

5 activities, whether new or familiar, and teach about them. But then,
on your account, I do at any rate acknowledge daimonic activities,
and to this you've sworn in your indictment against me. However, if I
acknowledge daimonic activities, surely it's absolutely necessary that I
acknowledge daimons. Isn't that so? Yes, it is—I assume you agree,
10 since you don't answer. But don't we believe that daimons are either
27d gods or, at any rate, children of gods? Yes or no?

Of course.

Then, if indeed I do believe in daimons, as you're saying, and if
daimons are gods of some sort, that's precisely what I meant when I
5 said that you're presenting us with a riddle and playing around: you're
saying that I don't believe in gods and, on the contrary, that I do
believe in gods, since in fact I do at least believe in daimons. But if,
on the other hand, daimons are children of gods, some sort of bastard
offspring of a nymph, or of whomever else tradition says each one is
the child, what man could possibly believe that children of gods exist,
10 but not gods? That would be just as unreasonable as believing in the
27e children of horses and asses⁵⁶—namely, mules—while not believing
in the existence of horses and asses.

Well then, Meletus, you must have written these things to test us⁵⁷
or because you were at a loss about what genuine injustice to charge
me with. There's no conceivable way you could persuade any man
with even the slightest intelligence that the same person believes in
both daimonic activities and gods, and, on the contrary, that this same
28a person believes neither in daimons, nor in gods, nor in heroes.⁵⁸

In fact, then, men of Athens, it doesn't seem to me to require a
long defense to show that I'm not guilty of the charges in Meletus'
indictment, but what I've said is sufficient. But what I was also saying
5 earlier, that much hostility has arisen against me and among many
people—you may be sure that's true. And *it's* what will convict me, if
I am convicted: not Meletus or Anytus, but the slander and malice of
many people. It has certainly convicted many other good men as
well, and I imagine it will do so again. There's no danger it will stop
28b with me.

56. Omitting ἢ with de Strycker and Slings.

57. Omitting τὴν γραφὴν αὐτὴν with de Strycker and Slings.

58. Heroes are demigods (28c2), children of gods and mortals, whose existence therefore entails the existence of gods. Hence someone who denies the existence of gods denies that of heroes too.

But perhaps someone may say, "Aren't you ashamed, Socrates, to
have engaged in the sort of occupation that has now put you at risk of
death?" I, however, would be right to reply to him, "You're not think- 5
ing straight, sir, if you think that a man who's any use at all should give
any opposing weight to the risk of living or dying, instead of looking
to this alone whenever he does anything: whether his actions are just
or unjust, the deeds of a good or bad man. You see, on your account, 28c
all those demigods who died on the plain of Troy were inferior people,
especially the son of Thetis, who was so contemptuous of danger when
the alternative was something shameful.⁵⁹ When he was eager to kill
Hector, his mother, since she was a goddess, spoke to him, I think, in 5
some such words as these: 'My child, if you avenge the death of your
friend Patroclus and slay Hector, you will die yourself immediately,' so
the poem goes, 'as your death is fated to follow next after Hector's.'
But though he heard that, he was contemptuous of death and danger,
for he was far more afraid of living as a bad man and of failing to 10
avenge his friends: 'Let me die immediately, then,' it continues, 'once 28d
I've given the wrongdoer his just deserts,⁶⁰ so that I do not remain here
by the curved ships, a laughingstock and a burden upon the earth.' Do
you really suppose he gave a thought to death or danger?"

You see, men of Athens, this is the truth of the matter: Wherever
someone has stationed himself because he thinks it best, or wherever 5
he's been stationed by his commander, there, it seems to me, he
should remain, steadfast in danger, taking no account at all of death or
of anything else, in comparison to what's shameful. I'd therefore have
been acting scandalously, men of Athens, if, when I'd been stationed 28e
in Potidea, Amphipolis, or Delium⁶¹ by the leaders you had elected to
lead me, I had, like many another, remained where they'd stationed
me and run the risk of death. But if, when the god stationed me here,
as I became thoroughly convinced he did, to live practicing philoso-
phy, examining myself and others, I had—for fear of death or any-
thing else—abandoned my station. 29a

59. See Homer, *Iliad* XVIII.94 ff. Thetis' son, born of a mortal father, Peleus, and hence a demigod, is Achilles.

60. "Once I've given . . . deserts" is a Socratic addition to Homer's text.

61. Three battles in the Peloponnesian War between Athens and its allies and Sparta and its allies. See Thucydides I.56–65 (Potidaea), IV.90 (Delium), V.2 (Amphipolis). Socrates' bravery at Potidea and Delium is described at *Symposium* 219e5–221d6.

That would have been scandalous, and someone might have rightly and justly brought me to court for not acknowledging that gods exist, by disobeying the oracle, fearing death, and thinking I was wise when I wasn't. You see, fearing death, gentlemen, is nothing other than thinking one is wise when one isn't, since it's thinking one knows what one doesn't know. I mean, no one knows whether death may not be the greatest of all goods for people, but they fear it as if they knew for certain that it's the worst thing of all. Yet surely⁶² this is the most blameworthy ignorance of thinking one knows what one doesn't know. But I, gentlemen, may perhaps differ from most people by just this much in this matter too. And if I really were to claim to be wiser than anyone in any way, it would be in this: that as I don't have adequate knowledge about things in Hades, so too I don't think that I have knowledge. To act unjustly, on the other hand, to disobey someone better than oneself, whether god or man, that I do know to be bad and shameful. In any case, I'll never fear or avoid things that may for all I know be good more than things I know are bad.

