

ARCHEDEMUS

We are pretty well acquainted with the state of Thebes prior to the return of the exiles. [...who will join the revolt.]

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Theocritus deems action better than education and criticizes Epaminondas as overly intellectual. Test this opinion against what happens during the discussion about Socrates' daemon...

So what remains for you to tell us is the actual return of our friends and the overthrow of the tyrants.

[2]

CAPHISIAS

Well, Archedemus, in those days all of us who were involved in the plot were in the habit of meeting in Simmias' house, where he was recovering from an injury to his leg. We would make our necessary contacts with one another there, at the same time openly devoting the time to philosophical discussion. We often

brought Archias and Leontiadas along, to allay suspicions.

Now, on the day when the exiles were due to arrive secretly at the wall when darkness fell, a messenger sent by Pherenicus arrived from Athens. None of us knew him except Charon. He reported that the twelve youngest of the exiles were hunting with hounds on Cithaeron, and hoped to arrive in the evening: he himself, he said, had been sent to give advance warning and to find out who was to provide a safe house for them when they arrived, so that they could go straight there. While we were still puzzling over this, and debating what to do, Charon offered his own house. The messenger thereupon decided to go straight back to the exiles.

[3] At this, Theocritus the prophet seized me by the hand, and gazed at Charon as he was leaving. 'Caphisias,' he said, 'just look at that man. He is no philosopher, and he has no special education like your brother Epaminondas, but he is naturally guided by the law to actions of honour, and volunteers to run great risks for his country. Yet Epaminondas, who thinks himself superior to any Boeotian because he has been educated for virtue, shows no keenness or enthusiasm . . . But what better time is he going to find to make use of his talents and accomplishments?'

'My dear enthusiast,' I replied, 'you and I are doing what we decided to do, and Epaminondas, being unable to persuade us to give it up, as he thinks we should, is very naturally resisting efforts to involve him in something for which he is not suited and which he does not approve. It wouldn't be sensible (would it?) to compel a doctor to operate or cauterize, if he promises to cure the illness without knife or fire.'

<Theocritus agreed>.

'Then we had best leave him alone,' I continued, 'since he undertakes not to put any citizen to death without due trial