

EUTHYPHRO

PLATO

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INTRODUCTION

In the *Meno*, Anytus had parted from Socrates with the significant words: 'That in any city, and particularly in the city of Athens, it is easier to do men harm than to do them good;' and Socrates was anticipating another opportunity of talking with him. In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates is awaiting his trial for impiety. But before the trial begins, Plato would like to put the world on their trial, and convince them of ignorance in that very matter touching which Socrates is accused. An incident which may perhaps really have occurred in the family of Euthyphro, a learned Athenian diviner and soothsayer, furnishes the occasion of the discussion.

This Euthyphro and Socrates are represented as meeting in the porch of the King Archon. (Compare *Theaet.*) Both have legal business in hand. Socrates is defendant in a suit for impiety which Meletus has brought against him (it is remarked by the way that he is not a likely man himself to have brought a suit against another); and Euthyphro too is plaintiff in an action for murder, which he has brought against his own father. The lat-

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ter has originated in the following manner:—A poor dependant of the family had slain one of their domestic slaves in Naxos. The guilty person was bound and thrown into a ditch by the command of Euthyphro's father, who sent to the interpreters of religion at Athens to ask what should be done with him. Before the messenger came back the criminal had died from hunger and exposure.

This is the origin of the charge of murder which Euthyphro brings against his father. Socrates is confident that before he could have undertaken the responsibility of such a prosecution, he must have been perfectly informed of the nature of piety and impiety; and as he is going to be tried for impiety himself, he thinks that he cannot do better than learn of Euthyphro (who will be admitted by everybody, including the judges, to be an unimpeachable authority) what piety is, and what is impiety. What then is piety?

Euthyphro, who, in the abundance of his knowledge, is very willing to undertake all the responsibility, replies: That piety is doing as I do, prosecuting your father (if he is guilty) on a charge of murder; doing as the gods do—as Zeus did to Cronos, and Cronos to Uranus.

Socrates has a dislike to these tales of mythology, and he fancies that this dislike of his may be the reason why he is charged with impiety. 'Are they really true?' 'Yes, they are;' and Euthyphro will gladly tell Socrates some more of them. But Socrates would like first of all to have a more satisfactory answer to the question, 'What is piety?' 'Doing as I do, charging a father with

murder,' may be a single instance of piety, but can hardly be regarded as a general definition.

Euthyphro replies, that 'Piety is what is dear to the gods, and impiety is what is not dear to them.' But may there not be differences of opinion, as among men, so also among the gods? Especially, about good and evil, which have no fixed rule; and these are precisely the sort of differences which give rise to quarrels. And therefore what may be dear to one god may not be dear to another, and the same action may be both pious and impious; e.g. your chastisement of your father, Euthyphro, may be dear or pleasing to Zeus (who inflicted a similar chastisement on his own father), but not equally pleasing to Cronos or Uranus (who suffered at the hands of their sons).

Euthyphro answers that there is no difference of opinion, either among gods or men, as to the propriety of punishing a murderer. Yes, rejoins Socrates, when they know him to be a murderer; but you are assuming the point at issue. If all the circumstances of the case are considered, are you able to show that your father was guilty of murder, or that all the gods are agreed in approving of our prosecution of him? And must you not allow that what is hated by one god may be liked by another? Waiving this last, however, Socrates proposes to amend the definition, and say that 'what all the gods love is pious, and what they all hate is impious.' To this Euthyphro agrees.

Socrates proceeds to analyze the new form of the definition. He shows that in other cases the act precedes the state; e.g. the act of being carried, loved, etc. precedes the state of being carried, loved, etc., and therefore that which is dear to the gods is

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dear to the gods because it is first loved of them, not loved of them because it is dear to them. But the pious or holy is loved by the gods because it is pious or holy, which is equivalent to saying, that it is loved by them because it is dear to them. Here then appears to be a contradiction,—Euthyphro has been giving an attribute or accident of piety only, and not the essence. Euthyphro acknowledges himself that his explanations seem to walk away or go round in a circle, like the moving figures of Daedalus, the ancestor of Socrates, who has communicated his art to his descendants.

Socrates, who is desirous of stimulating the indolent intelligence of Euthyphro, raises the question in another manner: 'Is all the pious just?' 'Yes.' 'Is all the just pious?' 'No.' 'Then what part of justice is piety?' Euthyphro replies that piety is that part of justice which 'attends' to the gods, as there is another part of justice which 'attends' to men. But what is the meaning of 'attending' to the gods? The word 'attending,' when applied to dogs, horses, and men, implies that in some way they are made better. But how do pious or holy acts make the gods any better? Euthyphro explains that he means by pious acts, acts of service or ministration. Yes; but the ministrations of the husbandman, the physician, and the builder have an end. To what end do we serve the gods, and what do we help them to accomplish? Euthyphro replies, that all these difficult questions cannot be resolved in a short time; and he would rather say simply that piety is knowing how to please the gods in word and deed, by prayers and sacrifices. In other words, says Socrates, piety is 'a science of asking and giving'—asking what we want and giving what they

want; in short, a mode of doing business between gods and men. But although they are the givers of all good, how can we give them any good in return? 'Nay, but we give them honour.' Then we give them not what is beneficial, but what is pleasing or dear to them; and this is the point which has been already disproved.

Socrates, although weary of the subterfuges and evasions of Euthyphro, remains unshaken in his conviction that he must know the nature of piety, or he would never have prosecuted his old father. He is still hoping that he will condescend to instruct him. But Euthyphro is in a hurry and cannot stay. And Socrates' last hope of knowing the nature of piety before he is prosecuted for impiety has disappeared. As in the Euthydemus the irony is carried on to the end.

The Euthyphro is manifestly designed to contrast the real nature of piety and impiety with the popular conceptions of them. But when the popular conceptions of them have been overthrown, Socrates does not offer any definition of his own: as in the Laches and Lysis, he prepares the way for an answer to the question which he has raised; but true to his own character, refuses to answer himself.

Euthyphro is a religionist, and is elsewhere spoken of, if he be the same person, as the author of a philosophy of names, by whose 'prancing steeds' Socrates in the Cratylus is carried away. He has the conceit and self-confidence of a Sophist; no doubt that he is right in prosecuting his father has ever entered into his mind. Like a Sophist too, he is incapable either of framing a general definition or of following the course of an argument. His wrong-headedness, one-sidedness, narrowness, positiveness,

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are characteristic of his priestly office. His failure to apprehend an argument may be compared to a similar defect which is observable in the rhapsode Ion. But he is not a bad man, and he is friendly to Socrates, whose familiar sign he recognizes with interest. Though unable to follow him he is very willing to be led by him, and eagerly catches at any suggestion which saves him from the trouble of thinking. Moreover he is the enemy of Meletus, who, as he says, is availing himself of the popular dislike to innovations in religion in order to injure Socrates; at the same time he is amusingly confident that he has weapons in his own armoury which would be more than a match for him. He is quite sincere in his prosecution of his father, who has accidentally been guilty of homicide, and is not wholly free from blame. To purge away the crime appears to him in the light of a duty, whoever may be the criminal.