Suppose, then, you're prepared to let me go now and to disobey Anytus, who said I shouldn't have been brought to court at all,⁶³ but that since I had been brought to court, you had no alternative but to put me to death because, as he stated before you, if I were acquitted, soon your sons would all be entirely corrupted by following Socrates' teachings. Suppose, confronted with that claim, you were to say to me, "Socrates, we will not obey Anytus this time. Instead, we are prepared to let you go. But on the following condition: that you spend no more time on this investigation and don't practice philosophy, and if you're caught doing so, you'll die." Well, as I just said, if you were to let me go on these terms, I'd reply to you, "I've the utmost respect and affection for you, men of Athens, but I'll obey the god rather than you, and as long as I draw breath and am able, I won't give up practicing philosophy, exhorting you and also showing the way⁶⁴ to any of you I ever happen to meet, saying just the sorts of things I'm accustomed to say:

62. Reading καίτοι with Eusebius.

63. Anytus presumably thought that Socrates would exile himself to escape trial, as Anaxagoras (26d6 note) had done. See *Crito* 45e3–4.

64. By showing you that you aren't wise though you think you are (23b7).

My excellent man, you're an Athenian, you belong to the greatest city, renowned for its wisdom and strength; are you not ashamed that you take care to acquire as much wealth as possible—and reputation and honor—but that about wisdom and truth, about how your soul may be in the best possible condition, you take neither care nor thought?

Then, if one of you disagrees and says that he *does* care, I won't let him go away immediately, but I'll question, examine, and test him. And if he doesn't seem to me to possess virtue, though he claims he does, I'll reproach him, saying that he treats the most important things as having the least value, and inferior ones as having more. This I will do for anyone I meet, young or old, alien or fellow citizen—but especially for you, my fellow citizens, since you're closer kin to me. This, you may be sure, is what the god orders me to do. And I believe that no greater good for you has ever come about in the city than my service to the god. You see, I do nothing else except go around trying to persuade you, both young and old alike, not to care about your bodies or your money as intensely as about how your soul may be in the best possible condition. I say,

It's not from wealth that virtue comes, but from virtue comes money, and all the other things that are good for human beings, both in private and in public life.⁶⁵

Now if by saying this, I'm corrupting the young, *this* is what you'd have to think to be harmful. But if anyone claims I say something other than this, he's talking nonsense."

"It's in that light," I want to say, "men of Athens, that you should obey Anytus or not, and let me go or not—knowing that I wouldn't act in any other way, not even if I were to die many times over."

Don't create an uproar, men of Athens. Instead, please abide by my request not to create an uproar at what I say, but to listen. For I think it will profit you to listen. You see, I'm certainly going to say some

65. Since Socrates is a poor man (23b9, 31c2–3, 38b1–6), he is hardly saying that virtue inevitably brings a lot of money. Rather he is saying that virtue brings as much money as is a good thing, and this may not be very much. Only someone who believed that money was itself the best thing or that virtue was strictly moral virtue (18a5 note) could find this disquieting.

29e

5

30a

5

yes
against
beliefs
30b of
the time

5

30c

5

further things to you at which you may perhaps exclaim—but by no means do so.

You may be sure that if you put me to death—a man of the sort I said I was just now—you won't harm me more than you harm yourselves. Certainly, Meletus or Anytus couldn't harm me in any way: 10 that's not possible. For I don't think it's lawful for a better man to be 30d harmed by a worse.⁶⁶ He may, of course, kill me, or perhaps banish or disenfranchise me. And these *he* believes to be very bad things, and others no doubt agree. But *I* don't believe this. Rather, I believe that doing 5 what he's doing now—attempting to kill a man unjustly—is far worse.

So, men of Athens, I'm far from pleading in my own defense now, as might be supposed. Instead, I'm pleading in yours, so that you don't commit a great wrong against the god's gift to you by condemning me. If you put me to death, you won't easily find another 30e like me. For, even if it seems ridiculous to say so, I've literally been attached to the city, as if to a large thoroughbred horse that was somewhat sluggish because of its size and needed to be awakened by some 5 sort of gadfly. It's as just such a gadfly, it seems to me, that the god has attached me to the city—one that awakens, persuades, and reproaches each and every one of you and never stops alighting everywhere on 31a you the whole day. You won't easily find another like that, gentlemen. So if you obey me, you'll spare my life. But perhaps you'll be resentful, like people awakened from a doze, and slap at me. If you 5 obey Anytus, you might easily kill me. Then you might spend the rest of your lives asleep, unless the god, in his compassion for you, were to send you someone else.

That I am indeed the sort of person to be given as a gift to the city by the god, you may recognize from this: it doesn't seem a merely 31b human matter—does it?—for me to have neglected all my own affairs and to have put up with this neglect of my domestic life for so many years now, but always to have minded your business, by visiting each of you in private, like a father or elder brother, to persuade you to care 5 about virtue. Of course, if I were getting anything out of it or if I were being paid for giving this advice, my conduct would be intelligible. But, as it is, you can plainly see for yourselves that my accusers, who so shamelessly accused me of everything else, couldn't bring themselves to be so utterly shameless as to call a witness to say that I ever once

66. For the meaning of "lawful" (*themiton*), see 21b6 note. The confident—and puzzling—claim is partly explained at *Crito* 44d8–10 and note.

accepted or asked for payment. In fact, it's *I* who can call what I think 31c is a sufficient witness that I'm telling the truth—my poverty.

