

PLATO

Republic

Translated from the New Standard Greek Text, with Introduction, by

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Book 8

SOCRATES' NARRATION CONTINUES:

543a SOCRATES: All right. We are agreed, then, Glaucon, that if a city is going to be eminently well governed, women must be shared; children and their entire education must be shared; in both peace and war, pursuits must be shared; and their kings must be those among them who have proved best
5 both in philosophy and where war is concerned.

GLAUCON: We are agreed.

b SOCRATES: Moreover, we also granted this: once the rulers are established, they will lead the soldiers and settle them in the kind of dwellings we described earlier, which are in no way private, but wholly shared. And surely we also came to an agreement, if you remember, about what sort of
5 possessions they should have.

c GLAUCON: Yes, I do remember. We thought that none of them should acquire any of the things that others now do; but that, as athletes of war and guardians, they should receive their minimum yearly upkeep from the other citizens as a wage for their guardianship, and take care of themselves and the rest of the city.¹

5 SOCRATES: That's right. But since we have completed that discussion, let's recall the point at which we began the digression that brought us here, so that we can continue on the same path again.

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544a GLAUCON: That is not difficult. You see, much the same as now, you were talking as if you had completed the description of the city.² You were saying that you would class both the city you described and the man who is like it as good, even though, as it seems, you had a still finer city and man to tell us about. But in any case, you were saying that the others were defective, if it was correct. And you said, if I remember, that of the remaining kinds of constitution four were worth discussing, each with defects we should observe; and that we should do the same for the people like them in order
5 to observe them all, come to an agreement about which man is best and which worst, and then determine whether the best is happiest and the worst most wretched, or whether it is otherwise. I was asking you which

¹ 415d6–420a7.

² 445c1–450c5.

four constitutions you had in mind, when Polemarchus and Adeimantus interrupted.³ And that is when you took up the discussion that led here. b

SOCRATES: That's absolutely right.

GLAUCON: Like a wrestler, then, give me the same hold again, and when I ask the same question, try to tell me what you were about to say before. 5

SOCRATES: If I can.

GLAUCON: In any case, I really want to hear for myself what four constitutions you meant.

SOCRATES: It won't be difficult for you to hear them. You see, the ones I mean are the very ones that already have names: the one that is praised by "the many," your Cretan or Laconian⁴ constitution. The second—and second in the praise it receives—is called oligarchy, a constitution filled with a host of evils. Antagonistic to it, and next in order, is democracy. And "noble" tyranny, surpassing all of them, is the fourth and most extreme disease of cities. Can you think of another form of constitution—I mean, another distinct in form from these? For, no doubt, there are dynasties and purchased kingships and other similar constitutions in between these, which one finds no less among barbarians than among Greeks. c 5 d

GLAUCON: Many strange ones are certainly mentioned, at least. 5

SOCRATES: Are you aware, then, that there must be as many forms of human character as there are of constitutions? Or do you think constitutions arise from oak or rock⁵ and not from the characters of the people in the cities, which tip the scales, so to speak, and drag the rest along with them? e

GLAUCON: No, they could not possibly arise from anything other than that.

SOCRATES: So, if there are five of cities, there must also be five ways of arranging private individual souls. 5

GLAUCON: Of course.

SOCRATES: Now, we have already described the one who is like aristocracy, the one we rightly describe as good and just.

GLAUCON: Yes, we have described him. 545a

SOCRATES: Mustn't we next describe the inferior ones—the victory-loving and honor-loving, which correspond to the Laconian constitution, followed by the oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical—so that, having discovered the most unjust of all, we can oppose him to the most just and 5

³ 449b1–2.

⁴ I.e., Spartan.

⁵ Homer, *Odyssey* 19.163.

complete our investigation into how pure justice and pure injustice stand with regard to the happiness or wretchedness of the one who possesses them; and be persuaded either by Thrasymachus to practice injustice or by
b the argument that is now coming to light to practice justice.

GLAUCON: That's exactly what we must do.

SOCRATES: Then just as we began by looking for the virtues of character in constitutions before looking for them in private individuals, thinking they would be clearer in the former,⁶ shouldn't we first examine the honor-
5 loving constitution? I do not know another name that is commonly applied to it; it should be called either timocracy or timarchy. Then shouldn't we examine that sort of man by comparing him to it, and, after that, oligarchy
c and the oligarchic man, and democracy and the democratic man? Fourth, having come to a city that is under a tyrant and having examined it, shouldn't we look into a tyrannical soul, and so try to become adequate
5 judges of the topic we proposed for ourselves?⁷

GLAUCON: That, at any rate, would be a reasonable way for us to go about observing and judging.

SOCRATES: Come on, then, let's try to describe how timocracy emerges from aristocracy. Or is it simply the case that, in all constitutions, change
d originates in the ruling element itself when faction breaks out within it; but that if this group remains of one mind, then—however small it is—change is impossible?

GLAUCON: Yes, that's right.

SOCRATES: How, then, Glaucon, will our city be changed? How will fac-
5 tion arise, either between the auxiliaries and the rulers or within either group? Or do you want us to be like Homer and pray to the Muses to tell us
e "how faction first broke out,"⁸ and have them speak in tragic tones, playing and jesting with us, as if we were children and they were speaking in earnest?

GLAUCON: How do you mean?

546a SOCRATES: Something like this: "It is difficult for a city constituted in this way to change. However, since everything that comes-to-be must decay, not even one so constituted will last forever. On the contrary, it, too, must face dissolution. And this is how it will be dissolved: not only plants that grow in the earth, but also animals that grow upon it, have periods of fertility and
5 infertility of both soul and bodies each time their cycles complete a revolution. These cycles are short for what is short-lived and the opposite for what

⁶ See 368c7–369a3.

⁷ Most recently at 544a2–8.

⁸ Apparently an adaptation of *Iliad* 16.112–3.

is the opposite. However, even though they are wise, the people you have educated to be leaders in your city will, by using rational calculation combined with sense-perception, nonetheless fail to ascertain the periods of good fertility and of infertility for your species. Instead, these will escape them, and so they will sometimes beget children when they should not.

“Now, for the birth of a divine creature there is a cycle comprehended by a perfect number;⁹ while for a human being, it is the first number in which are found increases involving both roots and powers, comprehending three intervals and four terms, of factors that cause likeness and unlikeness, cause increase and decrease, and make all things mutually agreeable and rational in their relations to one another. Of these factors, the base ones—four in relation to three, together with five—give two harmonies when thrice increased. One is a square, so many times a hundred. The other is of equal length one way, but oblong. One of its sides are 100 squares of the rational diameter of five each diminished by one, or alternatively 100 squares of the irrational diameter each diminished by two. The other side are 100 cubes of three. This whole geometrical number controls better and worse births.¹⁰

⁹ The divine creature seems to be the world or universe. See *Timaeus* 30b–d, 32d, 34a–b. Plato does not specify what its number is.

