Laches

PLATO

c. 428–348 BC

Laches

Λάχης

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited



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Laches · Plato (c. 428–348 BC)

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INTRODUCTION

Two old Athenians, Lysimachus and Melesias, are ashamed that they never achieved anything, and they want better for their sons. Should the boys learn to fight in armor? They ask two famous generals, Laches and Nicias, who disagree. Then Laches mentions how bravely Socrates fought in the retreat from Delium in 424 BC.

Socrates turns the question around. To know how to make the boys good, they must know what goodness is —or at least one part of it, courage. Laches, a blunt soldier, says courage is standing your ground. Nicias, more intellectual, says it is a kind of knowledge. Socrates finds a problem with each answer.

Within a few years Laches would die in battle and Nicias would lead Athens to disaster in Sicily. Here they end by admitting they don't know what courage is, and agree they all need to go back to school.

Laches

Athens, after a display of fighting in armor.
Two fathers ask the generals Laches and Nicias, and then Socrates, how to raise their sons, and the talk turns to what courage is.

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178a	**LYSIMACHUS** τεθέασθε μὲν τὸν ἄνδρα μαχόμενον ἐν ὅπλοις, ὦ Νικία τε καὶ Λάχης· οὗ δ' ἕνεκα ὑμᾶς ἐκελεύσαμεν συνθεάσασθαι ἐγώ τε καὶ Μελησίας ὅδε, τότε μὲν οὐκ εἴπομεν, νῦν δ' ἐροῦμεν. ἡγούμεθα γὰρ χρῆναι πρός γε ὑμᾶς παρρησιάζεσθαι. εἰσὶ γάρ τινες οἳ τῶν τοιούτων καταγελῶσι, καὶ ἐάν [178b] τις αὐτοῖς συμβουλεύσηται, οὐκ ἂν εἴποιεν ἃ νοοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ στοχαζόμενοι τοῦ συμβουλευομένου ἄλλα λέγουσι παρὰ τὴν αὑτῶν δόξαν· ὑμᾶς δὲ ἡμεῖς ἡγησάμενοι καὶ ἱκανοὺς γνῶναι καὶ γνόντας ἁπλῶς ἂν εἰπεῖν ἃ δοκεῖ ὑμῖν, οὕτω παρελάβομεν ἐπὶ τὴν συμβουλὴν περὶ ὧν μέλλομεν ἀνακοινοῦσθαι. ἔστιν [179a] οὖν τοῦτο, περὶ οὗ πάλαι τοσαῦτα προοιμιάζομαι, τόδε.	**LYSIMACHUS** You've watched the man fighting in armor, Nicias and Laches. Melesias here and I asked you to watch with us, but we didn't tell you why at the time. We'll tell you now, because we think that with you, at least, we ought to speak frankly. There are people who laugh at this sort of thing. If [178b] someone asks their advice, they won't say what they really think. Instead they guess at what the person consulting them wants to hear and say something other than their own opinion. But we thought you were capable of judging, and that once you had judged you would simply say what you think. So we've brought you in to advise us on what we're about to put to you. Here, then, [179a] is the matter I've been making such a long preamble about.[1]
179a	ἡμῖν εἰσὶν ὑεῖς οὑτοιί, ὅδε μὲν τοῦδε, πάππου ἔχων ὄνομα Θουκυδίδης, ἐμὸς δὲ αὖ ὅδε—παππῷον δὲ καὶ οὗτος ὄνομ' ἔχει τοὐμοῦ πατρός· Ἀριστείδην γὰρ αὐτὸν καλοῦμεν—ἡμῖν οὖν τούτων δέδοκται ἐπιμεληθῆναι ὡς οἷόν τε μάλιστα, καὶ μὴ ποιῆσαι ὅπερ οἱ πολλοί, ἐπειδὴ μειράκια γέγονεν, ἀνεῖναι αὐτοὺς ὅτι βούλονται ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ νῦν δὴ καὶ ἄρχεσθαι αὐτῶν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι καθ' ὅσον οἷοί τ' ἐσμέν. εἰδότες οὖν καὶ [179b] ὑμῖν ὑεῖς ὄντας ἡγησάμεθα μεμεληκέναι περὶ αὐτῶν, εἴπερ τισὶν ἄλλοις, πῶς ἂν θεραπευθέντες γένοιντο ἄριστοι· εἰ δ' ἄρα πολλάκις μὴ προσεσχήκατε τὸν νοῦν τῷ τοιούτῳ, ὑπομνήσοντες ὅτι οὐ χρὴ αὐτοῦ ἀμελεῖν, καὶ παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὸ ἐπιμέλειάν τινα ποιήσασθαι τῶν ὑέων κοινῇ μεθ' ἡμῶν. ὅθεν δὲ ἡμῖν ταῦτ' ἔδοξεν, ὦ Νικία τε καὶ Λάχης, χρὴ ἀκοῦσαι, κἂν ᾖ ὀλίγῳ μακρότερα.	We have sons, these two here. This one is Melesias' son, and he has his grandfather's name, Thucydides. This one is mine, and he too has a grandfather's name, my father's: we call him Aristides. Well, we've decided to take care of them as well as we possibly can. We don't want to do what most people do once their boys have grown into young men, and let them loose to do whatever they like. No, now is the moment to start taking care of them, as far as we're able. We knew [179b] that you have sons too, and we thought that you, if anyone, would have given thought to how they should be brought up so as to turn out as good as possible. And if perhaps you haven't often turned your minds to this sort of thing, we wanted to remind you that it mustn't be neglected, and to invite you to join us in taking some care of our sons together. You should hear how we came to this decision, Nicias and Laches, even if it takes a little longer.[2]
179b	συσσιτοῦμεν γὰρ δὴ ἐγώ τε καὶ Μελησίας ὅδε, καὶ ἡμῖν τὰ μειράκια παρασιτεῖ. [179c] ὅπερ οὖν καὶ ἀρχόμενος εἶπον	Melesias here and I take our meals together, you see, and the boys eat with us. [179c] So, as I said at the

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τοῦ λόγου, παρρησιασόμεθα πρὸς ὑμᾶς. ἡμῶν γὰρ ἑκάτερος περὶ τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ πατρὸς πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ ἔργα ἔχει λέγειν πρὸς τοὺς νεανίσκους, καὶ ὅσα ἐν πολέμῳ ἠργάσαντο καὶ ὅσα ἐν εἰρήνῃ, διοικοῦντες τά τε τῶν συμμάχων καὶ τὰ τῆσδε τῆς πόλεως· ἡμέτερα δ' αὐτῶν ἔργα οὐδέτερος ἔχει λέγειν. ταῦτα δὴ ὑπαισχυνόμεθά τε τούσδε καὶ αἰτιώμεθα τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν ὅτι ἡμᾶς μὲν [179d] εἴων τρυφᾶν, ἐπειδὴ μειράκια ἐγενόμεθα, τὰ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων πράγματα ἔπραττον· καὶ τοῖσδε τοῖς νεανίσκοις αὐτὰ ταῦτα ἐνδεικνύμεθα, λέγοντες ὅτι εἰ μὲν ἀμελήσουσιν ἑαυτῶν καὶ μὴ πείσονται ἡμῖν, ἀκλεεῖς γενήσονται, εἰ δ' ἐπιμελήσονται, τάχ' ἂν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἄξιοι γένοιντο ἃ ἔχουσιν.

ENGLISH

start of my speech, we'll be frank with you. Each of us has many fine deeds to tell the young men about his own father. There's what our fathers achieved in war and what they achieved in peace, managing the affairs of the allies and of this city. But neither of us has any deeds of his own to tell. That makes us rather ashamed in front of these boys, and we blame our fathers for letting us [179d] live in luxury once we were young men while they busied themselves with other people's affairs. We point out this very thing to these young men. We tell them that if they neglect themselves and don't listen to us, they'll end up without any renown, but if they take care, they may well prove worthy of the names they bear.

179d οὗτοι μὲν οὖν φασιν πείσεσθαι· ἡμεῖς δὲ δὴ τοῦτο σκοποῦμεν, τί ἂν οὗτοι μαθόντες ἢ ἐπιτηδεύσαντες ὅτι ἄριστοι γένοιντο. [179e] εἰσηγήσατο οὖν τις ἡμῖν καὶ τοῦτο τὸ μάθημα, ὅτι καλὸν εἴη τῷ νέῳ μαθεῖν ἐν ὅπλοις μάχεσθαι· καὶ ἐπῄνει τοῦτον ὃν νῦν ὑμεῖς ἐθεάσασθε ἐπιδεικνύμενον, κἄτ' ἐκέλευε θεάσασθαι. ἔδοξε δὴ χρῆναι αὐτούς τε ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ θέαν τἀνδρὸς καὶ ὑμᾶς συμπαραλαβεῖν ἅμα μὲν συνθεατάς, ἅμα δὲ συμβούλους τε καὶ κοινωνούς, ἐὰν βούλησθε, περὶ τῆς τῶν υἱέων ἐπιμελείας. [180a] ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἃ ἐβουλόμεθα ὑμῖν ἀνακοινώσασθαι. ἤδη οὖν ὑμέτερον μέρος συμβουλεύειν καὶ περὶ τούτου τοῦ μαθήματος, εἴτε δοκεῖ χρῆναι μανθάνειν εἴτε μή, καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων, εἴ τι ἔχετε ἐπαινέσαι μάθημα νέῳ ἀνδρὶ ἢ ἐπιτήδευμα, καὶ περὶ τῆς κοινωνίας λέγειν ὁποῖόν τι ποιήσετε.

Well, they say they'll listen to us. So what we're looking into is what they should learn or practice in order to become as good as possible. [179e] Someone suggested this subject to us as well: that it would be a fine thing for a young man to learn to fight in armor. He praised this man you've just watched giving his display, and urged us to go and see him. So we decided that we ought to go and watch the man ourselves, and take you along with us. We wanted you to watch with us, and also, if you're willing, to advise us and share with us in the care of our sons. [180a] That's what we wanted to put to you. So now it's your turn to advise us. Tell us about this subject, whether you think they should learn it or not, and about any others, if you have any subject or pursuit to recommend for a young man. And tell us what you'll do about joining us.

180a **NICIAS** ἐγὼ μέν, ὦ Λυσίμαχε καὶ Μελησία, ἐπαινῶ τε ὑμῶν τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ κοινωνεῖν ἕτοιμος, οἶμαι δὲ καὶ Λάχητα τόνδε.

NICIAS For my part, Lysimachus and Melesias, I commend your plan and I'm ready to join you. And I think Laches here is too.

180b **LACHES** ἀληθῆ γὰρ οἴει, ὦ Νικία. ὡς ὅ γε ἔλεγεν ὁ Λυσίμαχος ἄρτι περὶ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ αὑτοῦ τε καὶ τοῦ Μελησίου, πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ εὖ εἰρῆσθαι καὶ εἰς ἐκείνους καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς καὶ εἰς ἅπαντας ὅσοι τὰ τῶν πόλεων πράττουσιν, ὅτι αὐτοῖς σχεδόν τι ταῦτα συμβαίνει ἃ οὗτος λέγει καὶ περὶ παῖδας καὶ περὶ τἆλλα, τὰ ἴδια ὀλιγωρεῖσθαί τε καὶ ἀμελῶς διατίθεσθαι. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν καλῶς λέγεις, ὦ Λυσίμαχε· ὅτι δ' ἡμᾶς μὲν συμβούλους

LACHES You think right, Nicias. What Lysimachus was just saying about his own father and Melesias' seems to me very well said. It applies to them, to us, and to everyone who handles the affairs of cities. What he describes is pretty much what happens to them, with their children and everything else: their private affairs get slighted and neglected. So you're right about that, Lysimachus. But

2 The grandfathers were Aristides "the Just" and Thucydides son of Melesias (not the historian), both leading Athenian statesmen of the fifth century BC.

1 Fighting in armor (hoplomachia) was a display of combat technique in the heavy armor of a hoplite, the Greek infantryman. Traveling professionals taught it for a fee.

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παρακαλεῖς ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν νεανίσκων [180c] παιδείαν, Σωκράτη δὲ τόνδε οὐ παρακαλεῖς, θαυμάζω, πρῶτον μὲν ὄντα δημότην, ἔπειτα ἐνταῦθα ἀεὶ τὰς διατριβὰς ποιούμενον ὅπου τί ἐστι τῶν τοιούτων ὧν σὺ ζητεῖς περὶ τοὺς νέους ἢ μάθημα ἢ ἐπιτήδευμα καλόν.

180c **LYSIMACHUS** πῶς λέγεις, ὦ Λάχης; Σωκράτης γὰρ ὅδε τινὸς τῶν τοιούτων ἐπιμέλειαν πεποίηται;

LACHES πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ὦ Λυσίμαχε.

NICIAS τοῦτο μέν σοι κἂν ἐγὼ ἔχοιμι εἰπεῖν οὐ χεῖρον Λάχητος· καὶ γὰρ αὐτῷ μοι ἔναγχος ἄνδρα προυξένησε τῷ [180d] υἱεῖ διδάσκαλον μουσικῆς, Ἀγαθοκλέους μαθητὴν Δάμωνα, ἀνδρῶν χαριέστατον οὐ μόνον τὴν μουσικήν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τἆλλα ὁπόσου βούλει ἄξιον συνδιατρίβειν τηλικούτοις νεανίσκοις.

180d **LYSIMACHUS** οὗτοι, ὦ Σώκρατές τε καὶ Νικία καὶ Λάχης, οἱ ἡλίκοι ἐγὼ ἔτι γιγνώσκομεν τοὺς νεωτέρους, ἅτε κατ' οἰκίαν τὰ πολλὰ διατρίβοντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἡλικίας· ἀλλ' εἴ τι καὶ σύ, ὦ παῖ Σωφρονίσκου, ἔχεις τῷδε τῷ σαυτοῦ δημότῃ ἀγαθὸν [180e] συμβουλεῦσαι, χρὴ συμβουλεύειν. δίκαιος δ' εἶ· καὶ γὰρ πατρικὸς ἡμῖν φίλος τυγχάνεις ὤν· ἀεὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ σὸς πατὴρ ἑταίρω τε καὶ φίλω ἦμεν, καὶ πρότερον ἐκεῖνος ἐτελεύτησε, πρίν τι ἐμοὶ διενεχθῆναι. περιφέρει δέ τίς με καὶ μνήμη ἄρτι τῶνδε λεγόντων· τὰ γὰρ μειράκια τάδε πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἷκοι διαλεγόμενοι θαμὰ ἐπιμέμνηνται Σωκράτους καὶ σφόδρα ἐπαινοῦσιν· οὐ μέντοι πώποτε αὐτοὺς ἀνηρώτησα [181a] εἰ τὸν Σωφρονίσκου λέγοιεν. ἀλλ', ὦ παῖδες, λέγετέ μοι, ὅδ' ἐστὶ Σωκράτης, περὶ οὗ ἑκάστοτε ἐμέμνησθε;

181a **SONS** πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ὦ πάτερ, οὗτος.

LYSIMACHUS εὖ γε νὴ τὴν Ἥραν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι ὀρθοῖς τὸν πατέρα, ἄριστον ἀνδρῶν ὄντα, καὶ ἄλλως καὶ δὴ καὶ ὅτι οἰκεῖα τά τε σὰ ἡμῖν ὑπάρξει καὶ σοὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα.

LACHES καὶ μήν, ὦ Λυσίμαχε, μὴ ἀφίεσό γε τἀνδρός· ὡς ἐγὼ καὶ ἄλλοθί γε αὐτὸν ἐθεασάμην οὐ μόνον τὸν πατέρα

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it surprises me that you invite us to advise you on the young men's [180c] education and don't invite Socrates here. First of all, he's from your deme. And then he's always spending his time wherever there's any of the sort of thing you're looking for for the young, some fine subject or pursuit.[3]

LYSIMACHUS What do you mean, Laches? Has Socrates here taken an interest in anything of this kind?

LACHES Very much so, Lysimachus.

NICIAS I could tell you that just as well as Laches could. Only recently he introduced me to a music teacher for my [180d] son: Damon, the pupil of Agathocles. He's the most accomplished of men, not only in music but in every other respect you could want, and well worth having as a companion for young men of that age.[4]

LYSIMACHUS You see, Socrates, Nicias, and Laches, men of my age don't really know the younger ones anymore, since our age keeps us at home most of the time. But if you, son of Sophroniscus, have any good advice to give your fellow demesman here, [180e] you should give it. And you owe it to us, since you happen to be a friend of ours through your father. Your father and I were always comrades and friends, and he died before we ever had any disagreement. And something has just come back to me while these men were talking. When these boys are talking with each other at home, they often mention Socrates and praise him highly. But I've never asked them [181a] whether they meant the son of Sophroniscus. Tell me, boys, is this the Socrates you were always talking about?

SONS Yes, father, that's him.

LYSIMACHUS By Hera, Socrates, I'm glad you keep your father's name standing tall. He was the best of men. And I'm glad above all that our families will be close, so that what's yours will be ours and what's ours will be yours.

LACHES Yes, Lysimachus, and don't let the man go. I've seen him elsewhere, too, keeping not only

3 A deme was one of the local districts of Attica, in which every Athenian citizen was registered.
4 Damon was a celebrated Athenian theorist of music; Agathocles was a music teacher of the generation before him.

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181b ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν πατρίδα ὀρθοῦντα· ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἀπὸ Δηλίου φυγῇ μετ' ἐμοῦ συνανεχώρει, κἀγώ σοι λέγω ὅτι εἰ οἱ ἄλλοι ἤθελον τοιοῦτοι εἶναι, ὀρθὴ ἂν ἡμῶν ἡ πόλις ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἔπεσε τότε τοιοῦτον πτῶμα.

his father 181b but his fatherland standing tall. In the retreat from Delium he withdrew alongside me. I tell you, if the others had been willing to be like him, our city would be standing tall and wouldn't have taken such a fall back then.[5]

181b **LYSIMACHUS** ὦ Σώκρατες, οὗτος μέντοι ὁ ἔπαινός ἐστιν καλός, ὃν σὺ νῦν ἐπαινῇ ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν ἀξίων πιστεύεσθαι καὶ εἰς ταῦτα εἰς ἃ οὗτοι ἐπαινοῦσιν. εὖ οὖν ἴσθι ὅτι ἐγὼ ταῦτα ἀκούων χαίρω ὅτι εὐδοκιμεῖς, καὶ σὺ δὲ ἡγοῦ με ἐν τοῖς εὐνούστατόν 181c σοι εἶναι. χρῆν μὲν οὖν καὶ πρότερόν γε φοιτᾶν αὐτὸν παρ' ἡμᾶς καὶ οἰκείους ἡγεῖσθαι, ὥσπερ τὸ δίκαιον· νῦν δ' οὖν ἀπὸ τῆσδε τῆς ἡμέρας, ἐπειδὴ ἀνεγνωρίσαμεν ἀλλήλους, μὴ ἄλλως ποίει, ἀλλὰ σύνισθί τε καὶ γνώριζε καὶ ἡμᾶς καὶ τούσδε τοὺς νεωτέρους, ὅπως ἂν διασῴζητε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν ἡμετέραν φιλίαν. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν καὶ σὺ ποιήσεις καὶ ἡμεῖς σε καὶ αὖθις ὑπομνήσομεν· περὶ δὲ ὧν ἠρξάμεθα τί φατε; τί δοκεῖ; τὸ μάθημα τοῖς μειρακίοις ἐπιτήδειον εἶναι ἢ οὔ, τὸ μαθεῖν ἐν ὅπλοις μάχεσθαι;

LYSIMACHUS Socrates, this is truly fine praise you're receiving now. It comes from men worth trusting, and it's for the very things they're praising you for. So you can be sure that I'm delighted to hear you're so well thought of, and you must count me among those most well disposed 181c toward you. You really should have been visiting us before now and thinking of us as family, as was only right. But from this day on, now that we've recognized one another, don't do otherwise. Spend time with us and get to know us and these young people, so that you and they, too, may keep our friendship alive. Well, you'll do that, and we'll remind you again. But about what we started with, what do you all say? What do you think? Is the subject suitable for the boys or not, learning to fight in armor?

