

Apology of Socrates to the Jury

Xenophon

Greek original

Σωκράτους δὲ ἄξιόν μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι μεμνησθαι καὶ ὡς ἐπειδὴ ἐκλήθη εἰς τὴν δίκην ἐβουλεύσατο περὶ τε τῆς ἀπολογίας καὶ τῆς τελευτῆς τοῦ βίου. γεγράφασι μὲν οὖν περὶ τούτου καὶ ἄλλοι καὶ πάντες ἔτυχον τῆς μεγαληγορίας αὐτοῦ· ὧ καὶ δῆλον ὅτι τῷ ὄντι οὕτως ἐρρήθη ὑπὸ Σωκράτους. ἀλλ' ὅτι ἤδη ἑαυτῷ ἠγεῖτο αἰρετώτερον εἶναι τοῦ βίου θάνατον, τοῦτο οὐ διεσαφήνισαν· ὥστε ἀφρονεστέρα αὐτοῦ φαίνεται εἶναι ἢ μεγαληγορία.

Ἑρμογένης μέντοι ὁ Ἱππονίκου ἐταῖρός τε ἦν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐξήγγειλε περὶ αὐτοῦ τοιαῦτα ὥστε πρέπουσαν φαίνεσθαι τὴν μεγαληγορίαν αὐτοῦ τῇ διανοίᾳ. ἐκεῖνος γὰρ ἔφη ὁρῶν αὐτὸν περὶ πάντων μᾶλλον διαλεγόμενον ἢ περὶ τῆς δίκης εἰπεῖν·

οὐκ ἐχρῆν μέντοι σκοπεῖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ ὅ τι ἀπολογήσῃ; τὸν δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀποκρίνασθαι· οὐ γὰρ δοκῶ σοι ἀπολογεῖσθαι μελετῶν διαβεβιωκέναι; ἐπεὶ δ' αὐτὸν ἐρέσθαι· πῶς; ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄδικον διαγεγένημαι ποιῶν· ἦνπερ νομίζω μελέτην εἶναι καλλίστην ἀπολογίας.

ἐπεὶ δὲ αὐτὸν πάλιν λέγειν· οὐχ ὁρᾷς τὰ Ἀθηναίων δικαστήρια ὡς πολλάκις μὲν οὐδὲν ἀδικοῦντας λόγῳ παραχθέντες ἀπέκτειναν, πολλάκις δὲ ἀδικοῦντας ἢ ἐκ τοῦ λόγου οἰκτίσαντες ἢ ἐπιχαρίτως εἰπόντας ἀπέλυσαν; ἀλλὰ ναι μὰ Δία, φάναι αὐτόν, καὶ δις ἤδη ἐπιχειρήσαντός μου σκοπεῖν περὶ τῆς ἀπολογίας ἐναντιοῦταί μοι τὸ δαιμόνιον.

ὡς δὲ αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν· θαυμαστὰ λέγεις, τὸν δ' αὖ ἀποκρίνασθαι· ἢ θαυμαστὸν νομίζεις εἰ καὶ τῷ θεῷ δοκεῖ ἐμὲ βέλτιον εἶναι ἢ δὴ τελευτᾶν; οὐκ οἶσθα ὅτι μέχρι μὲν τοῦδε οὐδενὶ ἀνθρώπων ὑφείμην ἂν βέλτιον ἐμοῦ βεβιωκέναι; ὅπερ γὰρ ἡδιστόν ἐστιν, ἡδὲν ὁσίως μοι καὶ δικαίως ἅπαντα τὸν βίον βεβιωμένον· ὥστε ἰσχυρῶς ἀγάμενος ἐμαυτὸν ταῦτα ἡὔρισκον καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὶ συγγιγνομένους γιγνώσκοντας περὶ ἐμοῦ.

νῦν δὲ εἰ ἔτι προβήσεται ἡ ἡλικία, οἷδ' ὅτι ἀνάγκη ἔσται τὰ τοῦ γήρωος ἐπιτελεῖσθαι καὶ ὁρᾶν τε χεῖρον καὶ ἀκούειν ἥττον καὶ δυσμαθέστερον εἶναι καὶ ὦν ἔμαθον ἐπιλησμονέστερον. ἂν δὲ αἰσθάνωμαι χείρων γιγνόμενος καὶ καταμέμφωμαι ἐμαυτόν, πῶς ἂν, εἰπεῖν, ἐγὼ ἔτι ἂν ἡδέως βιοτεύοιμι;

ἴσως δέ τοι, φάναι αὐτόν, καὶ ὁ θεὸς δι' εὐμένειαν προξενεῖ μοι οὐ μόνον τὸ ἐν καιρῷ τῆς ἡλικίας καταλῦσαι τὸν βίον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἢ ῥᾶστα. ἂν γὰρ νῦν κατακριθῇ μοι, δῆλον ὅτι ἐξέσται μοι τῇ τελευτῇ χρῆσθαι ἢ ῥάστη μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν τούτου ἐπιμεληθέντων κέκριται, ἀπραγμονεστάτη δὲ τοῖς φίλοις, πλεῖστον δὲ πόθον ἐμποιοῦσα τῶν τελευτώντων. ὅταν γὰρ ἄσχημον μὲν μηδὲν μηδὲ δυσχερὲς ἐν ταῖς γνώμαις τῶν παρόντων καταλείπηται τις, ὑγιὲς δὲ τὸ σῶμα ἔχων καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν δυναμένην φιλοφρονεῖσθαι ἀπομαραίνεται, πῶς οὐκ ἀνάγκη τοῦτον ποθινὸν εἶναι;