But perhaps it may seem strange that I, of all people, give this advice by going around and minding other people's business in private, yet 5 do not venture to go before your Assembly and give advice to the city in public. The reason for that, however, is one you've heard me give many times and in many places: A divine and daimonic thing comes to me—the very thing Meletus made mocking allusion to in the indictment he wrote. It's something that began happening to me in 31d childhood: a sort of voice comes, which, whenever it does come, always holds me back from what I'm about to do but never urges me forward. *It* is what opposes my engaging in politics—and to me, at 5 least, its opposition seems entirely right. For you may be sure, men of Athens, that if I'd⁶⁷ tried to engage in politics I'd have perished long ago and have benefited neither you nor myself.

Please don't resent me if I tell you the truth. The fact is that no 31e man will be spared by you or by any other multitude of people if he genuinely opposes a lot of unjust and unlawful actions and tries to prevent them from happening in the city. On the contrary, anyone who really fights for what's just, if indeed he's going to survive for 32a even a short time, must act privately not publicly.

I'll present substantial evidence of that—not words, but what you value, deeds. Listen, then, to what happened to me, so you may see 5 that fear of death wouldn't lead me to submit to a single person contrary to what's just, not even if I were to perish at once for not submitting. The things I'll tell you are of a vulgar sort commonly heard in the law courts, but they're true nonetheless.

You see, men of Athens, I never held any other public office in the city, but I've served on the Council. And it happened that my own 32b tribe, Antiochis, was presiding⁶⁸ when you wanted⁶⁹ to try the ten generals—the ones who failed to rescue the survivors of the naval

67. Omitting *πάλαι* with Cobet.

68. A *phulē* is not a tribe in our sense, but an administrative division of the citizen body, most probably of military origin. The presiding committee of the Council (25a3 note) consisted of the fifty members of one of the ten tribes, selected by lot to serve for one-tenth of the year. It arranged meetings of the Council and Assembly, received envoys and letters to the state, and conducted other routine business.

69. Reading *ἐβούλεσθε* with de Strycker and Slings.

5 battle—as a group.⁷⁰ That was unlawful, as you all came to recognize
 5 at a later time. On that occasion, I was the only presiding member
 opposed to your doing something illegal, and I voted against you.
 And though the orators⁷¹ were ready to lay information against me
 and have me summarily arrested,⁷² and you were shouting and urging
 32c them on, I thought that I should face danger on the side of law and
 justice, rather than go along with you for fear of imprisonment or
 death when your proposals were unjust.

This happened when the city was still under democratic rule. But
 later, when the oligarchy had come to power, it happened once more.
 The Thirty⁷³ summoned me and four others to the Tholus⁷⁴ and
 5 ordered us to arrest Leon of Salamis⁷⁵ and bring him from Salamis to
 die. They gave many such orders to many other people too, of course,
 since they wanted to implicate as many as possible in their crimes. On
 that occasion, however, I showed once again not by words but by
 32d deeds that I couldn't care less about death—if that isn't putting it too
 bluntly—but that all I care about is not doing anything unjust or
 impious. You see, that government, powerful though it was, didn't
 5 frighten me into unjust action: when we came out of the Tholus, the
 other four went to Salamis and arrested Leon, whereas I left and went
 home. I might have died for that if the government hadn't fallen
 shortly afterward.

70. After the naval battle at Arginusae on the Ionian coast of Asia Minor (406 B.C.E.), ten Athenian generals were indicted for failing to rescue survivors and pick up the bodies of the dead. Both Council and Assembly voted to try them as a group, which was against Athenian law. See Xenophon, *Hellenica* I.7.

71. The politicians supporting the mass trial.

72. *Endeiknunai* . . . *kai apagein*: *Endeixis* (lay information against) and *apagoge* (have summarily arrested) were formal legal actions of a specific sort.

73. After Athens was defeated by Sparta in 404 B.C.E., its democratic government was replaced by a brutal oligarchy, the so-called Thirty Tyrants, which survived barely eight months. During that time it allegedly executed some fifteen hundred people, and many more went into exile to escape. Two members of the Thirty—Critias and Charmides—were relatives of Plato's and appear as Socratic interlocutors in the dialogues named after them. Socrates' association with them is often thought to have been one of the things that led to his indictment.

74. The Tholus was a dome-shaped building, also called the Skias ("parasol"). The presiding committee of the Council (32b2 note) took its meals there.

75. Leon is otherwise unknown. The episode, however, is widely reported (*Seventh Letter* 324d8–325c5; Xenophon, *Hellenica* II.3.39, *Memorabilia* IV.4.3).

There are many witnesses who will testify before you about these events.

