the sake of argument and was actually just playing around and hot air?

e I am determined to examine this together with you, Crito, whether it appears different when I consider it in this condition, or the same, and whether we should ignore it or be persuaded by it. It is always put like this, I think, by people who think there is something in it, like I put it just now: that it is necessary to pay serious attention to some of the opinions that men hold and not to others. By the gods, Crito, doesn't this seem

47a correct to you? Because you, as far as any human can tell, are in no danger of being executed tomorrow and the present misfortune should not lead you astray. Have a look, then. Is it fair enough to say that one should not value every human opinion but only some and not others? Not the opinions of everyone but of some and not others? What do you say? Isn't this right?

Cr: Yes, that's right.

So: Shouldn't we value the good opinions, and not the worthless ones?

Cr: Yes.

So: Aren't the good ones the opinions of the wise, while the worthless ones come from the ignorant?

Cr: Of course.

b So: So then, what did we say, again, about cases such as this: should a man in training, who takes it seriously, pay any heed to the praise and blame and opinion of everyone, or only to one person, the one who is a doctor or a trainer?

Cr: Only to the one.

So: So he should fear the criticisms and welcome the praises of that one person, and not those of the many?

Cr: Clearly.

So: He must practice and exercise, and eat and drink, in the way that seems best to that one person, the trainer and expert, more than to all the others together.

Cr: That's right.

c So: Well then. If he disobeys this one man and dishonors his opinion and his praises and instead honors those of the many who know nothing about it, won't he suffer some harm?

Cr: How could he not?

So: What is this harm, and what does it tend to do, and in what part of the disobedient person?

Cr: It's clear that it's in the body, since this is what it destroys.

d So: Well said. Isn't it the same with the others, not go to over them all but in particular justice and injustice and shameful and fine things and good and bad, which is what our current discussion is about, whether we must follow the opinion of the many and fear it or instead the opinion of the one person, if there is someone who has knowledge, whom we must defer to and fear more than all the others together? If we do not heed his opinion we will corrupt and harm that part of us which becomes better with justice and is destroyed by injustice. Or don't you think so?

Cr: I do indeed, Socrates.

e So: Tell me, if we destroy that part of us which is improved by what is wholesome and corrupted by what is sickening because we do not obey the opinion of the person who knows, is life worth living when that part is ruined? This is the body, I suppose. Or not?

Cr: Yes.

So: Then is life worth living with a wretched and corrupt body?

Cr: Not at all.

So: And is life worth living after the part of us which injustice



injures and justice benefits has been corrupted? Or do you think this is unimportant in comparison with the body, this part of us, whatever it is, that injustice and justice affect?

48a

Cr: Not at all.

So: But more valuable?

Cr: Much more.

So: So, best of men, we must not pay much heed to what the many will say to us, but to what the one who knows about just and unjust things will say, to that one person, and to the truth itself. So you were wrong, at the beginning, to bring this up, that we must heed the opinion of the many concerning just things and noble things and good things and their opposites. "But in spite of that," someone might declare, "the many can put us to death."

b

Cr: That too is obvious, for someone might say so, Socrates. You're right.

So: But, you wonderful fellow, it seems to me that the following statement, too, which we have been over before, still remains the same as it did previously. So examine again whether or not it still holds true for you, that it's not living that should be our priority, but living well.

Cr: Why, of course it's still true.

So: And that this is living well and finely and justly, does that remain true or not?

Cr: It remains true.

c

So: Therefore, based on what you've agreed, we must examine the following, whether it is just or unjust for me to try to leave here, when I was not acquitted by the Athenians. And if it seems just let's try it, and if not, let's abandon it. As for the points you make about spending money and reputation and the upbringing of children, Crito, I suspect that these are really questions belonging to people who would casually put someone to death and resurrect him, if they could, without any thought—to the members of the multitude.

d

As for us, since the argument requires it, I suppose we should examine precisely what we just mentioned, whether we will act justly, we who lead as well as we who are led, by giving money and thanks to those who will get me out of here, or whether we will in fact act unjustly by doing all of this. If we think that we're acting unjustly by doing these things, I don't think we should take into consideration whether we will die if we hold our ground and keep our peace, or anything else we will suffer, rather than whether we're acting unjustly.