181d **SOCRATES** ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτων πέρι, ὦ Λυσίμαχε, ἔγωγε πειράσομαι συμβουλεύειν ἄν τι δύνωμαι, καὶ αὖ ἃ προκαλῇ πάντα ποιεῖν. δικαιότατον μέντοι μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἐμὲ νεώτερον ὄντα τῶνδε καὶ ἀπειρότερον τούτων ἀκούειν πρότερον τί λέγουσιν καὶ μανθάνειν παρ' αὐτῶν· ἐὰν δ' ἔχω τι ἄλλο παρὰ τὰ ὑπὸ τούτων λεγόμενα, τότ' ἤδη διδάσκειν καὶ πείθειν καὶ σὲ καὶ τούτους. ἀλλ', ὦ Νικία, τί οὐ λέγει πότερος ὑμῶν;

SOCRATES Well, Lysimachus, I'll try to advise you on this too, if I can, and to do everything else you invite me to. But since I'm younger than these men and less experienced, it seems most right to me to hear first what they have to say and learn from them. Then, if I have something to add beyond what they say, I'll try to teach and persuade both you and them. So, Nicias, why doesn't one of you speak?

FIGHTING IN ARMOR

Nicias recommends the training; Laches thinks it useless and tells a funny story about its teacher.

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NICIAS ἀλλ' οὐδὲν κωλύει, ὦ Σώκρατες. δοκεῖ γὰρ καὶ 181e ἐμοὶ τοῦτο τὸ μάθημα τοῖς νέοις ὠφέλιμον εἶναι ἐπίστασθαι πολλαχῇ. καὶ γὰρ τὸ μὴ ἄλλοθι διατρίβειν, ἐν οἷς δὴ φιλοῦσιν οἱ νέοι τὰς διατριβὰς ποιεῖσθαι ὅταν σχολὴν ἄγωσιν, ἀλλ' ἐν τούτῳ, εὖ ἔχει, ὅθεν καὶ τὸ σῶμα βέλτιον ἴσχειν ἀνάγκη—οὐδενὸς γὰρ τῶν γυμνασίων φαυλότερον οὐδ' 182a ἐλάττω πόνον ἔχει—καὶ ἅμα προσήκει μάλιστ' ἐλευθέρῳ τοῦτό τε τὸ γυμνάσιον καὶ ἡ ἱππική· οὗ γὰρ ἀγῶνος ἀθληταί ἐσμεν καὶ ἐν οἷς ἡμῖν ὁ

NICIAS Nothing to stop us, Socrates. I too 181e think it's useful in many ways for young men to know this subject. For one thing, it's good that they spend their time on this, rather than in the places young men like to pass the time when they have leisure. It also necessarily improves the condition of the body, since it's inferior to none of the gymnastic exercises and takes no less 182a effort. At the same time, this exercise, along with horsemanship, is especially fitting for a free man. In the

5 At Delium in Boeotia, in 424 BC, the Athenian army was routed by the Boeotians.

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ἀγὼν πρόκειται, μόνοι οὗτοι γυμνάζονται οἱ ἐν τούτοις τοῖς τὸν περὶ τὸν πόλεμον ὀργάνοις γυμναζόμενοι.

contest we are competitors in, the struggle that lies before us, the only people in training are those who train with these instruments of war.

182a ἔπειτα ὀνήσει μέν τι τοῦτο τὸ μάθημα καὶ ἐν τῇ μάχῃ αὐτῇ, ὅταν ἐν τάξει δέῃ μάχεσθαι μετὰ πολλῶν ἄλλων· μέγιστον μέντοι αὐτοῦ ὄφελος, ὅταν λυθῶσιν αἱ τάξεις καὶ ἤδη τι δέῃ μόνον πρὸς μόνον ἢ διώκοντα ἀμυνομένῳ 182b τινὶ ἐπιθέσθαι ἢ καὶ ἐν φυγῇ ἐπιτιθεμένου ἄλλου ἀμύνασθαι αὐτόν· οὔτ' ἂν ὑπό γε ἑνὸς εἷς ὁ τοῦτ' ἐπιστάμενος οὐδὲν ἂν πάθοι, ἴσως δ' οὐδὲ ὑπὸ πλειόνων, ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ ἂν ταύτῃ πλεονεκτοῖ.

Next, this subject will be of some help in the battle itself, when a man has to fight in formation with many others. But its greatest benefit comes when the ranks break and it's one man against one. He may be in pursuit, attacking a man who is defending 182b himself, or in flight, defending himself against someone else's attack. A man who knows this skill wouldn't come to any harm at the hands of a single opponent, and probably not even at the hands of several. He'd have the advantage over them every time.

182b ἔτι δὲ καὶ εἰς ἄλλου καλοῦ μαθήματος ἐπιθυμίαν παρακαλεῖ τὸ τοιοῦτον· πᾶς γὰρ ἂν μαθὼν ἐν ὅπλοις μάχεσθαι ἐπιθυμήσειε καὶ τοῦ ἑξῆς μαθήματος τοῦ περὶ τὰς τάξεις, καὶ ταῦτα λαβὼν καὶ φιλοτιμηθεὶς 182c ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ πᾶν ἂν τὸ περὶ τὰς στρατηγίας ὁρμήσειε· καὶ ἤδη δῆλον ὅτι τὰ τούτων ἐχόμενα καὶ μαθήματα πάντα καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα καὶ καλὰ καὶ πολλοῦ ἄξια ἀνδρὶ μαθεῖν τε καὶ ἐπιτηδεῦσαι, ὧν καθηγήσαιτ' ἂν τοῦτο τὸ μάθημα. προσθήσομεν δ' αὐτῷ οὐ σμικρὰν προσθήκην, ὅτι πάντα ἄνδρα ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ θαρραλεώτερον καὶ ἀνδρειότερον ἂν ποιήσειεν αὐτὸν αὑτοῦ οὐκ ὀλίγῳ αὕτη ἡ ἐπιστήμη.

What's more, this sort of thing stirs up a desire for another fine subject. Anyone who has learned to fight in armor would want the next subject too, the one about formations. Once he had mastered that and taken pride 182c in it, he'd press on to the whole art of generalship. And it's already clear that the subjects and pursuits connected with these are all fine and well worth a man's learning and practicing, and this subject would lead the way to them. We'll add something to it, and no small addition, either: this knowledge would make any man in war considerably more confident and braver than he was before.

182c μὴ ἀτιμάσωμεν δὲ εἰπεῖν, εἰ καί τῳ σμικρότερον δοκεῖ εἶναι, ὅτι καὶ εὐσχημονέστερον ἐνταῦθα οὗ χρὴ τὸν ἄνδρα εὐσχημονέστερον 182d φαίνεσθαι, οὗ ἅμα καὶ δεινότερος τοῖς ἐχθροῖς φανεῖται διὰ τὴν εὐσχημοσύνην. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν, ὦ Λυσίμαχε, ὥσπερ λέγω, δοκεῖ τε χρῆναι διδάσκειν τοὺς νεανίσκους ταῦτα καὶ δι' ἃ δοκεῖ εἴρηκα· Λάχητος δ', εἴ τι παρὰ ταῦτα λέγει, κἂν αὐτὸς ἡδέως ἀκούσαιμι.

And let's not disdain to mention this, even if it strikes someone as rather minor: it makes a man cut a finer figure, right where a man ought to 182d cut a fine figure, and his fine bearing will also make him look more formidable to the enemy. So in my view, Lysimachus, the young men should be taught this, as I say, and I've told you my reasons. But if Laches has anything to say against it, I'd be glad to hear it myself.

182d **LACHES** ἀλλ' ἔστι μέν, ὦ Νικία, χαλεπὸν λέγειν περὶ ὁτουοῦν μαθήματος ὡς οὐ χρὴ μανθάνειν· πάντα γὰρ ἐπίστασθαι ἀγαθὸν δοκεῖ εἶναι. καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ ὁπλιτικὸν τοῦτο, 182e εἰ μέν ἐστιν μάθημα, ὅπερ φασὶν οἱ διδάσκοντες, καὶ οἷον Νικίας λέγει, χρὴ αὐτὸ μανθάνειν· εἰ δ' ἔστιν μὲν μὴ μάθημα, ἀλλ' ἐξαπατῶσιν οἱ ὑπισχνούμενοι, ἢ μάθημα μὲν τυγχάνει ὄν, μὴ μέντοι πάνυ σπουδαῖον, τί καὶ δέοι ἂν αὐτὸ μανθάνειν; λέγω δὲ ταῦτα περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τάδε ἀποβλέψας, ὅτι οἶμαι ἐγὼ τοῦτο, εἰ τὶ ἦν, οὐκ ἂν λελῆθέναι Λακεδαιμονίους, οἷς οὐδὲν ἄλλο μέλει ἐν τῷ βίῳ ἢ τοῦτο ζητεῖν καὶ ἐπιτηδεύειν, 183a ὅτι ἂν μαθόντες καὶ ἐπιτηδεύσαντες πλεονεκτοῖεν τῶν ἄλλων περὶ τὸν πόλεμον.

LACHES Well, Nicias, it's hard to say of any subject at all that it shouldn't be learned. It seems good to know everything. So with this armor-fighting business: 182e if it is a genuine subject, as those who teach it claim and as Nicias says, it should be learned. But it may not be a real subject, and the people who promise to teach it may be deceiving us. Or it may be a subject, but not a very serious one. In either case, why would anyone need to learn it? I say this about it because of the following. I think that if there were anything to it, it wouldn't have escaped the Spartans. They care

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about nothing else in life but seeking out and practicing [183a] whatever might give them an edge over others in war, if they learned and practiced it.

183a εἰ δ' ἐκείνους λέληθεν, ἀλλ' οὐ τούτους γε τοὺς διδασκάλους αὐτοῦ λέληθεν αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὅτι ἐκεῖνοι μάλιστα τῶν Ἑλλήνων σπουδάζουσιν ἐπὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις καὶ ὅτι παρ' ἐκείνοις ἄν τις τιμηθεὶς εἰς ταῦτα καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων πλεῖστ' ἂν ἐργάζοιτο χρήματα, ὥσπερ γε καὶ τραγῳδίας ποιητὴς παρ' ἡμῖν τιμηθείς. τοιγάρτοι ὃς ἂν οἴηται τραγῳδίαν καλῶς ποιεῖν, οὐκ ἔξωθεν κύκλῳ περὶ τὴν Ἀττικὴν [183b] κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας πόλεις ἐπιδεικνύμενος περιέρχεται, ἀλλ' εὐθὺς δεῦρο φέρεται καὶ τοῖσδ' ἐπιδείκνυσιν εἰκότως· τοὺς δὲ ἐν ὅπλοις μαχομένους ἐγὼ τούτους ὁρῶ τὴν μὲν Λακεδαίμονα ἡγουμένους εἶναι ἄβατον ἱερὸν καὶ οὐδὲ ἄκρῳ ποδὶ ἐπιβαίνοντας, κύκλῳ δὲ περιιόντας αὐτὴν καὶ πᾶσι μᾶλλον ἐπιδεικνυμένους, καὶ μάλιστα τούτοις οἳ κἂν αὐτοὶ ὁμολογήσειαν πολλοὺς σφῶν προτέρους εἶναι πρὸς τὰ τοῦ πολέμου.

And even if it escaped the Spartans, it certainly hasn't escaped these teachers of it that the Spartans take such things more seriously than any other Greeks. Nor has it escaped them that anyone honored for this among the Spartans would make the most money from everyone else too, just as a tragic poet does who is honored among us. That's why anyone who thinks he writes tragedy well doesn't go traveling around Attica from outside, [183b] giving displays in the other cities. He heads straight here and shows his work to the people here, naturally. But these armor-fighters, as far as I can see, regard Sparta as holy ground where no one may tread, and won't set so much as a tiptoe on it. They go around it in a circle and give their displays to anyone rather than the Spartans. They especially favor people who would admit themselves that many others are ahead of them in matters of war.

183c ἔπειτα, ὦ Λυσίμαχε, οὐ πάνυ ὀλίγοις ἐγὼ τούτων παραγέγονα ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἔργῳ, καὶ ὁρῶ οἷοί εἰσιν. ἔξεστι δὲ καὶ αὐτόθεν ἡμῖν σκέψασθαι. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐπίτηδες οὐδεὶς πώποτ' εὐδόκιμος γέγονεν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ ἀνὴρ τῶν τὰ ὁπλιτικὰ ἐπιτηδευσάντων. καίτοι εἴς γε τἆλλα πάντα ἐκ τούτων οἱ ὀνομαστοὶ γίγνονται, ἐκ τῶν ἐπιτηδευσάντων ἕκαστα· οὗτοι δ', ὡς ἔοικε, παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους οὕτω σφόδρα εἰς τοῦτο δεδυστυχήκασιν. ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτον τὸν Στησίλεων, ὃν ὑμεῖς [183d] μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τοσούτῳ ὄχλῳ ἐθεάσασθε ἐπιδεικνύμενον καὶ τὰ μεγάλα περὶ αὑτοῦ λέγοντα ἃ ἔλεγεν, ἑτέρωθι ἐγὼ κάλλιον ἐθεασάμην ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐπιδεικνύμενον οὐχ ἑκόντα. προσβαλούσης γὰρ τῆς νεὼς ἐφ' ἣ ἐπεβάτευεν πρὸς ὁλκάδα τινά, ἐμάχετο ἔχων δορυδρέπανον, διαφέρον δὴ ὅπλον ἅτε καὶ αὐτὸς τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρων.

Then again, Lysimachus, I've been present with quite a few of these men in actual combat, and I see what they're like. We can also judge from the facts right before us. It's as if on purpose: not one man who has practiced armor-fighting has ever won distinction in war. And yet in every other field, the famous names come from those who have practiced the thing in question. These men, it seems, have been uniquely unlucky in this respect. Take this Stesilaus, whom you [183d] watched with me giving his display in front of that huge crowd and saying all those grand things about himself. I watched him elsewhere giving a finer display, a real one, in which he truly displayed himself, though not by choice. The ship he was serving on as a marine rammed a merchant ship, and he was fighting with a scythe-spear, an exceptional weapon, naturally, for an exceptional man.

183d τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα οὐκ ἄξια λέγειν περὶ τἀνδρός, τὸ δὲ σόφισμα τὸ τοῦ δρεπάνου [183e] τοῦ πρὸς τῇ λόγχῃ οἷον ἀπέβη. μαχομένου γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἐνέσχετό που ἐν τοῖς τῆς νεὼς σκεύεσιν καὶ ἀντελάβετο· εἶλκεν οὖν ὁ Στησίλεως βουλόμενος ἀπολῦσαι, καὶ οὐχ οἷός τ' ἦν, ἡ δὲ ναῦς τὴν ναῦν παρῄει. τέως μὲν οὖν παρέθει ἐν τῇ νηὶ ἀντεχόμενος τοῦ δόρατος· ἐπεὶ δὲ δὴ παρημείβετο ἡ ναῦς τὴν ναῦν καὶ ἐπέσπα αὐτὸν τοῦ δόρατος ἐχόμενον, [184a] ἐφίει τὸ δόρυ διὰ τῆς χειρός, ἕως ἄκρου τοῦ στύρακος ἀντελάβετο.

Nothing else about the man is worth telling, but here is how his clever invention of the scythe [183e] on the spear turned out. While he was fighting, it got caught somewhere in the other ship's rigging and stuck fast. Stesilaus pulled, trying to free it, and couldn't, and meanwhile the one ship was moving past the other. For a while he ran along the deck of his own ship, hanging on to the spear. But as the ship slid past the other and dragged him

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		along with it, still clinging to the spear, [184a] he let the shaft slip through his hand until he was holding on to the very end of the butt.
184a	ἦν δὲ γέλως καὶ κρότος ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκ τῆς ὁλκάδος ἐπί τε τῷ σχήματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπειδὴ βαλόντος τινὸς λίθῳ παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ κατάστρωμα ἀφίεται τοῦ δόρατος, τότ' ἤδη καὶ οἱ ἐκ τῆς τριήρους οὐκέτι οἷοί τ' ἦσαν τὸν γέλωτα κατέχειν, ὁρῶντες αἰωρούμενον ἐκ τῆς ὁλκάδος τὸ δορυδρέπανον ἐκεῖνο. ἴσως μὲν οὖν εἴη ἄν τι ταῦτα, ὥσπερ Νικίας λέγει· οἷς δ' οὖν ἐγὼ ἐντετύχηκα, τοιαῦτ' [184b] ἄττα ἐστίν. ὃ οὖν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἶπον, εἴτε οὕτω σμικρὰς ὠφελίας ἔχει μάθημα ὄν, εἴτε μὴ ὂν φασὶ καὶ προσποιοῦνται αὐτὸ εἶναι μάθημα, οὐκ ἄξιον ἐπιχειρεῖν μανθάνειν.	The men on the merchant ship laughed and clapped at the figure he cut. Then someone threw a stone that landed on the deck at his feet, and he let go of the spear. At that point even the men on the trireme couldn't hold back their laughter anymore, as they watched that scythe-spear of his dangling from the merchant ship. Well, maybe there is something to this, as Nicias says. But in my own experience, this is the sort [184b] of thing it amounts to. So, as I said at the start, it may be a subject with such small benefits. Or it may not be a subject at all, and they merely claim and pretend that it is one. Either way, it isn't worth trying to learn.
184b	καὶ γὰρ οὖν μοι δοκεῖ, εἰ μὲν δειλός τις ὢν οἴοιτο αὐτὸ ἐπίστασθαι, θρασύτερος ἂν δι' αὐτὸ γενόμενος ἐπιφανέστερος γένοιτο οἷος ἦν, εἰ δὲ ἀνδρεῖος, φυλαττόμενος ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, εἰ καὶ σμικρὸν ἐξαμάρτοι, μεγάλας ἂν διαβολὰς ἴσχειν· [184c] ἐπίφθονος γὰρ ἡ προσποίησις τῆς τοιαύτης ἐπιστήμης, ὥστ' εἰ μή τι θαυμαστὸν ὅσον διαφέρει τῇ ἀρετῇ τῶν ἄλλων, οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ἄν τις φύγοι τὸ καταγέλαστος γενέσθαι φάσκων ἔχειν ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστήμην. τοιαύτη τις ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὦ Λυσίμαχε, ἡ περὶ τοῦτο τὸ μάθημα εἶναι σπουδή· χρὴ δ' ὅπερ σοι ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔλεγον, καὶ Σωκράτη τόνδε μὴ ἀφιέναι, ἀλλὰ δεῖσθαι συμβουλεύειν ὅπῃ δοκεῖ αὐτῷ περὶ τοῦ προκειμένου.	In fact, it seems to me that if a coward thought he knew it, it would make him more reckless and show more plainly what sort of man he was. And if a brave man thought so, people would watch him closely, and if he made even a small mistake, he'd be badly slandered. [184c] Claiming that kind of knowledge invites envy. So unless a man is astonishingly superior to everyone else in excellence, he can't possibly avoid becoming a laughingstock if he says he has it. That's how the enthusiasm for this subject looks to me, Lysimachus. But, as I told you at the start, you mustn't let Socrates here go either. Ask him to give you his advice about the question before us.

