# Apology

PLATO
c. 428–348 BC

# Apology

Ἀπολογία Σωκράτους

*Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited*



FORAGE
forage.com

*Apology* · Plato (c. 428–348 BC)

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited. Parallel-text edition, Forage, October 2026. forage.com/plato/apology

Greek text: John Burnet, *Platonis Opera*, vol. 1 (Oxford), via the Perseus Digital Library (github.com/PerseusDL/canonical-greekLit), CC BY-SA 4.0. English: translated from the Greek with AI (Claude), edited, then independently checked against the Greek by a second AI model, using H. N. Fowler's 1914 translation as a cross-reference. Not reviewed by a human specialist. Free to reuse under CC BY-SA 4.0. Margin numbers are the standard Stephanus references.

The original text is in the public domain. This translation is free to share and adapt under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-SA 4.0): creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0

Set in Source Serif 4, with Gentium Book Plus.

# CONTENTS

**Introduction** ..... vii

**The Defense** ..... 1

The old accusers ..... 2

The oracle at Delphi ..... 4

Testing the oracle ..... 5

Questioning Meletus ..... 9

Holding his post ..... 14

The gadfly ..... 17

The divine sign ..... 18

Arginusae and the Thirty ..... 19

No appeal to pity ..... 22

**The Counter-Penalty** ..... 25

What Socrates deserves ..... 25

The unexamined life ..... 27

**Final Words** ..... 29

A prophecy for those who condemned him ..... 30

To those who voted to acquit ..... 30

Why death is not to be feared ..... 31

# INTRODUCTION

In 399 BC, Socrates, then about seventy, stood trial before a jury of five hundred Athenian citizens. His accusers — Meletus, backed by Anytus and Lycon — charged him with not recognizing the gods the city recognizes, introducing new divine things, and corrupting the young. The penalty they asked for was death.

The *Apology* is Plato's version of what Socrates said in his own defense. Plato was in the courtroom. The title comes from the Greek *apologia*, a speech of defense. Socrates never apologizes.

The work has three parts: the defense itself, Socrates' response after the jury finds him guilty, and his final words after it sentences him to death.

# The Defense

*Socrates answers the old slanders and the new charges.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 17a | ὅτι μὲν ὑμεῖς, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πεπόνθατε ὑπὸ τῶν ἐμῶν κατηγόρων, οὐκ οἶδα· ἐγὼ δ' οὖν καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὀλίγου ἐμαυτοῦ ἐπελαθόμην, οὕτω πιθανῶς ἔλεγον. καίτοι ἀληθές γε ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν οὐδὲν εἰρήκασιν. μάλιστα δὲ αὐτῶν ἓν ἐθαύμασα τῶν πολλῶν ὧν ἐψεύσαντο, τοῦτο ἐν ᾧ ἔλεγον ὡς χρῆν ὑμᾶς εὐλαβεῖσθαι μὴ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐξαπατηθῆτε [17b] ὡς δεινοῦ ὄντος λέγειν. τὸ γὰρ μὴ αἰσχυνθῆναι ὅτι αὐτίκα ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐξελεγχθήσονται ἔργῳ, ἐπειδὰν μηδ' ὁπωστιοῦν φαίνωμαι δεινὸς λέγειν, τοῦτό μοι ἔδοξεν αὐτῶν ἀναισχυντότατον εἶναι, εἰ μὴ ἄρα δεινὸν καλοῦσιν οὗτοι λέγειν τὸν τἀληθῆ λέγοντα· εἰ μὲν γὰρ τοῦτο λέγουσιν, ὁμολογοίην ἂν ἔγωγε οὐ κατὰ τούτους εἶναι ῥήτωρ. | How you have been affected by my accusers, men of Athens, I don't know. As for me, they nearly made me forget myself, so persuasively did they speak. And yet hardly a word of what they've said is true. But of the many lies they told, one astonished me most: when they said that you must be careful not to be deceived by me, [17b] since I'm a clever speaker. That they weren't ashamed that I would refute them on the spot, by the plain facts, as soon as it became clear that I'm not a clever speaker in any way at all—that seemed to me the most shameless thing about them, unless of course they call a clever speaker the one who speaks the truth. If that's what they mean, I would agree that I'm an orator—though not of their kind. |
| 17b | οὗτοι μὲν οὖν, ὥσπερ ἐγὼ λέγω, ἤ τι ἢ οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς εἰρήκασιν, ὑμεῖς δέ μου ἀκούσεσθε πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν—οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κεκαλλιεπημένους γε λόγους, ὥσπερ οἱ τούτων, [17c] ῥήμασί τε καὶ ὀνόμασιν οὐδὲ κεκοσμημένους, ἀλλ' ἀκούσεσθε εἰκῇ λεγόμενα τοῖς ἐπιτυχοῦσιν ὀνόμασιν—πιστεύω γὰρ δίκαια εἶναι ἃ λέγω—καὶ μηδεὶς ὑμῶν προσδοκησάτω ἄλλως· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν δήπου πρέποι, ὦ ἄνδρες, τῇδε τῇ ἡλικίᾳ ὥσπερ μειρακίῳ πλάττοντι λόγους εἰς ὑμᾶς εἰσιέναι. καὶ μέντοι καὶ πάνυ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοῦτο ὑμῶν δέομαι καὶ παρίεμαι· ἐὰν διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν λόγων ἀκούητέ μου ἀπολογουμένου δι' ὧνπερ εἴωθα λέγειν καὶ ἐν ἀγορᾷ ἐπὶ τῶν τραπεζῶν, ἵνα ὑμῶν πολλοὶ ἀκηκόασι, καὶ ἄλλοθι, μήτε [17d] θαυμάζειν μήτε θορυβεῖν τούτου ἕνεκα. ἔχει γὰρ οὑτωσί. | So these men, as I say, have said little or nothing true, but from me you will hear the whole truth. Not, by Zeus, men of Athens, in elegantly crafted speeches like theirs, [17c] nor dressed up with fine words and phrases. No, you will hear things said at random, in whatever words come to hand—for I trust that what I say is just—and let none of you expect anything else. It would hardly be fitting, gentlemen, for a man of my age to come before you making up speeches like a boy. And there's one thing, men of Athens, that I really do ask and beg of you. If you hear me making my defense in the same language I usually speak in, in the marketplace by the bankers' tables, where many of you have heard me, and elsewhere, don't [17d] be surprised and don't make a disturbance on that account. For here's how things stand. |
| 17d | νῦν ἐγὼ πρῶτον ἐπὶ δικαστήριον ἀναβέβηκα, ἔτη γεγονὼς ἑβδομήκοντα· ἀτεχνῶς οὖν ξένως ἔχω τῆς ἐνθάδε λέξεως. ὥσπερ οὖν ἄν, εἰ τῷ ὄντι ξένος ἐτύγχανον ὤν, συνεγιγνώσκετε δήπου ἄν μοι εἰ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ φωνῇ τε καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ [18a] ἔλεγον ἐν οἷσπερ ἐτεθράμμην, καὶ δὴ καὶ νῦν τοῦτο ὑμῶν δέομαι δίκαιον, ὥς γέ μοι δοκῶ, τὸν μὲν τρόπον τῆς λέξεως ἐᾶν—ἴσως μὲν γὰρ χείρων, ἴσως δὲ βελτίων ἂν εἴη—αὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο σκοπεῖν καὶ τούτῳ τὸν | This is the first time I have come up before a court, at seventy years of age. So I'm simply a stranger to the way people speak here. Now if I really were a foreigner, you would surely forgive me for speaking in the dialect and manner [18a] I was brought up in. In just the same way I now make this request of you—a just one, as it seems to me: let my manner of speaking go—it may be worse, it may be better— |

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | νοῦν προσέχειν, εἰ δίκαια λέγω ἢ μή· δικαστοῦ μὲν γὰρ αὕτη ἀρετή, ῥήτορος δὲ τἀληθῆ λέγειν. | and consider only this, and give your attention to it: whether what I say is just or not. For that is a juror's excellence, and an orator's is to tell the truth. |

## THE OLD ACCUSERS

*Socrates answers the long-standing rumors that he studies the heavens and teaches for pay.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 18a | πρῶτον μὲν οὖν δίκαιός εἰμι ἀπολογήσασθαι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πρὸς τὰ πρῶτά μου ψευδῆ κατηγορημένα καὶ τοὺς πρώτους κατηγόρους, ἔπειτα δὲ πρὸς τὰ ὕστερον καὶ τοὺς [18b] ὑστέρους. ἐμοῦ γὰρ πολλοὶ κατήγοροι γεγόνασι πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πάλαι πολλὰ ἤδη ἔτη καὶ οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς λέγοντες, οὓς ἐγὼ μᾶλλον φοβοῦμαι ἢ τοὺς ἀμφὶ Ἄνυτον, καίπερ ὄντας καὶ τούτους δεινούς· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνοι δεινότεροι, ὦ ἄνδρες, οἳ ὑμῶν τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐκ παίδων παραλαμβάνοντες ἔπειθόν τε καὶ κατηγόρουν ἐμοῦ μᾶλλον οὐδὲν ἀληθές, ὡς ἔστιν τις Σωκράτης σοφὸς ἀνήρ, τά τε μετέωρα φροντιστὴς καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς πάντα ἀνεζητηκὼς καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω [18c] ποιῶν. οὗτοι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, οἱ ταύτην τὴν φήμην κατασκεδάσαντες, οἱ δεινοί εἰσίν μου κατήγοροι· οἱ γὰρ ἀκούοντες ἡγοῦνται τοὺς ταῦτα ζητοῦντας οὐδὲ θεοὺς νομίζειν. | First, then, men of Athens, it's right for me to defend myself against the first false charges brought against me and against my first accusers, and then against the later charges and the [18b] later accusers. For many accusers have come before you against me, long ago now, over many years, saying nothing true; and I fear them more than Anytus and his associates, though these are dangerous too. But those others are more dangerous, gentlemen. They took hold of most of you from childhood and kept persuading you, accusing me—with nothing true—that there is a certain Socrates, a wise man, a thinker on the things in the heavens, who has investigated everything beneath the earth and makes the weaker argument the stronger. [18c] These men, men of Athens, the ones who spread this rumor, are my dangerous accusers. For those who hear it believe that people who investigate such things don't even believe in the gods.[1] |
| 18c | ἔπειτά εἰσιν οὗτοι οἱ κατήγοροι πολλοὶ καὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἤδη κατηγορηκότες, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ἡλικίᾳ λέγοντες πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ᾗ ἂν μάλιστα ἐπιστεύσατε, παῖδες ὄντες ἔνιοι ὑμῶν καὶ μειράκια, ἀτεχνῶς ἐρήμην κατηγοροῦντες ἀπολογουμένου οὐδενός. ὃ δὲ πάντων ἀλογώτατον, ὅτι οὐδὲ τὰ [18d] ὀνόματα οἷόν τε αὐτῶν εἰδέναι καὶ εἰπεῖν, πλὴν εἴ τις κωμῳδοποιὸς τυγχάνει ὤν. ὅσοι δὲ φθόνῳ καὶ διαβολῇ χρώμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀνέπειθον—οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ πεπεισμένοι ἄλλους πείθοντες—οὗτοι πάντες ἀπορώτατοί εἰσιν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀναβιβάσασθαι οἷόν τ' ἐστὶν αὐτῶν ἐνταυθοῖ οὐδ' ἐλέγξαι οὐδένα, ἀλλ' ἀνάγκη ἀτεχνῶς ὥσπερ σκιαμαχεῖν ἀπολογούμενόν τε καὶ ἐλέγχειν μηδενὸς ἀποκρινομένου. | Then again, these accusers are many, and they have been accusing me for a long time now; what's more, they spoke to you at the age when you would be most likely to believe them, when some of you were children or young men, prosecuting a case that simply went by default, with no one there to defend it. And the most unreasonable thing of all is that it isn't even possible to know their [18d] names and tell them to you—unless one of them happens to be a comic poet. All those who used envy and slander to persuade you—and those who, persuaded themselves, persuaded others—all of these are the hardest to deal with. I can't bring any of them up here, or cross-examine a single one of them; I simply have to fight with shadows, as it were, making my defense and cross-examining with no one to answer. |
| 18d | ἀξιώσατε οὖν καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὥσπερ ἐγὼ λέγω, διττούς μου τοὺς κατηγόρους γεγονέναι, ἑτέρους μὲν τοὺς ἄρτι | So you too should accept, as I say, that my accusers are of two kinds: some who accused me re- |

1 Anytus, a prominent democratic politician, was one of Socrates' three prosecutors, with Meletus and Lycon.

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | κατηγορήσαντας, ἑτέρους δὲ [18e] τοὺς πάλαι οὓς ἐγὼ λέγω, καὶ οἰήθητε δεῖν πρὸς ἐκείνους πρῶτόν με ἀπολογήσασθαι· καὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ἐκείνων πρότερον ἠκούσατε κατηγορούντων καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τῶνδε τῶν ὕστερον. | cently, and others [18e] long ago, the ones I'm speaking of. And you should agree that I must defend myself against those first; after all, you heard them accusing me earlier, and far more than these later ones. |
| 18e | εἶεν· ἀπολογητέον δή, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, καὶ ἐπιχειρητέον [19a] ὑμῶν ἐξελέσθαι τὴν διαβολὴν ἣν ὑμεῖς ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ ἔσχετε ταύτην ἐν οὕτως ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ. βουλοίμην μὲν οὖν ἄν τοῦτο οὕτως γενέσθαι, εἴ τι ἄμεινον καὶ ὑμῖν καὶ ἐμοί, καὶ πλέον τί με ποιῆσαι ἀπολογούμενον· οἶμαι δὲ αὐτὸ χαλεπὸν εἶναι, καὶ οὐ πάνυ με λανθάνει οἷόν ἐστιν. ὅμως τοῦτο μὲν ἴτω ὅπῃ τῷ θεῷ φίλον, τῷ δὲ νόμῳ πειστέον καὶ ἀπολογητέον. | Well then. I must make my defense, men of Athens, and try [19a] in so short a time to remove from you this slander which you have held for so long. I would like it to turn out that way, if that is better for both you and me, and I would like to accomplish something by my defense. But I think it is hard, and I'm well aware what sort of task it is. Still, let that go however the god pleases; I must obey the law and make my defense. |
| 19a | ἀναλάβωμεν οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τίς ἡ κατηγορία ἐστὶν ἐξ ἧς [19b] ἡ ἐμὴ διαβολὴ γέγονεν, ᾗ δὴ καὶ πιστεύων Μέλητός με ἐγράψατο τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην. εἶεν· τί δὴ λέγοντες διέβαλλον οἱ διαβάλλοντες; ὥσπερ οὖν κατηγόρων τὴν ἀντωμοσίαν δεῖ ἀναγνῶναι αὐτῶν· "Σωκράτης ἀδικεῖ καὶ περιεργάζεται ζητῶν τά τε ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ οὐράνια καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω [19c] ποιῶν καὶ ἄλλους ταὐτὰ ταῦτα διδάσκων." τοιαύτη τίς ἐστιν· ταῦτα γὰρ ἑωρᾶτε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀριστοφάνους κωμῳδίᾳ, Σωκράτη τινὰ ἐκεῖ περιφερόμενον, φάσκοντά τε ἀεροβατεῖν καὶ ἄλλην πολλὴν φλυαρίαν φλυαροῦντα, ὧν ἐγὼ οὐδὲν οὔτε μέγα οὔτε μικρὸν πέρι ἐπαΐω. | Let us go back to the beginning, then, and see what the accusation is from which [19b] the slander against me arose—the slander Meletus relied on when he brought this indictment against me. Well then: what exactly did the slanderers say when they slandered me? I must read out their sworn charge, as if they were formal prosecutors: "Socrates is guilty of wrongdoing and is a busybody, investigating the things beneath the earth and in the heavens, making the weaker argument the stronger, [19c] and teaching others these same things." It runs something like that. You saw this yourselves in Aristophanes' comedy: a Socrates swinging around up there, claiming he was walking on air and spouting a great deal of other nonsense—things I don't understand in the least, great or small.[2] |
| 19c | καὶ οὐχ ὡς ἀτιμάζων λέγω τὴν τοιαύτην ἐπιστήμην, εἴ τις περὶ τῶν τοιούτων σοφός ἐστιν—μή πως ἐγὼ ὑπὸ Μελήτου τοσαύτας δίκας φεύγοιμι— ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐμοὶ τούτων, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, οὐδὲν μέτεστιν. [19d] μάρτυρας δὲ αὖ ὑμῶν τοὺς πολλοὺς παρέχομαι, καὶ ἀξιῶ ὑμᾶς ἀλλήλους διδάσκειν τε καὶ φράζειν, ὅσοι ἐμοῦ πώποτε ἀκηκόατε διαλεγομένου—πολλοὶ δὲ ὑμῶν οἱ τοιοῦτοί εἰσιν— φράζετε οὖν ἀλλήλοις εἰ πώποτε ἢ μικρὸν ἢ μέγα ἤκουσέ τις ὑμῶν ἐμοῦ περὶ τῶν τοιούτων διαλεγομένου, καὶ ἐκ τούτου γνώσεσθε ὅτι τοιαῦτ' ἐστὶ καὶ τἆλλα περὶ ἐμοῦ ἃ οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσιν. | And I don't say this to disparage such knowledge, if anyone is wise about such things—may I never have to defend myself against such serious charges from Meletus!—but the fact is, men of Athens, I have no part in any of this. [19d] Once again I offer most of you as witnesses, and I ask all of you who have ever heard me in conversation—and there are many of you—to tell one another and explain. So tell one another whether any of you has ever heard me discussing such things, briefly or at length; and from this you will recognize that the other things most people say about me are of the same kind. |
| 19d | ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὔτε τούτων οὐδέν ἐστιν, οὐδέ γ' εἴ τινος ἀκηκόατε ὡς ἐγὼ παιδεύειν ἐπιχειρῶ ἀνθρώπους καὶ | No, none of this is true; and if you've heard from anyone that I try to educate people and charge [19e] |

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | χρήματα [19e] πράττομαι, οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἀληθές. ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτό γέ μοι δοκεῖ καλὸν εἶναι, εἴ τις οἷός τ' εἴη παιδεύειν ἀνθρώπους ὥσπερ Γοργίας τε ὁ Λεοντῖνος καὶ Πρόδικος ὁ Κεῖος καὶ Ἱππίας ὁ Ἠλεῖος. τούτων γὰρ ἕκαστος, ὦ ἄνδρες, οἷός τ' ἐστὶν ἰὼν εἰς ἑκάστην τῶν πόλεων τοὺς νέους—οἷς ἔξεστι τῶν ἑαυτῶν πολιτῶν προῖκα συνεῖναι ᾧ ἂν βούλωνται—τούτους πείθουσι [20a] τὰς ἐκείνων συνουσίας ἀπολιπόντας σφίσιν συνεῖναι χρήματα διδόντας καὶ χάριν προσειδέναι. | money for it, that isn't true either. Though this too seems to me a fine thing, if someone is able to educate people, like Gorgias of Leontini, Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis. Each of these men, gentlemen, can go into any city and persuade the young—who can associate for free with whichever of their own fellow citizens they like—to abandon [20a] those associations and associate with them instead, paying money and being grateful to them besides.[3] |
| 20a | ἐπεὶ καὶ ἄλλος ἀνήρ ἐστι Πάριος ἐνθάδε σοφὸς ὢν ἐγὼ ᾐσθόμην ἐπιδημοῦντα· ἔτυχον γὰρ προσελθὼν ἀνδρὶ ὃς τετέλεκε χρήματα σοφισταῖς πλείω ἢ σύμπαντες οἱ ἄλλοι, Καλλίᾳ τῷ Ἱππονίκου· τοῦτον οὖν ἀνηρόμην—ἐστὸν γὰρ αὐτῷ δύο υἷε— "ὦ Καλλία," ἦν δ' ἐγώ, "εἰ μέν σου τὼ υἷε πώλω ἢ μόσχω ἐγενέσθην, εἴχομεν ἂν αὐτοῖν ἐπιστάτην λαβεῖν καὶ μισθώσασθαι ὃς [20b] ἔμελλεν αὐτὼ καλώ τε κἀγαθὼ ποιήσειν τὴν προσήκουσαν ἀρετήν, ἦν δ' ἂν οὗτος ἢ τῶν ἱππικῶν τις ἢ τῶν γεωργικῶν· νῦν δ' ἐπειδὴ ἀνθρώπω ἐστόν, τίνα αὐτοῖν ἐν νῷ ἔχεις ἐπιστάτην λαβεῖν; τίς τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρετῆς, τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης τε καὶ πολιτικῆς, ἐπιστήμων ἐστίν; οἶμαι γάρ σε ἐσκέφθαι διὰ τὴν τῶν υἱέων κτῆσιν. ἔστιν τις," ἔφην ἐγώ, "ἢ οὔ;" "πάνυ γε," ἦ δ' ὅς. | And there's another wise man here, from Paros, who I learned was in town. I happened to meet a man who has spent more money on sophists than all the others put together, Callias the son of Hipponicus. So I asked him—he has two sons—"Callias," I said, "if your two sons had been born colts or calves, we could find and hire a trainer for them who [20b] would make them fine and good in the excellence proper to them; he would be some horse-trainer or farmer. But as it is, since they are human beings, whom do you have in mind to take as their trainer? Who has knowledge of this kind of excellence, the excellence of a human being and a citizen? I assume you've looked into it, since you have sons. Is there someone," I said, "or not?" "Certainly," he said.[4] |
| 20b | "τίς," ἦν δ' ἐγώ, "καὶ ποδαπός, καὶ πόσου διδάσκει;" "Εὔηνος," ἔφη, "ὦ Σώκρατες, Πάριος, πέντε μνῶν." καὶ ἐγὼ τὸν Εὔηνον ἐμακάρισα εἰ ὡς ἀληθῶς [20c] ἔχοι ταύτην τὴν τέχνην καὶ οὕτως ἐμμελῶς διδάσκει. ἐγὼ γοῦν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκαλλυνόμην τε καὶ ἡβρυνόμην ἂν εἰ ἠπιστάμην ταῦτα· ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ἐπίσταμαι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι. | "Who," I said, "and where is he from, and what does he charge?" "Evenus, Socrates," he said, "from Paros. Five minas." And I thought Evenus a lucky man, if he really [20c] has this skill and teaches it for so modest a fee. I, at any rate, would be preening and giving myself airs if I knew these things. But I don't know them, men of Athens.[5] |

## THE ORACLE AT DELPHI

*Socrates explains that Chaerephon asked the Delphic oracle, which said no one was wiser than Socrates.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 20c | ὑπολάβοι ἂν οὖν τις ὑμῶν ἴσως· "ἀλλ', ὦ Σώκρατες, τὸ σὸν τί ἐστι πρᾶγμα; πόθεν αἱ διαβολαί σοι αὗται γεγόνασιν; οὐ γὰρ δήπου σοῦ γε οὐδὲν τῶν ἄλλων περιττότερον πραγματευομένου ἔπειτα τοσαύτη φήμη τε καὶ λόγος γέγονεν, εἰ μή τι ἔπραττες ἀλλοῖον ἢ οἱ πολλοί. λέγε οὖν ἡμῖν τί [20d] ἐστιν, ἵνα μὴ ἡμεῖς περὶ σοῦ | Now perhaps one of you might interject: "But Socrates, what is it you do? Where have these slanders against you come from? Surely all this talk and rumor didn't arise while you were busying yourself with nothing more out of the ordinary than anyone else—not unless you were doing |

2 Aristophanes' comedy *Clouds* (423 BC) portrayed Socrates suspended in a basket, running a school of cosmic speculation and verbal trickery.
3 Gorgias, Prodicus, and Hippias were celebrated traveling teachers—"sophists"—who charged fees for their instruction.
4 Callias, reputedly the richest man in Athens, was a famous patron of sophists.
5 Five minas was a large sum—well over a year's wages for a working man.