Cr: I think you put that well, Socrates. See what we should do, then.

e

So: Let's look together, my good man, and if at any point you have an objection to what I am saying, make it and I will persuade you; if not, you blessed man, finally quit saying the same thing over and over, that I have to get out of here against the will of the Athenians. I think it is most important to act with your consent and not against your will. See, then, that the starting point of the inquiry is laid down to your satisfaction and try to answer the questions in the way you think best.

49a

Cr: I shall certainly try.

So: Do we say that we should never willingly act unjustly, or that

b we should in some instances and not in others? Or is acting unjustly never good or noble, as we often agreed on previous occasions? Or have all our previous agreements been overturned in these last few days, and did we fail to notice long ago, Crito, that at our age we ourselves are no different from children when we have serious discussions with one another? Or above all isn't it the same as was said to us then? Whether the many agree or not, and whether we must additionally suffer harsher things than these or gentler, nevertheless acting unjustly is evil and shameful in every way for the person who does it. Do we say this or not?

Cr: We do.

So: And so one must never act unjustly.

Cr: By no means.

So: And so one should not repay an injustice with an injustice, as the many think, since one should never act unjustly.

c Cr: It appears not.

So: What next? Should one cause harm, Crito, or not?

Cr: Presumably not, Socrates.

So: And then? Is returning a harm for a harm just, as the many say, or not just?

Cr: Not at all.

So: Because harming a man in any way is no different from doing an injustice.

Cr: That's true.

d So: One must neither repay an injustice nor cause harm to any man, no matter what one suffers because of him. And see to it, Crito, that in agreeing with this you are not agreeing contrary to what you believe, because I know that few people believe it and would continue to believe it. And there is no common ground between those who hold this and those who don't, but when they see each other's positions they are bound to despise one other. So think carefully about whether you yourself agree and believe it and let us begin thinking from here, that it is never right to act unjustly or to return an injustice or to retaliate when one has suffered some harm by repaying the harm. Do you reject or accept this starting principle?

e For it still seems good to me now, as it did long ago, but if it looked some other way to you, speak up and educate me. If you're sticking to what we said before, listen to what comes next.

Cr: I do stick to it, and I accept it. Go ahead.

So: Here in turn is the next point. Or rather, I'll ask you: when someone has made an agreement with someone else, and it is just, must he keep to it or betray it?

Cr: He must keep to it.

50a So: Observe what follows from this. By leaving here without persuading the city are we doing someone a harm, and those whom we should least of all harm, or not? And are we keeping to the just agreements we made, or not?

Cr: I'm unable to answer what you're asking, Socrates; I don't know.

So: Well, look at it this way. If the laws and the community of the city came to us when we were about to run away from here, or whatever it should be called, and standing over us were to ask, "Tell me, Socrates,

b what are you intending to do? By attempting this deed, aren't you planning to do nothing other than destroy us, the laws, and the civic community, as much as you can? Or does it seem possible to you that any city where the verdicts reached have no force but are made powerless and corrupted by private citizens could continue to exist and not be in ruins?"

c What will we say, Crito, to these questions and others like them? Because there's a lot more a person could say, especially an orator, on behalf of this law we're destroying, which establishes the verdicts that have been decided as sovereign. Or will we say to them "The city treated us unjustly and did not decide the case properly"? Will we say this or something like it?

Cr: By Zeus, that's what we'll say, Socrates.

d So: What if the laws then said, "Socrates, did we agree on this, we and you, to honor the decisions that the city makes?" And if we were surprised to hear them say this, perhaps they would say, "Socrates, don't be surprised at what we're saying but answer, since you are used to participating in questioning and answering. Come then, what reason can you give us and the city for trying to destroy us? Did we not, to begin with, give birth to you? And wasn't it through us that your father married your mother and conceived you? So show those of us, the laws concerning marriages, what fault you find that keeps them from being good?" "I find no fault with them," I would say.

e "What about the laws concerning the upbringing and education of children, by which you too were raised? Or didn't those of us, the laws established on this matter, give good instructions when they directed your father to educate you in the arts and gymnastics?" "They did," I would say.

