3.1

The course of philosophy was changed by three organizing questions:

Why did philosophy move to Athens, and what did the Sophists teach?

Who was Socrates, and how did he question people?

Why did Athens put him to death in 399 BCE?

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3.2

Persuasion = A Path to Power

Three Pillars of Athenian Power:

1) A formidable Navy	
2) An expansive Empire	
3) A Radical Democracy.	

Every citizen could speak in the assembly and serve on juries.

Outcomes:
Athens emerges rich and proud.

490 BCE 480 BCE 479 BCE

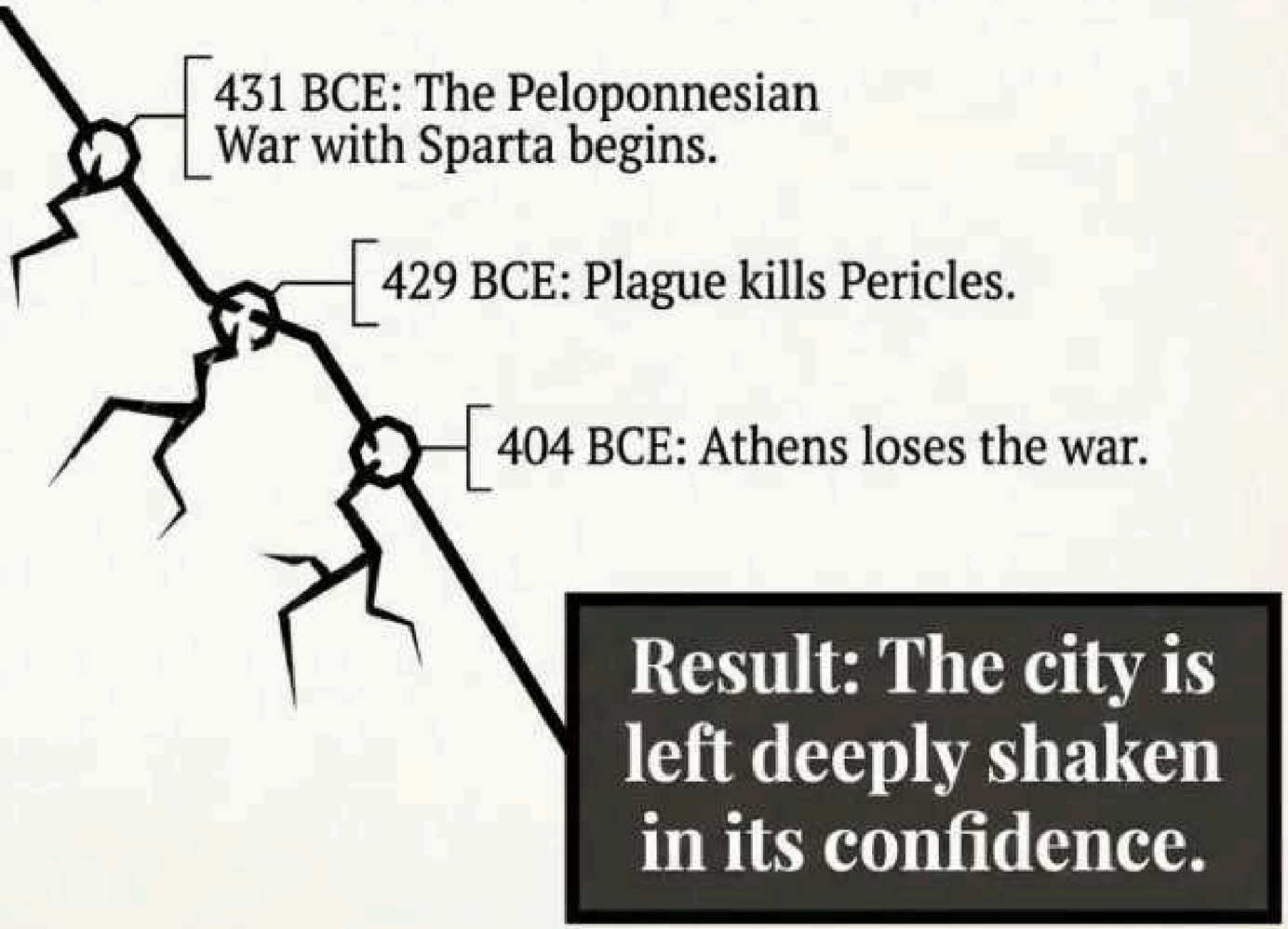
Greek cities defeat Persian invasions (Marathon, Salamis, Plataea).

