

# DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

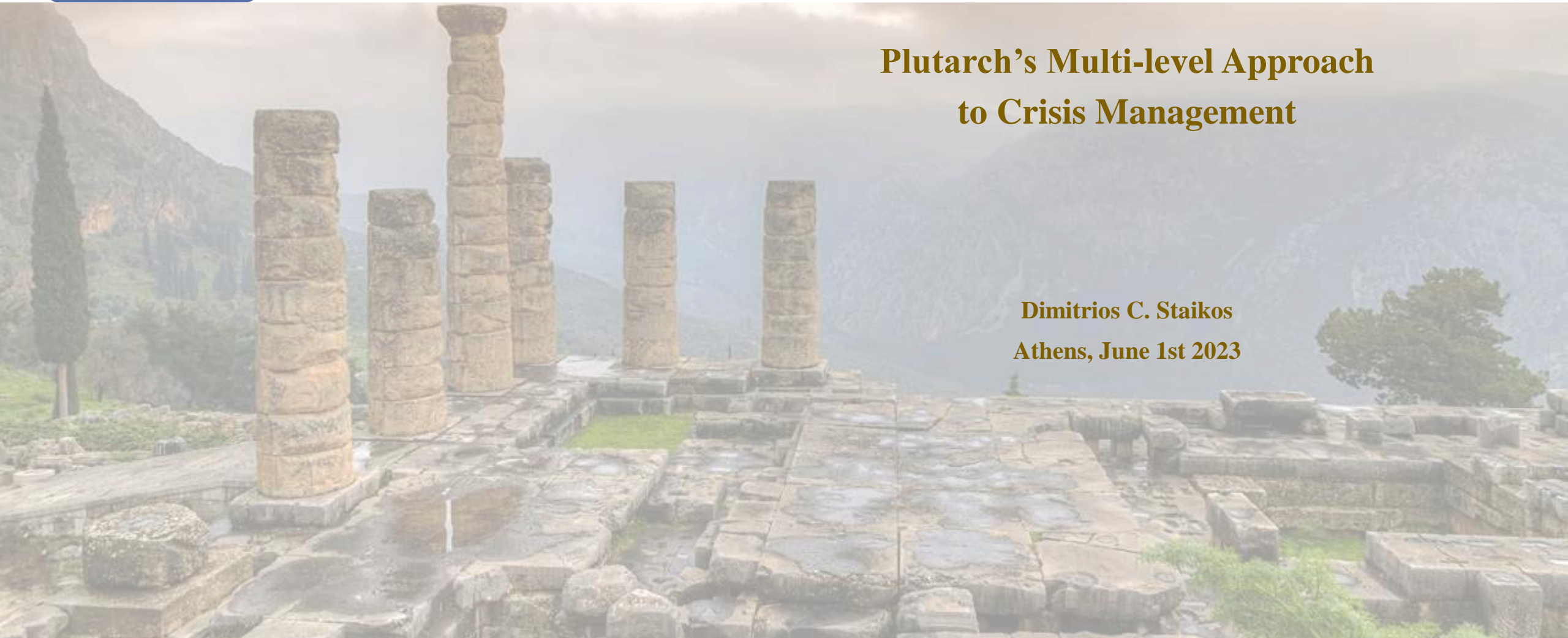
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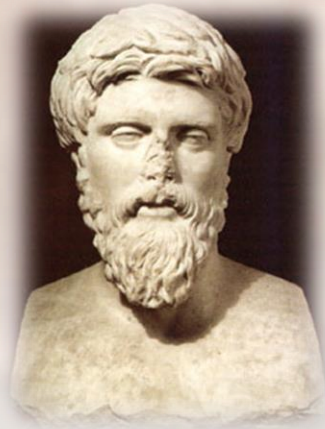
NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

## **Plutarch's Multi-level Approach to Crisis Management**

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# Life & Works of Plutarch

- AD 46 - 120 - Chaeronea, Boeotia
- Studied philosophy, mathematics, medicine & rhetoric in Athens
- Statesman (magistrate) at Chaeronea
- Founder of his own school of philosophy at Chaeronea
- Consul to the Roman Emperor
- Apollo's Priest at the Delphic Oracle
- Writings:
  - Parallel Lives
  - Moralia
- Influenced by Plato (Middle Platonist), Aristotle, Thucydides