¹⁰ The human geometrical number is the product of 3, 4, and 5 “thrice increased”: if $(3 \times 4 \times 5) \times (3 \times 4 \times 5) = (3 \times 4 \times 5)^2$ is one increase, $(3 \times 4 \times 5) \times (3 \times 4 \times 5) \times (3 \times 4 \times 5) \times (3 \times 4 \times 5) = (3 \times 4 \times 5)^4$ is three. This formula included “increases involving both roots and powers”: $(3 \times 4 \times 5)$ is a root; its indices are powers. It “comprehends” three “intervals,” symbolized by \times , and four “terms”—namely, the roots. The resulting number, 12,960,000, can be represented geometrically as: (1) a square whose sides are 3,600, or (2) an “oblong” or rectangle whose sides are 4,800 and 2,700. (1) is “so many times 100”: 36 times. (2) is obtained as follows. The “rational diameter” of 5 is the nearest rational number to the real diameter of a square whose sides are 5. This diameter $= \sqrt{5^2 + 5^2} = \sqrt{50} = 7$. Since the square of 7 is 49, we get the longer side of the rectangle by diminishing 49 by 1 and multiplying the result by 100. This gives 4,800. The “irrational diameter” of 5 is $\sqrt{50}$. When squared ($= 50$), diminished by 2 ($= 48$), and multiplied by 100, this, too, is 4,800. The short side, “100 cubes of three,” $= 2,700$. The significance of the number is more controversial. The factors “that cause likeness and unlikeness, cause increase and decrease, and make all things mutually agreeable and rational in their relations to one another” are probably the numbers, since odd numbers were thought to cause likeness and even ones unlikeness (Aristotle, *Physica* 203^a13–5). Of the numbers significant in human life, one is surely the 100 years of its maximum span (615a8–b1). Another might be the number of days in the year (roughly 360), and a third might be the divisions of those days into smaller units determined by the sun’s place in the sky, since it is the sun that provides for “the coming-to-be, growth, and nourishment” of all visible things (509b2–4). Assuming that those units are the 360 degrees of the sun’s path around the earth (a suggestion due to Robin Waterfield), the number of moments in a human life that have a potential effect on its coming-to-be, growth, and nourishment would be $100 \times 360 \times 360$, or 12,960,000—Plato’s human geometrical number.

d “And when, through ignorance of these, your guardians join brides and
grooms at the wrong time, the children will be neither good-natured nor
fortunate. The older generation will choose the best of these children, even
though they do not deserve them. And when they in turn acquire their
fathers’ powers, the first thing they will begin to neglect as guardians will
5 be us, by paying less attention to musical training than they should; and the
second is physical training. Hence your young people will become more
unmusical. And rulers chosen from among them won’t be able to guard
e well the testing of Hesiod’s and your own races—gold, silver, bronze, and
547a iron.¹¹ The intermixing of iron with silver and bronze with gold will
engender lack of likeness and unharmonious inequality, and these always
breed war and hostility wherever they arise. We must declare faction to be
5 ‘of this lineage,’¹² wherever and whenever it arises.”

GLAUCON: And we will declare that they have answered correctly.

SOCRATES: They must. They are Muses, after all!

b GLAUCON: What do the Muses say next?

SOCRATES: When faction arose, each of these two races, the iron and the
bronze, pulled the constitution toward moneymaking and the acquisition of
land, houses, gold, and silver. The other two, by contrast, the gold and sil-
5 ver races—since they are not poor, but naturally rich in their souls¹³—led
toward virtue and the old political system. Striving and struggling with one
another, they compromised on a middle way: they distributed the land and
houses among themselves as private property; enslaved and held as serfs and
c servants those whom they had previously guarded as free friends and pro-
viders of upkeep; and took responsibility themselves for making war and for
guarding against the ones they had enslaved.

5 GLAUCON: I think that is how the transformation begins.

SOCRATES: Wouldn’t this constitution, then, be somehow in the middle
between aristocracy and oligarchy?

GLAUCON: Of course.

SOCRATES: Anyway, that is how the transformation occurs. But once
transformed, how will it be managed? Or isn’t it obvious that it will imi-
d tate the first constitution in some respects and oligarchy in others, since it
is in the middle between them; and that it will also have some features
unique to itself?

GLAUCON: That’s right.

¹¹ 414d1–415c7; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 109–202.

¹² Homer, *Iliad* 6.211.

¹³ See 416e4–417a1.

SOCRATES: In honoring the rulers, then, and in the fighting class's abstention from farming, handicrafts, and other ways of making money, in providing communal meals and being devoted to physical training and training for war—in all such ways, won't the constitution be like the previous one? 5

GLAUCON: Yes.

SOCRATES: But in its fear of appointing wise people as rulers, on the grounds that men of that sort are no longer simple and earnest but mixed; in its inclination toward spirited and simpler people, who are more naturally suited for war than peace; in its honoring the tricks and stratagems of war; and spending all its time making war—in these respects, by contrast, 548a isn't it pretty much unique?

GLAUCON: Yes.

SOCRATES: Such men will have an appetite for money just like those in oligarchies, passionately adoring gold and silver in secret, owning storehouses and private treasuries where they can deposit them and keep them hidden; and they will have walls around their houses, real private nests, where they can spend lavishly on their women or on anyone else they please. b

GLAUCON: That's absolutely true.

SOCRATES: They will be stingy with money, since they honor it and do not possess it openly, but they will love to spend other people's money because of their appetites. They will enjoy their pleasures in secret, running away from the law like boys from their father, since they have not been educated by persuasion but by force. This is because they have neglected the true Muse, the companion of discussion and philosophy,¹⁴ and honored physical training more than musical training. c

GLAUCON: The constitution you are describing is a thorough mixture of good and bad.

SOCRATES: Yes, it is mixed. But because of its mastery by the spirited element, only one thing really stands out in it—the love of victories and honors. 5

GLAUCON: And very noticeable it is.

SOCRATES: That, then, is how this constitution would come to exist, and that is what it would be like. It is just an outline sketch of the constitution in words, not an exact account of it, since even from a sketch we will be able to see the most just man and most unjust one. It would be an incredibly long task to discuss every constitution and every character without omitting any detail. 10 d

GLAUCON: Yes, that's right. 5

¹⁴ See *Phaedo* 61a3–4.

SOCRATES: Who, then, is the man corresponding to this constitution? How does he come to exist and what sort of man is he?

ADEIMANTUS: I think he would be very like Glaucon here, at least as far as the love of victory is concerned.

SOCRATES: Maybe in that respect, but in the following ones I do not think his nature would be like that.

e ADEIMANTUS: Which ones?

549a SOCRATES: He would have to be more stubborn and less well trained in music; a lover of music and of listening, yet not at all skilled in speaking; the sort of person who is harsh to slaves instead of looking down on them, as an adequately educated person does; gentle to free people and very submissive to rulers; a lover of ruling and of honor, who does not base his claim to rule on his ability to speak or anything like that, but on his exploits in war and anything having to do with war; a lover of physical training and of hunting.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, that is indeed the character belonging to this constitution.

b SOCRATES: As regards money, too, wouldn't someone like that look down on it when he is young; but as he grows older, wouldn't he love it more and more because he shares in the money-lover's nature and is not pure in his attitude to virtue, since he lacks the best guardian?

5 ADEIMANTUS: What's that?

SOCRATES: Reason mixed with musical training. You see, only it dwells within the person who possesses it as the lifelong preserver of his virtue.

ADEIMANTUS: Well put.

10 SOCRATES: That, then, is what a timocratic youth is like; he is like the corresponding city.

c ADEIMANTUS: Yes, indeed.

5 SOCRATES: And he comes to exist in some such way as this: sometimes he is the young son of a good father, who lives in a city that is not politically well governed; avoids honors, political office, lawsuits, and all such meddling in other people's affairs; and who is even willing to be put at a disadvantage so as to avoid trouble.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, but how does he become timocratic?

d SOCRATES: It first happens when he listens to his mother complaining that her man is not one of the rulers and that she is at a disadvantage among the other women as a result. Next, she sees that he is not very serious about money, either; does not fight or exchange insults in private lawsuits or in the public assembly, but takes easily everything of that sort; has a mind

always absorbed in its own thoughts; and does not overvalue her or under-
value her either. As a result of all those things, she complains and tells her
son that his father is unmanly and too easygoing, and makes a litany of the
other sorts of things women love to recite on such occasions. 5
e

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, indeed, it is just like them to have lots of such complaints.