SOCRATES IS CALLED IN

Asked for a deciding vote, Socrates says such questions are settled by knowledge, not by a majority.

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184c	**LYSIMACHUS** ἀλλὰ δέομαι ἔγωγε, ὦ Σώκρατες· καὶ γὰρ ὥσπερ [184d] τοῦ ἐπιδιακρινοῦντος δοκεῖ μοι δεῖν ἡμῖν ἡ βουλή. εἰ μὲν γὰρ συνεφερέσθην τώδε, ἧττον ἂν τοῦ τοιούτου ἔδει· νῦν δὲ τὴν ἐναντίαν γάρ, ὡς ὁρᾷς, Λάχης Νικίᾳ ἔθετο, εὖ δὴ ἔχει ἀκοῦσαι καὶ σοῦ ποτέρῳ τοῖν ἀνδροῖν σύμψηφος εἶ.	**LYSIMACHUS** Yes, I do ask you, Socrates. Our council seems to me to need, as it were, [184d] someone to cast the deciding vote. If these two had agreed, there'd be less need for that sort of thing. But as it is, you see, Laches has voted the opposite way from Nicias. So it would be good to hear from you too which of the two men you're voting with.
184d	**SOCRATES** τί δέ, ὦ Λυσίμαχε; ὁπότερ' ἂν οἱ πλείους ἐπαινῶσιν ἡμῶν, τούτοις μέλλεις χρῆσθαι;	**SOCRATES** What's this, Lysimachus? Are you going to follow whichever side gets the approval of the majority of us?

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	LYSIMACHUS τί γὰρ ἄν τις καὶ ποιοῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες;	**LYSIMACHUS** Why, what else could anyone do, Socrates?
	SOCRATES ἦ καὶ σύ, ὦ Μελησία, οὕτως ἂν ποιοῖς; κἂν εἴ [184e] τις περὶ ἀγωνίας τοῦ υἱέος σοι βουλὴ εἴη τί χρὴ ἀσκεῖν, ἆρα τοῖς πλείοσιν ἂν ἡμῶν πείθοιο, ἢ 'κείνῳ ὅστις τυγχάνει ὑπὸ παιδοτρίβῃ ἀγαθῷ πεπαιδευμένος καὶ ἠσκηκώς;	**SOCRATES** And you, Melesias, would you do the same? Suppose [184e] you had to decide what your son should practice for an athletic contest. Would you be persuaded by the majority of us, or by whichever of us happened to have been taught and trained by a good trainer?
184e	**MELESIAS** ἐκείνῳ εἰκός γε, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**MELESIAS** By that one, naturally, Socrates.
	SOCRATES αὐτῷ ἄρ' ἂν μᾶλλον πείθοιο ἢ τέτταρσιν οὖσιν ἡμῖν;	**SOCRATES** So you'd be persuaded by him rather than by the four of us?
	MELESIAS ἴσως.	**MELESIAS** Probably.
	SOCRATES ἐπιστήμῃ γὰρ οἶμαι δεῖ κρίνεσθαι ἀλλ' οὐ πλήθει τὸ μέλλον καλῶς κριθήσεσθαι.	**SOCRATES** Yes, because I think anything that's going to be judged well has to be judged by knowledge, not by numbers.
	MELESIAS πῶς γὰρ οὔ;	**MELESIAS** Of course.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν καὶ νῦν χρὴ πρῶτον αὐτὸ τοῦτο σκέψασθαι, [185a] εἰ ἔστιν τις ἡμῶν τεχνικὸς περὶ οὗ βουλευόμεθα ἢ οὔ· καὶ εἰ μὲν ἔστιν, ἐκείνῳ πείθεσθαι ἑνὶ ὄντι, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους ἐᾶν, εἰ δὲ μή, ἄλλον τινὰ ζητεῖν. ἢ περὶ σμικροῦ οἴεσθε νυνὶ κινδυνεύειν καὶ σὺ καὶ Λυσίμαχος ἀλλ' οὐ περὶ τούτου τοῦ κτήματος ὃ τῶν ὑμετέρων μέγιστον ὂν τυγχάνει; υἱέων γάρ που ἢ χρηστῶν ἢ τἀναντία γενομένων καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκος ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς οὕτως οἰκήσεται, ὁποῖοι ἄν τινες οἱ παῖδες γένωνται.	**SOCRATES** Then now, too, we must first consider this very question: [185a] is any one of us an expert in what we're deliberating about, or not? If there is one, we must listen to him, even though he's only one, and let the others be. If not, we must look for someone else. Or do you think it's some small matter that you and Lysimachus are risking right now? Isn't it that possession which happens to be the greatest you have? Whether the sons turn out good or the opposite, the father's whole household will be run accordingly, depending on what sort of people the children become.
185a	**MELESIAS** ἀληθῆ λέγεις.	**MELESIAS** That's true.
	SOCRATES πολλὴν ἄρα δεῖ προμηθίαν αὐτοῦ ἔχειν.	**SOCRATES** So we must take great forethought about it.
	MELESIAS πάνυ γε.	**MELESIAS** Very much so.
185b	**SOCRATES** πῶς οὖν, ὃ ἐγὼ ἄρτι ἔλεγον, ἐσκοποῦμεν ἄν, εἰ ἐβουλόμεθα σκέψασθαι τίς ἡμῶν περὶ ἀγωνίαν τεχνικώτατος; ἆρ' οὐχ ὁ μαθὼν καὶ ἐπιτηδεύσας, ᾧ καὶ διδάσκαλοι ἀγαθοὶ γεγονότες ἦσαν αὐτοῦ τούτου;	**SOCRATES** So how would we go about it, as I was just saying, if we wanted to find out which of us is the greatest expert in athletic contests? Wouldn't it be the one who had learned and practiced it, and who had also had good teachers of that very thing?
	MELESIAS ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.	**MELESIAS** I think so.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἔτι πρότερον, τίνος ὄντος τούτου οὗ ζητοῦμεν τοὺς διδασκάλους;	**SOCRATES** And even before that, shouldn't we ask what this thing is that we're looking for teachers of?

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	MELESIAS πῶς λέγεις;	**MELESIAS** What do you mean?
	SOCRATES ὧδε ἴσως μᾶλλον κατάδηλον ἔσται. οὔ μοι δοκεῖ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἡμῖν ὡμολογῆσθαι τί ποτ' ἔστιν περὶ οὗ βουλευόμεθα καὶ σκεπτόμεθα, ὅστις ἡμῶν τεχνικὸς καὶ τούτου 185c ἕνεκα διδασκάλους ἐκτήσατο, καὶ ὅστις μή.	**SOCRATES** Maybe it'll be clearer this way. I don't think we agreed at the start on what exactly it is that we're deliberating and inquiring about, when we ask which of us is an expert and has acquired teachers 185c for that purpose, and which of us isn't.
185c	**NICIAS** οὐ γάρ, ὦ Σώκρατες, περὶ τοῦ ἐν ὅπλοις μάχεσθαι σκοποῦμεν, εἴτε χρὴ αὐτὸ τοὺς νεανίσκους μανθάνειν εἴτε μή;	**NICIAS** But Socrates, aren't we considering fighting in armor, and whether the young men should learn it or not?
	SOCRATES πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ὦ Νικία. ἀλλ' ὅταν περὶ φαρμάκου τίς του πρὸς ὀφθαλμοὺς σκοπῆται, εἴτε χρὴ αὐτὸ ὑπαλείφεσθαι εἴτε μή, πότερον οἴει τότε εἶναι τὴν βουλὴν περὶ τοῦ φαρμάκου ἢ περὶ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν;	**SOCRATES** Certainly, Nicias. But when someone is considering a medicine for the eyes, and whether he should apply it or not, do you think his deliberation is then about the medicine or about the eyes?
	NICIAS περὶ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν.	**NICIAS** About the eyes.
185d	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν καὶ ὅταν ἵππῳ χαλινὸν σκοπῆταί τις εἰ προσοιστέον ἢ μή, καὶ ὁπότε, τότε που περὶ τοῦ ἵππου βουλεύεται ἀλλ' οὐ περὶ τοῦ χαλινοῦ;	**SOCRATES** And when someone considers whether a bridle should be put on a horse or not, and when, then presumably he's deliberating about the horse and not about the bridle?
	NICIAS ἀληθῆ.	**NICIAS** True.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἑνὶ λόγῳ, ὅταν τίς τι ἕνεκά του σκοπῇ, περὶ ἐκείνου ἡ βουλὴ τυγχάνει οὖσα οὗ ἕνεκα ἐσκόπει, ἀλλ' οὐ περὶ τοῦ ὃ ἕνεκα ἄλλου ἐζήτει.	**SOCRATES** In a word, then, when someone considers one thing for the sake of another, his deliberation is about the thing for whose sake he was considering it. It isn't about the thing he was looking into for the sake of something else.
	NICIAS ἀνάγκη.	**NICIAS** Necessarily.
	SOCRATES δεῖ ἄρα καὶ τὸν σύμβουλον σκοπεῖν ἆρα τεχνικός ἐστιν εἰς ἐκείνου θεραπείαν, οὗ ἕνεκα σκοπούμενοι σκοποῦμεν.	**SOCRATES** So we must also consider whether our adviser is an expert in caring for that thing, the one for whose sake we're conducting our inquiry.
	NICIAS πάνυ γε.	**NICIAS** Certainly.
185e	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν νῦν φαμεν περὶ μαθήματος σκοπεῖν τῆς ψυχῆς ἕνεκα τῆς τῶν νεανίσκων;	**SOCRATES** Now, aren't we saying that we're considering a subject of learning for the sake of the young men's souls?
	NICIAS ναί.	**NICIAS** Yes.
	SOCRATES εἴ τις ἄρα ἡμῶν τεχνικὸς περὶ ψυχῆς θεραπείαν καὶ οἷός τε καλῶς τοῦτο θεραπεῦσαι, καὶ ὅτῳ διδάσκαλοι ἀγαθοὶ γεγόνασιν, τοῦτο σκεπτέον.	**SOCRATES** Then this is what we must consider: whether any of us is an expert in the care of the soul, able to care for it well, and has had good teachers.

GREEK

ENGLISH

LACHES τί δέ, ὦ Σώκρατες; οὔπω ἑώρακας ἄνευ διδασκάλων τεχνικωτέρους γεγονότας εἰς ἔνια ἢ μετὰ διδασκάλων;

LACHES What, Socrates? Haven't you ever seen people who became more expert in some things without teachers than with them?

SOCRATES ἔγωγε, ὦ Λάχης· οἷς γε σὺ οὐκ ἂν ἐθέλοις πιστεῦσαι, εἰ φαῖεν ἀγαθοὶ εἶναι δημιουργοί, εἰ μή τί σοι τῆς αὑτῶν τέχνης ἔργον ἔχοιεν ἐπιδεῖξαι εὖ εἰργασμένον, καὶ ἓν καὶ πλείω.

SOCRATES I have, Laches. But you wouldn't be willing to trust them if they claimed to be good craftsmen. Not unless they could show you some well-executed product of their craft, one or more.

186a **LACHES** τοῦτο μὲν ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

LACHES That much is true.

SOCRATES καὶ ἡμᾶς ἄρα δεῖ, ὦ Λάχης τε καὶ Νικία—ἐπειδὴ Λυσίμαχος καὶ Μελησίας εἰς συμβουλὴν παρεκαλεσάτην ἡμᾶς περὶ τοῖν υἱέοιν, προθυμούμενοι αὐτοῖν ὅτι ἀρίστας γενέσθαι τὰς ψυχάς—εἰ μέν φαμεν ἔχειν, ἐπιδεῖξαι αὐτοῖς καὶ διδασκάλους οἵτινες ἡμῶν γεγόνασιν αὐτοὶ πρῶτον ἀγαθοὶ ὄντες καὶ πολλῶν νέων τεθεραπευκότες ψυχὰς ἔπειτα [186b] καὶ ἡμᾶς διδάξαντες φαίνονται· ἢ εἴ τις ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἑαυτῷ διδάσκαλον μὲν οὔ φησι γεγονέναι, ἀλλ' οὖν ἔργα αὐτὸν αὑτοῦ ἔχειν εἰπεῖν καὶ ἐπιδεῖξαι τίνες Ἀθηναίων ἢ τῶν ξένων, ἢ δοῦλοι ἢ ἐλεύθεροι, δι' ἐκεῖνον ὁμολογουμένως ἀγαθοὶ γεγόνασιν· εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ἡμῖν τούτων ὑπάρχει, ἄλλους κελεύειν ζητεῖν καὶ μὴ ἐν ἑταίρων ἀνδρῶν υἱέσιν κινδυνεύειν διαφθείροντας τὴν μεγίστην αἰτίαν ἔχειν ὑπὸ τῶν οἰκειοτάτων.

SOCRATES So we ought to do the same, Laches and Nicias. Lysimachus and Melesias have called us in to advise them about their two sons, because they're eager for the boys' souls to become as good as possible. If we say we have teachers, we should point them out: teachers who were good themselves to begin with, who have cared for the souls of many young men, and who then [186b] clearly taught us as well. Or if one of us says he never had a teacher himself, he should at least be able to tell of his own works and point to people, Athenians or foreigners, slaves or free, who by common agreement have become good because of him. And if we have none of this to show, we should tell them to look elsewhere, and not risk corrupting the sons of our friends and so earning the gravest blame from those closest to us.

186b ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν, ὦ Λυσίμαχέ τε καὶ Μελησία, πρῶτος [186c] περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ λέγω ὅτι διδάσκαλός μοι οὐ γέγονε τούτου πέρι. καίτοι ἐπιθυμῶ γε τοῦ πράγματος ἐκ νέου ἀρξάμενος. ἀλλὰ τοῖς μὲν σοφισταῖς οὐκ ἔχω τελεῖν μισθούς, οἵπερ μόνοι ἐπηγγέλλοντό με οἷοί τ' εἶναι ποιῆσαι καλόν τε κἀγαθόν· αὐτὸς δ' αὖ εὑρεῖν τὴν τέχνην ἀδυνατῶ ἔτι νυνί. εἰ δὲ Νικίας ἢ Λάχης ηὕρηκεν ἢ μεμάθηκεν, οὐκ ἂν θαυμάσαιμι· καὶ γὰρ χρήμασιν ἐμοῦ δυνατώτεροι, ὥστε μαθεῖν παρ' ἄλλων, καὶ ἅμα πρεσβύτεροι, ὥστε ἤδη ηὑρηκέναι. δοκοῦσι [186d] δή μοι δυνατοὶ εἶναι παιδεῦσαι ἄνθρωπον· οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε ἀδεῶς ἀπεφαίνοντο περὶ ἐπιτηδευμάτων νέῳ χρηστῶν τε καὶ πονηρῶν, εἰ μὴ αὐτοῖς ἐπίστευον ἱκανῶς εἰδέναι. τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα ἔγωγε τούτοις πιστεύω· ὅτι δὲ διαφέρεσθον ἀλλήλοιν, ἐθαύμασα.

As for me, Lysimachus and Melesias, I'll be the first to [186c] admit that I've never had a teacher in this. And yet I've longed for it ever since I was young. But I can't pay the fees of the sophists, who were the only ones claiming they could make me a fine and good man, and I still can't discover the art on my own, even now. If Nicias or Laches has discovered it or learned it, I wouldn't be surprised. They have more money than I do, so they could learn it from others, and they're also older, so they may have discovered it by now. They do [186d] seem to me capable of educating a person. They'd never declare so fearlessly which pursuits are good for a young man and which are bad unless they were confident they knew enough. In everything else, then, I trust them. But I was surprised that the two of them disagree with each other.

186d τοῦτο οὖν σου ἐγὼ ἀντιδέομαι, ὦ Λυσίμαχε· καθάπερ ἄρτι Λάχης μὴ ἀφίεσθαί σε ἐμοῦ διεκελεύετο ἀλλὰ ἐρωτᾶν, καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν παρακελεύομαί σοι μὴ ἀφίεσθαι Λάχητος μηδὲ Νικίου, ἀλλ' ἐρωτᾶν λέγοντα ὅτι ὁ μὲν Σωκράτης οὔ [186e] φησιν ἐπαΐειν περὶ τοῦ πράγματος οὐδ' ἱκανὸς εἶναι

So I'm asking you a favor in return, Lysimachus. Just now Laches urged you not to let me go but to question me. Now I'm urging you not to let Laches or Nicias go, but to question them. Say to them:

GREEK

διακρῖναι ὁπότερος ὑμῶν ἀληθῆ λέγει—οὔτε γὰρ εὑρετὴς οὔτε μαθητὴς οὐδενὸς περὶ τῶν τοιούτων γεγονέναι— σὺ δ', ὦ Λάχης καὶ Νικία, εἴπετον ἡμῖν ἑκάτερος τίνι δὴ δεινοτάτῳ συγγεγόνατον περὶ τῆς τῶν νέων τροφῆς, καὶ πότερα μαθόντε παρά του ἐπίστασθον ἢ αὐτὼ ἐξευρόντε, καὶ εἰ μὲν μαθόντε, [187a] τίς ὁ διδάσκαλος ἑκατέρῳ καὶ τίνες ἄλλοι ὁμότεχνοι αὐτοῖς, ἵν', ἂν μὴ ὑμῖν σχολὴ ᾖ ὑπὸ τῶν τῆς πόλεως πραγμάτων, ἐπ' ἐκείνους ἴωμεν καὶ πείθωμεν ἢ δώροις ἢ χάρισιν ἢ ἀμφότερα ἐπιμεληθῆναι καὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων καὶ τῶν ὑμετέρων παίδων, ὅπως μὴ καταισχύνωσι τοὺς αὑτῶν προγόνους φαῦλοι γενόμενοι· εἰ δ' αὐτοὶ εὑρεταὶ γεγονότε τοῦ τοιούτου, δότε παράδειγμα τίνων ἤδη ἄλλων ἐπιμεληθέντες ἐκ φαύλων καλούς τε κἀγαθοὺς ἐποιήσατε.

ENGLISH

"Socrates says [186e] he doesn't understand the matter, and isn't competent to judge which of you is telling the truth, since he's never discovered anything of this sort or been anyone's student in it. But you, Laches and Nicias, each tell us: who is the most skilled person you've spent time with on the upbringing of the young? Do you know about it because you learned it from someone, or because you found it out yourselves? If you learned it, [187a] who was each of your teachers, and who else practices the same art? That way, if the city's business leaves you no time, we can go to them and persuade them, with gifts or favors or both, to look after our children and yours, so that the boys don't turn out worthless and shame their ancestors. And if you discovered this sort of thing yourselves, give us an example: whom have you already taken in hand and turned from worthless into fine and good?