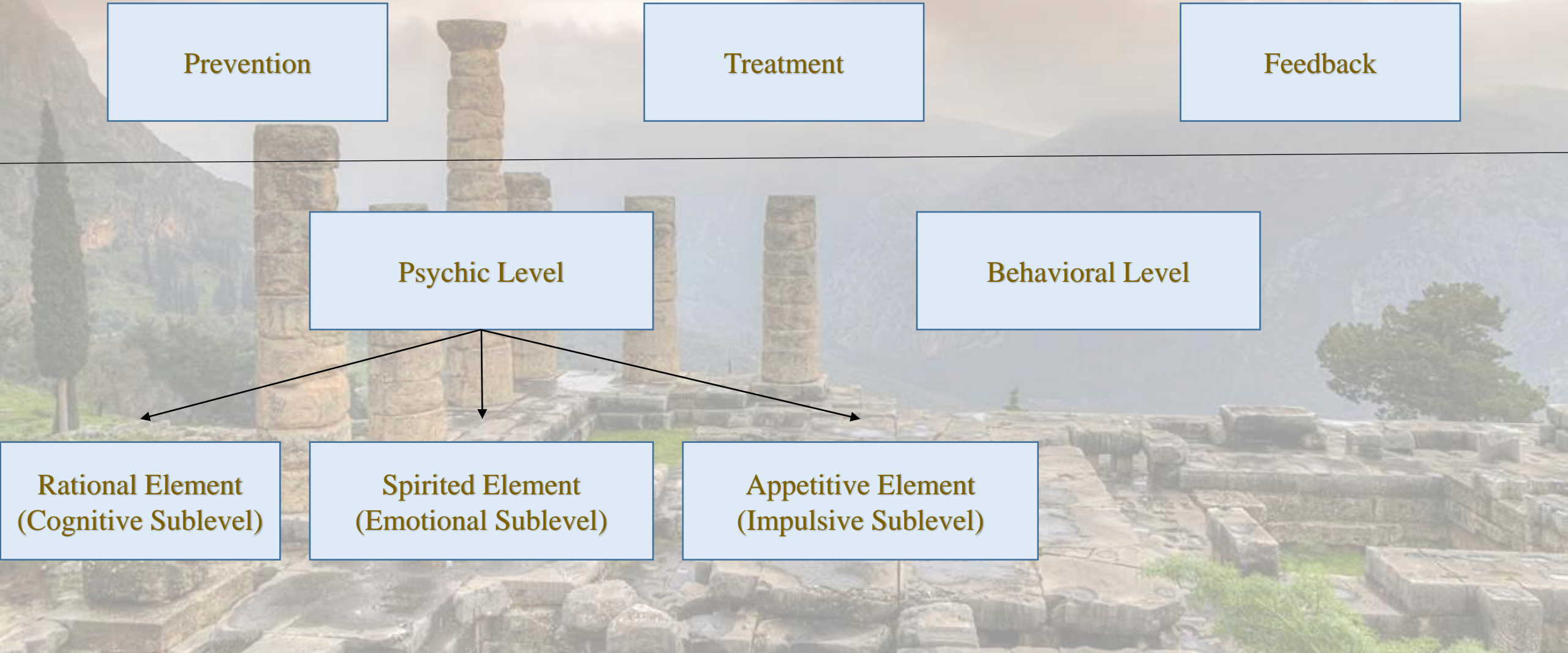
# Plutarch's Selected Works

The background of the slide is a photograph of ancient stone ruins, likely a temple or public building, featuring several tall, weathered columns. The ruins are set against a backdrop of misty, mountainous terrain under a cloudy sky. The overall tone is historical and atmospheric.

