



Portfolio Guide

The Court of Athens, 399 BC

Agenda: The Trial of Socrates

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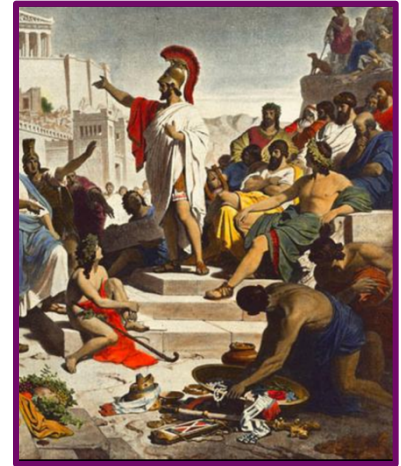
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Anytus

Overview

Anytus, son of Anthemion, was one of the wealthiest and most politically connected men in Athens by the time this trial began. A tanner by trade, he built a fortune large enough to matter and turned it into real democratic influence. He followed Thrasybulus into exile at Phyle, contributed heavily to the campaign that drove out the Thirty Tyrants, and had a hand in shaping the amnesty that followed. By 399 BCE he stood among the senior figures of the restored democracy, a man whose word carried weight and whose complaints got taken seriously.



His involvement in this prosecution did not come from an impulse. He has watched Socrates work the streets and stoas of Athens for decades and has settled, with what looks like genuine conviction, on the view that the man poses a real and ongoing threat to the civic culture the restoration spent years rebuilding. There is a personal layer to this as well. His own son attached himself to Socrates' circle, and Socrates is said to have told the boy that his father's trade sat beneath what he was capable of. Whether the exchange happened in those exact words matters less than what followed: the son's drift away from his family's world was real, and Anytus lays that at Socrates' feet.

Position in the Proceedings

Anytus comes to this trial believing his own political interests and the city's interests have quietly merged into one thing. His case against Socratic philosophy isn't built on formal heresy. It's built on the argument that this kind of education teaches aristocratic youth to look down on ordinary civic life, on the Assembly and its politicians, on the craftsmen who keep Athens running day to day. Alcibiades is his proof of that. Critias is his sharper, more damning proof.

He knows the amnesty forbids naming either man directly in connection with the oligarchy's crimes. He works around that by using them as atmosphere instead, the unspoken weight sitting behind the corruption charge rather than its stated content. The formal argument concerns what Socrates is doing now. The argument Anytus actually wants the jury to feel concerns what Athens has already paid for allowing men like this to shape its young.

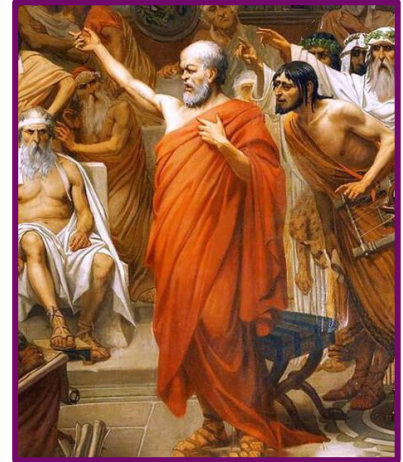
Objectives

1. Secure a guilty verdict on both charges, with death as the outcome of the penalty phase.
2. Fix in the jury's mind a link between Socratic intellectual culture and the aristocratic disloyalty behind the oligarchic catastrophe.
3. Present the prosecution as civic duty rather than personal grievance, since his credibility depends on looking like a man acting for Athens and not for himself.
4. Block any attempt by the defence to recast Socrates' philosophical practice as harmless, or worse, beneficial to the city.
5. Use the verdict to send a signal to Athens's broader intellectual circles about what kind of influence the restored democracy will tolerate.

Meletus

Overview

Meletus, son of Meletus of Pithos, is a poet by profession and the man whose name appears first on the indictment against Socrates. Athenian legal procedure for the *graphe asebeias* required a named citizen to file the charge formally, and Meletus took that role. He is young, holds no political office, and carries none of the civic weight Anytus brings to the case. Most Athenians struggle to place him, and those who can tend to know him mainly through his father, also a poet, and through a professional world Socrates has spent years quietly humiliating by asking poets to explain their own lines and watching them fail to do it.



What actually drives him is harder to see from outside the case. He clearly has a real personal stake in the outcome, sitting alongside, and possibly underneath, the religious concern he states openly. What is visible is his position as the formal accuser of record, the man whose signature is on the indictment and who opens proceedings before the jury. The weight of the case does not rest with him, even though the paperwork does.

Position in the Proceedings

Meletus carries the religious side of the prosecution. The impiety charge is formally his, and his opening speech is where the argument that Socrates ignored the gods of Athens and introduced new divinities gets made most directly. His position is that Socrates' *daimonion* sits outside anything Athenian civic religion authorizes, and that four decades of picking apart traditional theology add up to a sustained attack on the religious foundations of the city rather than harmless intellectual curiosity.

His problem is that Socrates will cross-examine him, and it probably won't go well. Under sustained pressure Meletus risks overreaching. If he pushes toward calling Socrates an outright atheist, a position some around him want him to take, it collides directly with the charge that Socrates introduced new divinities of his own. Socrates will use that contradiction to pull the impiety charge apart in front of the jury before he's finished speaking. How well Meletus has prepared for that exchange matters more than anything in his opening speech.

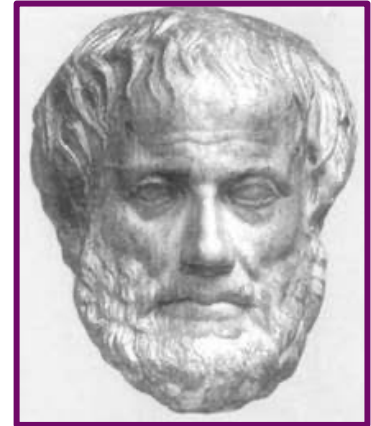
Objectives

1. Convince the jury beyond doubt that Socrates' *daimonion* is an unauthorized divinity whose existence alone constitutes impiety against the gods of Athens.
2. Establish that Socrates' lifelong questioning of traditional religion is not philosophy but a deliberate campaign to erode the sacred foundations upon which the polis stands.
3. Secure a guilty verdict that reaffirms the supremacy of Athenian civic religion and leaves no ambiguity over the consequences of undermining it.
4. Ensure the religious and political cases become inseparable in the minds of the jury, presenting Socrates as a threat whose influence must be ended permanently through conviction and the ultimate penalty.

Lycon

Overview

Lycon is a rhetorician and the third accuser, prominent as one of the three men behind the prosecution. He is known within Athenian public life primarily through his son Autolycus, a celebrated athlete whose victory at the Panathenaic Games brought the family considerable public attention. Beyond that association, Lycon occupies a relatively modest position in Athenian civic life. He is a professional in the arts of public speech, which places him in a world that Socrates has criticised consistently and pointedly throughout his philosophical career.



Position in the Proceedings

Lycon represents the community of orators and rhetoricians, and his presence in the prosecution reflects a professional grievance as much as a civic one. Socrates has spent years arguing that rhetoric as practised in Athens is a form of flattery rather than genuine communication, a tool for manipulating audiences toward predetermined conclusions rather than leading them toward truth. For men who have built their reputations and livelihoods on exactly this skill, that argument is not an abstract philosophical position. It is a direct attack on their standing in the city.

His contribution to the prosecution's case is likely to focus on the social consequences of Socratic teaching rather than its religious dimensions, which belong to Meletus, or its political implications, which belong to Anytus. He is the least essential of the three accusers, and the defence will probably treat him accordingly.

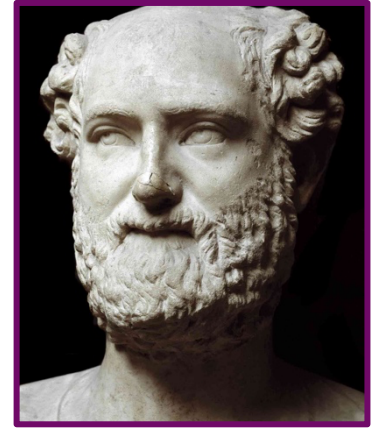
Objectives

1. Convince the jury that Socrates has systematically undermined the legitimacy of rhetoric, public persuasion, and the institutions through which Athenian democracy governs itself.
2. Establish that Socratic teaching breeds contempt for public speakers, civic participation, and the citizens entrusted with leading the polis.
3. Ensure the prosecution presents a united and uncompromising front, reinforcing the political and religious cases while preventing the defence from isolating or discrediting his role.
4. Prevent Socrates from exposing personal or professional motives behind his involvement, maintaining the image of a citizen acting solely in defence of Athens.
5. Help secure a decisive conviction that restores the authority of Athenian public institutions and deters future intellectual attacks on the city's civic order.

Aristophanes

Overview

Aristophanes sits with the prosecution, and the weight he brings to this trial is older than anything in the formal indictment. Every man on this jury old enough to have sat in the Theatre of Dionysus in 423 BCE watched a comic actor in a Socrates mask suspended in a basket, lecturing on the circumference of the moon while debtors in the orchestra learned how to talk their way out of what they owed. *The Clouds* gave Athens a Socrates before the real one ever stood trial for anything, and that earlier Socrates has been doing quiet work in this city for twenty-four years.



Position in the Proceedings

His contribution to the prosecution does not run through sworn testimony so much as through the ground he already cleared decades before Meletus drafted a single line of the indictment. Anytus and Meletus are building on an impression Aristophanes put in front of Athens long before this case existed, and Socrates knows it. He has said as much in addressing the court: the comic portrait reached people who never spoke a word to him, years before any formal charge existed. A man defending himself against a sworn accuser can answer the accusation directly. A man defending himself against a play half the jury saw as schoolboys has a harder target to hit back at, and Aristophanes' presence on this side of the case leans on exactly that advantage.

Objectives

1. Ensure the jury's memory of *The Clouds* reinforces the prosecution's case, cementing the image of Socrates as a corrupting and dangerous influence without relying on additional evidence.
2. Shape public perception so that the distinction between the comic Socrates and the real Socrates becomes irrelevant to the question of his guilt.
3. Strengthen the prosecution's case while denying the defence any opportunity to dismiss *The Clouds* as mere comedy rather than a reflection of a long-recognised public reality.
4. Secure a conviction that validates his portrayal of Socrates and affirms the role of comedy in exposing individuals whose influence threatens the city.

Archinus

Overview

Archinus sits with the prosecution, and the authority he brings to this trial goes back to 403 BCE, the year he helped engineer the settlement that let Athens function as one city again after the civil war against the Thirty. He fought beside Thrasybulus at Phyle and Piraeus, and once the democrats retook the city he became one of the sharpest enforcers of what followed: the amnesty, the formal decision that no one would be prosecuted for conduct under the oligarchy, with a short list of named exceptions. That agreement is the reason Anytus and Meletus had to build a case about impiety and corrupted youth instead of simply prosecuting Socrates for his proximity to Critias. Archinus built the wall the prosecution now has to argue around, and he understands that constraint better than anyone else in this courtroom.