Thus begins the contrast between the religion of the letter, or of the narrow and unenlightened conscience, and the higher notion of religion which Socrates vainly endeavours to elicit from him. 'Piety is doing as I do' is the idea of religion which first occurs to him, and to many others who do not say what they think with equal frankness. For men are not easily persuaded that any other religion is better than their own; or that other nations, e.g. the Greeks in the time of Socrates, were equally serious in their religious beliefs and difficulties. The chief difference between us and them is, that they were slowly learning what we are in process of forgetting. Greek mythology hardly admitted of the distinction between accidental homicide and murder: that the pollution of blood was the same in both cases is also the feeling of

the Athenian diviner. He had not as yet learned the lesson, which philosophy was teaching, that Homer and Hesiod, if not banished from the state, or whipped out of the assembly, as Heracleitus more rudely proposed, at any rate were not to be appealed to as authorities in religion; and he is ready to defend his conduct by the examples of the gods. These are the very tales which Socrates cannot abide; and his dislike of them, as he suspects, has branded him with the reputation of impiety. Here is one answer to the question, 'Why Socrates was put to death,' suggested by the way. Another is conveyed in the words, 'The Athenians do not care about any man being thought wise until he begins to make other men wise; and then for some reason or other they are angry;' which may be said to be the rule of popular toleration in most other countries, and not at Athens only. In the course of the argument Socrates remarks that the controversial nature of morals and religion arises out of the difficulty of verifying them. There is no measure or standard to which they can be referred.

The next definition, 'Piety is that which is loved of the gods,' is shipwrecked on a refined distinction between the state and the act, corresponding respectively to the adjective (*philon*) and the participle (*philoumenon*), or rather perhaps to the participle and the verb (*philoumenon* and *phileitai*). The act is prior to the state (as in Aristotle the *energeia* precedes the *dunamis*); and the state of being loved is preceded by the act of being loved. But piety or holiness is preceded by the act of being pious, not by the act of being loved; and therefore piety and the state of being loved are different. Through such subtleties of dialectic Socrates is working his way into a deeper region of thought and feeling.

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He means to say that the words 'loved of the gods' express an attribute only, and not the essence of piety.

Then follows the third and last definition, 'Piety is a part of justice.' Thus far Socrates has proceeded in placing religion on a moral foundation. He is seeking to realize the harmony of religion and morality, which the great poets Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Pindar had unconsciously anticipated, and which is the universal want of all men. To this the soothsayer adds the ceremonial element, 'attending upon the gods.' When further interrogated by Socrates as to the nature of this 'attention to the gods,' he replies, that piety is an affair of business, a science of giving and asking, and the like. Socrates points out the anthropomorphism of these notions, (compare *Symp.*; *Republic*; *Politicus*.) But when we expect him to go on and show that the true service of the gods is the service of the spirit and the co-operation with them in all things true and good, he stops short; this was a lesson which the soothsayer could not have been made to understand, and which every one must learn for himself.

There seem to be altogether three aims or interests in this little Dialogue: (1) the dialectical development of the idea of piety; (2) the antithesis of true and false religion, which is carried to a certain extent only; (3) the defence of Socrates.

The subtle connection with the *Apology* and the *Crito*; the holding back of the conclusion, as in the *Charmides*, *Lysis*, *Laches*, *Protagoras*, and other Dialogues; the deep insight into the religious world; the dramatic power and play of the two characters; the inimitable irony, are reasons for believing that the *Euthyphro* is a genuine Platonic writing. The spirit in which the popu-

lar representations of mythology are denounced recalls Republic II. The virtue of piety has been already mentioned as one of five in the Protagoras, but is not reckoned among the four cardinal virtues of Republic IV. The figure of Daedalus has occurred in the Meno; that of Proteus in the Euthydemus and Io. The kingly science has already appeared in the Euthydemus, and will reappear in the Republic and Statesman. But neither from these nor any other indications of similarity or difference, and still less from arguments respecting the suitability of this little work to aid Socrates at the time of his trial or the reverse, can any evidence of the date be obtained.

EUTHYPHRO

Persons of the Dialogue: Socrates, Euthyphro.

Scene: The Porch of the KING ARCHON.

Euthyphro: Why have you left the LYCEUM, Socrates? and what are you doing in the Porch of the King Archon? Surely you cannot
 2a be concerned in a SUIT BEFORE THE KING, like myself?

Socrates: Not in a suit, EUTHYPHRO; impeachment is the word which the Athenians use.

Euthyphro: What! I suppose that some one has been prosecuting you, for I cannot believe that you are the prosecutor of another.
Euthyphro and Socrates meet at the Porch of the King Archon. Both have legal business on hand.

Socrates: Certainly not.

Euthyphro: Then some one else has been prosecuting you?

Socrates: Yes.

Euthyphro: And who is he?

Socrates: A young man who is little known, Euthyphro; and I hardly know him: his name is MELETUS, and he is of the deme of Pitthis. Perhaps you may remember his appearance; he has a beak, and long straight hair, and a beard which is ill grown.

2 Euthyphro

Euthyphro: No, I do not remember him, SOCRATES. But what is the charge which he brings against you?

Meletus has brought a charge against Socrates.

Socrates: What is the charge? Well, a very serious charge, which shows a good deal of character in the young man, and for which he is certainly not to be despised. He says he knows how the youth are corrupted and who are their corruptors. I fancy that he must be a wise man, and seeing that I am the REVERSE OF A WISE MAN, he has found me out, and is going to accuse me of corrupting his young friends. And of this our mother the state is to be the judge. Of all our political men he is the only one who seems to me to begin in the right way, with the cultivation of virtue in youth; like a good husbandman, he makes the young shoots his first care, and clears away us who are the destroyers of them. This is only the first step; he will afterwards attend to the elder branches; and if he goes on as he has begun, he will be a very great public benefactor. d 3a

Euthyphro: I hope that he may; but I rather fear, Socrates, that the opposite will turn out to be the truth. My opinion is that in attacking you he is simply aiming a blow at the foundation of the state. But in what way does he say that you corrupt the young?

Socrates: He brings a wonderful accusation against me, which at first hearing excites surprise: he says that I am a poet or maker of gods, and that I invent new gods and deny the existence of old ones; this is the ground of his indictment. b

Euthyphro: I understand, Socrates; he means to attack you about the familiar sign which occasionally, as you say, comes to you. He thinks that you are a NEOLOGIAN, and he is going to have you up before the court for this. He knows that such a charge is readily

c received by the world, as I myself know too well; for when I speak in the assembly about divine things, and foretell the future to them, they laugh at me and think me a madman. Yet every word that I say is true. But they are jealous of us all; and we must be brave and go at them.

d *Socrates:* Their laughter, friend Euthyphro, is not a matter of much consequence. For a man may be thought wise; but the Athenians, I suspect, do not much trouble themselves about him until he begins to impart his wisdom to others, and then for some reason or other, perhaps, as you say, from jealousy, they are angry.

Euthyphro: I am never likely to try their temper in this way.

Socrates: I dare say not, for you are reserved in your behaviour, and seldom impart your wisdom. But I have a benevolent habit of pouring out myself to everybody, and would even pay for a listener, and I am afraid that the Athenians may think me too e talkative. Now if, as I was saying, they would only laugh at me, as you say that they laugh at you, the time might pass gaily enough in the court; but perhaps they may be in earnest, and then what the end will be you soothsayers only can predict.

Euthyphro: I dare say that the affair will end in nothing, Socrates, and that you will win your cause; and I think that I shall win my own.

Socrates: And what is your suit, Euthyphro? are you the pursuer or the defendant?

Euthyphro: I am the pursuer.

Socrates: Of whom?