Do you imagine, then, that I'd have survived all these years if I'd been regularly active in public affairs, and had come to the aid of justice like a good man, and regarded that as most important, as one should? Far from it, men of Athens, and neither would any other man. But throughout my entire life, in any public activities I may have engaged in, it was evident I was the sort of person—and in private life I was the same—who never agreed to anything with anyone contrary to justice, whether with others or with those who my slanderers⁷⁶ say are my students. In fact, I've never been anyone's teacher at any time. But if anyone, whether young or old, wanted to listen to me while I was talking and performing my own task, I never begrudged that to him. Neither do I engage in conversation only when I receive a fee and not when I don't. Rather, I offer myself for questioning to rich and poor alike, or, if someone prefers, he may listen to me and answer my questions. And if any one of these turned out well, or did not do so, I can't justly be held responsible, since I never at any time promised any of them that they'd learn anything from me or that I'd teach them. And if anyone says that he learned something from me or heard something in private that all the others didn't also hear, you may be sure he isn't telling the truth.⁷⁷

Why, then, you may ask, do some people enjoy spending so much time with me? You've heard the answer, men of Athens. I told you the whole truth: it's because they enjoy listening to people being examined who think they're wise but aren't. For it's not unpleasant. In my case, however, it's something, you may take it from me, I've been ordered to do by the god, in both oracles and dreams, and in every other way that divine providence ever ordered any man to do anything at all.

All these things, men of Athens, are both true and easily tested. I mean, if I really do corrupt the young or have corrupted them in the past, surely if any of them had recognized when they became older that I'd given them bad advice at some point in their youth, they'd now have come forward themselves to accuse me and seek redress. Or else, if they weren't willing to come themselves, some of their family members—fathers, brothers, or other relatives—if indeed

76. Reading οὓς δὴ οἱ διαβάλλοντες ἐμέ with de Strycker and Slings.

77. See Aristophanes, *Clouds* 140–144.

their kinsmen had suffered any harm from me—would remember it now and seek redress.

In any case, I see many of these people present here: first of all, 10 there's Crito, my contemporary and fellow demesman, the father of 33e Critobulus here;⁷⁸ then there's Lysanias of Sphettus, father of Aeschines here;⁷⁹ next, there's Epigenes' father, Antiphon of Cephisia here.⁸⁰ Then there are others whose brothers have spent time in this way: Nicostratus, son of Theozotides,⁸¹ brother of Theodotus—by the 5 way, Theodotus is dead, so that Nicostratus is at any rate not being held back by him;⁸² and Paralios here, son of Demodocus, whose brother was Theages;⁸³ and there's Adeimantus, the son of Ariston, 34a whose brother is Plato here,⁸⁴ and Aeantodorus, whose brother here is Apollodorus.⁸⁵ And there are many others I could mention, some of

78. Crito was a well-off farm owner (*Euthydemus* 291e8), able and willing to help his friends financially (38b7, *Crito* 44b6–c5; Diogenes Laertius II.20–21, 31, 105, 121). His relationship with Socrates is that of an old close friend and neighbor, who is also to some degree a patron or benefactor (Diogenes Laertius II.121) and adviser on practical matters. Of Socrates' various friends, he is the one who takes the lead, acting naturally as the spokesman of the others (*Crito* 43c5–8; *Phaedo* 115b5–118a14 below). Both belonged to the deme (see *Euthyphro* 2b9 note) Alopeke. Critobulus, his son, was also a member of Socrates' circle and was present at his death (*Phaedo* 59b7).

79. Aeschines of Sphettus (fourth-century B.C.E.) was a devoted follower of Socrates, present at his death (*Phaedo* 59b8). He taught oratory and wrote both speeches for the law courts and Socratic dialogues, only fragments of which are extant. His father is otherwise unknown.

80. Epigenes was present at Socrates' death (*Phaedo* 59b8) and was a member of his circle (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* III.12). Neither he nor his father are otherwise known.

81. Theozotides introduced two important democratic reforms after the fall of the Thirty Tyrants (32c4 note). His sons are otherwise unknown.

82. Presumably from accusing Socrates on his behalf.

83. Otherwise largely unknown. Spurious works in the Platonic canon are named after Theages and Demodocus.

84. This is one of three places in his dialogues that Plato mentions himself—38b6 and *Phaedo* 59b10 are the others. Adeimantus, with his brother Glaucon, plays an important role in the *Republic*.

85. Apollodorus, an enthusiastic follower of Socrates, given to emotion (*Phaedo* 59a8–b1, 117c3–d6), is the narrator in the *Symposium*. His brother is otherwise unknown.

whom Meletus most certainly ought to have called as witnesses in the course of his own speech. If he forgot to do so, let him call them 5 now—I yield time to him. Let him tell us if he has any such witness. No, it's entirely the opposite, gentlemen. You'll find that they're all prepared to come to my aid, their corruptor, the one who, Meletus and Anytus claim, is doing harm to their families. Of course, the corrupted ones themselves might indeed have reason to come to my aid. 34b But the *uncorrupted* ones, their relatives, who are older men now, what reason could they possibly have to support me, other than the right and just one: that they know perfectly well that Meletus is lying, 5 whereas I am telling the truth?

Well then, gentlemen, those, and perhaps other similar things, are pretty much all I have to say in my defense. But perhaps one of you might be resentful when he recalls his own behavior. Perhaps when he was contesting even a lesser charge than this charge, he positively 34c entreated the jurors with copious tears, bringing forward his children and many other relatives and friends as well, in order to arouse as much pity as possible. And then he finds that I'll do none of these 5 things, not even when I'm facing what might be considered the ultimate danger. Perhaps someone with these thoughts might feel more willful where I'm concerned and, made angry by these very same thoughts, cast his vote in anger. Well, if there's someone like that among you—of course, I don't expect there to be, but *if* there is—I 34d think it appropriate for me to answer him as follows: "I do indeed have relatives, my excellent man. As Homer puts it,⁸⁶ I too 'wasn't born from oak or from rock' but from human parents. And so I do have relatives, 5 sons too, men of Athens, three of them, one already a young man while two are still children. Nonetheless, I won't bring any of them forward here and then entreat you to vote for my acquittal."

