

CRITO

43a SOCRATES: Why have you come at this hour, Crito? Isn't it still early?

 CRITO:¹ It is indeed.

 SOCRATES: About what time?

 CRITO: Just before dawn.

5 SOCRATES: I'm surprised the prison warden was willing to let you in.

 CRITO: He knows me by now, Socrates, I come here so often. And besides I've done him a good turn.

 SOCRATES: Have you just arrived or have you been here for a while?

10 CRITO: For quite a while.

43b SOCRATES: Then why didn't you wake me right away, instead of sitting there in silence?

 CRITO: In the name of Zeus, Socrates, I wouldn't do that! I only wish I weren't so sleepless and distressed myself. I've been amazed
5 all this time to see how peacefully you were sleeping, and I deliberately kept from waking you, so that you could pass the time as pleasantly as possible. In the past—indeed, throughout my entire life—I've often counted you happy in your disposition, but never more so than in this present misfortune. You bear it so easily and calmly.

 SOCRATES: Well, Crito, it would be an error for someone of my
10 age to complain when the time has come when he must die.

43c CRITO: Other people get overtaken by such misfortunes too, Socrates, but their age doesn't prevent them in the least from complaining about their fate.

 SOCRATES: That's right. But tell me, why *have* you come so early?

5 CRITO: I bring bad news, Socrates. Not bad in your view, it seems to me, but bad and hard in mine and that of all your friends—and hardest of all, I think, for me to bear.

1. See *Apology* 33e1 note.

SOCRATES: What news is that? Or has the ship returned from Delos, at whose return I must die?² 43d

CRITO: No, it hasn't returned *yet*, but I think it will arrive today, judging from the reports of people who've come from Sunium,³ where they left it. It's clear from these reports that it will arrive today. And so tomorrow, Socrates, you must end your life. 5

SOCRATES: I pray that it may be for the best, Crito. If it pleases the gods, let it be so. All the same, I don't think it will arrive today.

CRITO: What evidence have you for that? 44a

SOCRATES: I'll tell you. I must die on the day after the ship arrives.

CRITO: That's what the authorities⁴ say, at least.

SOCRATES: Then I don't think it will arrive today, but tomorrow. My evidence for this comes from a dream I had in the night a short while ago. So it looks as though you chose the right time not to wake me. 5

CRITO: What was your dream?

SOCRATES: I thought a beautiful, graceful woman came to me, robed in white. She called me and said, "Socrates, you will arrive 'in fertile Phthia' on the third day."⁵ 10 44b

CRITO: What a strange dream, Socrates.

2. Legend had it that Athens was once obliged to send King Minos of Crete an annual tribute of seven young men and seven maidens to be given to the Minotaur—a monster, half man and half bull, that he kept in a labyrinth. With the help of a thread given to him by Minos' daughter Ariadne, Theseus, a legendary king of Athens, made his way through the labyrinth, killed the Minotaur, and escaped, thus ending the tribute. Each year, Athens commemorated these events by sending a mission of thanks to the sanctuary of Apollo on the sacred island of Delos. No executions could take place in Athens until it returned from its voyage. See *Phaedo* 58a3–c5.

3. A headland on the southeast coast of Attica, about 30 miles from Athens.

4. Namely, the Eleven. See *Apology* 37c2 note.

5. The quotation is from Homer, *Iliad* IX.363. Agamemnon (*Apology* 41c1), leader of the Greek forces, has insulted Achilles (*Apology* 28c4 note) by taking back his war prize, Briseis. Achilles withdraws from the battle, so that the Greeks suffer terrible losses. Agamemnon, realizing his mistake, offers enormous recompense but without coming to apologize in person. In response, Achilles threatens to set sail the next morning, so that with good weather he will arrive at his home "in fertile Phthia" on the third day. The dream means that Socrates' soul will find its home on the third day (counting, as usual among the Greeks, both the first and last member of the series).

SOCRATES: Yet its meaning is quite clear, Crito—at least, it seems
5 so to me.