Position in the Proceedings

His support for the prosecution carries the weight of a man defending the very legal architecture the case has to work within. Years ago, when a private citizen tried to reopen an old grievance against a man the amnesty protected, Archinus used the *paragraphe* procedure to stop the case before it could be heard, and the message landed across Athens: the amnesty would be enforced, not just declared. That precedent shapes what Meletus can and cannot argue here. He cannot charge Socrates with having taught Critias, because the amnesty closes that door, so the religious and moral language of the indictment has to gesture at the same suspicion without naming the political crime the settlement forbids prosecuting. Archinus's presence on the prosecution's side signals that this careful framing has his approval, that the case as built respects the line he drew rather than quietly working around it.

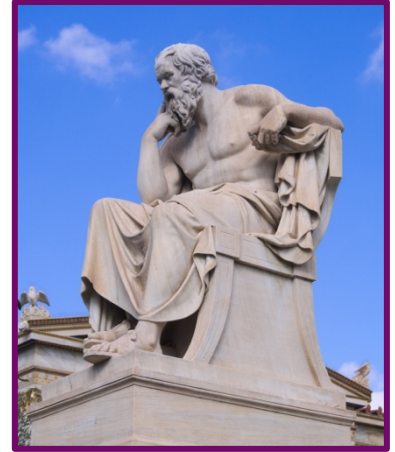
Objectives

1. Defend the amnesty as an inviolable principle of Athenian law, ensuring that neither this trial nor its verdict weakens the legal settlement that restored the democracy.
2. Prevent any attempt by the defence to recast the proceedings as a delayed prosecution for the crimes of the Thirty Tyrants or a reopening of the civil conflict.
3. Secure a conviction that demonstrates Athens can punish present threats to the city without abandoning the legal principles established after the restoration.
4. Ensure the prosecution remains firmly within the boundaries of the amnesty, denying the defence any opportunity to undermine the legitimacy of the case by exposing violations of the settlement Archinus helped create.

Euthyphro

Overview

Euthyphro stands as a witness aligned with the prosecution on the religious dimension of the charges, called to speak to the question of what piety actually requires of an Athenian. He is a seer with a reputation for unusual access to the will of the gods, and he comes to this testimony already in the middle of his own religious reckoning: he has brought his own father before the courts on a charge of murder, for the death of a hired labourer who killed a household slave and was left bound in a ditch on the family farm until instructions arrived from Athens. The man died of exposure before any answer came. Euthyphro filed the charge anyway, against his own family's wishes, because he believes the gods require it.



Position in the Proceedings

His testimony matters to the prosecution because he offers something Meletus cannot: the voice of a man who claims certainty about divine law and is willing to act on that certainty even at the cost of his own family. If the court accepts that piety has a knowable, enforceable content, the same logic that justifies Euthyphro's case against his father lends weight to the claim that Socrates has violated that content by inventing a private *daimonion* and questioning the gods of the city. But Euthyphro's confidence is also a liability the defence can use. Socrates has already pressed him, on the steps of the Archon's court, to define piety cleanly, and watched the definition collapse twice under simple questioning. If the defence can get that exchange in front of the jury, Euthyphro stops looking like a witness who proves the prosecution's case and starts looking like a demonstration of exactly the overconfidence Socrates has spent his life exposing.

Objectives

1. Convince the jury that piety is an objective and enforceable duty, and that Socrates has knowingly violated the religious obligations owed to the gods of Athens.
2. Use his own prosecution of his father as undeniable proof that obedience to divine law must take precedence over personal relationships, reputation, or social convention.
3. Maintain absolute confidence and authority under questioning, refusing to allow the defence to portray his understanding of piety as uncertain or self-contradictory.
4. Strengthen the prosecution's religious case by presenting Socrates' *daimonion* and theological teachings as clear deviations from Athenian civic religion deserving of conviction.

Andocides

Overview

Andocides sits with the prosecution, and his presence here is shaped by a personal history he has spent over a decade trying to live down. Implicated in the mutilation of the Herms in 415 BCE, he saved himself by informing on others, including members of his own family, and spent years afterward barred from the agora and the city's religious life before returning under the amnesty. Three years ago he faced a fresh impiety charge for taking part in the Eleusinian Mysteries while still under those old restrictions, and won his acquittal by arguing the amnesty had genuinely closed the matter.



Position in the Proceedings

His support for the prosecution comes from a man who has spent his career rebuilding trust with the city's religious institutions, and he has little patience left for anyone who treats those institutions casually. Having fought hard to convince Athens his own relationship to the gods was sound, he is unsympathetic to a defendant who answers questions about piety with private revelations and clever distinctions instead of straightforward respect for the city's gods.

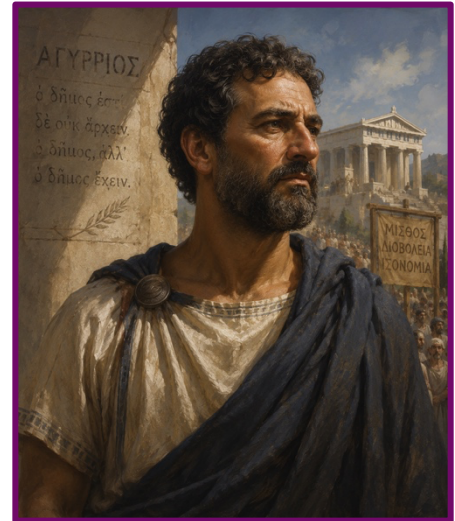
Objectives

1. Prove through his support for the prosecution that his own troubled history with impiety has strengthened, rather than weakened, his commitment to defending Athens' religious order.
2. Prevent the defence from drawing comparisons between Socrates' prosecution and his own past legal troubles, ensuring the focus remains entirely on Socrates' actions.
3. Reinforce the principle that no citizen, regardless of reputation or intellect, stands above the religious laws and traditions of Athens.
4. Help secure a conviction that reaffirms public confidence in the city's religious institutions and demonstrates that impiety will be met with decisive justice.

Agyrrhios

Overview

Agyrrhios sits with the prosecution bloc, and his stake in this trial runs through the institution hearing it as much as through Socrates himself. He is the politician most responsible for the *misthos*, the pay now given to the jurors who will decide this case, having pushed through the increase that restored the courts' attractiveness to ordinary citizens after years of strain on the treasury. He has also championed the *diobelia*, the grain dole that keeps the poorer citizens of Athens fed enough to participate in civic life rather than abandoning it for daily labour. His career has been built on the argument that a democracy survives only if its ordinary citizens can afford to show up for it, in the Assembly and in the jury box alike.



Position in the Proceedings

He has no formal role as an accuser and will not address the jury directly, but his alignment with Anytus and the democratic faction behind this prosecution is well known, and his presence in the courtroom carries its own weight. The case against Socrates rests partly on the claim that aristocratic philosophy breeds contempt for the kind of participatory democracy Agyrrhios has spent his career subsidising: the daily wage for the *dikast*, the grain that lets a poor man sit in judgment instead of starving in a field. If Socrates' circle has produced men who scorn that arrangement as a system of bribed mediocrity rather than a functioning democracy, as some of his associates are reported to have argued, Agyrrhios has personal reason to want the city to reject that view through a decisive verdict.

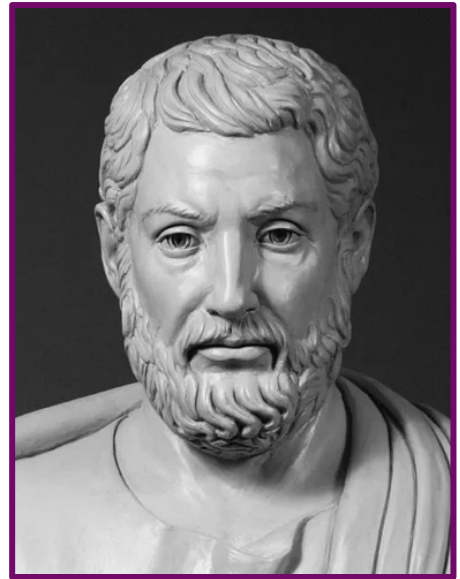
Objectives

1. Secure a conviction that strengthens public confidence in the democratic institutions he helped build, proving that the people's courts remain the legitimate guardians of Athens.
2. Prevent Socrates or his supporters from portraying the *misthos* and other democratic reforms as evidence of corruption or the decline of the polis.
3. Defend the principle of state-funded civic participation by ensuring this jury is remembered as impartial, capable, and fully worthy of exercising justice on behalf of the city.
4. Reinforce the authority of the democratic faction by making this trial a clear affirmation that Athens will defend its institutions against those who seek to undermine them intellectually or politically.

Thrasybulus

Overview

Thrasybulus sits with the prosecution bloc, and his standing there comes from the same history that gives Anytus his authority in this case. He led the democratic exiles from Phyle to Piraeus and broke the rule of the Thirty by force, and the restored democracy that now sits in judgment of Socrates exists largely because he was willing to fight for it when fighting was the only option left. He and Anytus built that campaign together, and the alliance between them has held since, through the amnesty negotiations and into the political life of the restored city.



Position in the Proceedings

He brings to the prosecution something Meletus cannot offer on his own: the standing of a man who actually risked his life against the oligarchy, at a moment when most of Athens was too frightened or too compromised to do the same. His support lends the case a weight beyond its legal substance, an implicit argument that the men now asking the jury to convict Socrates are the same men who restored the democracy that jury serves. There is a complication beneath that alignment that the prosecution would rather not advertise. Years earlier, when Athens needed Alcibiades back to help win the war, it was Thrasybulus who proposed his recall and argued for trusting him again. Alcibiades is the name the prosecution now uses against Socrates, the proof that his teaching corrupts its students toward contempt for the city. Thrasybulus once staked his own judgment on rehabilitating that very man, and a sharp advocate for the defence could ask him, gently or otherwise, whether he still stands by that judgment, and what it says about how reliably a man's later conduct can be predicted from the company he once kept.

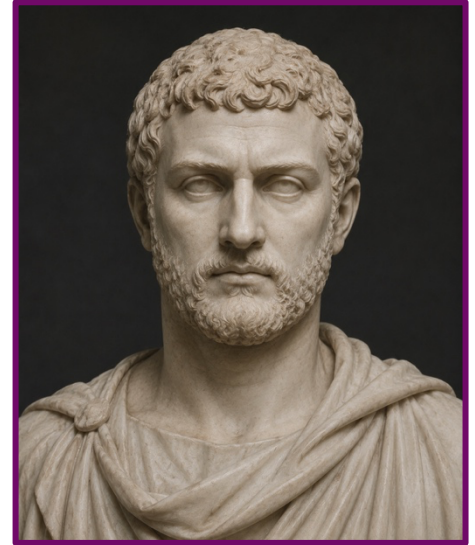
Objectives

1. Secure the conviction of Socrates while ensuring that his own past support for Alcibiades is kept entirely separate from the question of Socrates' guilt.
2. Defend the restored democracy by proving that it is strong enough to defeat its enemies through the rule of law rather than through force of arms.
3. Preserve and strengthen the democratic alliance with Anytus, presenting a united front determined to protect the constitutional order restored in 403 BCE.
4. Prevent the defence from shifting the trial onto his own political judgment or past decisions, keeping the jury focused solely on Socrates as the threat standing before Athens today.