Why, you may ask, will I do none of these things? Not because I'm willful, men of Athens, or want to dishonor you—whether I'm 10 boldly facing death or not is a separate story. The point has to do with reputation—yours and mine and that of the entire city: it doesn't seem noble to me to do these things, especially at my age and with my reputation—for whether truly or falsely, it's firmly believed in any case that Socrates is superior to the majority of people in some way. 35a

86. *Odyssey* XIX.163. Penelope is speaking to her husband, Odysseus (41c1 note), whom she hasn't yet recognized.

Therefore, if those of *you* who are believed to be superior—in either wisdom or courage or any other virtue whatever—behave like that, it would be shameful.

I've often seen people of this sort when they're on trial: they're
 5 thought to be someone, yet they do astonishing things—as if they
 imagined they'd suffer something terrible if they died and would be
 immortal if only you didn't kill them. People like that seem to me to
 35b bring such shame to the city that any foreigner might well suppose
 that those among the Athenians who are superior in virtue—the
 ones they select from among themselves for political office and other
 positions of honor—are no better than women.⁸⁷ I say this, men of
 Athens, because none of us⁸⁸ who are in any way whatever thought
 5 to be someone should behave like that, nor, if we attempt to do so,
 should you allow it. On the contrary, you should make it clear
 you're far more likely to convict someone who makes the city despi-
 cable by staging these pathetic scenes than someone who minds his
 behavior.

10 Reputation aside, gentlemen, it doesn't seem just to me to entreat
 35c the jury—nor to be acquitted by entreating it—but rather to inform
 it and persuade it. After all, a juror doesn't sit in order to grant justice
 as a favor, but to decide where justice lies. And he has sworn on oath
 not that he'll favor whomever he pleases, but that he'll judge accord-
 5 ing to law.⁸⁹ We shouldn't accustom you to breaking your oath, then,
 nor should you become accustomed to doing so—neither of us
 would be doing something holy if we did. Hence don't expect me,
 men of Athens, to act toward you in ways I consider to be neither
 35d noble, nor just, nor pious—most especially, by Zeus, when I'm
 being prosecuted for *impiety* by Meletus here. You see, if I tried to
 persuade and to force you by entreaties, after you've sworn an oath, I
 clearly would be teaching you not to believe in the existence of
 5 gods, and my defense would literally convict me of not acknowledg-
 ing gods. But that's far from being the case: I do acknowledge them,
 men of Athens, as none of my accusers does. I turn it over to you

87. Casual sexism of this sort is common in Plato's dialogues, but may reflect cultural rather than personal attitudes.

88. Reading ἡμῶς.

89. The gist of this oath, which may be pieced together from references such as this one, was as follows: "I will judge according to the laws and decrees of Athens, and I will decide matters about which there are no laws by the most just opinion."

and to the god to judge me in whatever way will be best for me and for yourselves.⁹⁰

• • •

There are many reasons, men of Athens, why I'm not resentful at this
 outcome—that you voted to convict me—and this outcome wasn't
 unexpected by me. I'm much more surprised at the number of votes
 36a cast on each side: I didn't think that the decision would be by so few
 votes but by a great many. Yet now, it seems, that if a mere thirty votes
 5 had been cast differently, I'd have been acquitted.⁹¹ Or rather, it seems
 to me that where Meletus is concerned I've been acquitted even as
 things stand. And not merely acquitted. On the contrary, one thing at
 least is clear to everyone: if Anytus had not come forward with Lycon
 to accuse me, Meletus would have been fined a thousand drachmas,
 since he wouldn't have received a fifth of the votes.⁹² 36b

But be that as it may, the man demands the death penalty for me.
 Well then, what counterpenalty should I now propose to you, men of
 Athens? Or is it clear that it's whatever I deserve? What then should it
 be? What do I deserve to suffer or pay just because I didn't mind my
 5 own business throughout my life? Because I didn't care about the
 things most people care about—making money, managing an estate,
 or being a general, a popular leader, or holding some other political
 office, or joining the cabals and factions that come to exist in a city—
 but thought myself too honest, in truth, to engage in these things and
 36c survive? Because I didn't engage in things, if engaging in them was
 going to benefit neither you nor myself, but instead went to each of
 you privately and tried to perform what I claim is the greatest bene-
 faction? That was what I did. I tried to persuade each of you to care 5

90. The jury returns a guilty verdict. Meletus proposes the death penalty. The law permits Socrates to propose an alternative, or counterpenalty, which he proceeds to do in the next part of his defense. Later members of the jury will choose which-ever of the penalty and the counterpenalty they deem the more appropriate pun-ishment.

91. A jury of 500 (or 501) was usual for an indictment of impiety. It follows that the vote was 280 to 220, since a tied vote resulted in acquittal.

92. Socrates is imagining that his accusers received around 90 votes each, or a third of the 280 guilty votes. This is less than the 100 votes that Meletus needed to re-ceive in order to avoid paying the fine to which Socrates refers, which was insti-tuted by law to deter frivolous suits.

first not about any of his possessions, but about himself and how he'll become best and wisest; and not primarily about the city's possessions, but about the city itself; and to care about all other things in the same way.