4a *Euthyphro:* You will think me mad when I tell you.

Socrates: Why, has the fugitive wings?

2 Euthyphro

Euthyphro: Nay, he is not very volatile at his time of life.

Socrates: Who is he?

Euthyphro: My father.

Socrates: Your father! my good man?

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: And of what is he accused?

Euthyphro: Of murder, *Socrates*.

The irony of Socrates. *Socrates*: By the powers, *Euthyphro*! how little does the common herd know of the nature of right and truth. A man must be an extraordinary man, and have made great strides in wisdom, before he could have seen his way to bring such an action. 4b

Euthyphro: Indeed, *Socrates*, he must.

Socrates: I suppose that the man whom your father murdered was one of your relatives—clearly he was; for if he had been a stranger you would never have thought of prosecuting him.

Euthyphro is under a sacred obligation to prosecute a homicide, even if he be his own father. *Euthyphro*: I am amused, *Socrates*, at your making a distinction between one who is a relation and one who is not a relation; for surely the pollution is the same in either case, if you knowingly associate with the murderer when you ought to clear yourself and him by proceeding against him. The real question is whether the murdered man has been justly slain. If justly, then your duty is to let the matter alone; but if unjustly, then even if the murderer lives under the same roof with you and eats at the same table, proceed against him. Now the man who is dead was a poor dependant of mine who worked for us as a field labourer on our farm in NAXOS, and one day in a fit of drunken passion he got into a quarrel with one of our domestic servants and slew him. My father bound him hand and foot and threw him into a ditch, c d

and then sent to ATHENS to ask of a DIVINER what he should do with him. Meanwhile he never attended to him and took no care about him, for he regarded him as a murderer; and thought that no great harm would be done even if he did die. Now this was just what happened. For such was the effect of cold and hunger and chains upon him, that before the messenger returned from the diviner, he was dead. And my father and family are angry with me for taking the part of the murderer and prosecuting my
e father. They say that he did not kill him, and that if he did, the dead man was but a murderer, and I ought not to take any notice, for that a son is impious WHO PROSECUTES A FATHER. Which shows, Socrates, how little they know what the gods think about piety and impiety.

Socrates: Good heavens, Euthyphro! and is your knowledge of religion and of things pious and impious so very exact, that, supposing the circumstances to be as you state them, you are not afraid lest you too may be doing an impious thing in bringing an action against your father?

5a Euthyphro: The best of Euthyphro, and that which distinguishes him, Socrates, from other men, is his exact knowledge of all such matters. What should I be good for without it?

Socrates: Rare friend! I think that I cannot do better than be your disciple. Then before the trial with Meletus comes on I shall challenge him, and say that I have always had a great interest in religious questions, and now, as he charges me with rash imaginations and innovations in religion, I have become your disciple.

b You, Meletus, as I shall say to him, acknowledge Euthyphro to be a great theologian, and sound in his opinions; and if you approve

Socrates, who is accused of false theology, thinks that he cannot do better than become the disciple of so great a theologian as Euthyphro.

2 Euthyphro

of him you ought to approve of me, and not have me into court; but if you disapprove, you should begin by indicting him who is my teacher, and who will be the ruin, not of the young, but of the old; that is to say, of myself whom he instructs, and of his old father whom he admonishes and chastises. And if Meletus refuses to listen to me, but will go on, and will not shift the indictment from me to you, I cannot do better than repeat this challenge in the court.

Euthyphro: Yes, indeed, Socrates; and if he attempts to indict me I am mistaken if I do not find a flaw in him; the court shall have a great deal more to say to him than to me. c

Socrates asks, 'What is piety?'

Socrates: And I, my dear friend, knowing this, am desirous of becoming your disciple. For I observe that no one appears to notice you—not even this Meletus; but his sharp eyes have found me out at once, and he has indicted me for impiety. And therefore, I adjure you to tell me the NATURE OF PIETY AND IMPIETY, which you said that you knew so well, and of murder, and of other offences against the gods. What are they? Is not piety in every action always the same? and impiety, again—is it not always the opposite of piety, and also the same with itself, having, as impiety, one notion which includes whatever is impious? d

Piety is doing as I am doing; -like Zeus, I am proceeding against my father.

Euthyphro: To be sure, Socrates.

Socrates: And what is piety, and what is impiety?

Euthyphro: Piety is doing as I am doing; that is to say, prosecuting any one who is guilty of murder, sacrilege, or of any similar crime—whether he be your father or mother, or whoever he may be—that makes no difference; and not to prosecute them is impiety. And please to consider, Socrates, what a notable proof e

I will give you of the truth of my words, a proof which I have already given to others:—of the principle, I mean, that the impious, whoever he may be, ought not to go unpunished. For do not men regard ZEUS as the best and most righteous of the gods?—
6a and yet they admit that he bound his father (CRONOS) because he wickedly devoured his sons, and that he too had punished his own father (URANUS) for a similar reason, in a nameless manner. And yet when I proceed against my father, they are angry with me. So inconsistent are they in their way of talking when the gods are concerned, and when I am concerned.

b *Socrates:* May not this be the reason, Euthyphro, why I am charged with impiety—that I cannot away with these stories about the gods? and therefore I suppose that people think me wrong. But, as you who are well informed about them approve of them, I cannot do better than assent to your superior wisdom. What else can I say, confessing as I do, that I know nothing about them? Tell me, for the love of Zeus, whether you really believe that they are true.
Does Euthyphro believe these amazing stories about the gods?

Euthyphro: Yes, Socrates; and things more wonderful still, of which the world is in ignorance.

c *Socrates:* And do you really believe that the gods fought with one another, and had dire quarrels, battles, and the like, as the poets say, and as you may see represented in the works of great artists? The temples are full of them; and notably the ROBE OF ATHENE, which is carried up to the ACROPOLIS at the great PANATHENAEA, is embroidered with them. Are all these tales of the gods true, Euthyphro?
Yes, and things more amazing still.

2 Euthyphro

Euthyphro: Yes, Socrates; and, as I was saying, I can tell you, if you would like to hear them, many other things about the gods which would quite amaze you.

Socrates: I dare say; and you shall tell me them at some other d time when I have leisure. But just at present I would rather hear from you a more precise answer, which you have not as yet given, my friend, to the question, What is 'piety'? When asked, you only replied, Doing as you do, charging your father with murder.

Euthyphro: And what I said was true, Socrates.

Socrates: No doubt, Euthyphro; but you would admit that there are many other pious acts?

Euthyphro: There are.

Socrates: Remember that I did not ask you to give me two or e three examples of piety, but to explain the general idea which makes all pious things to be pious. Do you not recollect that there was one idea which made the impious impious, and the pious pious?

Euthyphro: I remember.

Socrates: Tell me what is the nature of this idea, and then I shall have a standard to which I may look, and by which I may measure actions, whether yours or those of any one else, and then I shall be able to say that such and such an action is pious, such another impious.

Euthyphro: I will tell you, if you like.

Socrates: I should very much like.

Euthyphro: Piety, then, is that which is dear to the gods, and 7a impiety is that which is not dear to them.

Socrates: Very good, Euthyphro; you have now given me the sort of answer which I wanted. But whether what you say is true or not I cannot as yet tell, although I make no doubt that you will prove the truth of your words.

Euthyphro: Of course.