187a εἰ γὰρ νῦν πρῶτον ἄρξεσθε [187b] παιδεύειν, σκοπεῖν χρὴ μὴ οὐκ ἐν τῷ Καρὶ ὑμῖν ὁ κίνδυνος κινδυνεύηται, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς υἱέσι τε καὶ ἐν τοῖς τῶν φίλων παισί, καὶ ἀτεχνῶς τὸ λεγόμενον κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν ὑμῖν συμβαίνῃ ἐν πίθῳ ἡ κεραμεία γιγνομένη. λέγετε οὖν τί τούτων ἢ φατὲ ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν τε καὶ προσήκειν ἢ οὔ φατε. ταῦτ', ὦ Λυσίμαχε, παρ' αὐτῶν πυνθάνου τε καὶ μὴ μεθίει τοὺς ἄνδρας.

"Because if you're only now going to start [187b] educating, you need to watch out that the risk you're running isn't on a Carian but on your own sons and your friends' children, and that the proverb doesn't come true for you exactly as it says, 'learning pottery on a wine jar.' So tell us which of these things you claim to have and to be qualified for, and which you don't." Find these things out from them, Lysimachus, and don't let the men off.[6]

187b **LYSIMACHUS** καλῶς μὲν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὦ ἄνδρες, Σωκράτης λέγειν· [187c] εἰ δὲ βουλομένοις ὑμῖν ἐστι περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἐρωτᾶσθαί τε καὶ διδόναι λόγον, αὐτοὺς δὴ χρὴ γιγνώσκειν, ὦ Νικία τε καὶ Λάχης. ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ καὶ Μελησίᾳ τῷδε δῆλον ὅτι ἡδομένοις ἂν εἴη εἰ πάντα ἃ Σωκράτης ἐρωτᾷ ἐθέλοιτε λόγῳ διεξιέναι· καὶ γὰρ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐντεῦθεν ἠρχόμην λέγων, ὅτι εἰς συμβουλὴν διὰ ταῦτα ὑμᾶς παρακαλέσαιμεν, ὅτι μεμεληκέναι ὑμῖν ἡγούμεθα, ὡς εἰκός, περὶ τῶν τοιούτων, καὶ ἄλλως καὶ ἐπειδὴ οἱ παῖδες ὑμῖν ὀλίγου ὥσπερ οἱ ἡμέτεροι ἡλικίαν [187d] ἔχουσι παιδεύεσθαι. εἰ οὖν ὑμῖν μή τι διαφέρει, εἴπατε καὶ κοινῇ μετὰ Σωκράτους σκέψασθε, διδόντες τε καὶ δεχόμενοι λόγον παρ' ἀλλήλων· εὖ γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο λέγει ὅδε, ὅτι περὶ τοῦ μεγίστου νῦν βουλευόμεθα τῶν ἡμετέρων.

LYSIMACHUS Gentlemen, I think Socrates is speaking well. [187c] But whether you're willing to be questioned about such things and give an account of yourselves is for you to decide, Nicias and Laches. For Melesias here and me, it would obviously be a pleasure if you'd agree to talk through everything Socrates asks. In fact, that's where I began at the start. I told you we'd called you in for advice because we assumed you'd naturally given thought to such matters, especially since your boys, like ours, are almost old enough [187d] to be educated. So if you don't mind, speak up and look into it together with Socrates, giving and receiving accounts from one another. He's right about this too, that we're deliberating now about the most important of our concerns.

187d ἀλλ' ὁρᾶτε εἰ δοκεῖ χρῆναι οὕτω ποιεῖν.

But see whether you think we should do it this way.

6 Two proverbs: to experiment "on a Carian" meant risking something of little value (Carians often served as hired soldiers), while "learning pottery on a wine jar" meant starting a craft with the largest, hardest piece.

WHAT TALKING WITH SOCRATES IS LIKE

Nicias warns that talk with Socrates turns to one's own life; Laches welcomes it from a man of deeds.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	NICIAS ὦ Λυσίμαχε, δοκεῖς μοι ὡς ἀληθῶς Σωκράτη πατρόθεν γιγνώσκειν μόνον, αὐτῷ δ' οὐ συγγεγονέναι ἀλλ' ἢ [187e] παιδὶ ὄντι, εἴ που ἐν τοῖς δημόταις μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀκολουθῶν ἐπλησίασέν σοι ἢ ἐν ἱερῷ ἢ ἐν ἄλλῳ τῳ συλλόγῳ τῶν δημοτῶν· ἐπειδὴ δὲ πρεσβύτερος γέγονεν, οὐκ ἐντετυχηκὼς τῷ ἀνδρὶ δῆλος ἔτι εἶ.	**NICIAS** Lysimachus, it really seems to me that you know Socrates only through his father, and haven't had anything to do with him except [187e] as a child, when he may have tagged along with his father and come up to you among your fellow demesmen, at a temple or some other gathering of the deme. Clearly you haven't yet met the man since he's grown up.
187e	**LYSIMACHUS** τί μάλιστα, ὦ Νικία;	**LYSIMACHUS** Why do you say that, Nicias?
	NICIAS οὔ μοι δοκεῖς εἰδέναι ὅτι ὃς ἂν ἐγγύτατα Σωκράτους ᾖ λόγῳ ὥσπερ γένει καὶ πλησιάζῃ διαλεγόμενος, ἀνάγκη αὐτῷ, ἐὰν ἄρα καὶ περὶ ἄλλου του πρότερον ἄρξηται διαλέγεσθαι, μὴ παύεσθαι ὑπὸ τούτου περιαγόμενον τῷ λόγῳ, πρὶν ἂν ἐμπέσῃ εἰς τὸ διδόναι περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον, ὅντινα [188a] τρόπον νῦν τε ζῇ καὶ ὄντινα τὸν παρεληλυθότα βίον βεβίωκεν· ἐπειδὰν δ' ἐμπέσῃ, ὅτι οὐ πρότερον αὐτὸν ἀφήσει Σωκράτης, πρὶν ἂν βασανίσῃ ταῦτα εὖ τε καὶ καλῶς ἅπαντα.	**NICIAS** You don't seem to know that anyone who gets as close to Socrates in discussion as a relative is by birth, and keeps company with him in conversation, is bound to be led around by his argument without stopping, even if he starts out talking about something else, until he finds himself giving an account of himself: the way [188a] he lives now and the way he has lived his life up to now. And once he's fallen into that, Socrates won't let him go until he has tested every bit of it thoroughly.
188a	ἐγὼ δὲ συνήθης τέ εἰμι τῷδε καὶ οἶδ' ὅτι ἀνάγκη ὑπὸ τούτου πάσχειν ταῦτα, καὶ ἔτι γε αὐτὸς ὅτι πείσομαι ταῦτα εὖ οἶδα· χαίρω γάρ, ὦ Λυσίμαχε, τῷ ἀνδρὶ πλησιάζων, καὶ οὐδὲν οἶμαι κακὸν εἶναι τὸ ὑπομιμνῄσκεσθαι ὅτι μὴ καλῶς ἢ πεποιήκαμεν [188b] ἢ ποιοῦμεν, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα βίον προμηθέστερον ἀνάγκη εἶναι τὸν ταῦτα μὴ φεύγοντα ἀλλ' ἐθέλοντα κατὰ τὸ τοῦ Σόλωνος καὶ ἀξιοῦντα μανθάνειν ἕωσπερ ἂν ζῇ, καὶ μὴ οἰόμενον αὐτῷ τὸ γῆρας νοῦν ἔχον προσιέναι. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν οὐδὲν ἄηθες οὐδ' αὖ ἀηδὲς ὑπὸ Σωκράτους βασανίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάλαι σχεδόν τι ἠπιστάμην ὅτι οὐ περὶ τῶν μειρακίων ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος ἔσοιτο Σωκράτους παρόντος, ἀλλὰ περὶ [188c] ἡμῶν αὐτῶν.	I'm used to him, and I know that this is what you have to put up with from him, and I know perfectly well I'll get the same treatment myself. I enjoy his company, Lysimachus, and I don't think there's any harm in being reminded of what we have done [188b] or are doing wrong. A man who doesn't run away from this is bound to be more careful in the rest of his life, if he's willing, as Solon says, and thinks it right to keep learning as long as he lives, and doesn't suppose that old age will bring him good sense all by itself. So for me there's nothing unusual or unpleasant in being tested by Socrates. In fact, I pretty much knew long ago that with Socrates here the discussion wouldn't be about the boys but about [188c] us.[7]
188c	ὅπερ οὖν λέγω, τὸ μὲν ἐμὸν οὐδὲν κωλύει Σωκράτει συνδιατρίβειν ὅπως οὗτος βούλεται· Λάχητα δὲ τόνδε ὅρα ὅπως ἔχει περὶ τοῦ τοιούτου.	So, as I say, as far as I'm concerned nothing stops us from spending time with Socrates however he likes. But see how Laches here feels about this sort of thing.
	LACHES ἁπλοῦν τό γ' ἐμόν, ὦ Νικία, περὶ λόγων ἐστίν, εἰ δὲ βούλει, οὐχ ἁπλοῦν ἀλλὰ διπλοῦν· καὶ γὰρ ἂν	**LACHES** My attitude to discussions is simple, Nicias, or, if you like, not simple but double. I

7 Solon, the Athenian statesman and poet of the early sixth century BC, wrote: "I grow old, always learning many things."

GREEK

δόξαιμί τῳ φιλόλογος εἶναι καὶ αὖ μισόλογος. ὅταν μὲν γὰρ ἀκούω ἀνδρὸς περὶ ἀρετῆς διαλεγομένου ἢ περί τινος σοφίας ὡς ἀληθῶς ὄντος ἀνδρὸς καὶ ἀξίου τῶν λόγων ὧν λέγει, [188d] χαίρω ὑπερφυῶς, θεώμενος ἅμα τόν τε λέγοντα καὶ τὰ λεγόμενα ὅτι πρέποντα ἀλλήλοις καὶ ἁρμόττοντά ἐστι. καὶ κομιδῇ μοι δοκεῖ μουσικὸς ὁ τοιοῦτος εἶναι, ἁρμονίαν καλλίστην ἡρμοσμένος οὐ λύραν οὐδὲ παιδιᾶς ὄργανα, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι ζῆν ἡρμοσμένος οὗ αὐτὸς αὑτοῦ τὸν βίον σύμφωνον τοῖς λόγοις πρὸς τὰ ἔργα, ἀτεχνῶς δωριστὶ ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἰαστί, οἶομαι δὲ οὐδὲ φρυγιστὶ οὐδὲ λυδιστί, ἀλλ᾽ ἥπερ μόνη Ἑλληνική ἐστιν ἁρμονία.

ENGLISH

might seem to some people to love discussion and also to hate it. When I hear a man discussing excellence or some kind of wisdom, a man who's really a man and worthy of the words he speaks, [188d] I'm wonderfully delighted, as I watch the speaker and what he says together and see how they fit and suit each other. A man like that seems to me a true musician. He has tuned himself to the finest harmony, not on a lyre or some instrument for amusement. He has really tuned his own life so that his words are in concord with his deeds, purely in the Dorian mode, not the Ionian, nor, I think, the Phrygian or Lydian, but the one mode that is truly Greek.[8]

188d ὁ μὲν οὖν τοιοῦτος χαίρειν με ποιεῖ [188e] φθεγγόμενος καὶ δοκεῖν ὁτῳοῦν φιλόλογον εἶναι—οὕτω σφόδρα ἀποδέχομαι παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὰ λεγόμενα—ὁ δὲ τἀναντία τούτου πράττων λυπεῖ με, ὅσῳ ἂν δοκῇ ἄμεινον λέγειν, τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον, καὶ ποιεῖ αὖ δοκεῖν εἶναι μισόλογον. Σωκράτους δ᾽ ἐγὼ τῶν μὲν λόγων οὐκ ἔμπειρός εἰμι, ἀλλὰ πρότερον, ὡς ἔοικε, τῶν ἔργων ἐπειράθην, καὶ ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν [189a] ηὗρον ἄξιον ὄντα λόγων καλῶν καὶ πάσης παρρησίας. εἰ οὖν καὶ τοῦτο ἔχει, συμβούλομαι τἀνδρί, καὶ ἥδιστ᾽ ἂν ἐξεταζοίμην ὑπὸ τοῦ τοιούτου, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἀχθοίμην μανθάνων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐγὼ τῷ Σόλωνι, ἓν μόνον προσλαβών, συγχωρῶ· γηράσκων γὰρ πολλὰ διδάσκεσθαι ἐθέλω ὑπὸ χρηστῶν μόνον.

When a man like that speaks, he delights me [188e] and makes me seem to anyone a lover of discussion, so eagerly do I take in what he says. But a man who does the opposite pains me, and the better he seems to speak, the more he pains me, and then he makes me seem a hater of discussion. Now I have no experience of Socrates' words, but before that, it seems, I had experience of his deeds, and there [189a] I found him worthy of fine words and of complete frankness. So if he has this too, I'm with him, and I'd be very glad to be examined by a man like that, and I wouldn't resent learning. I too agree with Solon, with just one addition: as I grow old I'm willing to be taught many things, but only by good men.

189a τοῦτο γάρ μοι συγχωρείτω, ἀγαθὸν καὶ αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν διδάσκαλον, ἵνα μὴ δυσμαθὴς φαίνωμαι ἀηδῶς μανθάνων· εἰ δὲ νεώτερος ὁ διδάσκων ἔσται ἢ μήπω ἐν δόξῃ ὢν ἤ τι [189b] ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων ἔχων, οὐδέν μοι μέλει. σοὶ οὖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐγὼ ἐπαγγέλλομαι καὶ διδάσκειν καὶ ἐλέγχειν ἐμὲ ὅτι ἂν βούλῃ, καὶ μανθάνειν γε ὅτι αὖ ἐγὼ οἶδα· οὕτω σὺ παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ διάκεισαι ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας ᾗ μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ συνδιεκινδύνευσας καὶ ἔδωκας σαυτοῦ πεῖραν ἀρετῆς ἣν χρὴ διδόναι τὸν μέλλοντα δικαίως δώσειν. λέγ᾽ οὖν ὅτι σοι φίλον, μηδὲν τὴν ἡμετέραν ἡλικίαν ὑπόλογον ποιούμενος.

Let him grant me this much, that the teacher himself be good, so I don't look like a slow learner because I learn reluctantly. Whether the teacher is younger, or not yet well known, or has [189b] anything else of that sort, doesn't matter to me at all. So I offer myself to you, Socrates: teach me and refute me however you like, and learn, in turn, whatever I know. That's how I've felt about you ever since that day when you shared the danger with me and gave proof of your excellence, the kind of proof anyone must give who means to give it rightly. So say whatever you like, and don't let our age count against us at all.

189c **SOCRATES** οὐ τὰ ὑμέτερα, ὡς ἔοικεν, αἰτιασόμεθα μὴ οὐχ ἕτοιμα εἶναι καὶ συμβουλεύειν καὶ συσκοπεῖν.

SOCRATES It looks as if we won't be able to complain that you aren't ready to give advice and to join in the inquiry.

8 The Dorian mode was a musical scale the Greeks associated with manly dignity. The Ionian was thought soft, and the Phrygian and Lydian came from Asia Minor.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	LYSIMACHUS ἀλλ᾽ ἡμέτερον δὴ ἔργον, ὦ Σώκρατες—ἕνα γάρ σε ἔγωγε ἡμῶν τίθημι—σκόπει οὖν ἀντ᾽ ἐμοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν νεανίσκων ὅτι δεόμεθα παρὰ τῶνδε πυνθάνεσθαι, καὶ συμβούλευε διαλεγόμενος τούτοις. ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἐπιλανθάνομαι ἤδη τὰ πολλὰ διὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν ὧν ἂν διανοηθῶ ἐρέσθαι καὶ αὖ ἃ ἂν ἀκούσω· ἐὰν δὲ μεταξὺ ἄλλοι λόγοι γένωνται, οὐ πάνυ 189d μέμνημαι. ὑμεῖς οὖν λέγετε καὶ διέξιτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς περὶ ὧν προυθέμεθα· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀκούσομαι καὶ ἀκούσας αὖ μετὰ Μελησίου τοῦδε ποιήσω τοῦτο ὅτι ἂν καὶ ὑμῖν δοκῇ.	**LYSIMACHUS** Well, it's our job, Socrates, since I count you as one of us. So look into it for me, on the young men's behalf: what we need to find out from these two. Talk with them and give us your advice. Because of my age I now forget most of what I mean to ask, and what I hear, too. And if other talk comes up in between, I hardly 189d remember anything. So you all speak and go through among yourselves the question we've set. I'll listen, and once I've listened, I'll do whatever you think best, together with Melesias here.

WHAT IS COURAGE?

To know how to make the boys good, they must first say what one part of excellence, courage, is.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
189d	**SOCRATES** πειστέον, ὦ Νικία τε καὶ Λάχης, Λυσιμάχῳ καὶ Μελησίᾳ. ἃ μὲν οὖν νυνδὴ ἐπεχειρήσαμεν σκοπεῖν, τίνες οἱ διδάσκαλοι ἡμῖν τῆς τοιαύτης παιδείας γεγόνασιν ἢ τίνας ἄλλους βελτίους πεποιήκαμεν, ἴσως μὲν οὐ κακῶς εἶχεν 189e ἐξετάζειν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἡμᾶς αὐτούς· ἀλλ᾽ οἶμαι καὶ ἡ τοιάδε σκέψις εἰς ταὐτὸν φέρει, σχεδὸν δέ τι καὶ μᾶλλον ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἴη ἄν. εἰ γὰρ τυγχάνομεν ἐπιστάμενοι ὁτουοῦν πέρι ὅτι παραγενόμενόν τῳ βέλτιον ποιεῖ ἐκεῖνο ᾧ παρεγένετο, καὶ προσέτι οἷοί τέ ἐσμεν αὐτὸ ποιεῖν παραγίγνεσθαι ἐκείνῳ, δῆλον ὅτι αὐτό γε ἴσμεν τοῦτο οὗ πέρι σύμβουλοι ἂν γενοίμεθα ὡς ἄν τις αὐτὸ ῥᾷστα καὶ ἄριστ᾽ ἂν κτήσαιτο. ἴσως οὖν οὐ μανθάνετέ μου ὅτι λέγω, ἀλλ᾽ ὧδε ῥᾷον μαθήσεσθε.	**SOCRATES** We have to do as Lysimachus and Melesias say, Nicias and Laches. Now the questions we were just trying to look into, who our teachers in this kind of education have been and whom else we've made better, perhaps it wasn't a bad idea 189e to examine ourselves on things like that. But I think another kind of inquiry leads to the same point, and might even start a little closer to the beginning. Suppose we happen to know about something, whatever it is, that when it's added to another thing it makes that thing better, and suppose we're also able to make it be added. Then clearly we know the thing itself on which we could advise people about how to acquire it most easily and best. Perhaps you don't understand what I mean. You'll understand more easily this way.
190a	εἰ τυγχάνομεν ἐπιστάμενοι ὅτι ὄψις παραγενομένη ὀφθαλμοῖς βελτίους ποιεῖ ἐκείνους οἷς παρεγένετο, καὶ προσέτι οἷοί τ᾽ ἐσμὲν ποιεῖν αὐτὴν παραγίγνεσθαι ὄμμασι, δῆλον ὅτι ὄψιν γε ἴσμεν αὐτὴν ὅτι ποτ᾽ ἔστιν, ἧς πέρι σύμβουλοι ἂν γενοίμεθα ὡς ἄν τις αὐτὴν ῥᾷστα καὶ ἄριστα κτήσαιτο. εἰ γὰρ μηδ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτο εἰδεῖμεν, ὅτι ποτ᾽ ἔστιν ὄψις ἢ ὅτι ἔστιν ἀκοή, σχολῇ ἂν σύμβουλοί γε ἄξιοι λόγου γενοίμεθα καὶ ἰατροὶ ἢ περὶ ὀφθαλμῶν ἢ περὶ ὤτων, ὁντινα τρόπον 190b ἀκοὴν ἢ ὄψιν κάλλιστ᾽ ἂν κτήσαιτό τις.	Suppose we happen to know that sight, when it's added to eyes, makes better the eyes it's added to, and suppose we're also able to make it be added to eyes. Then clearly we know what sight itself is, and we could advise people about how to acquire it most easily and best. But if we didn't know even this, what sight is or what hearing is, we'd hardly be advisers worth listening to, or doctors of the eyes or ears, on how 190b someone could best acquire hearing or sight.
190b	**LACHES** ἀληθῆ λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**LACHES** That's true, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν, ὦ Λάχης, καὶ νῦν ἡμᾶς τώδε παρακαλεῖτον εἰς συμβουλήν, τίν᾽ ἂν τρόπον τοῖς ὑέσιν αὐτῶν ἀρετὴ παραγενομένη ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἀμείνους ποιήσειε;	**SOCRATES** And now, Laches, aren't these two calling us in to advise them how excellence might be added to their sons' souls and make them better?

