

## A Map of Crito (KPITΩN)

- 43a–44b After the trial, Socrates’s (wealthy; see *Apology* 38b) friend Crito visits him in prison. He brings news of his imminent execution.
- 44b–46a Crito tries to persuade Socrates to escape. *Reason 1.* The common people (οἱ πολλοί, hoi polloi) will think Crito let Socrates down, so the friends’ reputation will be damaged, with bad individual consequences. *Reason 2.* Money is not an issue. *Reason 3.* Socrates would be welcome abroad. *Reason 4.* Socrates complies with his enemies; he throws away his life. *Reason 5.* Socrates irresponsibly betrays his duty to his sons. *Reason 6.* Socrates is a coward.
- 46b–50a Socrates replies. To *Reason 1:* not all opinions have the same value. We should listen to the experts and the wise: the qualified. What matters in the present predicament is the expert on justice, for the question is whether it would be just for Socrates to abscond. Socrates reminds Crito that what is relevant is not merely a life, but a good life, or a well-lived life (τὸ εὖ ζῆν, to eu zên); and the good life is the just life. Socrates also reminds Crito of the long-held belief that one should never (willingly or intentionally) do an injustice (οὐδαμῶς δεῖ ἀδικεῖν, oudamôs dei adikein), and this entails that one should never do an injustice *even* if one is wronged, or somehow provoked (see Handout 6). Hence, the ‘established hypothesis’: non-retaliation. Doing injustice is doing harm and injury. Likewise for agreements or commitments (τις ὁμολογήσῃ, tis homologêsê): if they are just, one ought to fulfil them. These ideas are echoed, e.g., in the *Gorgias* (508c ff.), Socrates identifies doing injustice as the biggest evil; and in the *Republic* (335–6), he argues that a moral or just person does not harm anyone.
- 50a–51c Crito seems confused: why should Socrates’s escape do unjust (or unjustifiable) harm to the city? To clarify, The Laws of Athens ‘speak’. The first argument: running away undermines the authority of the rule of law, and hence the state itself. The state demands (almost) total obedience. Harming the state is unholy (a sin).
- 51c–53a The second argument: breaking the contract (συνθήκη, synthêkê) or agreement (ὁμολογία, homologia) with the state. The covenant with the state cannot be broken unilaterally. If it could be, this would (again) jeopardise the political system.
- 53a–54e The third series of arguments: fleeing is disgraceful, and jeopardises his friends and his children’s education. The response to Crito’s initial reasons. His friends’ property would be confiscated. As a law-breaker, Socrates could only live in ill-governed states that probably would not allow ‘the examined life’. (How could he discuss *justice* after escaping?) His sons would be foreigners. Finally, The Laws conclude: Socrates has been wronged not by them (but by men); if he left, he would retaliate, and this would be inconsistent with his ethical beliefs.