ὀρθῶς δὲ οἱ θεοὶ τότε μοι ἠναντιοῦντο, φάναι αὐτόν, τῇ τοῦ λόγου ἐπισκέψει ὅτε ἐδόκει ἡμῖν ζητητέα εἶναι ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου τὰ ἀποφευκτικά. εἰ γὰρ τοῦτο διεπραξάμην, δῆλον ὅτι ἡτοιμασάμην ἂν ἀντὶ τοῦ ἤδη λῆξαι τοῦ βίου ἢ νόσοις ἀλγυνόμενος τελευτῆσαι ἢ γήρᾳ, εἰς ὃ πάντα τὰ χαλεπὰ συρρεῖ καὶ μάλα ἔρημα τῶν εὐφροσυνῶν.

μὰ Δί', εἰπεῖν αὐτόν, ὦ Ἑρμόγενες, ἐγὼ ταῦτα οὐδὲ προθυμήσομαι, ἀλλ' ὅσων νομίζω τετυχηκέναι καλῶν καὶ παρὰ θεῶν καὶ παρ' ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἦν ἐγὼ δόξαν ἔχω περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ, ταύτην ἀναφαίνων εἰ βαρυνῶ τοὺς δικαστάς, αἰρήσομαι τελευτᾶν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀνελευθέρως τὸ ζῆν ἔτι προσαιτῶν κερδᾶναι τὸν πολὺ χεῖρω βίον ἀντὶ θανάτου.

οὕτως δὲ γνόντα αὐτὸν ἔφη [εἰπεῖν], ἐπειδὴ κατηγόρησαν αὐτοῦ οἱ ἀντίδικοι ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὲν ἡ πόλις νομίζει θεοὺς οὐ νομίζω, ἕτερα δὲ καινὰ δαιμόνια εἰσφέρει καὶ τοὺς νέους διαφθείρει, παρελθόντα εἰπεῖν·

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ, ὦ ἄνδρες, τοῦτο μὲν πρῶτον θαυμάζω Μελήτου, ὅτῳ ποτὲ γνοὺς λέγει ὡς ἐγὼ οὐκ ἡ πόλις νομίζει θεοὺς οὐ νομίζω· ἐπεὶ θύοντά γε με ἐν ταῖς κοιναῖς ἑορταῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν δημοσίων βωμῶν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι οἱ παρατυγχάνοντες ἐώρων καὶ αὐτὸς Μέλητος, εἰ ἐβούλετο.

καινὰ γε μὴν δαιμόνια πῶς ἂν ἐγὼ εἰσφέρωμι λέγων ὅτι θεοῦ μοι φωνὴ φαίνεται σημαίνουσα ὅ τι χρὴ ποιεῖν; καὶ γὰρ οἱ φθόγγους οἰωνῶν καὶ οἱ φήμαις ἀνθρώπων χρώμενοι φωναῖς δήπου τεκμαίρονται. βροντὰς δὲ ἀμφιλέξει τις ἢ μὴ φωνεῖν ἢ μὴ μέγιστον οἰωνιστήριον εἶναι; ἢ δὲ Πυθοῖ ἐν τῷ τρίποδι ἰέρεια οὐ καὶ αὐτὴ φωνὴ τὰ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ διαγγέλλει;

ἀλλὰ μέντοι καὶ τὸ προειδέναι γε τὸν θεὸν τὸ μέλλον καὶ τὸ προσημαίνειν ὥς βούλεται, καὶ τοῦτο, ὥσπερ ἐγὼ φημι, οὕτω πάντες καὶ λέγουσι καὶ νομίζουσιν. ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν οἰωνοὺς τε καὶ φήμας καὶ συμβόλους τε καὶ μάντις ὀνομάζουσι τοὺς προσημαίνοντας εἶναι, ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο δαιμόνιον καλῶ καὶ οἶμαι οὕτως ὀνομάζων καὶ ἀληθέστερα καὶ ὁσιώτερα λέγειν τῶν τοῖς ὄρνισιν ἀνατιθέντων τὴν τῶν θεῶν δύναμιν. ὥς γε μὴν οὐ ψεύδομαι κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦτ' ἔχω τεκμήριον· καὶ γὰρ τῶν φίλων πολλοῖς δὴ ἐξαγγελίας τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ συμβουλευμάτων οὐδεπώποτε ψευδόμενος ἐφάνην.