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	LACHES πάνυ γε.	**LACHES** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ἆρ' οὖν ἡμῖν τοῦτό γ' ὑπάρχειν δεῖ, τὸ εἰδέναι ὅτι ποτ' ἔστιν ἀρετή; εἰ γάρ που μηδ' ἀρετὴν εἰδεῖμεν τὸ παράπαν ὅτι ποτε τυγχάνει ὄν, τίν' ἂν τρόπον τούτου [190c] σύμβουλοι γενοίμεθ' ἂν ὁτῳοῦν, ὅπως ἂν αὐτὸ κάλλιστα κτήσαιτο;	**SOCRATES** Then don't we need to have this at least, a knowledge of what excellence is? If we didn't know at all what excellence actually is, how could we [190c] advise anyone about how best to acquire it?
190c	**LACHES** οὐδένα, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**LACHES** We couldn't, it seems to me, Socrates.
	SOCRATES φαμὲν ἄρα, ὦ Λάχης, εἰδέναι αὐτὸ ὅτι ἔστιν.	**SOCRATES** Then we claim, Laches, to know what it is.
	LACHES φαμὲν μέντοι.	**LACHES** Yes, we do claim that.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ὅ γε ἴσμεν, κἂν εἴποιμεν δήπου τί ἐστιν.	**SOCRATES** And if we know something, surely we can also say what it is.
	LACHES πῶς γὰρ οὔ;	**LACHES** Of course.
	SOCRATES μὴ τοίνυν, ὦ ἄριστε, περὶ ὅλης ἀρετῆς εὐθέως σκοπώμεθα—πλέον γὰρ ἴσως ἔργον—ἀλλὰ μέρους τινὸς πέρι πρῶτον ἴδωμεν εἰ ἱκανῶς ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸ εἰδέναι· καὶ [190d] ἡμῖν, ὡς τὸ εἰκός, ῥᾴων ἡ σκέψις ἔσται.	**SOCRATES** Then let's not look at the whole of excellence straight away, my friend, since that might be too big a job. Let's first take some part of it and see whether we're in a position to know it. That way, [190d] most likely, the inquiry will be easier for us.
190d	**LACHES** ἀλλ' οὕτω ποιῶμεν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὡς σὺ βούλει.	**LACHES** All right, Socrates, let's do it the way you want.
	SOCRATES τί οὖν ἂν προελοίμεθα τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς μερῶν; ἢ δῆλον δὴ ὅτι τοῦτο εἰς ὃ τείνειν δοκεῖ ἡ ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις μάθησις; δοκεῖ δέ που τοῖς πολλοῖς εἰς ἀνδρείαν. ἦ γάρ;	**SOCRATES** So which of the parts of excellence should we choose? Isn't it obviously the one that learning to fight in armor seems to aim at? And most people think that's courage, don't they?
	LACHES καὶ μάλα δὴ οὕτω δοκεῖ.	**LACHES** They certainly do.
	SOCRATES τοῦτο τοίνυν πρῶτον ἐπιχειρήσωμεν, ὦ Λάχης, εἰπεῖν, ἀνδρεία τί ποτ' ἐστίν· ἔπειτα μετὰ τοῦτο σκεψόμεθα [190e] καὶ ὅτῳ ἂν τρόπῳ τοῖς νεανίσκοις παραγένοιτο, καθ' ὅσον οἷόν τε ἐξ ἐπιτηδευμάτων τε καὶ μαθημάτων παραγενέσθαι. ἀλλὰ πειρῶ εἰπεῖν ὃ λέγω, τί ἐστιν ἀνδρεία.	**SOCRATES** Then let's first try to say, Laches, what courage is. After that we'll look [190e] at how it might be added to the young men, so far as it can come from pursuits and studies. Come on, try to answer my question: what is courage?

LACHES' DEFINITION: STANDING FIRM

Laches says courage is staying in the ranks and not running away; Socrates asks for what all courage shares.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
190e	**LACHES** οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐ χαλεπὸν εἰπεῖν· εἰ γάρ τις ἐθέλοι ἐν τῇ τάξει μένων ἀμύνεσθαι τοὺς πολεμίους καὶ μὴ φεύγοι, εὖ ἴσθι ὅτι ἀνδρεῖος ἂν εἴη.	**LACHES** By Zeus, Socrates, that's not hard to say. If someone is willing to stay at his post in the ranks and hold off the enemy, and doesn't run away, you can be sure he's brave.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES εὖ μὲν λέγεις, ὦ Λάχης· ἀλλ' ἴσως ἐγὼ αἴτιος, οὐ σαφῶς εἰπών, τὸ σὲ ἀποκρίνασθαι μὴ τοῦτο ὃ διανοούμενος ἠρόμην, ἀλλ' ἕτερον.	**SOCRATES** Well said, Laches. But perhaps I'm to blame for not speaking clearly, since you answered not the question I had in mind but a different one.
	LACHES πῶς τοῦτο λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες;	**LACHES** What do you mean, Socrates?
191a	**SOCRATES** ἐγὼ φράσω, ἐὰν οἷός τε γένωμαι. ἀνδρεῖός που οὗτος, ὃν καὶ σὺ λέγεις, ὃς ἂν ἐν τῇ τάξει μένων μάχηται τοῖς πολεμίοις.	**SOCRATES** I'll explain, if I can. The man you describe is brave, I suppose: the one who stays at his post in the ranks and fights the enemy.
	LACHES ἐγὼ γοῦν φημι.	**LACHES** That's what I say, anyway.
	SOCRATES καὶ γὰρ ἐγώ. ἀλλὰ τί αὖ ὅδε, ὃς ἂν φεύγων μάχηται τοῖς πολεμίοις ἀλλὰ μὴ μένων;	**SOCRATES** So do I. But what about this other man, who fights the enemy while retreating, instead of standing his ground?
	LACHES πῶς φεύγων;	**LACHES** Retreating how?
	SOCRATES ὥσπερ που καὶ Σκύθαι λέγονται οὐχ ἧττον φεύγοντες ἢ διώκοντες μάχεσθαι, καὶ Ὅμηρός που ἐπαινῶν τοὺς τοῦ Αἰνείου ἵππους κραιπνὰ μάλ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα 191b ἔφη αὐτοὺς ἐπίστασθαι διώκειν ἠδὲ φέβεσθαι· καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Αἰνείαν κατὰ τοῦτ' ἐνεκωμίασε, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ φόβου ἐπιστήμην, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτὸν εἶναι μήστωρα φόβοιο.	**SOCRATES** The way the Scythians, I believe, are said to fight just as well while fleeing as while pursuing. And Homer, praising Aeneas' horses, said that they knew how "swiftly, this way and that, 191b to pursue and to flee." He praised Aeneas himself for the same thing, for his knowledge of fear, calling him a "master of fear."[9]
191b	**LACHES** καὶ καλῶς γε, ὦ Σώκρατες· περὶ ἁρμάτων γὰρ ἔλεγε. καὶ σὺ τὸ τῶν Σκυθῶν ἱππέων πέρι λέγεις· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἱππικὸν τὸ ἐκείνων οὕτω μάχεται, τὸ δὲ ὁπλιτικὸν τό γε τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ὡς ἐγὼ λέγω.	**LACHES** And he was right, Socrates, because he was talking about chariots. And you're talking about Scythian horsemen. Their cavalry fights that way, but heavy infantry, Greek infantry at least, fights the way I say.
	SOCRATES πλήν γ' ἴσως, ὦ Λάχης, τὸ Λακεδαιμονίων. Λακεδαιμονίους 191c γάρ φασιν ἐν Πλαταιαῖς, ἐπειδὴ πρὸς τοῖς γερροφόροις ἐγένοντο, οὐκ ἐθέλειν μένοντας πρὸς αὐτοὺς μάχεσθαι, ἀλλὰ φεύγειν, ἐπειδὴ δ' ἐλύθησαν αἱ τάξεις τῶν Περσῶν, ἀναστρεφομένους ὥσπερ ἱππέας μάχεσθαι καὶ οὕτω νικῆσαι τὴν ἐκεῖ μάχην.	**SOCRATES** Except perhaps for the Spartans, Laches. They say that at Plataea, 191c when the Spartans came up against the troops with wicker shields, they weren't willing to stand their ground and fight them, but retreated. Then, when the Persian ranks broke up, they turned around and fought like cavalry, and that's how they won the battle there.[10]
191c	**LACHES** ἀληθῆ λέγεις.	**LACHES** That's true.
	SOCRATES τοῦτο τοίνυν ὃ ἄρτι ἔλεγον, ὅτι ἐγὼ αἴτιος μὴ καλῶς σε ἀποκρίνασθαι, ὅτι οὐ καλῶς ἠρόμην— βουλόμενος 191d γάρ σου πυθέσθαι μὴ μόνον τοὺς ἐν τῷ ὁπλιτικῷ ἀνδρείους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἐν τῷ ἱππικῷ καὶ ἐν σύμπαντι τῷ πολεμικῷ εἴδει, καὶ μὴ μόνον τοὺς ἐν τῷ	**SOCRATES** So this is what I meant just now when I said I was to blame for your not answering well, because I didn't ask well. I wanted 191d to learn from you not only about those who are brave in the infantry but also in the cavalry and in every

9 In Homer the word *phobos* means "rout" or "flight," so "master of fear" originally meant "master of the rout"; Socrates plays on its later sense, "fear."
10 At Plataea in 479 BC the Greek allies, led by Sparta, decisively defeated the invading Persian army.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	πολέμῳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς πρὸς τὴν θάλατταν κινδύνοις ἀνδρείους ὄντας, καὶ ὅσοι γε πρὸς νόσους καὶ ὅσοι πρὸς πενίας ἢ καὶ πρὸς τὰ πολιτικὰ ἀνδρεῖοί εἰσιν, καὶ ἔτι αὖ μὴ μόνον ὅσοι πρὸς λύπας ἀνδρεῖοί εἰσιν ἢ φόβους, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἐπιθυμίας ἢ ἡδονὰς δεινοὶ 191e μάχεσθαι, καὶ μένοντες καὶ ἀναστρέφοντες—εἰσὶ γάρ πού τινες, ὦ Λάχης, καὶ ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἀνδρεῖοι—	kind of warfare, and not only those in war but also those who are brave in dangers at sea, and all who are brave in the face of illness or poverty, or in politics, too. And again, not only those who are brave against pains or fears, but also those who are formidable at fighting desires or pleasures, 191e whether by standing their ground or by turning back. For there are people, Laches, who are brave in things like these too—
191e	**LACHES** καὶ σφόδρα, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**LACHES** Very much so, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἀνδρεῖοι μὲν πάντες οὗτοί εἰσιν, ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἐν ἡδοναῖς, οἱ δ' ἐν λύπαις, οἱ δ' ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις, οἱ δ' ἐν φόβοις τὴν ἀνδρείαν κέκτηνται· οἱ δέ γ' οἶμαι δειλίαν ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς τούτοις.	**SOCRATES** So all of these are brave. But some have acquired their courage in pleasures, some in pains, some in desires, and some in fears. And others, I think, have acquired cowardice in these same things.
	LACHES πάνυ γε.	**LACHES** Certainly.
	SOCRATES τί ποτε ὂν ἑκάτερον τούτων; τοῦτο ἐπυνθανόμην. πάλιν οὖν πειρῶ εἰπεῖν ἀνδρείαν πρῶτον τί ὂν ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις ταὐτόν ἐστιν· ἢ οὔπω καταμανθάνεις ὃ λέγω;	**SOCRATES** What is each of these two things? That's what I was asking. So try again and say first what courage is, the thing that's the same in all of these. Or don't you see yet what I mean?
	LACHES οὐ πάνυ τι.	**LACHES** Not really.
192a	**SOCRATES** ἀλλ' ὧδε λέγω, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ τάχος ἠρώτων τί ποτ' ἐστίν, ὃ καὶ ἐν τῷ τρέχειν τυγχάνει ὂν ἡμῖν καὶ ἐν τῷ κιθαρίζειν καὶ ἐν τῷ λέγειν καὶ ἐν τῷ μανθάνειν καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις πολλοῖς, καὶ σχεδόν τι αὐτὸ κεκτήμεθα, οὗ καὶ πέρι ἄξιον λέγειν, ἢ ἐν ταῖς τῶν χειρῶν πράξεσιν ἢ σκελῶν ἢ στόματός τε καὶ φωνῆς ἢ διανοίας· ἢ οὐχ οὕτω καὶ σὺ λέγεις;	**SOCRATES** Well, I mean something like this. Suppose I were asking what quickness is. We find it in running, in playing the lyre, in speaking, in learning, and in many other things. In fact we have it in pretty much anything worth mentioning, in what we do with our hands or legs, our mouth and voice, or our mind. Or wouldn't you put it that way too?
	LACHES πάνυ γε.	**LACHES** Certainly.
	SOCRATES εἰ τοίνυν τίς με ἔροιτο· "ὦ Σώκρατες, τί λέγεις τοῦτο ὃ ἐν πᾶσιν ὀνομάζεις ταχυτῆτα εἶναι;" εἴποιμ' ἂν 192b αὐτῷ ὅτι τὴν ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ πολλὰ διαπραττομένην δύναμιν ταχυτῆτα ἔγωγε καλῶ καὶ περὶ φωνὴν καὶ περὶ δρόμον καὶ περὶ τἆλλα πάντα.	**SOCRATES** So if someone asked me, "Socrates, what do you say it is, this thing that you call quickness in all of them?" I'd tell 192b him that what I call quickness is the power that gets a lot done in a short time, whether in speech or in running or in anything else.
192b	**LACHES** ὀρθῶς γε σὺ λέγων.	**LACHES** And you'd be right.

LACHES TRIES AGAIN: ENDURANCE

Courage is endurance of the soul, but wise endurance looks less brave than foolish endurance.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES πειρῶ δὴ καὶ σύ, ὦ Λάχης, τὴν ἀνδρείαν οὕτως εἰπεῖν τίς οὖσα δύναμις ἡ αὐτὴ ἐν ἡδονῇ καὶ ἐν λύπῃ καὶ ἐν ἅπασιν οἷς νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν αὐτὴν εἶναι, ἔπειτα ἀνδρεία κέκληται.	**SOCRATES** Then you try too, Laches, to say in the same way what power courage is, the power that's the same in pleasure and in pain and in all the things we just said it was found in, and that's why it's been called courage.
	LACHES δοκεῖ τοίνυν μοι καρτερία τις εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς, εἰ [192c] τό γε διὰ πάντων περὶ ἀνδρείας πεφυκὸς δεῖ εἰπεῖν.	**LACHES** Well, it seems to me to be a kind of endurance of the soul, if [192c] I have to say what courage is by nature in all of them.
192c	**SOCRATES** ἀλλὰ μὴν δεῖ, εἴ γε τὸ ἐρωτώμενον ἀποκρινούμεθα ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς. τοῦτο τοίνυν ἔμοιγε φαίνεται· οὔτι πᾶσά γε, ὡς ἐγῷμαι, καρτερία ἀνδρεία σοι φαίνεται. τεκμαίρομαι δὲ ἐνθένδε· σχεδὸν γάρ τι οἶδα, ὦ Λάχης, ὅτι τῶν πάνυ καλῶν πραγμάτων ἡγῇ σὺ ἀνδρείαν εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** You do have to, if we're going to answer the question for ourselves. Now here's how it looks to me: I don't think every kind of endurance looks to you like courage. I infer this from the following. I'm fairly sure, Laches, that you consider courage one of the very fine things.
	LACHES εὖ μὲν οὖν ἴσθι ὅτι τῶν καλλίστων.	**LACHES** You can be sure it's one of the finest.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν ἡ μὲν μετὰ φρονήσεως καρτερία καλὴ κἀγαθή;	**SOCRATES** Now endurance joined with understanding is fine and good?
	LACHES πάνυ γε.	**LACHES** Certainly.
192d	**SOCRATES** τί δ' ἡ μετ' ἀφροσύνης; οὐ τοὐναντίον ταύτῃ βλαβερὰ καὶ κακοῦργος;	**SOCRATES** What about endurance joined with folly? Isn't that, on the contrary, harmful and destructive?
	LACHES ναί.	**LACHES** Yes.
	SOCRATES καλὸν οὖν τι φήσεις σὺ εἶναι τὸ τοιοῦτον, ὃν κακοῦργόν τε καὶ βλαβερόν;	**SOCRATES** Then will you call something like that fine, when it's destructive and harmful?
	LACHES οὔκουν δίκαιόν γε, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**LACHES** It wouldn't be right to, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἄρα τήν γε τοιαύτην καρτερίαν ἀνδρείαν ὁμολογήσεις εἶναι, ἐπειδήπερ οὐ καλή ἐστιν, ἡ δὲ ἀνδρεία καλόν ἐστιν.	**SOCRATES** So you won't agree that this kind of endurance is courage, since it isn't fine, and courage is something fine.
	LACHES ἀληθῆ λέγεις.	**LACHES** That's true.
	SOCRATES ἡ φρόνιμος ἄρα καρτερία κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον ἀνδρεία ἂν εἴη.	**SOCRATES** Then by your account it's wise endurance that would be courage.
	LACHES ἔοικεν.	**LACHES** It seems so.
192e	**SOCRATES** ἴδωμεν δή, ἡ εἰς τί φρόνιμος; ἢ ἡ εἰς ἅπαντα καὶ τὰ μεγάλα καὶ τὰ σμικρά; οἷον εἴ τις καρτερεῖ ἀναλίσκων ἀργύριον φρονίμως, εἰδὼς ὅτι ἀναλώσας πλέον ἐκτήσεται, τοῦτον ἀνδρεῖον καλοῖς ἄν;	**SOCRATES** Let's see, then: wise about what? About everything, great and small? For instance, suppose someone shows endurance in spending