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | αὐτοσχεδιάζωμεν." ταυτί μοι δοκεῖ δίκαια λέγειν ὁ λέγων, κἀγὼ ὑμῖν πειράσομαι ἀποδεῖξαι τί ποτ' ἐστὶν τοῦτο ὃ ἐμοὶ πεποίηκεν τό τε ὄνομα καὶ τὴν διαβολήν. ἀκούετε δή. καὶ ἴσως μὲν δόξω τισὶν ὑμῶν παίζειν· εὖ μέντοι ἴστε, πᾶσαν ὑμῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐρῶ. ἐγὼ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, δι' οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ διὰ σοφίαν τινὰ τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα ἔσχηκα. ποίαν δὴ σοφίαν ταύτην; | something different from most people. So tell us what [20d] it is, so that we don't jump to conclusions about you." That seems to me a just thing to say, and I will try to show you what it is that has given me this name and this slander. So listen. Perhaps some of you will think I'm joking; but you can be sure that I will tell you the whole truth. For I have acquired this name, men of Athens, for no other reason than a certain wisdom. What sort of wisdom is that? |
| 20d | ἥπερ ἐστὶν ἴσως ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία· τῷ ὄντι γὰρ κινδυνεύω ταύτην εἶναι σοφός. οὗτοι δὲ τάχ' ἄν, οὓς ἄρτι [20e] ἔλεγον, μείζω τινὰ ἢ κατ' ἄνθρωπον σοφίαν σοφοὶ εἶεν, ἢ οὐκ ἔχω τί λέγω· οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἔγωγε αὐτὴν ἐπίσταμαι, ἀλλ' ὅστις φησὶ ψεύδεταί τε καὶ ἐπὶ διαβολῇ τῇ ἐμῇ λέγει. καί μοι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, μὴ θορυβήσητε, μηδ' ἐὰν δόξω τι ὑμῖν μέγα λέγειν· οὐ γὰρ ἐμὸν ἐρῶ τὸν λόγον ὃν ἂν λέγω, ἀλλ' εἰς ἀξιόχρεων ὑμῖν τὸν λέγοντα ἀνοίσω. τῆς γὰρ ἐμῆς, εἰ δή τίς ἐστιν σοφία καὶ οἵα, μάρτυρα ὑμῖν παρέξομαι τὸν θεὸν τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς. Χαιρεφῶντα γὰρ ἴστε που. οὗτος [21a] ἐμός τε ἑταῖρος ἦν ἐκ νέου καὶ ὑμῶν τῷ πλήθει ἑταῖρός τε καὶ συνέφυγε τὴν φυγὴν ταύτην καὶ μεθ' ὑμῶν κατῆλθε. | The sort, perhaps, that is human wisdom. For it really may be that I'm wise in that. But the men I was speaking of [20e] just now might be wise with some wisdom greater than human—or I don't know what to call it. For I certainly don't have that knowledge, and whoever says I do is lying and saying it to slander me. And please, men of Athens, don't make a disturbance, even if I seem to you to be making some big claim. For the words I'm about to speak aren't my own; I will refer you to a speaker you can trust. As witness to my wisdom—whether it is wisdom at all, and what kind—I will present to you the god at Delphi. You know Chaerephon, I think. He [21a] was my friend from youth, and a friend of your democratic party too; he shared in the recent exile and came back with you.[6] |
| 21a | καὶ ἴστε δὴ οἷος ἦν Χαιρεφῶν, ὡς σφοδρὸς ἐφ' ὅτι ὁρμήσειεν. καὶ δή ποτε καὶ εἰς Δελφοὺς ἐλθὼν ἐτόλμησε τοῦτο μαντεύσασθαι—καί, ὅπερ λέγω, μὴ θορυβεῖτε, ὦ ἄνδρες—ἤρετο γὰρ δὴ εἴ τις ἐμοῦ εἴη σοφώτερος. ἀνεῖλεν οὖν ἡ Πυθία μηδένα σοφώτερον εἶναι. καὶ τούτων πέρι ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῖν αὐτοῦ οὑτοσὶ μαρτυρήσει, ἐπειδὴ ἐκεῖνος τετελεύτηκεν. [21b] | And you know what Chaerephon was like, how intense in whatever he set out to do. Well, once he went to Delphi and dared to ask the oracle this—and, as I said, don't make a disturbance, gentlemen—he asked whether anyone was wiser than I. And the Pythia answered that no one was wiser. His brother here will testify to you about this, since Chaerephon himself has died. [21b] [7] |

## TESTING THE ORACLE

*Socrates questions politicians, poets and craftsmen, finding each thinks he knows what he does not.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 21b | σκέψασθε δὴ ὧν ἕνεκα ταῦτα λέγω· μέλλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς διδάξειν ὅθεν μοι ἡ διαβολὴ γέγονεν. ταῦτα γὰρ ἐγὼ ἀκούσας ἐνεθυμούμην οὑτωσί· "τί ποτε λέγει ὁ θεός, καὶ τί ποτε αἰνίττεται; ἐγὼ γὰρ δὴ οὔτε μέγα οὔτε σμικρὸν σύνοιδα ἐμαυτῷ σοφὸς ὤν· τί οὖν ποτε λέγει φάσκων ἐμὲ | Now consider why I'm telling you this: I'm going to explain to you where the slander against me came from. When I heard this, I thought it over like this: "What on earth does the god mean? What is his riddle? I'm aware that I'm not wise in any- |

6 Chaerephon went into exile with the democrats during the oligarchic coup of 404 BC and returned with them when democracy was restored in 403.

7 The Pythia was Apollo's priestess at Delphi, through whom the oracle spoke.

| GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|
| σοφώτατον εἶναι; οὐ γὰρ δήπου ψεύδεταί γε· οὐ γὰρ θέμις αὐτῷ." καὶ πολὺν μὲν χρόνον ἠπόρουν τί ποτε λέγει· ἔπειτα μόγις πάνυ ἐπὶ ζήτησιν αὐτοῦ τοιαύτην τινὰ ἐτραπόμην. | thing, great or small. So what can he mean by saying I'm the wisest? He surely isn't lying; that would not be right for him." For a long time I was at a loss as to what he meant. Then, very reluctantly, I turned to investigating it in something like this way. |
| ἦλθον ἐπί τινα τῶν δοκούντων σοφῶν εἶναι, ὡς [21c] ἐνταῦθα εἴπερ που ἐλέγξων τὸ μαντεῖον καὶ ἀποφανῶν τῷ χρησμῷ ὅτι "οὑτοσὶ ἐμοῦ σοφώτερός ἐστι, σὺ δ' ἐμὲ ἔφησθα." διασκοπῶν οὖν τοῦτον—ὀνόματι γὰρ οὐδὲν δέομαι λέγειν, ἦν δέ τις τῶν πολιτικῶν πρὸς ὃν ἐγὼ σκοπῶν τοιοῦτόν τι ἔπαθον, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, καὶ διαλεγόμενος αὐτῷ—ἔδοξέ μοι οὗτος ὁ ἀνὴρ δοκεῖν μὲν εἶναι σοφὸς ἄλλοις τε πολλοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ μάλιστα ἑαυτῷ, εἶναι δ' οὔ· κἄπειτα ἐπειρώμην αὐτῷ δεικνύναι ὅτι οἴοιτο μὲν εἶναι σοφός, εἴη δ' οὔ. | I went to one of those reputed to be wise, thinking that [21c] there, if anywhere, I would refute the oracle and point out to it: "This man is wiser than I am, but you said I was." So I examined this man—I needn't mention his name; he was one of the politicians, and in examining him and talking with him, men of Athens, I had an experience something like this—it seemed to me that this man seemed wise to many other people and most of all to himself, but was not. And then I tried to show him that he thought he was wise but was not. |
| 21d ἐντεῦθεν οὖν τούτῳ τε ἀπηχθόμην καὶ πολλοῖς τῶν παρόντων· πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν δ' οὖν ἀπιὼν ἐλογιζόμην ὅτι τούτου μὲν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐγὼ σοφώτερός εἰμι· κινδυνεύει μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν οὐδέτερος οὐδὲν καλὸν κἀγαθὸν εἰδέναι, ἀλλ' οὗτος μὲν οἴεταί τι εἰδέναι οὐκ εἰδώς, ἐγὼ δέ, ὥσπερ οὖν οὐκ οἶδα, οὐδὲ οἴομαι· ἔοικα γοῦν τούτου γε σμικρῷ τινι αὐτῷ τούτῳ σοφώτερος εἶναι, ὅτι ἃ μὴ οἶδα οὐδὲ οἴομαι εἰδέναι. ἐντεῦθεν ἐπ' ἄλλον ἦα τῶν ἐκείνου δοκούντων σοφωτέρων εἶναι καί [21e] μοι ταὐτὰ ταῦτα ἔδοξε, καὶ ἐνταῦθα κἀκείνῳ καὶ ἄλλοις πολλοῖς ἀπηχθόμην. | As a result I became hated by him and by many of those present. So as I went away I reasoned to myself: I am wiser than this man. It's likely that neither of us knows anything fine and good; but he thinks he knows something when he doesn't, whereas I, just as I don't know, don't think I do either. So I seem to be wiser than he is at least in this one small way: that what I don't know, I don't think I know either. Then I went to another man, one of those reputed to be wiser than him, and [21e] the very same thing seemed true to me; and there I became hated by him and by many others as well. |
| 21e μετὰ ταῦτ' οὖν ἤδη ἐφεξῆς ἦα, αἰσθανόμενος μὲν καὶ λυπούμενος καὶ δεδιὼς ὅτι ἀπηχθανόμην, ὅμως δὲ ἀναγκαῖον ἐδόκει εἶναι τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ πλείστου ποιεῖσθαι—ἰτέον οὖν, σκοποῦντι τὸν χρησμὸν τί λέγει, ἐπὶ ἅπαντας τούς τι [22a] δοκοῦντας εἰδέναι. καὶ νὴ τὸν κύνα, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι— δεῖ γὰρ πρὸς ὑμᾶς τἀληθῆ λέγειν—ἦ μὴν ἐγὼ ἔπαθόν τι τοιοῦτον· οἱ μὲν μάλιστα εὐδοκιμοῦντες ἔδοξάν μοι ὀλίγου δεῖν τοῦ πλείστου ἐνδεεῖς εἶναι ζητοῦντι κατὰ τὸν θεόν, ἄλλοι δὲ δοκοῦντες φαυλότεροι ἐπιεικέστεροι εἶναι ἄνδρες πρὸς τὸ φρονίμως ἔχειν. δεῖ δὴ ὑμῖν τὴν ἐμὴν πλάνην ἐπιδεῖξαι ὥσπερ πόνους τινὰς πονοῦντος ἵνα μοι καὶ ἀνέλεγκτος ἡ μαντεία γένοιτο. | After that I went on to one after another, aware of the hatred I was incurring, and pained and afraid because of it; but all the same it seemed necessary to put the god's business first. So I had to go, in examining what the oracle meant, to all those with a reputation [22a] for knowing something. And by the dog, men of Athens—for I must tell you the truth—this is what happened to me. As I searched in accordance with the god, those with the highest reputations seemed to me almost the most deficient, while others who were thought inferior seemed to be better men when it came to understanding. I must describe my wanderings to you, as though I were performing a series of labors, so that the oracle might prove to be beyond refutation.[8] |

8 "By the dog" was a characteristic oath of Socrates.

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 22a | μετὰ γὰρ τοὺς πολιτικοὺς ἦα ἐπὶ τοὺς ποιητὰς τούς τε τῶν τραγῳδιῶν καὶ τοὺς τῶν [22b] διθυράμβων καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους, ὡς ἐνταῦθα ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ καταληψόμενος ἐμαυτὸν ἀμαθέστερον ἐκείνων ὄντα. ἀναλαμβάνων οὖν αὐτῶν τὰ ποιήματα ἅ μοι ἐδόκει μάλιστα πεπραγματεῦσθαι αὐτοῖς, διηρώτων ἂν αὐτοὺς τί λέγοιεν, ἵν' ἅμα τι καὶ μανθάνοιμι παρ' αὐτῶν. αἰσχύνομαι οὖν ὑμῖν εἰπεῖν, ὦ ἄνδρες, τἀληθῆ· ὅμως δὲ ῥητέον. ὡς ἔπος γὰρ εἰπεῖν ὀλίγου αὐτῶν ἅπαντες οἱ παρόντες ἂν βέλτιον ἔλεγον περὶ ὧν αὐτοὶ ἐπεποιήκεσαν. ἔγνων οὖν αὖ καὶ περὶ τῶν ποιητῶν ἐν ὀλίγῳ τοῦτο, ὅτι οὐ σοφίᾳ ποιοῖεν [22c] ἃ ποιοῖεν, ἀλλὰ φύσει τινὶ καὶ ἐνθουσιάζοντες ὥσπερ οἱ θεομάντεις καὶ οἱ χρησμῳδοί· καὶ γὰρ οὗτοι λέγουσι μὲν πολλὰ καὶ καλά, ἴσασιν δὲ οὐδὲν ὧν λέγουσι. | After the politicians I went to the poets—the tragic poets, the [22b] dithyrambic poets, and the rest—thinking that there I would catch myself red-handed being more ignorant than they were. So I would take up those of their poems that seemed to me most carefully worked, and ask them what they meant, so that I might learn something from them at the same time. I'm ashamed to tell you the truth, gentlemen; still, it must be told. Almost everyone present, you might say, would have talked better than the poets themselves about the poems they had made. So I soon realized about the poets too that it wasn't by wisdom that they made [22c] what they made, but by some natural gift and in a state of inspiration, like the seers and oracle-singers. For these too say many fine things, but know nothing of what they are saying.[9] |
| 22c | τοιοῦτόν τί μοι ἐφάνησαν πάθος καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ πεπονθότες, καὶ ἅμα ἠσθόμην αὐτῶν διὰ τὴν ποίησιν οἰομένων καὶ τἆλλα σοφωτάτων εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἃ οὐκ ἦσαν. ἀπῇα οὖν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν τῷ αὐτῷ οἰόμενος περιγεγονέναι ᾧπερ καὶ τῶν πολιτικῶν. | The poets too, it was clear to me, were affected in something like this way. And at the same time I noticed that because of their poetry they thought themselves the wisest of men in other things as well, where they were not. So I left there too, thinking I had the same advantage over them as over the politicians. |
| | τελευτῶν οὖν ἐπὶ τοὺς χειροτέχνας ἦα· ἐμαυτῷ γὰρ [22d] συνῄδη οὐδὲν ἐπισταμένῳ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, τούτους δέ γ' ἤδη ὅτι εὑρήσοιμι πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ ἐπισταμένους. καὶ τούτου μὲν οὐκ ἐψεύσθην, ἀλλ' ἠπίσταντο ἃ ἐγὼ οὐκ ἠπιστάμην καί μου ταύτῃ σοφώτεροι ἦσαν. ἀλλ', ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ταὐτόν μοι ἔδοξαν ἔχειν ἁμάρτημα ὅπερ καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ καὶ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ δημιουργοί—διὰ τὸ τὴν τέχνην καλῶς ἐξεργάζεσθαι ἕκαστος ἠξίου καὶ τἆλλα τὰ μέγιστα σοφώτατος εἶναι—καὶ αὐτῶν αὕτη ἡ πλημμέλεια ἐκείνην τὴν σοφίαν [22e] ἀποκρύπτειν· ὥστε με ἐμαυτὸν ἀνερωτᾶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ χρησμοῦ πότερα δεξαίμην ἂν οὕτως ὥσπερ ἔχω ἔχειν, μήτε τι σοφὸς ὢν τὴν ἐκείνων σοφίαν μήτε ἀμαθὴς τὴν ἀμαθίαν, ἢ ἀμφότερα ἃ ἐκεῖνοι ἔχουσιν ἔχειν. ἀπεκρινάμην οὖν ἐμαυτῷ καὶ τῷ χρησμῷ ὅτι μοι λυσιτελοῖ ὥσπερ ἔχω ἔχειν. | Finally I went to the craftsmen. For I was aware [22d] that I knew practically nothing, and I knew I would find that they knew many fine things. And I wasn't wrong about that: they knew things I didn't know, and in that respect they were wiser than I. But, men of Athens, the good craftsmen too seemed to me to have the same failing as the poets: because he practiced his craft well, each of them thought himself wisest in the other, most important matters too—and this false note of theirs obscured [22e] the wisdom they did have. So I asked myself on behalf of the oracle whether I would prefer to be as I am, neither wise with their wisdom nor ignorant with their ignorance, or to have both, as they do. And I answered myself and the oracle that I was better off as I am. |
| 22e | ἐκ ταυτησὶ δὴ τῆς ἐξετάσεως, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, [23a] πολλαὶ μὲν ἀπέχθειαί μοι γεγόνασι καὶ οἷαι χαλεπώταται καὶ βαρύταται, ὥστε πολλὰς διαβολὰς ἀπ' αὐτῶν γεγονέναι, ὄνομα δὲ τοῦτο λέγεσθαι, σοφὸς εἶναι· οἴονται γάρ με ἑκάστοτε οἱ παρόντες ταῦτα αὐτὸν εἶναι σοφὸν ἃ ἂν ἄλλον ἐξελέγξω. τὸ δὲ κινδυνεύει, ὦ ἄνδρες, τῷ ὄντι ὁ | From this examination, men of Athens, [23a] a great deal of hostility has arisen against me, of the harshest and most oppressive kind, so that many slanders have come from it, and I've been given this name: "wise." For on each occasion those present think that I myself am wise in the things |

9 Dithyrambs were choral hymns, originally to Dionysus, performed in competition at Athenian festivals.

GREEK

θεὸς σοφὸς εἶναι, καὶ ἐν τῷ χρησμῷ τούτῳ τοῦτο λέγειν, ὅτι ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία ὀλίγου τινὸς ἀξία ἐστὶν καὶ οὐδενός.

23a καὶ φαίνεται τοῦτον λέγειν τὸν Σωκράτη, προσκεχρῆσθαι δὲ [23b] τῷ ἐμῷ ὀνόματι, ἐμὲ παράδειγμα ποιούμενος, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ εἴποι ὅτι "οὗτος ὑμῶν, ὦ ἄνθρωποι, σοφώτατός ἐστιν, ὅστις ὥσπερ Σωκράτης ἔγνωκεν ὅτι οὐδενὸς ἄξιός ἐστι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πρὸς σοφίαν." ταῦτ' οὖν ἐγὼ μὲν ἔτι καὶ νῦν περιιὼν ζητῶ καὶ ἐρευνῶ κατὰ τὸν θεὸν καὶ τῶν ἀστῶν καὶ ξένων ἄν τινα οἴωμαι σοφὸν εἶναι· καὶ ἐπειδάν μοι μὴ δοκῇ, τῷ θεῷ βοηθῶν ἐνδείκνυμαι ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι σοφός. καὶ ὑπὸ ταύτης τῆς ἀσχολίας οὔτε τι τῶν τῆς πόλεως πρᾶξαί μοι σχολὴ γέγονεν ἄξιον λόγου οὔτε τῶν οἰκείων, ἀλλ' ἐν [23c] πενίᾳ μυρίᾳ εἰμὶ διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ λατρείαν.