CRITO: All too clear, apparently. But look here, Socrates, it's still
not too late to take my advice and save yourself. You see, if you die, I
won't just suffer a single misfortune. On the contrary, not only will I
lose a friend the like of whom I'll never find again, but, in addition,
10 many people, who don't know you or me well, will think that I
didn't care about you, since I could have saved you if I'd been willing
44c to spend the money. And indeed what reputation could be more
shameful than being thought to value money more than friends? For
the majority of people won't believe that it was you yourself who
5 refused to leave this place, though we were urging you to do so.

SOCRATES: But my dear Crito, why should we care so much
about what the majority think? After all, the most decent ones, who
are worthier of consideration, will believe that matters were handled
in just the way they were in fact handled.

44d CRITO: But you can surely see, Socrates, that one should care
about majority opinion too. Your present situation itself shows clearly
that the majority can do not just minor harms but the very worst
5 things to someone who's been slandered in front of them.

SOCRATES: I only wish, Crito, that the majority *could* do the very
worst things, then they might also be able to do the very best ones—
and everything would be fine. But as it is, they can do neither, since
they can't make someone either wise or unwise—the effects *they* pro-
10 duce are really the result of chance.⁶

44e CRITO: Well, if you say so. But tell me this, Socrates. You're not
worried about me and your other friends, are you—fearing that if
you escaped, the informers⁷ would give us trouble, and that we might
5 be forced to give up all our property, pay heavy fines, or even suffer
some further penalty? If you're afraid of anything like that, dismiss it
45a from your mind. After all, we're surely justified in running this risk to

6. Socrates often argues that wisdom is the only really good thing and ignorance (lack of wisdom) the only really bad one. See *Charmides* 174b11–c3; *Euthydemus* 281d2–e5; *Meno* 87d2–89a5. Because the majority are unwise, they cannot reliably produce the effects they want.

7. *Sukophantai*: individuals who prosecuted others in order to get the reward offered in Athenian law to successful prosecutors as public benefactors, or as a way of blackmailing someone who would pay to avoid prosecution, or for personal or political gain of some other sort.

save you or an even greater one if need be. Now take my advice, and don't refuse me.

SOCRATES: Yes, those things do worry me, Crito, among many others. 5

CRITO: Then don't fear them: the sum of money that certain people I know will accept in order to save you and get you out of here isn't that large. Next, don't you see how cheap these informers are and how little money is needed to deal with them? My own wealth's available to you, and it, I think, should be enough. Next, even if your concern for me makes you unwilling to spend my money, there are foreign visitors here who are willing to spend theirs. One of them, Simmias of Thebes, has even brought enough money for this very purpose; and Cebes, too, and a good many others are also willing to contribute.⁸ So, as I say, don't let these fears make you hesitate to save yourself. And don't let it trouble you, as you were saying in court, that if you went into exile you wouldn't know what to do with yourself.⁹ You see, wherever else you may go, there'll be people to welcome you. If you want to go to Thessaly, I have friends there who'll make much of you and protect you, so that no one in Thessaly will give you any trouble.¹⁰ 45b 5 45c 5

Besides, Socrates, I think that what you're doing isn't just: throwing away your life, when you could save it, and hastening the very sort of fate for yourself that your enemies would hasten—and indeed have hastened—in their wish to destroy you. What's more I think you're also betraying those sons of yours¹¹ by going away and deserting them when you could bring them up and educate them. So far as you're concerned, they must take their chances in life; and the chance they'll get, in all likelihood, is just the one that orphans usually get when they lose their parents.¹² No. Either one shouldn't have 10 45d

8. Simmias and Cebes (also from Thebes) were followers of Socrates and serve as his chief interlocutors in *Phaedo*.

9. See *Apology* 37c4–e2.

10. Thessaly is a region in the north of Greece.

11. See *Apology* 34d6–8.

12. See Homer, *Iliad* XXII.490–498: “An orphan has no friends. / He hangs his head, his cheeks are wet with tears. / He has to beg from his dead father's friends, / Tugging on one man's cloak, another's tunic, / And if they pity him he gets to sip / From someone's cup, just enough to moisten / His lips but not enough to quench his thirst. / Or a child with both parents still alive / Will push him away from a feast, taunting him, / ‘Go away, your father doesn't eat with us.’” (Trans. Stanley Lombardo.)