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3.3

The Periclean Golden Age

Roughly thirty years of splendor led by statesman Pericles (marked by the Parthenon, tragedy, and history).



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3.4

The Sophists

(Traveling teachers in Athens who charged fees).

Original Meaning

A wise or skilled person. They taught rhetoric (the art of persuasive speech) and general skills for success in public life.

Later Meaning

Someone who uses clever arguments to win. This semantic shift was driven largely by Plato's subsequent criticisms.

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3.5

Figure: Protagoras of Abdera (c. 490–420 BCE), the most famous Sophist.

"Man is the measure of all things, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not."

↓

Interpretive Node (Plato's Take)

Subjective truth—what seems true to each person is true for that person.

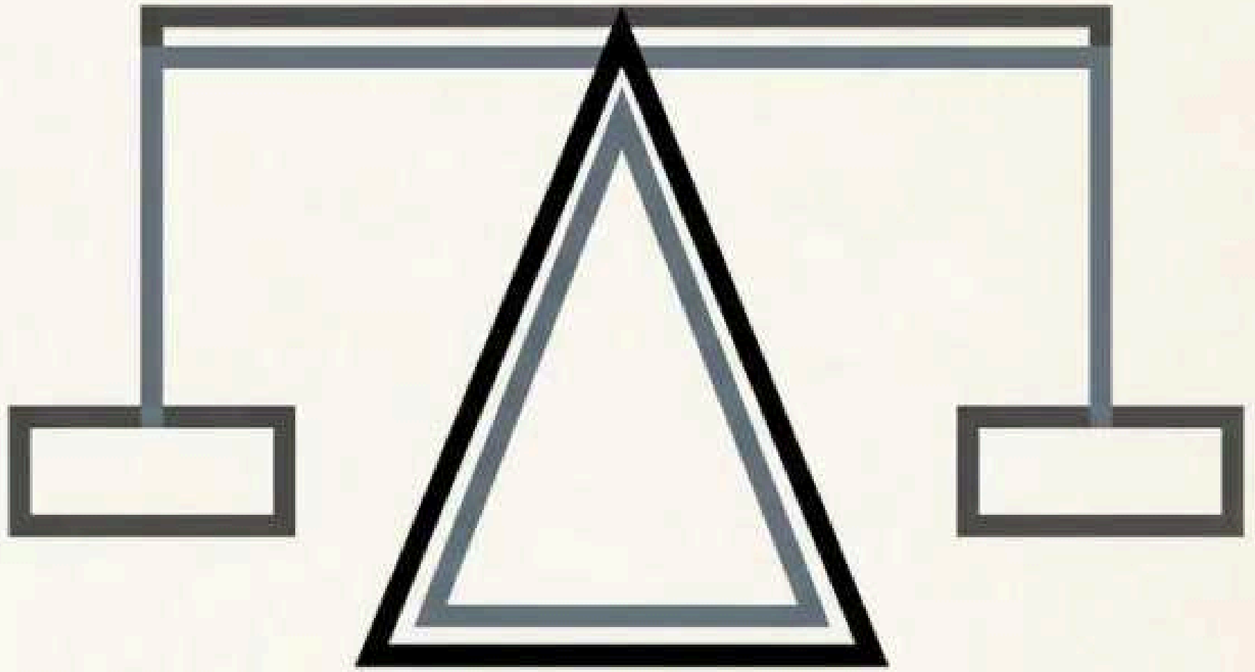
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3.6

Epistemological Limit: Agnosticism on the Gods.