23c πρὸς δὲ τούτοις οἱ νέοι μοι ἐπακολουθοῦντες—οἷς μάλιστα σχολή ἐστιν, οἱ τῶν πλουσιωτάτων—αὐτόματοι, χαίρουσιν ἀκούοντες ἐξεταζομένων τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ αὐτοὶ πολλάκις ἐμὲ μιμοῦνται, εἶτα ἐπιχειροῦσιν ἄλλους ἐξετάζειν· κἄπειτα οἶμαι εὑρίσκουσι πολλὴν ἀφθονίαν οἰομένων μὲν εἰδέναι τι ἀνθρώπων, εἰδότων δὲ ὀλίγα ἢ οὐδέν.

ἐντεῦθεν οὖν οἱ ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐξεταζόμενοι ἐμοὶ ὀργίζονται, οὐχ αὑτοῖς, [23d] καὶ λέγουσιν ὡς Σωκράτης τίς ἐστι μιαρώτατος καὶ διαφθείρει τοὺς νέους· καὶ ἐπειδάν τις αὐτοὺς ἐρωτᾷ ὅτι ποιῶν καὶ ὅτι διδάσκων, ἔχουσι μὲν οὐδὲν εἰπεῖν ἀλλ' ἀγνοοῦσιν, ἵνα δὲ μὴ δοκῶσιν ἀπορεῖν, τὰ κατὰ πάντων τῶν φιλοσοφούντων πρόχειρα ταῦτα λέγουσιν, ὅτι "τὰ μετέωρα καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς" καὶ "θεοὺς μὴ νομίζειν" καὶ "τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν." τὰ γὰρ ἀληθῆ οἶμαι οὐκ ἂν ἐθέλοιεν λέγειν, ὅτι κατάδηλοι γίγνονται προσποιούμενοι μὲν εἰδέναι, εἰδότες δὲ οὐδέν. ἅτε οὖν οἶμαι φιλότιμοι [23e] ὄντες καὶ σφοδροὶ καὶ πολλοί, καὶ συντεταμένως καὶ πιθανῶς λέγοντες περὶ ἐμοῦ, ἐμπεπλήκασιν ὑμῶν τὰ ὦτα καὶ πάλαι καὶ σφοδρῶς διαβάλλοντες.

23e ἐκ τούτων καὶ Μέλητός μοι ἐπέθετο καὶ Ἄνυτος καὶ Λύκων, Μέλητος μὲν ὑπὲρ τῶν ποιητῶν ἀχθόμενος, Ἄνυτος δὲ ὑπὲρ τῶν δημιουργῶν καὶ [24a] τῶν πολιτικῶν, Λύκων δὲ ὑπὲρ τῶν ῥητόρων· ὥστε, ὅπερ ἀρχόμενος ἐγὼ

ENGLISH

in which I refute someone else. But it is likely, gentlemen, that in reality the god is wise, and that in this oracle he is saying this: that human wisdom is worth little or nothing.

And he appears to be speaking of Socrates here, and to have made use of [23b] my name, taking me as an example, as if he were saying: "Human beings, the wisest among you is the one who, like Socrates, has recognized that in truth he is worth nothing when it comes to wisdom." So even now I still go around seeking and searching, in accordance with the god, for anyone, citizen or foreigner, I think is wise; and when he doesn't seem so to me, I come to the god's aid and show him that he is not wise. And because of this occupation I've had no leisure to do anything worth mentioning in the city's affairs, or in my own; instead I live in [23c] utter poverty because of my service to the god.

On top of this, the young men who follow me around of their own accord—those who have the most leisure, the sons of the richest families—enjoy hearing people being examined, and they themselves often imitate me and then try to examine others. And then, I think, they find a great abundance of people who think they know something but know little or nothing.

So as a result, the people they question get angry with me, not with themselves, [23d] and say that there's a certain Socrates, an utterly vile man, who corrupts the young. And when someone asks them what he does, what he teaches, to have this effect, they have nothing to say—they don't know—but so as not to seem at a loss, they trot out the charges that lie ready to hand against all philosophers: "things in the heavens and beneath the earth," and "not believing in gods," and "making the weaker argument the stronger." The truth, I suppose, they wouldn't care to tell: that they're being exposed as pretending to know when they know nothing. And so, since they're ambitious, I think, [23e] and vehement, and numerous, and speak about me in a concerted and persuasive way, they have filled your ears with their slanders—vehement slanders, and of long standing.

It was on this basis that Meletus came after me, along with Anytus and Lycon: Meletus aggrieved on behalf of the poets, Anytus on behalf of the craftsmen and [24a] the politicians, Lycon on behalf

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | ἔλεγον, θαυμάζοιμ' ἂν εἰ οἷός τ' εἴην ἐγὼ ὑμῶν ταύτην τὴν διαβολὴν ἐξελέσθαι ἐν οὕτως ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ οὕτω πολλὴν γεγονυῖαν. ταῦτ' ἔστιν ὑμῖν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τἀληθῆ, καὶ ὑμᾶς οὔτε μέγα οὔτε μικρὸν ἀποκρυψάμενος ἐγὼ λέγω οὐδ' ὑποστειλάμενος. καίτοι οἶδα σχεδὸν ὅτι αὐτοῖς τούτοις ἀπεχθάνομαι, ὃ καὶ τεκμήριον ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγω καὶ ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ διαβολὴ ἡ ἐμὴ καὶ τὰ αἴτια [24b] ταῦτά ἐστιν. καὶ ἐάντε νῦν ἐάντε αὖθις ζητήσητε ταῦτα, οὕτως εὑρήσετε. | of the orators. So, as I said when I began, I'd be amazed if I could clear this slander out of your minds in so short a time, when it has grown so large. There you have the truth, men of Athens, and I'm telling it to you without hiding anything, large or small, and without holding anything back. And yet I'm fairly sure that it's for these very things that I'm hated—which is itself evidence that I'm telling the truth, and that this is the slander against me, and these [24b] are its causes. Whether you look into it now or later, this is what you'll find. |

## QUESTIONING MELETUS

*Socrates cross-examines Meletus on the charges of corrupting the young and not believing in the gods.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 24b | περὶ μὲν οὖν ὧν οἱ πρῶτοί μου κατήγοροι κατηγόρουν αὕτη ἔστω ἱκανὴ ἀπολογία πρὸς ὑμᾶς· πρὸς δὲ Μέλητον τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ φιλόπολιν, ὥς φησι, καὶ τοὺς ὑστέρους μετὰ ταῦτα πειράσομαι ἀπολογήσασθαι. αὖθις γὰρ δή, ὥσπερ ἑτέρων τούτων ὄντων κατηγόρων, λάβωμεν αὖ τὴν τούτων ἀντωμοσίαν. ἔχει δέ πως ὧδε· Σωκράτη φησὶν ἀδικεῖν τούς τε νέους διαφθείροντα καὶ θεοὺς οὓς ἡ πόλις [24c] νομίζει οὐ νομίζοντα, ἕτερα δὲ δαιμόνια καινά. τὸ μὲν δὴ ἔγκλημα τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν· τούτου δὲ τοῦ ἐγκλήματος ἓν ἕκαστον ἐξετάσωμεν. | As for the charges my first accusers brought, let this be a sufficient defense before you. Next I'll try to defend myself against Meletus—that good man, who loves his city, as he says—and against the later accusers. So once again, as if these were a second set of accusers, let's take up their sworn charge in its turn. It runs something like this: it says that Socrates is guilty of wrongdoing by corrupting the young, and by not believing in the gods the city [24c] believes in, but in other, new divine things. That is the charge. Let's examine each point of it one by one. |
| 24c | **SOCRATES** φησὶ γὰρ δὴ τοὺς νέους ἀδικεῖν με διαφθείροντα. ἐγὼ δέ γε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀδικεῖν φημι Μέλητον, ὅτι σπουδῇ χαριεντίζεται, ῥᾳδίως εἰς ἀγῶνα καθιστὰς ἀνθρώπους, περὶ πραγμάτων προσποιούμενος σπουδάζειν καὶ κήδεσθαι ὧν οὐδὲν τούτῳ πώποτε ἐμέλησεν· ὡς δὲ τοῦτο οὕτως ἔχει, πειράσομαι καὶ ὑμῖν ἐπιδεῖξαι. καί μοι δεῦρο, ὦ Μέλητε, εἰπέ· ἄλλο τι ἢ [24d] περὶ πλείστου ποιῇ ὅπως ὡς βέλτιστοι οἱ νεώτεροι ἔσονται; | **SOCRATES** He says, then, that I'm guilty of wrongdoing by corrupting the young. But I say, men of Athens, that it's Meletus who is guilty of wrongdoing, because he jokes about serious matters, lightly hauling people into court, pretending to be serious about and to care for things he has never cared about in the least. That this is so, I'll try to show you as well. Come here, Meletus, and tell me: isn't it true that you [24d] regard it as of the greatest importance that the young should be as good as possible?[10] |
| 24d | **MELETUS** ἔγωγε.<br><br>**SOCRATES** ἴθι δή νυν εἰπὲ τούτοις, τίς αὐτοὺς βελτίους ποιεῖ; δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι οἶσθα, μέλον γέ σοι. τὸν μὲν γὰρ διαφθείροντα ἐξευρών, ὡς φῄς, ἐμέ, εἰσάγεις τουτοισὶ καὶ κατηγορεῖς· τὸν δὲ δὴ βελτίους ποιοῦντα ἴθι εἰπὲ καὶ | **MELETUS** I do.<br><br>**SOCRATES** Then come, tell these men: who makes them better? Obviously you know, since it's something you care about. You've found the one who corrupts them, as you say—me—and you bring me |

10 The name Meletus sounds like the Greek *melei*, "it is a care to"; Socrates plays on this throughout the exchange.

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | μήνυσον αὐτοῖς τίς ἐστιν. —ὁρᾷς, ὦ Μέλητε, ὅτι σιγᾷς καὶ οὐκ ἔχεις εἰπεῖν; καίτοι οὐκ αἰσχρόν σοι δοκεῖ εἶναι καὶ ἱκανὸν τεκμήριον οὗ δὴ ἐγὼ λέγω, ὅτι σοι οὐδὲν μεμέληκεν; ἀλλ' εἰπέ, ὠγαθέ, τίς αὐτοὺς ἀμείνους ποιεῖ; | before these men and accuse me. So come, tell them who makes them better; point him out to them.—You see, Meletus? You're silent; you have nothing to say. Don't you find that shameful—and proof enough of exactly what I'm saying, that you've never cared about it at all? Come on, my good man, tell us: who makes them better? |
| | **MELETUS** οἱ νόμοι. [24e] | **MELETUS** The laws. [24e] |
| 24e | **SOCRATES** ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦτο ἐρωτῶ, ὦ βέλτιστε, ἀλλὰ τίς ἄνθρωπος, ὅστις πρῶτον καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο οἶδε, τοὺς νόμους; | **SOCRATES** That's not what I'm asking, my excellent friend. I mean which human being—someone who, first of all, knows this very thing, the laws. |
| | **MELETUS** οὗτοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, οἱ δικασταί. | **MELETUS** These men here, Socrates—the jurors. |
| | **SOCRATES** πῶς λέγεις, ὦ Μέλητε; οἵδε τοὺς νέους παιδεύειν οἷοί τέ εἰσι καὶ βελτίους ποιοῦσιν; | **SOCRATES** What are you saying, Meletus? These men are able to educate the young, and make them better? |
| | **MELETUS** μάλιστα. | **MELETUS** Very much so. |
| | **SOCRATES** πότερον ἅπαντες, ἢ οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν, οἱ δ' οὔ; | **SOCRATES** All of them, or some of them and not others? |
| | **MELETUS** ἅπαντες. | **MELETUS** All of them. |
| | **SOCRATES** εὖ γε νὴ τὴν Ἥραν λέγεις καὶ πολλὴν ἀφθονίαν τῶν ὠφελούντων. τί δὲ δή; οἱ δὲ ἀκροαταὶ βελτίους ποιοῦσιν [25a] ἢ οὔ; | **SOCRATES** By Hera, that's good news—a great abundance of benefactors! And what about this: do the listeners here make them better, [25a] or not? |
| 25a | **MELETUS** καὶ οὗτοι. | **MELETUS** They do too. |
| | **SOCRATES** τί δέ, οἱ βουλευταί; | **SOCRATES** And what about the members of the Council?[11] |
| | **MELETUS** καὶ οἱ βουλευταί. | **MELETUS** The Council members too. |
| | **SOCRATES** ἀλλ' ἄρα, ὦ Μέλητε, μὴ οἱ ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, οἱ ἐκκλησιασταί, διαφθείρουσι τοὺς νεωτέρους; ἢ κἀκεῖνοι βελτίους ποιοῦσιν ἅπαντες; | **SOCRATES** Well then, Meletus, surely it isn't the people in the Assembly, the assemblymen, who corrupt the young? Or do they too, all of them, make them better? |
| | **MELETUS** κἀκεῖνοι. | **MELETUS** They do too. |
| | **SOCRATES** πάντες ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικεν, Ἀθηναῖοι καλοὺς κἀγαθοὺς ποιοῦσι πλὴν ἐμοῦ, ἐγὼ δὲ μόνος διαφθείρω. οὕτω λέγεις; | **SOCRATES** So it seems that every Athenian makes them fine and good except me, and I alone corrupt them. Is that what you're saying? |
| | **MELETUS** πάνυ σφόδρα ταῦτα λέγω. | **MELETUS** That's exactly what I'm saying—emphatically. |
| | **SOCRATES** πολλήν γέ μου κατέγνωκας δυστυχίαν. καί μοι ἀπόκριναι· ἦ καὶ περὶ ἵππους οὕτω σοι δοκεῖ ἔχειν; οἱ | **SOCRATES** You've convicted me of great misfortune! But answer me this: do you think it's like this |

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | μὲν [25b] βελτίους ποιοῦντες αὐτοὺς πάντες ἄνθρωποι εἶναι, εἷς δέ τις ὁ διαφθείρων; ἢ τοὐναντίον τούτου πᾶν εἷς μέν τις ὁ βελτίους οἷός τ' ὢν ποιεῖν ἢ πάνυ ὀλίγοι, οἱ ἱππικοί, οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ ἐάνπερ συνῶσι καὶ χρῶνται ἵπποις, διαφθείρουσιν; οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει, ὦ Μέλητε, καὶ περὶ ἵππων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἁπάντων ζῴων; πάντως δήπου, ἐάντε σὺ καὶ Ἄνυτος οὐ φῆτε ἐάντε φῆτε· πολλὴ γὰρ ἂν τις εὐδαιμονία εἴη περὶ τοὺς νέους εἰ εἷς μὲν μόνος αὐτοὺς διαφθείρει, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι [25c] ὠφελοῦσιν. ἀλλὰ γάρ, ὦ Μέλητε, ἱκανῶς ἐπιδείκνυσαι ὅτι οὐδεπώποτε ἐφρόντισας τῶν νέων, καὶ σαφῶς ἀποφαίνεις τὴν σαυτοῦ ἀμέλειαν, ὅτι οὐδέν σοι μεμέληκεν περὶ ὧν ἐμὲ εἰσάγεις. | with horses too? That [25b] all people make them better, and one person ruins them? Or is it the complete opposite: one person is able to make them better, or a very few—the horse-trainers—while most people, if they have to do with horses and use them, ruin them? Isn't that how it is, Meletus, both with horses and with all other animals? Of course it is, whether you and Anytus say no or yes. It would be great good fortune for the young if only one person corrupted them and everyone else [25c] did them good. But no, Meletus: you've shown well enough that you've never given a thought to the young, and you plainly reveal your own lack of care—that you've never cared at all about the things you're bringing me to court for. |
| 25c | ἔτι δὲ ἡμῖν εἰπέ, ὦ πρὸς Διὸς Μέλητε, πότερόν ἐστιν οἰκεῖν ἄμεινον ἐν πολίταις χρηστοῖς ἢ πονηροῖς; ὦ τάν, ἀπόκριναι· οὐδὲν γάρ τοι χαλεπὸν ἐρωτῶ. οὐχ οἱ μὲν πονηροὶ κακόν τι ἐργάζονται τοὺς ἀεὶ ἐγγυτάτω αὐτῶν ὄντας, οἱ δ' ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθόν τι; | Now tell us further, Meletus, for Zeus's sake: is it better to live among good citizens or bad ones? Answer, my friend—I'm not asking anything hard. Don't bad people do some harm to whoever is closest to them at the time, and good people some good? |
| | **MELETUS** πάνυ γε. [25d] | **MELETUS** Certainly. [25d] |
| 25d | **SOCRATES** ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις βούλεται ὑπὸ τῶν συνόντων βλάπτεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ ὠφελεῖσθαι; ἀποκρίνου, ὦ ἀγαθέ· καὶ γὰρ ὁ νόμος κελεύει ἀποκρίνεσθαι. ἔσθ' ὅστις βούλεται βλάπτεσθαι; | **SOCRATES** Is there anyone, then, who wants to be harmed by the people he spends time with rather than benefited? Answer, my good man—the law, after all, requires you to answer. Is there anyone who wants to be harmed? |
| | **MELETUS** οὐ δῆτα. | **MELETUS** Of course not. |
| | **SOCRATES** φέρε δή, πότερον ἐμὲ εἰσάγεις δεῦρο ὡς διαφθείροντα τοὺς νέους καὶ πονηροτέρους ποιοῦντα ἑκόντα ἢ ἄκοντα; | **SOCRATES** Well then: are you bringing me here on the grounds that I corrupt the young and make them worse intentionally, or unintentionally? |
| | **MELETUS** ἑκόντα ἔγωγε. | **MELETUS** Intentionally, I say. |
| | **SOCRATES** τί δῆτα, ὦ Μέλητε; τοσοῦτον σὺ ἐμοῦ σοφώτερος εἶ τηλικούτου ὄντος τηλικόσδε ὤν, ὥστε σὺ μὲν ἔγνωκας ὅτι οἱ μὲν κακοὶ κακόν τι ἐργάζονται ἀεὶ τοὺς μάλιστα πλησίον [25e] ἑαυτῶν, οἱ δὲ ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθόν, ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ εἰς τοσοῦτον ἀμαθίας ἥκω ὥστε καὶ τοῦτ' ἀγνοῶ, ὅτι ἐάν τινα μοχθηρὸν ποιήσω τῶν συνόντων, κινδυνεύσω κακόν τι λαβεῖν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, ὥστε τοῦτο τὸ τοσοῦτον κακὸν ἑκὼν ποιῶ, ὡς φῂς σύ; ταῦτα ἐγώ σοι οὐ πείθομαι, ὦ Μέλητε, οἶμαι δὲ οὐδὲ ἄλλον ἀνθρώπων οὐδένα· ἀλλ' ἢ οὐ διαφθείρω, ἢ εἰ διαφθείρω, [26a] ἄκων, ὥστε σύ γε κατ' ἀμφότερα ψεύδῃ. | **SOCRATES** What's this, Meletus? Are you so much wiser at your age than I am at mine that you have recognized that bad people always do some harm to those nearest [25e] them, and good people good, while I've reached such a pitch of ignorance that I don't even know this—that if I make any of my companions wicked, I risk getting some harm from him—so that I do this great harm intentionally, as you claim? I don't believe you on this, Meletus, and I don't think anyone else in the world |