51a "Well, then. Since you have been born and brought up and educated, could you say that you were not our offspring and slave from the beginning, both you and your ancestors? And if this is so, do you suppose that justice between you and us is based on equality, and do you think that whatever we might try to do to you, it is just for you to do these things to us in return? Justice between you and your father, or your master if you happened to have one, was not based on equality, so that you could not do whatever you had suffered in return, neither speak back when crossed nor strike back when struck nor many other such things. Will you be allowed to do this to your homeland and the laws, so that, if we try to destroy you, thinking this to be just, you will then try to destroy us the laws and your homeland in return with as much power as you have and claim that you're acting justly in doing so, the man who truly cares about virtue?

b Are you so wise that it has slipped your mind that the homeland is deserving of more honor and reverence and worship than your mother and father and all of your other ancestors? And is held in higher esteem both by the gods and by men of good sense? And that when she is angry you should show her more respect and compliance and obedience than your father, and either convince her or do what she commands, and suffer without complaining if she orders you to suffer something? And that whether it is to be beaten or imprisoned, or to be wounded or killed if she leads you into war, you must do it? And that justice is like this, and that

c you must not be daunted or withdraw or abandon your position, but at war and in the courts and everywhere you must do what the city and the homeland orders, or convince her by appealing to what is naturally just? And that it is not holy to use force against one's mother or father, and it is so much worse to do so against one's homeland?" What will we say to this, Crito? That the laws speak the truth? Or not?

Cr: It looks so to me.

d So: "Consider, then, Socrates" the laws might say, "whether we speak the truth about the following: that it is not just for you to try to do to us what you're now attempting. For we gave birth to you, brought you up, educated you, and gave you and all the other citizens everything we could that's good, and yet even so we pronounce that we have given the power to any Athenian who wishes, when he has been admitted as an adult and sees the affairs of the city and us the laws and is not pleased with us, to take his possessions and leave for wherever he wants. And if any among you wants to live in a colony because we and the city do not satisfy him, or if he wants to go somewhere else and live as a foreigner, none of us laws stands in the way or forbids him from taking his possessions with him and leaving for wherever he wants.

e But whoever remains with us, having observed how we decide lawsuits and take care of other civic matters, we claim that this man by his action has now made an agreement with us to do what we command him to do, and we claim that anyone who does not obey is guilty three times over, because he disobeys us who gave birth to him, and who raised him, and because, despite agreeing to be subject to us, he does not obey us or persuade us if we are doing something improper, and although we give him an alternative and don't angrily press him to do what we order but instead we allow either of two possibilities, either to persuade us or to comply, he does neither of these.

52a

b We say that you especially will be liable to these charges, Socrates, if indeed you carry out your plans, and you not least of the Athenians but most of all." If, then, I would say, "How do you mean?", perhaps they would scold me justly, saying that I have made this agreement more than other Athenians. They might say "Socrates, we have great evidence for this, that we and the city satisfy you. For you would never have lived here more than all of the other Athenians unless it seemed particularly good to you, and you never left the city for a festival, except once to Isthmos, but never to anywhere else, except on military duty, nor did you ever make another trip like other Athenians, nor did any urge seize you to get to know a different city or other laws, but we and our city were sufficient for you.

c So intently did you choose us and agree to be governed by us that, in particular, because the city was satisfactory to you, you had children in it. Moreover, at your trial you could have proposed exile, if you had wished, and what you're now trying to do to the city without her consent, you could have done then with her consent. At the time, you prided yourself on not being angry if you had to die, and you chose death, you said, in preference to exile. But now you neither feel shame in the face of those words nor have you any respect for us the laws. By trying to destroy

d us you are doing what the most despicable slave would do, trying to run away contrary to the contract and the agreement by which you agreed to be governed by us. So answer us first on the particular point of whether or not we speak the truth in claiming that you agreed to be governed by us in deed and not merely in words." What can we say to this, Crito? Mustn't we agree?