36d What, then, do I deserve to suffer for being such a man? Something good, men of Athens, if I'm indeed to propose a penalty that I truly deserve. Yes, and the sort of good thing, too, that would be appropriate for me. What, then, is appropriate for a poor man who is
5 a public benefactor and needs to have the leisure to exhort you? Nothing could be more appropriate,⁹³ men of Athens, than for such a man to be given free meals in the Prytaneum—much more so for him, at any rate, than for anyone of you who has won a victory at Olympia, whether with a single horse or with a pair or a team of four.⁹⁴ You see, he makes you think you're happy, whereas I make you
10 actually happy.⁹⁵ Besides, he doesn't need to be sustained in that way, but I do need it. So if, as justice demands, I must propose a penalty I
36e deserve, that's the penalty I propose: free meals in the Prytaneum.
37a

Now perhaps when I say this, you may think I'm speaking in a quite willful manner—just as when I talked about appeals to pity and supplications. That's not so, men of Athens, rather it's something like
5 this: I'm convinced that I never intentionally do injustice to any man—but I can't get you to share my conviction, because we've talked together a short time. I say this, because if you had a law, as other men in fact do, not to try a capital charge in a single day, but
10 over several, I think you'd be convinced.⁹⁶ But as things stand, it isn't easy to clear myself of huge slanders in a short time.
37b

Since I'm convinced that I've done injustice to no one, however, I'm certainly not likely to do myself injustice, to announce that I deserve something bad and to propose a penalty of that sort for
5 myself. Why should I do that? In order not to suffer what Meletus

93. Omitting οὐτως with Adam.

94. The Prytaneum, a building on the northeast slope of the Acropolis, was the symbolic center of Athens, where the communal hearth was housed. See *Euthyphro* 3a7 note. Guests of the city and victors in the Olympic and other games were given free meals there.

95. Because "living well [being happy], living a fine life, and living justly are the same" (*Crito* 48b8); "wisdom is clearly virtue, either the whole of it or part of it" (*Meno* 87d2–89a5); and being examined by Socrates leads to human wisdom.

96. Sparta had a law of this sort.

proposes as a penalty for me, when I say that I don't know whether it's a good or a bad thing?⁹⁷ As an alternative to that, am I then to choose one of the things I know very well to be bad and propose it? Imprisonment, for example? And why should I live in prison, enslaved to the regularly appointed officers, the Eleven?⁹⁸ All right, a
37c fine with imprisonment until I pay? But in my case the effect would be precisely the one I just now described, since I haven't the means to pay.

Well then, should I propose exile? Perhaps that's what you'd propose for me. But I'd certainly have to have an excessive love of life, men of Athens, to be so irrational as to do that. I see that you, my fellow citizens, were unable to tolerate my discourses and discussions
5 but came to find them so burdensome and odious that you're now seeking to get rid of them. Is it likely, then, that I'll infer that others will find them easy to bear? Far from it, men of Athens. It would be a fine life for me, indeed, a man of my age, to go into exile and spend his life exchanging one city for another, because he's always being expelled. You see, I well know that wherever I go, the young will
5 come to hear me speaking, just as they do here. And if I drive them away, they will themselves persuade their elders to expel me; whereas if I don't drive them away, their fathers and relatives will expel me
37d because of these same young people.
37e

Now perhaps someone may say, "But by keeping quiet and minding your own business, Socrates, wouldn't it be possible for you to live in exile for us?" This is the very hardest point on which to convince some of you. You see, if I say that to do *that* would be to disobey the god, and that this is why I can't mind my own business, you won't believe me, since you'll suppose I'm being ironical.⁹⁹ But
5 again, if I say it's the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day, and the other things you've heard me discussing and examining myself and others about, on the grounds that the unexamined life¹⁰⁰ isn't worth living for a human being, you'll believe me even less
38a when I say that. But in fact, things are just as I claim them to be, men
5

97. See 29a–b.

98. Officials appointed by lot to be in charge of prisons and executions.

99. Ancient irony (*eirōneia*) involved not simply meaning the contrary of what one said, but saying it with the intention to deceive.

100. That is, a life left unexamined, whether by the person whose life it is or by someone else engaging the person in elenctic cross-examination.

of Athens, though it isn't easy to convince you of them. At the same time, I'm not accustomed to thinking that I deserve anything bad. If
 38b I had the means, I'd have proposed a fine of as much as I could afford
 . to pay, since that would have done me no harm at all. But as things
 stand, I don't have them—unless you want me to propose as much as
 5 I'm in fact able to pay. Perhaps I could pay you about a mina of silver.
 So I propose a fine of that amount.

One moment, men of Athens. Plato here, and Crito, Critobulus,
 and Apollodorus as well, are urging me to propose thirty minas and
 saying that they themselves will guarantee it.¹⁰¹ I propose a fine of
 that amount, therefore, and these men will be sufficient guarantors to
 10 you of the silver.¹⁰²

. . .