11 The Council was a body of 500 citizens, chosen by lot, that prepared business for the Assembly.

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | | does either. Either I don't corrupt them, or if I do, |
| | | 26a it's unintentionally—so either way you're lying. |
| 26a | εἰ δὲ ἄκων διαφθείρω, τῶν τοιούτων καὶ ἀκουσίων ἁμαρτημάτων οὐ δεῦρο νόμος εἰσάγειν ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ ἰδίᾳ λαβόντα διδάσκειν καὶ νουθετεῖν· δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι ἐὰν μάθω, παύσομαι ὅ γε ἄκων ποιῶ. σὺ δὲ συγγενέσθαι μέν μοι καὶ διδάξαι ἔφυγες καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησας, δεῦρο δὲ εἰσάγεις, οἷ νόμος ἐστὶν εἰσάγειν τοὺς κολάσεως δεομένους ἀλλ' οὐ μαθήσεως. | And if I corrupt them unintentionally, the law doesn't call for bringing people here for mistakes of that kind—unintentional ones—but for taking them aside in private to instruct and admonish them. Clearly, once I learn better, I'll stop doing what I do unintentionally. But you avoided spending time with me and teaching me; you weren't willing to. Instead you bring me here, where the law says to bring those who need punishment, not instruction. |
| | ἀλλὰ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοῦτο μὲν ἤδη δῆλον 26b οὑγὼ ἔλεγον, ὅτι Μελήτῳ τούτων οὔτε μέγα οὔτε μικρὸν πώποτε ἐμέλησεν. ὅμως δὲ δὴ λέγε ἡμῖν, πῶς με φῂς διαφθείρειν, ὦ Μέλητε, τοὺς νεωτέρους; ἢ δῆλον δὴ ὅτι κατὰ τὴν γραφὴν ἣν ἐγράψω θεοὺς διδάσκοντα μὴ νομίζειν οὓς ἡ πόλις νομίζει, ἕτερα δὲ δαιμόνια καινά; οὐ ταῦτα λέγεις ὅτι διδάσκων διαφθείρω; | But really, men of Athens, it's already clear, 26b as I was saying, that Meletus has never cared about these things, much or little. Still, tell us, Meletus: how do you say I corrupt the young? Or is it obvious, going by the indictment you wrote, that I do it by teaching them not to believe in the gods the city believes in, but in other, new divine things? Isn't this what you mean—that it's by teaching this that I corrupt them? |
| 26b | **MELETUS** πάνυ μὲν οὖν σφόδρα ταῦτα λέγω. | **MELETUS** Yes, that's exactly what I mean—emphatically. |
| | **SOCRATES** πρὸς αὐτῶν τοίνυν, ὦ Μέλητε, τούτων τῶν θεῶν ὧν νῦν ὁ λόγος ἐστίν, εἰπὲ ἔτι σαφέστερον καὶ ἐμοὶ καὶ τοῖς ἀνδράσιν 26c τουτοισί. ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐ δύναμαι μαθεῖν πότερον λέγεις διδάσκειν με νομίζειν εἶναί τινας θεούς—καὶ αὐτὸς ἄρα νομίζω εἶναι θεοὺς καὶ οὐκ εἰμὶ τὸ παράπαν ἄθεος οὐδὲ ταύτῃ ἀδικῶ —οὐ μέντοι οὕσπερ γε ἡ πόλις ἀλλὰ ἑτέρους, καὶ τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὅ μοι ἐγκαλεῖς, ὅτι ἑτέρους, ἢ παντάπασί με φῂς οὔτε αὐτὸν νομίζειν θεοὺς τούς τε ἄλλους ταῦτα διδάσκειν. | **SOCRATES** Then in the name of these very gods we're now discussing, Meletus, speak more clearly still, both to me and to these 26c men here. For I can't make out whether you're saying that I teach people to believe that some gods exist—in which case I myself believe that gods exist, and am not a complete atheist, and am not guilty of wrongdoing on that score—only not the ones the city believes in, but different ones, and that's your charge against me, that they're different; or whether you're saying that I don't believe in gods at all myself, and teach this to others. |
| 26c | **MELETUS** ταῦτα λέγω, ὡς τὸ παράπαν οὐ νομίζεις θεούς. 26d | **MELETUS** That's what I'm saying: that you don't believe in gods at all. 26d |
| 26d | **SOCRATES** ὦ θαυμάσιε Μέλητε, ἵνα τί ταῦτα λέγεις; οὐδὲ ἥλιον οὐδὲ σελήνην ἄρα νομίζω θεοὺς εἶναι, ὥσπερ οἱ ἄλλοι ἄνθρωποι; | **SOCRATES** Meletus, you astonishing man, what makes you say that? Don't I even believe that the sun and the moon are gods, as the rest of mankind does? |
| | **MELETUS** μὰ Δί', ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, ἐπεὶ τὸν μὲν ἥλιον λίθον φησὶν εἶναι, τὴν δὲ σελήνην γῆν. | **MELETUS** No, by Zeus, judges, he doesn't—since he says the sun is a stone and the moon is earth. |
| | **SOCRATES** Ἀναξαγόρου οἴει κατηγορεῖν, ὦ φίλε Μέλητε; καὶ οὕτω καταφρονεῖς τῶνδε καὶ οἴει αὐτοὺς | **SOCRATES** Do you think you're accusing Anaxagoras, my dear Meletus? Do you think so |

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | ἀπείρους γραμμάτων εἶναι ὥστε οὐκ εἰδέναι ὅτι τὰ Ἀναξαγόρου βιβλία τοῦ Κλαζομενίου γέμει τούτων τῶν λόγων; καὶ δὴ καὶ οἱ νέοι ταῦτα παρ' ἐμοῦ μανθάνουσιν, ἃ ἔξεστιν ἐνίοτε εἰ πάνυ πολλοῦ δραχμῆς [26e] ἐκ τῆς ὀρχήστρας πριαμένοις Σωκράτους καταγελᾶν, ἐὰν προσποιῆται ἑαυτοῦ εἶναι, ἄλλως τε καὶ οὕτως ἄτοπα ὄντα; ἀλλ', ὦ πρὸς Διός, οὑτωσί σοι δοκῶ; οὐδένα νομίζω θεὸν εἶναι; | little of these men—suppose them so unlettered—that they don't know that the books of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae are full of such theories? And what's more, the young learn these things from me, do they—things they can buy, now and then, for a drachma at most [26e] in the orchestra, and then laugh at Socrates if he pretends they're his own, especially when they're so outlandish? But for Zeus's sake, is that how I seem to you? I believe no god exists?[12] |
| 26e | **MELETUS** οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία οὐδ' ὁπωστιοῦν. | **MELETUS** No, by Zeus, none—not in any way at all. |
| | **SOCRATES** ἄπιστός γ' εἶ, ὦ Μέλητε, καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς, σαυτῷ. ἐμοὶ γὰρ δοκεῖ οὑτοσί, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πάνυ εἶναι ὑβριστὴς καὶ ἀκόλαστος, καὶ ἀτεχνῶς τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην ὕβρει τινὶ καὶ ἀκολασίᾳ καὶ νεότητι γράψασθαι. [27a] ἔοικεν γὰρ ὥσπερ αἴνιγμα συντιθέντι διαπειρωμένῳ "ἆρα γνώσεται Σωκράτης ὁ σοφὸς δὴ ἐμοῦ χαριεντιζομένου καὶ ἐναντί' ἐμαυτῷ λέγοντος, ἢ ἐξαπατήσω αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τοὺς ἀκούοντας;" οὗτος γὰρ ἐμοὶ φαίνεται τὰ ἐναντία λέγειν αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἐν τῇ γραφῇ ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ εἴποι· "ἀδικεῖ Σωκράτης θεοὺς οὐ νομίζων, ἀλλὰ θεοὺς νομίζων." καίτοι τοῦτό ἐστι παίζοντος. | **SOCRATES** You're not to be believed, Meletus—not even, it seems to me, by yourself. Men of Athens, this man strikes me as thoroughly insolent and unrestrained, and he has written this indictment out of nothing but a kind of insolence and lack of restraint and youthful rashness. [27a] He's like someone who has made up a riddle to test me: "Will Socrates, the wise one, see that I'm joking and contradicting myself, or will I fool him and everyone else listening?" For he seems to me to contradict himself in the indictment, as if he were to say: "Socrates is guilty of wrongdoing by not believing in gods, but believing in gods." And that is the talk of someone playing games. |
| 27a | συνεπισκέψασθε δή, ὦ ἄνδρες, ᾗ μοι φαίνεται ταῦτα λέγειν· σὺ δὲ ἡμῖν ἀπόκριναι, ὦ Μέλητε. ὑμεῖς δέ, ὅπερ [27b] κατ' ἀρχὰς ὑμᾶς παρῃτησάμην, μέμνησθέ μοι μὴ θορυβεῖν ἐὰν ἐν τῷ εἰωθότι τρόπῳ τοὺς λόγους ποιῶμαι. | Look into it with me, gentlemen—how he seems to me to be saying this. And you, Meletus, answer us. And you, as I asked [27b] you at the start, please remember not to make an uproar if I conduct the discussion in my usual way. |
| 27b | ἔστιν ὅστις ἀνθρώπων, ὦ Μέλητε, ἀνθρώπεια μὲν νομίζει πράγματ' εἶναι, ἀνθρώπους δὲ οὐ νομίζει; ἀποκρινέσθω, ὦ ἄνδρες, καὶ μὴ ἄλλα καὶ ἄλλα θορυβείτω· ἔσθ' ὅστις ἵππους μὲν οὐ νομίζει, ἱππικὰ δὲ πράγματα; ἢ αὐλητὰς μὲν οὐ νομίζει εἶναι, αὐλητικὰ δὲ πράγματα; οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦ ἄριστε ἀνδρῶν· εἰ μὴ σὺ βούλει ἀποκρίνεσθαι, ἐγὼ σοὶ λέγω καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τουτοισί. ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐπὶ τούτῳ γε ἀπόκριναι· [27c] ἔσθ' ὅστις δαιμόνια μὲν νομίζει πράγματ' εἶναι, δαίμονας δὲ οὐ νομίζει; | Is there anyone in the world, Meletus, who believes that there are human affairs, but doesn't believe in human beings? Make him answer, gentlemen, and not keep raising one uproar after another. Is there anyone who doesn't believe in horses, but does believe in horse affairs? Or doesn't believe there are flute-players, but believes in flute-playing affairs? There isn't, my excellent man. If you don't want to answer, I'll tell you, and these others here. But answer the next one, at least: [27c] is there anyone who believes that there are divine affairs, but doesn't believe in spirits?[13] |

12 Anaxagoras, a philosopher from Clazomenae who lived in Athens, held that the sun was a fiery stone. The "orchestra" was probably an open space in the marketplace where books were sold.
13 "Divine" here translates *daimonios*, the adjective formed from *daimon*, "spirit."

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 27c | **MELETUS** οὐκ ἔστιν. | **MELETUS** There isn't. |
| | **SOCRATES** ὡς ὤνησας ὅτι μόγις ἀπεκρίνω ὑπὸ τουτωνὶ ἀναγκαζόμενος. οὐκοῦν δαιμόνια μὲν φῄς με καὶ νομίζειν καὶ διδάσκειν, εἴτ' οὖν καινὰ εἴτε παλαιά, ἀλλ' οὖν δαιμόνιά γε νομίζω κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον, καὶ ταῦτα καὶ διωμόσω ἐν τῇ ἀντιγραφῇ. εἰ δὲ δαιμόνια νομίζω, καὶ δαίμονας δήπου πολλὴ ἀνάγκη νομίζειν μέ ἐστιν· οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει; ἔχει δή· τίθημι γάρ σε ὁμολογοῦντα, ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἀποκρίνῃ. τοὺς δὲ [27d] δαίμονας οὐχὶ ἤτοι θεούς γε ἡγούμεθα ἢ θεῶν παῖδας; φῂς ἢ οὔ; | **SOCRATES** How good of you to answer—barely, and forced to by these men! So you say that I believe in and teach divine things, whether new or old; at any rate, by your account I believe in divine things, and you swore to it in your charge. But if I believe in divine things, then surely it's absolutely necessary that I believe in spirits too. Isn't that so? It is—I'll take it that you agree, since you don't answer. And don't we regard [27d] spirits as either gods or children of gods? Yes or no? |
| 27d | **MELETUS** πάνυ γε. | **MELETUS** Certainly. |
| | **SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν εἴπερ δαίμονας ἡγοῦμαι, ὡς σὺ φῄς, εἰ μὲν θεοί τινές εἰσιν οἱ δαίμονες, τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη ὃ ἐγώ φημί σε αἰνίττεσθαι καὶ χαριεντίζεσθαι, θεοὺς οὐχ ἡγούμενον φάναι με θεοὺς αὖ ἡγεῖσθαι πάλιν, ἐπειδήπερ γε δαίμονας ἡγοῦμαι· εἰ δ' αὖ οἱ δαίμονες θεῶν παῖδές εἰσιν νόθοι τινὲς ἢ ἐκ νυμφῶν ἢ ἔκ τινων ἄλλων ὧν δὴ καὶ λέγονται, τίς ἂν ἀνθρώπων θεῶν μὲν παῖδας ἡγοῖτο εἶναι, θεοὺς δὲ μή; ὁμοίως γὰρ [27e] ἂν ἄτοπον εἴη ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ἵππων μὲν παῖδας ἡγοῖτο ἢ καὶ ὄνων, τοὺς ἡμιόνους, ἵππους δὲ καὶ ὄνους μὴ ἡγοῖτο εἶναι. | **SOCRATES** So if I believe in spirits, as you say, then if spirits are some kind of gods, this would be what I mean by your riddling and joking: saying that I don't believe in gods and then again that I do believe in gods, since I believe in spirits. And if, on the other hand, spirits are children of gods—bastard children of some sort, born of nymphs or of whatever other mothers they're said to come from—what human being would believe that there are children of gods, but not gods? That would be as [27e] absurd as believing in the offspring of horses and donkeys—mules—but not believing that there are horses and donkeys. |
| 27e | ἀλλ', ὦ Μέλητε, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως σὺ ταῦτα οὐχὶ ἀποπειρώμενος ἡμῶν ἐγράψω τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην ἢ ἀπορῶν ὅτι ἐγκαλοῖς ἐμοὶ ἀληθὲς ἀδίκημα· ὅπως δὲ σύ τινα πείθοις ἂν καὶ σμικρὸν νοῦν ἔχοντα ἀνθρώπων, ὡς οὐ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἔστιν καὶ δαιμόνια καὶ θεῖα ἡγεῖσθαι, καὶ αὖ τοῦ αὐτοῦ μήτε [28a] δαίμονας μήτε θεοὺς μήτε ἥρωας, οὐδεμία μηχανή ἐστιν. | No, Meletus, it can only be that you wrote this indictment to test us, or because you were at a loss for any real wrongdoing to charge me with. But that you could persuade anyone with even a little sense that one and the same man can believe in divine things and things of the gods, and yet that same man believe in neither [28a] spirits nor gods nor heroes—there's no way that can be done. |

## HOLDING HIS POST

*Socrates says a good man weighs only right and wrong, not death, and vows to keep philosophizing.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 28a | ἀλλὰ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ὡς μὲν ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀδικῶ κατὰ τὴν Μελήτου γραφήν, οὐ πολλῆς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἀπολογίας, ἀλλὰ ἱκανὰ καὶ ταῦτα· ὃ δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἔλεγον, ὅτι πολλή μοι ἀπέχθεια γέγονεν καὶ πρὸς πολλούς, εὖ ἴστε ὅτι ἀληθές ἐστιν. καὶ τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὃ ἐμὲ αἱρεῖ, ἐάνπερ αἱρῇ, οὐ Μέλητος οὐδὲ Ἄνυτος ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν πολλῶν διαβολή τε καὶ φθόνος. ἃ δὴ πολλοὺς καὶ ἄλλους καὶ ἀγαθοὺς [28b] ἄνδρας ἥρηκεν, οἶμαι δὲ καὶ αἱρήσει· οὐδὲν δὲ δεινὸν μὴ ἐν ἐμοὶ στῇ. | But really, men of Athens, that I'm not guilty of wrongdoing under Meletus' indictment doesn't seem to me to call for much of a defense; this is enough. But what I said earlier—that a great deal of hatred has built up against me, and among many people—you can be sure that's true. And that is what will convict me, if anything does: not Meletus, nor Anytus, but the slander and envy of the |

GREEK

ENGLISH

many. It has convicted many other good [28b] men, and I think it will go on doing so. There's no danger it will stop with me.

28b ἴσως ἂν οὖν εἴποι τις· "εἶτ' οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοιοῦτον ἐπιτήδευμα ἐπιτηδεύσας ἐξ οὗ κινδυνεύεις νυνὶ ἀποθανεῖν;" ἐγὼ δὲ τούτῳ ἂν δίκαιον λόγον ἀντείποιμι, ὅτι "οὐ καλῶς λέγεις, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, εἰ οἴει δεῖν κίνδυνον ὑπολογίζεσθαι τοῦ ζῆν ἢ τεθνάναι ἄνδρα ὅτου τι καὶ σμικρὸν ὄφελός ἐστιν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκεῖνο μόνον σκοπεῖν ὅταν πράττῃ, πότερον δίκαια ἢ ἄδικα πράττει, καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ ἔργα ἢ κακοῦ.

Perhaps someone might say: "Aren't you ashamed, Socrates, to have pursued the kind of occupation that has now put you in danger of death?" To him I'd make a just reply: "You're wrong, my friend, if you think that a man who is of even a little use should weigh up the risk of living or dying, rather than considering only this, whenever he acts: whether what he does is just or unjust, the deed of a good man or of a bad one.

φαῦλοι [28c] γὰρ ἂν τῷ γε σῷ λόγῳ εἶεν τῶν ἡμιθέων ὅσοι ἐν Τροίᾳ τετελευτήκασιν οἵ τε ἄλλοι καὶ ὁ τῆς Θέτιδος υἱός, ὃς τοσοῦτον τοῦ κινδύνου κατεφρόνησεν παρὰ τὸ αἰσχρόν τι ὑπομεῖναι ὥστε, ἐπειδὴ εἶπεν ἡ μήτηρ αὐτῷ προθυμουμένῳ Ἕκτορα ἀποκτεῖναι, θεὸς οὖσα, οὑτωσί πως, ὡς ἐγὼ οἶμαι· "ὦ παῖ, εἰ τιμωρήσεις Πατρόκλῳ τῷ ἑταίρῳ τὸν φόνον καὶ Ἕκτορα ἀποκτενεῖς, αὐτὸς ἀποθανῇ—αὐτίκα γάρ τοι," φησί, "μεθ' Ἕκτορα πότμος ἑτοῖμος" —ὁ δὲ τοῦτο ἀκούσας τοῦ μὲν θανάτου καὶ τοῦ κινδύνου ὠλιγώρησε, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον [28d] δείσας τὸ ζῆν κακὸς ὢν καὶ τοῖς φίλοις μὴ τιμωρεῖν, "αὐτίκα," φησί, "τεθναίην, δίκην ἐπιθεὶς τῷ ἀδικοῦντι, ἵνα μὴ ἐνθάδε μένω καταγέλαστος παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν ἄχθος ἀρούρης." μὴ αὐτὸν οἴει φροντίσαι θανάτου καὶ κινδύνου;"

By your account, [28c] the demigods who died at Troy would be worthless creatures—the son of Thetis above all. He so despised danger, compared with enduring anything shameful, that when he was eager to kill Hector and his mother, a goddess, spoke to him—something like this, I believe: 'My child, if you avenge the killing of your comrade Patroclus and kill Hector, you will die yourself; for straight after Hector,' she says, 'your own doom is ready'—he, hearing this, made light of death and danger, fearing far more [28d] to live as a coward and leave his friends unavenged. 'Let me die at once,' he says, 'once I've given the wrongdoer his due, so that I don't stay here, a laughingstock beside the curved ships, a burden on the earth.' You don't suppose he gave any thought to death and danger, do you?"[14]

28d οὕτω γὰρ ἔχει, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· οὗ ἄν τις ἑαυτὸν τάξῃ ἡγησάμενος βέλτιστον εἶναι ἢ ὑπ' ἄρχοντος ταχθῇ, ἐνταῦθα δεῖ, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, μένοντα κινδυνεύειν, μηδὲν ὑπολογιζόμενον μήτε θάνατον μήτε ἄλλο μηδὲν πρὸ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ. ἐγὼ οὖν δεινὰ ἂν εἴην εἰργασμένος, ὦ ἄνδρες [28e] Ἀθηναῖοι, εἰ ὅτε μέν με οἱ ἄρχοντες ἔταττον, οὓς ὑμεῖς εἵλεσθε ἄρχειν μου, καὶ ἐν Ποτειδαίᾳ καὶ ἐν Ἀμφιπόλει καὶ ἐπὶ Δηλίῳ, τότε μὲν οὗ ἐκεῖνοι ἔταττον ἔμενον ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλος τις καὶ ἐκινδύνευον ἀποθανεῖν, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τάττοντος, ὡς ἐγὼ ᾠήθην τε καὶ ὑπέλαβον, φιλοσοφοῦντά με δεῖν ζῆν καὶ ἐξετάζοντα ἐμαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους, ἐνταῦθα δὲ φοβηθεὶς ἢ θάνατον [29a] ἢ ἄλλ' ὁτιοῦν πρᾶγμα λίποιμι τὴν τάξιν.

This is how things truly stand, men of Athens. Wherever a man stations himself, believing it best, or is stationed by his commander, there, it seems to me, he must stay and face the danger, taking nothing into account—not death, nor anything else—before disgrace. So I would have done a terrible thing, men of [28e] Athens, if, when the commanders you elected to command me stationed me—at Potidaea and at Amphipolis and at Delium—I stayed where they stationed me, like anyone else, and ran the risk of dying; but when the god stationed me, as I thought and understood, to live my life philosophizing and examining myself and others, I then, out of fear of death [29a] or anything else whatever, deserted my post.[15]

14 The son of Thetis is Achilles; the lines adapt Homer, *Iliad* 18.94–104.
15 Socrates served as an infantryman at Potidaea (432–430 BC), Delium (424) and Amphipolis (422), campaigns in the war between Athens and Sparta.

GREEK

ENGLISH

29a δεινόν τἂν εἴη, καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς τότ’ ἄν με δικαίως εἰσάγοι τις εἰς δικαστήριον, ὅτι οὐ νομίζω θεοὺς εἶναι ἀπειθῶν τῇ μαντείᾳ καὶ δεδιὼς θάνατον καὶ οἰόμενος σοφὸς εἶναι οὐκ ὤν. τὸ γάρ τοι θάνατον δεδιέναι, ὦ ἄνδρες, οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ δοκεῖν σοφὸν εἶναι μὴ ὄντα· δοκεῖν γὰρ εἰδέναι ἐστὶν ἃ οὐκ οἶδεν. οἶδε μὲν γὰρ οὐδεὶς τὸν θάνατον οὐδ’ εἰ τυγχάνει τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ πάντων μέγιστον ὂν τῶν ἀγαθῶν, δεδίασι δ’ ὡς εὖ εἰδότες [29b] ὅτι μέγιστον τῶν κακῶν ἐστι. καίτοι πῶς οὐκ ἀμαθία ἐστὶν αὕτη ἡ ἐπονείδιστος, ἡ τοῦ οἴεσθαι εἰδέναι ἃ οὐκ οἶδεν;

That would be terrible, and then someone really could justly bring me into court for not believing that gods exist—disobeying the oracle, and fearing death, and thinking I was wise when I’m not. For to fear death, gentlemen, is nothing other than to seem wise when one is not: it is to seem to know what one doesn’t know. No one knows about death —not even whether it may be the greatest of all goods for a human being—yet people fear it as if they knew well [29b] that it is the greatest of evils. And surely this is ignorance, the disgraceful kind: thinking one knows what one doesn’t know.