Cr: We must, Socrates.

e So: "Aren't you", they might say, "going against your contract and agreement with us ourselves, which you were not forced to agree to nor deceived about nor compelled to decide upon in a short time but over  
53a seventy years, in which time you could have gone away if we did not satisfy you and these agreements did not appear just to you. You did not prefer Lakedaimonia\* nor Crete, each of which you claim is well-governed, nor any other of the Hellenic cities or the foreign ones, but you left it less than the lame and the blind and the other disabled people. Evidently the city and also we the laws were so much more pleasing to you than to other Athenians, for is a city without laws satisfactory to anyone? Now then, won't you keep to your agreement? You will, if you are convinced by us, at any rate, Socrates; and at least you won't look ridiculous by leaving the city.

b "Just think about what good it would do you and your friends if you break it and do wrong in one of these ways. It's pretty clear that your friends will risk exile along with you and disenfranchisement from the city and confiscation of their property. And if you first go to one of the closest cities, to Thebes or to Megara—since both are well-governed—you would be an enemy, Socrates, of those governments, and all those who care about their cities will regard you suspiciously, thinking that you are a destroyer of the laws. And you will confirm the opinion of the judges in thinking  
c that they judged the case correctly, since whoever is a destroyer of the laws would certainly be considered in some way a destroyer of young and foolish men.

d "Will you flee, then, from well-governed cities and from the most civilized people? Is it worth it to you to live like this? Will you associate with them, Socrates, and feel no shame when talking with them? What will you say, Socrates—what you said here, that virtue and justice are most valuable for humans and lawfulness and the laws? And you don't think the conduct of this Socrates will appear shameful? One should think so.

e "But will you leave these places and go to Crito's friends in Thessaly, since there is plenty of disorder and disobedience there? They might listen with pleasure to you, about how you amusingly ran away from prison wearing some costume or a peasant's vest or something else of the sort that runaways typically dress themselves in, altering your appearance. But still, will no one say that an old man, who probably only has a short time left in his life, was so greedy in his desire to live that he dared to violated the greatest laws? Perhaps not, if you do not annoy anyone. But if you do, Socrates, you will hear many dishonorable things about yourself. You will surely spend your life sucking up to everyone and being a slave. What else will you do but feast in Thessaly, as though you had traveled to Thessaly for dinner? And those speeches, the ones about

54a justice and the other virtues, where will they be?

"Is it for the sake of your children that you want to live, so that you can raise and educate them? What are you going to do, in that case? You'll raise and educate them by bringing them to Thessaly and making them outsiders, so that they will enjoy that benefit too? Or if not that, will they grow up better if they are raised and educated with you alive but away from them, because your friends will take care of them? Is it that if you go to Thessaly, they'll look after them, but if you go to Hades they won't? If those who claim to be your friends are any good, you must believe they will.

"So be convinced by we who brought you up, Socrates, and do not put children or life or anything else ahead of justice, so that when you go to Hades you will be able to provide all this as your defense to those who rule there. Since neither in this world, nor in the next when you arrive, will this action be thought better or more just or more pious for you and your friends to do. But as it is you leave us, if indeed you depart, having been done an injustice not by us, the laws, but by men. If you return the injustice, however, and repay the harm and flee in shame, having violated your agreement and contract with us and harmed those who least of all should be harmed, yourself, your friends, your homeland, and us, we will make life hard for you while you're alive, and then our brothers, the laws in Hades, will not receive you favorably, knowing that you also tried to destroy us as far as you were able. So do not be persuaded by Crito to do what he says instead of what we say."

Rest assured, my dear friend Crito, that this is what I seem to hear, just as the Korubantes\* seem to hear the pipes, and this sound, from these words, resonates within me and makes me unable to hear anything else. So be aware that, based on what I currently believe, at least, if you speak in opposition to this, you will speak in vain. Nevertheless, if you honestly think you can do something more, speak.

Cr: No, Socrates. I am unable to speak.

e So: Then let it be, Crito, and let us act in this way, since this is where the god leads us.

## NOTES

43c *ship arrived from Delos.* Socrates has spent a month in prison since the trial because he could not be executed until a religious mission returned from the island of Delos, the mythical birth-place of Artemis and Apollo and where Theseus slayed the minotaur, before returning to Athens.