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		money wisely, because he knows that by spending it he'll gain more. Would you call him brave?
	LACHES μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγε.	**LACHES** By Zeus, I wouldn't.
	SOCRATES ἀλλ' οἷον εἴ τις ἰατρὸς ὤν, περιπλευμονίᾳ τοῦ υἱέος ἐχομένου ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς καὶ δεομένου πιεῖν ἢ φαγεῖν [193a] δοῦναι, μὴ κάμπτοιτο ἀλλὰ καρτεροῖ;	**SOCRATES** Or suppose someone is a doctor, and his son or someone else has pneumonia and begs him for something to drink or eat, [193a] and he doesn't give in but endures?
193a	**LACHES** οὐδ' ὁπωστιοῦν οὐδ' αὕτη.	**LACHES** No, that's not courage at all either.
	SOCRATES ἀλλ' ἐν πολέμῳ καρτεροῦντα ἄνδρα καὶ ἐθέλοντα μάχεσθαι, φρονίμως λογιζόμενον, εἰδότα μὲν ὅτι βοηθήσουσιν ἄλλοι αὐτῷ, πρὸς ἐλάττους δὲ καὶ φαυλοτέρους μαχεῖται ἢ μεθ' ὧν αὐτός ἐστιν, ἔτι δὲ χωρία ἔχει κρείττω, τοῦτον τὸν μετὰ τῆς τοιαύτης φρονήσεως καὶ παρασκευῆς καρτεροῦντα ἀνδρειότερον ἂν φαίης ἢ τὸν ἐν τῷ ἐναντίῳ στρατοπέδῳ ἐθέλοντα ὑπομένειν τε καὶ καρτερεῖν;	**SOCRATES** Now take a man in war who endures and is willing to fight, on the basis of wise calculation. He knows that others will come to his aid, that he'll be fighting against fewer and weaker men than those on his side, and that he also holds the stronger position. Would you say this man, enduring with that kind of understanding and preparation, is braver than the man in the opposing camp who is willing to stand his ground and endure?
193b	**LACHES** τὸν ἐν τῷ ἐναντίῳ, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**LACHES** The man in the opposing camp, I'd say, Socrates.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ μὴν ἀφρονεστέρα γε ἡ τούτου ἢ ἡ τοῦ ἑτέρου καρτερία.	**SOCRATES** And yet his endurance is more foolish than the other man's.
	LACHES ἀληθῆ λέγεις.	**LACHES** That's true.
	SOCRATES καὶ τὸν μετ' ἐπιστήμης ἄρα ἱππικῆς καρτεροῦντα ἐν ἱππομαχίᾳ ἧττον φήσεις ἀνδρεῖον εἶναι ἢ τὸν ἄνευ ἐπιστήμης.	**SOCRATES** So you'll also say that the man who endures in a cavalry battle with a knowledge of horsemanship is less brave than the one without that knowledge.
	LACHES ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.	**LACHES** I think so.
	SOCRATES καὶ τὸν μετὰ σφενδονητικῆς ἢ τοξικῆς ἢ ἄλλης τινὸς τέχνης καρτεροῦντα.	**SOCRATES** And the same for the man who endures with skill at slinging or archery or some other art.
193c	**LACHES** πάνυ γε.	**LACHES** Certainly.
	SOCRATES καὶ ὅσοι ἂν ἐθέλωσιν εἰς φρέαρ καταβαίνοντες καὶ κολυμβῶντες καρτερεῖν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ἔργῳ, μὴ ὄντες δεινοί, ἢ ἔν τινι ἄλλῳ τοιούτῳ, ἀνδρειοτέρους φήσεις τῶν ταῦτα δεινῶν.	**SOCRATES** And people who are willing to go down into a well and dive, and to endure in that work, or in any other work like it, without being skilled at it—you'll say they're braver than those who are skilled at it.
	LACHES τί γὰρ ἄν τις ἄλλο φαίη, ὦ Σώκρατες;	**LACHES** What else could anyone say, Socrates?
	SOCRATES οὐδέν, εἴπερ οἴοιτό γε οὕτως.	**SOCRATES** Nothing, if that's what he thought.
	LACHES ἀλλὰ μὴν οἶμαί γε.	**LACHES** Well, it's what I think.

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	SOCRATES καὶ μήν που ἀφρονεστέρως γε, ὦ Λάχης, οἱ τοιοῦτοι κινδυνεύουσίν τε καὶ καρτεροῦσιν ἢ οἱ μετὰ τέχνης αὐτὸ πράττοντες.	**SOCRATES** And yet, Laches, people like that take risks and endure more foolishly than those who do it with skill.
	LACHES φαίνονται.	**LACHES** Apparently.
193d	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν αἰσχρὰ ἡ ἄφρων τόλμα τε καὶ καρτέρησις ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν ἐφάνη ἡμῖν οὖσα καὶ βλαβερά;	**SOCRATES** Now didn't foolish daring and endurance turn out earlier to be shameful and harmful?
	LACHES πάνυ γε.	**LACHES** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ἡ δέ γε ἀνδρεία ὡμολογεῖτο καλόν τι εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** Whereas courage was agreed to be something fine.
	LACHES ὡμολογεῖτο γάρ.	**LACHES** Yes, that was agreed.
	SOCRATES νῦν δ' αὖ πάλιν φαμὲν ἐκεῖνο τὸ αἰσχρόν, τὴν ἄφρονα καρτέρησιν, ἀνδρείαν εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** But now we're saying the opposite, that the shameful thing, foolish endurance, is courage.
	LACHES ἐοίκαμεν.	**LACHES** It seems we are.
	SOCRATES καλῶς οὖν σοι δοκοῦμεν λέγειν;	**SOCRATES** So do you think we're speaking well?
	LACHES μὰ τὸν Δί', ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐμοὶ μὲν οὔ.	**LACHES** By Zeus, Socrates, I certainly don't.
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἄρα που κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον δωριστὶ ἡρμόσμεθα [193e] ἐγώ τε καὶ σύ, ὦ Λάχης· τὰ γὰρ ἔργα οὐ συμφωνεῖ ἡμῖν τοῖς λόγοις. ἔργῳ μὲν γάρ, ὡς ἔοικε, φαίη ἄν τις ἡμᾶς ἀνδρείας μετέχειν, λόγῳ δ', ὡς ἐγῷμαι, οὐκ ἄν, εἰ νῦν ἡμῶν ἀκούσειε διαλεγομένων.	**SOCRATES** So it seems, Laches, that by your own account you and I aren't tuned to the Dorian mode. [193e] Our deeds aren't in harmony with our words. In deed, it seems, someone might say we have a share of courage. But in word, I imagine, he wouldn't, if he heard us talking just now.
193e	**LACHES** ἀληθέστατα λέγεις.	**LACHES** That's perfectly true.
	SOCRATES τί οὖν; δοκεῖ καλὸν εἶναι οὕτως ἡμᾶς διακεῖσθαι;	**SOCRATES** Well then? Do you think it's a fine thing for us to be in this state?
	LACHES οὐδ' ὁπωστιοῦν.	**LACHES** Not in the least.
	SOCRATES βούλει οὖν ᾧ λέγομεν πειθώμεθα τό γε τοσοῦτον;	**SOCRATES** Then shall we obey what we're saying, at least this far?
	LACHES τὸ ποῖον δὴ τοῦτο, καὶ τίνι τούτῳ;	**LACHES** How far? And obey what?
194a	**SOCRATES** τῷ λόγῳ ὃς καρτερεῖν κελεύει. εἰ οὖν βούλει, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ τῇ ζητήσει ἐπιμείνωμέν τε καὶ καρτερήσωμεν, ἵνα καὶ μὴ ἡμῶν αὐτὴ ἡ ἀνδρεία καταγελάσῃ, ὅτι οὐκ ἀνδρείως αὐτὴν ζητοῦμεν, εἰ ἄρα πολλάκις αὐτὴ ἡ καρτέρησίς ἐστιν ἀνδρεία.	**SOCRATES** The argument that tells us to endure. So, if you're willing, let's stand firm in our search and endure. That way courage itself won't laugh at us for not searching for it courageously, in case endurance turns out after all to be courage.
	LACHES ἐγὼ μὲν ἕτοιμος, ὦ Σώκρατες, μὴ προαφίστασθαι. καίτοι ἀήθης γ' εἰμὶ τῶν τοιούτων λόγων· ἀλλά τίς με καὶ φιλονικία εἴληφεν πρὸς τὰ εἰρημένα, καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀγανακτῶ [194b] εἰ οὑτωσὶ ἃ νοῶ μὴ οἷός τ' εἰμὶ	**LACHES** I'm ready not to quit before the end, Socrates. Mind you, I'm not used to arguments like this. But a kind of competitive spirit has taken hold of me over what's been said, and I'm honestly

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	εἰπεῖν. νοεῖν μὲν γὰρ ἔμοιγε δοκῶ περὶ ἀνδρείας ὅτι ἔστιν, οὐκ οἶδα δ' ὅπῃ με ἄρτι διέφυγεν, ὥστε μὴ συλλαβεῖν τῷ λόγῳ αὐτὴν καὶ εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἔστιν.	annoyed [194b] that I can't put what I think into words this way. I do seem to myself to understand what courage is. But somehow it slipped away from me just now, so I couldn't pin it down in words and say what it is.
194b	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν, ὦ φίλε, τὸν ἀγαθὸν κυνηγέτην μεταθεῖν χρὴ καὶ μὴ ἀνιέναι.	**SOCRATES** Well, my friend, a good hunter has to keep up the chase and not give up.
	LACHES παντάπασι μὲν οὖν.	**LACHES** Absolutely.
	SOCRATES βούλει οὖν καὶ Νικίαν τόνδε παρακαλῶμεν ἐπὶ τὸ κυνηγέσιον, εἴ τι ἡμῶν εὐπορώτερός ἐστιν;	**SOCRATES** Then shall we call Nicias here to join the hunt too, in case he's better at finding a way than we are?
194c	**LACHES** βούλομαι· πῶς γὰρ οὔ;	**LACHES** Yes, let's. Why not?

NICIAS' DEFINITION: KNOWLEDGE

Nicias cites Socrates: courage is knowing what is to be feared and what is to be dared.

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	SOCRATES ἴθι δή, ὦ Νικία, ἀνδράσι φίλοις χειμαζομένοις ἐν λόγῳ καὶ ἀποροῦσιν βοήθησον, εἴ τινα ἔχεις δύναμιν. τὰ μὲν γὰρ δὴ ἡμέτερα ὁρᾷς ὡς ἄπορα· σὺ δ' εἰπὼν ὅτι ἡγῇ ἀνδρείαν εἶναι, ἡμᾶς τε τῆς ἀπορίας ἔκλυσαι καὶ αὐτὸς ἃ νοεῖς τῷ λόγῳ βεβαίωσαι.	**SOCRATES** Come on, then, Nicias. Your friends are caught in a storm of argument and don't know where to turn. Help us, if you have any power to. You can see how stuck we are. Tell us what you think courage is, and free us from our perplexity. At the same time you'll make your own thinking secure by putting it into words.
	NICIAS δοκεῖτε τοίνυν μοι πάλαι οὐ καλῶς, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὁρίζεσθαι τὴν ἀνδρείαν· ὃ γὰρ ἐγὼ σοῦ ἤδη καλῶς λέγοντος ἀκήκοα, τούτῳ οὐ χρῆσθε.	**NICIAS** Well, Socrates, it seems to me you two have been defining courage badly for some time now. You're not making use of something I've heard you say, and say well.
	SOCRATES ποίῳ δή, ὦ Νικία;	**SOCRATES** What's that, Nicias?
194d	**NICIAS** πολλάκις ἀκήκοά σου λέγοντος ὅτι ταῦτα ἀγαθὸς ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἅπερ σοφός, ἃ δὲ ἀμαθής, ταῦτα δὲ κακός.	**NICIAS** I've often heard you say that each of us is good at the things he's wise about, and bad at the things he's ignorant of.
	SOCRATES ἀληθῆ μέντοι νὴ Δία λέγεις, ὦ Νικία.	**SOCRATES** By Zeus, Nicias, that's true.
	NICIAS οὐκοῦν εἴπερ ὁ ἀνδρεῖος ἀγαθός, δῆλον ὅτι σοφός ἐστιν.	**NICIAS** So if the brave man is good, clearly he's wise.
	SOCRATES ἤκουσας, ὦ Λάχης;	**SOCRATES** Did you hear that, Laches?
	LACHES ἔγωγε, καὶ οὐ σφόδρα γε μανθάνω ὃ λέγει.	**LACHES** I did, and I don't really understand what he means.
	SOCRATES ἀλλ' ἐγὼ δοκῶ μανθάνειν, καί μοι δοκεῖ ἀνὴρ σοφίαν τινὰ τὴν ἀνδρείαν λέγειν.	**SOCRATES** But I think I do. I think the man is saying that courage is a kind of wisdom.
	LACHES ποίαν, ὦ Σώκρατες, σοφίαν;	**LACHES** What kind of wisdom, Socrates?

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194e	**SOCRATES** οὐκοῦν τόνδε τοῦτο ἐρωτᾷς;	**SOCRATES** Isn't that a question for him?
	LACHES ἔγωγε.	**LACHES** It is.
	SOCRATES ἴθι δή, αὐτῷ εἰπέ, ὦ Νικία, ποία σοφία ἀνδρεία ἂν εἴη κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον. οὐ γάρ που ἥ γε αὐλητική.	**SOCRATES** Go on, then, Nicias, tell him what kind of wisdom courage would be on your account. Surely it isn't the wisdom of playing the pipes.
	NICIAS οὐδαμῶς.	**NICIAS** Not at all.
	SOCRATES οὐδὲ μὴν ἡ κιθαριστική.	**SOCRATES** Nor of playing the lyre.
	NICIAS οὐ δῆτα.	**NICIAS** Certainly not.
	SOCRATES ἀλλὰ τίς δὴ αὕτη ἢ τίνος ἐπιστήμη;	**SOCRATES** Then what is it? Knowledge of what?
	LACHES πάνυ μὲν οὖν ὀρθῶς αὐτὸν ἐρωτᾷς, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ εἰπέτω γε τίνα φησὶν αὐτὴν εἶναι.	**LACHES** You're asking him exactly the right question, Socrates. Let him tell us what he says it is.
	NICIAS ταύτην ἔγωγε, ὦ Λάχης, τὴν τῶν δεινῶν καὶ θαρραλέων [195a] ἐπιστήμην καὶ ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν.	**NICIAS** This, Laches: the knowledge of what is to be feared and what is to be dared, [195a] in war and in everything else.
195a	**LACHES** ὡς ἄτοπα λέγει, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**LACHES** What a strange thing to say, Socrates!
	SOCRATES πρὸς τί τοῦτ' εἶπες βλέψας, ὦ Λάχης;	**SOCRATES** What did you have in mind when you said that, Laches?
	LACHES πρὸς ὅτι; χωρὶς δήπου σοφία ἐστὶν ἀνδρείας.	**LACHES** What did I have in mind? Wisdom is surely something separate from courage.
	SOCRATES οὔκουν φησί γε Νικίας.	**SOCRATES** Nicias, at any rate, says it isn't.
	LACHES οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία· ταῦτά τοι καὶ ληρεῖ.	**LACHES** No, by Zeus, he doesn't. That's exactly why he's talking nonsense.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν διδάσκωμεν αὐτὸν ἀλλὰ μὴ λοιδορῶμεν.	**SOCRATES** Then let's teach him instead of abusing him.
	NICIAS οὔκ, ἀλλά μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, Λάχης ἐπιθυμεῖν κἀμὲ φανῆναι μηδὲν λέγοντα, ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἄρτι τοιοῦτός [195b] τις ἐφάνη.	**NICIAS** No, Socrates. It seems to me Laches wants me to be shown up as saying nothing too, since he was just shown up [195b] that way himself.
195b	**LACHES** πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ὦ Νικία, καὶ πειράσομαί γε ἀποφῆναι· οὐδὲν γὰρ λέγεις. ἐπεὶ αὐτίκα ἐν ταῖς νόσοις οὐχ οἱ ἰατροὶ τὰ δεινὰ ἐπίστανται; ἢ οἱ ἀνδρεῖοι δοκοῦσί σοι ἐπίστασθαι; ἢ τοὺς ἰατροὺς σὺ ἀνδρείους καλεῖς;	**LACHES** Absolutely, Nicias, and I'll try to prove it, because you're saying nothing. Take an obvious case. In illness, isn't it doctors who know what's to be feared? Or do you think it's the brave who know? Or do you call doctors brave?
	NICIAS οὐδ' ὁπωστιοῦν.	**NICIAS** Not in the least.
	LACHES οὐδέ γε τοὺς γεωργοὺς οἶμαι. καίτοι τά γε ἐν τῇ γεωργίᾳ δεινὰ οὗτοι δήπου ἐπίστανται, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι δημιουργοὶ ἅπαντες τὰ ἐν ταῖς αὑτῶν τέχναις δεινά τε καὶ [195c] θαρραλέα ἴσασιν· ἀλλ' οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον οὗτοι ἀνδρεῖοί εἰσιν.	**LACHES** Nor farmers either, I suppose. And yet they surely know what's to be feared in farming. All the other craftsmen know what's to be feared

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and [195c] what's to be dared in their own crafts. But that doesn't make them any braver.

195c **SOCRATES** τί δοκεῖ Λάχης λέγειν, ὦ Νικία; ἔοικεν μέντοι λέγειν τι.

SOCRATES What do you think Laches is saying, Nicias? He does seem to be saying something.

NICIAS καὶ γὰρ λέγει γέ τι, οὐ μέντοι ἀληθές γε.

NICIAS Yes, he's saying something. It just isn't true.

SOCRATES πῶς δή;

SOCRATES How so?

NICIAS ὅτι οἴεται τοὺς ἰατροὺς πλέον τι εἰδέναι περὶ τοὺς κάμνοντας ἢ τὸ ὑγιεινὸν εἰπεῖν οἷόν τε καὶ νοσῶδες. οἱ δὲ δήπου τοσοῦτον μόνον ἴσασιν· εἰ δὲ δεινόν τῳ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ ὑγιαίνειν μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ κάμνειν, ἡγῇ σὺ τουτί, ὦ Λάχης, τοὺς ἰατροὺς ἐπίστασθαι; ἢ οὐ πολλοῖς οἴει ἐκ τῆς νόσου ἄμεινον εἶναι μὴ ἀναστῆναι ἢ ἀναστῆναι; τοῦτο γὰρ εἰπέ· [195d] σὺ πᾶσι φῂς ἄμεινον εἶναι ζῆν καὶ οὐ πολλοῖς κρεῖττον τεθνάναι;

NICIAS Because he thinks doctors know something more about the sick than how to tell what's healthy and what's diseased. Surely that's all they know. If for someone being healthy is more to be feared than being sick, do you think the doctors know that, Laches? Or don't you think that for many people it would be better not to get up from their sickness than to get up? Tell me this. [195d] Do you say it's better for everyone to live, and that for many it isn't better to be dead?

195d **LACHES** οἶμαι ἔγωγε τοῦτό γε.

LACHES I do think that much, at least.

NICIAS οἷς οὖν τεθνάναι λυσιτελεῖ, ταὐτὰ οἴει δεινὰ εἶναι καὶ οἷς ζῆν;

NICIAS Then do you think the same things are to be feared by those who'd be better off dead and by those who'd be better off alive?

LACHES οὐκ ἔγωγε.

LACHES I don't.