29b ἐγὼ δ’, ὦ ἄνδρες, τούτῳ καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἴσως διαφέρω τῶν πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ εἰ δή τῳ σοφώτερός του φαίην εἶναι, τούτῳ ἄν, ὅτι οὐκ εἰδὼς ἱκανῶς περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἅιδου οὕτω καὶ οἶομαι οὐκ εἰδέναι· τὸ δὲ ἀδικεῖν καὶ ἀπειθεῖν τῷ βελτίονι καὶ θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, ὅτι κακὸν καὶ αἰσχρόν ἐστιν οἶδα.

But I, gentlemen, here too, perhaps, differ from most people in just this respect; and if I were to claim to be wiser than anyone in anything, it would be in this: that not knowing enough about things in Hades, I don’t think I know, either. But doing wrong, and disobeying one’s better, whether god or man—that I know is bad and shameful.

πρὸ οὖν τῶν κακῶν ὧν οἶδα ὅτι κακά ἐστιν, ἃ μὴ οἶδα εἰ καὶ ἀγαθὰ ὄντα τυγχάνει οὐδέποτε φοβήσομαι οὐδὲ φεύξομαι· ὥστε οὐδ’ εἰ [29c] με νῦν ὑμεῖς ἀφίετε Ἀνύτῳ ἀπιστήσαντες, ὃς ἔφη ἢ τὴν ἀρχὴν οὐ δεῖν ἐμὲ δεῦρο εἰσελθεῖν ἤ, ἐπειδὴ εἰσῆλθον, οὐχ οἷόν τ’ εἶναι τὸ μὴ ἀποκτεῖναί με, λέγων πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὡς εἰ διαφευξοίμην ἤδη ἂν ὑμῶν οἱ υἱεῖς ἐπιτηδεύοντες ἃ Σωκράτης διδάσκει πάντες παντάπασι διαφθαρήσονται, —εἴ μοι πρὸς ταῦτα εἴποιτε· “ὦ Σώκρατες, νῦν μὲν Ἀνύτῳ οὐ πεισόμεθα ἀλλ’ ἀφίεμέν σε, ἐπὶ τούτῳ μέντοι, ἐφ’ ᾧτε μηκέτι ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ζητήσει διατρίβειν μηδὲ φιλοσοφεῖν·

So rather than the evils I know to be evils, I will never fear or flee things that, for all I know, may turn out to be good. So even if [29c] you acquit me now, disbelieving Anytus—who said that either I should never have been brought here in the first place, or, since I have been, that you couldn’t possibly avoid putting me to death, telling you that if I got off, your sons would at once take up what Socrates teaches and all be utterly corrupted—if, in response to this, you were to say to me: “Socrates, this time we won’t listen to Anytus; we acquit you, but on this condition: that you no longer spend your time in this inquiry, or philosophize;

29c ἐὰν δὲ [29d] ἁλῷς ἔτι τοῦτο πράττων, ἀποθανῇ” —εἰ οὖν με, ὅπερ εἶπον, ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀφίοιτε, εἴποιμ’ ἂν ὑμῖν ὅτι “ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀσπάζομαι μὲν καὶ φιλῶ, πείσομαι δὲ μᾶλλον τῷ θεῷ ἢ ὑμῖν, καὶ ἕωσπερ ἂν ἐμπνέω καὶ οἷός τε ὦ, οὐ μὴ παύσωμαι φιλοσοφῶν καὶ ὑμῖν παρακελευόμενός τε καὶ ἐνδεικνύμενος ὅτῳ ἂν ἀεὶ ἐντυγχάνω ὑμῶν, λέγων οἷάπερ εἴωθα, ὅτι “ὦ ἄριστε ἀνδρῶν, Ἀθηναῖος ὤν, πόλεως τῆς μεγίστης καὶ εὐδοκιμωτάτης εἰς σοφίαν καὶ ἰσχύν, χρημάτων μὲν οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ ἐπιμελούμενος ὅπως σοι ἔσται ὡς πλεῖστα, [29e] καὶ δόξης καὶ τιμῆς, φρονήσεως δὲ καὶ ἀληθείας καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ὅπως ὡς βελτίστη ἔσται οὐκ ἐπιμελῇ οὐδὲ φροντίζεις;”” “καὶ ἐάν τις ὑμῶν ἀμφισβητήσῃ καὶ φῇ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, οὐκ εὐθὺς ἀφήσω αὐτὸν οὐδ’ ἄπειμι, ἀλλ’ ἐρήσομαι αὐτὸν καὶ ἐξετάσω καὶ ἐλέγξω, καὶ ἐάν μοι μὴ δοκῇ κεκτῆσθαι ἀρετήν, [30a] φάναι δέ, ὀνειδιῶ ὅτι τὰ

But if you are [29d] caught still doing this, you will die.”—if, as I said, you were to let me go on these terms, I would say to you: “Men of Athens, I hold you dear and I love you, but I will obey the god rather than you. As long as I draw breath and am able, I will never stop doing philosophy, urging you on and pointing things out to whichever of you I happen to meet, saying just what I always say: ‘My excellent friend, you are an Athenian, a citizen of the greatest city, the one most renowned for wisdom and power. Aren’t you ashamed to care about getting as much money as you can, [29e] and reputation and honor, while for understanding and truth, and for your soul—that it be as good as possible—you neither care nor give a thought?’” “And if any of you disputes this and says he does care, I won’t let him go straight off, and I won’t

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | πλείστου ἄξια περὶ ἐλαχίστου ποιεῖται, τὰ δὲ φαυλότερα περὶ πλείονος. | walk away. I'll question him, examine him, and cross-examine him. And if he doesn't seem to me to possess excellence, [30a] though he says he does, I'll reproach him for treating what is worth most as least important, and what is more trivial as more important. |
| 30a | ταῦτα καὶ νεωτέρῳ καὶ πρεσβυτέρῳ ὅτῳ ἂν ἐντυγχάνω ποιήσω, καὶ ξένῳ καὶ ἀστῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῖς ἀστοῖς, ὅσῳ μου ἐγγυτέρω ἐστὲ γένει. ταῦτα γὰρ κελεύει ὁ θεός, εὖ ἴστε, καὶ ἐγὼ οἶομαι οὐδέν πω ὑμῖν μεῖζον ἀγαθὸν γενέσθαι ἐν τῇ πόλει ἢ τὴν ἐμὴν τῷ θεῷ ὑπηρεσίαν. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο πράττων ἐγὼ περιέρχομαι ἢ πείθων ὑμῶν καὶ νεωτέρους καὶ πρεσβυτέρους μήτε σωμάτων [30b] ἐπιμελεῖσθαι μήτε χρημάτων πρότερον μηδὲ οὕτω σφόδρα ὡς τῆς ψυχῆς ὅπως ὡς ἀρίστη ἔσται, λέγων ὅτι "οὐκ ἐκ χρημάτων ἀρετὴ γίγνεται, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀρετῆς χρήματα καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἀγαθὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἅπαντα καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ." εἰ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα λέγων διαφθείρω τοὺς νέους, ταῦτ' ἂν εἴη βλαβερά· εἰ δέ τίς μέ φησιν ἄλλα λέγειν ἢ ταῦτα, οὐδὲν λέγει. | I will do this to anyone I meet, young or old, foreigner or fellow citizen—but more so to you citizens, since you are closer to me by birth. For this is what the god commands, make no mistake. And I believe no greater good has ever come to you in this city than my service to the god. All I do is go around trying to persuade you, young and old alike, not to care for your bodies [30b] or your money before, or as intensely as, your soul—how it may be as good as possible. I tell you: 'Excellence does not come from money; it is excellence that makes money and everything else good for human beings, in private and in public.' Now if by saying this I am corrupting the young, then this would be harmful. But if anyone claims I say anything other than this, he's talking nonsense. |
| 30b | πρὸς ταῦτα," φαίην ἄν, "ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἢ πείθεσθε Ἀνύτῳ ἢ μή, καὶ ἢ ἀφίετέ με ἢ μή, ὡς ἐμοῦ οὐκ [30c] ἂν ποιήσαντος ἄλλα, οὐδ' εἰ μέλλω πολλάκις τεθνάναι." | In view of this," I would say, "men of Athens, either do as Anytus says or don't, and either acquit me or don't—knowing that I [30c] would not act otherwise, not even if I am to die many times over." |

**THE GADFLY**

*Socrates calls himself a gadfly sent by the god to rouse the sluggish city.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 30c | μὴ θορυβεῖτε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀλλ' ἐμμείνατέ μοι οἷς ἐδεήθην ὑμῶν, μὴ θορυβεῖν ἐφ' οἷς ἂν λέγω ἀλλ' ἀκούειν· καὶ γάρ, ὡς ἐγὼ οἶμαι, ὀνήσεσθε ἀκούοντες. μέλλω γὰρ οὖν ἄττα ὑμῖν ἐρεῖν καὶ ἄλλα ἐφ' οἷς ἴσως βοήσεσθε· ἀλλὰ μηδαμῶς ποιεῖτε τοῦτο. εὖ γὰρ ἴστε, ἐάν με ἀποκτείνητε τοιοῦτον ὄντα οἷον ἐγὼ λέγω, οὐκ ἐμὲ μείζω βλάψετε ἢ ὑμᾶς αὐτούς· ἐμὲ μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἂν βλάψειεν οὔτε Μέλητος οὔτε Ἄνυτος—οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν δύναιτο—οὐ γὰρ οἴομαι θεμιτὸν [30d] εἶναι ἀμείνονι ἀνδρὶ ὑπὸ χείρονος βλάπτεσθαι. ἀποκτείνειε μεντἂν ἴσως ἢ ἐξελάσειεν ἢ ἀτιμώσειεν· ἀλλὰ ταῦτα οὗτος μὲν ἴσως οἴεται καὶ ἄλλος τίς που μεγάλα κακά, ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ οἶομαι, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ποιεῖν ἃ οὑτοσὶ νῦν ποιεῖ, ἄνδρα ἀδίκως ἐπιχειρεῖν ἀποκτεινύναι. | Don't make a commotion, men of Athens. Hold to what I asked of you: not to make a commotion at what I say, but to listen. In fact I think you'll benefit from listening. I'm about to tell you some other things too, at which you may well shout out—but please don't do that. Make no mistake: if you kill me, being the sort of man I say I am, you will not harm me more than you harm yourselves. Neither Meletus nor Anytus could harm me at all—he wouldn't be able to—for I don't think divine law permits [30d] a better man to be harmed by a worse. He might, perhaps, kill me, or banish me, or strip me of my rights as a citizen. He, perhaps, and maybe someone else, think these are great evils. I don't. I think it is far worse to do what this man is doing now—trying to kill a man unjustly. |
| 30d | | |

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | νῦν οὖν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πολλοῦ δέω ἐγὼ ὑπὲρ ἐμαυτοῦ ἀπολογεῖσθαι, ὥς τις ἂν οἴοιτο, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, μή τι ἐξαμάρτητε περὶ τὴν τοῦ [30e] θεοῦ δόσιν ὑμῖν ἐμοῦ καταψηφισάμενοι. ἐὰν γάρ με ἀποκτείνητε, οὐ ῥᾳδίως ἄλλον τοιοῦτον εὑρήσετε, ἀτεχνῶς—εἰ καὶ γελοιότερον εἰπεῖν—προσκείμενον τῇ πόλει ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὥσπερ ἵππῳ μεγάλῳ μὲν καὶ γενναίῳ, ὑπὸ μεγέθους δὲ νωθεστέρῳ καὶ δεομένῳ ἐγείρεσθαι ὑπό μύωπός τινος, οἷον δή μοι δοκεῖ ὁ θεὸς ἐμὲ τῇ πόλει προστεθηκέναι τοιοῦτόν τινα, ὃς ὑμᾶς ἐγείρων καὶ πείθων καὶ ὀνειδίζων ἕνα ἕκαστον [31a] οὐδὲν παύομαι τὴν ἡμέραν ὅλην πανταχοῦ προσκαθίζων. | So now, men of Athens, far from defending myself, as someone might think, I am defending you—so that you don't go wrong about the god's [30e] gift to you by condemning me. For if you kill me, you won't easily find another like me: someone who has simply—even if it sounds rather comic to put it this way—been attached to the city by the god, as if to a horse that is large and well-bred but sluggish because of its size, and in need of being roused by some gadfly. That is just the role I think the god has given me in the city: I am the one who never stops rousing you, persuading you, and reproaching each one of you, [31a] settling on you everywhere, all day long. |
| 31a | τοιοῦτος οὖν ἄλλος οὐ ῥᾳδίως ὑμῖν γενήσεται, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἀλλ' ἐὰν ἐμοὶ πείθησθε, φείσεσθέ μου· ὑμεῖς δ' ἴσως τάχ' ἂν ἀχθόμενοι, ὥσπερ οἱ νυστάζοντες ἐγειρόμενοι, κρούσαντες ἄν με, πειθόμενοι Ἀνύτῳ, ῥᾳδίως ἂν ἀποκτείναιτε, εἶτα τὸν λοιπὸν βίον καθεύδοντες διατελοῖτε ἄν, εἰ μή τινα ἄλλον ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν ἐπιπέμψειεν κηδόμενος ὑμῶν. ὅτι δ' ἐγὼ τυγχάνω ὢν τοιοῦτος οἷος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ πόλει δεδόσθαι, ἐνθένδε [31b] ἂν κατανοήσαιτε· οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρωπίνῳ ἔοικε τὸ ἐμὲ τῶν μὲν ἐμαυτοῦ πάντων ἠμεληκέναι καὶ ἀνέχεσθαι τῶν οἰκείων ἀμελουμένων τοσαῦτα ἤδη ἔτη, τὸ δὲ ὑμέτερον πράττειν ἀεί, ἰδίᾳ ἑκάστῳ προσιόντα ὥσπερ πατέρα ἢ ἀδελφὸν πρεσβύτερον πείθοντα ἐπιμελεῖσθαι ἀρετῆς. | Another like that won't easily come your way, gentlemen. If you take my advice, you'll spare me. But perhaps you'll be annoyed, like people woken from a doze, and you'll swat me—doing as Anytus says—and easily kill me. Then you would spend the rest of your lives asleep, unless the god, out of care for you, sent you someone else. That I really am the sort of man to have been given to the city by the god, you can see [31b] from this: it doesn't look like something merely human, that I have neglected all my own affairs and put up with the neglect of my household for so many years now, while always attending to yours—going to each of you privately, like a father or an older brother, urging you to care about excellence. |
| 31b | καὶ εἰ μέν τι ἀπὸ τούτων ἀπέλαυον καὶ μισθὸν λαμβάνων ταῦτα παρεκελευόμην, εἶχον ἄν τινα λόγον· νῦν δὲ ὁρᾶτε δὴ καὶ αὐτοὶ ὅτι οἱ κατήγοροι τἆλλα πάντα ἀναισχύντως οὕτω κατηγοροῦντες τοῦτό γε οὐχ οἷοί τε ἐγένοντο ἀπαναισχυντῆσαι [31c] παρασχόμενοι μάρτυρα, ὡς ἐγώ ποτέ τινα ἢ ἐπραξάμην μισθὸν ἢ ᾔτησα. ἱκανὸν γάρ, οἶμαι, ἐγὼ παρέχομαι τὸν μάρτυρα ὡς ἀληθῆ λέγω, τὴν πενίαν. | Now if I were getting something out of this, and taking pay for these exhortations, that would make some sense. But as it is, you can see for yourselves that my accusers, shameless as they've been in all their other accusations, couldn't bring themselves to be shameless enough on this one point— [31c] to produce a witness that I ever charged anyone a fee, or asked for one. I think I offer a good enough witness that I'm telling the truth: my poverty. |

## THE DIVINE SIGN

*Socrates explains that his divine sign has always kept him out of politics.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 31c | ἴσως ἂν οὖν δόξειεν ἄτοπον εἶναι, ὅτι δὴ ἐγὼ ἰδίᾳ μὲν ταῦτα συμβουλεύω περιιὼν καὶ πολυπραγμονῶ, δημοσίᾳ δὲ οὐ τολμῶ ἀναβαίνων εἰς τὸ πλῆθος τὸ ὑμέτερον συμβουλεύειν τῇ πόλει. τούτου δὲ αἴτιόν ἐστιν ὃ ὑμεῖς ἐμοῦ πολλάκις ἀκηκόατε πολλαχοῦ λέγοντος, ὅτι μοι | Now it may seem odd that I go around giving this advice in private and busying myself with others' affairs, but in public I don't venture to go up before your assembly and advise the city. The reason is something you have often heard me speak of, in |

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | θεῖόν τι καὶ [31d] δαιμόνιον γίγνεται φωνή, ὃ δὴ καὶ ἐν τῇ γραφῇ ἐπικωμῳδῶν Μέλητος ἐγράψατο. ἐμοὶ δὲ τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐκ παιδὸς ἀρξάμενον, φωνή τις γιγνομένη, ἣ ὅταν γένηται, ἀεὶ ἀποτρέπει με τοῦτο ὃ ἂν μέλλω πράττειν, προτρέπει δὲ οὔποτε. τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὅ μοι ἐναντιοῦται τὰ πολιτικὰ πράττειν, καὶ παγκάλως γέ μοι δοκεῖ ἐναντιοῦσθαι· εὖ γὰρ ἴστε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, εἰ ἐγὼ πάλαι ἐπεχείρησα πράττειν τὰ πολιτικὰ πράγματα, πάλαι ἂν ἀπολώλη καὶ οὔτ' ἂν ὑμᾶς ὠφελήκη [31e] οὐδὲν οὔτ' ἂν ἐμαυτόν. | many places: that something godlike and [31d] divine comes to me, a voice—the very thing Meletus made a mockery of in his indictment. It began in my childhood: a kind of voice that comes, and whenever it comes it always turns me away from what I'm about to do, but never urges me on. This is what opposes my taking part in politics—and a very fine thing it is, I think, that it does. For make no mistake, men of Athens: if I had tried long ago to engage in politics, I would have perished long ago, and done no good [31e] either to you or to myself. |
| 31e | καί μοι μὴ ἄχθεσθε λέγοντι τἀληθῆ· οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ὅστις ἀνθρώπων σωθήσεται οὔτε ὑμῖν οὔτε ἄλλῳ πλήθει οὐδενὶ γνησίως ἐναντιούμενος καὶ διακωλύων πολλὰ ἄδικα καὶ παράνομα ἐν τῇ πόλει γίγνεσθαι, ἀλλ' [32a] ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι τὸν τῷ ὄντι μαχούμενον ὑπὲρ τοῦ δικαίου, καὶ εἰ μέλλει ὀλίγον χρόνον σωθήσεσθαι, ἰδιωτεύειν ἀλλὰ μὴ δημοσιεύειν. | And don't be angry with me for telling the truth. There is no man who will survive if he genuinely opposes you, or any other mass of people, and tries to stop many unjust and unlawful things from happening in the city. [32a] Anyone who really fights for what is just, if he is going to survive even for a short time, must live as a private citizen, not a public man. |

## ARGINUSAE AND THE THIRTY

*Socrates recounts defying the Assembly over the generals' trial and the Thirty over Leon of Salamis.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 32a | μεγάλα δ' ἔγωγε ὑμῖν τεκμήρια παρέξομαι τούτων, οὐ λόγους ἀλλ' ὃ ὑμεῖς τιμᾶτε, ἔργα. ἀκούσατε δή μοι τὰ συμβεβηκότα, ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι οὐδ' ἂν ἑνὶ ὑπεικάθοιμι παρὰ τὸ δίκαιον δείσας θάνατον, μὴ ὑπείκων δὲ ἀλλὰ κἂν ἀπολοίμην. ἐρῶ δὲ ὑμῖν φορτικὰ μὲν καὶ δικανικά, ἀληθῆ δέ. ἐγὼ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἄλλην μὲν ἀρχὴν οὐδεμίαν [32b] πώποτε ἦρξα ἐν τῇ πόλει, ἐβούλευσα δέ· καὶ ἔτυχεν ἡμῶν ἡ φυλὴ Ἀντιοχὶς πρυτανεύουσα ὅτε ὑμεῖς τοὺς δέκα στρατηγοὺς τοὺς οὐκ ἀνελομένους τοὺς ἐκ τῆς ναυμαχίας ἐβουλεύσασθε ἀθρόους κρίνειν, παρανόμως, ὡς ἐν τῷ ὑστέρῳ χρόνῳ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν ἔδοξεν. | I'll give you strong proof of this—not words, but what you respect: deeds. Listen, then, to what happened to me, so that you know I would not give way to anyone against what is just out of fear of death, and that if I refused to give way I would even be ready to perish. What I'll tell you is tiresome stuff, the kind you hear in the law courts, but it is true. I have never, men of Athens, held any other office [32b] in the city, but I did serve on the Council. And it happened that our tribe, Antiochis, was presiding when you decided to try the ten generals as a group—the ones who had failed to pick up the men from the naval battle. That was unlawful, as you all came to think later.[16] |
| 32b | τότ' ἐγὼ μόνος τῶν πρυτάνεων ἠναντιώθην ὑμῖν μηδὲν ποιεῖν παρὰ τοὺς νόμους καὶ ἐναντία ἐψηφισάμην· καὶ ἑτοίμων ὄντων ἐνδεικνύναι με καὶ ἀπάγειν τῶν ῥητόρων, καὶ ὑμῶν κελευόντων καὶ βοώντων, μετὰ τοῦ [32c] νόμου καὶ τοῦ δικαίου ᾤμην μᾶλλόν με δεῖν διακινδυνεύειν ἢ μεθ' ὑμῶν γενέσθαι μὴ δίκαια βουλευομένων, φοβηθέντα δεσμὸν ἢ θάνατον. καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἦν ἔτι | Then I alone of the presiding committee opposed your doing anything against the laws, and I voted against it. The orators were ready to lay information against me and have me arrested, and you were urging them on and shouting, but I thought I should run the risk on the side of [32c] the law and what is just, rather than side with you in your un- |