5 children at all, or one ought to see their upbringing and education through to the end. But you seem to me to be choosing the easiest way out, whereas one should choose whatever a good and brave man would choose—particularly when one claims to have cared about virtue throughout one's life.¹³

I feel ashamed on your behalf and on behalf of myself and your
 45e friends. I fear that it's going to seem that this whole business of yours has been handled with a certain cowardice on our part. The case was brought to court when it needn't have been brought.¹⁴ Then there was the actual conduct of the trial. And now, to crown it all, this
 5 absurd finale to the affair. It's going to seem that we let the opportunity slip because of some vice, such as cowardice, on our part, since
 46a we didn't save you nor did you save yourself, although it was quite possible had we been of even the slightest use.

See to it, then, Socrates, that all this doesn't turn out badly and a shameful thing both for you and for us. Come, deliberate—or rather, at this hour it's not a matter of deliberating but of having
 5 deliberated already—and only one decision remains. You see, everything must be done this coming night; and if we delay, it will no longer be possible. For all these reasons, Socrates, please take my advice and don't refuse me.

46b SOCRATES: My dear Crito, your enthusiasm's most valuable, provided it's of the right sort. But if it isn't, the greater it is, the more difficult it will be to deal with. We must therefore examine whether we should do what you advise or not. You see, I'm not the sort of person who's just now for the first time persuaded by nothing within me
 5 except the argument that on rational reflection seems best to me;¹⁵ I've *always* been like that. I can't now reject the arguments I stated before just because this misfortune has befallen me. On the contrary, they seem pretty much the same to me, and I respect and value the
 46c same ones as I did before. So if we have no better ones to offer in the present situation, you can be sure I won't agree with you—not even if the power of the majority to threaten us, as if we were children, with
 5 the bogeymen of imprisonment, execution, and confiscation of property were far greater than it is now.

13. See *Apology* 32c8–33a5.

14. See *Apology* 29c2 and note.

15. See *Euthyphro* 14e9.

What, then, is the most reasonable way to examine these matters? Suppose we first take up the argument you stated about people's opinions. Is it true or not that one should pay attention to some opinions but not to others? Or was it true before I had to die, whereas it's now clear that it was stated idly, for the sake of argument, and is really just childish nonsense? For my part, I'm eager to join you, Crito, in a joint examination of whether this argument will appear any differently to me, now that I'm here, or the same, and of whether we should dismiss it from our minds or be persuaded by it. 46c

It used to be said, I think, by people who thought they were talking sense, that, as I said a moment ago, one should take some people's opinions seriously but not others. By the gods, Crito, don't you think that was true? You see, in all human probability, *you* are not going to die tomorrow, and so the present situation won't distort your judgment. Consider, then, don't you think it's a sound argument that one shouldn't value all the opinions people have, but some and not others, and not those of everyone, but those of some people and not of others? What do you say? Isn't that true? 46e 47a 5

CRITO: It is.

SOCRATES: And we should value good opinions, but not bad ones?

CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And the good ones are those of wise people and the bad ones those of unwise people? 10

CRITO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Come then, what of such questions as this? When a man's primarily engaged in physical training, does he pay attention to the praise or blame or opinion of every man or only to those of the one man who's a doctor or a trainer? 47b

CRITO: Only to those of the one man.

SOCRATES: Then he should fear the blame and welcome the praise of that one man, but not those of the majority of people. 5

CRITO: Clearly.

SOCRATES: So his actions and exercises, his eating and drinking, should be guided by the opinion of the one man, the knowledgeable and understanding supervisor, rather than on that of all the rest? 10

CRITO: That's right.

47c SOCRATES: Well, then, if he disobeys that one man and sets no value on his opinion or his praises but values those of the majority of people who have no understanding, won't something bad happen to him?

CRITO: Of course.

SOCRATES: And what is this bad effect? Where does it occur? In what part of the one who disobeys?