38c For the sake of a little time, men of Athens, you're going to earn
 from those who wish to denigrate our city both the reputation and
 the blame for having killed Socrates—that wise man. For those who
 wish to reproach you will, of course, claim that I'm wise, even if I'm
 5 not. In any case,¹⁰³ if you'd waited a short time, this would have hap-
 pened of its own accord. You, of course, see my age, you see that I'm
 already far along in life and close to death. I'm saying this not to all
 38d of you, but to those who voted for the death penalty. And to those
 same people I also say this: Perhaps you imagine, gentlemen, that I

101. Thirty minas (three thousand silver drachmas) was almost ten years' salary for someone engaged in public works.

102. The jury votes for the death penalty, and Socrates begins the final part of his speech. He addresses one set of remarks to those who found him guilty (38c7–d2) and another to those who voted for the death penalty (39c1–2). This suggests that these two groups were not identical. The fact that he describes those who voted to acquit him as deserving to be called jurors (40a2–3) suggests there was no overlap between this group and the group who voted for death. For Socrates would hardly be likely to refer to the latter in such flattering terms. It follows that fewer jurors voted for the death penalty than voted guilty. This contradicts the claim made by Diogenes Laertius (2.42), some five centuries later, that there were eighty more votes for the sentence of death than for the verdict of guilty. But it's surely what we would expect. For jurors who believed Socrates to be innocent would hardly vote to put him to death, and some of those who did find him guilty are likely to have recoiled at the death penalty.

103. Reading οὐν with βδ.

was convicted for lack of the sort of arguments I could have used to
 convince you, if I'd thought I should do or say anything to escape the
 penalty. Far from it. I *have* been convicted for a lack—not of argu- 5
 ments, however, but of boldfaced shamelessness and for being
 unwilling to say the sorts of things to you you'd have been most
 pleased to hear, with me weeping and wailing, and doing and saying
 many other things I claim are unworthy of me, but that are the very
 sorts of things you're used to hearing from everyone else. No, I didn't 38e
 think then that I should do anything servile because of the danger I
 faced, and so I don't regret now that I defended myself as I did. I'd far
 rather die after such a defense than live like that.

You see, whether in a trial or in a war, neither I nor anyone else 5
 should contrive to escape death at all costs. In battle, too, it often 39a
 becomes clear that one might escape death by throwing down one's
 weapons and turning to supplicate one's pursuers. And in each sort of
 danger there are many other ways one can contrive to escape death, if 5
 one is shameless enough to do or say anything. The difficult thing,
 gentlemen, isn't escaping death; escaping villainy is much more diffi-
 cult, since it runs faster than death. And now I, slow and old as I am, 39b
 have been overtaken by the slower runner while my accusers, clever
 and sharp-witted as they are, have been overtaken by the faster one—
 vice. And now I take my leave, convicted by you of a capital crime,
 whereas they stand forever convicted by the truth of wickedness and 5
 injustice. And just as I accept my penalty, so must they. Perhaps, things
had to turn out this way, and I suppose it's good they have.

Next, I want to make a prophecy to those who convicted me. 39c
 Indeed, I'm now at the point at which men prophesy most—when
 they're about to die. I say to you men who condemned me to death
 that as soon as I'm dead vengeance will come upon you, and it will be
 much harsher, by Zeus, than the vengeance you take in killing me. 5
 You did this now in the belief that you'll escape giving an account of
 your lives. But I say that quite the opposite will happen to you. There
 will be more people to test you, whom I now restrain, though you 39d
 didn't notice my doing so. And they'll be all the harsher on you, since
 they're younger, and you'll resent it all the more. You see, if you imag-
 ine that by killing people you'll prevent anyone from reproaching you
 for not living in the right way, you're not thinking straight. In fact, to 5
 escape is neither possible nor noble. On the contrary, what's best and
 easiest isn't to put down other people, but to prepare oneself to be the

best one can. With that prophecy to those of you who voted to con-
 10 vict me, I take my leave.

39e However, I'd gladly discuss this result with those who voted for my
 acquittal while the officers of the court are busy and I'm not yet on
 my way to the place where I must die. Please stay with me, gentle-
 men, just for that short time. After all, there's nothing to prevent us
 5 from having a talk with one another while it's still in our power. To
 40a you whom I regard as friends I'm willing to show the meaning of
 what has just now happened to me. You see, gentlemen of the jury—
 for in calling *you* "jurors" I no doubt use the term correctly—an
 amazing thing has happened to me. In previous times, the usual
 5 prophecies of my daimonic sign were always very frequent, opposing
 me even on trivial matters, if I was about to do something that wasn't
 right. Now, however, something has happened to me, as you can see
 for yourselves, that one might think to be, and that's generally
 regarded as being, the worst of all bad things. Yet the god's sign didn't
 40b oppose me when I left home this morning, or when I came up here
 to the law court, or anywhere in my speech when I was about to say
 something, even though in other discussions it has often stopped me
 in the middle of what I was saying. Now, however, where this affair is
 5 concerned, it has opposed me in nothing I either said or did.

What, then, do I suppose is the explanation for that? I'll tell you.
 You see, it's likely that what has happened to me is a good thing and
 that those of you who suppose death to be bad make an incorrect
 40c supposition. I've strong evidence of this, since there's no way my
 usual sign would have failed to oppose me, if I weren't about to
 achieve something good.