Protagoras could not say whether gods exist or not.

Blocking Factors to Knowledge:
1) The obscurity of the subject.
2) The shortness of human life.



The Core Method: On every question, there are two opposed arguments. Protagoras explicitly taught his students how to build and argue both sides equally.

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3.7

Figure: Gorgias of Leontini, Sicily (c. 485–380 BCE), master of rhetoric.

Work: *On What Is Not* (widely taken as a parody of Parmenides).

The Nihilistic Proof:

Step 1: Nothing exists.

Step 2: If anything did exist, it could not be known.

Step 3: If it could be known, it could not be communicated.

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3.8 The Fundamental Contrast

Physis (Nature)	*Nomos* (Convention)
Is there a standard in nature?	Laws and customs differ from city to city. Are they merely conventions?

Provocation Callout: In Plato's *Republic*, the Sophist Thrasymachus claims that justice is simply ***the advantage of the stronger***.

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3.9

The Historiographical Dispute: Were they relativists or simply teachers? (Known mainly through the writings of their opponents).

The Platonic View

Merchants of apparent wisdom.

The Actual Contribution

- Raised real, enduring questions regarding law, language, and education.

- Made the study of human affairs a formal part of philosophy for the first time.

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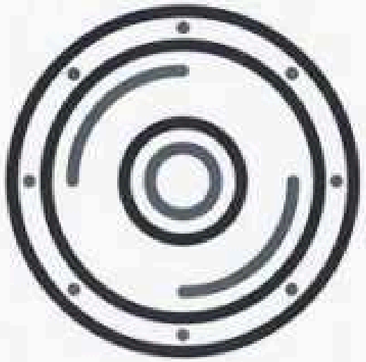






Figure: Socrates (c. 470–399 BCE).

Origins:

Son of a stonemason and a midwife.

Military Service:

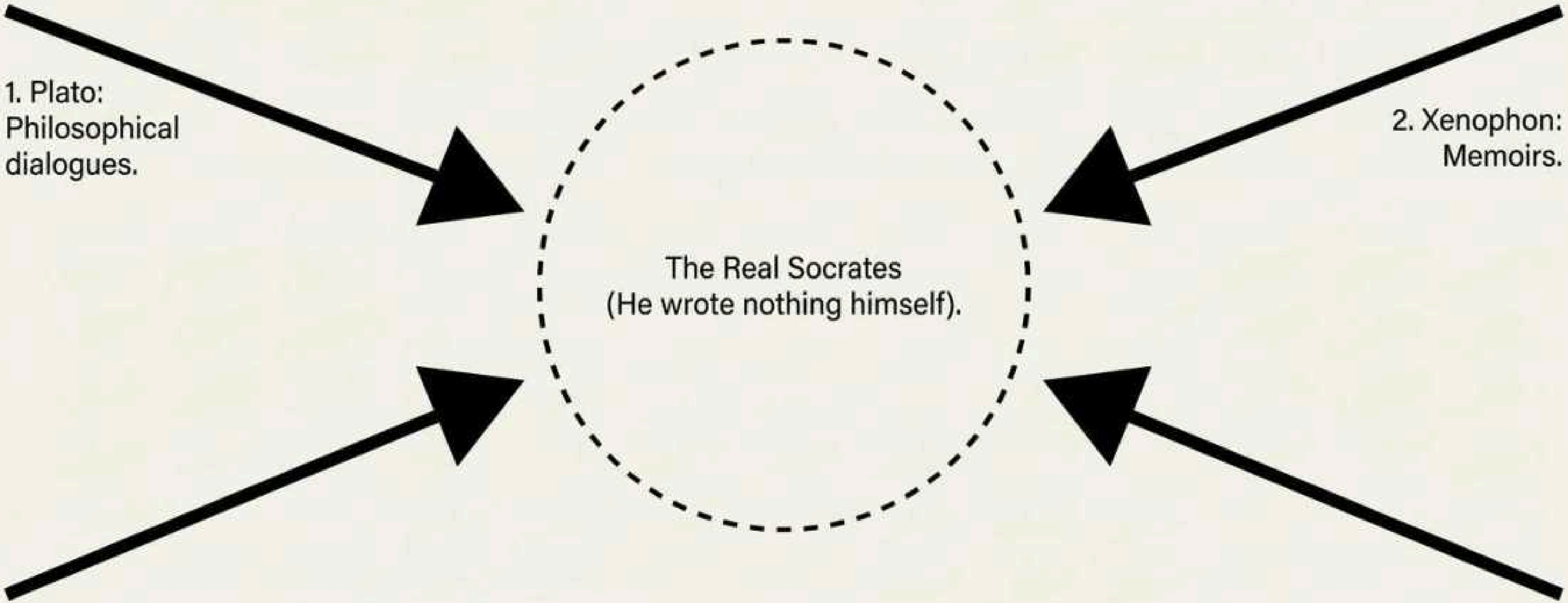
Served as a heavy infantryman at the battles of Potidaea, Delium, and Amphipolis.