SOCRATES: You know, then, that the servants of such men—the ones
thought to be loyal—also say similar things to the sons in private. If they see
someone who owes the father money or has wronged him in some other
way, whom he does not prosecute, they urge the son to punish all such
people when he becomes a man, and be more of a man than his father. And 5
when he goes out, the boy hears and sees other similar things: those who
do their own work in the city are called fools and held to be of little
account, while those who do not are honored and praised. When the
young man hears and sees all this, then, and, on the other hand, also listens
to what his father says, and sees his practices from close at hand and com-
pares them with those of the others, he is pulled by both—his father nour-
ishing the rational element in his soul and making it grow; the others
nourishing the appetitive and spirited elements. And, because he is not a
bad man by nature, but has kept bad company, he compromises on a middle
way when he is pulled in these two directions, and surrenders the rule
within him to the middle element—the victory-loving and spirited one—
and becomes a proud and honor-loving man. 550a
5
b

ADEIMANTUS: I think you have exactly described how such a man comes
to exist.

SOCRATES: So, we now have the second constitution and the second man. c

ADEIMANTUS: We have.

SOCRATES: Next then, shall we, like Aeschylus, talk of “another man
ordered like another city,”¹⁵ or follow our plan and talk about the city first? 5

ADEIMANTUS: The latter, of course.

SOCRATES: And I suppose oligarchy would come next after such a consti-
tution.

ADEIMANTUS: And what kind of political system do you mean by oligarchy? 10

SOCRATES: The constitution based on a property assessment, the one in
which the rich rule and the poor man does not participate in ruling. d

ADEIMANTUS: I understand.

SOCRATES: So, mustn't we first describe how timarchy is transformed into
oligarchy?

¹⁵ The line does not occur in the extant plays, but it may be an adaptation of *Seven against Thebes* 451.

5 ADEIMANTUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And surely the way it is transformed is clear even to the blind.

ADEIMANTUS: How?

10 SOCRATES: That storehouse filled with gold we mentioned,¹⁶ which each possesses, destroys such a constitution. First, you see, the timocrats find ways of spending their money, then they alter the laws to allow them to do so, and then they and their women disobey the laws altogether.

ADEIMANTUS: Probably so.

e SOCRATES: Next, I suppose, through one person seeing another and envying him, they make the majority behave like themselves.

ADEIMANTUS: Probably so.

5 SOCRATES: After that then, they become further involved in moneymaking; and the more honorable they consider it, the less honorable they consider virtue. Or isn't virtue so opposed to wealth that if they were set on the scale of a balance, they would always incline in opposite directions?

ADEIMANTUS: It certainly is.

551a SOCRATES: So, when wealth and the wealthy are honored in a city, virtue and good people are honored less.

ADEIMANTUS: Clearly.

5 SOCRATES: And what is honored is always practiced, and what is not honored, neglected.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes.

10 SOCRATES: So, in the end, victory-loving and honor-loving men become lovers of making money and money-lovers, and they praise and admire the wealthy man and appoint him as ruler, and dishonor the poor one.

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

b SOCRATES: Isn't it then that they pass a law, which is a defining characteristic of an oligarchic constitution, establishing a wealth qualification—higher where it is more oligarchic, lower where it is less so—and proclaim that anyone whose property does not reach the stated assessment cannot participate in ruling? And they either put this through by force of arms, or else, without resorting to that, they use intimidation to establish this sort of
5 constitution. Isn't that so?

ADEIMANTUS: It is.

SOCRATES: That, then, is, generally speaking, how it is established.

¹⁶ 548a7–8.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, it is. But what is the constitution like? What are the defects we said it had?¹⁷

c

SOCRATES: First of all, consider its defining characteristic. I mean, what would happen if ship captains were appointed like that, on the basis of property assessments, and a poor person was turned away even if he were a better captain?

5

ADEIMANTUS: People would make a very bad voyage!

SOCRATES: And doesn't the same apply to any other sort of rule whatsoever?

ADEIMANTUS: I suppose so.

SOCRATES: Except of a city? Or does it apply to that of a city, too?

ADEIMANTUS: It applies to it most of all, since it is the most difficult and most important kind of rule there is.

10

SOCRATES: That, then, is one major defect in oligarchy.

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ADEIMANTUS: So it seems.

SOCRATES: And what about this one? Is it any smaller than the other?

ADEIMANTUS: Which?

SOCRATES: That a city of this sort is not one, but inevitably two—a city of the poor and one of the rich, living in the same place and always plotting against one another.

5

ADEIMANTUS: By Zeus, that's no smaller a defect.

SOCRATES: And this is hardly a good quality either: the likelihood of being unable to fight a war because of having to arm and use the majority, and so having to fear them more than the enemy; or else, because of not using them, and so having to show up as true oligarchs¹⁸ on the battlefield; and because, at the same time, the fact that they are money-lovers makes them unwilling to pay mercenaries.

10

e

ADEIMANTUS: That is not good.

5

SOCRATES: And what about what we condemned long ago¹⁹—the fact that in this constitution there is the meddling in other people's affairs that occurs when the same people are farmers, moneymakers, and soldiers simultaneously? Or do you think it is right for things to be that way?

552a

ADEIMANTUS: Not at all.

SOCRATES: Now, let's see whether it is the first to admit the greatest of all evils.

5

¹⁷ 544c4–5.

¹⁸ I.e., as being few in number. *Oligos* means few.

¹⁹ 374b6–c2.

ADEIMANTUS: Which is?

SOCRATES: Allowing someone to sell all his possessions and someone else to buy them, and then allowing the seller to continue living in the city while not being any one of its parts—neither moneymaker nor craftsman,
10 nor cavalryman, nor hoplite, but a poor person without means.

b ADEIMANTUS: It is the first.

SOCRATES: Anyway, this sort of thing certainly is not forbidden in oligarchies. I mean, if it were, some of their citizens would not be super rich and others totally impoverished.

5 ADEIMANTUS: That's right.

SOCRATES: Now, consider this: when a person like that was rich and spending his money, was he then of any greater use to the city in the ways we have just mentioned? Or did he merely seem to be one of the rulers, while in fact he was neither ruler nor subject of it, but only a squanderer of property?

c ADEIMANTUS: That's right. He seemed to be a ruler but was nothing but a squanderer.

SOCRATES: Do you want us to say of him, then, that as a drone existing in a cell is an affliction to the hive, so this person existing in a household is a drone and affliction to the city?

5 ADEIMANTUS: Yes, indeed, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And hasn't the god, Adeimantus, made all the winged drones stingless, as well as some of the footed ones, while other footed ones have terrible stings? And don't those who end up as beggars in old age come from
d among the stingless ones, while all those with stings are called evildoers?

ADEIMANTUS: That's absolutely true.

SOCRATES: Clearly then, in any city where you see beggars, somewhere in the neighborhood there are thieves hidden, and pickpockets, temple robbers, and craftsmen of all such sorts of evil.

ADEIMANTUS: Clearly.

SOCRATES: What about oligarchic cities? Don't you see beggars in them?

10 ADEIMANTUS: Nearly everyone is one, apart from the rulers.

e SOCRATES: Mustn't we suppose, then, that there are also many evildoers there with stings, whom the rulers forcibly keep in check by their cautiousness?

ADEIMANTUS: We certainly must suppose it.

5 SOCRATES: And aren't we saying that the presence of such people is the result of lack of education, bad rearing, and a bad constitutional system?

ADEIMANTUS: We are.

SOCRATES: Well, then, that is roughly what the oligarchic city would be like. It would contain all these evils and probably others as well. 10

ADEIMANTUS: That's pretty much it.

SOCRATES: Let's take it, then, that we have disposed of the constitution they call oligarchy, which gets its rulers on the basis of a property assessment. Next, let's consider how the person who is like it comes to exist, and what sort of person he is when he does. 553a

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, let's. 5

SOCRATES: Doesn't the transformation from timocrat to oligarch mostly occur in this way?