ἐπεὶ δὲ ταῦτα ἀκούοντες οἱ δικασταὶ ἐθορύβουν, οἱ μὲν ἀπιστοῦντες τοῖς λεγομένοις, οἱ δὲ καὶ φθονοῦντες, εἰ καὶ παρὰ θεῶν μειζόνων ἢ αὐτοῖς τυγχάνοι, πάλιν εἰπεῖν τὸν Σωκράτην· ἄγε δὴ ἀκούσατε καὶ ἄλλα, ἵνα ἔτι μᾶλλον οἱ βουλόμενοι ὑμῶν ἀπιστῶσι τῷ ἐμὲ τετιμῆσθαι ὑπὸ δαιμόνων. Χαιρεφῶντος γάρ ποτε ἐπερωτῶντος ἐν Δελφοῖς περὶ ἐμοῦ πολλῶν παρόντων ἀνεῖλεν ὁ Ἀπόλλων μηδένα εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἐμοῦ μῆτε ἐλευθεριώτερον μῆτε δικαιοτέρον μῆτε σωφρονέστερον.

ὥς δ' αὖ ταῦτ' ἀκούσαντες οἱ δικασταὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον εἰκότως ἐθορύβουν, αὖθις εἰπεῖν τὸν Σωκράτην· ἀλλὰ μείζω μὲν, ὦ ἄνδρες, εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν χρησμοῖς περὶ Λυκούργου τοῦ Λακεδαιμονίου νομοθετήσαντος ἢ περὶ ἐμοῦ. λέγεται γὰρ εἰς τὸν ναὸν εἰσιόντα προσεῖπεῖν αὐτόν· φροντίζω πότερα θεὸν σε εἶπω ἢ ἄνθρωπον. ἐμὲ δὲ θεῶ μὲν οὐκ εἵκασεν, ἀνθρώπων δὲ πολλῶν προέκρινεν ὑπερφέρειν. ὅμως δὲ ὑμεῖς μηδὲ ταῦτ' εἰκῇ πιστεύσητε τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλὰ καθ' ἕνα καὶ ἕνα ἐπισκοπεῖτε ὧν εἶπεν ὁ θεός.

τίνα μὲν γὰρ ἐπίστασθε ἥττον ἐμοῦ δουλεύοντα ταῖς τοῦ σώματος ἐπιθυμίαις; τίνα δὲ ἀνθρώπων ἐλευθεριώτερον, ὃς παρ' οὐδενὸς οὔτε δῶρα οὔτε μισθὸν δέχομαι; δικαιοτέρον δὲ τίνα ἂν εἰκότως νομίσατε τοῦ πρὸς τὰ παρόντα συνηρμωμένου, ὡς τῶν ἀλλοτρίων μηδενὸς προσδεῖσθαι; σοφὸν δὲ πῶς οὐκ ἂν τις εἰκότως ἄνδρα φήσειεν εἶναι ὃς ἐξ ὅτουπερ ξυνιέναι τὰ λεγόμενα ἡρξάμην οὐπώποτε διέλειπον καὶ ζητῶν καὶ μανθάνων ὅ τι ἐδυνάμην ἀγαθόν;

ὥς δὲ οὐ μάτην ἐπόνουν οὐ δοκεῖ ὑμῖν καὶ τάδε τεκμήρια εἶναι, τὸ πολλοὺς μὲν

πολίτας τῶν ἀρετῆς ἐφιεμένων, πολλοὺς δὲ ξένων, ἐκ πάντων προαιρεῖσθαι ἐμοὶ
ξυνεῖναι; ἐκείνου δὲ τί φήσομεν αἷτιον εἶναι, τοῦ πάντας εἰδέναι ὅτι ἐγὼ ἥκιστ'
ἂν ἔχοιμι χρήματα ἀντιδιδόναι, ὅμως πολλοὺς ἐπιθυμεῖν ἐμοί τι δωρεῖσθαι; τὸ δ'
ἐμὲ μὲν μηδ' ὑφ' ἐνὸς ἀπαιτεῖσθαι εὐεργεσίας, ἐμοὶ δὲ πολλοὺς ὁμολογεῖν χάριτας
ὀφείλιν;

τὸ δ' ἐν τῇ πολιορκίᾳ τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους οἰκτίζειν ἑαυτούς, ἐμὲ δὲ μηδὲν ἀπορώτερον
διάγειν ἢ ὅτε τὰ μάλιστα ἡ πόλις ἡδαιμόνει; τὸ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους μὲν τὰς εὐπαθείας
ἐκ τῆς ἀγορᾶς πολυτελεῖς πορίζεσθαι, ἐμὲ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄνευ δαπάνης ἡδίου
ἐκείνων μηχανᾶσθαι; εἴ γε μὴν ὅσα εἴρηκα περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ μηδεὶς δύναται ἂν
ἐξελέγξαι με ὥς ψεύδομαι, πῶς οὐκ ἂν ἤδη δικαίως καὶ ὑπὸ θεῶν καὶ ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων
ἐπαινοῖμην;

ἀλλ' ὅμως σύ με φῆς, ὦ Μέλητε, τοιαῦτα ἐπιτηδεύοντα τοὺς νέους διαφθείρειν;
καίτοι ἐπιστάμεθα μὲν δήπου τίνες εἰσὶ νέων διαφθοραί· σὺ δὲ εἶπες εἴ τινα οἴσθαι
ὑπ' ἐμοῦ γεγενημένον ἢ ἐξ εὐσεβοῦς ἀνόσιον ἢ ἐκ σώφρονος ὑβριστὴν ἢ ἐξ εὐδαιμόνου
πολυδάπανον ἢ [ὥς] ἐκ μετριοπότου οἰνόφλυγα ἢ ἐκ φιλοπόνου μαλακὸν
ἢ ἄλλης πονηρᾶς ἡδονῆς ἡττημένον.