**16** The battle of Arginusae (406 BC). Members of the Council from each of the ten tribes took turns serving as its presiding committee.

| GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|
| δημοκρατουμένης τῆς πόλεως· ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὀλιγαρχία ἐγένετο, οἱ τριάκοντα αὖ μεταπεμψάμενοί με πέμπτον αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν θόλον προσέταξαν ἀγαγεῖν ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος Λέοντα τὸν Σαλαμίνιον ἵνα ἀποθάνοι, οἷα δὴ καὶ ἄλλοις ἐκεῖνοι πολλοῖς πολλὰ προσέταττον, βουλόμενοι ὡς πλείστους ἀναπλῆσαι αἰτιῶν. | just proposals out of fear of prison or death. That was while the city was still a democracy. But when the oligarchy came in, the Thirty in turn summoned me and four others to the Rotunda and ordered us to bring Leon of Salamis from Salamis to be put to death. They gave many such orders to many others too, wanting to implicate as many people as possible in their crimes.[17] |
| 32c τότε μέντοι ἐγὼ [32d] οὐ λόγῳ ἀλλ' ἔργῳ αὖ ἐνεδειξάμην ὅτι ἐμοὶ θανάτου μὲν μέλει, εἰ μὴ ἀγροικότερον ἦν εἰπεῖν, οὐδ' ὁτιοῦν, τοῦ δὲ μηδὲν ἄδικον μηδ' ἀνόσιον ἐργάζεσθαι, τούτου δὲ τὸ πᾶν μέλει. ἐμὲ γὰρ ἐκείνη ἡ ἀρχὴ οὐκ ἐξέπληξεν, οὕτως ἰσχυρὰ οὖσα, ὥστε ἄδικόν τι ἐργάσασθαι, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἐκ τῆς θόλου ἐξήλθομεν, οἱ μὲν τέτταρες ᾤχοντο εἰς Σαλαμῖνα καὶ ἤγαγον Λέοντα, ἐγὼ δὲ ᾠχόμην ἀπιὼν οἴκαδε. καὶ ἴσως ἂν διὰ ταῦτα ἀπέθανον, εἰ μὴ ἡ ἀρχὴ διὰ ταχέων κατελύθη. καὶ [32e] τούτων ὑμῖν ἔσονται πολλοὶ μάρτυρες. | But then [32d] I showed once again, not in words but in action, that I don't care about death in the slightest—if that's not too blunt a way of putting it—but that my whole concern is not to do anything unjust or unholy. That regime, powerful as it was, did not frighten me into doing anything unjust. When we came out of the Rotunda, the other four went off to Salamis and brought Leon back, while I went off home. And I might well have been put to death for it, if the regime hadn't fallen soon afterward. And [32e] you will have many witnesses to this. |
| 32e ἆρ' οὖν ἄν με οἴεσθε τοσάδε ἔτη διαγενέσθαι εἰ ἔπραττον τὰ δημόσια, καὶ πράττων ἀξίως ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ ἐβοήθουν τοῖς δικαίοις καὶ ὥσπερ χρὴ τοῦτο περὶ πλείστου ἐποιούμην; πολλοῦ γε δεῖ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλος [33a] ἀνθρώπων οὐδείς. ἀλλ' ἐγὼ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου δημοσίᾳ τε εἴ πού τι ἔπραξα τοιοῦτος φανοῦμαι, καὶ ἰδίᾳ ὁ αὐτὸς οὗτος, οὐδενὶ πώποτε συγχωρήσας οὐδὲν παρὰ τὸ δίκαιον οὔτε ἄλλῳ οὔτε τούτων οὐδενὶ οὓς δὴ διαβάλλοντες ἐμέ φασιν ἐμοὺς μαθητὰς εἶναι. | So do you think I would have survived all these years if I had engaged in public affairs, and, acting as a good man should, had come to the aid of what is just, and made this, as one must, my highest concern? Far from it, men of Athens. Nor would any other [33a] man. But throughout my whole life, if I ever did anything in public, I'll be shown to be that sort of man, and the same in private: never conceding anything contrary to what is just to anyone—whether to others, or to any of those my slanderers call my students. |
| 33a ἐγὼ δὲ διδάσκαλος μὲν οὐδενὸς πώποτ' ἐγενόμην· εἰ δέ τίς μου λέγοντος καὶ τὰ ἐμαυτοῦ πράττοντος ἐπιθυμοῖ ἀκούειν, εἴτε νεώτερος εἴτε πρεσβύτερος, οὐδενὶ πώποτε ἐφθόνησα, οὐδὲ χρήματα μὲν λαμβάνων διαλέγομαι [33b] μὴ λαμβάνων δὲ οὔ, ἀλλ' ὁμοίως καὶ πλουσίῳ καὶ πένητι παρέχω ἐμαυτὸν ἐρωτᾶν, καὶ ἐάν τις βούληται ἀποκρινόμενος ἀκούειν ὧν ἂν λέγω. καὶ τούτων ἐγὼ εἴτε τις χρηστὸς γίγνεται εἴτε μή, οὐκ ἂν δικαίως τὴν αἰτίαν ὑπέχοιμι, ὧν μήτε ὑπεσχόμην μηδενὶ μηδὲν πώποτε μάθημα μήτε ἐδίδαξα· εἰ δέ τίς φησι παρ' ἐμοῦ πώποτέ τι μαθεῖν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι ἰδίᾳ ὅτι μὴ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι πάντες, εὖ ἴστε ὅτι οὐκ ἀληθῆ λέγει. | I have never been anyone's teacher. But if anyone, young or old, wanted to hear me talking and going about my own business, I never begrudged it to anyone. Nor do I talk with people when I'm paid [33b] and not when I'm not. I make myself available to rich and poor alike to ask me questions, and, if someone prefers, to answer mine and hear what I have to say. And whether any of these people turns out good or not, I cannot justly be held responsible, since I never promised any of them any instruction and never taught them any. If anyone says he ever learned anything from me, or heard privately something that everyone else didn't hear too, you can be sure he isn't telling the truth. |

17 The Thirty: the oligarchy that ruled Athens in 404–403 BC after its defeat by Sparta. The Rotunda (Tholos) was where the presiding committee met and dined.

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 33b | ἀλλὰ διὰ τί δή ποτε μετ' ἐμοῦ χαίρουσί τινες πολὺν [33c] χρόνον διατρίβοντες; ἀκηκόατε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πᾶσαν ὑμῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐγὼ εἶπον· ὅτι ἀκούοντες χαίρουσιν ἐξεταζομένοις τοῖς οἰομένοις μὲν εἶναι σοφοῖς, οὖσι δ' οὔ. ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἀηδές. ἐμοὶ δὲ τοῦτο, ὡς ἐγώ φημι, προστέτακται ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πράττειν καὶ ἐκ μαντείων καὶ ἐξ ἐνυπνίων καὶ παντὶ τρόπῳ ᾧπέρ τίς ποτε καὶ ἄλλη θεία μοῖρα ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ ὁτιοῦν προσέταξε πράττειν. ταῦτα, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, καὶ ἀληθῆ ἐστιν καὶ εὐέλεγκτα. | Why is it, then, that some people enjoy spending so much [33c] time with me? You've heard, men of Athens—I told you the whole truth: they enjoy hearing people examined who think they are wise but aren't. It is not unpleasant. But for me, as I say, this is something I have been commanded to do by the god—through oracles, through dreams, and in every way in which any divine dispensation has ever commanded a human being to do anything at all. This, men of Athens, is both true and easy to test. |
| 33c | εἰ γὰρ δὴ ἔγωγε τῶν νέων [33d] τοὺς μὲν διαφθείρω τοὺς δὲ διέφθαρκα, χρῆν δήπου, εἴτε τινὲς αὐτῶν πρεσβύτεροι γενόμενοι ἔγνωσαν ὅτι νέοις οὖσιν αὐτοῖς ἐγὼ κακὸν πώποτέ τι συνεβούλευσα, νυνὶ αὐτοὺς ἀναβαίνοντας ἐμοῦ κατηγορεῖν καὶ τιμωρεῖσθαι· εἰ δὲ μὴ αὐτοὶ ἤθελον, τῶν οἰκείων τινὰς τῶν ἐκείνων, πατέρας καὶ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἄλλους τοὺς προσήκοντας, εἴπερ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ τι κακὸν ἐπεπόνθεσαν αὐτῶν οἱ οἰκεῖοι, νῦν μεμνῆσθαι καὶ τιμωρεῖσθαι. | For if among the young [33d] I really am corrupting some and have corrupted others, then surely some of them, now grown older and aware that I once gave them bad advice when they were young, ought to be coming up here now to accuse me and get their revenge. Or, if they themselves were unwilling, some of their families—fathers, brothers, and other relatives—if their kin had suffered some harm at my hands, ought to remember it now and take revenge. |
| 33d | πάντως δὲ πάρεισιν αὐτῶν πολλοὶ ἐνταυθοῖ οὓς ἐγὼ ὁρῶ, πρῶτον μὲν Κρίτων οὑτοσί, ἐμὸς ἡλικιώτης [33e] καὶ δημότης, Κριτοβούλου τοῦδε πατήρ, ἔπειτα Λυσανίας ὁ Σφήττιος, Αἰσχίνου τοῦδε πατήρ, ἔτι δ' Ἀντιφῶν ὁ Κηφισιεὺς οὑτοσί, Ἐπιγένους πατήρ, ἄλλοι τοίνυν οὗτοι ὧν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ διατριβῇ γεγόνασιν, Νικόστρατος Θεοζοτίδου, ἀδελφὸς Θεοδότου—καὶ ὁ μὲν Θεόδοτος τετελεύτηκεν, ὥστε οὐκ ἂν ἐκεῖνός γε αὐτοῦ καταδεηθείη—καὶ Παράλιος ὅδε, ὁ Δημοδόκου, οὗ ἦν Θεάγης ἀδελφός· ὅδε δὲ [34a] Ἀδείμαντος, ὁ Ἀρίστωνος, οὗ ἀδελφὸς οὑτοσὶ Πλάτων, καὶ Αἰαντόδωρος, οὗ Ἀπολλόδωρος ὅδε ἀδελφός. καὶ ἄλλους πολλοὺς ἐγὼ ἔχω ὑμῖν εἰπεῖν, ὧν τινα ἐχρῆν μάλιστα μὲν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ παρασχέσθαι Μέλητον μάρτυρα· εἰ δὲ τότε ἐπελάθετο, νῦν παρασχέσθω—ἐγὼ παραχωρῶ—καὶ λεγέτω εἴ τι ἔχει τοιοῦτον. | In any case, many of them are here; I can see them. First, Crito here, my contemporary [33e] and from my own district, father of Critobulus here; then Lysanias of Sphettus, father of Aeschines here; and Antiphon of Cephisia here, too, father of Epigenes. Then there are these others, whose brothers have spent their time in this pursuit: Nicostratus, son of Theozotides, brother of Theodotus—Theodotus has died, so he at least couldn't have begged his brother to hold back—and Paralius here, son of Demodocus, whose brother was Theages. And here is [34a] Adeimantus, son of Ariston, whose brother is Plato here, and Aeantodorus, whose brother is Apollodorus here. I could name many others to you, and Meletus certainly should have produced one of them as a witness in his own speech. If he forgot then, let him produce one now—I yield the floor—and let him tell us if he has any such testimony.[18] |
| 34a | ἀλλὰ τούτου πᾶν τοὐναντίον εὑρήσετε, ὦ ἄνδρες, πάντας ἐμοὶ βοηθεῖν ἑτοίμους τῷ διαφθείροντι, τῷ κακὰ ἐργαζομένῳ τοὺς οἰκείους αὐτῶν, ὡς φασι Μέλητος καὶ [34b] Ἄνυτος. αὐτοὶ μὲν γὰρ οἱ διεφθαρμένοι τάχ' ἂν λόγον ἔχοιεν βοηθοῦντες· οἱ δὲ ἀδιάφθαρτοι, πρεσβύτεροι ἤδη ἄνδρες, οἱ τούτων προσήκοντες, τίνα ἄλλον ἔχουσι λόγον | But you'll find the very opposite, gentlemen: all of them ready to help me—the corrupter, the man doing harm to their families, as Meletus and [34b] Anytus say. The corrupted themselves might well have a reason to help me. But the uncorrupted, older men by now, their relatives—what other reason do |

**18** Plato, the author, names himself here as present at the trial.

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | βοηθοῦντες ἐμοὶ ἀλλ' ἢ τὸν ὀρθόν τε καὶ δίκαιον, ὅτι συνίσασι Μελήτῳ μὲν ψευδομένῳ, ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀληθεύοντι; | they have for helping me but the right and just one: that they know Meletus is lying and I am telling the truth? |

## NO APPEAL TO PITY

*Socrates refuses to parade his family before the jury, and the jury votes to convict.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 34b | εἶεν δή, ὦ ἄνδρες· ἃ μὲν ἐγὼ ἔχοιμ' ἂν ἀπολογεῖσθαι, σχεδόν ἐστι ταῦτα καὶ ἄλλα ἴσως τοιαῦτα. τάχα δ' ἄν τις [34c] ὑμῶν ἀγανακτήσειεν ἀναμνησθεὶς ἑαυτοῦ, εἰ ὁ μὲν καὶ ἐλάττω τουτουῒ τοῦ ἀγῶνος ἀγῶνα ἀγωνιζόμενος ἐδεήθη τε καὶ ἱκέτευσε τοὺς δικαστὰς μετὰ πολλῶν δακρύων, παιδία τε αὐτοῦ ἀναβιβασάμενος ἵνα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐλεηθείη, καὶ ἄλλους τῶν οἰκείων καὶ φίλων πολλούς, ἐγὼ δὲ οὐδὲν ἄρα τούτων ποιήσω, καὶ ταῦτα κινδυνεύων, ὡς ἂν δόξαιμι, τὸν ἔσχατον κίνδυνον. τάχ' ἂν οὖν τις ταῦτα ἐννοήσας αὐθαδέστερον ἂν πρός με σχοίη καὶ ὀργισθεὶς αὐτοῖς τούτοις θεῖτο ἂν μετ' [34d] ὀργῆς τὴν ψῆφον. | Well then, gentlemen. What I have to say in my defense is roughly this, and perhaps other things like it. But perhaps one of [34c] you will be resentful when he remembers his own case—if, in a trial even less serious than this one, he begged and pleaded with the jurors with many tears, bringing up his little children to win as much pity as possible, and many of his other relatives and friends besides, while I, it seems, will do none of these things, even though I'm facing, as it might appear, the ultimate danger. Someone thinking about this might harden himself against me, and, angered by these very things, cast his vote in [34d] anger. |
| 34d | εἰ δή τις ὑμῶν οὕτως ἔχει—οὐκ ἀξιῶ μὲν γὰρ ἔγωγε, εἰ δ' οὖν—ἐπιεικῆ ἄν μοι δοκῶ πρὸς τοῦτον λέγειν λέγων ὅτι "ἐμοί, ὦ ἄριστε, εἰσὶν μέν πού τινες καὶ οἰκεῖοι· καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο αὐτὸ τὸ τοῦ Ὁμήρου, οὐδ' ἐγὼ "ἀπὸ δρυὸς οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης" πέφυκα ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, ὥστε καὶ οἰκεῖοί μοί εἰσι καὶ υἱεῖς γε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τρεῖς, εἷς μὲν μειράκιον ἤδη, δύο δὲ παιδία· ἀλλ' ὅμως οὐδένα αὐτῶν δεῦρο ἀναβιβασάμενος δεήσομαι ὑμῶν ἀποψηφίσασθαι." τί δὴ οὖν οὐδὲν τούτων ποιήσω; | If any of you feels this way—I don't expect it of you, but if so—I think it would be reasonable to say to him: "My good man, I do have some family, of course. As Homer puts it, I too was not born 'from oak or from rock,' but from human beings. So I have family, and sons too, men of Athens—three of them: one already a young man, two still children. And yet I won't bring any of them up here and beg you to acquit me." Why, then, won't I do any of these things?[19] |
| | οὐκ αὐθαδιζόμενος, ὦ ἄνδρες [34e] Ἀθηναῖοι, οὐδ' ὑμᾶς ἀτιμάζων, ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν θαρραλέως ἐγὼ ἔχω πρὸς θάνατον ἢ μή, ἄλλος λόγος, πρὸς δ' οὖν δόξαν καὶ ἐμοὶ καὶ ὑμῖν καὶ ὅλῃ τῇ πόλει οὔ μοι δοκεῖ καλὸν εἶναι ἐμὲ τούτων οὐδὲν ποιεῖν καὶ τηλικόνδε ὄντα καὶ τοῦτο τοὔνομα ἔχοντα, εἴτ' οὖν ἀληθὲς εἴτ' οὖν ψεῦδος, ἀλλ' οὖν δεδογμένον [35a] γέ ἐστί τῳ Σωκράτη διαφέρειν τῶν πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων. | Not out of arrogance, men [34e] of Athens, nor out of disrespect for you. Whether or not I face death with confidence is another matter. But as regards reputation—mine, yours, and the whole city's—I don't think it's honorable for me to do any of these things, at my age and with the name I have, whether it's true or false. At any rate, people have [35a] made up their minds that Socrates stands out in some way from most people. |
| 35a | εἰ οὖν ὑμῶν οἱ δοκοῦντες διαφέρειν εἴτε σοφίᾳ εἴτε ἀνδρείᾳ εἴτε ἄλλῃ ἡτινιοῦν ἀρετῇ τοιοῦτοι ἔσονται, αἰσχρὸν ἂν εἴη· οἷουσπερ ἐγὼ πολλάκις ἑώρακά τινας ὅταν κρίνωνται, δοκοῦντας μέν τι εἶναι, θαυμάσια δὲ ἐργαζομένους, ὡς δεινόν τι οἰομένους πείσεσθαι εἰ ἀποθανοῦνται, ὥσπερ ἀθανάτων ἐσομένων ἂν ὑμεῖς αὐτοὺς μὴ ἀποκτείνητε· οἳ ἐμοὶ δοκοῦσιν αἰσχύνην τῇ | So if those of you who are thought to stand out in wisdom or courage or any other excellence at all behave like that, it would be shameful. I have often seen men of that sort when they are on trial—men who are thought to be somebody, yet who behave in astonishing ways, as if they thought some- |

**19** The quotation is from Homer's *Odyssey* (19.163), where Penelope asks the disguised Odysseus about his origins.

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | πόλει περιάπτειν, ὥστ' ἄν τινα καὶ τῶν ξένων [35b] ὑπολαβεῖν ὅτι οἱ διαφέροντες Ἀθηναίων εἰς ἀρετήν, οὓς αὐτοὶ ἑαυτῶν ἔν τε ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις τιμαῖς προκρίνουσιν, οὗτοι γυναικῶν οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν. | thing terrible would happen to them if they died, as if they would be immortal so long as you didn't kill them. Such men seem to me to bring shame on the city, so that even a foreigner [35b] might suppose that the Athenians who are outstanding in excellence, whom the Athenians themselves pick out from among themselves for offices and other honors, are no better than women. |
| 35b | ταῦτα γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, οὔτε ὑμᾶς χρὴ ποιεῖν τοὺς δοκοῦντας καὶ ὁπῃοῦν τι εἶναι, οὔτ', ἂν ἡμεῖς ποιῶμεν, ὑμᾶς ἐπιτρέπειν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸ ἐνδείκνυσθαι, ὅτι πολὺ μᾶλλον καταψηφιεῖσθε τοῦ τὰ ἐλεινὰ ταῦτα δράματα εἰσάγοντος καὶ καταγέλαστον τὴν πόλιν ποιοῦντος ἢ τοῦ ἡσυχίαν ἄγοντος. | You should not do these things, men of Athens, those of you who have any standing at all; nor, if we do them, should you allow it. You should make it clear instead that you'll be far readier to convict the man who stages these pitiful dramas and makes the city a laughingstock than the one who keeps his composure. |
| | χωρὶς δὲ τῆς δόξης, ὦ ἄνδρες, οὐδὲ δίκαιόν μοι δοκεῖ [35c] εἶναι δεῖσθαι τοῦ δικαστοῦ οὐδὲ δεόμενον ἀποφεύγειν, ἀλλὰ διδάσκειν καὶ πείθειν. οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ τούτῳ κάθηται ὁ δικαστής, ἐπὶ τῷ καταχαρίζεσθαι τὰ δίκαια, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ κρίνειν ταῦτα· καὶ ὀμώμοκεν οὐ χαριεῖσθαι οἷς ἂν δοκῇ αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ δικάσειν κατὰ τοὺς νόμους. οὔκουν χρὴ οὔτε ἡμᾶς ἐθίζειν ὑμᾶς ἐπιορκεῖν οὔθ' ὑμᾶς ἐθίζεσθαι· οὐδέτεροι γὰρ ἂν ἡμῶν εὐσεβοῖεν. μὴ οὖν ἀξιοῦτέ με, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοιαῦτα δεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς πράττειν ἃ μήτε ἡγοῦμαι καλὰ εἶναι μήτε [35d] δίκαια μήτε ὅσια, ἄλλως τε μέντοι νὴ Δία πάντως καὶ ἀσεβείας φεύγοντα ὑπὸ Μελήτου τουτουΐ. | Reputation aside, gentlemen, it doesn't seem to me just [35c] to beg the juror, or to get off by begging; one should inform and persuade. The juror doesn't sit there to hand out justice as a favor, but to decide what is just. And he has sworn not to do favors for whomever he pleases, but to judge according to the laws. So we shouldn't get you into the habit of breaking your oath, and you shouldn't get into the habit; neither of us would be acting piously. So don't expect me, men of Athens, to do things before you that I believe are neither honorable nor [35d] just nor holy—least of all, by Zeus, when I am being prosecuted for impiety by Meletus here. |
| 35d | σαφῶς γὰρ ἄν, εἰ πείθοιμι ὑμᾶς καὶ τῷ δεῖσθαι βιαζοίμην ὀμωμοκότας, θεοὺς ἂν διδάσκοιμι μὴ ἡγεῖσθαι ὑμᾶς εἶναι, καὶ ἀτεχνῶς ἀπολογούμενος κατηγοροίην ἂν ἐμαυτοῦ ὡς θεοὺς οὐ νομίζω. ἀλλὰ πολλοῦ δεῖ οὕτως ἔχειν· νομίζω τε γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ὡς οὐδεὶς τῶν ἐμῶν κατηγόρων, καὶ ὑμῖν ἐπιτρέπω καὶ τῷ θεῷ κρῖναι περὶ ἐμοῦ ὅπῃ μέλλει ἐμοί τε ἄριστα εἶναι καὶ ὑμῖν. | For clearly, if I persuaded you and overpowered you by begging, after you have sworn an oath, I would be teaching you not to believe that there are gods, and in my very defense I would simply be accusing myself of not believing in gods. But that is far from the truth. I do believe in them, men of Athens, as none of my accusers does. And I leave it to you and to the god to judge my case in whatever way will be best for me and for you. |