CRITO: Clearly, it's in his body, since that's what it destroys.

SOCRATES: That's right. And isn't the same true in other cases, Crito? No need to go through them all, but, in particular, in cases of just and unjust things, shameful and fine ones, good and bad ones—in cases of what we're now deliberating about—is it the opinion of the majority we should follow and fear? Or is it the opinion of the one man—if there is one who understands these things—we should respect and fear above all others? On the grounds that, if we don't follow it, we shall seriously damage and maim that part of us which, as we used to say, is made better by what's just but is destroyed by what's unjust. Or is there no truth in that?

5 CRITO: I certainly think there is, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Come then, suppose we destroy the part of us that is made better by what's healthy but is seriously damaged by what causes disease when we don't follow the opinion of people who have understanding. Would our lives be worth living once it has been seriously damaged?¹⁶ And that part, of course, is the body, isn't it?

47e CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then are our lives worth living with a wretched, seriously damaged body?

5 CRITO: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: But our lives *are* worth living when the part of us that's maimed by what's unjust and benefited by what's just is seriously damaged? Or do we consider it—whichever part of us it is to which justice and injustice pertain—to be inferior to the body?

48a CRITO: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: On the contrary, it's more valuable?

CRITO: Far more.

16. See *Apology* 38a5–6.

SOCRATES: Then, my very good friend, we should not give so much thought to what the majority of people will say about us, but think instead of what the person who understands just and unjust things will say—the one man and the truth itself. So your first claim—that we should give thought to the opinion of the majority about what’s just, fine, good, and their opposites—isn’t right. 5

“But,” someone might say, “the majority can put us to death.” 10

CRITO: That’s certainly clear too. It would indeed be said, Socrates. 48b

SOCRATES: That’s right. And yet, my dear friend, the argument we’ve gone through still seems the same to me, at any rate, as it did before. And now examine this further one to see whether we think it still stands¹⁷ or not: the most important thing isn’t living, but living well. 5

CRITO: Yes, it still stands.

SOCRATES: And the argument that living well, living a fine life, and living justly are the same¹⁸—does it still stand or not?

CRITO: It still stands.

SOCRATES: Then in the light of these agreements, we should examine whether or not it would be just for me to try to get out of here when the Athenians haven’t acquitted me. And if it does seem just, we should make the attempt, and if it doesn’t, we should abandon the effort. 48c

As for those other considerations you raise about loss of money and people’s opinions and bringing up children—they, in truth, Crito, are appropriate considerations for people who readily put one to death and would as readily bring one back to life again if they could, without thinking; I mean, the majority of people. For us, however, the argument has made the decision. There’s nothing else to be examined besides the very thing we just mentioned: whether we—both the ones who are rescued and also the rescuers themselves—will be acting justly if we pay money to those who would get me out of here and do them favors, or whether we will in truth be acting unjustly if we do those things. And if it appears that we will be acting unjustly in doing them, we have no need at all to give any opposing weight to our having to 48d

17. Or stays put. See *Euthyphro* 11b6–e1.

18. So that living justly guarantees (or is the same thing as) living a happy life.

die—or suffer in some other way—if we stay here and mind our
 5 behavior when the alternative is doing injustice.¹⁹

CRITO: What you *say* seems true to me, Socrates. But I wish you'd consider what we're to *do*.

SOCRATES: Let's examine that question together, my dear friend, and if you can oppose anything I say, oppose it, and I'll be persuaded
 48e by you. But if you can't, be a good fellow and stop telling me the same thing over and over, that I should leave here against the will of the Athenians. You see, I think it very important that I act in this matter having persuaded you, rather than against your will. Consider,
 5 then, the starting point of our inquiry, to see if you find it adequately
 49a formulated, and try to answer my questions as you really think best.

CRITO: I'll certainly try.