ἀλλὰ ναὶ μὰ Δί', ἔφη ὁ Μέλητος, ἐκείνους οἶδα οὓς σὺ πέπεικας σοὶ πείθεσθαι
μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς γειναμένοις. ὁμολογῶ, φάναι τὸν Σωκράτην, περὶ γε παιδείας· τοῦτο
γὰρ ἴσασιν ἐμοὶ μεμεληκός. περὶ δὲ ὑγείας τοῖς ἰατροῖς μᾶλλον οἱ ἄνθρωποι
πείθονται ἢ τοῖς γονεῦσι· καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις γε πάντες δήπου οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι
τοῖς φρονιμώτατα λέγουσι πείθονται μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς προσήκουσιν. οὐ γὰρ δὴ καὶ
στρατηγούς αἰρεῖσθε καὶ πρὸ πατέρων καὶ πρὸ ἀδελφῶν, καὶ ναὶ μὰ Δία γε ὑμεῖς πρὸ
ὑμῶν αὐτῶν, οὓς ἂν ἡγήσθε περὶ τῶν πολεμικῶν φρονιμωτάτους εἶναι; οὕτω γάρ,
φάναι τὸν Μέλητον, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ συμφέρει καὶ νομίζεται.

οὐκοῦν, εἶπεῖν τὸν Σωκράτην, θαυμαστὸν καὶ τοῦτό σοι δοκεῖ εἶναι, τὸ ἐν μὲν ταῖς
ἄλλαις πράξεσι μὴ μόνον ἰσομοιρίας τυγχάνειν τοὺς κρατίστους, ἀλλὰ καὶ
προτετιμῆσθαι, ἐμὲ δέ, ὅτι περὶ τοῦ μεγίστου ἀγαθοῦ ἀνθρώποις περὶ παιδείας,
βέλτιστος εἶναι ὑπὸ τινων προκρίνομαι, τούτου ἕνεκα θανάτου ὑπὸ σοῦ διώκεσθαι;

ἐρρήθη μὲν δῆλον ὅτι τούτων πλείω ὑπὸ τε αὐτοῦ
καὶ τῶν συναγορευόντων φίλων αὐτῷ. ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐ τὰ πάντα εἶπεῖν τὰ ἐκ τῆς δίκης
ἐσπούδασα, ἀλλ' ἤρκεσέ μοι δηλῶσαι ὅτι Σωκράτης τὸ μὲν μήτε περὶ θεοὺς ἀσεβῆσαι
μήτε περὶ ἀνθρώπους ἄδικος φανῆναι περὶ παντὸς ἐποιεῖτο·

τὸ δὲ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν οὐκ ᾤετο λιπαρητέον εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ καιρὸν ἤδη ἐνόμιζεν ἑαυτῷ
τελευτᾶν. ὅτι δὲ οὕτως ἐγίγνωσκε καταδηλότερον ἐγένετο, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἡ δίκη
κατεψηφίσθη. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ κελευόμενος ὑποτιμᾶσθαι οὔτε αὐτὸς ὑπετιμῆσατο οὔτε
τοὺς φίλους εἶασεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔλεγεν ὅτι τὸ ὑποτιμᾶσθαι ὁμολογοῦντος εἶη ἀδικεῖν.
ἔπειτα τῶν ἐταίρων ἐκκλέψαι βουλομένων αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐφείπετο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπισκῶψαι
ἐδόκει ἐρόμενος εἴ που εἰδείεν τι χωρίον ἔξω τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἔνθα οὐ προσβατὸν
θανάτῳ.

ὥς δὲ τέλος εἶχεν ἡ δίκη, εἶπεῖν αὐτόν· ἀλλ', ὦ
ἄνδρες, τοὺς μὲν διδάσκοντας τοὺς μάρτυρας ὥς χρὴ ἐπιπορκοῦντας
καταψευδομαρτυρεῖν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοὺς πειθομένους τούτοις ἀνάγκη ἐστὶ πολλὴν ἑαυτοῖς
συνειδέναι ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν· ἐμοὶ δὲ τί προσήκει νῦν μείον φρονεῖν ἢ πρὶν

κατακριθῆναι, μηδὲν ἐλεγχθέντι ὡς πεποιθήκα τι ὣν ἐγράψαντό με; οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔγωγε ἀντὶ Διὸς καὶ Ἥρας καὶ τῶν σὺν τούτοις θεῶν οὔτε θύων τισὶ καινοῖς δαίμοσιν οὔτε ὁμνὺς οὔτε νομίζων ἄλλους θεοὺς ἀναπέφνηνα.