Cleitophon

Overview

Cleitophon sits with the prosecution, and his position here grows out of a complaint he has held against Socrates for years, one that predates this trial and exists independently of Meletus's formal charges. He was associated with the oligarchic movement of 411 BCE, among those who supported the rule of the Four Hundred before the democracy reasserted itself, and his name surfaces again near Critias and the circle that produced the Thirty, though he never held the kind of power within that regime that would have made him a target once the amnesty was settled. What he brings to this courtroom is not a record of violence but a long-standing philosophical grievance, the argument that Socrates talks about virtue endlessly and never once tells anyone what to actually do with it.



Position in the Proceedings

His contribution to the prosecution is less about character assassination than about a precise intellectual complaint, one he has made directly to Socrates before this trial and is prepared to make again in this setting. He will argue that Socrates is skilled at convincing young men that justice and virtue are worth pursuing and considerably less skilled, by his own admission, at telling them what justice and virtue actually require once they agree to pursue them. A student leaves Socrates persuaded that he does not know how to live well and with no clearer idea of how to fix that than when he arrived, sent instead to find some other teacher for the practical answer Socrates declines to give.

Cleitophon's argument is that this half-finished instruction does real damage, that it leaves ambitious young men stirred up about justice with nowhere productive to put that energy, and that some of them, finding no constructive answer from Socrates, went looking for one elsewhere and found it in men like Critias instead. The corruption charge, on his telling, is not that Socrates taught contempt for the city directly but that he created an appetite he never satisfied, leaving his students to satisfy it on their own terms.

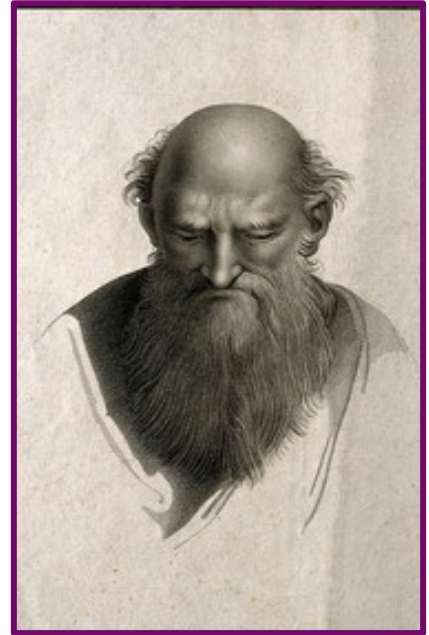
Objectives

1. Convince the jury that Socrates' refusal to provide practical moral guidance is itself a form of corruption, leaving his followers vulnerable to dangerous influences.
2. Establish that Socrates bears responsibility not because he deliberately created tyrants, but because he cultivated restless minds without offering them a constructive path to follow.
3. Present an independent philosophical case against Socrates, demonstrating that the prosecution rests on more than political or religious grievances alone.
4. Prevent the defence from discrediting his testimony by shifting attention to his own past political associations, ensuring the jury judges the force of his argument rather than his history.

Nicomachus

Overview

Nicomachus sits with the prosecution, and he brings the unglamorous credibility of a man who has survived nearly this exact accusation himself. As one of the clerks responsible for compiling and republishing the sacred calendar and sacrificial laws after the restoration, he was accused of tampering with the religious code for his own profit, of deciding which sacrifices the city would and would not fund, and was hauled before a jury on charges that blurred financial mismanagement with outright impiety. He survived that trial and has spent the years since defending the accuracy of his work against men who questioned both his honesty and his right, as someone of modest origin, to have been trusted with the city's sacred law at all.



Position in the Proceedings

His usefulness to the prosecution is narrow but specific. He speaks with the authority of a man who has handled Athens' actual sacred laws in detail, the kind of granular religious competence that lets him say, with more precision than Meletus can manage alone, exactly what the city's gods require and how far Socrates' *daimonion* departs from anything the official calendar recognises. Where Meletus gestures at impiety in general terms, Nicomachus can describe the specific boundaries of sanctioned religious practice and argue that Socrates has stepped outside them.

Objectives

1. Establish beyond doubt that Socrates' *daimonion* and religious practices fall outside the boundaries of Athens' officially sanctioned sacred law.
2. Use his expertise over the sacred calendar and sacrificial code to give the prosecution's impiety charge precise legal and religious authority that cannot easily be dismissed.
3. Prevent the defence from undermining his credibility by invoking his own past prosecution, keeping the jury focused on his technical expertise rather than his personal history.
4. Help secure a conviction that reaffirms the authority of Athens' sacred laws and demonstrates that no individual may place private religious beliefs above the city's established rites.

Polycrates

Overview

Polycrates sits with the prosecution as its rhetorician, the man giving Meletus's case the literary shape it would otherwise lack. He is a professional speechwriter, trained in the techniques of persuasion that Athenian courts run on, and he has built out the prosecution's arguments into something closer to a finished indictment than anything Meletus could have produced unassisted. Where Meletus supplies the legal charge and Anytus supplies the political weight, Polycrates supplies the words, the structure, the lines designed to stay in a juror's memory after five hundred other speeches have blurred together.



Position in the Proceedings

His contribution is craft rather than testimony. He has assembled the case against Socrates into a coherent narrative: the basket image from the comic stage, the corruption of Alcibiades and Critias laid out as cause and effect rather than coincidence, the *daimonion* presented as proof of contempt for the city's actual gods rather than a private quirk. None of this is new evidence. It is the existing material, sharpened and sequenced for maximum effect on a jury that will hear it once and vote shortly after. He understands, better than the accusers themselves, which arguments will land with five hundred ordinary Athenians and which will sound clever only to other rhetoricians.

Objectives

1. Forge the prosecution's political, religious, and moral accusations into a single, compelling narrative that leaves the jury with only one logical verdict: guilty.
2. Convince the jury that the rise of Alcibiades and Critias was not coincidence but the inevitable consequence of Socrates' teachings and influence.
3. Outmanoeuvre Socrates in the courtroom by turning his unconventional style of defence into evidence of arrogance, contempt for the court, and disregard for Athenian justice.
4. Deliver a prosecution so persuasive that Socrates' conviction becomes the accepted judgment of history, leaving little room for future generations to question the justice of the verdict.

Callias III

Overview

Callias sits with the prosecution, and he arrives with more wealth and more inherited religious standing than almost anyone else in this courtroom. He comes from the Kerykes, one of the two priestly families that administer the Eleusinian Mysteries, and he holds the hereditary office of Torchbearer in those rites, a position that makes him, formally, one of the most religiously significant men in Athens regardless of how he has chosen to live the rest of his life. That life has been expensive and erratic: a fortune inherited from his father Hipponicus, spent faster than anyone expected, a household that has played host to sophists and their fee-paying students, and a personal reputation for excess that sits oddly alongside his sacred office.



Position in the Proceedings

His support for the prosecution carries the weight of inherited religious authority rather than legal argument. He is not building a case so much as lending one his name, and his name on the impiety charge means something specific in Athens: when a Kerykes Torchbearer says a man has offended the gods, the claim arrives with a kind of institutional backing that Meletus's accusation alone cannot supply. Callias intends to use that weight, framing Socrates' *daimonion* and his habit of redefining piety on his own terms as an affront not just to civic religion in the abstract but to the actual rites Callias's own family has overseen for generations. There is friction underneath this, since Callias's own relationship to sacred matters has not always survived scrutiny.

Years before this trial, Callias accused Andocides, now seated beside him in this same prosecution, of an act of sacrilege during the Eleusinian Mysteries, placing a suppliant bough on the altar in a manner forbidden to a man under religious disability. The accusation was tangled from the start with a separate and uglier dispute between the two men over an inheritance, a contested marriage connection running through Callias's own household, and few in Athens at the time believed the religious charge was the real motive. Andocides was acquitted. The two men now sit on the same side of a different impiety trial, and anyone who remembers the earlier episode will notice that Callias is, for the second time, making a sacred accusation that conveniently serves an interest of his own.

Objectives

1. Defend the exclusive religious authority of the Kerykes by ensuring the jury rejects Socrates' claim to private divine guidance as a legitimate source of religious authority alongside Athens' sacred traditions.
2. Secure a conviction that reinforces the sanctity of the Eleusinian Mysteries and the civic cults, affirming that no citizen, regardless of reputation or intellect, may redefine piety outside the institutions entrusted with preserving it.
3. Restore public confidence in his own standing as Torchbearer of the Mysteries by demonstrating unwavering commitment to protecting Athens' religious order, despite the controversies that have surrounded his personal life.

Demophantus

Overview

Demophantus sits with the prosecution, and the authority he brings to this trial rests on a decree that every man in this jury has sworn to personally. After the oligarchy of the Four Hundred fell in 410 BCE, he proposed the law that bound every Athenian citizen to an oath: to kill, by word or deed or vote, anyone who attempted to overthrow the democracy, and to treat the killing of such a man as no crime at all. The oath was renewed in spirit, if not in exact legal form, during the settlement that followed the Thirty. Demophantus is, in a real sense, the author of the loyalty test this entire city still operates under.



Position in the Proceedings

His support for the prosecution draws its force from that history rather than from any specific knowledge of Socrates' conduct. He argues that the oath he authored was built for a particular danger: men who use legitimate means, persuasion, education, and the slow cultivation of influence over the young, to erode the city's democratic foundations without ever picking up a weapon. Critias did not need an army to help destroy the democracy in 404 BCE. He needed a following willing to believe the old arrangements were beneath them, and Demophantus argues that following was cultivated somewhere before it was activated. He is not claiming Socrates conspired with the Thirty. He is claiming that the oath he wrote was meant to catch exactly this kind of slower, prior corruption, and that the jury's own sworn obligation under his decree gives them a duty to consider whether the law has been honoured if Socrates walks free.

The decree itself was unusual even by Athenian standards in how directly it authorised citizens to act, granting impunity in advance for killing anyone who moved against the democracy and binding the entire citizen body to enforce that judgment personally rather than leaving it to magistrates. It was a measure born of real trauma, written in the aftermath of an actual coup, and it has hung over Athenian political life since, invoked rhetorically far more often than it has ever been formally applied. Demophantus has spent the years since defending the decree's continued relevance against critics who argue it was a wartime measure that should have expired with the circumstances that produced it. This trial, in his telling, is a test of whether that argument has any force left.

Objectives

1. Convince the jury that their oath to defend the democracy extends beyond armed rebellion to those who undermine it through education, persuasion, and the corruption of future citizens.
2. Secure a conviction that affirms the continued authority of the Oath of Demophantus, proving that the duty to defend Athens did not end with the fall of the oligarchs.
3. Frame a guilty verdict as the fulfilment of the jurors' own sworn obligations, making acquittal appear not merely mistaken but a failure to uphold the oath every citizen has taken.
4. Establish that the democracy must confront threats before they become tyrannies, demonstrating that Athens has learned from the rise of the Four Hundred and the Thirty and will no longer wait until its enemies seize power before acting.

Archedemus

Overview

Archedemus sits with the prosecution, and he arrives as someone Athens already knows well from the courts, if not always favourably. He built his political career as a prosecutor, one of the men Athenians call *sycophants* for making a living out of accusation, and he has stood in front of juries far more often than most citizens ever will. He is known almost as much for his poor eyesight, which earned him the nickname the city uses behind his back, as for the sharpness of his legal instincts, which nobody who has faced him in court doubts for a moment.