Public Persona in Athens:

– Known for plain dress and bare feet.
– Engaged in endless conversations in the marketplace.
– Claimed to be poor and uniquely did not take fees for teaching.

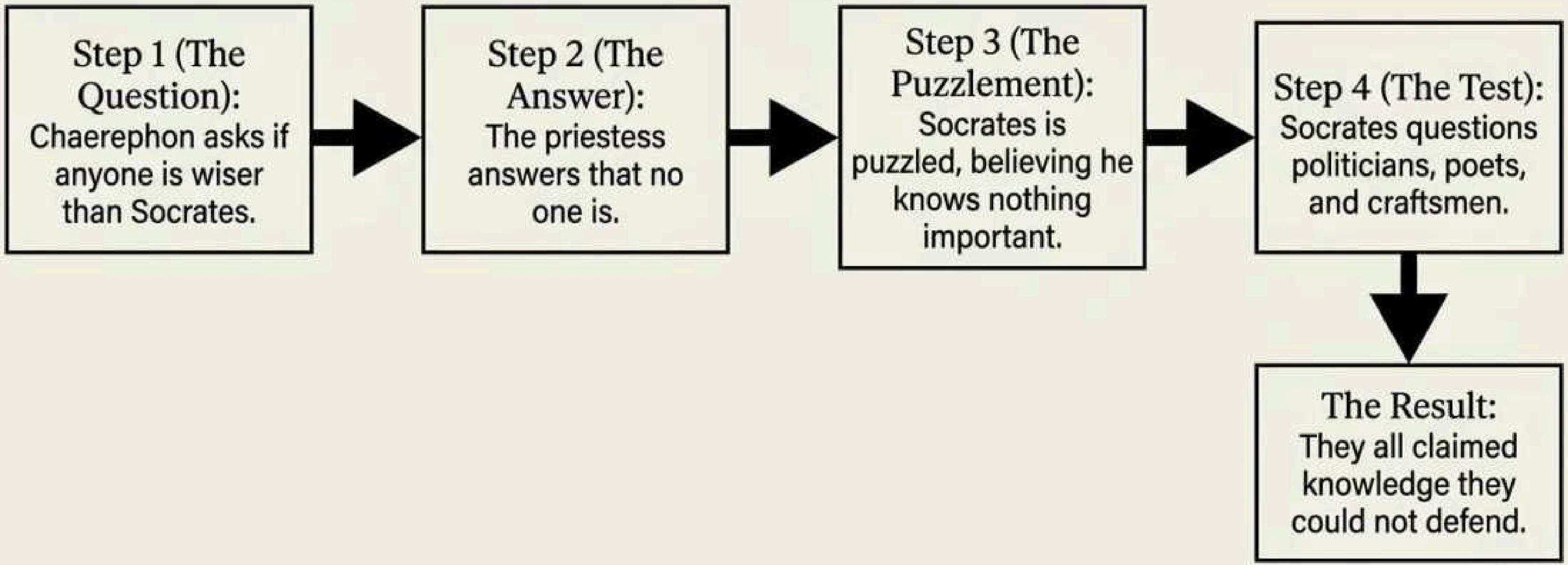
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3.11 The Socratic Problem: Sorting out the real figure from portraits that do not perfectly agree.



