

Socrates on Trial

The Apology

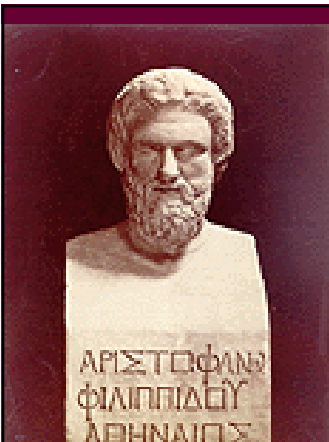
- What is Socrates apologizing for?
- Apologia
- means “Defense” (not “apology”)
- Charges brought in 399 B.C. by Anytus, Lycon, and Meletus.
- Trial is historical
- Speeches may or may not be historical.

The Apology

- The Formal charges (24b):
- Corrupting the young.
- Not believing in the gods of Athens.
- Believing in other new spiritual things:
- Daimon
- = Conscience?

The Apology

- Bad reputation
- The Earlier accusations (19b):
- Studies things in the sky and below the earth.
- Makes the worse into the stronger argument.
- Teaches others to do the same.



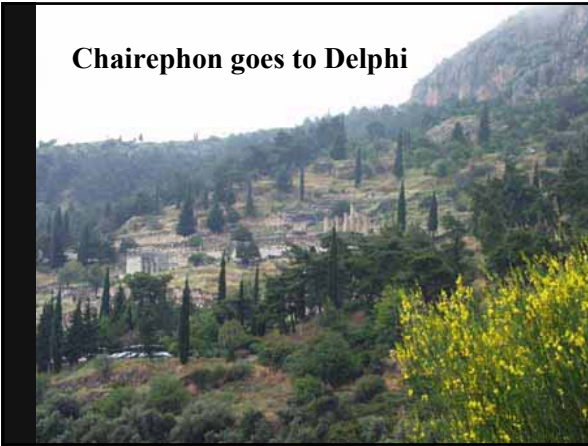
Aristophanes (448-380 B.C.)

“The Clouds” (423 B.C.)

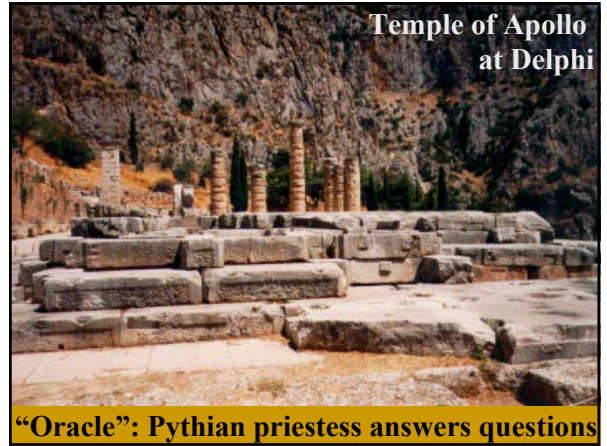
Response to Earlier Accusations

- Is Socrates a sophist?
- Why doesn't Socrates mind his own business?
- Socrates' mission.

Chairephon goes to Delphi



Temple of Apollo at Delphi



“Oracle”: Pythian priestess answers questions

Oracle at Delphi

- Yes-or-No questions:
- “Should I raise sheep?”
- “Is the child Annyla is pregnant with *my* child?”
- “Is now a good time to attack?”
- “Is anyone wiser than Socrates?”
- “No.” → Mission (33c)



Socrates' Mission

- What could that mean? How could it be true?
- Socrates didn't think he really knew anything.
- Socrates *knew* that he didn't know.
- Gadfly: rouse Athenians to reflection.
- God's gift to Athens! (30e-31b)

Response to Formal Charges

- Questions Meletus:
 - Corrupts the young?
 - Not intentionally.
- Examples?



Oliver meets Fagin's band of thieves



Alcibiades



Alcibiades

(450-404 B.C.)

Athenian General, 421-415
flees to Sparta, 415
flees to Persia, 413
returns to Athens, 411
Athenian General, 411-406
exiled, 406
assassinated by Persians, 404.

Plato's Symposium



Response to Formal Charges

Questions Meletus:
Corrupts the young?
Not intentionally.
Examples?

- Disbelieves in gods?/Introduces gods?
- What does this mean?
- Proof that he believes?

Response to Formal Charges

- What do you think of Socrates' defense?
- Attitude?
- Penalty.



What do you think
of Socrates now?

Socrates' Beliefs

- "The unexamined life is not worth living for a man." (38a)
- But the examined life is extremely painful.
– Malcolm X (1925-1965)



Socrates' Beliefs

- "A good man cannot be harmed either in life or in death." (41d)
- What does he mean by this?
- Do you agree?
- Why or why not?

Socrates' Fate

- **Convicted.**
- **Sentenced to death.**
- **“Crito”**: refused chance to escape.
- **“Phaedo”**: conversation on last day of his life, and his death.
- **Paper assignment.**