Position in the Proceedings

His usefulness to Anytus and Meletus is procedural as much as rhetorical. He has spent years learning exactly how an Athenian jury moves, what sequence of claims builds momentum toward conviction and what sequence lets a defendant regain ground, and he brings that craft to bear on a case that Meletus, inexperienced in serious prosecution, might otherwise mishandle. Archedemus is less interested in Socrates' philosophy than in the mechanics of winning, and he treats this trial the way he has treated every prosecution before it: as a problem of persuasion to be solved methodically, charge by charge, witness by witness.

Years earlier, in the furious aftermath of the naval victory at Arginusae, Archedemus was among the men who drove the prosecution of the returning generals before the Assembly, accused of failing to recover the dead and the survivors after the battle. He argued for their collective trial rather than the separate hearings the law required, and the Assembly, gripped by grief and by the momentum his and others' rhetoric supplied, convicted six of them to death. Socrates was one of the *prytaneis* on duty that day and refused to put the illegal motion to a vote, a small act of resistance that failed against the pressure Archedemus and his allies had built. The two men have, in effect, already met once, on opposite sides of a question about what the law can be made to do under sufficient public anger. Archedemus does not forget having won that argument then, and he is not inclined to lose this one now.

Objectives

1. Orchestrate the prosecution with the discipline of an experienced litigator, ensuring every witness, argument, and accusation builds relentlessly toward a guilty verdict.
2. Exploit his understanding of Athenian juries to deny Socrates opportunities to recover sympathy, controlling the pace and direction of the trial from beginning to end.
3. Vindicate the prosecutorial methods that secured convictions in previous high-profile cases, demonstrating once again that decisive legal action is essential to protecting the city.
4. Settle his longstanding legal rivalry with Socrates by securing the conviction of the man who once opposed the proceedings at Arginusae, proving that persuasive advocacy, not philosophical obstruction, determines justice in Athens.

Theodorus of Byzantium

Overview

Theodorus sits with the prosecution as a technician of argument rather than a man with any personal grievance against Socrates. He is known across Athens for his exacting classifications of rhetorical technique, the fine subdivisions of proof and refutation and objection that he has spent his career naming and cataloguing with a precision most practising speakers never bother with. Where Polycrates builds the prosecution's case into a persuasive whole, Theodorus checks its individual joints, testing whether each argument holds the specific shape its category demands.



Position in the Proceedings

His contribution is quieter than the other men supporting this prosecution and easy to miss unless one knows to look for it. He has gone through the structure of the charges against Socrates the way he goes through any speech, sorting which claims function as direct proof, which function as anticipatory refutation of an objection the defence has not raised yet, and which are doing rhetorical work without doing any actual argumentative work at all. Socrates is famous for exploiting exactly this kind of looseness in an opponent's reasoning, and Theodorus's involvement is meant to deny him that opening before the trial even begins.

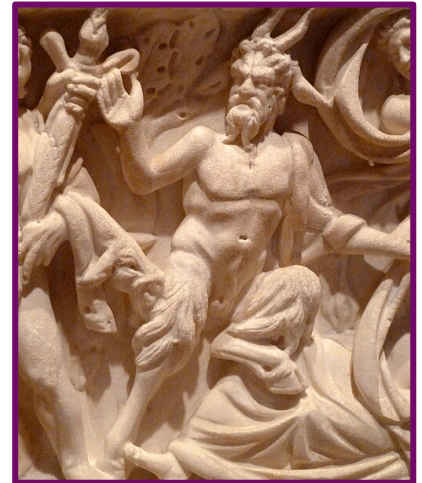
Objectives

1. Eliminate every logical weakness in the prosecution's case, ensuring Socrates cannot dismantle its arguments through definition, contradiction, or dialectical questioning.
2. Refine the prosecution's speeches so that every claim, objection, and rebuttal serves a deliberate rhetorical purpose, leaving no argument vulnerable to philosophical attack.
3. Demonstrate the superiority of disciplined rhetorical method over Socratic dialectic by ensuring the prosecution remains coherent and internally consistent throughout the trial.
4. Establish his reputation as the foremost authority on rhetorical technique by helping deliver a prosecution whose structure withstands even Athens' most formidable cross-examiner.

Satyrus

Overview

Satyrus sits with the prosecution in a way no other man on this list does, since his stake in the case is institutional rather than personal. He serves as an officer under the Eleven, the board of magistrates responsible for prisons, executions, and the practical administration of capital sentences in Athens. He has no grievance against Socrates, no philosophical objection to his teaching, no political history entangled with Critias or Alcibiades. His alignment with the prosecution exists because the law he serves exists, and his interest in this trial is that whatever verdict the jury reaches gets carried out exactly as the law requires.



Position in the Proceedings

His role centres on procedure rather than persuasion. As an officer under the Eleven, he carries no personal grievance against Socrates and no argument about piety or corruption to press. His institutional position is that whatever verdict emerges from this trial gets carried out exactly as the law requires, which gives him standing in the prosecution bloc without requiring him to have built any part of the case himself. Anytus needs the jury persuaded. Satyrus's stake is that the outcome, once reached, is enforced without deviation.

Men like Satyrus are rarely named in the speeches that survive from Athenian trials, and that anonymity is itself part of how the system is built. The Eleven and their officers are meant to be procedurally invisible, the guarantee that a verdict means something regardless of who argued for it, so that a conviction is not merely a rhetorical victory for whichever side spoke best but an actual legal fact enforced by the city. His presence at the edge of this trial is a reminder that beneath the argument over piety and corruption sits a much older question: whether Athens can trust its own courts to produce verdicts worth enforcing at all.

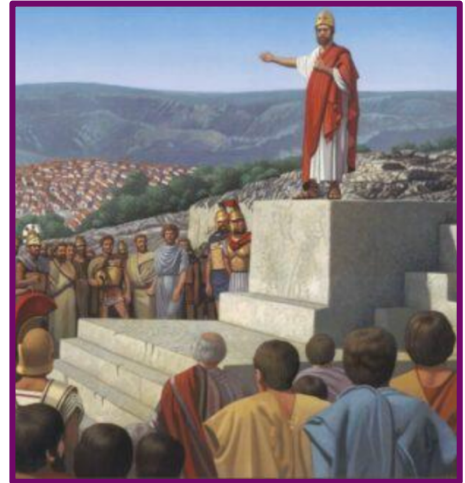
Objectives

1. Ensure that every stage of the proceedings, from verdict to sentence, is carried out in strict accordance with Athenian law, preserving the authority of the Eleven and the courts they serve.
2. Uphold the impartiality of the Eleven by demonstrating that the city's judicial officers enforce the law faithfully regardless of the identity, reputation, or popularity of the accused.
3. Prepare for the lawful execution of any sentence imposed by the jury, ensuring that the authority of the court is translated into unquestioned action without delay or political interference.
4. Reinforce public confidence in the Athenian justice system by proving that its verdicts are not merely persuasive speeches but binding judgments that the institutions of the polis will enforce without exception.

Pythodorus

Overview

Pythodorus sits with the prosecution, and he carries into this trial a political history he has spent years trying to outrun. In 411 BCE, he was the man who formally proposed the decree that dissolved the existing democratic council and installed the Four Hundred in its place, the measure that gave the oligarchic coup its legal cover. The regime he helped install lasted only months before Athens tore it down, and Pythodorus has spent the restored democracy's life since then rebuilding a reputation as a loyal citizen of the very system he once helped suspend.



Position in the Proceedings

His alignment with Anytus and Meletus is, in part, a continuation of that rebuilding project. He has reason to want this prosecution to succeed that has little to do with Socrates specifically and everything to do with being seen, publicly and repeatedly, standing on the side of democratic vigilance rather than aristocratic sympathy. Supporting a case that frames Socratic philosophy as a training ground for men like Critias lets him draw a clean line between the impressionable circles that produce oligarchs and his own current loyalties, a line he has every reason to keep drawing as visibly as possible.

The decree of 411 BCE did not itself install the Four Hundred by force. It created the legal opening that the coup's actual architects then used, a distinction that has mattered enormously to how Athens has judged him since. He was not among the men who ran the regime once it existed, and he was not swept up in the amnesty's list of specific exclusions the way some collaborators were. That technical distance from the worst of it has let him remain a citizen in good standing, but it has never fully erased the fact that his name is on the decree that began the affair, and everyone old enough to remember 411 BCE still knows it.

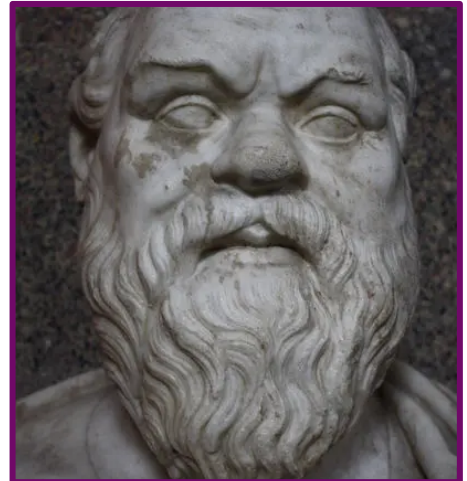
Objectives

1. Secure Socrates' conviction as a public demonstration of his unwavering loyalty to the restored democracy, leaving no doubt that he now stands firmly against oligarchic influence.
2. Reinforce the argument that anti-democratic movements are first nurtured through aristocratic intellectual circles, establishing Socrates' teachings as a dangerous precursor to political subversion rather than harmless philosophy.
3. Prevent the defence from shifting scrutiny onto his own role in the coup of 411 BCE, ensuring the jury judges Socrates' influence on the present rather than revisiting Pythodorus' past.
4. Strengthen his political rehabilitation by visibly aligning himself with the democratic leadership, proving through action that those who once erred can now serve as resolute defenders of Athens' constitutional order.

Callixenus

Overview

Callixenus sits with the prosecution, and he carries into this trial the same instinct for exploiting collective anger that made him infamous seven years ago. He was the man who stood before the Assembly after Arginusae and moved that the eight generals be tried together, as one body, rather than given the separate hearings Athenian law required for each. The motion passed on a wave of grief over the unrecovered dead, six of the generals were executed, and Athens spent the years since arguing over whether it had committed a collective act of judicial murder. Callixenus was the man who gave that anger a procedural shape.



Position in the Proceedings

He aligns with Anytus and Meletus because he recognises the same pattern he once used himself: a jury or an Assembly, sufficiently convinced that a defendant threatens the city's safety, will act decisively against him. He has little personal history with Socrates beyond the one moment where their paths crossed directly. Socrates was among the *prytaneis* on duty the day Callixenus brought his motion, and he refused to put an illegal proposal to a vote, holding out even as the rest of the presiding board caved to the pressure. Callixenus was overruled that day only by a majority vote of his colleagues, not by Socrates alone, but he has never forgotten which man in that room stood against him on principle while everyone else calculated the political cost of resistance.

Public opinion in Athens later turned sharply against Callixenus once the fury over Arginusae cooled. The generals' families and their supporters argued the collective trial had been an illegal panic dressed up as justice, and the Assembly itself came to regret the vote it had been manoeuvred into casting. Callixenus's name became a warning of how easily democratic institutions could be driven by fear and outrage. Some accounts suggest he died in disgrace, never recovering the standing he lost after the city's anger gave way to regret.