- **Precepts of Statecraft**
- **To the Uneducated Ruler**
- **That a Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power**

# Levels of Plutarchian Crisis Management

**Bipartite level distinction:**



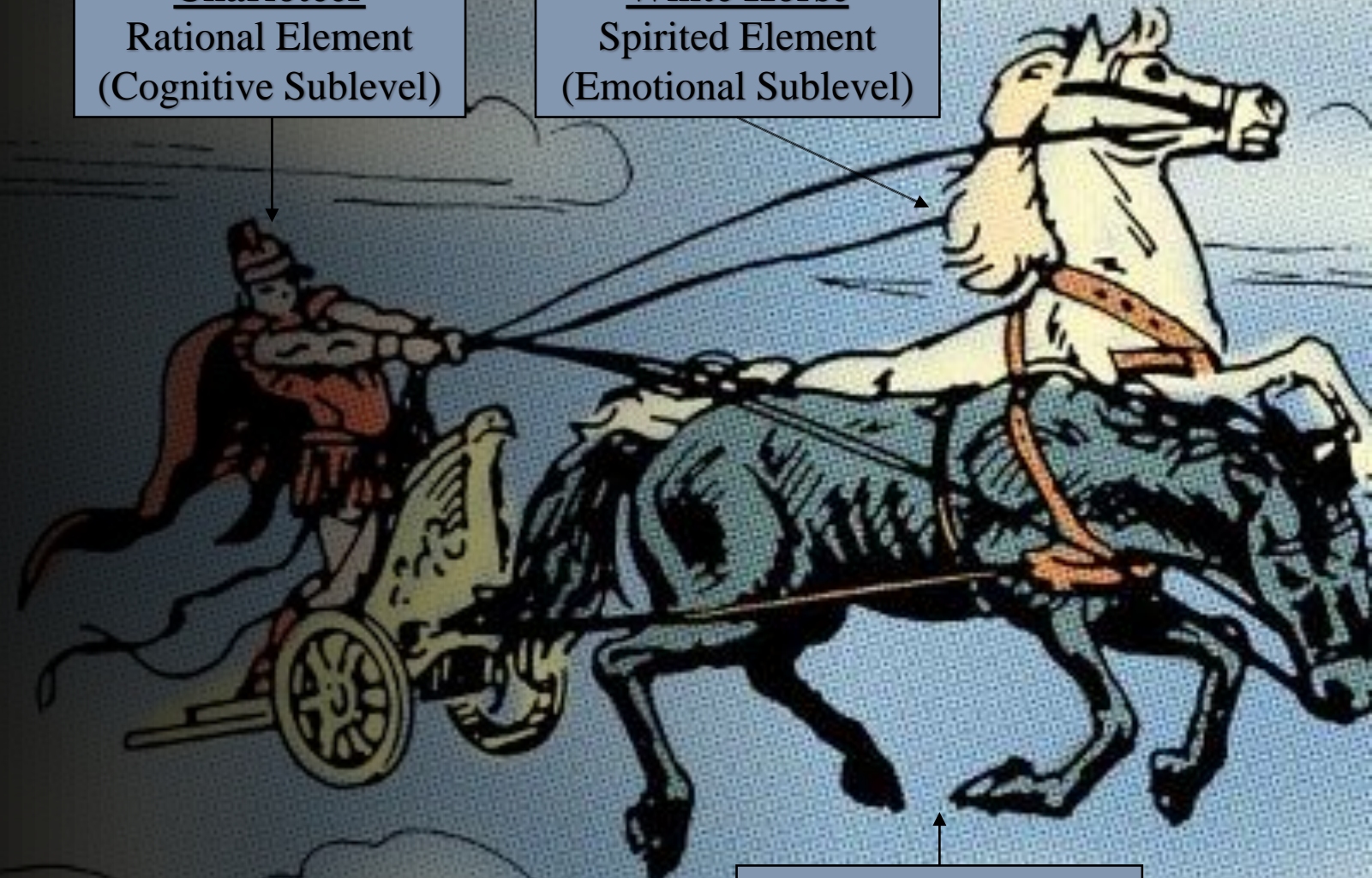


# Plato's Allegory of the Chariot about Psyche (Phaedrus)

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**Charioteer**  
Rational Element  
(Cognitive Sublevel)

**White Horse**  
Spirited Element  
(Emotional Sublevel)



**Black Horse**  
Appetitive Element  
(Impulsive Sublevel)



# Plutarchian Crisis Management Objectives

The background of the slide features a scenic view of ancient stone ruins, likely the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. Several tall, weathered stone columns stand amidst a field of rubble and stone blocks. The ruins are set against a backdrop of misty, mountainous terrain under a cloudy sky.