Socrates: Come, then, and let us examine what we are saying. That thing or person which is dear to the gods is pious, and that thing or person which is hateful to the gods is impious, these two being the extreme opposites of one another. Was not that said?

Euthyphro: It was.

Socrates: And well said?

b Euthyphro: Yes, Socrates, I thought so; it was certainly said.

Socrates: And further, Euthyphro, the gods were admitted to have enmities and hatreds and differences?

Euthyphro: Yes, that was also said.

Socrates: And what sort of difference creates enmity and anger? Suppose for example that you and I, my good friend, differ about a number; do differences of this sort make us enemies and set us at variance with one another? Do we not go at once to arithmetic, *c* and put an end to them by a sum?

Euthyphro: True.

Socrates: Or suppose that we differ about magnitudes, do we not quickly end the differences by measuring?

Euthyphro: Very true.

Socrates: And we end a controversy about heavy and light by resorting to a weighing machine?

Euthyphro: To be sure.

A more correct definition: -Piety is that which is dear to the gods.

Differences about numbers and figures create no ill-will because they can be settled by a sum or by weighing machine, but enmities about the just and unjust are the occasions of quarrels, both among gods and men.

2 Euthyphro

Socrates: But what differences are there which cannot be thus decided, and which therefore make us angry and set us at enmity with one another? I dare say the answer does not occur to you at the moment, and therefore I will suggest that these enmities arise when the matters of difference are the just and unjust, good and evil, honourable and dishonourable. Are not these the points about which men differ, and about which when we are unable satisfactorily to decide our differences, you and I and all of us quarrel, when we do quarrel? textcolorred(Compare Alcib.) *d*

Euthyphro: Yes, Socrates, the nature of the differences about which we quarrel is such as you describe.

Socrates: And the quarrels of the gods, noble Euthyphro, when they occur, are of a like nature?

Euthyphro: Certainly they are.

Socrates: They have differences of opinion, as you say, about good and evil, just and unjust, honourable and dishonourable: there would have been no quarrels among them, if there had been no such differences—would there now? *e*

Euthyphro: You are quite right.

Men and gods alike love the things which they deem noble and just, but they are not agreed what these are. *Socrates:* Does not every man love that which he deems noble and just and good, and hate the opposite of them?

Euthyphro: Very true.

Socrates: But, as you say, people regard the same things, some as just and others as unjust,—about these they dispute; and so there arise wars and fightings among them. *8a*

Euthyphro: Very true.

Socrates: Then the same things are hated by the gods and loved by the gods, and are both hateful and dear to them?

Euthyphro: True.

Socrates: And upon this view the same things, Euthyphro, will be pious and also impious?

Euthyphro: So I should suppose.

Socrates: Then, my friend, I remark with surprise that you have not answered the question which I asked. For I certainly did not ask you to tell me what action is both pious and impious: but now it would seem that what is loved by the gods is also hated **b** by them. And therefore, Euthyphro, in thus chastising your father you may very likely be doing what is agreeable to Zeus but disagreeable to Cronos or Uranus, and what is acceptable to HEPHAESTUS but unacceptable to HERE, and there may be other gods who have similar differences of opinion.

Euthyphro: But I believe, Socrates, that all the gods would be agreed as to the propriety of punishing a murderer: there would be no difference of opinion about that.

c *Socrates*: Well, but speaking of men, Euthyphro, did you ever hear any one arguing that a murderer or any sort of evil-doer ought to be let off?

Euthyphro: I should rather say that these are the questions which they are always arguing, especially in courts of law: they commit all sorts of crimes, and there is nothing which they will not do or say in their own defence.

Socrates: But do they admit their guilt, Euthyphro, and yet say that they ought not to be punished?

Euthyphro: No; they do not.

d *Socrates*: Then there are some things which they do not venture to say and do: for they do not venture to argue that the

2 Euthyphro

guilty are to be unpunished, but they deny their guilt, do they not?

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: Then they do not argue that the evil-doer should not be punished, but they argue about the fact of who the evil-doer is, and what he did and when?

Euthyphro: True.

Socrates: And the gods are in the same case, if as you assert they quarrel about just and unjust, and some of them say while others deny that injustice is done among them. For surely neither God ^e nor man will ever venture to say that the doer of injustice is not to be punished?

Neither God nor man will say that the doer of evil is not to be punished, but they are doubtful about particular acts. What proof is there that all the gods approve of the prosecution of your father? *Euthyphro:* That is true, Socrates, in the main.

Socrates: But they join issue about the particulars—gods and men alike; and, if they dispute at all, they dispute about some act which is called in question, and which by some is affirmed to be just, by others to be unjust. Is not that true?

Euthyphro: Quite true.

Socrates: Well then, my dear friend Euthyphro, do tell me, for ^{9a} my better instruction and information, what proof have you that in the opinion of all the gods a servant who is guilty of murder, and is put in chains by the master of the dead man, and dies because he is put in chains before he who bound him can learn from the interpreters of the gods what he ought to do with him, dies unjustly; and that on behalf of such an one a son ought to proceed against his father and accuse him of murder. How would ^b you show that all the gods absolutely agree in approving of his

act? Prove to me that they do, and I will applaud your wisdom as long as I live.

Euthyphro: It will be a difficult task; but I could make the matter very clear indeed to you.

Socrates: I understand; you mean to say that I am not so quick of apprehension as the JUDGES: for to them you will be sure to prove that the act is unjust, and hateful to the gods.

Euthyphro: Yes indeed, *Socrates*; at least if they will listen to me.

- c* *Socrates*: But they will be sure to listen if they find that you are a good speaker. There was a notion that came into my mind while you were speaking; I said to myself: 'Well, and what if *Euthyphro* does prove to me that all the gods regarded the death of the serf as unjust, how do I know anything more of the nature of piety and impiety? for granting that this action may be hateful to the gods, still piety and impiety are not adequately defined by these distinctions, for that which is hateful to the gods has been
- d* shown to be also pleasing and dear to them.' And therefore, *Euthyphro*, I do not ask you to prove this; I will suppose, if you like, that all the gods condemn and abominate such an action. But I will amend the definition so far as to say that what all the gods hate is impious, and what they love pious or holy; and what some of them love and others hate is both or neither. Shall this be our definition of piety and impiety?

Let us say that what all the gods approve is pious and holy.

Euthyphro: Why not, *Socrates*?

Socrates: Why not! certainly, as far as I am concerned, *Euthyphro*, there is no reason why not. But whether this admission will

2 Euthyphro

greatly assist you in the task of instructing me as you promised, is a matter for you to consider.

Euthyphro: Yes, I should say that what all the gods love is pious e and holy, and the opposite which they all hate, impious.

Socrates: Ought we to enquire into the truth of this, Euthyphro, or simply to accept the mere statement on our own authority and that of others? What do you say?

Euthyphro: We should enquire; and I believe that the statement will stand the test of enquiry.

Socrates: We shall know better, my good friend, in a little while. 10a
The point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious or holy is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods.

But does the state follow the act, or the act the state?

Euthyphro: I do not understand your meaning, Socrates.

Socrates: I will endeavour to explain: we, speak of carrying and we speak of being carried, of leading and being led, seeing and being seen. You know that in all such cases there is a difference, and you know also in what the difference lies?

Euthyphro: I think that I understand.

Socrates: And is not that which is beloved distinct from that which loves?

Euthyphro: Certainly.

Socrates: Well; and now tell me, is that which is carried in this state of carrying because it is carried, or for some other reason? b

Euthyphro: No; that is the reason.