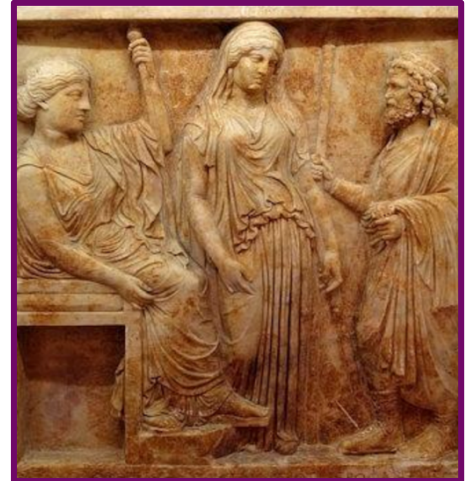
Objectives

1. Secure the conviction of Socrates by convincing the jury that protecting the city from dangerous influence must take precedence over procedural hesitation or philosophical nuance.
2. Demonstrate that decisive action against perceived threats to Athens is a mark of responsible leadership, vindicating the political instincts that guided his actions after Arginusae.
3. Turn the outcome of this trial into a step toward restoring his own reputation, proving that his judgment in defending the city remains valuable despite the controversy surrounding his past.
4. Settle his longstanding conflict with Socrates by defeating, through the courts, the man who publicly resisted his authority during the Arginusae proceedings and has long stood as a symbol of legal obstruction to decisive civic action.

Cephisius

Overview

Cephisius sits with the prosecution, and his presence here has less to do with Socrates directly than with a case of his own that ran through Athens' courts earlier this same year. He was the principal accuser against Andocides, charging him with illegally taking part in the Eleusinian Mysteries while still barred by old disabilities from religious life. Cephisius pressed that case hard and lost, watching Andocides walk free on an acquittal that still sits poorly with him.



Position in the Proceedings

He has no direct history with Socrates and no independent grievance driving his involvement here. His alignment with the prosecution is mostly a matter of shared interest: he takes impiety charges seriously as a category and resents watching one collapse in court, and this trial gives him a chance to see the kind of verdict he did not get earlier in the year. There is an added edge to his position given that Andocides, the man he failed to convict, now sits on this same prosecution bench. Cephisius has reason to want this case handled more carefully than his own was.

Objectives

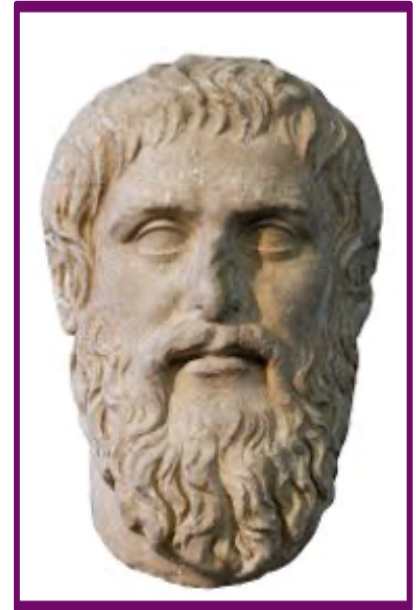
1. Secure a conviction on the charge of impiety, demonstrating that Athens remains willing to punish genuine offences against the gods despite the failure of his own prosecution against Andocides.
2. Reinforce the seriousness of religious law by ensuring that Socrates' *daimonion* and teachings are recognised as clear violations of the city's sacred traditions rather than dismissed as harmless philosophy.
3. Prevent the defence from drawing comparisons between this trial and the acquittal of Andocides, ensuring that the jury judges Socrates on the strength of the present case alone.
4. Restore his standing as a credible prosecutor by contributing to a successful impiety prosecution and proving that his earlier defeat reflected the circumstances of that case rather than any weakness in his judgment.

Plato

Overview

Son of Ariston and Perictione, born into one of Athens' oldest families, he grew up with Critias and Charmides as relatives on his mother's side, which meant he watched two men he was related to help run the Thirty before he ever sat down seriously to study philosophy. He had tried politics once, briefly, and walked away from it, put off first by what his own family did in power and then by a restored democracy that seemed no less willing to kill a man for asking questions than the oligarchy had been willing to kill men for refusing to answer them.

By 399 BCE he had spent years at Socrates' side, listening more than talking, present for conversations that would later become dialogues he had not yet begun writing. He is one of the small group Socrates names in open court as willing to guarantee a fine on his behalf if the jury will accept one instead of death - a detail that says plainly where Plato stands, whatever he manages to say aloud in the room.



Position in the Proceedings

Plato's problem is timing. He isn't a public figure in 399 BCE; his name will carry the weight it does much later, once the Academy exists and the dialogues are finished, which means his testimony here has to work on its own terms rather than on reputation he hasn't earned yet. His argument is that Socrates never told anyone what to believe, only how to examine what they already believed, and that the difference between unsettling a belief and corrupting a citizen is exactly what this Court has been asked to decide.

He is also acutely aware that his own family produced two of the Thirty's most notorious names, and that the prosecution doesn't need to say either one out loud for the jury to make the connection on its own. Anytus is building an argument out of exactly this kind of unstated association, and Plato knows that any defence he offers will be heard against that backdrop whether he addresses it directly or not.

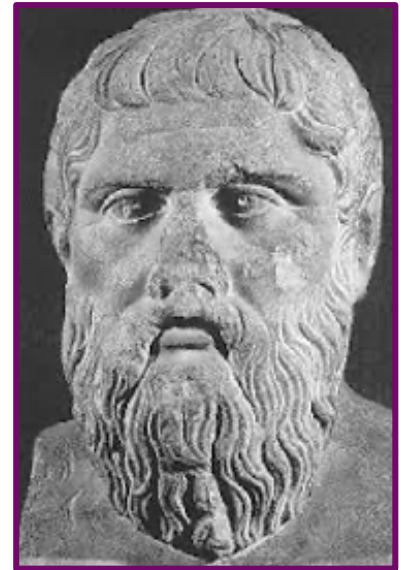
Objectives

1. Keep the argument on method, not memory - what Socrates asked, not what anyone later did with the answer.
2. Draw a hard line between examining a belief and attacking the city that holds it.
3. Get ahead of the Critias and Charmides association before Anytus can use it as unspoken weight against the defence.
4. Leave the jury with a Socrates who is difficult rather than dangerous.
5. Use his own willingness to guarantee a fine as proof of where his loyalty actually sits.

Crito

Overview

Crito of Alopecce is old enough to remember Socrates before any of this started, and rich enough that nobody can accuse him of following the man for money. The two grew up in the same deme and stayed close for something close to fifty years, through the war, the plague, and two changes of regime. He is not a philosopher and has never pretended to be one; his son Critobulus is the one who sits in on the actual conversations with any regularity, and Crito's own contribution to Socrates' circle has always been more practical than intellectual - his purse, his time, and later his contacts.



Position in the Proceedings

Crito isn't interested in the abstract questions this trial keeps circling back to; he's known Socrates too long for that. His case is simple: this is a man he has watched behave the same way for half a century, in war and in peace, through rich years and lean ones, and none of that conduct looks anything like the indictment describes. He would rather the Court judge the man in front of them than the reputation that has built up around him in the last few years.

He also understands, better than some of the younger defenders, that this jury has just lived through an oligarchy and a civil war, and that fear is not the same thing as malice. His approach is to meet that fear with plain, unglamorous testimony rather than argue it away, on the theory that a jury already exhausted by rhetoric might respond better to someone who isn't offering any.

Objectives

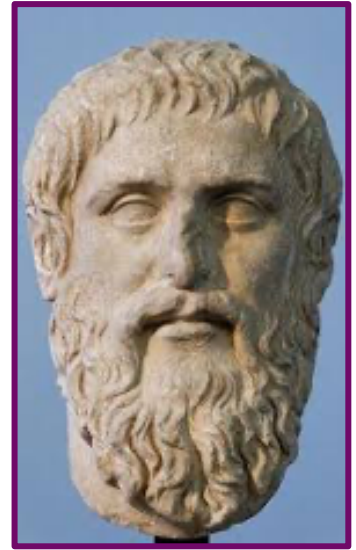
1. Set four decades of ordinary conduct against the indictment and let the jury compare.
2. Keep the focus on what Socrates has actually done, not on assumptions about who he talks to.
3. Use his own standing as a landowner and citizen to vouch for someone the jury may already have decided to distrust.
4. Stay out of philosophical argument entirely - that isn't his register, and he knows it.
5. Have the escape plan ready regardless of how the verdict lands, without letting the Court sense it's already being drawn up.

Adeimantus

Overview

Adeimantus is Plato's older brother and carries the family's aristocratic weight along with all the suspicion currently attached to it, including the same uncomfortable proximity to Critias and Charmides that his younger brother has to answer for. He appears prominently in conversations that will later become Plato's Republic, working through questions of justice and the ideal city with a seriousness that suggests he took the discussions at least as much to heart as Plato did, even if it's his brother's name that ends up on the finished dialogues.

Of the two brothers, Adeimantus is generally read as the more politically minded, more comfortable moving between the philosophical circle and the wider aristocratic world their family still belongs to, which makes him a useful bridge between the two but also someone with more to lose if that world falls under further suspicion.



Position in the Proceedings

Adeimantus doesn't pretend Socrates was uncritical of Athenian democracy - he wasn't, and Adeimantus watched him say so more than once, sometimes in front of people who took it badly. His argument is that pointing out a flaw isn't the same as wanting the whole system gone, and that the current climate is treating the two as identical when plenty of loyal citizens, including men who fought at Phyle, have said harder things about Athenian institutions than Socrates ever did.

He reads the room carefully, aware that his own family's history under the Thirty means any argument he makes will be weighed against exactly the association he's trying to defuse, and he tries to get ahead of that rather than wait for the prosecution to raise it first.

Objectives

1. Concede honestly where Socrates criticised democratic institutions, then argue the intent behind it.
2. Separate loyalty to Athens from agreement with everything Athens currently does.
3. Use his own political awareness to read the room rather than provoke it further.
4. Keep his family's recent history from becoming the whole conversation.
5. Point out that plenty of loyal democrats have criticised Athens more harshly than Socrates ever did.

Apollodorus

Overview

They call Apollodorus "the madman," and not always kindly. It's less about instability than volume - he cries in public, argues too loudly, refuses to hide how much this trial is costing him.

He came to philosophy relatively late and relatively hard, the way some people come to religion, and there is nothing measured about his attachment to Socrates. Where Crito offers practical loyalty and Plato offers careful argument, Apollodorus offers something closer to grief that hasn't happened yet but is already being rehearsed in real time, in open court, in front of a jury that isn't sure what to make of it.

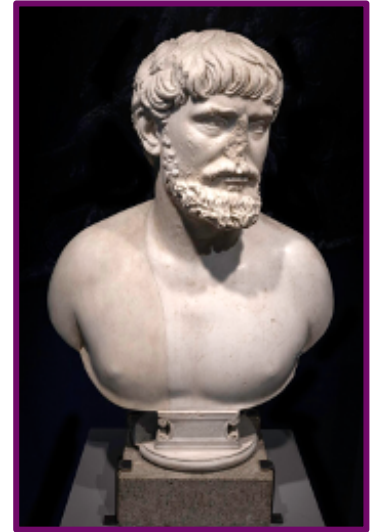
Position in the Proceedings

Apollodorus doesn't really have a legal strategy so much as a refusal to accept that any of this is happening. He believes the charges are cover for something closer to fear and old grudges, and he isn't especially interested in disguising how personal his defence is. That's both his strength and his problem - jurors can't doubt his sincerity, but they might doubt his judgement, and a case built partly on this kind of open emotion risks reading as weakness to men who have spent the last several years living through actual political violence.