τούς γε μὴν νέους πῶς ἂν διαφθείροιμι καρτερίαν καὶ εὐτέλειαν προσεθίζων; ἐφ' οἷς γε μὴν ἔργοις κεῖται θάνατος ἢ ζημία, ἱεροσυλία, τοιχωρυχία, ἀνδραποδίσει, πόλεως προδοσία, οὐδ' αὐτοὶ οἱ ἀντίδικοι τούτων πρᾶξαί τι κατ' ἐμοῦ φασιν. ὥστε θαυμαστὸν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ εἶναι ὅπως ποτὲ ἐφάνη ὑμῖν τοῦ θανάτου ἔργον ἄξιον ἐμοὶ εἰργασμένον.

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μέντοι ὅτι ἀδίκως ἀποθνήσκω, διὰ τοῦτο μείον φρονητέον· οὐ γὰρ ἐμοὶ ἀλλὰ τοῖς καταγνοῦσι τοῦτο αἰσχρόν [γάρ] ἐστι. παραμυθεῖται δ' ἔτι με καὶ Παλαμήδης ὁ παραπλησίως ἐμοὶ τελευτήσας· ἔτι γὰρ καὶ νῦν πολὺ καλλίους ὕμνους παρέχεται Ὀδυσσέως τοῦ ἀδίκως ἀποκτείναντος αὐτόν· οἷδ' ὅτι καὶ ἐμοὶ μαρτυρήσεται ὑπὸ τε τοῦ ἐπιόντος καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ παρεληλυθότος χρόνου ὅτι ἡδίκησα μὲν οὐδένα πώποτε οὐδὲ πονηρότερον ἐποίησα, εὐηργέτουν δὲ τοὺς ἐμοὶ διαλεγομένους προῖκα διδάσκων ὅ τι ἐδυνάμην ἀγαθόν.

εἰπὼν δὲ ταῦτα μάλα ὁμολογουμένως δὴ τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἀπήει καὶ ὄμμασι καὶ σχήματι καὶ βαδίσματι φαιδρός. ὥς δὲ ἦσθετο ἄρα τοὺς παρεπομένους δακρύοντας, τί τοῦτο; εἰπεῖν αὐτόν, ἧ ἄρτι δακρύετε; οὐ γὰρ πάλαι ἴστε ὅτι ἐξ ὅτουπερ ἐγενόμην κατεψηφισμένος ἦν μου ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως ὁ θάνατος; ἀλλὰ μέντοι εἰ μὲν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιρρεόντων προαπόλλυμαι, δῆλον ὅτι ἐμοὶ καὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς εὖνοις λυπητέον· εἰ δὲ χαλεπῶν προσδοκωμένων καταλύω τὸν βίον, ἐγὼ μὲν οἶμαι ὡς εὐπραγοῦντος ἐμοῦ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν εὐθυμητέον εἶναι.

παρὼν δὲ τις Ἀπολλόδωρος, ἐπιθυμητῆς μὲν ὢν ἰσχυρῶς αὐτοῦ, ἄλλως δ' εὐήθης, εἶπεν ἄρα· ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἔγωγε, ὦ Σώκρατες, χαλεπώτατα φέρω ὅτι ὀρῶ σε ἀδίκως ἀποθνήσκοντα. τὸν δὲ λέγεται καταψήσαντα αὐτοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰπεῖν· σὺ δέ, ὦ φίλτατε Ἀπολλόδωρε, μᾶλλον ἐβούλου με ὀρᾶν δικαίως ἢ ἀδίκως ἀποθνήσκοντα; καὶ ἅμα ἐπιγελάσαι.

λέγεται δὲ καὶ Ἄνυτον παριόντα ἰδὼν εἰπεῖν· ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἀνὴρ ὅδε κυδρός, ὡς μέγα τι καὶ καλὸν διαπεπραγμένος, εἰ ἀπέκτονέ με, ὅτι αὐτὸν τῶν μεγίστων ὑπὸ τῆς πόλεως ὀρῶν ἀξιούμενον οὐκ ἔφην χρῆναι τὸν υἱὸν περὶ βύρσας παιδεύειν. ὡς μοχθηρὸς οὗτος, ἔφη, ὃς οὐκ ἔοικεν εἰδέναί ὅτι ὀπότερος ἡμῶν καὶ συμφορώτερα καὶ καλλίω εἰς τὸν αἰὶ χρόνον διαπέπρακται, οὗτός ἐστι καὶ ὁ νικῶν.

ἀλλὰ μέντοι, φάναι αὐτόν, ἀνέθηκε μὲν καὶ Ὀμηρος ἔστιν οἷς τῶν ἐν καταλύσει τοῦ βίου προγιγνώσκειν τὰ μέλλοντα, βούλομαι δὲ καὶ ἐγὼ χρησμοδῆσαί τι. συνεγενόμην γὰρ ποτε βραχέα τῷ Ἀνύτου υἱῷ, καὶ ἔδοξέ μοι οὐκ ἄρρωστος τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι· ὥστε φημὶ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῇ δουλοπρεπεῖ διατριβῇ ἣν ὁ πατήρ αὐτῷ παρεσκεύακεν οὐ διαμενεῖν· διὰ δὲ τὸ μηδένα ἔχειν σπουδαῖον ἐπιμελητὴν προσπεσεῖσθαι τινι αἰσχυρᾷ ἐπιθυμίᾳ, καὶ προβήσεσθαι μέντοι πόρρω μοχθηρίας.