# The Counter-Penalty

*Found guilty, Socrates must propose his own penalty.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 35e | τὸ μὲν μὴ ἀγανακτεῖν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἐπὶ τούτῳ [36a] τῷ γεγονότι, ὅτι μου κατεψηφίσασθε, ἄλλα τέ μοι πολλὰ συμβάλλεται, καὶ οὐκ ἀνέλπιστόν μοι γέγονεν τὸ γεγονὸς τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον θαυμάζω ἑκατέρων τῶν ψήφων τὸν γεγονότα ἀριθμόν. οὐ γὰρ ᾠόμην ἔγωγε οὕτω παρ' ὀλίγον ἔσεσθαι ἀλλὰ παρὰ πολύ· νῦν δέ, ὡς ἔοικεν, εἰ τριάκοντα μόναι μετέπεσον τῶν ψήφων, ἀπεπεφεύγη ἄν. Μέλητον μὲν οὖν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκῶ, καὶ νῦν ἀποπέφευγα, καὶ οὐ μόνον ἀποπέφευγα, ἀλλὰ παντὶ δῆλον τοῦτό γε, ὅτι εἰ μὴ ἀνέβη Ἄνυτος καὶ Λύκων κατηγορήσοντες ἐμοῦ, κἂν ὤφλε [36b] χιλίας δραχμάς, οὐ μεταλαβὼν τὸ πέμπτον μέρος τῶν ψήφων. | Many things contribute, men of Athens, to my not being upset at what [36a] has happened—that you have convicted me. Above all, what has happened is not unexpected. What surprises me much more is the number of votes on each side. I didn't think it would be this close; I thought it would be by a wide margin. As it is, it seems, if only thirty votes had gone the other way, I would have been acquitted. As far as Meletus is concerned, I think I've been acquitted even now. And not only acquitted: it is plain to everyone that if Anytus and Lycon hadn't come up to accuse me, he would have been fined [36b] a thousand drachmas for failing to get a fifth of the votes.[1] |

## WHAT SOCRATES DESERVES

*Asked to propose a penalty, Socrates says he deserves free meals in the Prytaneum.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 36b | τιμᾶται δ' οὖν μοι ὁ ἀνὴρ θανάτου. εἶεν· ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ τίνος ὑμῖν ἀντιτιμήσομαι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι; ἢ δῆλον ὅτι τῆς ἀξίας; τί οὖν; τί ἄξιός εἰμι παθεῖν ἢ ἀποτεῖσαι, ὅτι μαθὼν ἐν τῷ βίῳ οὐχ ἡσυχίαν ἦγον, ἀλλ' ἀμελήσας ὧνπερ οἱ πολλοί, χρηματισμοῦ τε καὶ οἰκονομίας καὶ στρατηγιῶν καὶ δημηγοριῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀρχῶν καὶ συνωμοσιῶν καὶ στάσεων τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει γιγνομένων, ἡγησάμενος ἐμαυτὸν [36c] τῷ ὄντι ἐπιεικέστερον εἶναι ἢ ὥστε εἰς ταῦτ' ἰόντα σώζεσθαι, ἐνταῦθα μὲν οὐκ ᾖα οἷ ἐλθὼν μήτε ὑμῖν μήτε ἐμαυτῷ ἔμελλον μηδὲν ὄφελος εἶναι, ἐπὶ δὲ τὸ ἰδίᾳ ἕκαστον ἰὼν εὐεργετεῖν τὴν μεγίστην εὐεργεσίαν, ὡς ἐγώ φημι, ἐνταῦθα ᾖα, ἐπιχειρῶν ἕκαστον ὑμῶν πείθειν μὴ πρότερον μήτε τῶν ἑαυτοῦ μηδενὸς ἐπιμελεῖσθαι πρὶν ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιμεληθείη ὅπως ὡς βέλτιστος καὶ φρονιμώτατος ἔσοιτο, μήτε τῶν τῆς πόλεως, πρὶν αὐτῆς τῆς πόλεως, τῶν τε ἄλλων οὕτω κατὰ τὸν [36d] αὐτὸν τρόπον ἐπιμελεῖσθαι—τί οὖν εἰμι ἄξιος παθεῖν τοιοῦτος ὤν; | So the man proposes death as my penalty. Very well. And what counter-penalty shall I propose to you, men of Athens? Clearly what I deserve, isn't it? What, then? What do I deserve to suffer or to pay, because I took it into my head not to lead a quiet life? I neglected what most people care about—making money and managing an estate, generalships and speeches before the Assembly and the other offices, and the sworn political clubs and factions that spring up in the city—because I believed myself [36c] really too decent a man to survive if I went in for those things. I didn't go where I would be of no use either to you or to myself. Instead I went to each of you privately, to do what I say is the greatest of services: I tried to persuade each of you not to care for any of his possessions before caring for himself, how he might be as good and as full of understanding as possible, nor for the city's affairs before the city itself, and to care |

1 Socrates has been found guilty; each side now proposes a penalty. A prosecutor who won less than a fifth of the votes paid a heavy fine.

GREEK

ENGLISH

for everything else in the same [36d] way. So what do I deserve to suffer, being a man like that?

36d ἀγαθόν τι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, εἰ δεῖ γε κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ τιμᾶσθαι· καὶ ταῦτά γε ἀγαθὸν τοιοῦτον ὅτι ἂν πρέποι ἐμοί. τί οὖν πρέπει ἀνδρὶ πένητι εὐεργέτῃ δεομένῳ ἄγειν σχολὴν ἐπὶ τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ παρακελεύσει; οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅτι μᾶλλον, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πρέπει οὕτως ὡς τὸν τοιοῦτον ἄνδρα ἐν πρυτανείῳ σιτεῖσθαι, πολύ γε μᾶλλον ἢ εἴ τις ὑμῶν ἵππῳ ἢ συνωρίδι ἢ ζεύγει νενίκηκεν Ὀλυμπίασιν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὑμᾶς ποιεῖ εὐδαίμονας δοκεῖν εἶναι, ἐγὼ δὲ [36e] εἶναι, καὶ ὁ μὲν τροφῆς οὐδὲν δεῖται, ἐγὼ δὲ δέομαι. εἰ οὖν δεῖ με κατὰ τὸ δίκαιον τῆς ἀξίας τιμᾶσθαι, τούτου [37a] τιμῶμαι, ἐν πρυτανείῳ σιτήσεως.

Something good, men of Athens, if I really must propose what I truly deserve—and a good of a kind that would suit me, at that. What, then, suits a poor man who is your benefactor and needs leisure to go on exhorting you? There is nothing more fitting, men of Athens, than for such a man to be given his meals in the Prytaneum—far more fitting than for any of you who has won at Olympia with a single horse, or a pair, or a four-horse team. He makes you seem happy; I make you [36e] be happy. And he has no need of the food; I do. So if I must propose what I justly deserve, this is what [37a] I propose: meals in the Prytaneum.[2]

37a ἴσως οὖν ὑμῖν καὶ ταυτὶ λέγων παραπλησίως δοκῶ λέγειν ὥσπερ περὶ τοῦ οἴκτου καὶ τῆς ἀντιβολήσεως, ἀπαυθαδιζόμενος· τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοιοῦτον ἀλλὰ τοιόνδε μᾶλλον. πέπεισμαι ἐγὼ ἑκὼν εἶναι μηδένα ἀδικεῖν ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλὰ ὑμᾶς τοῦτο οὐ πείθω· ὀλίγον γὰρ χρόνον ἀλλήλοις διειλέγμεθα. ἐπεί, ὡς ἐγῷμαι, εἰ ἦν ὑμῖν νόμος, ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις, περὶ θανάτου μὴ μίαν ἡμέραν [37b] μόνον κρίνειν ἀλλὰ πολλάς, ἐπείσθητε ἄν· νῦν δ' οὐ ῥᾴδιον ἐν χρόνῳ ὀλίγῳ μεγάλας διαβολὰς ἀπολύεσθαι. πεπεισμένος δὴ ἐγὼ μηδένα ἀδικεῖν πολλοῦ δέω ἐμαυτόν γε ἀδικήσειν καὶ κατ' ἐμαυτοῦ ἐρεῖν αὐτὸς ὡς ἄξιός εἰμί του κακοῦ καὶ τιμήσεσθαι τοιούτου τινὸς ἐμαυτῷ. τί δείσας; ἦ μὴ πάθω τοῦτο οὗ Μέλητός μοι τιμᾶται, ὅ φημι οὐκ εἰδέναι οὔτ' εἰ ἀγαθὸν οὔτ' εἰ κακόν ἐστιν;

Perhaps in saying this, too, you think I'm talking much as I did about pity and pleading—out of sheer arrogance. That isn't how it is, men of Athens; it's more like this. I am convinced that I never willingly do wrong to any human being, but I can't convince you of it, because we have talked with each other for only a short time. I think that if you had a law, as some other people do, that a capital case must be decided not in a single day [37b] but over many, you would have been convinced. As it is, it isn't easy to dispel great slanders in a short time. Convinced as I am that I do no one wrong, I am certainly far from going to wrong myself—from saying against myself that I deserve something bad and proposing some such penalty for myself. Out of fear of what? Of suffering what Meletus proposes for me, when I say I don't know whether it is a good thing or a bad one?

37b ἀντὶ τούτου δὴ ἕλωμαι ὧν εὖ οἶδά τι κακῶν ὄντων τούτου τιμησάμενος; πότερον δεσμοῦ; [37c] καὶ τί με δεῖ ζῆν ἐν δεσμωτηρίῳ, δουλεύοντα τῇ ἀεὶ καθισταμένῃ ἀρχῇ, τοῖς ἕνδεκα; ἀλλὰ χρημάτων καὶ δεδέσθαι ἕως ἂν ἐκτείσω; ἀλλὰ ταὐτόν μοί ἐστιν ὅπερ νυνδὴ ἔλεγον· οὐ γὰρ ἔστι μοι χρήματα ὁπόθεν ἐκτείσω. ἀλλὰ δὴ φυγῆς τιμήσωμαι; ἴσως γὰρ ἄν μοι τούτου τιμήσαιτε. πολλὴ μεντἄν με φιλοψυχία ἔχοι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, εἰ οὕτως ἀλόγιστός εἰμι ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι λογίζεσθαι ὅτι ὑμεῖς μὲν ὄντες πολῖταί μου οὐχ οἷοί τε ἐγένεσθε ἐνεγκεῖν τὰς ἐμὰς [37d] διατριβὰς καὶ τοὺς λόγους, ἀλλ' ὑμῖν βαρύτεραι γεγόνασιν καὶ ἐπιφθονώτεραι, ὥστε ζητεῖτε αὐτῶν νυνὶ

Instead of that, am I to choose something I know very well to be bad, and propose that? Imprisonment? [37c] And why should I live in prison, a slave to whoever holds office there at the time, the Eleven? A fine, then, and prison until I pay it? But for me that comes to the same thing I just mentioned, since I have no money to pay it with. Shall I propose exile, then? You might well accept that. I would have to be gripped by a great love of life, men of Athens, to be so irrational that I couldn't work this out: you, my own fellow citizens, were unable to bear my [37d] way of spending my time and my arguments—they became too burdensome

2 The Prytaneum was the city's town hall, where free meals were given at public expense to honored citizens such as Olympic victors.

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | ἀπαλλαγῆναι· ἄλλοι δὲ ἄρα αὐτὰς οἴσουσι ῥᾳδίως; πολλοῦ γε δεῖ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι. | and too hateful for you, so that now you're trying to be rid of them—and others, then, will bear them easily? Far from it, men of Athens.[3] |
| 37d | καλὸς οὖν ἄν μοι ὁ βίος εἴη ἐξελθόντι τηλικῷδε ἀνθρώπῳ ἄλλην ἐξ ἄλλης πόλεως ἀμειβομένῳ καὶ ἐξελαυνομένῳ ζῆν. εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι ὅποι ἂν ἔλθω, λέγοντος ἐμοῦ ἀκροάσονται οἱ νέοι ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε· κἂν μὲν τούτους ἀπελαύνω, οὗτοί με αὐτοὶ ἐξελῶσι πείθοντες τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους· [37e] ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀπελαύνω, οἱ τούτων πατέρες δὲ καὶ οἰκεῖοι δι' αὐτοὺς τούτους. | A fine life it would be for me, then, a man of my age, to go off and live moving from one city to another, always being driven out. For I know very well that wherever I go, the young will listen to me talk, just as they do here. If I drive them away, they themselves will get me driven out by persuading their elders; [37e] if I don't drive them away, their fathers and relatives will drive me out for their sake. |

## THE UNEXAMINED LIFE

*Socrates says the unexamined life is not worth living, offers a fine, and is sentenced to death.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 37e | ἴσως οὖν ἄν τις εἴποι· "σιγῶν δὲ καὶ ἡσυχίαν ἄγων, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐχ οἷός τ' ἔσῃ ἡμῖν ἐξελθὼν ζῆν;" τουτὶ δή ἐστι πάντων χαλεπώτατον πεῖσαί τινας ὑμῶν. ἐάντε γὰρ λέγω ὅτι τῷ θεῷ ἀπειθεῖν τοῦτ' ἐστὶν καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' ἀδύνατον [38a] ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν, οὐ πείσεσθέ μοι ὡς εἰρωνευομένῳ· ἐάντ' αὖ λέγω ὅτι καὶ τυγχάνει μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν ὂν ἀνθρώπῳ τοῦτο, ἑκάστης ἡμέρας περὶ ἀρετῆς τοὺς λόγους ποιεῖσθαι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων περὶ ὧν ὑμεῖς ἐμοῦ ἀκούετε διαλεγομένου καὶ ἐμαυτὸν καὶ ἄλλους ἐξετάζοντος, ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ, ταῦτα δ' ἔτι ἧττον πείσεσθέ μοι λέγοντι. τὰ δὲ ἔχει μὲν οὕτως, ὡς ἐγώ φημι, ὦ ἄνδρες, πείθειν δὲ οὐ ῥᾴδιον. καὶ ἐγὼ ἅμα οὐκ εἴθισμαι ἐμαυτὸν ἀξιοῦν κακοῦ [38b] οὐδενός. | Someone might say, then: "But Socrates, can't you leave us and live quietly, keeping your mouth shut?" This is the hardest thing of all to convince some of you of. If I say that this would be disobeying the god, and that for this reason it is impossible for me [38a] to keep quiet, you won't believe me; you'll think I'm being ironic. If instead I say that this actually is the greatest good for a human being—to discuss excellence every day, and the other things you hear me talking about as I examine myself and others—and that the unexamined life is not worth living for a human being, you'll believe me even less. Yet that is how things are, as I say, gentlemen; it just isn't easy to convince you. And besides, I'm not accustomed to thinking I deserve anything [38b] bad. |
| 38b | εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν μοι χρήματα, ἐτιμησάμην ἂν χρημάτων ὅσα ἔμελλον ἐκτείσειν, οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν ἐβλάβην· νῦν δὲ οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν, εἰ μὴ ἄρα ὅσον ἂν ἐγὼ δυναίμην ἐκτεῖσαι, τοσούτου βούλεσθέ μοι τιμῆσαι. ἴσως δ' ἂν δυναίμην ἐκτεῖσαι ὑμῖν που μνᾶν ἀργυρίου· τοσούτου οὖν τιμῶμαι. | If I had money, I would have proposed a fine of as much as I could pay, since that would have done me no harm. But as it is, I don't—unless you're willing to set my penalty at whatever I can pay. I could perhaps pay you a mina of silver. So that is the penalty I propose.[4] |
| | Πλάτων δὲ ὅδε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, καὶ Κρίτων καὶ Κριτόβουλος καὶ Ἀπολλόδωρος κελεύουσί με τριάκοντα μνῶν τιμήσασθαι, αὐτοὶ δ' ἐγγυᾶσθαι· τιμῶμαι οὖν τοσούτου, ἐγγυηταὶ δὲ ὑμῖν ἔσονται τοῦ ἀργυρίου οὗτοι ἀξιόχρεῳ. | But Plato here, men of Athens, and Crito and Critobulus and Apollodorus urge me to propose thirty minas, and they themselves will stand surety. So I propose that amount, and these men will be reliable guarantors of the money to you. |

3 The Eleven were the officials in charge of the prison and of executions.
4 A mina was a hundred drachmas: a real but modest sum.

# Final Words

*Sentenced to death, Socrates speaks to the jury one last time.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 38c | οὐ πολλοῦ γ' ἕνεκα χρόνου, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ὄνομα ἕξετε καὶ αἰτίαν ὑπὸ τῶν βουλομένων τὴν πόλιν λοιδορεῖν ὡς Σωκράτη ἀπεκτόνατε, ἄνδρα σοφόν— φήσουσι γὰρ δὴ σοφὸν εἶναι, εἰ καὶ μή εἰμι, οἱ βουλόμενοι ὑμῖν ὀνειδίζειν— εἰ γοῦν περιεμείνατε ὀλίγον χρόνον, ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου ἂν ὑμῖν τοῦτο ἐγένετο· ὁρᾶτε γὰρ δὴ τὴν ἡλικίαν ὅτι πόρρω ἤδη ἐστὶ τοῦ βίου θανάτου δὲ ἐγγύς. λέγω δὲ τοῦτο οὐ 38d πρὸς πάντας ὑμᾶς, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς ἐμοῦ καταψηφισαμένους θάνατον. λέγω δὲ καὶ τόδε πρὸς τοὺς αὐτοὺς τούτους. ἴσως με οἴεσθε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀπορίᾳ λόγων ἐαλωκέναι τοιούτων οἷς ἂν ὑμᾶς ἔπεισα, εἰ ᾤμην δεῖν ἅπαντα ποιεῖν καὶ λέγειν ὥστε ἀποφυγεῖν τὴν δίκην. πολλοῦ γε δεῖ. | For the sake of a little time, men of Athens, you will get the name and the blame, from those who want to disparage the city, of having killed Socrates, a wise man—for those who want to reproach you will certainly say I'm wise, even if I'm not. If you had just waited a short while, this would have happened for you of its own accord. You can see my age: I am far along in life and close to death. I say this not 38d to all of you, but to those who voted for my death. And to these same people I say this as well. Perhaps you think, men of Athens, that I was convicted for lack of the kind of arguments with which I could have persuaded you, had I thought I should do and say anything at all to escape the charge. Far from it. |
| 38d | ἀλλ' ἀπορίᾳ μὲν ἐάλωκα, οὐ μέντοι λόγων, ἀλλὰ τόλμης καὶ ἀναισχυντίας καὶ τοῦ μὴ ἐθέλειν λέγειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς τοιαῦτα οἵ' ἂν ὑμῖν μὲν ἥδιστα ἦν ἀκούειν— θρηνοῦντός τέ μου καὶ ὀδυρομένου καὶ ἄλλα ποιοῦντος καὶ 38e λέγοντος πολλὰ καὶ ἀνάξια ἐμοῦ, ὡς ἐγώ φημι, οἷα δὴ καὶ εἴθισθε ὑμεῖς τῶν ἄλλων ἀκούειν. ἀλλ' οὔτε τότε ᾠήθην δεῖν ἕνεκα τοῦ κινδύνου πρᾶξαι οὐδὲν ἀνελεύθερον, οὔτε νῦν μοι μεταμέλει οὕτως ἀπολογησαμένῳ, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον αἱροῦμαι ὧδε ἀπολογησάμενος τεθνάναι ἢ ἐκείνως ζῆν. οὔτε γὰρ ἐν δίκῃ οὔτ' ἐν πολέμῳ οὔτ' ἐμὲ οὔτ' ἄλλον οὐδένα δεῖ 39a τοῦτο μηχανᾶσθαι, ὅπως ἀποφεύξεται πᾶν ποιῶν θάνατον. | I was convicted for a lack, yes—but not of arguments. It was a lack of brazenness and shamelessness, and of willingness to say to you the kind of things you would most have liked to hear: me wailing and lamenting and doing and 38e saying many other things unworthy of me, as I claim—the sort of things you are used to hearing from others. But I didn't think then that the danger justified my doing anything unworthy of a free man, nor do I regret now having defended myself this way. I would much rather die having made this defense than live by making that one. For neither in court nor in war should I or anyone else 39a contrive to escape death by doing anything whatever. |
| 39a | καὶ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς μάχαις πολλάκις δῆλον γίγνεται ὅτι τό γε ἀποθανεῖν ἄν τις ἐκφύγοι καὶ ὅπλα ἀφεὶς καὶ ἐφ' ἱκετείαν τραπόμενος τῶν διωκόντων· καὶ ἄλλαι μηχαναὶ πολλαί εἰσιν ἐν ἑκάστοις τοῖς κινδύνοις ὥστε διαφεύγειν θάνατον, ἐάν τις τολμᾷ πᾶν ποιεῖν καὶ λέγειν. ἀλλὰ μὴ οὐ τοῦτ' ᾖ χαλεπόν, ὦ ἄνδρες, θάνατον ἐκφυγεῖν, ἀλλὰ πολὺ χαλεπώτερον πονηρίαν· 39b θᾶττον γὰρ θανάτου θεῖ. καὶ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν ἅτε βραδὺς ὢν καὶ πρεσβύτης ὑπὸ τοῦ βραδυτέρου ἑάλων, οἱ δ' ἐμοὶ κατήγοροι ἅτε δεινοὶ καὶ ὀξεῖς ὄντες ὑπὸ τοῦ θάττονος, τῆς κακίας. καὶ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν ἄπειμι ὑφ' ὑμῶν θανάτου δίκην ὀφλών, οὗτοι δ' ὑπὸ | In battle, too, it often becomes clear that a man could escape death by throwing down his arms and turning to beg his pursuers for mercy; and in every kind of danger there are many other devices for escaping death, if one is willing to do and say anything at all. But I suspect, gentlemen, that the hard thing is not escaping death; far harder is escaping wickedness, 39b for it runs faster than death. And now I, being slow and old, have been caught by the slower of the two, while my accusers, being clever and quick, have been caught |