But let's bear in mind that the following is also a strong reason to
 5 hope that death may be something good. Being dead is one of two
 things: either the dead are nothing, as it were, and have no awareness
 whatsoever of anything at all; or else, as we're told, it's some sort of
 change, a migration of the soul from here to another place. Now, if
 there's in fact no awareness, but it's like sleep—the kind in which the
 40d sleeper has no dream whatsoever—then death would be an amazing
 advantage. For I imagine that if someone had to pick a night in which
 he slept so soundly that he didn't even dream and had to compare all
 5 the other nights and days of his life with that one, and then, having
 considered the matter, had to say how many days or nights of his life
 he had spent better or more pleasantly than that night—I imagine

that not just some private individual, but even the great king,¹⁰⁴
 would find them easy to count compared to the other days and 40e
 nights. Well, if death's like that, *I* say it's an advantage, since, in that
 case, the whole of time would seem no longer than a single night.

On the other hand, if death's a sort of journey from here to another
 place, and if what we're told is true, and all who've died are indeed 5
 there, what could be a greater good than that, gentlemen of the jury? If 41a
 on arriving in Hades and leaving behind the people who claim to be
 jurors here, one's going to find those who are truly jurors or judges, the
 very ones who are said to sit in judgment there too—Minos, Rhada-
 manthys, Aeacus, Triptolemus,¹⁰⁵ and all the other demigods who were
 just in their own lifetimes—would the journey be a wretched one? 5

Or again, what would any one of you not give to talk to Orpheus
 and Museus, Hesiod and Homer?¹⁰⁶ I'd be willing to die many times
 over, if that were true. You see, for myself, at any rate, spending time
 there would be amazing; when I met Palamedes¹⁰⁷ or Ajax, the son 41b
 of Telemon,¹⁰⁸ or anyone else of old who died because of an unjust

104. The king of Persia, whose wealth and power made him a popular exemplar of human success and happiness (*Gorgias* 470e4–9; *Euthydemus* 274a6–7; *Sophist* 230d8–e3; *Laws* 693d1–696a4).

105. Minos was a legendary king of Crete. He judges among the dead in Hades as he did among the living—though not for wrongs they committed in this life. Rhadamanthys is usually thought to judge not in Hades but in the Isles of the Blessed. Aeacus is the judge and lawgiver of Aegina and an arbiter among the gods. Triptolemus, a hero from Eleusis, had a prominent role in mystery cults.

106. Orpheus was a legendary bard and founder of the mystical religion of Orphism. Museus, usually associated with Orpheus, was also a legendary bard. Hesiod, an early Greek poet, is the author of *Theogony* (a work on the genealogy of the gods) and *Works and Days* (a work of practical advice and moral suasion). Homer, the greatest Greek epic poet, is the author of the *Iliad* (which deals with events in the war between the Greeks and the Trojans) and the *Odyssey* (which deals with the adventures of Odysseus [41c1 note] during his journey home from the Trojan War).

107. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides all wrote tragedies named after him, and Gorgias (19e3 note) wrote a defense of him. Odysseus (41c1 note) hid gold in his tent, forged a letter that compromised him, accused him of treason, and had him stoned to death.

108. Ajax was cheated of the armor of Achilles in competition with Odysseus (41c1 note). Driven mad, as a result of this injustice, he committed suicide. Sophocles' *Ajax* deals with these events.

verdict, I could compare my own experience with theirs—as I suppose it wouldn't be unpleasing to do. And in particular, the most important thing: I could spend time examining and searching people there, just as I do here, to find out who among them is wise, and who thinks he is, but isn't.

What wouldn't one give, gentlemen of the jury, to be able to examine the leader of the great expedition against Troy,¹⁰⁹ or Odysseus,¹¹⁰ or Sisyphus,¹¹¹ or countless other men and women one could mention? To talk to them there, to associate with them and examine them, wouldn't that be inconceivable happiness? In any case, the people there certainly don't kill one for doing it. For if what we're told is true, the people there are both happier in all other respects than the people here and also deathless for the remainder of time.

But you too, gentlemen of the jury, should be of good hope in the face of death, and bear in mind this single truth: nothing bad can happen to a good man, whether in life or in death, nor are the gods unconcerned about his troubles. What has happened to me hasn't happened by chance; rather, it's clear to me that to die now and escape my troubles was a better thing for me. It was for this very reason that my sign never opposed me. And so, for my part, I'm not at all angry with those who voted to condemn me or with my accusers. And yet this wasn't what they had in mind when they were condemning and accusing me. No, they thought to harm me—and for that they deserve to be blamed.

This small favor, however, I ask of them.¹¹² When my sons come of age, gentlemen, punish them by harassing them in the very same way that I harassed you, if they seem to you to take care of wealth or anything before virtue, if they think they're someone when they're no one. Reproach them, just as I reproached you: tell them that they don't care for the things they should and think they're someone when

109. Agamemnon, king of Mycenae.

110. Odysseus is a legendary hero of the Trojan War, prominent in Homer's *Iliad* and central to his *Odyssey*. He was as famous for his cunning as for his skill in battle.

111. Sisyphus is a legendary king and founder of Corinth. A trickster who tried to cheat death, he was punished in Hades by having to roll a boulder to the top of a hill, only to have to do so over and over again, since it always rolled back down. A spurious work in the Platonic canon is named after him.

112. Not just the jurors who voted to condemn Socrates, presumably, but as "gentlemen" in the next sentence suggests, the entire jury.

they're worth nothing. If you will do that, I'll have received my own just deserts from you, as will my sons. 42a

But now it's time to leave, I to die and you to live. Which of us goes to the better thing, however, is unclear to everyone except the god. 5