43d *Sounion.* The tip of Attica; a headland 200 feet above sea-level bearing a temple to Poseidon.

44b *you shall arrive in fertile Phthia on the third day. Iliad 9.363.* Achilles is threatening to leave Troy and return home.

52e *Lakedaimonia.* Sparta.

54d *Korubantes.* In the cult of Kubele, worshippers danced as though possessed.

DEATH SCENE FROM  
**PHAEDO**

ΦΑΙΔΩΝ

**PLATO**

ΠΛΑΤΩΝ

114d8 "These are the reasons why a man ought to be confident about his  
 e soul, the man who, during his life, has shunned glamorous things and the  
 other pleasures of the body, considering them foreign to him and more the  
 goals of the opposite character, but instead has devoted himself to the  
 pleasures of learning and who, having beautified his soul with nothing but  
 115a its own adornments—namely self-control and justice and courage and  
 freedom and truth—awaits his journey to Hades accordingly, prepared to  
 go whenever fate calls. So while you," he said, "Simmias and Kebes and  
 you others, will each make this journey later when his time comes, as it is  
 now, fate, as a tragedian would say, is already calling me, and it is nearly  
 time that I go to the bath, because I think it is clearly better to bathe myself  
 before drinking the poison and save the women the trouble of bathing a  
 corpse."

b When he said this Crito asked, "Well then, Socrates, do you have  
 any final requests for these men or myself, concerning your children or  
 anything else, which we could do for you and so be of some particular  
 service to you?"

"The things I always say, Crito," he replied, "Nothing very new. By  
 taking good care of yourselves you are of service to me and my family as  
 well as yourselves, no matter what you do, even if you don't think so at  
 present. But if you neglect yourselves and are unwilling to live, as though  
 following tracks, in accordance with what we now say and have said in the  
 c past too, then no matter how much or how seriously you agree with me at  
 present you will accomplish next to nothing."

"We will certainly be eager to act in this way", he replied. "But how  
 should we bury you?"

"However you want to," he responded, "if you can actually catch me  
 and I don't escape you." And laughing quietly he turned to face us and  
 said, "Men, I can't convince Crito that I am this man Socrates who is  
 speaking right now and arranging each of his sentences. Instead, he thinks  
 d I am what he will shortly see as a corpse, and so he asks how he should  
 bury me. And what I have been going on about at length—about how,  
 after I drink the poison I will no longer be with you but will have  
 departed, going off to the particular joys of the blessed—it seems I was  
 saying these things to him for some other reason, encouraging you and  
 myself at the same time.

"So give Crito a guarantee for me," he said, "the opposite guarantee  
 to the one he gave the judges; for his was that I would stay, but you must  
 e guarantee him that I won't stay when I die, but will go away and leave, so  
 that Crito will more easily bear it and won't be angry on my behalf, as if I  
 am suffering something terrible when he sees my body being burned or  
 buried, nor say at my funeral that *Socrates* is being laid out, or carried out,  
 or buried. For rest assured, great Crito," said he, "speaking poorly is not  
 only discordant in itself, but also causes some harm to souls. But you must  
 be brave and say that you bury my body, and bury it in whatever manner  
 116a is best and as you think is customary."

Having said this he set off to bathe in another room, and Crito  
 followed him, but he ordered us to stay behind. So we stayed, talking  
 amongst ourselves about what had been said and re-examining it, and



then returned to dwell on how great a misfortune had befallen us, thinking that since we were being deprived of a father, we would literally be spending life hereafter as orphans.

b When he had bathed and his children had been brought in—he had two small sons and one older one—and the women of the family had come and he had spoken to them in Crito's presence and instructed them as he wanted, he ordered the women and children to leave and joined us. It was already close to sunset, for he had spent a long time inside. He came from his bath and sat down and didn't say much more after that. The servant of the Eleven\* came and, standing next to him, said "Socrates, I won't condemn you for what I convict others, that you will be angry with me and curse me when, on the orders of the magistrates, I tell them to drink the poison. This whole time I have found you in other ways to be the most noble and kind and best man of those who have ever come here. And so I am sure that now too you will be angry not with me but with those others, since you know the reasons. So now, because you know what I have come to tell you, farewell and try to bear what must be as easily as possible." d And he cried as he turned and left.