ADEIMANTUS: Which?

SOCRATES: It happens when a son of his is born who begins by emulating his father and following in his footsteps, and then sees him suddenly crashing against the city as against a reef, and sees him and all his possessions spilling overboard. He had held a generalship or some other high office, was brought to court by sycophants,²⁰ and was put to death or exiled, or was disenfranchised and had all his property confiscated. 10 b 5

ADEIMANTUS: Probably so.

SOCRATES: Anyway, my friend, after seeing and experiencing all that, and losing his property, the son is afraid, I imagine, and immediately throws the honor-loving and spirited element headlong from the throne in his own soul. And humbled by poverty, he turns greedily to moneymaking and, little by little, saving and working, he amasses property. Don't you think that someone like that will then establish the appetitive and moneymaking element on that throne, and make it a great king within himself, adorned with golden tiaras and collars and Persian swords?²¹ c 5

ADEIMANTUS: I do.

SOCRATES: And I suppose he makes the rational and spirited elements sit on the ground beneath it, one on either side, and be slaves. He won't allow the first to calculate or consider anything except how a little money can be made into more; or the second to admire or honor anything except wealth and wealthy people, or to love being honored for anything besides the possession of wealth and whatever contributes to it. d 5

ADEIMANTUS: There is no other way to turn an honor-loving young man into a money-loving one that is as swift and sure as that!

²⁰ See Glossary of Terms s.v. sycophants.

²¹ For the Greeks, the king of Persia was emblematic of absolute rule.

e SOCRATES: Isn't this, then, the oligarchic person?

ADEIMANTUS: Well, he certainly developed from the sort of man who resembled the constitution from which oligarchy came.

SOCRATES: Then let's see whether he resembles it.

554a ADEIMANTUS: Let's.

SOCRATES: Wouldn't he resemble it, primarily, by attaching the greatest importance to money?

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

5 SOCRATES: And also by being a thrifty worker who satisfies only his necessary appetites and spends nothing on other things but enslaves his other appetites as pointless.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, indeed.

10 SOCRATES: A pretty squalid fellow, at any rate, who tries to make a profit from everything: a treasury-builder—the sort the majority admire. Isn't that the sort of man who resembles this sort of constitution?

ADEIMANTUS: *I* certainly think so. At any rate, money is honored more than anything else by both the city and the one who is like it.

SOCRATES: Because I don't suppose someone like that has paid any attention to education.

5 ADEIMANTUS: I don't think so. I mean, if he had, he would not have chosen a blind leader for his chorus and honored him most.²²

c SOCRATES: Well put! But consider this. Wouldn't we say that though the dronish appetites exist in him because of his lack of education, some of them beggars and others evildoers, they are forcibly kept in check by his general cautiousness?²³

ADEIMANTUS: Certainly.

5 SOCRATES: Do you know, then, where you should look to see the evils such people do?

ADEIMANTUS: Where?

SOCRATES: Where they are guardians of orphans, or any other situation like that, where they have ample opportunity to do injustice.

10 ADEIMANTUS: True.

SOCRATES: So, doesn't that make it clear that in other contractual matters, where someone like that has a good reputation and is thought to be just, something good of his is forcibly holding in check the other bad appetites

²² I.e., Plutus, the god of wealth, who is often represented as being blind.

²³ See 552e1–2.

within; not persuading them that they had better not, nor taming them with arguments, but using compulsion and fear, because he is terrified of losing his other possessions? d

ADEIMANTUS: Exactly.

SOCRATES: Yes, by Zeus, my friend, you will find that most of them, when they have other people's money to spend, have appetites in them akin to those of the drone. 5

ADEIMANTUS: Indeed, you certainly will!

SOCRATES: So, someone like that would not be entirely free from internal faction, and would not be a single person but somehow a twofold one,²⁴ although his better appetites would generally master his worse appetites. 10
e

ADEIMANTUS: That's right.

SOCRATES: Because of this, I suppose someone like that would be more respectable than many other people; but the true virtue of a single-minded and harmonious soul would somehow far escape him. 5

ADEIMANTUS: I suppose so.

SOCRATES: Furthermore, the thrifty man is a worthless individual contestant in the city for any prize of victory or any of the other fine things the love of honor craves. He is unwilling to spend money for the sake of fame or other such results of competition, and, fearing to arouse his appetites for spending by allying them with love of victory, he fights in true oligarchic fashion, with only a few of his resources,²⁵ and is mostly defeated, but remains rich! 555a
5

ADEIMANTUS: Exactly.

SOCRATES: Are we still in any doubt, then, that, as regards resemblance, a thrifty moneymaker corresponds to an oligarchic city? b

ADEIMANTUS: Not at all.

SOCRATES: Then democracy, it seems, must be considered next—both the way it comes to exist and what it is like when it does—so that when we know the character of this sort of man, we can present him for judgment in turn. 5

ADEIMANTUS: At any rate, that would be consistent with what we have been doing.

SOCRATES: Well, then, isn't the change from an oligarchy to a democracy due in some way or other to the insatiable desire for the good set before it—the need to become as rich as possible? 10

²⁴ See 443c9–444a2.

²⁵ See 551e2 note.

ADEIMANTUS: How so?

c SOCRATES: Since the rulers rule in it because they own a lot, I suppose
they are not willing to enact laws to prevent young people who have
become intemperate from spending and wasting their wealth, so that by
buying and making loans on the property of such people, the rulers them-
selves can become even richer and more honored.

5 ADEIMANTUS: That's their primary goal, at any rate.

SOCRATES: So, isn't it clear by now that you cannot honor wealth in a city
and maintain temperance in the citizens at the same time, but must inevita-
bly neglect one or the other?

d ADEIMANTUS: That is pretty clear.

SOCRATES: The negligent encouragement of intemperance in oligarchies,
then, sometimes reduces people who are not ill born to poverty.

5 ADEIMANTUS: Indeed, it does.

SOCRATES: And these people sit around in the city, I suppose, armed with
stings or weapons—some of them in debt, some disenfranchised, some
both—hating and plotting against those who have acquired their property,
and all the others as well; passionately longing for revolution.

e ADEIMANTUS: That's right.

SOCRATES: These moneymakers, with their heads down,²⁶ pretending not
to see them, inject the poison of their money into any of the rest who do not
resist, and, carrying away a multitude of offspring in interest from their prin-
cipal,²⁷ greatly increase the size of the drone and beggar class in the city.

556a ADEIMANTUS: They certainly do increase it greatly.

SOCRATES: In any case, they are not willing to quench evil of this sort as it
flares up, either by preventing a person from doing whatever he likes with
his own property, or alternatively by passing this other law to do away with
such abuses.

5 ADEIMANTUS: What law?

SOCRATES: The one that is next best and that compels the citizens to care
about virtue. You see, if someone prescribed that most voluntary contracts
be entered into at the lender's own risk, money would be less shamelessly
pursued in the city and fewer of those evils we were mentioning just now
would develop in it.

5 ADEIMANTUS: Far fewer.

²⁶ Their heads are down because their appetite for money forces their souls to look downward. See 518c4–519b5.

²⁷ See 507a5 and note.

SOCRATES: But as it is, and for all these reasons, the rulers in the city treat their subjects in the way we described. And as for themselves and those belonging to them, don't they bring up the young to be fond of luxury, incapable of effort either mental or physical, too soft to endure pleasures or pains, and lazy? c

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: And haven't they themselves neglected everything except making money and been no more concerned about virtue than poor people are? 5

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, they have.