Socrates: And the same is true of what is led and of what is seen?

Euthyphro: True.

Socrates: And a thing is not seen because it is visible, but conversely, visible because it is seen; nor is a thing led because it is in the state of being led, or carried because it is in the state of being carried, but the converse of this. And now I think, Euthyphro, that my meaning will be intelligible; and my meaning is, that any state of action or passion implies previous action or passion. It does not become because it is becoming, but it is in a state of becoming because it becomes; neither does it suffer because it is in a state of suffering, but it is in a state of suffering because it suffers. Do you not agree?

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: Is not that which is loved in some state either of becoming or suffering?

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: And the same holds as in the previous instances; the state of being loved follows the act of being loved, and not the act the state.

Euthyphro: Certainly.

d Socrates: And what do you say of piety, Euthyphro: is not piety, according to your definition, loved by all the gods?

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: Because it is pious or holy, or for some other reason?

Euthyphro: No, that is the reason.

Socrates: It is loved because it is holy, not holy because it is loved?

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: And that which is dear to the gods is loved by them, and is in a state to be loved of them because it is loved of them?

The latter is the truer account, and therefore we can only say that what is loved by all the gods is in a state to be loved by them; but holiness has a wider meaning than this.

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Euthyphro: Certainly.

Socrates: Then that which is dear to the gods, Euthyphro, is not holy, nor is that which is holy loved of God, as you affirm; but they are two different things.

Euthyphro: How do you mean, Socrates? e

Socrates: I mean to say that the holy has been acknowledged by us to be loved of God because it is holy, not to be holy because it is loved.

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: But that which is dear to the gods is dear to them because it is loved by them, not loved by them because it is dear to them.

Euthyphro: True.

Socrates: But, friend Euthyphro, if that which is holy is the same with that which is dear to God, and is loved because it is holy, 11a then that which is dear to God would have been loved as being dear to God; but if that which is dear to God is dear to him because loved by him, then that which is holy would have been holy because loved by him. But now you see that the reverse is the case, and that they are quite different from one another. For one (theophiles) is of a kind to be loved cause it is loved, and the other (osion) is loved because it is of a kind to be loved. Thus you appear to me, Euthyphro, when I ask you what is the essence of holiness, to offer an attribute only, and not the essence—the attribute of being loved by all the gods. But you still refuse to explain to me the nature of holiness. b And therefore, if you please, I will ask you not to hide your treasure, but to tell me once more what holiness or piety really is, whether dear to the gods or not

(for that is a matter about which we will not quarrel); and what is impiety?

Euthyphro: I really do not know, Socrates, how to express what I mean. For somehow or other our arguments, on whatever ground we rest them, seem to turn round and walk away from us.

c *Socrates*: Your words, Euthyphro, are like the handiwork of my ancestor DAEDALUS; and if I were the sayer or propounder of them, you might say that my arguments walk away and will not remain fixed where they are placed because I am a descendant of his. But now, since these notions are your own, you must find some other gibe, for they certainly, as you yourself allow, show an inclination to be on the move.

What is the essential meaning of holiness or piety?

d *Euthyphro*: Nay, Socrates, I shall still say that you are the Daedalus who sets arguments in motion; not I, certainly, but you make them move or go round, for they would never have stirred, as far as I am concerned.

e *Socrates*: Then I must be a greater than Daedalus: for whereas he only made his own inventions to move, I move those of other people as well. And the beauty of it is, that I would rather not. For I would give the wisdom of Daedalus, and the wealth of Tantalus, to be able to detain them and keep them fixed. But enough of this. As I perceive that you are lazy, I will myself endeavour to show you how you might instruct me in the nature of piety; and I hope that you will not grudge your labour. Tell me, then—Is not that which is pious necessarily just?

Euthyphro: Yes.

12a

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Socrates: And is, then, all which is just pious? or, is that which is pious all just, but that which is just, only in part and not all, pious?

Euthyphro: I do not understand you, Socrates.

All which is pious is just:-is therefore all which is just pious?

Socrates: And yet I know that you are as much wiser than I am, AS YOU ARE YOUNGER. But, as I was saying, revered friend, the abundance of your wisdom makes you lazy. Please to exert yourself, for there is no real difficulty in understanding me. What I mean I may explain by an illustration of what I do not mean. The poet (Stasinus) sings—

'Of Zeus, the author and creator of all these things, You will not tell: for where there is fear there is also reverence.'

Now I disagree with this poet. Shall I tell you in what respect?

Euthyphro: By all means.

We may say, e. g., that wherever there is reverence there will be fear, but not that wherever there is fear there will be reverence.

Socrates: I should not say that where there is fear there is also reverence; for I am sure that many persons fear poverty and disease, and the like evils, but I do not perceive that they reverence the objects of their fear.

Euthyphro: Very true.

Socrates: But where reverence is, there is fear; for he who has a feeling of reverence and shame about the commission of any action, fears and is afraid of an ill reputation.

Euthyphro: No doubt.

Socrates: Then we are wrong in saying that where there is fear there is also reverence; and we should say, where there is reverence there is also fear. But there is not always reverence where there is fear; for fear is a more extended notion, and reverence is a part of fear, just as the odd is a part of number, and number is

a more extended notion than the odd. I suppose that you follow me now?

d *Euthyphro*: Quite well.

Socrates: That was the sort of question which I meant to raise when I asked whether the just is always the pious, or the pious always the just; and whether there may not be justice where there is not piety; for justice is the more extended notion of which piety is only a part. Do you dissent?

Euthyphro: No, I think that you are quite right.

Socrates: Then, if piety is a part of justice, I suppose that we should enquire what part? If you had pursued the enquiry in the previous cases; for instance, if you had asked me what is an even number, and what part of number the even is, I should have had no difficulty in replying, a number which represents a figure having two equal sides. Do you not agree?

Euthyphro: Yes, I quite agree.

e *Socrates*: In like manner, I want you to tell me what part of justice is piety or holiness, that I may be able to tell Meletus not to do me injustice, or indict me for impiety, as I am now adequately instructed by you in the nature of piety or holiness, and their opposites.

Piety or holiness is that part of justice which attends upon the gods.

Euthyphro: Piety or holiness, *Socrates*, appears to me to be that part of justice which attends to the gods, as there is the other part of justice which attends to men.

13a *Socrates*: That is good, *Euthyphro*; yet still there is a little point about which I should like to have further information, What is the meaning of ‘attention’? For attention can hardly be used in the same sense when applied to the gods as when applied to

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other things. For instance, horses are said to require attention, and not every person is able to attend to them, but only a person skilled in horsemanship. Is it not so?

Euthyphro: Certainly.

Socrates: I should suppose that the art of horsemanship is the art of attending to horses?

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: Nor is every one qualified to attend to dogs, but only the huntsman?

Euthyphro: True. b

Socrates: And I should also conceive that the art of the huntsman is the art of attending to dogs?

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: As the art of the oxherd is the art of attending to oxen?

Euthyphro: Very true.

Socrates: In like manner holiness or piety is the art of attending to the gods?—that would be your meaning, Euthyphro?

Euthyphro: Yes.

Socrates: And is not attention always designed for the good or benefit of that to which the attention is given? As in the case of horses, you may observe that when attended to by the horse-
man's art they are benefited and improved, are they not?

Euthyphro: True.