And Socrates looked in his direction and said "Farewell to you too. We will do it." And then to us he said, "How polite the man is. Throughout this whole time he has come to check on me and sometimes talked with me and was as kind as could be, and how genuinely he weeps for me now.

"But come on, Crito, let's obey him. Have someone bring in the poison, if it has been ground. If not, have the man grind it."

e And Crito said, "But I think there is still sun on the mountains, Socrates, and it is not quite sunset. And I know that others have taken the poison very late, after the order has been given to them, eating and drinking exceedingly well and having sex with some of the people they desire. So don't hurry. There is still time."

117a And Socrates said, "The people who act in this way, the ones you mention, Crito, act reasonably, because they think it will benefit them to do such things. But I will be reasonable by not doing them. For I think that drinking a little later will bring me nothing except looking ridiculous in my own eyes, clinging to life and sparing it when there's nothing left in it. So come, obey me and don't do otherwise."

And Crito heeded him and nodded to the boy who had been standing nearby, and the boy went out. After a long time had passed he came back leading the man who was to give the poison, which was ground up in a cup he was carrying. Seeing him, Socrates said "Well then, best of men, since you are the expert in these matters, what should I do?"

b "You only have to drink it," he said, "and walk around until you feel your legs become heavy. Then lie down, and from there it will work on its own." And at the same time he handed the cup to Socrates.

And taking it very good-naturedly, Echekrates, without fear and without changing color or expression, he looked at the man as would a bull and said "What do you say about pouring out an offering to a god from the drink? Is it allowed, or not?"

"We only prepare as much as we think is needed," he said.

c "I understand" said he. "But surely it is permissible, and necessary,

to pray to the gods, that my migration from here to there will be blessed. So I pray for this, that it will happen in this way." And as he said this he raised the cup and drank it down, very gently and calmly.

d Until then the majority of us had been able to keep ourselves from crying reasonably well, but when we saw him drinking and that he had finished it ... no longer. And my own tears poured out of me with the force of a flood, and I hid myself in shame and cried for myself—for truly I was crying not for him but for my own misfortune, that I was being deprived of a man like this as my friend. Crito had turned away even before I did, when he was unable to restrain his tears. Apollodoros had been crying throughout the entire time, and when he howled with grief and anger at that moment in particular, nobody who was present could help breaking down, except Socrates himself.

e And he said, "What a way to behave, you remarkable men! I sent the women away mainly for this reason, so that they would not make such an offensive sound, because I have heard that one must meet one's end in calmed silence. So be quiet and collect yourselves." And when we heard this we were ashamed and ceased crying.

118a He was walking around, and when he said his legs had become heavy, he lay down on his back—since this was what the man had instructed—and the man who had given him the poison took hold of him, and after a while examined his feet and legs and then squeezed his foot hard and asked if he felt it. He said that he didn't. After this, he squeezed his calves, and going higher in this way he showed us that he was cold and congealed. Socrates grasped himself and said that when it reached his heart, he would be gone.

And then when nearly all of the area around his belly was growing cold, he uncovered his head, for he had covered it, and said—he uttered his final words—"Crito," he said, "we owe a cock to Asklepios.\* Make the offering and don't forget."

"It will be done," Crito said. "But see if you have anything else to say."

He said nothing more in response to the question but after a short time he shuddered. The man uncovered him. His eyes were fixed. And Crito, seeing this, closed his mouth and eyes.

This, Echekrates, is how our friend passed away, a man who, we would say, was the best of those we have ever known and the most moderate and most just too.

#### NOTES

A star (\*) in the text indicates a note.

116b *the Eleven*. Elected officials in charge of prisons, executions and confiscations. See [Athenian Constitution 52](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/medieval/athe6.htm#52) at

118a *a cock to Asklepios*. Asklepios was the Greek god of medicine. The command "Make the offering and don't forget" is in the second person plural.