SOCRATES: Do we say that one should never do injustice intentionally? Or may injustice be done in some circumstances but not in
 5 others? Is doing injustice never good or fine, as we have often agreed in the past? Or have all these former agreements been discarded during these last few days? Can you and I at our age, Crito, have spent so
 10 long in serious discussion with one another without realizing that we
 49b ourselves were no better than a pair of children? Or is what we used to say true above all else: that whether the majority of people agree or not, and whether we must suffer still worse things than at present or ones that are easier to bear, it's true, all the same, that doing injustice in any circumstances is bad and shameful for the one who does it? Is
 5 that what we say or not?

CRITO: It is what we say.

SOCRATES: So one should never do injustice.

CRITO: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: So one shouldn't do injustice in return for injustice, as the majority of people think—seeing that one should *never* do
 10 injustice.

49c CRITO: Apparently not.

SOCRATES: Well then, should one do wrong or not?

CRITO: Certainly not, Socrates.

19. This doctrine—that faced with a choice between acting unjustly and *anything else whatever*, one must choose the latter—is Socrates' supreme principle of practical choice. See *Apology* 28b5–9, d6–10.

SOCRATES: Well, what about when someone does wrong in return for having suffered wrongdoing? Is that just, as the majority of people think, or not just? 5

CRITO: It's not just at all.

SOCRATES: No, for there's no difference, I take it, between doing wrong and doing injustice?

CRITO: That's right.

SOCRATES: So one must neither do injustice in return nor wrong any man, no matter what one has suffered at his hands. And, Crito, in agreeing to this, watch out that you're not agreeing to anything contrary to what you believe. You see, I know that only a few people do believe or will believe it. And between those who believe it and those who don't, there's no common basis for deliberation, but each necessarily regards the other with contempt when they see their deliberations. You too, then, should consider very carefully whether you share that belief with me and whether the following is the starting point of our deliberations: that it's never right to do injustice, or to do injustice in return, or to retaliate with bad treatment when one has been treated badly.²⁰ Or do you disagree and not share this starting point? You see, I've believed this for a long time myself and still believe it now. But if you've come to some other opinion, say so. Instruct me. If you stand by the former one, however, then listen to my next point. 10 49d 5 49e

CRITO: Yes, I do stand by it and share it with you, so go on.

SOCRATES: Then I'll state the next point—or rather, ask a question: should one do the things one has agreed with someone to do, provided they are just, or should one cheat? 5

CRITO: One should do them.

SOCRATES: Then consider what follows. If we leave this place without having persuaded the city, are we treating some people badly—and those whom we should least of all treat in that way—or not? Are we standing by agreements that are just or not? 50a

CRITO: I can't answer your question, Socrates, since I don't understand it. 5

20. This abandonment of the conventional doctrine that justice consists in "doing good to friends and harm to enemies" (*Meno* 71e1–5), that retaliation is a fundamental principle of justice, is one of Socrates' most revolutionary moral doctrines, as he himself recognizes here.

SOCRATES: Well, look at it this way. Suppose we were about to run away from here—or whatever what we'd be doing should be called.²¹ And suppose the Laws and the city community came and confronted us, and said,

50b “Tell us, Socrates, what do you intend to do? Do you intend anything else by this act you're attempting than to destroy us Laws, and the city as a whole, to the extent that you can? Or do you think that a city can continue to exist and not be overthrown if the legal judgments rendered in it have no force, but are deprived of authority and undermined by the actions of private individuals?”

5 What shall we say in response to that question, Crito, and to others like it? For there's a lot that one might say—particularly, if one were an orator—on behalf of this law we're destroying, the one requiring that legal judgments, once rendered, have authority. Or shall we say to
50c them, “Yes, that's what we intend, for the city treated us unjustly and didn't judge our lawsuit correctly.” Is that what we're to say—or what?

CRITO: Yes, by Zeus, that's what we're to say, Socrates.

5 SOCRATES: Then what if the Laws replied, “Was that also part of the agreement between you and us, Socrates? Or did you agree to stand by whatever judgments the city rendered?” Then, if we were surprised at the words, perhaps they might say, “Don't be surprised at what we're saying, Socrates, but answer us—since you're so accus-
10 tomed to using question and answer. Come now, what charge have you to bring against the city and ourselves that you should try to
50d destroy us? In the first place, wasn't it we who gave you birth—wasn't it through us that your father married your mother and produced you? Tell us, do you have some complaint about the correctness of those of us Laws concerned with marriage?”

