

Most likely a certain kind of dream

But when we had a daemonic revelation by certain sure signs* that Lysis was dead, and received reliable information from persons who knew he had lived and been cared for by your family, Polymnis, and how he had died happy, a rich man tended in his old age by a poor household and enrolled as father to your sons, then I was sent, one young man as the representative of my many seniors, who offer the money they have to you who have none, and desire in return to have your favour and friendship. Lysis lies well at rest, and this is your doing. But better in his sight even than his fair tomb is the repayment of his friend's kindness by his other friends and brethren.'

[14] During the stranger's speech, my father wept much at the thought of Lysis. My brother smiled in his usual way, and said: 'What do we do, Caphisias? Do we give up our poverty for wealth and say nothing?' 'No, indeed,' I answered, 'poverty is our "good and loving nurse of youth".¹ Defend her. It's for you to speak.'

'Well, father,' said Epaminondas, 'I was afraid that the family might be susceptible to the lure of money for one reason only—Caphisias' person, and his need of fine clothes to look nice for all his lovers, and of generous rations to make him fit for the gymnasium and his wrestling-exercises. But since he doesn't choose to abandon the family poverty, or let its colours fade, as it were, but prides himself, boy as he is, on a simple life, and is happy with what we have, what useful way of disposing of wealth could we find?

Theanor's offer of a gift is sincere and well motivated; study the reasons Epaminondas gives for rejecting it not only for his rationale, but, also, for the underlying conception of morality that it implies.

'The other day,' said Epaminondas, 'when Jason, Prince of Thessaly, sent a large sum in gold to us, and begged us to

accept it, I was thought rude and ungracious for replying that he was the aggressor, because, being a lover of absolute power, he was using his money to tempt a private citizen in a free and independent state. Your interest, sir, I accept and greatly appreciate. It is noble, and worthy of a philosopher. But you bring medicine to friends who are not ill. If you had heard we were at war, and had sailed to our aid with weapons and armour, but then found peace and friendship, you would not have thought it right to offer the weapons or leave them with us, because we should not now need them. It is so now. You have come as an ally to fight poverty, as though we were hard pressed by her. But poverty is easy for us to bear. She is a dear member of the family. We need no money to fight one who causes us no trouble. Tell your friends at home that they use their wealth to noble ends, and that they have friends here who use poverty also to noble ends. Lysis himself paid for our care of him in life and in his burial in many ways, and not least by teaching us not to complain of poverty.'