NICIAS ἀλλὰ τοῦτο δὴ σὺ δίδως τοῖς ἰατροῖς γιγνώσκειν ἢ ἄλλῳ τινὶ δημιουργῷ πλὴν τῷ τῶν δεινῶν καὶ μὴ δεινῶν ἐπιστήμονι, ὃν ἐγὼ ἀνδρεῖον καλῶ;

NICIAS Well, do you grant the knowledge of this to doctors, or to any other craftsman? Or only to the one who knows what is to be feared and what isn't, the man I call brave?

SOCRATES κατανοεῖς, ὦ Λάχης, ὅτι λέγει;

SOCRATES Do you see what he means, Laches?

195e **LACHES** ἔγωγε, ὅτι γε τοὺς μάντεις καλεῖ τοὺς ἀνδρείους· τίς γὰρ δὴ ἄλλος εἴσεται ὅτῳ ἄμεινον ζῆν ἢ τεθνάναι; καίτοι σύ, ὦ Νικία, πότερον ὁμολογεῖς μάντις εἶναι ἢ οὔτε μάντις οὔτε ἀνδρεῖος;

LACHES I do. He's calling seers the brave ones. Who else will know whether it's better for someone to live or to die? So tell me, Nicias, which is it? Do you admit to being a seer, or are you neither a seer nor brave?

NICIAS τί δέ; μάντει αὖ οἴει προσήκει τὰ δεινὰ γιγνώσκειν καὶ τὰ θαρραλέα;

NICIAS What? So now you think it's the seer's business to know what's to be feared and what's to be dared?

LACHES ἔγωγε· τίνι γὰρ ἄλλῳ;

LACHES I do. Whose else?

NICIAS ὦι ἐγὼ λέγω πολὺ μᾶλλον, ὦ βέλτιστε· ἐπεὶ μάντιν γε τὰ σημεῖα μόνον δεῖ γιγνώσκειν τῶν ἐσομένων, εἴτε τῳ θάνατος εἴτε νόσος εἴτε ἀποβολὴ χρημάτων ἔσται, [196a] εἴτε νίκη εἴτε ἧττα ἢ πολέμου ἢ καὶ ἄλλης τινὸς

NICIAS Far more the man I'm talking about, my good friend. A seer only has to know the signs of what's going to happen: whether someone will meet with death, or illness, or loss of property, [196a] or victory or defeat, in war or in any other contest.

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	ἀγωνίας· ὅτι δέ τῳ ἄμεινον τούτων ἢ παθεῖν ἢ μὴ παθεῖν, τί μᾶλλον μάντει προσήκει κρῖναι ἢ ἄλλῳ ὁτῳοῦν;	But whether it's better for someone to suffer these things or not, why should judging that be the seer's business any more than anyone else's?
196a	**LACHES** ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τούτου οὐ μανθάνω, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι βούλεται λέγειν· οὔτε γὰρ μάντιν οὔτε ἰατρὸν οὔτε ἄλλον οὐδένα δηλοῖ ὄντινα λέγει τὸν ἀνδρεῖον, εἰ μὴ εἰ θεόν τινα λέγει αὐτὸν εἶναι. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν φαίνεται Νικίας οὐκ ἐθέλειν [196b] γενναίως ὁμολογεῖν ὅτι οὐδὲν λέγει, ἀλλὰ στρέφεται ἄνω καὶ κάτω ἐπικρυπτόμενος τὴν αὑτοῦ ἀπορίαν· καίτοι κἂν ἡμεῖς οἷοί τε ἦμεν ἄρτι ἐγώ τε καὶ σὺ τοιαῦτα στρέφεσθαι, εἰ ἐβουλόμεθα μὴ δοκεῖν ἐναντία ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς λέγειν. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐν δικαστηρίῳ ἡμῖν οἱ λόγοι ἦσαν, εἶχεν ἄν τινα λόγον ταῦτα ποιεῖν· νῦν δὲ τί ἄν τις ἐν συνουσίᾳ τοιᾷδε μάτην κενοῖς λόγοις αὐτὸς αὑτὸν κοσμοῖ;	**LACHES** Well, I don't understand what he's getting at, Socrates. He doesn't make clear that the brave man he means is a seer, or a doctor, or anyone else at all, unless he's saying it's some god. It looks to me as if Nicias isn't willing [196b] to admit like a man of honor that he's saying nothing. Instead he twists this way and that to hide his own perplexity. Yet you and I could have twisted around like that just now, if we'd wanted to avoid seeming to contradict ourselves. If we were arguing in a law court, there might be some point in doing this. But in a gathering like this one, why would anyone dress himself up for nothing with empty words?
196c	**SOCRATES** οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, ὦ Λάχης· ἀλλ' ὁρῶμεν μὴ Νικίας οἴεταί τι λέγειν καὶ οὐ λόγου ἕνεκα ταῦτα λέγει. αὐτοῦ οὖν σαφέστερον πυθώμεθα τί ποτε νοεῖ· καὶ ἐάν τι φαίνηται λέγων, συγχωρησόμεθα, εἰ δὲ μή, διδάξομεν.	**SOCRATES** I don't see any point either, Laches. But let's make sure Nicias doesn't think he's saying something real, and isn't just saying it for argument's sake. Let's ask him more clearly what exactly he has in mind. If he turns out to be saying something, we'll agree with him. If not, we'll teach him.
	LACHES σὺ τοίνυν, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰ βούλει πυνθάνεσθαι, πυνθάνου· ἐγὼ δ' ἴσως ἱκανῶς πέπυσμαι.	**LACHES** You ask him, then, Socrates, if you want to. I've probably asked enough.
	SOCRATES ἀλλ' οὐδέν με κωλύει· κοινὴ γὰρ ἔσται ἡ πύστις ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ τε καὶ σοῦ.	**SOCRATES** Nothing's stopping me. The questioning will be on behalf of us both.
	LACHES πάνυ μὲν οὖν.	**LACHES** Certainly.
	SOCRATES λέγε δή μοι, ὦ Νικία—μᾶλλον δ' ἡμῖν· κοινούμεθα [196d] γὰρ ἐγώ τε καὶ Λάχης τὸν λόγον—τὴν ἀνδρείαν ἐπιστήμην φῂς δεινῶν τε καὶ θαρραλέων εἶναι;	**SOCRATES** Tell me, then, Nicias—or rather tell us, since Laches and I are partners [196d] in this argument—do you say courage is knowledge of what is to be feared and what is to be dared?
196d	**NICIAS** ἔγωγε.	**NICIAS** I do.
	SOCRATES τοῦτο δὲ οὐ παντὸς δὴ εἶναι ἀνδρὸς γνῶναι, ὁπότε γε μήτε ἰατρὸς μήτε μάντις αὐτὸ γνώσεται μηδὲ ἀνδρεῖος ἔσται, ἐὰν μὴ αὐτὴν ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστήμην προσλάβῃ· οὐχ οὕτως ἔλεγες;	**SOCRATES** And that this isn't something every man can know, since neither a doctor nor a seer will know it, nor will he be brave, unless he acquires this particular knowledge as well? Isn't that what you were saying?
	NICIAS οὕτω μὲν οὖν.	**NICIAS** Yes, it is.
	SOCRATES κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν ἄρα τῷ ὄντι οὐκ ἂν πᾶσα ὗς γνοίη οὐδ' ἂν ἀνδρεία γένοιτο.	**SOCRATES** So really, as the proverb says, it isn't something "any pig would know," and no pig could become brave.[11]

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	NICIAS οὔ μοι δοκεῖ.	**NICIAS** I don't think so.
196e	**SOCRATES** δῆλον δή, ὦ Νικία, ὅτι οὐδὲ τὴν Κρομμυωνίαν ὗν πιστεύεις σύ γε ἀνδρείαν γεγονέναι. τοῦτο δὲ λέγω οὐ παίζων, ἀλλ' ἀναγκαῖον οἶμαι τῷ ταῦτα λέγοντι μηδενὸς θηρίου ἀποδέχεσθαι ἀνδρείαν, ἢ συγχωρεῖν θηρίον τι οὕτω σοφὸν εἶναι, ὥστε ἃ ὀλίγοι ἀνθρώπων ἴσασι διὰ τὸ χαλεπὰ εἶναι γνῶναι, ταῦτα λέοντα ἢ πάρδαλιν ἤ τινα κάπρον φάναι εἰδέναι· ἀλλ' ἀνάγκη ὁμοίως λέοντα καὶ ἔλαφον καὶ ταῦρον καὶ πίθηκον πρὸς ἀνδρείαν φάναι πεφυκέναι τὸν τιθέμενον ἀνδρείαν τοῦθ' ὅπερ σὺ τίθεσαι.	**SOCRATES** Clearly, then, Nicias, you don't believe even the Crommyonian sow was brave. I'm not joking. I think anyone who says this has to deny courage to every wild animal. Otherwise he has to grant that some animal is so wise that a lion, or a leopard, or some boar knows what few human beings know, because it's so hard to know. Anyone who defines courage as you do has to say that a lion and a deer, a bull and a monkey, are equally suited by nature for courage.[12]
197a	**LACHES** νὴ τοὺς θεούς, καὶ εὖ γε λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες. καὶ ἡμῖν ὡς ἀληθῶς τοῦτο ἀπόκριναι, ὦ Νικία, πότερον σοφώτερα φῂς ἡμῶν ταῦτα εἶναι τὰ θηρία, ἃ πάντες ὁμολογοῦμεν ἀνδρεῖα εἶναι, ἢ πᾶσιν ἐναντιούμενος τολμᾷς μηδὲ ἀνδρεῖα αὐτὰ καλεῖν;	**LACHES** By the gods, that's well said, Socrates. Give us an honest answer, Nicias. Do you say these animals, which we all agree are brave, are wiser than we are? Or do you dare to go against everyone and not even call them brave?
	NICIAS οὐ γάρ τι, ὦ Λάχης, ἔγωγε ἀνδρεῖα καλῶ οὔτε θηρία οὔτε ἄλλο οὐδὲν τὸ τὰ δεινὰ ὑπὸ ἀνοίας μὴ φοβούμενον, ἀλλ' ἄφοβον καὶ μῶρον· ἢ καὶ τὰ παιδία πάντα οἴει με [197b] ἀνδρεῖα καλεῖν, ἃ δι' ἄνοιαν οὐδὲν δέδοικεν; ἀλλ' οἶμαι τὸ ἄφοβον καὶ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον οὐ ταὐτόν ἐστιν. ἐγὼ δὲ ἀνδρείας μὲν καὶ προμηθίας πάνυ τισὶν ὀλίγοις οἶμαι μετεῖναι, θρασύτητος δὲ καὶ τόλμης καὶ τοῦ ἀφόβου μετὰ ἀπρομηθίας πάνυ πολλοῖς καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν καὶ παίδων καὶ θηρίων. ταῦτ' οὖν ἃ σὺ καλεῖς ἀνδρεῖα καὶ οἱ πολλοί, ἐγὼ [197c] θρασέα καλῶ, ἀνδρεῖα δὲ τὰ φρόνιμα περὶ ὧν λέγω.	**NICIAS** No, Laches. I don't call animals brave, or anything else that has no fear of what's to be feared because it lacks sense. I call it fearless and stupid. Or do you think I call all children [197b] brave too, who are afraid of nothing because they have no sense? No. I think being fearless and being brave aren't the same thing. In my view very few people have courage and forethought. But a great many have boldness, daring, and fearlessness without forethought: men, women, children, and animals. So the actions that you and most people call brave, I [197c] call bold. The brave ones are the wise ones I'm talking about.
197c	**LACHES** θέασαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὡς εὖ ὅδε ἑαυτὸν δή, ὡς οἴεται, κοσμεῖ τῷ λόγῳ· οὓς δὲ πάντες ὁμολογοῦσιν ἀνδρείους εἶναι, τούτους ἀποστερεῖν ἐπιχειρεῖ ταύτης τῆς τιμῆς.	**LACHES** Look, Socrates, how nicely he dresses himself up with this argument—or so he thinks. And the men everyone agrees are brave, he's trying to rob of that honor.
	NICIAS οὔκουν σέ γε, ὦ Λάχης, ἀλλὰ θάρρει· φημὶ γάρ σε εἶναι σοφόν, καὶ Λάμαχόν γε, εἴπερ ἐστὲ ἀνδρεῖοι, καὶ ἄλλους γε συχνοὺς Ἀθηναίων.	**NICIAS** Not you, Laches—don't worry. I say you're wise, and Lamachus too, given that you're both brave, and plenty of other Athenians as well.[13]
	LACHES οὐδὲν ἐρῶ πρὸς ταῦτα, ἔχων εἰπεῖν, ἵνα μή με φῇς ὡς ἀληθῶς Αἰξωνέα εἶναι.	**LACHES** I won't answer that, though I could, so you won't say I really am a man from Aixone.[14]
197d	**SOCRATES** μηδέ γε εἴπῃς, ὦ Λάχης· καὶ γάρ μοι δοκεῖς οὐδὲ ᾐσθῆσθαι ὅτι ταύτην τὴν σοφίαν παρὰ Δάμωνος τοῦ	**SOCRATES** Don't say anything, Laches. In fact I don't think you've even noticed where he got this

11 The proverb "any pig would know it" was said of something obvious to everyone.
12 The Crommyonian sow was a monstrous wild sow near Crommyon, on the Isthmus of Corinth, killed by the hero Theseus.
13 Lamachus was an Athenian general, later Nicias' fellow commander on the Sicilian expedition of 415 BC.
14 Aixone was an Attic district whose people had a reputation for abusive talk.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	ἡμετέρου ἑταίρου παρείληφεν, ὁ δὲ Δάμων τῷ προδίκῳ πολλὰ πλησιάζει, ὃς δὴ δοκεῖ τῶν σοφιστῶν κάλλιστα τὰ τοιαῦτα ὀνόματα διαιρεῖν.	wisdom. It's from our friend Damon, and Damon spends a lot of time with Prodicus, who's thought to be the best of the sophists at drawing distinctions between words like these.[15]
	LACHES καὶ γὰρ πρέπει, ὦ Σώκρατες, σοφιστῇ τὰ τοιαῦτα μᾶλλον κομψεύεσθαι ἢ ἀνδρὶ ὃν ἡ πόλις ἀξιοῖ αὑτῆς προεστάναι.	**LACHES** Well, Socrates, that sort of hair-splitting suits a sophist better than a man the city thinks fit to lead it.

KNOWLEDGE OF ALL GOODS AND EVILS

Socrates shows that such knowledge would be the whole of excellence, not a part of it.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
197e	**SOCRATES** πρέπει μέν που, ὦ μακάριε, τῶν μεγίστων προστατοῦντι μεγίστης φρονήσεως μετέχειν· δοκεῖ δέ μοι Νικίας ἄξιος εἶναι ἐπισκέψεως, ὅποι ποτὲ βλέπων τοὔνομα τοῦτο τίθησι τὴν ἀνδρείαν.	**SOCRATES** Surely, my dear friend, it suits a man in charge of the greatest affairs to have the greatest understanding. But I think Nicias deserves to be examined, to see what he has in view when he gives the name courage to this.
	LACHES αὐτὸς τοίνυν σκόπει, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**LACHES** Examine him yourself, then, Socrates.
	SOCRATES τοῦτο μέλλω ποιεῖν, ὦ ἄριστε· μὴ μέντοι οἷου με ἀφήσειν σε τῆς κοινωνίας τοῦ λόγου, ἀλλὰ πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν καὶ συσκόπει τὰ λεγόμενα.	**SOCRATES** That's what I intend to do, my good friend. But don't think I'll let you off your share in the argument. Pay attention and examine what's said along with me.
	LACHES ταῦτα δὴ ἔστω, εἰ δοκεῖ χρῆναι.	**LACHES** All right, if you think I have to.
198a	**SOCRATES** ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ. σὺ δέ, Νικία, λέγε ἡμῖν πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς· οἶσθ' ὅτι τὴν ἀνδρείαν κατ' ἀρχὰς τοῦ λόγου ἐσκοποῦμεν ὡς μέρος ἀρετῆς σκοποῦντες;	**SOCRATES** I do. Now, Nicias, tell us again from the beginning. You know that at the start of the discussion we were examining courage as a part of excellence?
	NICIAS πάνυ γε.	**NICIAS** Certainly.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν καὶ σὺ τοῦτο ἀπεκρίνω ὡς μόριον, ὄντων δὴ καὶ ἄλλων μερῶν, ἃ σύμπαντα ἀρετὴ κέκληται;	**SOCRATES** And you too answered on the basis that it's a part, and that there are other parts as well, which all together are called excellence?
	NICIAS πῶς γὰρ οὔ;	**NICIAS** Of course.
	SOCRATES ἆρ' οὖν ἅπερ ἐγὼ καὶ σὺ ταῦτα λέγεις; ἐγὼ δὲ καλῶ πρὸς ἀνδρείᾳ σωφροσύνην καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἄλλ' ἄττα τοιαῦτα. οὐ καὶ σύ;	**SOCRATES** Then do you mean the same parts I do? Besides courage I count moderation, justice, and a few others of that kind. Don't you?
198b	**NICIAS** πάνυ μὲν οὖν.	**NICIAS** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ἔχε δή. ταῦτα μὲν γὰρ ὁμολογοῦμεν, περὶ δὲ τῶν δεινῶν καὶ θαρραλέων σκεψώμεθα, ὅπως μὴ σὺ μὲν ἄλλ' ἄττα ἡγῇ, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄλλα. ἃ μὲν οὖν ἡμεῖς ἡγούμεθα, φράσομέν σοι· σὺ δὲ ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῇς, διδάξεις. ἡγούμεθα	**SOCRATES** Hold on, then. We agree on that. Now let's look into what's to be feared and what's to be dared, so you don't think one thing and we another. We'll tell you what we think, and if you don't