ταῦτα δ' εἰπὼν οὐκ ἐψεύσατο, ἀλλ' ὁ νεανίσκος ἦσθεις οἶνω οὔτε νυκτὸς οὔτε ἡμέρας ἐπαύετο πίνων, καὶ τέλος οὔτε τῇ ἑαυτοῦ πόλει οὔτε τοῖς φίλοις οὔτε αὐτῷ ἄξιος οὐδενὸς ἐγένετο. Ἄνυτος μὲν δὴ διὰ τὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ πονηρὰν παιδείαν καὶ διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἀγνωμοσύνην ἔτι καὶ τετελευτηκῶς τυγχάνει κακοδοξίας.

Σωκράτης δὲ διὰ τὸ μεγαλύνειν ἑαυτὸν ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ φθόνον ἐπαγόμενος μᾶλλον

καταψηφίσασθαι ἑαυτοῦ ἐποίησε τοὺς δικαστάς. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν δοκεῖ θεοφιλοῦς μοίρας τετυχηκέναι· τοῦ μὲν γὰρ βίου τὸ χαλεπώτατον ἀπέλιπε, τῶν δὲ θανάτων τοῦ ῥάστου ἔτυχεν.

ἐπεδείξατο δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν ῥώμην· ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἔγνω τοῦ ἔτι ζῆν τὸ τεθνάναι αὐτῷ κρεῖττον εἶναι, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ πρὸς τᾶλλα τὰγαθὰ προσάντης ἦν, οὐδὲ πρὸς τὸν θάνατον ἐμαλακίσατο, ἀλλ' ἱλαρῶς καὶ προσεδέχετο αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπετελέσατο.

ἐγὼ μὲν δὴ κατανοῶν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τὴν τε σοφίαν καὶ τὴν γενναιότητα οὔτε μὴ μεμνησθαι δύναμαι αὐτοῦ οὔτε μεμνημένος μὴ οὐκ ἐπαινεῖν. εἰ δέ τις τῶν ἀρετῆς ἐφιμένων ὠφελιμωτέρῳ τινὶ Σωκράτους συνεγένετο, ἐκεῖνον ἐγὼ τὸν ἄνδρα ἀξιομακαριστότατον νομίζω.

English translation

It seems to me fitting to hand down to memory,
furthermore, how Socrates, on being
indicted, deliberated on his defence and on his end. It is true that others have
written about this, and that all of them have reproduced the loftiness of his
words,—a fact which proves that his utterance really was of the character
intimated;—but they have not shown clearly that he had now come to the
conclusion that for him death was more to be desired than life; and hence his
lofty utterance appears rather ill-considered.

Hermogenes, the son of Hipponicus, however, was a companion of his and has given
us reports of such a nature as to show that the sublimity of his speech was
appropriate to the resolve he had made. For he stated that on seeing
Socrates discussing any and
every subject rather than the trial, he had said:

Socrates, ought you not to be giving
some thought to what defence you are going to make?

That
Socrates had at first replied,

Why, do I not seem to you to have spent my whole life in preparing to defend
myself?

Then when he asked,

How so?

he had said,

Because all my life I have
been guiltless of wrong-doing; and that I consider the finest preparation for a
defence.

Then when Hermogenes again asked,

Do you not observe that the Athenian courts have often been carried away by an
eloquent speech and have condemned innocent men to death, and often on the other
hand the guilty have been acquitted either because their plea aroused compassion
or because their speech was witty?

Yes, indeed!

he had answered;

and I have
tried twice already to meditate on my defence, but my divine sign interposes.

And when Hermogenes observed,

That is a surprising statement,

he had replied,

Do you think it surprising that even God holds it better for me to die now? Do you not know that I would refuse to concede that any man has lived a better life than I have up to now? For I have realized that my whole life has been spent in righteousness toward God and man,—a fact that affords the greatest satisfaction; and so I have felt a deep self-respect and have discovered that my associates hold corresponding sentiments toward me.

But now, if my years are prolonged, I know that the frailties of old age will inevitably be realized,—that my vision must be less perfect and my hearing less keen, that I shall be slower to learn and more forgetful of what I have learned.

If I perceive my decay and take to complaining, how,

he had continued,

could I

any longer take pleasure in life?

Perhaps,

he added,

God in his kindness is taking my part and securing me the opportunity of ending my life not only in season but also in the way that is easiest. For if I am condemned now, it will clearly be my privilege to suffer a death that is adjudged by those who have superintended this matter to be not only the easiest but also the least irksome to one's friends and one that implants in them the deepest feeling of loss for the dead. For when a person leaves behind in the hearts of his companions no remembrance to cause a blush or a pang, but dissolution comes while he still possesses a sound body and a spirit capable of showing kindness, how could such a one fail to be sorely missed?