- **Prevention, treatment & feedback on crises:**

- **Not to break out, or**

- **To cease the soonest possible, or**

- **Not to expand,**

- **To mitigate their consequences,**

- **To get over them**

# Crises' Prevention at the Psychic Level

- “*But the best thing is to see to it in advance that factional discord shall never arise among them and to regard this as the greatest and noblest function of what may be called the art of statesmanship*” (Precepts of Statecraft, 824C)
- Inextricable linkage between the psychic sublevels: “... corrupt souls cannot contain power, but leak out in acts of desire, anger, arrogance, and ignorance of the good and beautiful” (To an Uneducated Ruler, 782F)

Appetitive Element  
(Impulsive Sublevel)

Spirited Element  
(Emotional Sublevel)

Rational Element  
(Cognitive Sublevel)



# Crises' Prevention at the Cognitive Sublevel

- Rational part of the soul (cognitive sublevel):
  - Intellectualism (rule of reason) - knowledge - self-command: “... *uneducated generals and rulers are often rocked and capsized by the ignorance within them... the sovereign must first gain command of himself... then make his subjects fit his pattern. For one who is falling cannot hold others up... nor can he rule who is under no rule*” (To an Uneducated Ruler, 780B)
  - General education - learning: “... *Fortune by such things as riches, reputations, or offices exalts uneducated and uncultured men a little and then, as soon as they have risen high, gives them a conspicuous fall*” (To an Uneducated Ruler, 782E)
  - Philosophers as leaders' advisors: “... *he (the philosopher) who removes evil from the character of a ruler, or directs his mind towards what is right, philosophizes, as it were, in the public interest and corrects the general power by which all are governed*” (That a Philosopher Ought to..., 778F)



# Crises' Prevention at the Emotional Sublevel



- Spirited part of the soul (emotional sublevel):
  - Sense of justice: *“Who, then, shall rule the ruler?... not law written outside him in books or on wooden tablets or the like, but reason endowed with life within him, always abiding with him and watching over him and never leaving his soul without its leadership.... Now justice is the aim and end of law, but law is the work of the ruler...”* (To an Uneducated Ruler, 780 C-E)
  - Empathy: *“For the good man is... showing his solicitude and friendliness, not only by acts of service, but also by sharing the griefs of those who fail and the joys of those who succeed”* (Precepts of Statecraft, 823A)

# Crises' Prevention at the Impulsive Sublevel



- Appetitive part of the soul (impulsive sublevel):
  - *“There is indeed great danger that he who can do what he wishes may wish what he ought not to do” (To an Uneducated Ruler, 782C)*
  - Avarice aversion: *“... strip off all love of wealth and of money, as you would iron full of rust and a disease of the soul...” (Precepts of Statecraft, 819E)*
  - Ambition mitigation: *“But ambition, although it is a more pretentious word than covetousness, is no less pernicious in the State... so let us moderate our ambition, saying that we have in ourselves honor, a gold uncorrupted, undefiled, and unpolluted by envy and fault-finding...” (Precepts of Statecraft, 819F-820A)*



# Crises' Prevention at the Behavioral Level



- Composure, sobriety & consistency: “... *Pericles... always showed a composed countenance... and trod only one path—that which led to the assembly and the senate*” (Precepts of Statecraft, 800C)
- Adaptability - flexibility:
  - “... *the statesman... must accommodate himself to the people’s character as he finds it and make that the object of his efforts...*” (Precepts of Statecraft, 799C)
  - “*You (the statesman) should arrange your cloak more carefully...*” (Precepts of Statecraft, 813E)
- Show-off avoidance: “*And he is in no way... conspicuous for invidious exhibitions of luxury and extravagance; but he is on an equal level with others in his clothing and daily life... as one who wishes to live like the masses and be friendly with them*” (Precepts of Statecraft, 823B)