He is aware of this risk in the abstract, in the way anyone is aware of a fault they can name but not correct. He isn't going to become a different, cooler kind of witness for the sake of the jury, and the rest of the defence has more or less made peace with that, on the theory that his sincerity is worth more than his restraint even where restraint would clearly help.

Objectives

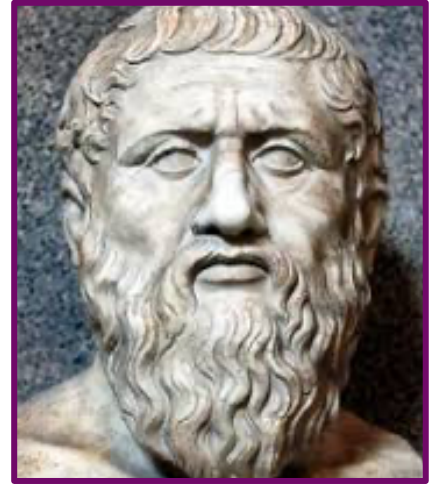
1. Make the human cost of the verdict visible - this isn't an abstract case to him, and he won't pretend otherwise.
2. Push back hard on any suggestion that Socrates is dangerous rather than simply difficult.
3. Let his own devotion stand as evidence of what kind of man inspires it.
4. Try, and probably fail, to keep his emotions from working against him mid-speech.
5. Avoid letting his own reputation for excess become a stand-in for the whole defence's credibility.



Phaedo

Overview

Phaedo was a slave before he was a philosopher. Captured when Elis fell during the war, he ended up in Athens in a household that put him to work in ways he doesn't discuss in much detail, and Socrates - by most accounts - is the reason he was eventually ransomed and given the chance to study rather than keep working someone else's household for the rest of his life. Accounts differ on exactly whose money bought his freedom, Crito's name comes up, so does Alcibiades', but the outcome is the same either way: a man who started this decade enslaved will end it founding his own school in Elis.



That biography does a lot of the defence's work without anyone having to argue it out loud. Phaedo isn't an aristocrat playing at philosophy as a diversion from politics; whatever he has, he built entirely under Socrates' instruction, starting from genuinely nothing.

Position in the Proceedings

Phaedo's case rests on what actually happened to him, which is hard to dismiss as rhetoric. He thinks the charge that Socrates corrupts the young gets the relationship exactly backwards - in his own experience it was closer to the opposite, a slow and deliberate building up rather than any kind of tearing down. He isn't going to fight this out on political ground; he would rather stay with what he watched happen to himself and to the people around him over the years he's spent in this circle.

He also carries a kind of quiet authority that comes from having nothing left to lose that Athens could plausibly take from him - no citizenship to strip, no property to seize, nothing except the philosophy itself, which makes his loyalty to Socrates read as considered rather than convenient.

Objectives

1. Let his own history argue the case - a former slave who became a philosopher under this man's teaching.
2. Keep the argument on moral formation rather than political loyalty.
3. Push the Court toward evidence over inherited suspicion.
4. Preserve, whatever the verdict, an honest account of what these final conversations actually contained.
5. Use his own transformation as proof that Socrates measured people by character rather than birth.

Cebes

Overview

Cebes travelled from Thebes to study with Socrates and never fully signed on to anything without arguing about it first, which is exactly the reputation he carries into this trial. He is wealthy by Theban standards, well educated, and reportedly a student of the Pythagorean Philolaus before he ever met Socrates, which is part of why he pushes so hard, in conversations that will later become central to the *Phaedo*, on questions of the soul and what happens to it after death.

His home city has complicated loyalties in the current political climate - Thebes sheltered the democrats during the exile at Phyle, which counts in his favour here, but it was also on the opposing side against Athens for much of the war before that, which some jurors will not have forgotten.



Position in the Proceedings

Cebes won't defend Socrates through unqualified praise, because that isn't how he's ever engaged with the man. His argument is that a habit of questioning - which he's demonstrated himself, repeatedly, in front of Socrates and without any apparent penalty for it - is the opposite of corruption. If Socrates wanted disciples who simply agreed with him, Cebes says, he picked a strange way to get them, since he spent as much time being argued with as being listened to.

He also brings a Pythagorean's comfort with abstract argument to a courtroom that mostly wants plain answers, which means his contribution works best paired with someone more grounded - Crito or Xenophon - rather than carrying the defence on its own.

Objectives

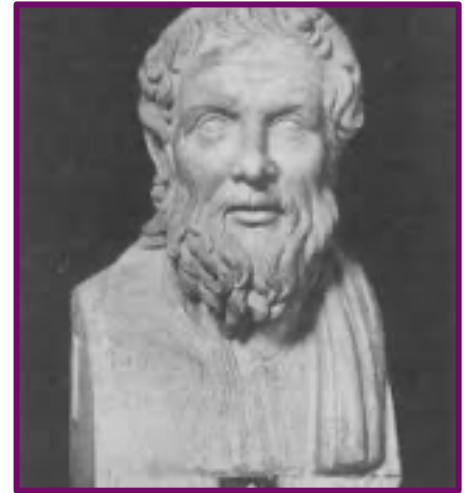
1. Use his own record of arguing with Socrates as proof that dissent was welcomed, not punished.
2. Keep the tone analytical rather than reverent - it lands better coming from him that way.
3. Separate independent thought from disloyalty as cleanly as the case allows.
4. Hold the philosophical substance steady even where the politics of the room gets tense.
5. Draw on Thebes' recent support for the democratic exiles to offset suspicion of his foreign loyalties.

Simmias

Overview

Simmias made the same trip from Thebes as his friend Cebes, likely for the same reason - both are said to have studied under the Pythagorean Philolaus before either of them met Socrates - and the two of them appear together in the same later dialogue working through the same difficult questions about the soul. He is the more careful of the pair, known for pushing Socrates without ever losing the courtesy of the exchange.

Like Cebes, he arrives with a foreigner's distance from Athenian politics and a Pythagorean's comfort with difficult abstract argument, which makes him a strong witness on philosophical substance and a weaker one on anything that requires local standing.



Position in the Proceedings

Simmias's whole case is that questioning authority responsibly isn't the same thing as undermining it, and he's lived that distinction for years without it ever turning into disloyalty toward the man doing the questioning. He knows Athens is frightened right now, in a way that has very little to do with philosophy and a great deal to do with recent memory, but thinks fear is a poor substitute for evidence in a courtroom that is supposed to be weighing one against the other.

He is aware that his money, along with Cebes', is one of the few resources this defence has that could matter later regardless of the verdict, and he keeps that fact quietly in reserve rather than raising it during the trial itself.

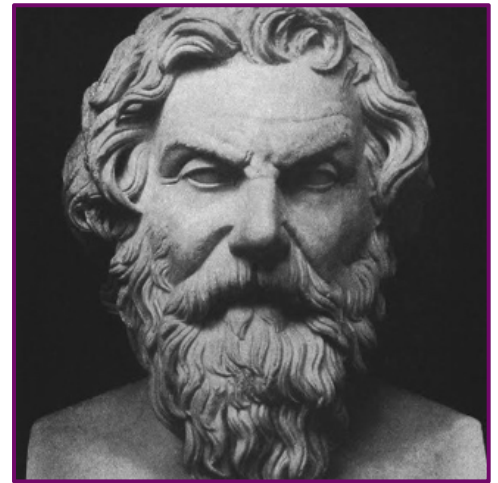
Objectives

1. Demonstrate, through his own record of respectful disagreement, that Socrates never demanded conformity.
2. Separate the discipline of questioning from the accusation of disobedience.
3. Keep the argument reasoned rather than emotional, which is where his credibility actually sits.
4. Ask the Court to weigh evidence alongside the city's post-war anxiety, not instead of it.
5. Hold his own resources in reserve in case they're needed for something other than argument.

Antisthenes

Overview

Antisthenes never quite belonged in Athens the way a citizen with two Athenian parents belongs - his mother was Thracian, which under Athenian law leaves him without full citizen status no matter how long he lives in the city or how well he speaks its dialect. He trained under the sophist Gorgias first, learned to argue any side of anything for a fee, and then largely gave that up once he met Socrates, trading rhetorical polish for a life stripped down to almost nothing: one cloak, no property worth mentioning, meals taken standing at the Cynosarges, the gymnasium reserved for men of his half-citizen status.



Position in the Proceedings

Antisthenes thinks the whole case rests on a category error - treating a man who owns nothing, wants nothing, and has never held office as though he were some kind of political operator with designs on the city. He isn't going to soften that argument to make it land better with a nervous jury. Frankness is the whole point, as far as he's concerned, and he has spent years turning frankness into something close to a discipline.

He is also the member of the defence least likely to read the room and adjust. Where Adeimantus or Phaedrus might calibrate a point for effect, Antisthenes says the thing as he sees it and lets the consequences land where they land, on the theory that a defence built on flattering the jury isn't worth mounting in the first place.

Objectives

1. Show that a life this stripped down can't plausibly be read as ambition in disguise.
2. Draw the line between sophistry, which he abandoned, and philosophy, which he didn't.
3. Refuse to trade conviction for likability, even where likability would clearly help.
4. Make simplicity itself part of the argument against the corruption charge.
5. Use his own half-citizen status to argue that Socrates valued character over pedigree.

Eucleides of Megara

Overview

Eucleides isn't even Athenian, which under the current restrictions on Megarian movement is a genuine legal problem - Megarians aren't supposed to be crossing into the city at all, a hangover from the years of war between the two states. He came anyway, more than once, reportedly slipping in after dark and sometimes in a woman's cloak to avoid being stopped at the gates, just to keep sitting in on Socrates' conversations. That isn't embellishment for effect; it's the kind of commitment that's genuinely difficult to fake, and everyone in the circle who has heard the story tells it slightly differently, which is usually a sign that it's true.



Position in the Proceedings

As a foreigner, Eucleides can't lean on citizenship to make his case land, and he knows better than to try. What he can offer instead is distance - no stake in Athenian factional politics, no family name to protect, nothing except years spent risking arrest to keep studying with this man. He argues that the charges mistake discomfort with unfamiliar ideas for actual danger to the state, a mistake he thinks looks obvious to an outsider precisely because he isn't caught up in the local anxieties driving it.

He is careful, though, not to let that outsider's clarity tip into open criticism of Athenian institutions, aware that a Megarian lecturing this jury on its own fears would do more harm than good regardless of how sound the underlying point might be.