It was with good reason,

Socrates had continued,

that the gods opposed my studying up my speech at the time when we held that by fair means or foul we must find some plea that would effect my acquittal. For if I had achieved this end, it is clear that instead of now passing out of life, I should merely have provided for dying in the throes of illness or vexed by old age, the sink into which all distresses flow, unrelieved by any joy.

As Heaven is my witness, Hermogenes,

he had gone on,

I shall never court that

fate; but if I am going to offend the jury by declaring all the blessings that I feel gods and men have bestowed on me, as well as my personal opinion of myself, I shall prefer death to begging meanly for longer life and thus gaining a life far less worthy in exchange for death.

Hermogenes stated that with this resolve Socrates came before the jury after his adversaries had charged him with not believing in the gods worshipped by the state and with the introduction of new deities in their stead and with corruption of the young, and replied:

One thing that I marvel at in Meletus, gentlemen, is what may be the basis of his assertion that I do not believe in the gods worshipped by the state; for all who have happened to be near at the time, as well as Meletus himself,—if he so desired, — have seen me sacrificing at the communal festivals and on the public altars.

As for introducing new divinities, how could I be guilty of that merely in asserting that a voice of God is made manifest to me indicating my duty? Surely those who take their omens from the cries of birds and the utterances of men form their judgments on voices. Will any one dispute either that thunder utters its voice, or that it is an omen of the greatest moment? Does not the very priestess who sits on the tripod at Delphi divulge the god's will through a voice?

But more than that, in regard to God's foreknowledge of the future and his forewarning thereof to whomsoever he will, these are the same terms, I assert, that all men use, and this is their belief. The only difference between them and me is that whereas they call the sources of their forewarning birds, utterances, chance meetings, prophets, I call mine a divine thing; and I think that in using such a term I am speaking with more truth and deeper religious feeling than do those who ascribe the gods' power to birds. Now that I do not lie against God I have the following proof: I have revealed to many of my friends the counsels which God has given me, and in no instance has the event shown that I was mistaken.

Hermogenes further reported that when the jurors raised a clamour at hearing these words, some of them disbelieving his statements, others showing jealousy at his receiving greater favours even from the gods than they, Socrates resumed:

Hark ye; let me tell you something more, so that those of you who feel so inclined may have still greater disbelief in my being honoured of Heaven. Once on a time when Chaerephon made inquiry at the Delphic oracle concerning me, in the presence of many people Apollo answered that no man was more free than I, or more just, or more prudent.

When the jurors, naturally enough, made a still

greater tumult on hearing this statement, he said that Socrates again went on:

And yet, gentlemen, the god uttered in oracles greater things of Lycurgus, the Lacedaemonian law-giver, than he did of me. For there is a legend that, as Lycurgus entered the temple, the god thus addressed him: 'I am pondering whether to call you god or man.' Now Apollo did not compare me to a god; he did, however, judge that I far excelled the rest of mankind. However, do not believe the god even in this without due grounds, but examine the god's utterance in detail.

First, who is there in your knowledge that is less a slave to his bodily appetites than I am? Who in the world more free,—for I accept neither gifts nor pay from any one? Whom would you with reason regard as more just than the one so reconciled to his present possessions as to want nothing beside that belongs to another? And would not a person with good reason call me a wise man, who from the time when I began to understand spoken words have never left off seeking after and learning every good thing that I could?

And that my labour has not been in vain do you not think is attested by this fact, that many of my fellow-citizens who strive for virtue and many from abroad choose to associate with me above all other men? And what shall we say is accountable for this fact, that although everybody knows that it is quite impossible for me to repay with money, many people are eager to make me some gift? Or for this, that no demands are made on me by a single person for the repayment of benefits, while many confess that they owe me a debt of gratitude?

Or for this, that during the siege, while others were commiserating their lot, I got along without feeling the pinch of poverty any worse than when the city's prosperity was at its height? Or for this, that while other men get their delicacies in the markets and pay a high price for them, I devise more pleasurable ones from the resources of my soul, with no expenditure of money? And now, if no one can convict me of misstatement in all that I have said of myself, do I not unquestionably merit praise from both gods and men?

But in spite of all, Meletus, do you maintain that I corrupt the young by such practices? And yet surely we know what kinds of corruption affect the young; so you tell us whether you know of any one who under my influence has fallen from piety into impiety, or from sober into wanton conduct, or from moderation in living into extravagance, or from temperate drinking into sottishness, or from strenuousness into effeminacy, or has been overcome of any other base pleasure."

But, by Heaven!

said Meletus:

there is one set of men I know,—those whom you have persuaded to obey you rather than their parents.

I admit it,

he reports

Socrates as replying,

at least

so far as education is concerned; for people know that I have taken an interest in that. But in a question of health, men take the advice of physicians rather than that of their parents; and moreover, in the meetings of the legislative assembly all the people of Athens, without question, follow the advice of those whose words are wisest rather than that of their own relatives. Do you not also elect for your generals, in preference to fathers and brothers,—yes, by Heaven! in preference to your very selves,—those whom you regard as having the greatest wisdom in military affairs?