Socrates: As the dogs are benefited by the huntsman's art, and the oxen by the art of the oxherd, and all other things are tended or attended for their good and not for their hurt? c

Euthyphro: Certainly, not for their hurt.

Socrates: But for their good?

Euthyphro: Of course.

Socrates: And does piety or holiness, which has been defined to be the art of attending to the gods, benefit or improve them? Would you say that when you do a holy act you make any of the gods better?

Euthyphro: No, no; that was certainly not what I meant.

d Socrates: And I, Euthyphro, never supposed that you did. I asked you the question about the nature of the attention, because I thought that you did not.

Euthyphro: You do me justice, Socrates; that is not the sort of attention which I mean.

Socrates: Good: but I must still ask what is this attention to the gods which is called piety?

Euthyphro: It is such, Socrates, as servants show to their masters.

Socrates: I understand—a sort of ministration to the gods.

Euthyphro: Exactly.

Socrates: Medicine is also a sort of ministration or service, having in view the attainment of some object—would you not say of health?

Euthyphro: I should.

e Socrates: Again, there is an art which ministers to the ship-builder with a view to the attainment of some result?

Euthyphro: Yes, Socrates, with a view to the building of a ship.

Socrates: As there is an art which ministers to the house-builder with a view to the building of a house?

Euthyphro: Yes.

The attention to the gods called piety is such as servants show their masters.

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*But in what
way do men
help the
work of God?*

Socrates: And now tell me, my good friend, about the art which ministers to the gods: what work does that help to accomplish? For you must surely know if, as you say, you are of all men living the one who is best instructed in religion.

Euthyphro: And I speak the truth, Socrates.

Socrates: Tell me then, oh tell me—what is that fair work which the gods do by the help of our ministrations?

Euthyphro: Many and fair, Socrates, are the works which they do.

Socrates: Why, my friend, and so are those of a general. But the chief of them is easily told. Would you not say that victory in war is the chief of them? 14a

Euthyphro: Certainly.

Socrates: Many and fair, too, are the works of the husbandman, if I am not mistaken; but his chief work is the production of food from the earth?

Euthyphro: Exactly.

Socrates: And of the many and fair things done by the gods, which is the chief or principal one?

Euthyphro: I have told you already, Socrates, that to learn all these things accurately will be very tiresome. Let me simply say that piety or holiness is learning how to please the gods in word and deed, by prayers and sacrifices. Such piety is the salvation of families and states, just as the impious, which is displeasing to the gods, is their ruin and destruction. b

Socrates: I think that you could have answered in much fewer words the chief question which I asked, Euthyphro, if you had chosen. But I see plainly that you are not disposed to instruct c

me—clearly not: else why, when we reached the point, did you turn aside? Had you only answered me I should have truly learned of you by this time the nature of piety. Now, as the asker of a question is necessarily dependent on the answerer, whither he leads I must follow; and can only ask again, what is the pious, and what is piety? Do you mean that they are a sort of science of praying and sacrificing?

Euthyphro: Yes, I do.

d *Socrates:* And sacrificing is giving to the gods, and prayer is asking of the gods?

Euthyphro: Yes, Socrates.

Socrates: Upon this view, then, piety is a science of asking and giving?

Euthyphro: You understand me capitally, Socrates.

Socrates: Yes, my friend; the reason is that I am a votary of your science, and give my mind to it, and therefore nothing which you say will be thrown away upon me. Please then to tell me, what is the nature of this service to the gods? Do you mean that we prefer requests and give gifts to them?

Euthyphro: Yes, I do.

e *Socrates:* Is not the right way of asking to ask of them what we want?

Euthyphro: Certainly.

Socrates: And the right way of giving is to give to them in return what they want of us. There would be no meaning in an art which gives to any one that which he does not want.

Euthyphro: Very true, Socrates.

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Socrates: Then piety, Euthyphro, is an art which gods and men have of doing business with one another?

Euthyphro: That is an expression which you may use, if you like.

Socrates: But I have no particular liking for anything but the truth. I wish, however, that you would tell me what benefit accrues to the gods from our gifts. There is no doubt about what they give to us; for there is no good thing which they do not give; but how we can give any good thing to them in return is far from being equally clear. If they give everything and we give nothing, that must be an affair of business in which we have very greatly the advantage of them. 15a

Euthyphro: And do you imagine, Socrates, that any benefit accrues to the gods from our gifts?

Socrates: But if not, Euthyphro, what is the meaning of gifts which are conferred by us upon the gods?

Euthyphro: What else, but tributes of honour; and, as I was just now saying, what pleases them?

Socrates: Piety, then, is pleasing to the gods, but not beneficial or dear to them? b

Euthyphro: I should say that nothing could be dearer.

Socrates: Then once more the assertion is repeated that piety is dear to the gods?

Euthyphro: Certainly.

Socrates: And when you say this, can you wonder at your words not standing firm, but walking away? Will you accuse me of being the Daedalus who makes them walk away, not perceiving that there is another and far greater artist than Daedalus who makes them go round in a circle, and he is yourself; for the argument, as

d you will perceive, comes round to the same point. Were we not saying that the holy or pious was not the same with that which is loved of the gods? Have you forgotten?

Euthyphro: I quite remember.

Socrates: And are you not saying that what is loved of the gods is holy; and is not this the same as what is dear to them—do you see?

Euthyphro: True.

Socrates: Then either we were wrong in our former assertion; or, if we were right then, we are wrong now.

Euthyphro: One of the two must be true.

Socrates: Then we must BEGIN AGAIN AND ASK, What is piety? That is an enquiry which I shall never be weary of pursuing as far as in me lies; and I entreat you not to scorn me, but to apply your mind to the utmost, and tell me the truth. For, if any man knows, you are he; and therefore I must detain you, like PROTEUS, until you tell. If you had not certainly known the nature of piety and impiety, I am confident that you would never, on behalf of a serf, have charged your aged father with murder. You would not have run such a risk of doing wrong in the sight of the gods, and you would have had too much respect for the opinions of *e* men. I am sure, therefore, that you know the nature of piety and impiety. Speak out then, my dear Euthyphro, and do not hide your knowledge.

Euthyphro: Another time, Socrates; for I am in a hurry, and must go now.

Socrates: Alas! my companion, and will you leave me in despair? I was hoping that you would instruct me in the nature of piety

2 Euthyphro

and impiety; and then I might have cleared myself of Meletus and his indictment. I would have told him that I had been enlightened by Euthyphro, and had given up rash innovations and speculations, in which I indulged only through ignorance, and that now I am about to lead a better life. 16a

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2a.

KING ARCHON: Archons were ancient Athenian magistrates who oversaw various civil and religious matters. The constitution of the city-state provided for nine archons of which the King was the second. Though chosen by lot, he was "King" by inheritance. Historically, Kings interceded to the gods on behalf of the people, a role they continued to play in democratic Athens. The King's day would begin by sacrificing an animal. He had jurisdiction over charges of homicide and impiety.

The King Archon had his office in the Royal Stoa (Stoa Basileios) of the Agora.

LYCEUM: This is one of three famous gymnasia or sports grounds located outside the walls of Athens. It is situated on the bank of a river and was named after the precinct in which it was located. We know from Plato that it was a favorite spot for Socrates, being the setting for two Platonic dialogues, the Euthydemus and the Lysis.