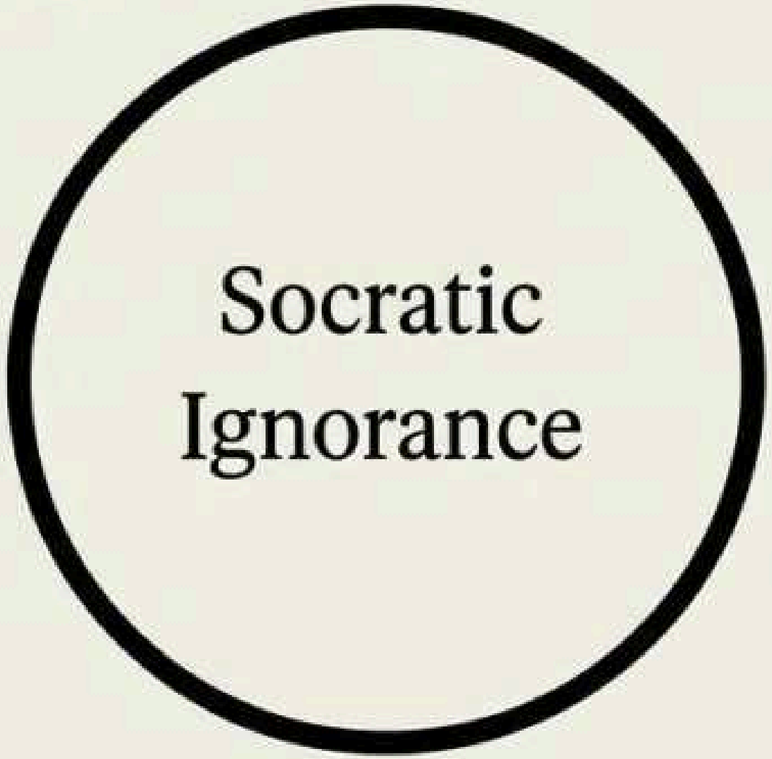
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3.12 The Catalyst: Plato's account of Chaerephon at the Oracle at Delphi.



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3.13



Definition: Knowing what you do not know.
(He concluded he was wiser in this one small way).