SOCRATES: And when rulers and subjects, socialized in this way, meet on journeys or some other shared undertakings, whether in an embassy or a military campaign; or as shipmates or fellow soldiers; or when they watch one another in dangerous situations—in these circumstances, don't you think the poor are in no way despised by the rich? On the contrary, don't you think it is often the case that a poor man, lean and suntanned, is stationed in battle next to a rich one, reared in the shade and carrying a lot of excess flesh, and sees him panting and completely at a loss? And don't you think he believes that it is because of the cowardice of the poor that such people are rich and that one poor man says to another when they meet in private: "These men are ours for the taking; they are good for nothing"? 10
d
5
e

ADEIMANTUS: I know very well they do.

SOCRATES: Well, just as a sick body needs only a slight shock from outside to become ill and sometimes, even without external influence, becomes divided into factions, itself against itself, doesn't a city in the same condition need only a small pretext—such as one side bringing in allies from an oligarchy or the other from a democracy—to become ill and fight with itself? And doesn't it sometimes become divided into factions even without any external influence? 5

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, violently so. 557a

SOCRATES: Then democracy comes about, I suppose, when the poor are victorious, kill or expel the others, and give the rest an equal share in the constitution and the ruling offices, and the majority of offices in it are assigned by lot. 5

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, that is how a democratic political system gets established, whether it comes to exist by force of arms or because intimidation drives its opponents into exile.²⁸

SOCRATES: In what way, then, do these people live? What sort of constitution do they have? For clearly the sort of man who is like it will turn out to be democratic. b

²⁸ See 551a12–b5.

ADEIMANTUS: Clearly.

5 SOCRATES: Well, in the first place, aren't they free? And isn't the city full of freedom and freedom of speech? And isn't there license in it to do whatever one wants?

ADEIMANTUS: That's what they say, anyway.

10 SOCRATES: And where there is license, clearly each person would arrange his own life in whatever way pleases him.

ADEIMANTUS: Clearly.

c SOCRATES: I imagine it is in this constitution, then, that multifarious people come to exist.

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

5 SOCRATES: It looks, then, as though it is the most beautiful of all the constitutions. For just like an embroidered cloak embroidered with every kind of ornament, it is embroidered with every sort of character, and so would appear to be the most beautiful. And presumably, many people would behave like women and children looking at embroidered objects and actually judge it to be the most beautiful.

10 ADEIMANTUS: They certainly would.

d SOCRATES: What is more, bless you, it is also a handy place in which to look for a constitution!

ADEIMANTUS: Why is that?

SOCRATES: Because it contains all kinds of constitutions, as a result of its license. So whoever wants to organize a city, as we were doing just now, probably has to go to a democracy and, as if he were in a supermarket of constitutions, pick out whatever pleases him and establish it.

e ADEIMANTUS: He probably wouldn't be at a loss for examples, anyway!

SOCRATES: There is no compulsion to rule in this city, even if you are qualified to rule, or to be ruled if you do not want to be; or to be at war when the others are at war, or to keep the peace when the others are keeping it, if you do not want peace; or, even if there happens to be a law preventing you from ruling or from serving on a jury, to be any the less free to rule or serve on a jury—isn't that a heavenly and pleasant way to pass the time, while it lasts?

558a

ADEIMANTUS: It probably is—while it lasts.

SOCRATES: And what about the calm of some of their condemned criminals? Isn't that a sophisticated quality? Or have you never seen people who have been condemned to death or exile in a constitution of this sort staying on all the same and living right in the middle of things, without

5

anyone giving them a thought or staring at them, while they stroll around like a hero?²⁹

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, I have seen it a lot.

SOCRATES: And what about the city's tolerance, its complete lack of petty-mindedness, and its utter disregard for the things we took so seriously when we were founding the city—that unless someone had transcendent natural gifts, he would never become a good man if he did not play fine games right from early childhood and engage in practices that are all of that same sort? Isn't it magnificent how it tramples all that underfoot, gives no thought to what sort of practices someone went in for before he entered politics, and honors him if only he tells them he wishes the majority well?

ADEIMANTUS: That's true nobility!

SOCRATES: These, then, and others akin to them are the characteristics a democracy would possess. And it would, it seems, be a pleasant constitution—lacking rulers but not complexity, and assigning a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, that's well known!

SOCRATES: Look and see, then, what sort of private individual resembles it. Or should we first consider, as we did in the case of the constitution, how he comes to exist?

ADEIMANTUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Well, doesn't it happen this way? Mightn't we suppose that our thrifty oligarchic man had a son brought up by his father with his father's traits of character?

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: Then he too would rule by force the pleasures that exist in him—the spendthrift ones that do not make money; the ones that are called unnecessary.

ADEIMANTUS: Clearly.

SOCRATES: In order not to have a discussion in the dark, would you like us first to define which appetites are necessary and which are not?

ADEIMANTUS: I would.

SOCRATES: Well, then, wouldn't those we cannot deny rightly be called necessary? And also those whose satisfaction benefits us? For we are by nature compelled to try to satisfy them both. Isn't that so?

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

²⁹ Dead heroes were worshipped as minor deities in Greek religion, particularly in their birthplaces, where their spirits were thought to linger.

559a SOCRATES: So, we would be right to apply the term “necessary” to them?

ADEIMANTUS: We would be right.

SOCRATES: What about those someone could get rid of if he started practicing from childhood, those whose presence does no good but may even do the opposite? If we said that all of them were unnecessary, would we be
5 right?

ADEIMANTUS: We would be right.

SOCRATES: Let’s pick an example of each, so that we have a pattern to follow.

10 ADEIMANTUS: Yes, let’s.

SOCRATES: Wouldn’t the desire to eat to the point of health and well-being, and the desire for bread and relishes³⁰ be necessary ones?
b

ADEIMANTUS: I suppose so.

SOCRATES: The desire for bread is surely necessary on both counts, in that it is beneficial and that unless it is satisfied, we die.³¹

5 ADEIMANTUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And so is the one for relishes, insofar as it is beneficial and conduces to well-being.

ADEIMANTUS: Indeed.

SOCRATES: What about an appetite that goes beyond these and seeks other
10 sorts of foods; that, if it is restrained from childhood and educated, most people can get rid of; and that is harmful to the body and harmful to the soul’s capacity for wisdom and temperance? Wouldn’t it be correct to call it
c unnecessary?

ADEIMANTUS: Entirely correct.

SOCRATES: Wouldn’t we also say that the latter desires are spendthrift, then, whereas the former are moneymaking because they are useful where work is concerned?

5 ADEIMANTUS: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And won’t we say the same about sexual appetites and the rest?

ADEIMANTUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And didn’t we say that the person we just now called a drone is full of such pleasures and appetites and is ruled by the unnecessary ones,
d while the one who is ruled by his necessary appetites is a thrifty oligarch?

ADEIMANTUS: Of course we did.

³⁰ See 372c4 note.

³¹ Bread is used here to mean “the staff of life.” That is why one dies for want of it.

SOCRATES: Let's go back, then, and say how the democrat develops from the oligarch. It seems to me as if it mostly happens this way. 5

ADEIMANTUS: What way?

SOCRATES: When a young man who is reared in the uneducated and thrifty manner we described just now tastes the honey of the drones and associates with wild and terrible creatures who can provide multifarious pleasures of every degree of complexity and sort, that probably marks the beginning of his transformation from having an oligarchic constitution within him to having a democratic one. 10 e

ADEIMANTUS: It most certainly does.

SOCRATES: So, just as the city changed when one party received help from a like-minded alliance outside, doesn't the young man change in turn when external appetites of the same type and quality as it come to the aid of one of the parties within him? 5

ADEIMANTUS: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: And I suppose if a counter-alliance comes to the aid of the oligarchic party within him—whether from his father or from the rest of his family, who exhort and reproach him—then there is a faction and an opposing faction within him, and he battles against himself. 10 560a

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: And sometimes, I suppose, the democratic party yields to the oligarchic, some of its appetites are overcome while others are expelled, and a kind of shame rises in the young man's soul and order is restored. 5

ADEIMANTUS: That does sometimes happen.