“No, I have no complaint,” I'd reply.

5 “Well then, what about the Laws dealing with the bringing up and educating of children, under which you were educated yourself? Didn't those of us Laws who regulate that area prescribe correctly when we ordered your father to educate you in the arts and physical training?”²²

“They prescribed correctly,” I'd reply.

21. See *Apology* 28d5–29c1, 38e5–39b1.

22. *Mousikē* and *gymnastikē*: traditional Greek education in poetry, song, and music, on the one hand, and dancing, physical training, and preparatory military training, on the other.

“Good. Then since you were born, brought up, and educated, can you deny, first, that you’re our offspring and slave, both yourself and your ancestors? And if that’s so, do you think that what’s just is based on an equality between you and us, that whatever we try to do to you it’s just for you to do to us in return? As regards you and your father (or you and your master, if you happened to have one), what’s just isn’t based on equality, and so you don’t return whatever treatment you receive—answering back when you’re criticized or striking back when you’re struck, or doing many other such things. As regards you and your fatherland and its Laws, then, are these things permitted? If we try to destroy you, believing it to be just, will you try to destroy us Laws and your fatherland, to the extent that you can? And will you claim that you’re acting justly in doing so—you the man who really cares about virtue? Or are you so wise that it has escaped your notice that your fatherland is more worthy of honor than your mother and father and all your other ancestors; that it is more to be revered and more sacred and is held in greater esteem both among the gods and among those human beings who have any sense; that you must treat your fatherland with piety, submitting to it and placating it more than you would your own father when it is angry; that you must either persuade it or else do whatever it commands; that you must mind your behavior and undergo whatever treatment it prescribes for you, whether a beating or imprisonment; that if it leads you to war to be wounded or killed, that’s what you must do, and that’s what is just—not to give way or retreat or leave where you were stationed, but, on the contrary, in war and law courts, and everywhere else, to do whatever your city or fatherland commands or else persuade it as to what is really just;²³ and

23. The Laws say that *they* are to be persuaded—an obvious metaphor, made possible by their personification. They do not tell us how the metaphor is to be cashed by identifying which of their representative bodies in Athens—the one that makes the laws or the one that implements them—is the appropriate one to hear persuasion or specify the kind of alleged injustice it is appropriate to persuade about—unjust laws, unjust judgments, or unjust sentences. They do say, however, that if Socrates escapes execution, he *neither* persuades *nor* obeys. What he fails to obey is presumably some law or laws. Only two have any bearing on his situation: (1) The law against impiety under which he was indicted, and (2) the law on court judgments, which required him to abide by the decision of the court and not to try to prevent its sentence from being carried out (50a8–b5). Since the only one of these that Socrates wouldn’t obey by escaping is (2), what the Laws are asserting seems to be this: (A) *A citizen of Athens who has broken, or been accused of breaking, one of its*

51c that while it is impious to violate the will of your mother or father, it is yet less so than to violate that of your fatherland.”

What are we to say to that, Crito? Are the Laws telling the truth or not?

5 CRITO: Yes, I think they are.

SOCRATES: “Consider, then, Socrates,” the Laws might perhaps continue, “whether we’re also telling the truth in saying this: that you aren’t treating us justly in what you’re now trying to do. You see, we gave you birth, upbringing, and education, and have provided you, as well as every other citizen, with a share of all the fine things we could. Nonetheless, if any Athenian—who has been admitted to adult status and has observed both how affairs are handled in the city and ourselves, the Laws—is dissatisfied with us and wishes to leave, we grant him permission to take his property and go wherever he pleases. Not one of us Laws stands in his way or forbids it. If any one of you is dissatisfied with us and the city and wishes to go to a colony or to live as an alien elsewhere,²⁴ he may go wherever he wishes and hold on to what’s his.