Yes,

Meletus had said;

for that is both expedient and conventional.

Well, then,

Socrates had rejoined,

does it not seem to you an amazing thing that while in other activities those who excel receive honours not merely on a parity with their fellows but even more marked ones, yet I, because I am adjudged by some people supreme in what is man's greatest blessing,—education,—am being prosecuted by you on a capital charge?

More than this of course was said both by

Socrates himself and by the

friends who joined in his defence. But I have not made it a point to report the whole trial; rather I am satisfied to make it clear that while

Socrates' whole concern was

to keep free from any act of impiety toward the gods or any appearance of wrong-doing toward man, he did not think it meet to beseech the jury to let him escape death; instead, he believed that the time had now come for him to die.

This conviction of his became more evident than ever after the adverse issue of the trial. For, first of all, when he was bidden to name his penalty, he refused personally and forbade his friends to name one, but said that naming the penalty in itself implied an acknowledgment of guilt. Then, when his companions wished to remove him clandestinely from prison, he would not accompany them, but seemed actually to banter them, asking them whether they knew of any spot outside of Attica that was inaccessible to death.

When the trial was over,
Socrates (according to
Hermogenes) remarked:

Well, gentlemen, those who instructed the witnesses that they must bear false witness against me, perjuring themselves to do so, and those who were won over to do this must feel in their hearts a guilty consciousness of great impiety and iniquity; but as for me, why should my spirit be any less exalted now than before my condemnation, since I have not been proved guilty of having done any of the acts mentioned in the indictment? For it has not been shown that I have sacrificed to new deities in the stead of Zeus and Hera and the gods of their company, or that I have invoked ill oaths or mentioned other gods.

And how could I be corrupting the young by habituating them to fortitude and frugality? Now of all the acts for which the laws have prescribed the death-penalty—temple robbery, burglary, enslavement, treason to the state—not even my adversaries themselves charge me with having committed any of these. And so it seems astonishing to me how you could ever have been convinced that I had committed an act meriting death.

But further, my spirit need not be less exalted because I am to be executed unjustly; for the ignominy of that attaches not to me but to those who condemned me. And I get comfort from the case of Palamedes also, who died in circumstances similar to mine; for even yet he affords us far more noble themes for song than does Odysseus, the man who unjustly put him to death. And I know that time to come as well as time past will attest that I, too, far from ever doing any man a wrong or rendering him more wicked, have rather profited those who conversed with me by teaching them, without reward, every good thing that lay in my power.

With these words he departed, blithe in glance, in mien, in gait, as comported well indeed with the words he had just uttered. When he noticed that those who accompanied him were in tears,

What is this?

Hermogenes reports him as asking.

Are you just now beginning to weep? Have you not known all along that from the moment of my birth nature had condemned me to death? Verily, if I am being destroyed before my time while blessings are still pouring in upon me, clearly that should bring grief to me and to my well-wishers; but if I am ending my life when only troubles are in view, my own opinion is that you ought all to feel cheered, in the assurance that my state is happy.

A man named Apollodorus, who was there with him, a very ardent disciple of Socrates, but otherwise simple, exclaimed,

But,
Socrates, what I find it
hardest to bear is that I see you being put to death unjustly!

The other, stroking Apollodorus' head, is said to have replied,
My beloved Apollodorus, was it your preference to see me
put to death justly?

and smiled as he asked the question.

It is said also that he remarked as he saw
Anytus
passing by:

There goes a man who is filled with pride at
the thought that he has accomplished some great and noble end in putting
me to death, because, seeing him honored by the state with the highest
offices, I said that he ought not to confine his son's education to
hides

What a vicious, fellow,
he continued,

not to
know, apparently, that whichever one of us has wrought the more
beneficial and noble deeds for all time, he is the real
victor.

But,
he is reported to have added,

Homer has attributed to some of his heroes
at the moment of dissolution the power to foresee the future; and so I too wish
to utter a prophecy. At one time I had a brief association with the son of
Anytus, and I thought him not lacking in firmness of spirit; and so I predict
that he will not continue in the servile occupation that his father has provided
for him; but through want of a worthy adviser he will fall into some disgraceful
propensity and will surely go far in the career of vice.

In saying this he was not mistaken; the young man, delighting in wine, never left
off drinking night or day, and at last turned out worth nothing to his city,
his friends, or himself. So Anytus, even though dead, still enjoys an evil
repute for his son's mischievous education and for his own hard-heartedness.

And as for Socrates, by exalting himself
before the court, he brought ill-will upon himself and made his conviction by
the jury more certain. Now to me he seems to have met a fate that the gods love;
for he escaped the hardest part of life and met the easiest sort of death.

And he displayed the stalwart nature of his heart; for having once decided that
to die was better for him than to live longer, he did not weaken in the presence
of death (just as he had never set his face against any other thing, either,

that was for his good), but was cheerful not only in the expectation of death but in meeting it.

And so, in contemplating the man's wisdom and nobility of character, I find it beyond my power to forget him or, in remembering him, to refrain from praising him. And if among those who make virtue their aim any one has ever been brought into contact with a person more helpful than Socrates, I count that man worthy to be called most blessed.