SOCRATES: Moreover, I suppose, as some appetites are expelled, others akin to them are being nurtured undetected because of the father's ignorance of upbringing, and become numerous and strong. b

ADEIMANTUS: At any rate, that's what usually happens.

SOCRATES: Then these desires draw him back to his old associates³² and, in secret intercourse, breed a multitude of others. 5

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: Finally, I suppose, they seize the citadel of the young man's soul, since they realize that it is empty of the fine studies and practices and the true arguments that are the best watchmen and guardians in the minds of men loved by the gods. 10

ADEIMANTUS: By far the best. c

³² Described at 559d7–e2.

SOCRATES: Then, I suppose, beliefs and arguments that are lying imposters rush up and occupy this same part of him in place of the others.

ADEIMANTUS: They do, indeed.

5 SOCRATES: Won't he then return to those Lotus-eaters and live with them openly? And if any help should come to the thrifty part of his soul from his relatives, don't those imposter arguments, having barred the gates of the royal wall within him, prevent the allied force itself from entering and even refusing to admit arguments of older, private individuals as ambassadors?
d Proving stronger in the battle, won't they call reverence foolishness and drive it out as a dishonored fugitive? And calling temperance cowardliness, won't they shower it with abuse and banish it? As for moderate and orderly
5 expenditure, won't they persuade him that it is boorish and illiberal, and join with a multitude of useless appetites to drive it over the border?

ADEIMANTUS: They will indeed.

e SOCRATES: And when they have somehow emptied and purged these from the soul of the one they are seizing hold of and initiating with solemn rites, they then immediately proceed to return arrogance, anarchy, extravagance, and shamelessness from exile in a blaze of torchlight, accompanied with a vast chorus of followers and crowned with garlands. They praise them and give them fine names, calling arrogance "good breeding," anarchy
5 "freedom," extravagance "magnificence," and shamelessness "courage." Isn't it in some such way as this that a young person exchanges an upbringing
561a among necessary appetites for the freeing and release of useless and unnecessary pleasures?

5 ADEIMANTUS: Yes, that's clearly the way it happens.

SOCRATES: Then in his subsequent life, I suppose, someone like that spends no less money, effort, and time on the necessary pleasures than on the unnecessary pleasures. But if he is lucky and does not go beyond the limits in his bacchic frenzy, and if, as a result of his growing somewhat older, the great tumult within him passes, he welcomes back some of the
b exiles and ceases to surrender himself completely to the newcomers. Then, putting all his pleasures on an equal footing, he lives, always surrendering rule over himself to whichever desire comes along, as if it were chosen by lot,³³ until it is satisfied; and after that to another, dishonoring none but satisfying all equally.
5

ADEIMANTUS: He does, indeed.

c SOCRATES: And he does not accept or admit true argument into the guard-house if someone tells him that some pleasures belong to fine and good appetites and others to bad ones, and that he must practice and honor the

³³ Many public officials in democratic Athens were elected by lot.

former and restrain and enslave the latter. On the contrary, he denies all this and declares that they are all alike and must be honored on an equal basis.

ADEIMANTUS: That's exactly what he feels and does.

5

SOCRATES: And so he lives from day to day, gratifying the appetite of the moment. Sometimes he drinks heavily while listening to the flute, while at others he drinks only water and is on a diet. Sometimes he goes in for physical training, while there are others when he is idle and neglects everything. Sometimes he spends his time engaged in what he takes to be philosophy. Often, though, he takes part in politics, leaping to his feet and saying and doing whatever happens to come into his mind. If he admires some military men, that is the direction in which he is carried; if some money-makers, then in that different one. There is neither order nor necessity in his life, yet he calls it pleasant, free, and blessedly happy, and follows it throughout his entire life.

d

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ADEIMANTUS: You have perfectly described the life of a man devoted to legal equality.³⁴

e

SOCRATES: I certainly think he is a multifarious man and full of all sorts of characters, beautiful and complex, like the democratic city. Many men and women would envy his life because of the great number of examples of constitutions and characters it contains within it.

5

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, that's right.

SOCRATES: Well, then, will we set this man alongside democracy as the one who would rightly be called democratic?

562a

ADEIMANTUS: We will.

SOCRATES: The finest constitution and the finest man remain for us to discuss: tyranny and the tyrant.

5

ADEIMANTUS: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: Come on, then; tell me, my dear comrade, how does tyranny come to exist? That it evolves from democracy, you see, is fairly clear.

ADEIMANTUS: It is clear.

SOCRATES: So, isn't the way democracy evolves from oligarchy much the same as that in which tyranny evolves from democracy?

10

b

ADEIMANTUS: How do you mean?

SOCRATES: The good they proposed for themselves, and because of which oligarchy was established, was wealth, wasn't it?

ADEIMANTUS: Yes.

5

³⁴ *Isonomia*: an important democratic value.

SOCRATES: And its insatiable desire for wealth and its neglect of other things for the sake of moneymaking was what destroyed it.

ADEIMANTUS: True.

10 SOCRATES: So, isn't democracy's insatiable desire for what it defines as the good also what destroys it?

ADEIMANTUS: What do you think it does define as the good?

c SOCRATES: Freedom. For surely, in a democratic city, that is what you would hear described as its finest possession, and as what makes it the only place worth living in for someone who is naturally free.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, you often hear that said.

5 SOCRATES: As I was about to say, then, isn't it the insatiable desire for this good and the neglect of other things that changes this constitution and prepares it to need a dictatorship?

ADEIMANTUS: How does it do that?

d SOCRATES: I suppose it is when a democratic city, athirst for freedom, happens to get bad cupbearers for its leaders and gets drunk by drinking more than it should of unmixed wine.³⁵ Then, if the rulers are not very gentle and do not provide plenty of freedom, it punishes them and accuses them of being filthy oligarchs.

5 ADEIMANTUS: Yes, that is what it does.

e SOCRATES: It showers with abuse those who obey the rulers as voluntary slaves and nonentities, but both in public and private it praises and honors rulers who are like subjects, and subjects who are like rulers. And isn't it inevitable in such a city that freedom should spread everywhere?

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

5 SOCRATES: Yes, my friend, and so it is bound to make its way into private households until finally it breeds anarchy among the very animals.

ADEIMANTUS: What do you mean by that?

563a SOCRATES: For instance, a father gets into the habit of behaving like a child and fearing his son, and the son gets into the habit of behaving like a father, feeling neither shame nor fear in front of his parents—all in order to be *free*. A resident alien feels himself equal to a citizen and a citizen to him, and a foreigner likewise.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, those sorts of things do happen.

SOCRATES: They do—and so do other little things of the same sort. A teacher in such circumstances is afraid of his students and flatters them, while the students belittle their teachers and do the same to their tutors,

³⁵ The Greeks drank their wine mixed with water.

too. In general, the young are the spitting images of their elders and compete with them in words and deeds, while the old stoop to the level of the young and are full of wit and indulgence, imitating the young for fear of being thought disagreeable and masterful. 5
b

ADEIMANTUS: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: The ultimate freedom for the majority, my friend, comes about in such a city, when males and females bought as slaves are no less free than those who bought them. Then there is the case of women in relation to men, and men to women, and the extent of their legal equality and freedom—we almost forgot to mention that! 5

ADEIMANTUS: Are we not, with Aeschylus, going to “say whatever it was came to our lips just now?”³⁶ c

SOCRATES: Certainly. At any rate, *I am* going to say it. I mean, no one who had not experienced it would believe how much freer domestic animals are here than in any other city. Bitches follow the proverb exactly and become like their mistresses. Horses and donkeys are in the habit of proceeding with complete freedom and dignity, bumping into anyone they meet on the road who does not get out of their way. And everything else is full of freedom, too. 5
d

ADEIMANTUS: It is my own dream you are telling me.³⁷ That often happens to me when I go to the country.