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“*But* if any of you stays here, after he has observed the way we judge lawsuits and the other ways in which we manage the city, then we say that he has agreed with us by his action to do whatever we command. And we say that whoever does not obey commits a three-fold injustice: he disobeys us as his parents; he disobeys us as those who brought him up; and, after having agreed to obey us, he neither

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laws must, if summoned, either persuade a court that he has done nothing unjust or abide by the court’s judgment and obey the law requiring him to submit to the sentence passed on him. That is why the Laws don’t “harshly command” (52a1) Socrates; they give him the option of defending himself before a jury. But if he doesn’t succeed in persuading the jury of his innocence, he must obey, not (1) the law he has already allegedly broken (that would make little sense), but (2). If, however, the sentence chosen by the jury requires Socrates to do something unjust—for example, to stop philosophizing—he will disobey it (Apology 29b9–d5). But he would violate (A) in doing so only if, having been called before a court to account for his disobedience, and having failed to persuade it that his disobedience was just, he tried to escape the sentence it imposed.

24. When the population of a Greek city became too large for its available resources, it often sent some of its citizens out to found a new city elsewhere. This so-called colony (*apoikia*) was politically autonomous but typically retained some significant ties with its mother city. For example, its citizens were not resident aliens when living in the new city.

obeys nor persuades us, if we're doing something that isn't right. Yet we offer him a choice and do not harshly command him to do what he's told. On the contrary, we offer two alternatives: he must either persuade us or do what we say. And he does neither. These, then, are the charges, Socrates, to which we say you too will become liable, if you do what you have in mind—and you won't be among the least liable of the Athenians, but among the most.”

Then, if I were to say, “Why is that?” perhaps they might justifiably reproach me by saying that I am among the Athenians who have made that agreement with them in the strongest terms.

“Socrates,” they would say, “we have the strongest evidence that you were satisfied with us and with the city. After all, you'd never have stayed at home here so much more consistently than all the rest of the Athenians if you weren't also much more consistently satisfied. You never left the city for a festival, except once to go to the Isthmus.²⁵ You never went anywhere else, except for military service.²⁶ You never went abroad as other people do. You had no desire to acquaint yourself with other cities or other laws. On the contrary, we and our city sufficed for you. So emphatically did you choose us and agree to live as a citizen under us, that you even produced children here. *That's* how satisfied you were with the city.

“Moreover, even at your very trial, you could have proposed exile as a counterpenalty if you'd wished, and what you're now trying to do against the city's will, you could then have done with its consent.²⁷ On that occasion, you prided yourself on not feeling resentful that you had to die.²⁸ You'd choose death before exile—so you said. Now, however, you feel no shame at those words and show no regard for us Laws as you try to destroy us. You're acting exactly the way the most wretched slave would act by trying to run away, contrary to your commitments and your agreements to live as a citizen under us.

“First, then, answer us on this very point: are we telling the truth when we say that you agreed, by deeds not words, to live as a citizen under us? Or is that untrue?”

25. The narrow strip of land connecting the Peloponnese to the rest of Greece, where the Isthmian Games were held.

26. See *Apology* 28e1–3 and note.

27. See *Apology* 34d9 note.

28. See *Apology* 41d6–7.

What are we to reply to that, Crito? Mustn't we agree?

CRITO: We must, Socrates.

SOCRATES: "Well then," they might say, "surely you're breaking the commitments and agreements you made with us. You weren't
 52e coerced or tricked into agreeing or forced to decide in a hurry. On
 the contrary, you had seventy years in which you could have left if
 you weren't satisfied with us or if you thought those agreements
 5 unjust. You, however, preferred neither Sparta nor Crete—places you
 53a often say have good law and order²⁹—nor any other Greek or foreign
 city. On the contrary, you went abroad less often than the lame, the
 blind, or other handicapped people. Hence it's clear that you, more
 than any other Athenian, have been consistently satisfied with your
 5 city and with us Laws—for who would be satisfied by a city but not
 by its laws? Won't you, then, stand by your agreements now? Yes, you
 will, if you're persuaded by us, Socrates, and at least you won't make
 yourself a laughingstock by leaving the city.