Objectives

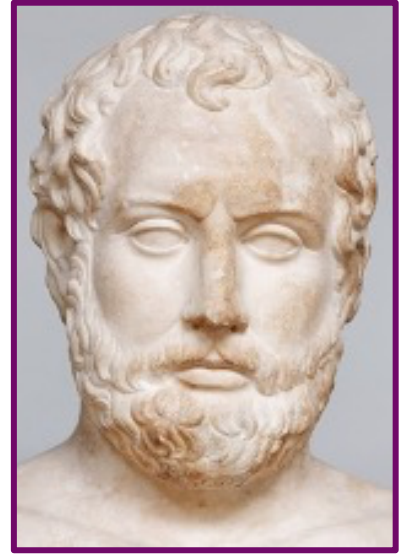
1. Use his outsider status as evidence of impartiality rather than treat it as a liability.
2. Argue that Socrates' pull crossed a hostile border, which says something on its own about what he actually offered.
3. Keep any criticism of Athenian institutions implicit rather than stated, given his position.
4. Frame philosophy as something Athens gains from engaging with, not something it needs protecting from.
5. Let the travel-ban story speak for itself rather than lean on it too hard.

Aeschines of Sphettus

Overview

Aeschines came from nothing much - a modest family, no name that opens doors - and built whatever standing he has almost entirely through dialogues.

What he has, in 399 BCE, is years of ordinary conversations, not just the famous exchanges that will make it into other people's more polished dialogues. He listened carefully and remembers accurately, which is a smaller kind of contribution than Plato's but not a less honest one.



Position in the Proceedings

Aeschines argues from the texture of the dialogues themselves - what Socrates actually asked, how the exchanges actually went - rather than from grand claims about corruption or its opposite. He thinks the prosecution's whole case rests on reading method as menace, treating a habit of asking uncomfortable questions as though it were itself a form of subversion.

He doesn't have Plato's family name or Xenophon's military record to lean on, so his contribution has to stand entirely on the specificity of what he remembers, which he treats as an advantage rather than a limitation - a man with nothing to gain from flattering his testimony has less reason to have shaded it.

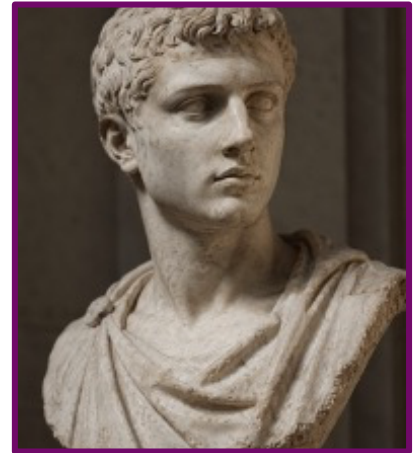
Objectives

1. Reconstruct specific exchanges rather than argue in the abstract.
2. Show that questioning assumptions is a discipline, not a provocation.
3. Keep the argument in reasoned territory, which is where his real strength lies.
4. Let his own ordinary background undercut the idea that Socrates only attracted aristocratic troublemakers.
5. Make clear that his account owes nothing to family interest, since he has none at stake.

Critobulus

Overview

Critobulus is Crito's son, raised around Socrates for essentially his whole life, and about as ordinary a young Athenian as the defence has to offer, at least on paper. In company he's remembered less for anything he's said than for how he looks - Socrates teases him more than once, in front of others, about being dangerously good-looking and about the kind of trouble that tends to follow good looks in a city like this one. Xenophon has him getting practical advice from Socrates on friendship, estate management, and leadership rather than abstract metaphysics, which is precisely the point the defence wants to make with him: whatever Socrates was doing with the city's young men, it looked a great deal like ordinary mentorship.



He is old enough now to speak for himself, though everyone in the room, including Critobulus, understands that his father's decades with Socrates will inevitably be read into anything he says.

Position in the Proceedings

Critobulus is Exhibit A for the corruption charge whichever way it goes - either proof Socrates ruined the youth, or proof of the opposite. He knows it, and he's trying to make sure his own conduct in the room argues for the second reading rather than leave the jury to decide it purely from his father's reputation.

He is also aware that Socrates' own teasing about his looks could be twisted by a hostile reading into something it plainly wasn't, and part of his task here is heading off that misreading before the prosecution can attempt it, without making more of the joke than it deserves.

Objectives

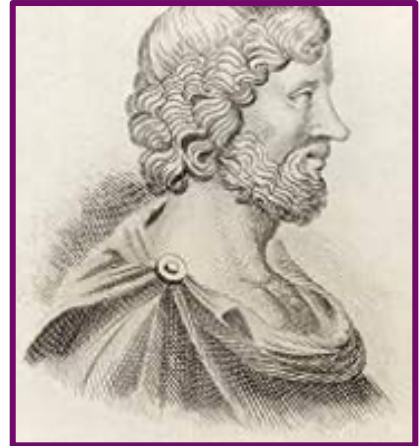
1. Behave, visibly, like the kind of citizen Socrates is accused of failing to produce.
2. Point to his father's decades-long friendship with Socrates as a kind of inherited character reference.
3. Keep his contribution practical rather than philosophical - that's where his credibility actually is.
4. Avoid giving the prosecution anything to point to as evidence of the opposite.
5. Get ahead of any attempt to twist Socrates' familiar teasing into something it was never meant as.

Aristippus of Cyrene

Overview

Aristippus came from Cyrene, across the Mediterranean on the North African coast, specifically to study with Socrates, and left with a philosophy that looks almost nothing like his teacher's. Where Socrates refused payment for teaching on principle, he did not refuse.

None of that divergence stopped him crediting Socrates as the single greatest influence on how he thinks, which he says plainly and often, in a way that reads as more credible precisely because he has no reason left to flatter the man.



Position in the Proceedings

Aristippus's whole argument is himself. If Socrates really moulded followers into copies of himself, Aristippus is the exhibit that says otherwise - a student who took the training in independent reasoning and used it to arrive somewhere his teacher would likely not have approved of. He thinks holding a teacher responsible for every direction a former student later takes sets a standard nobody in this city, or any city, could actually survive.

He is sympathetic, in the abstract, to Athens' desire for stability after the years it has just been through, but he doesn't think that sympathy requires conceding that independent thought is the thing threatening it. If anything, he thinks his own example argues the opposite - that Socrates produced people capable of disagreeing with him in public without any of it turning into treason.

Objectives

1. Point to his own diverging philosophy as proof that Socrates cultivated thinkers rather than copies.
2. Push back on the idea that a teacher owns his students' later choices.
3. Keep the case narrow - Socrates' own conduct, not the conduct of everyone he ever spoke to.
4. Accept Athens's desire for stability without conceding that independent thought threatens it.
5. Let his own comfort with luxury, so unlike Socrates', underline how little the teacher actually dictated.

Hermogenes

Overview

Hermogenes, son of Hipponicus, is the person Socrates actually talked to about the trial beforehand - about the charges, about whether to prepare a formal speech, about dying. His half-brother Callias is one of the richest men in Athens, but Hermogenes himself was cut out of most of the family fortune and lives without much money of his own, which may be part of why he gravitated toward a teacher who valued a person's conduct over their bank balance. He's quiet, not especially ambitious, and known mostly within the circle rather than outside it, which is exactly why his account carries the weight it does: he was there for the private version of all this, not just the public one.



Position in the Proceedings

Hermogenes' account matters because Socrates reportedly told him he didn't intend to prepare a set speech for this trial at all - his daimonion, the private sign he has followed for years, stopped him each time he tried to draft one, which Socrates apparently took as confirmation that facing the charges without a rehearsed defence was the right course. Hermogenes thinks that detail says more about Socrates' actual state of mind than anything argued in open court, and he wants the jury to hear it plainly rather than have it explained away.

He has no rhetorical flourish to offer and isn't going to manufacture any; his entire contribution rests on being believed as a plain and disinterested witness to conversations nobody else in the room was present for.

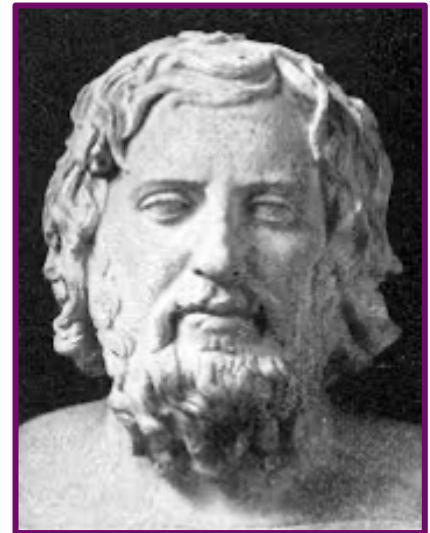
Objectives

1. Get the private conversations about the defence itself in front of the jury.
2. Use Socrates' own calm before the trial as evidence against the idea that he feared exposure.
3. Keep the account plain and resist any temptation to dress it up for effect.
4. Ask the Court to judge what actually happened rather than what people are afraid happened.
5. Let his own limited means underscore that his loyalty to Socrates was never about money or advantage.

Xenophon

Overview

Xenophon is a soldier before he is anything else, and it shows in how he defends his teacher - not through abstract argument but through an accumulation of specific, remembered conduct: campaigns discussed, advice given on household management, a man who lived exactly as he told others to live. Unlike almost everyone else in Socrates' circle, Xenophon has actual command experience, which gives his account a different kind of authority even though it arrives too late to help in the courtroom itself.



Position in the Proceedings

Xenophon's version of the defence has to work through character rather than courtroom detail. He wasn't in Athens to hear the exact wording of the charges, so he builds his case on what he watched Socrates do over years of acquaintance - the moderation, the discipline, the refusal to take money for talking, the willingness to give plain advice to young men without flattering them. It's a soldier's argument: judge the man by what he did, not by what people are afraid he might have meant.

He is also aware that his own reputation, tangled up as it is with service to Sparta, could just as easily be used against Socrates by association as it could be used to help him. That risk doesn't stop him writing the account down; if anything it sharpens his insistence on sticking to plain, verifiable conduct rather than anything that could be read as political argument.

Objectives

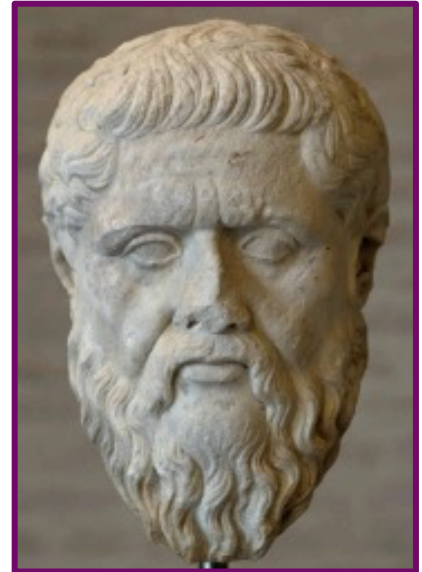
1. Establish Socrates' conduct through specific, lived examples rather than reconstructed argument.
2. Push back on the idea that keeping unusual company is itself proof of wrongdoing.
3. Argue that self-discipline and public service, which he can vouch for personally, don't square with corruption.
4. Get an accurate record down before rumour hardens into consensus.
5. Keep his own complicated later reputation from becoming a weapon against the very man he's trying to defend.

Phaedrus

Overview

Phaedrus is an aristocrat from Myrrhinus who spent years chasing conversations about rhetoric and persuasion with anyone who would have them, Socrates included. He also carries an older scandal that this jury is old enough to remember clearly: in 415 BCE, in the panic surrounding the mutilation of the herms and the profanation of the Eleusinian Mysteries, Phaedrus was among those named and driven into exile before eventually being allowed back into the city. That history means the prosecution doesn't need to invent a reason to distrust an aristocrat with a taste for clever talk - Phaedrus already has one on the public record, whether or not it's fair to hold it against him now.