SOCRATES: Summing up all these things together, then, do you notice how sensitive they make the citizens’ souls, so that if anyone tries to impose the least degree of slavery, they get irritated and cannot bear it? In the end, as I am sure you are aware, they take no notice of the laws—written or unwritten—in order to avoid having any master at all. 5
e

ADEIMANTUS: I certainly am aware.

SOCRATES: This, my friend, is the fine and impetuous beginning from which tyranny seems to me to grow.

ADEIMANTUS: It is certainly impetuous. But what comes next? 5

SOCRATES: The same disease that developed in oligarchy and destroyed it also develops here—only more widespread and virulent because of the general permissiveness—and eventually enslaves democracy. In fact, excessive action in one direction usually sets up a great reaction in the opposite direction. This happens in seasons, in plants, in bodies, and particularly in constitutions. 10
564a

ADEIMANTUS: That’s probably right.

³⁶ At 562e4–5. We no longer possess the play from which this fragment comes.

³⁷ I.e., you are telling me what I already know.

SOCRATES: For extreme freedom probably cannot lead to anything but a change to extreme slavery, whether in a private individual or a city.

5 ADEIMANTUS: No, it probably can't.

SOCRATES: Tyranny probably does not evolve from any constitution other than democracy, then—the most severe and cruel slavery evolving from what I suppose is the most eminent degree of freedom.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, that's reasonable.

10 SOCRATES: But I think you were asking, not that, but rather what sort of
b disease develops both in oligarchy and democracy alike, and enslaves the latter.

ADEIMANTUS: That's true.

5 SOCRATES: Well, then, I meant that class of idle and extravagant men, with the bravest as leaders and the more cowardly as followers. We compared them to drones: the leaders to drones with stings, the followers to stingless ones.³⁸

ADEIMANTUS: Rightly so.

10 SOCRATES: These two cause problems in any constitution in which they
c arise, like phlegm and bile in the body.³⁹ And it is against them that the good doctor and lawgiver of a city must take no less advance precaution than a wise beekeeper. He should preferably prevent them from arising at all. But if they should happen to arise, he must cut them out, cells and all, as quickly as possible.

5 ADEIMANTUS: Yes, by Zeus, and as thoroughly as possible.

SOCRATES: Then let's take up the question in this way, in order to see what we want more distinctly.

ADEIMANTUS: In what way?

10 SOCRATES: Let's in our discussion divide a democratic city into three
d parts—which is also how it is actually divided. One part is surely this class of drones, which, because of the general permissiveness, grows in it no less than in an oligarchy.

ADEIMANTUS: So it does.

SOCRATES: But it is much fiercer in it than in the other.

5 ADEIMANTUS: How so?

SOCRATES: There, because it is not honored but is excluded from the ranks of the rulers, it does not get any exercise and does not become vigor-

³⁸ 552c2–e3.

³⁹ Phlegm and bile were two of the so-called humors Greek medicine thought responsible for health and disease.

ous. However, in a democracy, with few exceptions, it is surely the dominant class. Its fiercest part does all the talking and acting, while the other one settles near the speaker's platform. It buzzes and does not tolerate any dissent. As a result, this class is in charge of everything in such a constitution—with a few exceptions.⁴⁰ 10 e

ADEIMANTUS: That's right.

SOCRATES: Then, there is a second distinct class that is constantly emerging from the majority.

ADEIMANTUS: Which one? 5

SOCRATES: Surely, when everyone is trying to make money, the ones who are by nature most orderly generally become the wealthiest.

ADEIMANTUS: Probably so.

SOCRATES: Then that is where the most plentiful honey for the drones exists, I take it, and the easiest for them to extract. 10

ADEIMANTUS: How could anyone extract it from those who have very little?

SOCRATES: I suppose, then, that these rich people, as they are called, are fodder for the drones.

ADEIMANTUS: Pretty much.

SOCRATES: The people—those who work their own land, take no part in politics, and own few possessions—would be the third class. This is the largest and most powerful class in a democracy when it meets in assembly. 565a

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, it is. But it is not willing to meet often, if it does not get a share of the honey. 5

SOCRATES: So, it always does get a share—one that allows the leaders, in taking the wealth of the rich and distributing it to the people, to keep the greatest share for themselves.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, that is the sort of share they get. b

SOCRATES: Then I suppose that those whose wealth is taken away are compelled to defend themselves by speaking in the popular assembly and doing whatever else they can.

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: At which point—even if they have no appetite for revolution at all—they get accused by the others of plotting against the people and of being oligarchs. 5

⁴⁰ The exceptions in question are presumably the various offices—such as the chief military official—to which in the Athenian democracy were appointed on the basis of expertise.

ADEIMANTUS: They do.

10 SOCRATES: Finally, when they see the people—not intentionally, but
c through misapprehension and being misled by the accusers—trying to do
injustice to them, then, whether they wish it or not, they really do become
oligarchs—not from choice, though, but because the drone, by stinging
them, engenders this evil.

5 ADEIMANTUS: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: Then there are impeachments, judgments, and trials on both
sides.

ADEIMANTUS: Right.

10 SOCRATES: And don't the people always tend to set up one man as their
special leader, nurturing him and making him great?

ADEIMANTUS: Yes.

d SOCRATES: And it is clear that when a tyrant arises, the position of popu-
lar leader is the sole root from which he springs.

ADEIMANTUS: It is.

5 SOCRATES: What is the beginning, then, of the transformation from pop-
ular leader to tyrant? Isn't it clear that it happens when the popular leader
begins to behave like the character in the story told about the temple of the
Lycaean Zeus⁴¹ in Arcadia?

ADEIMANTUS: What story?

10 SOCRATES: That whoever tastes the one piece of human innards cut up
with those of all the other sacrificial victims inevitably becomes a wolf.
e Haven't you heard that story?

ADEIMANTUS: I have.

5 SOCRATES: Isn't it the same, then, with a popular leader? Once he really
takes over a docile mob, he does not restrain himself from shedding a fellow
citizen's blood. But by leveling the usual false charges and bringing people
into court, he commits murder. And by blotting out a man's life, his impi-
ous tongue and lips taste kindred blood. Then he banishes and kills and
566a drops hints about the cancellation of debts and the redistribution of land.
And after that, isn't such a man inevitably fated either to be killed by his
enemies or to be a tyrant, transformed from a man into a wolf?

5 ADEIMANTUS: Yes. That is the inevitable outcome.

SOCRATES: He is the one, then, who stirs up faction against the rich.

ADEIMANTUS: He is.

⁴¹ Zeus the wolf-god.

SOCRATES: And if he happens to be exiled but, despite his enemies, manages to return, doesn't he come back as a full-fledged tyrant?⁴² 10

ADEIMANTUS: Obviously.

SOCRATES: And if they are unable to expel him or put him to death by accusing him before the city, they plot a violent death for him by covert means. b

ADEIMANTUS: That's what tends to happen, anyway.

SOCRATES: And everyone who has reached this stage soon discovers the famous tyrannical request—to ask the people to give him a bodyguard to keep their popular leader safe for them. 5

ADEIMANTUS: Right.

SOCRATES: And the people give it to him, I suppose, fearing for his safety but confident of their own. 10

ADEIMANTUS: Right. c

SOCRATES: So, when a wealthy man sees this and is charged with being an enemy of the people because of his wealth, then, comrade, in the words of the oracle to Croesus, he “flees without delay to the banks of the many-pebbled Hermus, and is not ashamed at all of his cowardice.”⁴³ 5

ADEIMANTUS: He would certainly never get a second chance to be ashamed!