15 Prodicus of Ceos was a sophist famous for distinguishing between words of similar meaning.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	δ' ἡμεῖς δεινὰ μὲν εἶναι ἃ καὶ δέος παρέχει, θαρραλέα δὲ ἃ μὴ δέος παρέχει—δέος δὲ παρέχει οὐ τὰ γεγονότα οὐδὲ τὰ παρόντα τῶν κακῶν, ἀλλὰ τὰ προσδοκώμενα· δέος γὰρ εἶναι προσδοκίαν μέλλοντος κακοῦ—ἢ οὐχ οὕτω καὶ συνδοκεῖ, ὦ Λάχης;	agree, you'll teach us. We think that what's to be feared is whatever causes fear, and what's to be dared is whatever doesn't. And fear is caused not by evils that have already happened or are present, but by evils that are expected, since fear is the expectation of an evil to come. Or don't you share this view, Laches?
198c	**LACHES** πάνυ γε σφόδρα, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**LACHES** Very much so, Socrates.
	SOCRATES τὰ μὲν ἡμέτερα τοίνυν, ὦ Νικία, ἀκούεις, ὅτι δεινὰ μὲν τὰ μέλλοντα κακά φαμεν εἶναι, θαρραλέα δὲ τὰ μὴ κακὰ ἢ ἀγαθὰ μέλλοντα· σὺ δὲ ταύτῃ ἢ ἄλλῃ περὶ τούτων λέγεις;	**SOCRATES** There's our view, then, Nicias. We say that what's to be feared is evils to come, and what's to be dared is things to come that are either not evil or good. Do you put it this way, or some other way?
	NICIAS ταύτῃ ἔγωγε.	**NICIAS** This way.
	SOCRATES τούτων δέ γε τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἀνδρείαν προσαγορεύεις;	**SOCRATES** And it's knowledge of these that you call courage?
	NICIAS κομιδῇ γε.	**NICIAS** Exactly.
	SOCRATES ἔτι δὴ τὸ τρίτον σκεψώμεθα εἰ συνδοκεῖ σοί τε καὶ ἡμῖν.	**SOCRATES** Then let's look at a third point too, and see whether you and we agree on it.
	NICIAS τὸ ποῖον δὴ τοῦτο;	**NICIAS** What point is that?
198d	**SOCRATES** ἐγὼ δὴ φράσω. δοκεῖ γὰρ δὴ ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷδε, περὶ ὅσων ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη, οὐκ ἄλλη μὲν εἶναι περὶ γεγονότος εἰδέναι ὅπῃ γέγονεν, ἄλλη δὲ περὶ γιγνομένων ὅπῃ γίγνεται, ἄλλη δὲ ὅπῃ ἂν κάλλιστα γένοιτο καὶ γενήσεται τὸ μήπω γεγονός, ἀλλ' ἡ αὐτή.	**SOCRATES** I'll explain. My friend here and I think that, for any subject there's knowledge of, it isn't one knowledge that knows how past things happened, another how present things are happening, and another how what hasn't happened yet might best happen and will happen. It's the same knowledge.
	οἷον περὶ τὸ ὑγιεινὸν εἰς ἅπαντας τοὺς χρόνους οὐκ ἄλλη τις ἢ ἰατρική, μία οὖσα, ἐφορᾷ καὶ γιγνόμενα καὶ γεγονότα καὶ γενησόμενα ὅπῃ [198e] γενήσεται· καὶ περὶ τὰ ἐκ τῆς γῆς αὖ φυόμενα ἡ γεωργία ὡσαύτως ἔχει· καὶ δήπου τὰ περὶ τὸν πόλεμον αὐτοὶ ἂν μαρτυρήσαιτε ὅτι ἡ στρατηγία κάλλιστα προμηθεῖται τά τε ἄλλα καὶ περὶ τὸ μέλλον ἔσεσθαι, οὐδὲ τῇ μαντικῇ οἴεται δεῖν ὑπηρετεῖν ἀλλὰ ἄρχειν, ὡς εἰδυῖα κάλλιον [199a] τὰ περὶ τὸν πόλεμον καὶ γιγνόμενα καὶ γενησόμενα· καὶ ὁ νόμος οὕτω τάττει, μὴ τὸν μάντιν τοῦ στρατηγοῦ ἄρχειν, ἀλλὰ τὸν στρατηγὸν τοῦ μάντεως. φήσομεν ταῦτα, ὦ Λάχης;	For example, where health is concerned, at every point in time there's no knowledge other than medicine. Being one, it oversees what is happening, what has happened, and what will happen, and how [198e] it will happen. Farming is the same with what grows from the earth. And as for warfare, you two would surely testify yourselves that generalship has the finest foresight about everything, and especially about what's going to happen. It doesn't think it ought to serve the seer's art but to rule it, because it knows better [199a] the affairs of war, both what is happening and what will happen. And the law lays it down this way: the seer doesn't command the general; the general commands the seer. Shall we say this, Laches?
199a	**LACHES** φήσομεν.	**LACHES** We shall.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	SOCRATES τί δέ; σὺ ἡμῖν, ὦ Νικία, σύμφῃς περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τὴν αὐτὴν ἐπιστήμην καὶ ἐσομένων καὶ γιγνομένων καὶ γεγονότων ἐπαΐειν;	**SOCRATES** Well, Nicias? Do you agree with us that the same knowledge understands the same things, whether they're future, present, or past?
	NICIAS ἔγωγε· δοκεῖ γάρ μοι οὕτως, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**NICIAS** I do. That's how it seems to me, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐκοῦν, ὦ ἄριστε, καὶ ἡ ἀνδρεία τῶν δεινῶν ἐπιστήμη [199b] ἐστὶν καὶ θαρραλέων, ὡς φῄς· ἦ γάρ;	**SOCRATES** Then, my good friend, courage is knowledge of what is to be feared [199b] and what is to be dared, as you say. Isn't that so?
199b	**NICIAS** ναί.	**NICIAS** Yes.
	SOCRATES τὰ δὲ δεινὰ ὡμολόγηται καὶ τὰ θαρραλέα τὰ μὲν μέλλοντα ἀγαθά, τὰ δὲ μέλλοντα κακὰ εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** And it's been agreed that the things to be dared are future goods, and the things to be feared are future evils.
	NICIAS πάνυ γε.	**NICIAS** Certainly.
	SOCRATES ἡ δέ γ' αὐτὴ ἐπιστήμη τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ μελλόντων καὶ πάντως ἐχόντων εἶναι.	**SOCRATES** And that the same knowledge deals with the same things, whether they're in the future or in any state at all.
	NICIAS ἔστι ταῦτα.	**NICIAS** That's right.
	SOCRATES οὐ μόνον ἄρα τῶν δεινῶν καὶ θαρραλέων ἡ ἀνδρεία ἐπιστήμη ἐστίν· οὐ γὰρ μελλόντων μόνον πέρι τῶν ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ κακῶν ἐπαΐει, ἀλλὰ καὶ γιγνομένων καὶ γεγονότων [199c] καὶ πάντως ἐχόντων, ὥσπερ αἱ ἄλλαι ἐπιστῆμαι.	**SOCRATES** So courage isn't only knowledge of what's to be feared and what's to be dared. It understands goods and evils not only in the future, but also in the present and the past [199c] and in any state at all, just as the other kinds of knowledge do.
199c	**NICIAS** ἔοικέν γε.	**NICIAS** So it seems.
	SOCRATES μέρος ἄρα ἀνδρείας ἡμῖν, ὦ Νικία, ἀπεκρίνω σχεδόν τι τρίτον· καίτοι ἡμεῖς ἠρωτῶμεν ὅλην ἀνδρείαν ὅτι εἴη. καὶ νῦν δή, ὡς ἔοικεν, κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον οὐ μόνον δεινῶν τε καὶ θαρραλέων ἐπιστήμη ἡ ἀνδρεία ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ σχεδόν τι ἡ περὶ πάντων ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ κακῶν καὶ πάντως ἐχόντων, ὡς [199d] νῦν αὖ ὁ σὸς λόγος, ἀνδρεία ἂν εἴη. οὕτως αὖ μετατίθεσθαι ἢ πῶς λέγεις, ὦ Νικία;	**SOCRATES** So, Nicias, the answer you gave us covers only about a third of courage. Yet we were asking what courage is as a whole. And now, it seems, on your account courage isn't only knowledge of what's to be feared and what's to be dared. It would be more or less knowledge of all goods and evils in any state at all. That, [199d] on your revised account, is what courage would be. Do you accept the change, Nicias, or what do you say?
199d	**NICIAS** ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.	**NICIAS** I accept it, Socrates.
	SOCRATES δοκεῖ οὖν σοι, ὦ δαιμόνιε, ἀπολείπειν ἄν τι ὁ τοιοῦτος ἀρετῆς, εἴπερ εἰδείη τά τε ἀγαθὰ πάντα καὶ παντάπασιν ὡς γίγνεται καὶ γενήσεται καὶ γέγονε, καὶ τὰ κακὰ ὡσαύτως; καὶ τοῦτον οἴει ἂν σὺ ἐνδεᾶ εἶναι σωφροσύνης ἢ δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ ὁσιότητος, ᾧ γε μόνῳ προσήκει καὶ περὶ θεοὺς καὶ περὶ ἀνθρώπους ἐξευλαβεῖσθαί τε τὰ δεινὰ καὶ τὰ [199e] μή, καὶ τἀγαθὰ πορίζεσθαι, ἐπισταμένῳ ὀρθῶς προσομιλεῖν;	**SOCRATES** Then do you think, my remarkable friend, that a man like this would lack any part of excellence, if he really knew all good things, and exactly how they come about, will come about, and have come about, and the same for evil things? Do you think he'd be lacking in moderation, or in justice and piety? He alone, in dealings with gods and with human beings alike, is the one

	GREEK	ENGLISH
		whose task it is to guard against what's to be feared and what [199e] isn't, and to secure good things, since he knows how to deal with them rightly.
199e	**NICIAS** λέγειν τὶ ὦ Σώκρατές μοι δοκεῖς.	**NICIAS** I think there's something in what you say, Socrates.
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἄρα, ὦ Νικία, μόριον ἀρετῆς ἂν εἴη τὸ νῦν σοι λεγόμενον, ἀλλὰ σύμπασα ἀρετή.	**SOCRATES** Then, Nicias, what you're describing now wouldn't be a part of excellence, but excellence as a whole.
	NICIAS ἔοικεν.	**NICIAS** So it seems.
	SOCRATES καὶ μὴν ἔφαμέν γε τὴν ἀνδρείαν μόριον εἶναι ἓν τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς.	**SOCRATES** And yet we said courage was one of the parts of excellence.
	NICIAS ἔφαμεν γάρ.	**NICIAS** We did.
	SOCRATES τὸ δέ γε νῦν λεγόμενον οὐ φαίνεται.	**SOCRATES** But what we're describing now doesn't appear to be a part.
	NICIAS οὐκ ἔοικεν.	**NICIAS** It doesn't seem so.
	SOCRATES οὐκ ἄρα ηὑρήκαμεν, ὦ Νικία, ἀνδρεία ὅτι ἔστιν.	**SOCRATES** So we haven't found what courage is, Nicias.
	NICIAS οὐ φαινόμεθα.	**NICIAS** Apparently not.

BACK TO SCHOOL

The generals trade jibes, and everyone agrees they all need a good teacher, themselves included.

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	LACHES καὶ μὴν ἔγωγε, ὦ φίλε Νικία, ᾤμην σε εὑρήσειν, [200a] ἐπειδὴ ἐμοῦ κατεφρόνησας Σωκράτει ἀποκριναμένου· πάνυ δὴ μεγάλην ἐλπίδα εἶχον, ὡς τῇ παρὰ τοῦ Δάμωνος σοφίᾳ αὐτὴν ἀνευρήσεις.	**LACHES** And here I was, my dear Nicias, thinking you'd find it, [200a] since you looked down on me while I was answering Socrates. I had very high hopes that you'd track it down with the wisdom you got from Damon.
200a	**NICIAS** εὖ γε, ὦ Λάχης, ὅτι οὐδὲν οἴει σὺ ἔτι πρᾶγμα εἶναι ὅτι αὐτὸς ἄρτι ἐφάνης ἀνδρείας πέρι οὐδὲν εἰδώς, ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ ἐγὼ ἕτερος τοιοῦτος ἀναφανήσομαι, πρὸς τοῦτο βλέπεις, καὶ οὐδὲν ἔτι διοίσει, ὡς ἔοικε, σοὶ μετ' ἐμοῦ μηδὲν εἰδέναι ὧν προσήκει ἐπιστήμην ἔχειν ἀνδρὶ οἰομένῳ τὶ εἶναι. σὺ [200b] μὲν οὖν μοι δοκεῖς ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀνθρώπειον πρᾶγμα ἐργάζεσθαι οὐδὲ πρὸς σαυτὸν βλέπειν ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους· ἐγὼ δ' οἶμαι ἐμοὶ περὶ ὧν ἐλέγομεν νῦν τε ἐπιεικῶς εἰρῆσθαι, καὶ εἴ τι αὐτῶν μὴ ἱκανῶς εἴρηται, ὕστερον ἐπανορθώσεσθαι καὶ μετὰ Δάμωνος—οὗ σύ που οἴει καταγελᾶν, καὶ ταῦτα οὐδ' ἰδὼν πώποτε τὸν Δάμωνα—καὶ μετ' ἄλλων· καὶ ἐπειδὰν βεβαιώσωμαι αὐτά, διδάξω καὶ σέ, καὶ οὐ φθονήσω· δοκεῖς [200c] γάρ μοι καὶ μάλα σφόδρα δεῖσθαι μαθεῖν.	**NICIAS** Very nice, Laches. You think it no longer matters that you yourself were just shown to know nothing about courage. All you care about is whether I'll be shown up as another of the same sort. It won't make any difference to you anymore, it seems, that you and I both know nothing of what a man who thinks he amounts to something ought to understand. You, [200b] it seems to me, are doing a thoroughly human thing: looking not at yourself but at others. As for me, I think what I've said on our subject has been reasonable enough for now. And if any of it hasn't been put adequately, I'll correct it later with the help of Damon—whom you think you can laugh at, though

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you've never even laid eyes on him—and of others. And once I've made it secure, I'll teach you too, and I won't begrudge it. You seem [200c] to me to be in great need of learning.

200c **LACHES** σοφὸς γάρ τοι σὺ εἶ, ὦ Νικία. ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐγὼ Λυσιμάχῳ τῷδε καὶ Μελησίᾳ συμβουλεύω σὲ μὲν καὶ ἐμὲ περὶ τῆς παιδείας τῶν νεανίσκων χαίρειν ἐᾶν, Σωκράτη δὲ τουτονί, ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔλεγον, μὴ ἀφιέναι· εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐν ἡλικίᾳ ἦσαν οἱ παῖδες, ταὐτὰ ἂν ταῦτ' ἐποίουν.

LACHES You're a wise man, Nicias, no doubt about it. All the same, my advice to Lysimachus here and Melesias is to say goodbye to you and me where the boys' education is concerned, and, as I said from the start, not to let Socrates here go. If my own boys were of that age, I'd do exactly the same.

NICIAS ταῦτα μὲν κἀγὼ συγχωρῶ· ἐάνπερ ἐθέλῃ Σωκράτης τῶν μειρακίων ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, μηδένα ἄλλον ζητεῖν. ἐπεὶ κἂν [200d] ἐγὼ τὸν Νικήρατον τούτῳ ἥδιστα ἐπιτρέποιμι, εἰ ἐθέλοι οὗτος· ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἄλλους μοι ἑκάστοτε συνίστησιν, ὅταν τι αὐτῷ περὶ τούτου μνησθῶ, αὐτὸς δὲ οὐκ ἐθέλει. ἀλλ' ὅρα, ὦ Λυσίμαχε, εἴ τι σοῦ ἂν μᾶλλον ὑπακούοι Σωκράτης.

NICIAS I agree with that too. If Socrates is willing to take care of the young men, they shouldn't look for anyone else. In fact, [200d] I'd be delighted to entrust Niceratus to him, if he were willing. But every time I bring up the subject with him, he introduces me to other people and won't do it himself. Still, Lysimachus, see whether Socrates might listen to you more.[16]

200d **LYSIMACHUS** δίκαιόν γέ τοι, ὦ Νικία, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐγὼ τούτῳ πολλὰ ἂν ἐθελήσαιμι ποιεῖν, ἃ οὐκ ἂν ἄλλοις πάνυ πολλοῖς ἐθέλοιμι. πῶς οὖν φῄς, ὦ Σώκρατες; ὑπακούσῃ τι καὶ συμπροθυμήσῃ ὡς βελτίστοις γενέσθαι τοῖς μειρακίοις;

LYSIMACHUS That would only be fair, Nicias, since I'd be willing to do a great deal for him that I wouldn't be willing to do for many others. So what do you say, Socrates? Will you listen to us and share our eagerness for the boys to become as good as possible?

200e **SOCRATES** καὶ γὰρ ἂν δεινὸν εἴη, ὦ Λυσίμαχε, τοῦτό γε, μὴ ἐθέλειν τῳ συμπροθυμεῖσθαι ὡς βελτίστῳ γενέσθαι. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐν τοῖς διαλόγοις τοῖς ἄρτι ἐγὼ μὲν ἐφάνην εἰδώς, τώδε δὲ μὴ εἰδότε, δίκαιον ἂν ἦν ἐμὲ μάλιστα ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον παρακαλεῖν, νῦν δ' ὁμοίως γὰρ πάντες ἐν ἀπορίᾳ ἐγενόμεθα· τί οὖν ἄν τις ἡμῶν τίνα προαιροῖτο; ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν δὴ αὐτῷ [201a] δοκεῖ οὐδένα· ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχει, σκέψασθε ἄν τι δόξω συμβουλεύειν ὑμῖν. ἐγὼ γάρ φημι χρῆναι, ὦ ἄνδρες —οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἔκφορος λόγος—κοινῇ πάντας ἡμᾶς ζητεῖν μάλιστα μὲν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς διδάσκαλον ὡς ἄριστον—δεόμεθα γάρ— ἔπειτα καὶ τοῖς μειρακίοις, μήτε χρημάτων φειδομένους μήτε ἄλλου μηδενός· ἐᾶν δὲ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἔχειν ὡς νῦν ἔχομεν οὐ συμβουλεύω.

SOCRATES Yes, Lysimachus, it would be a terrible thing to be unwilling to share anyone's eagerness to become as good as possible. Now if, in the conversations just now, I had seemed to know and these two not to, it would be right to call on me above all for this work. But as it is, we all ended up equally at a loss. So why would anyone choose any one of us over the others? In my own view, [201a] none of us. But since that's how things stand, see whether my advice seems worth anything to you. I say, gentlemen—and this stays between us—that we should all join together in looking for the best teacher we can find, first for ourselves, since we need one, and then for the young men, sparing neither money nor anything else. What I don't advise is that we leave ourselves as we are now.

201a εἰ δέ τις ἡμῶν καταγελάσεται, ὅτι [201b] τηλικοίδε ὄντες εἰς διδασκάλων ἀξιοῦμεν φοιτᾶν, τὸν Ὅμηρον δοκεῖ μοι χρῆναι προβάλλεσθαι, ὃς ἔφη οὐκ ἀγαθὴν εἶναι αἰδῶ κεχρημένῳ ἀνδρὶ παρεῖναι. καὶ ἡμεῖς οὖν ἐάσαντες

And if anyone laughs at us because, [201b] at our age, we think fit to go to school, I think we should hold up Homer as our shield, who said that "shame is no good companion for a man in need." So let's not

16 Niceratus was Nicias' son.

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	χαίρειν εἴ τίς τι ἐρεῖ, κοινῇ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν μειρακίων ἐπιμέλειαν ποιησώμεθα.	mind if anyone says anything, and let's take care of ourselves and the young men together.
201b	**LYSIMACHUS** ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀρέσκει, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἃ λέγεις· καὶ ἐθέλω, ὅσῳπερ γεραίτατός εἰμι, τοσούτῳ προθυμότατα μανθάνειν μετὰ τῶν νεανίσκων. ἀλλά μοι οὑτωσὶ ποίησον· αὔριον 201c ἕωθεν ἀφίκου οἴκαδε καὶ μὴ ἄλλως ποιήσῃς, ἵνα βουλευσώμεθα περὶ αὐτῶν τούτων, τὸ δὲ νῦν εἶναι τὴν συνουσίαν διαλύσωμεν.	**LYSIMACHUS** I like what you say, Socrates. And the older I am, the more eager I am to learn along with the young men. But do this for me. Tomorrow 201c at dawn, come to my house—don't fail me—so we can consult about these very matters. For now, let's bring our gathering to a close.
201c	**SOCRATES** ἀλλὰ ποιήσω, ὦ Λυσίμαχε, ταῦτα, καὶ ἥξω παρὰ σὲ αὔριον, ἐὰν θεὸς ἐθέλῃ.	**SOCRATES** I'll do that, Lysimachus. I'll come to you tomorrow, god willing.