His conversation with Socrates on love and speech-making, which will later become one of Plato's dialogues, is remembered specifically because Phaedrus came into it fascinated by clever argument for its own sake and left thinking truth mattered more than technique - exactly the kind of change of heart the defence would like the jury to notice about Socrates' influence generally.



Position in the Proceedings

Phaedrus's angle is rhetoric itself - he thinks this trial has become exactly the kind of persuasion-over-truth exercise Socrates spent years warning him against, and he wants to say so without sounding like he's just being clever for its own sake, which is a genuine risk given both his education and his history.

He knows the 415 BCE scandal will be sitting in the back of every juror's mind the moment he stands up, and he has decided the only way through it is to address his own past plainly rather than hope nobody remembers, on the theory that pretending it isn't there would look far worse than acknowledging it.

Objectives

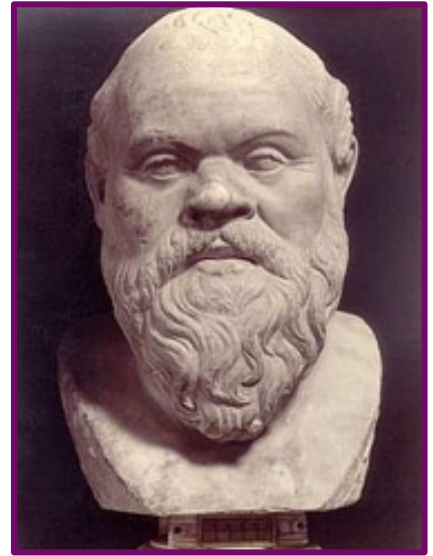
1. Draw the line between honest argument and rhetoric aimed at winning regardless of truth.
2. Turn his own conversion - from loving clever speech to distrusting it - into part of the case.
3. Use his eloquence carefully, aware that too much polish confirms the prosecution's suspicions rather than dispelling them.
4. Keep the argument about truth rather than victory.
5. Address his own history from the Mysteries scandal directly rather than let the prosecution raise it first.

Ctesippus

Overview

Ctesippus has a temper, and everyone who knows him mentions it before anything else. He is close with Menexenus and with the younger Lysis, and in one widely retold exchange he gets into it directly with a pair of visiting sophists, sharp-tongued and quick to call out anything he thinks is dishonest in an argument, unwilling to let a cheap trick pass just because it came dressed up in clever language. Socrates, by most accounts, spent real effort trying to temper that instinct rather than encourage it, teaching him to make the same points without the heat attached to them.

That effort is precisely why the defence wants him in the room at all - not because his testimony carries particular weight, but because his own composure or lack of it will say something the words alone can't.



Position in the Proceedings

Ctesippus's biggest liability in this trial is himself. A bad moment in court, one sharp remark at the wrong witness or juror, plays straight into the prosecution's story about what Socrates' company does to young men, so his real job here is staying composed, which has never been his strongest skill and which he's the first to admit.

He has spent time before the trial specifically rehearsing restraint with Menexenus, aware that the two of them appearing too close, too easy with each other, could read as exactly the kind of clique the prosecution is trying to conjure out of Socrates' younger followers.

Objectives

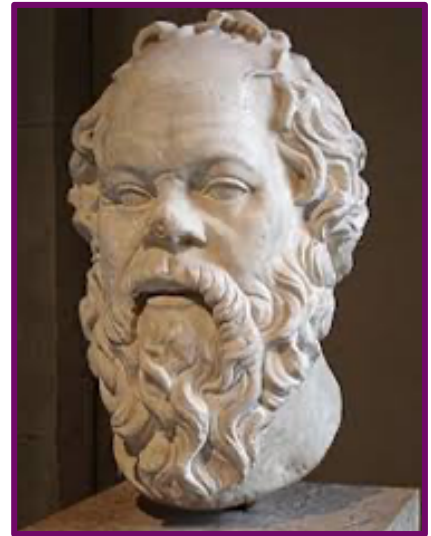
1. Get through this without losing his temper in front of the jury, however hard that turns out to be.
2. Use his own record of being talked down, rather than wound up, as the actual argument.
3. Back up the more senior members of the defence without trying to outshine them.
4. Prove, by staying calm, exactly the opposite of what the prosecution needs him to prove.
5. Keep his closeness with Menexenus from reading as evidence of an aristocratic clique.

Menexenus

Overview

Menexenus is young, well off, and close friends with Ctesippus and Lysis, appearing alongside both of them in the same lighter conversations that Socrates seems to have enjoyed having with Athens' younger set. His own exchange with Socrates on rhetoric and civic duty, which will later be written up under his own name, is gentler than most of what the defence has to offer, closer to a young man being drawn out than being lectured at.

He hasn't done anything yet that would normally earn a young Athenian a role in a trial like this - no office, no military record, nothing except years of being present at exactly the kind of conversations the prosecution says corrupted an entire generation.



Position in the Proceedings

Menexenus knows his age works against him here - anything he says risks being read as an echo of Socrates rather than a genuine view of his own, and unlike Critobulus he doesn't even have a father's long friendship with the accused to lend his testimony extra weight. His response is to be as measured as possible and let his conduct, not his arguments, do the work of answering the corruption charge.

He is close enough to Ctesippus that the two of them have discussed, privately, how much they should let their friendship with each other show in the room, worried that a display of the wrong kind of camaraderie could read as exactly the aristocratic clique the prosecution keeps gesturing toward.

Objectives

1. Model, through restraint, exactly the kind of citizen the prosecution says doesn't exist.
2. Keep arguments modest and specific rather than grand, given how his youth will be read either way.
3. Let his own thoughtfulness stand as a small but real counter-example.
4. Avoid giving the impression that any of this was rehearsed.
5. Coordinate quietly with Ctesippus so their friendship reads as ordinary rather than clannish.

Epigenes

Overview

Epigenes is barely a name at all outside Socrates' immediate circle - no writings, no office, nothing that would normally earn someone a seat at a trial like this. Xenophon remembers him mainly for one particular exchange, in which Socrates needled him for being badly out of shape and told him plainly that a citizen owes the city a body capable of defending it, not just a mind capable of arguing for it. It's a small story, and not a flattering one for Epigenes personally, but it's exactly the kind of ordinary, slightly embarrassing detail that argues against the prosecution's picture of Socrates recruiting an elite conspiracy of aristocratic disciples.



Position in the Proceedings

Epigenes doesn't have grand arguments to offer, and he knows it. What he has is an ordinary account of what these conversations were actually like day to day - not corrupting, not radical, just a persistent, sometimes uncomfortable insistence on doing better, delivered to someone with no particular talent or ambition to make the insistence worth Socrates' time except that Socrates gave it anyway.

He's aware that his own unremarkableness is, oddly, the most useful thing he brings to the defence, and he's content to let his testimony be small and specific rather than try to inflate it into something it isn't.

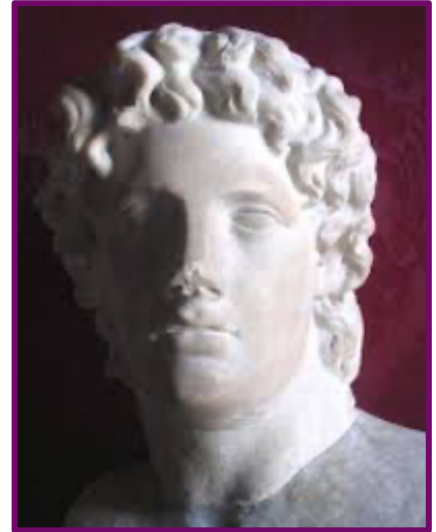
Objectives

1. Offer the plainest possible account of daily conversation, with nothing added for effect.
2. Let his own unremarkable life argue against the idea that Socrates only produced troublemakers.
3. Support the more prominent witnesses rather than compete with them.
4. Keep expectations modest - his value here is ordinariness, not eloquence.
5. Use the physical-fitness exchange to show Socrates cared about ordinary citizens, not just clever ones.

Alcibiades the Younger

Overview

Alcibiades the Younger carries the single most loaded name in the room, inherited from a father whose brilliance and betrayals are still raw enough that people flinch at the mention of it. His father is already dead by 399 BCE, assassinated in Phrygia the previous year under circumstances nobody in Athens has fully explained, which means the son now carries the name without the man himself around either to defend it or to embarrass it further. He hasn't done anything yet, politically or militarily - hasn't had the chance, and by most accounts hasn't shown much appetite for it either - but the name alone puts him at the centre of a case that keeps circling back to guilt by association.



He grew up mostly in his father's shadow rather than at his side, given how much of his father's adult life was spent exiled, campaigning, or under suspicion, which leaves him in the odd position of defending a relationship - his father's friendship with Socrates - that he barely witnessed firsthand.

Position in the Proceedings

His whole argument is that responsibility has to be personal rather than inherited, and that if Athens starts judging teachers by what their students' children later become, nobody who ever spoke to anyone controversial is safe. He knows how raw the wounds from the war still are, and knows that saying his own name in this room does half the prosecution's work for them before he's said anything else.

He is also navigating a harder problem than most of the others: he isn't defending his own experience of Socrates so much as defending an association he was too young to have witnessed clearly, which means his testimony has to lean more on argument and less on memory than anyone else's in this room.

Objectives

1. Separate his father's record from Socrates' conduct, twice removed as it already is.
2. Push back on guilt by association as a legal standard at all.
3. Try to be heard as himself rather than as a footnote to his father's career.
4. Accept that his name works against him and argue past it rather than around it.
5. Acknowledge openly that he knew the friendship mostly by reputation rather than firsthand.

Terpsion

Overview

Terpsion is Eucleides' friend and fellow Megarian, remembered mainly as the person Eucleides later recounts Socrates' final conversations to - a listener rather than a talker by most accounts, but a trusted one, and one who takes the trouble to write the account down carefully enough that it survives. Like Eucleides, he faces the same restrictions on Megarian movement into Athens, and his presence here is a smaller, quieter version of the same risk his friend is taking.

He doesn't have Eucleides' eventual fame as the founder of a school, and doesn't seem to want it; what he offers this defence is corroboration rather than originality, a second set of eyes on the same events told from the same outsider's distance.



Position in the Proceedings

Terpsion isn't going to out-argue anyone in this room, and doesn't try. His contribution is steadiness - corroborating what Eucleides says, keeping the account measured, resisting the temptation to dramatise a case that doesn't need it, especially given how easily an emotional Megarian witness could be read as playing to the jury's existing distrust of foreigners.

He and Eucleides have discussed, quietly, how much overlap their testimony should have; too much agreement risks looking rehearsed, too little risks looking like the two of them can't even agree on what they witnessed.

Objectives

1. Back Eucleides' account without embellishing it further.
2. Keep testimony calm and specific rather than emotional.
3. Separate philosophical disagreement from actual criminal conduct as plainly as the case allows.
4. Preserve an accurate record regardless of how the verdict lands.
5. Coordinate carefully with Eucleides so their accounts corroborate without appearing rehearsed.