SOCRATES: If he is caught, I would imagine he is put to death.

ADEIMANTUS: Inevitably.

SOCRATES: As for this popular leader of ours, he clearly does not lie on the ground “mighty in his might,”⁴⁴ but, having brought down all those others, he stands in the chariot of the city as a complete tyrant instead of a popular leader. d

ADEIMANTUS: That's for sure.

SOCRATES: Shall we next describe the happiness of this man and of the city in which such a creature arises? 5

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, let's.

SOCRATES: To start with, in the early days of his reign, won't he greet everyone he meets with a smile, deny he is a tyrant, promise all sorts of

⁴² Plato seems to be alluding to the tyrant Peisistratus. In 560 BCE, Peisistratus made himself tyrant with the help of a bodyguard granted to him by the Athenian people. After five years, he was expelled. Eventually he returned to Athens and used mercenaries to establish himself firmly as tyrant. He died in 527. See Herodotus 1.59–64.

⁴³ The story of the Delphic oracle to Croesus is found in Herodotus 1.55.

⁴⁴ See *Iliad* 16.776.

e things in private and in public, free the people from debt, redistribute the land to them and to his followers, and pretend to be gracious and gentle to all?

5 ADEIMANTUS: Inevitably.

SOCRATES: But once he has dealt with his exiled enemies by making peace with some and destroying others, and all is calm on that front, his primary concern, I imagine, is to be constantly stirring up some war or other, so that the people will need a leader.

10 ADEIMANTUS: Very likely.

567a SOCRATES: And also, wouldn't you say, so that impoverished by war taxes, they will be forced to concentrate on their daily needs and be less likely to plot against him?

ADEIMANTUS: Clearly.

5 SOCRATES: And in addition, I suppose, so that if there are some free-thinking people he suspects of rejecting his rule, he can find pretexts for putting them at the mercy of the enemy and destroying them? For all these reasons, isn't a tyrant bound to be always stirring up war?

ADEIMANTUS: He is.

10 SOCRATES: Don't all these actions tend to make him more hateful to the
b citizens?

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

5 SOCRATES: And don't some of those who helped establish his tyranny and hold positions of power within it, the ones who are bravest, speak freely to him and to each other, criticizing what is happening?

ADEIMANTUS: Probably.

10 SOCRATES: Then the tyrant will have to do away with all of them if he intends to rule, until he is left with no friend or enemy who is worth anything at all.

ADEIMANTUS: Obviously.

c SOCRATES: He will have to keep a sharp lookout, then, for anyone who is brave, magnanimous, wise, or rich. He is so happy, you see, that he is forced, whether he wants to or not, to be their enemy and plot against all of them until he has purged the city.

ADEIMANTUS: A fine purge that is!

5 SOCRATES: Yes. The opposite of the one doctors perform on our bodies. They draw off the worst and leave the best, whereas he does just the opposite!

ADEIMANTUS: Yet that's what he has to do, it seems, if he is to rule.

SOCRATES: It is a blessedly happy necessity he is bound by, then, which requires him to live with inferior masses even though hated by them, or not live at all! d

ADEIMANTUS: It is.

SOCRATES: And the more he makes the citizens hate him by doing those things, the larger and more trustworthy a bodyguard he will need, won't he? 5

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: And who will these trustworthy people be? And from where will he get them?

ADEIMANTUS: Lots of them will come swarming of their own accord, if he pays them. 10

SOCRATES: Drones again, by the dog!⁴⁵ That is what I think you are talking about. Foreign, multifarious ones! e

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, you are right.

SOCRATES: What about the domestic ones? Wouldn't he be willing to deprive citizens of their slaves somehow, set them free, and enlist them in his bodyguard? 5

ADEIMANTUS: He certainly would, since they are the ones he can trust the most.

SOCRATES: What a blessedly happy thing this tyrant business is on your view, if these are the sorts of friends and trusted men he must employ after destroying his former ones! 568a

ADEIMANTUS: Nonetheless, they are the sorts he does employ.

SOCRATES: And these friends and new citizens admire and associate with him, whereas the good ones hate and avoid him? 5

ADEIMANTUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: It is no wonder, then, that tragedy seems to be something wholly wise, or that Euripides is outstanding in it.

ADEIMANTUS: Why is that? 10

SOCRATES: Because, among other things, he expressed the following shrewd thought: "tyrants are wise by associating with the wise." He meant evidently that these associates of the tyrant are the wise ones.⁴⁶ b

⁴⁵ See 399e5 note.

⁴⁶ The fragment is from an unknown play. Euripides meant that tyrants gain wisdom from the wise people who, as Simonides said, "knock at the doors of the rich" (489b7–8). Plato twists his words to mean that the drones and slaves, who are the tyrant's last resort, are wise, since they associate with him.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes. And he also praises tyranny as godlike, and lots of other things besides—and the other poets do, too.

5 SOCRATES: Then surely, since the tragic poets are so wise, they will forgive us and those with constitutions like ours if we do not admit them into our city, since they hymn the praises of tyranny.

c ADEIMANTUS: For my part, I think they will forgive us—the more refined of them, anyway.

5 SOCRATES: They can go around to all the other cities instead, I suppose, drawing large crowds and hiring actors with fine, loud, persuasive voices, and lead their constitutions to become tyrannies and democracies.

ADEIMANTUS: Yes, indeed.

d SOCRATES: What's more, they are paid and honored for it, primarily—as one might expect—by tyrants and secondly by democracy. But the higher they go on the ascending scale of constitutions, the more their honor diminishes, as if unable to proceed for lack of breath.

ADEIMANTUS: Absolutely.

5 SOCRATES: But all that is a digression. Let's return to our tyrant's camp—the one that is beautiful, populous, complex, and never the same—and ask how he is going to maintain it.

ADEIMANTUS: If there are sacred treasuries in the city, he will obviously use them for as long as they last, as well as the property of those he has destroyed, so the taxes he will require from the people will be smaller.

e SOCRATES: What about when these resources give out?

ADEIMANTUS: Clearly, his father's estate will have to support him, his drinking companions, and his boyfriends and girlfriends, too.

5 SOCRATES: I understand. You mean the people who fathered the tyrant will have to support him and his friends.

ADEIMANTUS: They will have no choice.

569a SOCRATES: What if the people get irritated and say it is not just for a grown-up son to be supported by his father? On the contrary, the father should be supported by his son. They did not father him and establish him in power, they say, so that, when he had become strong, they would be enslaved to their own slave and have to support him, his slaves, and other assorted rabble as well; but so that, with him as their popular leader, they would get free from the rule of the rich and the so-called fine and good people in the city. At that point, they order him and his friends to leave the city, as a father might drive a son and his troublesome drinking companions from his house. What do you think would happen then?

ADEIMANTUS: Then, by Zeus, the people will soon learn what kind of creature they have fathered, welcomed, and made strong, and that it is a case of the weaker trying to drive out the stronger.

b

SOCRATES: What do you mean? Will the tyrant dare to use force against his father or hit him if he does not obey?

ADEIMANTUS: Yes—once he has taken away his weapons.

5

SOCRATES: A tyrant is a parricide as you describe him, then, and a harsh nurse of old age; and we do now seem to have an acknowledged tyranny. And so the people, by trying to avoid the proverbial frying pan of enslavement to free men, have fallen into the fire of having slaves as their masters; and, in exchange for the excessive and inappropriate freedom they had before, have put upon themselves the harshest and most bitter slavery to slaves.

c

ADEIMANTUS: That's exactly what happens.

5

SOCRATES: Well, then, wouldn't we be justified in saying that we have adequately described how tyranny evolves from democracy, and what it is like once it has come to exist?

ADEIMANTUS: We would. Our description was entirely adequate.