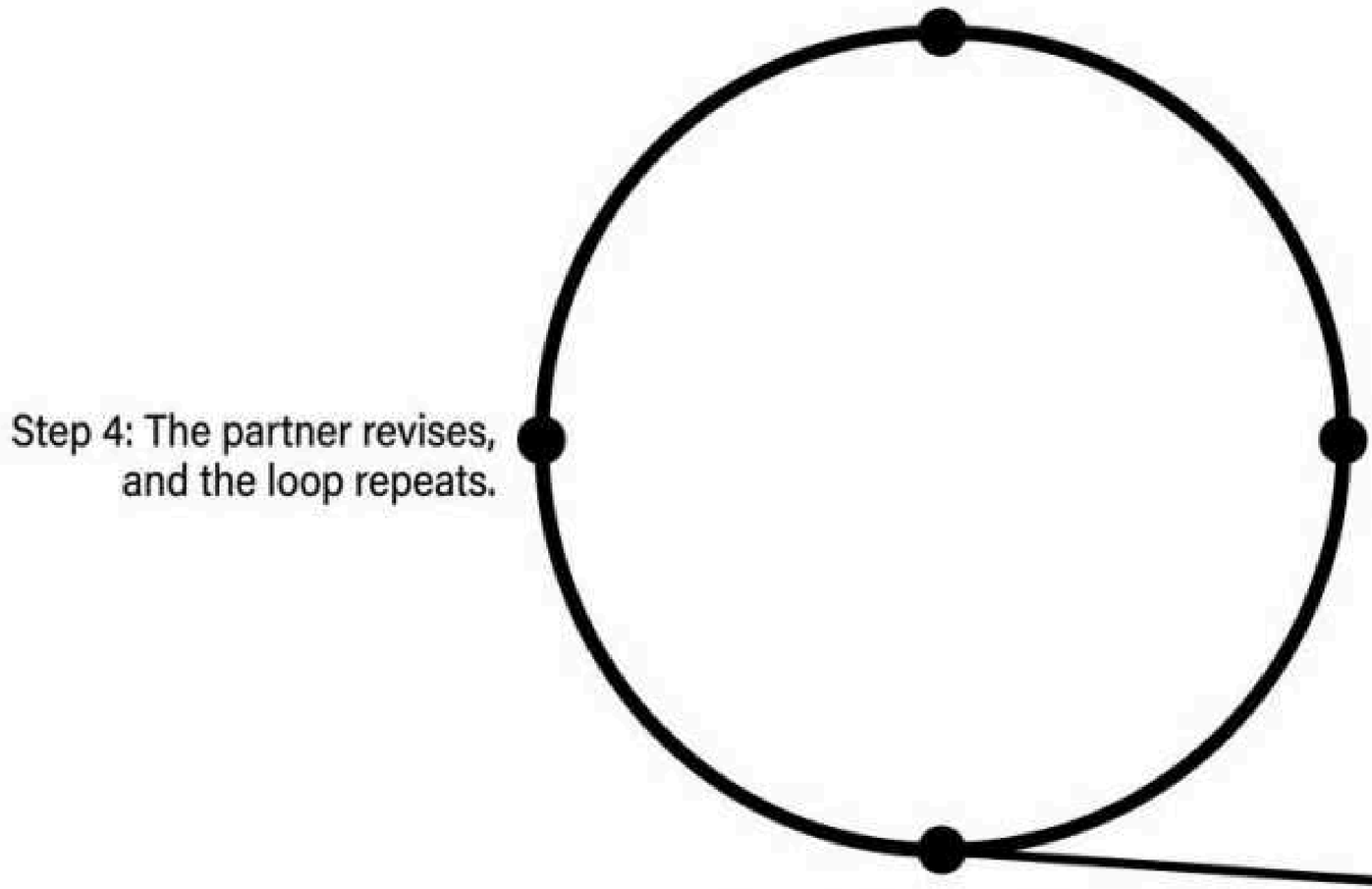
Crucial Distinction: It is NOT Skepticism.

- Socrates held firm moral convictions.
- It is simply a refusal to claim knowledge without being able to give reasons, and a demand that others do the same.

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3.14

The Method: The *Elenchus* (Greek for cross-examination)