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| | τῆς ἀληθείας ὠφληκότες μοχθηρίαν καὶ ἀδικίαν. καὶ ἐγώ τε τῷ τιμήματι ἐμμένω καὶ οὗτοι. | by the faster—by vice. So now I go away condemned by you to pay the penalty of death, while they go away convicted by the truth of depravity and injustice. I abide by my penalty, and they by theirs. |
| 39b | ταῦτα μέν που ἴσως οὕτως καὶ ἔδει σχεῖν, καὶ οἶμαι αὐτὰ μετρίως ἔχειν. [39c] | Perhaps things had to turn out this way, and I think it is fair enough. [39c] |

### A PROPHECY FOR THOSE WHO CONDEMNED HIM

*Socrates warns those who condemned him that younger critics will soon call them to account.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 39c | τὸ δὲ δὴ μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπιθυμῶ ὑμῖν χρησμῳδῆσαι, ὦ καταψηφισάμενοί μου· καὶ γάρ εἰμι ἤδη ἐνταῦθα ἐν ᾧ μάλιστα ἄνθρωποι χρησμῳδοῦσιν, ὅταν μέλλωσιν ἀποθανεῖσθαι. φημὶ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες οἳ ἐμὲ ἀπεκτόνατε, τιμωρίαν ὑμῖν ἥξειν εὐθὺς μετὰ τὸν ἐμὸν θάνατον πολὺ χαλεπωτέραν νὴ Δία ἢ οἵαν ἐμὲ ἀπεκτόνατε· νῦν γὰρ τοῦτο εἴργασθε οἰόμενοι μὲν ἀπαλλάξεσθαι τοῦ διδόναι ἔλεγχον τοῦ βίου, τὸ δὲ ὑμῖν πολὺ ἐναντίον ἀποβήσεται, ὡς ἐγώ φημι. πλείους ἔσονται ὑμᾶς [39d] οἱ ἐλέγχοντες, οὓς νῦν ἐγὼ κατεῖχον, ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ᾐσθάνεσθε· καὶ χαλεπώτεροι ἔσονται ὅσῳ νεώτεροί εἰσιν, καὶ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον ἀγανακτήσετε. | Next I want to prophesy to you, you who voted to condemn me. For I am already at the point where people most often prophesy: when they are about to die. I tell you, you men who have killed me, that punishment will come upon you right after my death, far harsher, by Zeus, than the death you have dealt me. You have done this now in the belief that you will be free of having to give an account of your lives, but it will turn out quite the opposite for you, I tell you. There will be more people [39d] cross-examining you—people I have been holding back, though you didn't notice. And they will be harsher, since they are younger, and you will be more resentful. |
| 39d | εἰ γὰρ οἴεσθε ἀποκτείνοντες ἀνθρώπους ἐπισχήσειν τοῦ ὀνειδίζειν τινὰ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθῶς ζῆτε, οὐ καλῶς διανοεῖσθε· οὐ γάρ ἐσθ' αὕτη ἡ ἀπαλλαγὴ οὔτε πάνυ δυνατὴ οὔτε καλή, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη καὶ καλλίστη καὶ ῥᾴστη, μὴ τοὺς ἄλλους κολούειν ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν παρασκευάζειν ὅπως ἔσται ὡς βέλτιστος. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ὑμῖν τοῖς καταψηφισαμένοις μαντευσάμενος ἀπαλλάττομαι. [39e] | If you think that by killing people you will stop anyone from reproaching you for not living rightly, you are mistaken. That way of getting free is neither really possible nor honorable. The finest and easiest way is not to cut others down but to prepare oneself to be as good as possible. With this prophecy to you who voted to condemn me, I take my leave of you. [39e] |

### TO THOSE WHO VOTED TO ACQUIT

*Socrates tells his supporters that his divine sign's silence shows that what has happened is good.*

| | GREEK | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| 39e | τοῖς δὲ ἀποψηφισαμένοις ἡδέως ἂν διαλεχθείην ὑπὲρ τοῦ γεγονότος τουτουῒ πράγματος, ἐν ᾧ οἱ ἄρχοντες ἀσχολίαν ἄγουσι καὶ οὔπω ἔρχομαι οἷ ἐλθόντα με δεῖ τεθνάναι. ἀλλά μοι, ὦ ἄνδρες, παραμείνατε τοσοῦτον χρόνον· οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει διαμυθολογῆσαι πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἕως ἔξεστιν. ὑμῖν [40a] γὰρ ὡς φίλοις οὖσιν ἐπιδεῖξαι ἐθέλω τὸ νυνί μοι συμβεβηκὸς τί ποτε νοεῖ. ἐμοὶ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί—ὑμᾶς γὰρ δικαστὰς καλῶν ὀρθῶς ἂν καλοίην—θαυμάσιόν τι γέγονεν. ἡ γὰρ εἰωθυῖά μοι μαντικὴ ἡ τοῦ δαιμονίου ἐν μὲν τῷ πρόσθεν χρόνῳ παντὶ πάνυ πυκνὴ ἀεὶ ἦν καὶ πάνυ | With those who voted to acquit me I would gladly talk over what has happened, while the officials are busy and I am not yet going to the place where I must go to die. So stay with me, gentlemen, that long; nothing prevents us from talking together while we still can. To you, [40a] as my friends, I want to show what this thing that has happened to me really means. For to me, judges—and in calling you judges I would be using the name rightly—some- |

GREEK

ENGLISH

ἐπὶ σμικροῖς ἐναντιουμένη, εἴ τι μέλλοιμι μὴ ὀρθῶς πράξειν.

thing remarkable has happened. My usual prophetic voice, the divine sign, was always very frequent in all the time before, and it would oppose me even in very small matters, if I was about to do something that wasn't right.

40a νυνὶ δὲ συμβέβηκέ μοι ἅπερ ὁρᾶτε καὶ αὐτοί, ταυτὶ ἄ γε δὴ οἰηθείη ἄν τις καὶ νομίζεται ἔσχατα κακῶν εἶναι· ἐμοὶ δὲ 40b οὔτε ἐξιόντι ἕωθεν οἴκοθεν ἠναντιώθη τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ σημεῖον, οὔτε ἡνίκα ἀνέβαινον ἐνταυθοῖ ἐπὶ τὸ δικαστήριον, οὔτε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ οὐδαμοῦ μέλλοντί τι ἐρεῖν. καίτοι ἐν ἄλλοις λόγοις πολλαχοῦ δή με ἐπέσχε λέγοντα μεταξύ· νῦν δὲ οὐδαμοῦ περὶ ταύτην τὴν πρᾶξιν οὔτ' ἐν ἔργῳ οὐδενὶ οὔτ' ἐν λόγῳ ἠναντίωταί μοι. τί οὖν αἴτιον εἶναι ὑπολαμβάνω; ἐγὼ ὑμῖν ἐρῶ· κινδυνεύει γάρ μοι τὸ συμβεβηκὸς τοῦτο ἀγαθὸν γεγονέναι, καὶ οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ἡμεῖς ὀρθῶς ὑπολαμβάνομεν, 40c ὅσοι οἰόμεθα κακὸν εἶναι τὸ τεθνάναι.

But now there has happened to me what you can see for yourselves—what anyone might think, and what is generally held, to be the worst of evils. Yet 40b the god's sign did not oppose me when I left home this morning, nor when I came up here to the court, nor at any point in my speech when I was about to say something. And yet in other speeches it has often stopped me in the middle of what I was saying. But now, in this whole affair, it hasn't opposed me anywhere, in anything I did or said. What do I take to be the reason? I'll tell you. It looks as though what has happened to me is a good thing, and there is no way we are right, 40c those of us who think that being dead is an evil.

40c μέγα μοι τεκμήριον τούτου γέγονεν· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐκ ἠναντιώθη ἄν μοι τὸ εἰωθὸς σημεῖον, εἰ μή τι ἔμελλον ἐγὼ ἀγαθὸν πράξειν.

I have had strong evidence of this. There is no way my usual sign would not have opposed me, if I were not about to do something good.

## WHY DEATH IS NOT TO BE FEARED

*Socrates argues death is either dreamless sleep or a journey to meet the dead, and both are good.*

GREEK

ENGLISH

ἐννοήσωμεν δὲ καὶ τῇδε ὡς πολλὴ ἐλπίς ἐστιν ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι. δυοῖν γὰρ θάτερόν ἐστιν τὸ τεθνάναι· ἢ γὰρ οἷον μηδὲν εἶναι μηδὲ αἴσθησιν μηδεμίαν μηδενὸς ἔχειν τὸν τεθνεῶτα, ἢ κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα μεταβολή τις τυγχάνει οὖσα καὶ μετοίκησις τῇ ψυχῇ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἐνθένδε εἰς ἄλλον τόπον.

Let us consider it this way too, and see how much reason there is to hope that it is a good thing. Being dead is one of two things. Either it is like being nothing, and the dead man has no perception of anything at all; or, as we are told, it is a kind of change, a migration of the soul from this place here to another place.

καὶ εἴτε δὴ μηδεμία αἴσθησίς ἐστιν ἀλλ' 40d οἷον ὕπνος ἐπειδάν τις καθεύδων μηδ' ὄναρ μηδὲν ὁρᾷ, θαυμάσιον κέρδος ἂν εἴη ὁ θάνατος—ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂν οἶμαι, εἴ τινα ἐκλεξάμενον δέοι ταύτην τὴν νύκτα ἐν ᾗ οὕτω κατέδαρθεν ὥστε μηδὲ ὄναρ ἰδεῖν, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμέρας τὰς τοῦ βίου τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ ἀντιπαραθέντα ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ δέοι σκεψάμενον εἰπεῖν πόσας ἄμεινον καὶ ἥδιον ἡμέρας καὶ νύκτας ταύτης τῆς νυκτὸς βεβίωκεν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ βίῳ, οἶμαι ἂν μὴ ὅτι ἰδιώτην τινά, ἀλλὰ τὸν μέγαν βασιλέα εὐαριθμήτους 40e ἂν εὑρεῖν αὐτὸν ταύτας πρὸς τὰς ἄλλας ἡμέρας καὶ νύκτας—εἰ οὖν τοιοῦτον ὁ θάνατός ἐστιν, κέρδος ἔγωγε λέγω· καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲν πλείων ὁ πᾶς χρόνος φαίνεται οὕτω δὴ εἶναι ἢ μία νύξ.

GREEK

ENGLISH

Now if there is no perception, but it is [40d] like sleep, when someone sleeping sees nothing, not even a dream, death would be a marvelous gain. For suppose someone had to pick out the night in which he slept so soundly that he didn't even dream, and set the other nights and days of his life beside that night, and then had to consider and say how many days and nights in his life he had lived better and more pleasantly than that night. I think that not just some private person but the Great King himself would find them easy to count [40e] compared with all the other days and nights. So if death is like that, I call it a gain; for then all of time appears to be no longer than a single night.[1]

40e εἰ δ' αὖ οἷον ἀποδημῆσαί ἐστιν ὁ θάνατος ἐνθένδε εἰς ἄλλον τόπον, καὶ ἀληθῆ ἐστιν τὰ λεγόμενα, ὡς ἄρα ἐκεῖ εἰσι πάντες οἱ τεθνεῶτες, τί μεῖζον ἀγαθὸν τούτου εἴη ἄν, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί; εἰ γάρ τις [41a] ἀφικόμενος εἰς Ἅιδου, ἀπαλλαγεὶς τουτωνὶ τῶν φασκόντων δικαστῶν εἶναι, εὑρήσει τοὺς ὡς ἀληθῶς δικαστάς, οἵπερ καὶ λέγονται ἐκεῖ δικάζειν, Μίνως τε καὶ Ῥαδάμανθυς καὶ Αἰακὸς καὶ Τριπτόλεμος καὶ ἄλλοι ὅσοι τῶν ἡμιθέων δίκαιοι ἐγένοντο ἐν τῷ ἑαυτῶν βίῳ, ἆρα φαύλη ἂν εἴη ἡ ἀποδημία; ἢ αὖ Ὀρφεῖ συγγενέσθαι καὶ Μουσαίῳ καὶ Ἡσιόδῳ καὶ Ὁμήρῳ ἐπὶ πόσῳ ἄν τις δέξαιτ' ἂν ὑμῶν; ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ πολλάκις ἐθέλω τεθνάναι εἰ ταῦτ' ἔστιν ἀληθῆ.

If, on the other hand, death is like a journey from here to another place, and what we are told is true —that all the dead are there—what greater good could there be than this, judges? If someone [41a] arrives in Hades, rid of these people here who claim to be judges, and finds the true judges, who are said to give judgment there—Minos and Rhadamanthys and Aeacus and Triptolemus, and all the other demigods who were just in their own lives—would that be a poor journey? Or again, what would any of you give to be with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? I am willing to die many times over, if these things are true.[2]

41a ἐπεὶ [41b] ἔμοιγε καὶ αὐτῷ θαυμαστὴ ἂν εἴη ἡ διατριβὴ αὐτόθι, ὁπότε ἐντύχοιμι Παλαμήδει καὶ Αἴαντι τῷ Τελαμῶνος καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος τῶν παλαιῶν διὰ κρίσιν ἄδικον τέθνηκεν, ἀντιπαραβάλλοντι τὰ ἐμαυτοῦ πάθη πρὸς τὰ ἐκείνων—ὡς ἐγὼ οἶμαι, οὐκ ἂν ἀηδὲς εἴη—καὶ δὴ τὸ μέγιστον, τοὺς ἐκεῖ ἐξετάζοντα καὶ ἐρευνῶντα ὥσπερ τοὺς ἐνταῦθα διάγειν, τίς αὐτῶν σοφός ἐστιν καὶ τίς οἴεται μέν, ἔστιν δ' οὔ. ἐπὶ πόσῳ δ' ἄν τις, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, δέξαιτο ἐξετάσαι τὸν ἐπὶ Τροίαν ἀγαγόντα [41c] τὴν πολλὴν στρατιὰν ἢ Ὀδυσσέα ἢ Σίσυφον ἢ ἄλλους μυρίους ἄν τις εἴποι καὶ ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας, οἷς ἐκεῖ διαλέγεσθαι καὶ συνεῖναι καὶ ἐξετάζειν ἀμήχανον ἂν εἴη εὐδαιμονίας;

For [41b] I myself would find it a wonderful way to spend my time there, when I met Palamedes and Ajax son of Telamon, and any other of the ancients who died because of an unjust verdict, and compared my experiences with theirs—which would not be unpleasant, I think. And, greatest of all, I could spend my time examining and searching out the people there, as I do those here, to find which of them is wise and which thinks he is but isn't. What would one give, judges, to examine the man who led [41c] the great army against Troy, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, or countless others one could name, men and women? To talk with them there, and be with them, and examine them, would be happiness beyond measure.[3]

41c πάντως οὐ δήπου τούτου γε ἕνεκα οἱ ἐκεῖ ἀποκτείνουσι· τά τε γὰρ ἄλλα εὐδαιμονέστεροί εἰσιν οἱ ἐκεῖ τῶν ἐνθάδε,

In any case, surely the people there don't put anyone to death for that. For they are happier than

1 The Great King was the king of Persia, the proverbial example of wealth and good fortune.
2 Minos, Rhadamanthys, Aeacus, and Triptolemus were legendary figures said to judge the dead; Orpheus and Musaeus were legendary poets and seers.
3 Palamedes, executed on a false charge of treason, and Ajax, who killed himself after Achilles' armor was awarded to Odysseus, were legendary victims of unjust judgments; the leader of the army against Troy is Agamemnon.

GREEK

καὶ ἤδη τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἀθάνατοί εἰσιν, εἴπερ γε τὰ λεγόμενα ἀληθῆ.

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑμᾶς χρή, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, εὐέλπιδας εἶναι πρὸς τὸν θάνατον, καὶ ἕν τι τοῦτο διανοεῖσθαι ἀληθές, ὅτι [41d] οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθῷ κακὸν οὐδὲν οὔτε ζῶντι οὔτε τελευτήσαντι, οὐδὲ ἀμελεῖται ὑπὸ θεῶν τὰ τούτου πράγματα· οὐδὲ τὰ ἐμὰ νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου γέγονεν, ἀλλά μοι δῆλόν ἐστι τοῦτο, ὅτι ἤδη τεθνάναι καὶ ἀπηλλάχθαι πραγμάτων βέλτιον ἦν μοι. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐμὲ οὐδαμοῦ ἀπέτρεψεν τὸ σημεῖον, καὶ ἔγωγε τοῖς καταψηφισαμένοις μου καὶ τοῖς κατηγόροις οὐ πάνυ χαλεπαίνω. καίτοι οὐ ταύτῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ κατεψηφίζοντό μου καὶ κατηγόρουν, ἀλλ' οἰόμενοι βλάπτειν· [41e] τοῦτο αὐτοῖς ἄξιον μέμφεσθαι.

41e τοσόνδε μέντοι αὐτῶν δέομαι· τοὺς υἱεῖς μου, ἐπειδὰν ἡβήσωσι, τιμωρήσασθε, ὦ ἄνδρες, ταὐτὰ ταῦτα λυποῦντες ἅπερ ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐλύπουν, ἐὰν ὑμῖν δοκῶσιν ἢ χρημάτων ἢ ἄλλου του πρότερον ἐπιμελεῖσθαι ἢ ἀρετῆς, καὶ ἐὰν δοκῶσί τι εἶναι μηδὲν ὄντες, ὀνειδίζετε αὐτοῖς ὥσπερ ἐγὼ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐκ ἐπιμελοῦνται ὧν δεῖ, καὶ οἴονταί τι εἶναι ὄντες οὐδενὸς ἄξιοι. καὶ ἐὰν [42a] ταῦτα ποιῆτε, δίκαια πεπονθὼς ἐγὼ ἕσομαι ὑφ' ὑμῶν αὐτός τε καὶ οἱ υἱεῖς. ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἤδη ὥρα ἀπιέναι, ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀποθανουμένῳ, ὑμῖν δὲ βιωσομένοις· ὁπότεροι δὲ ἡμῶν ἔρχονται ἐπὶ ἄμεινον πρᾶγμα, ἄδηλον παντὶ πλὴν ἢ τῷ θεῷ.

ENGLISH

people here in other respects, and they are also immortal from then on, for the rest of time—if what we are told is true.

But you too, judges, should be hopeful about death, and keep in mind this one thing as true: that [41d] no evil can come to a good man, either in life or after death, and that his affairs are not neglected by the gods. Nor has what has happened to me now come about of its own accord; it is clear to me that it was better for me to die now and be released from my troubles. That is why the sign never turned me back, and why I am not at all angry with those who voted to condemn me or with my accusers. And yet it was not with this in mind that they condemned and accused me; they thought they were harming me, [41e] and for that they deserve blame.

This much, though, I ask of them. When my sons grow up, punish them, gentlemen, by giving them the same pain I gave you, if they seem to you to care about money or anything else before excellence. And if they think they are something when they are nothing, reproach them as I reproached you, for not caring about what they should, and for thinking they are something when they are worth nothing. If [42a] you do this, I will have been treated justly by you—both I myself and my sons. But now it is time to go—I to die, and you to live. Which of us is going to the better thing is unclear to everyone except the god.