Unlike our age, which all too often separates intellectual from athletic sites, the Greeks professed integration of mind and body. There was no "dumb jock" mentality here! Because the Lyceum

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was a place for the free and uninhibited discussion of the truth, it forms a contrast to the courts of law in this dialogue where "winning" is what counted and the truth had, at best, secondary value.

Later, in the fourth century B.C.E., Aristotle founded a school here and, likewise, named it after the precinct.

SUIT BEFORE THE KING: In ancient Athens, two types of suit could be brought before the court: a civil dispute over some perceived private wrong and a public indictment over a perceived wrong against the state. In either case, a private citizen (or groups of citizens) needed to initiate the process. Socrates, of course, is faced with a public indictment, while Euthyphro, as you will see, is initiating a private suit against his father.

EUTHYPHRO: As you will discover, Euthyphro is dogmatic but not very bright. This makes him ill-suited for the demands of the Socratic dialogue which involves a free and critical inquiry into the nature of truth. Although generally portrayed as a religious conservative, Euthyphro's strict adherence to the views of the gods as portrayed in Homer is out of step with the Athenians of his day (including the conservatives). Since the literalist position, though accepted prior to the stresses and strains of the Peloponnesian War, was no longer common by this time (399 B.C.E.), Euthyphro was in the minority and often the subject of ridicule. For Socrates, himself, a strict religious interpretation stands in the way of the quest for knowledge to which he is passionately com-

mitted.

2c.

MELETUS: In ancient Athens prosecutions could be initiated by any citizen or group of citizens. There were no D. A.'s (public prosecutors) as there are today. Meletus authored the written indictment against Socrates in 399 B.C.E. and, thus, is the principal prosecutor. At least on the surface that is. He would have been quite young at the time and far less skillful in the political arena than another prosecutor, Anytus.

For this reason, many scholars consider Anytus the real "power behind the throne" regarding the prosecution of Socrates. Some evidence exists that Meletus, a poet by trade, may have been a bona fide religious fanatic who was far more concerned with the charge of impiety lodged against Socrates than with the corruption charge. In any event, Plato portrays him as a very serious and patriotic sort of fellow who probably sincerely believed the prosecution of Socrates was for the good of his city-state of Athens. The third person who forms part of the prosecution is Lycon.

SOCRATES: Although Socrates (470-399 BCE) is the central figure of these dialogues, little is actually known about him. He left no writings, and what is known is derived largely from Plato and Xenophon.

Socrates was a stone cutter by trade, even though there is little evidence that he did much to make a living. However, he did have

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enough money to own a suit of armor when he was a hoplite in the Athenian military. Socrates' mother was a midwife. He was married and had three sons. Throughout his life he claimed to hear voices which he interpreted as signs from the gods.

It appears that Socrates spent much of his adult life in the agora (or the marketplace) conversing about ethical issues. He had a penchant for exposing ignorance, hypocrisy, and conceit among among his fellow Athenians, particularly in regard to moral questions. In all probability, he was disliked by most of them.

However, Socrates did have a loyal following. He was very influential in the lives of Plato, Euclid, Alcibiades, and many others. As such, he was associated with the undemocratic faction of Athens. Although Socrates went to great lengths to distinguish himself from the sophists, it is unlikely that his fellow Athenians made such a distinction in their minds.

Socrates is admired by many philosophers for his willingness to explore an argument wherever it would lead as well as having
2d. the moral courage to follow its conclusion.

REVERSE OF A WISE MAN: This phrase is an example of so-called Socratic irony. As a reader of Plato's work, you will discover that, despite Socrates' claim of ignorance, he is no dummy! This often leads a student to believe that Socrates is being dishonest and is merely laying intellectual traps for those with whom he converses. Try to think of it this way. If knowledge is defined as revisable claims that can be defended, then Socrates is being decep-

tive because he certainly has an understanding of such things. If, however, true knowledge is final and beyond revision, Socrates is being honest. He doesn't see himself as having reached that level of understanding. In either event, his professed ignorance challenges various self-proclaimed experts in the dialogue to join the process of discussion.

3b.

NEOLOGIAN: neologian is anyone who brings new or innovative interpretations to theology, particularly of a rationalistic sort. Because Greek mythology is full of fantastic events (from a literal standpoint), the educated Greeks in Socrates' day were prone to a more symbolic and/or poetic interpretation of divine activities. For those with an orthodox bent such as Meletus, this was simply heresy!

4c.

NAXOS: Southeast of Athens in the Aegean Sea, lay a series of islands collectively referred to as the Cyclades. The largest and most productive among them was Naxos. Politically, it had a history of changing sides during conflict and revolting at the most inopportune times. For this reason, it was occupied in the fifth century by Athenian cleruchs. It is speculated that Euthyphro's father was one such Athenian settler. Naxos was particularly renowned for its wine and the worship of the god of wine, Dionysus.

4d.

ATHENS: Athens is located about 5 miles inland from the harbor town of Piraeus. Athens was one of the largest city-states during this time. Its population is estimated to have been about 200,000

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during the 5th century. Athens was noted as a center for cultural, intellectual, and artistic activity. Some of its most distinctive features include the Acropolis (the center for religious life) and the Agora (marketplace).

DIVINER: Diviners held prominent roles in both ancient Greece and Rome. By means of the supernatural, they sought to predict the future or to interpret the important events of one's life. Euthyphro's father, wanting to be certain that he was justified in killing the murderer, seeks the advice of the gods through such a medium.

4e.

WHO PROSECUTES A FATHER: This case is puzzling for a variety of reasons. To begin with, homicide in ancient Athens was not a crime against the state. For the suit to come to trial, therefore, it had to be a private case in which the "prosecutor" was seeking correction for some injustice. Since this required that a relative of the deceased file the suit, it is very likely that the King Archon would dismiss the case on, what we might call, procedural grounds. Any citizen could file a private suit, however, if the murder created some type of religious pollution contrary to the best interests of the state. In any event, the facts surrounding the murderer's death are sufficiently murky to cause reflection on the meaning of piety and whether prosecution of one's own father is indeed holy!

5c.

NATURE OF PIETY AND IMPIETY: Without being aware of it, we have been drawn into the Socratic method. A chance meeting be-

tween Euthyphro and Socrates has led to a discussion about the necessity of acting in a "holy" (i.e. pious) manner. To Socrates' way of thinking, one must know the definition of "piety" before one can act that way! Consequently, he begins the dialogue by inquiring into the very nature of piety, itself. As you will see, Euthyphro, like so many interlocutors in other dialogues, does not define the object in question but merely gives an example! 6a.

ZEUS: Zeus was the greatest of the Olympian gods (even Apollo dared not oppose him directly). Associated with light, the sky, and thunder, he was also responsible for maintaining order and justice in the world (though he was often side tracked, according to Homer, by his numerous affairs and constant battles with his wife Hera).

"Jove" is the poetic form of the Roman god, Jupiter, who later becomes associated with the Greek god, Zeus. Zeus, therefore, would be more historically accurate here and the translators use of the name "Jove" is not accurate.

He was said to preside on Mount Olympus.