"For consider now: if you break those agreements, if you commit
 10 any of these wrongs, what good will you do yourself or your friends?
 53b You see, it's pretty clear that your friends will risk being exiled them-
 selves as well as being disenfranchised and having their property con-
 fiscated. As for you, if you go to one of the nearest cities, Thebes or
 5 Megara—for they both have good laws—you will be arriving there,
 Socrates, as an enemy of their political systems, and those who care
 about their own cities will look on you with suspicion, regarding you
 as one who undermines laws. You will also confirm your jurors in
 their opinion, so that they will think they judged your lawsuit cor-
 53c rectly. For anyone who undermines laws might very well be consid-
 ered a corruptor of young and ignorant people.

"Will you, then, avoid cities with good law and order, and men of
 the most respectable kind? And if so, will your life be worth living? Or
 5 will you associate with these people and be shameless enough to con-
 verse with them? And what will you say, Socrates? The very things that
 you said here, about how virtue and justice are man's most valuable pos-
 sessions, along with law and lawful conduct. Don't you think Socrates
 and everything about him will look unseemly? Surely, you must.

53d "Or will you keep away from those places and go to Crito's friends
 in Thessaly? After all, there's complete disorder and laxity there, so

29. *Eunomia*: good laws and compliance with them.

perhaps they'd enjoy hearing about your absurd escape from prison when you dressed up in disguise, wore a peasant's leather jerkin or some other such escapee's outfit and altered your appearance. And will no one remark on the fact that you, an old man, with probably only a short time left to live, were so greedy for life that you dared to violate the most important laws?³⁰ Perhaps not, provided you don't annoy anyone. Otherwise, you'll hear many disparaging things said about you. Will you live by currying favor with every man and acting the slave—and do nothing in Thessaly besides eat, as if you'd gone to live in Thessaly for a good dinner? As for those arguments about justice and the rest of virtue, where, tell us, will they be?

“Is it that you want to live for your children's sake, then, to bring them up and educate them? Really? Will you bring them up and educate them by taking them to Thessaly and making foreigners of them, so they can enjoy that privilege too? If not, will they be better brought up and educated here without you, provided that you're still alive? ‘Of course,’ you may say, because your friends will take care of them. Then will they take care of them if you go to Thessaly, but not take care of them if you go to Hades? If those who call themselves your friends are worth anything at all, you surely can't believe that.

“No, Socrates, be persuaded by us who reared you. Don't put a higher value on children, on life, or on anything else than on what's just, so that when you reach Hades you may have all this to offer as your defense before the authorities there. For if you do do that, it doesn't seem that it will be better for you *here*, or for any of your friends, or that it will be more just or more pious. And it won't be better for you when you arrive *there* either. As it is, you'll leave here—if you do leave—as one who has been treated unjustly not by us Laws, but by men. But suppose you leave, suppose you return injustice for injustice and bad treatment for bad treatment in that shameful way, breaking your agreements and commitments with us and doing bad things to those whom you should least of all treat in that way—yourself, your friends, your fatherland, and ourselves. Then we'll be angry with you while you're still alive, and our brothers, the Laws of Hades, won't receive you kindly there, knowing that you tried to destroy us to the extent you could. Come, then, don't let Crito persuade you to follow his advice rather than ours.”

30. See *Phaedo* 117a1–3 below.

That, Crito, my dear friend, is what I seem to hear them saying, you may be sure. And, just like those Corybantes who think they are still hearing the flutes,³¹ the echo of their arguments reverberates in
5 me and makes me incapable of hearing anything else. No, as far as my present thoughts go, at least, you may be sure that if you argue against them, you will speak in vain. All the same, if you think you can do any more, please tell me.

CRITO: No, Socrates, I've nothing to say.

54e SOCRATES: Then, let it be, Crito, and let's act in that way, since that's the way the god is leading us.

31. See *Apology* 27b6–7 and note. The Corybantes dance to the sound of flutes in the orgiastic rites of Dionysus—the god of wine and intoxication. Their music was supposed to induce a state of frenzied exhaustion in hysterical or emotionally disturbed people, from which they awoke relieved of their symptoms.