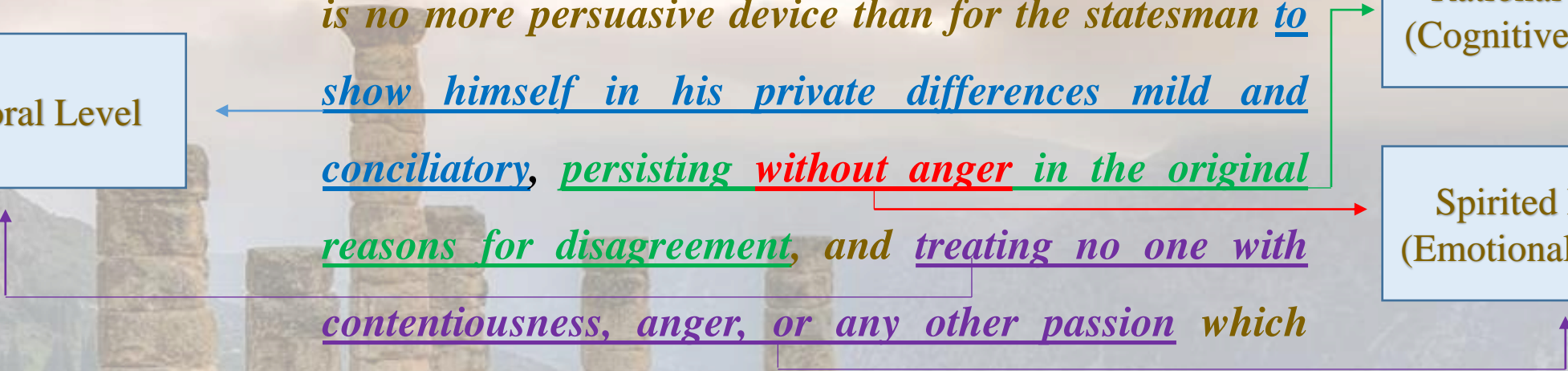
# Crises' Treatment

- Constant intertwining of the various levels: “... *there is no more persuasive device than for the statesman to show himself in his private differences mild and conciliatory, persisting without anger in the original reasons for disagreement, and treating no one with contentiousness, anger, or any other passion which injects harshness and bitterness into unavoidable disputes... rivalries affecting public interests, if private enmities are done away with, become of slight importance and do no serious or incurable harm”  
(Precepts of Statecraft, 825E-F)*

Behavioral Level

Rational Element  
(Cognitive Sublevel)

Spirited Element  
(Emotional Sublevel)





# Crises' Treatment at the Psychic Level

- **Boldness - taking initiatives & assuming responsibilities:**
  - *“... he (the statesman) must not create storms himself, and yet he must not desert the State when storms fall upon it; he must not stir up the State and make it reel perilously, but when it is reeling and in danger, he must come to its assistance and employ his expressive boldness as a sacred anchor heaved over in the greatest perils” (Precepts of Statecraft, 815C-D)*
  - *“... nor cowering in fear, the man who is really a statesman, nor would you see him throwing blame upon others and putting himself out of danger... but, even though he had no part in the wrongdoing of the people, taking dangers upon himself in their behalf” (Precepts of Statecraft, 815D)*

# Crises' Treatment at the Behavioral Level



- On-site treatment: *“... Therefore the statesman should not despise such offences as may, like diseases in a person, spread quickly, but he should take hold of them, suppress them, and cure them”* (Precepts of Statecraft, 825D)
- Vigor - idleness aversion: *“Yet certainly it is not fitting in time of disorder to sit without feeling or grief, singing the praises of your own impassiveness and of the inactive and blessed life...”* (Precepts of Statecraft, 824B)
- Promotion of a participatory culture: *“... that great man (Solon) prescribed that in case of factional disorder whoever joined neither faction (remained idle & neutral) should be deprived of civic rights”* (Precepts of Statecraft, 823F)



# Feedback on Crises



- Indemnification through restrained amenities:  
*“For just as a physician, after drawing off a great deal of infected blood, supplies a little harmless nourishment, so the statesman, after doing away with something big which was discreditable or harmful, appeases the spirit of discontent and fault-finding by some slight and kindly act of favor” (Precepts of Statecraft, 818E)*
- Relocation of focus from a crisis’ consequences to beneficial - compensating activities: *“It is also expedient to divert the people’s interest to other useful things...” (Precepts of Statecraft, 818E)*

# References

- **Translations of Plutarch's *Precepts of Statecraft, To an Uneducated Ruler* and *That a Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power* were sourced from:**
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  - **Plutarch (2018). *Precepts of Statecraft*. Translated by Panagiotis Vardakas. Thessaloniki; Zitros Publications**
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<http://pandemos.panteion.gr/index.php?op=record&type=creator&q=%CE%A3%CF%84%CE%AC%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%82,%20%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%AE%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%82%20%CE%9A.&page=1&scope=&lang=el&pid=iid:21264> )



**Thank you for your attention!!!**

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