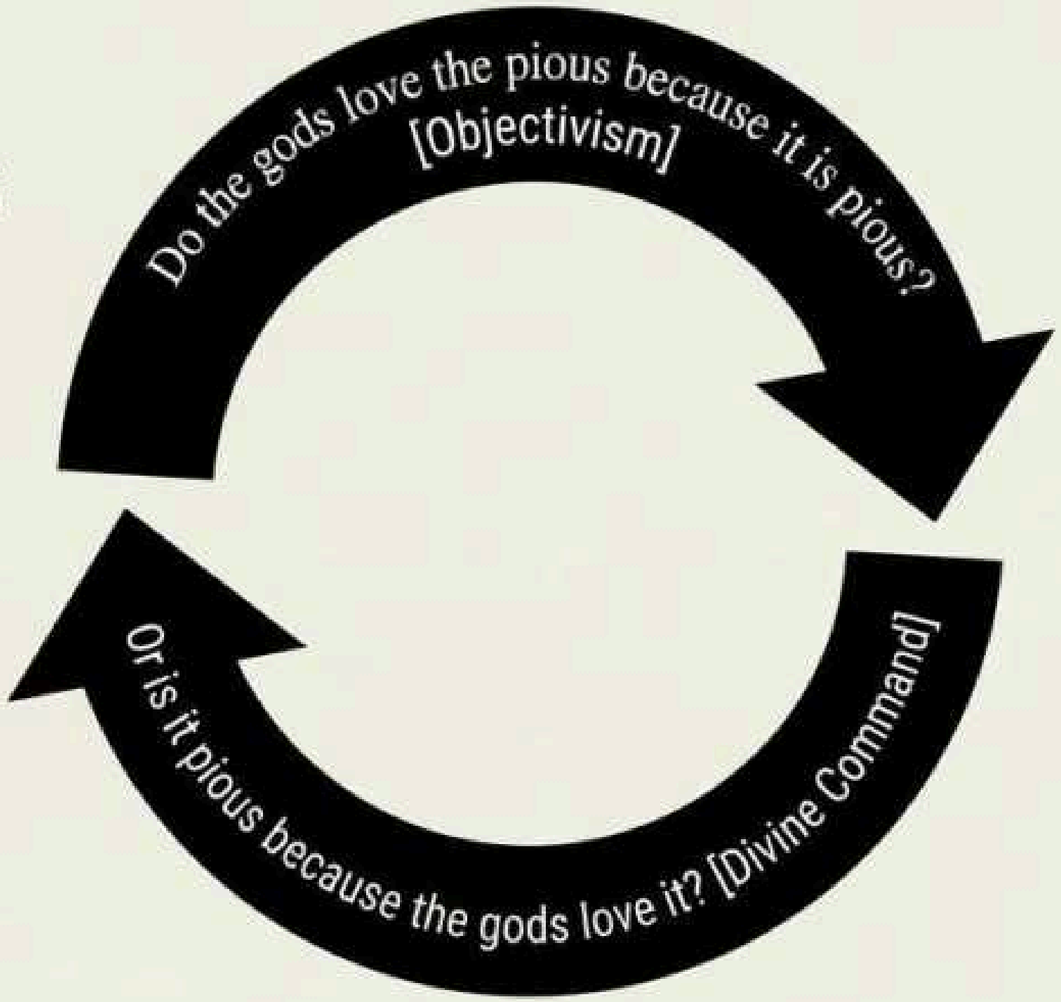
Exit State: *Aporia* (Puzzlement)—the dialogue ends with no agreed answer.

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3.15

The Context: Exploring the source of goodness in the *Euthyphro*. Euthyphro claims piety is what the gods love.

The Dilemma:



Significance: This question regarding the source of goodness is still actively discussed in ethics today.

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3.16 Famous Socratic Claims

Virtue is a kind of knowledge.

No one does wrong willingly.

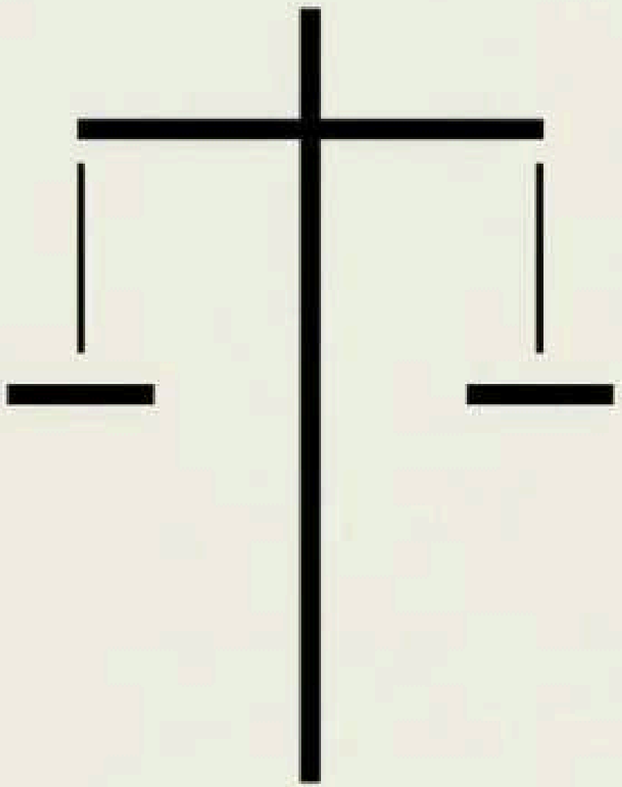
(Everyone wants what is good; wrongdoing stems solely from ignorance of the good).