CRONOS: In an effort to escape the common objection that it is impious to prosecute one's own father, Euthyphro appeals to Greek mythology (again we see his strict fundamentalism regarding the stories of the gods). Prior to the rule of the Olympian gods, the Titans controlled the earth. One of the Titans, Cronos by name, was the son of Uranus and Gaia. He fathered the following el-

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dest children: Hestia, Demeter, Hades, and Poseidon. Fearing that his children would overpower him, he swallowed each of them whole! When Zeus was born, however, his mother wrapped a stone in a swaddling cloth which Cronos promptly devoured, mistaking it for the child. Zeus was hidden away. True to the predictions, when Zeus became a man, he overpowered Cronos and banished him to Tartarus, a place so deep that it was below the Underworld. By the way, if you are skeptical about all of this, the imprisoned Titans (others were to follow) periodically seek to break free from their inner earthly prison. And you thought that earthquakes and volcanic eruptions were natural phenomenon!

URANUS: This fertile sky god is said to have descended nightly upon mother earth (Gaia) to impregnate her. For fear of being overthrown by his offspring, he would return them to Gaia's womb as soon as they were born. Finally, tired of unending childbirth, Gaia conspires with her son, Cronos, to fix old Uranus. Cronos hid within Gaia's vagina (Is this Freudian or what?) and waited for that evening's mating. When the opportunity arrived, he castrated his father with a sickle! The testicles, in turn, were thrown into the sea where, by one account, they begot the goddess of love, Aphrodite. (In case you haven't gotten the message, these 6c. folks were the original dysfunctional family!)

ROBE OF ATHENE: This beautifully adorned robe figured prominently in the Panathenaea. During this festival, it was placed upon the mast of a ship and brought to the goddess, Athena. Because the celebration was held on land, the ship was equipped with

wheels for the occasion!

ACROPOLIS: Generally speaking, an "acropolis" is a town or temples that have been erected on any detached hill. The one in Athens, however, is what usually comes to mind when a reference has been made to the Acropolis. The Acropolis lies south of the original city, is oval in shape (about 500 by 1000 feet), and is only reasonably accessible on the west side. Successive generations of Athenians built religious sanctuaries there. The most famous of these sanctuaries, the Parthenon, survives to this day. It is dedicated to Athena, the patroness of the city-state which bears her name. Among other things, Athena is the goddess of wisdom, water, arts, crafts, and battle.

PANATHENAEA: This annual festival was held in Athens and celebrated the supposed birthday of Athena. Every fourth year the pomp and circumstance was especially grand. The festival included sacrifices, game playing, and processions.

A large variety of groups and peoples were represented in the opening procession and the flesh of sacrificed animals was distributed among the crowd. The prize for the games was a holy olive oil, taken from an olive tree that had, supposedly, been planted by Athena, herself. The oil was kept in amphoras (thin, two handled jars with narrow necks). The outside of the jar was decorated with the figure of Athena holding a spear, a characteristic pose for the goddess. The spear also depicted one of the many festival games.

8b.

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HEPHAESTUS: Hephaestus, son of Zeus and Hera, is the god of fire, the forge, and metalworking. He is the Rodney Dangerfield of the gods - he got no respect!

By one account, Zeus threw him out of Mount Olympus because he sided with Hera during a family argument. Being the greatest of the Olympian gods, Zeus tossed him so far that it took Hephaestus an entire day (and 150 miles) to reach ground. He finally landed on the island of Lemnos, hitting so hard that it left him permanently lame.

When inventions, rather than divine etiquette, were necessary, however, Hephaestus showed his genius. To get back into Olympus he fashioned a golden throne for Hera, complete with concealed chains. When she sat on the throne she was bound hand and foot. Because no one could release her, the gods had no choice but to beg Hephaestus to return. Dionysus, that "wild and crazy" god of wine, got him drunk and Hephaestus rode triumphantly into Olympus on the back of a jackass!

HERE: Later identified with the Roman goddess Juno, Hera reigns as the greatest of the Olympian goddesses. She is both sister and wife to her male equivalent, Zeus. Among their children are Hephaestus (the god of metal work or the forge) and Ares (the god of war). In ancient Greece, festivals celebrating her marriage to Zeus took place almost everywhere. She is probably most famous for her violent, punitive, and jealous responses to the many af-

fairs of her husband (if you haven't figured it out by now, the ordinary human rules of sexual conduct hardly applied to the gods)!

Hera became the protecting deity of wives as a result. Since it was difficult for her to get back at Zeus directly (the mythic gods had a hierarchy both sexual and otherwise which was used to validate Greek patriarchy) she vented her anger on the mistresses and illegitimate children of her husband. Heracles (known as Hercules to the Romans) was among her more frequent victims. So much so that their exploits spawned a popular syndicated television show! Eventually, she and Heracles made peace, however. Do I sense a grand finale to the series here?

9b.

JUDGES: In the context of this trial, the term judges referred to the jurors who were chosen by lot for civic service. There was no presiding judge like today. Each took an oath to make judgment according to the laws of Athens.

The jurors volunteered. Their names were chosen by lot for random service over a one year period. They were called judges as there was no presiding judge. Like today, jurors were paid, but the expectation was that one should really do jury duty as a service to the community (thus, like today, the compensation was modest). Nevertheless, many jury volunteers were old men who lacked other means of livelihood. Each took an oath to make judgment according to the laws of Athens.

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11b. The allotment machine at the right was used to select jurors for trials.

DAEDALUS: It was common for Greeks to trace their ancestry back to a "patron" god. For example, physicians would ordinarily claim Asclepius, the god of healing, as their ultimate ancestor. Here, Socrates is drawing a connection between his father's profession as a stone-worker and the most famous of the Greek sculptors, Daedalus. Daedalus, though not a god, was supposedly descended from Hephaestus, and, through him, descended from Zeus. Daedalus is credited with revolutionizing the art form of sculpture by "freeing" the arms and legs from the sides of his statues. This added an element of reality and, as is referenced here, undoubtedly contributed to the notion that they were alive and moving. Although Euthyphro will accuse Socrates of creating arguments that "hop about", Socrates will have the last laugh. He will show that Euthyphro's arguments not only move around but come full circle, returning to the point from which they began!

Consider one final piece of information about Daedalus. As the story goes, he and his son attempted to escape from the Labyrinth on Crete by fashioning wings of wax, attaching them to their arms, and flying to safety. Unfortunately, his son, Icarus, ignored his father's warnings and flew too close to the sun. When the wax melted, he plunged to his death in the sea around Samos which bears his name. It would seem that, long before the Robert Redford
12a. sitcom, "Father Knows Best!"

AS YOU ARE YOUNGER: This is clearly an example of irony. Euthyphro, who is middle-aged, may be twenty or more years younger than the seventy year old Socrates. Far from being much wiser, however, he is rather dull-witted and slow to understand the flow of the conversation.

15d.

BEGIN AGAIN AND ASK: It is typical of Plato's early dialogues, purported by scholars to give the most historically accurate portrait of Socrates, to be open-ended. One never really discovers the true nature of the object being studied, but only discovers what it is not. One shouldn't despair, however. In discovering what something is not, our smug assumptions and our ignorance of the subject are dispelled. This is real progress! Besides, if we really are committed to the pursuit of truth, this ongoing process is a moving forward by picking up the analysis where we last left off.

PROTEUS: Proteus is a minor sea god and was a servant of Poseidon. It was said that he herded the watery sea flocks, most notably the seals. He was gifted with the ability to change physical shape and form. If held onto long enough, however, he was forced to assume his true shape and answer all his captor's questions, but holding him was no easy task. Just as the Greek King, Menelaus, hounded Proteus to share his prophecy, Socrates must hound Euthyphro in an effort to get the answer he seeks.