It is better to suffer injustice than to do it.

The most important task is to care for your soul.

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3.17 Event: The Trial (399 BCE).



The Jury	The Charges
501 Athenian citizens.	1. Impiety (not honoring the the city's gods, introducing new divinities). 2. Corrupting the young.

The Political Context:
Some of his associates had joined the cruel regime of the Thirty Tyrants in 404 BCE, likely coloring public feeling against him.

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Text: *The Apology*.

“The unexamined life is not worth living for forı a human being.”

The Core Belief

The Metaphor: Socrates as a gadfly sent to wake a sluggish horse (Athens).

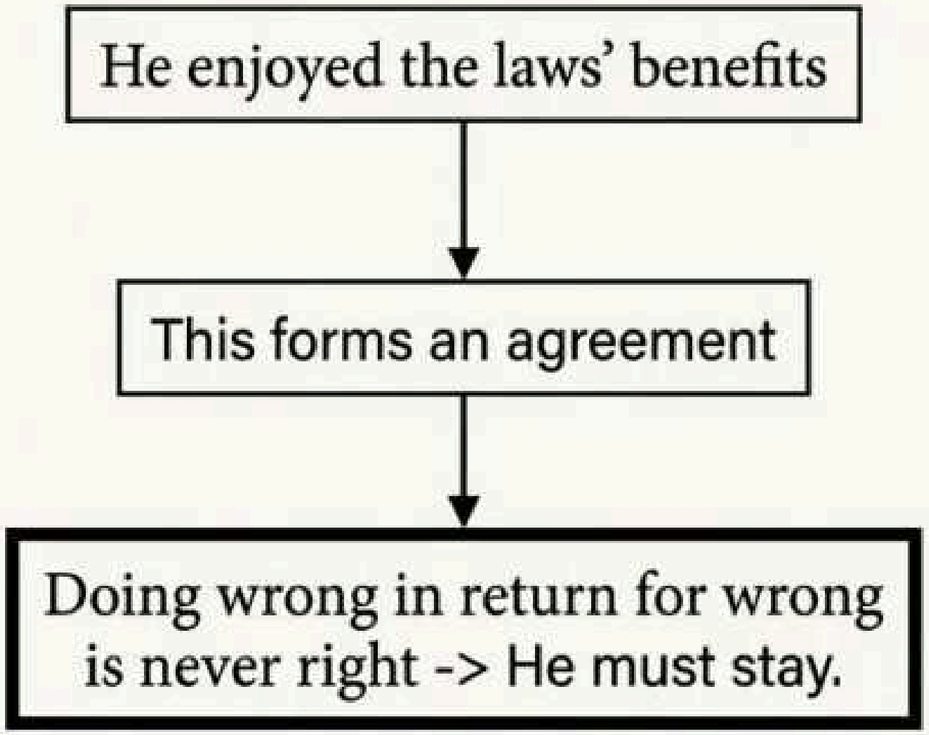
The Verdict:
Extremely close (a shift of just thirty votes would have acquitted him).

The Penalty Phase:
Socrates proposed free meals for life. The jury voted for death.

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3.19

Text 1: Crito (The Refusal to Escape).

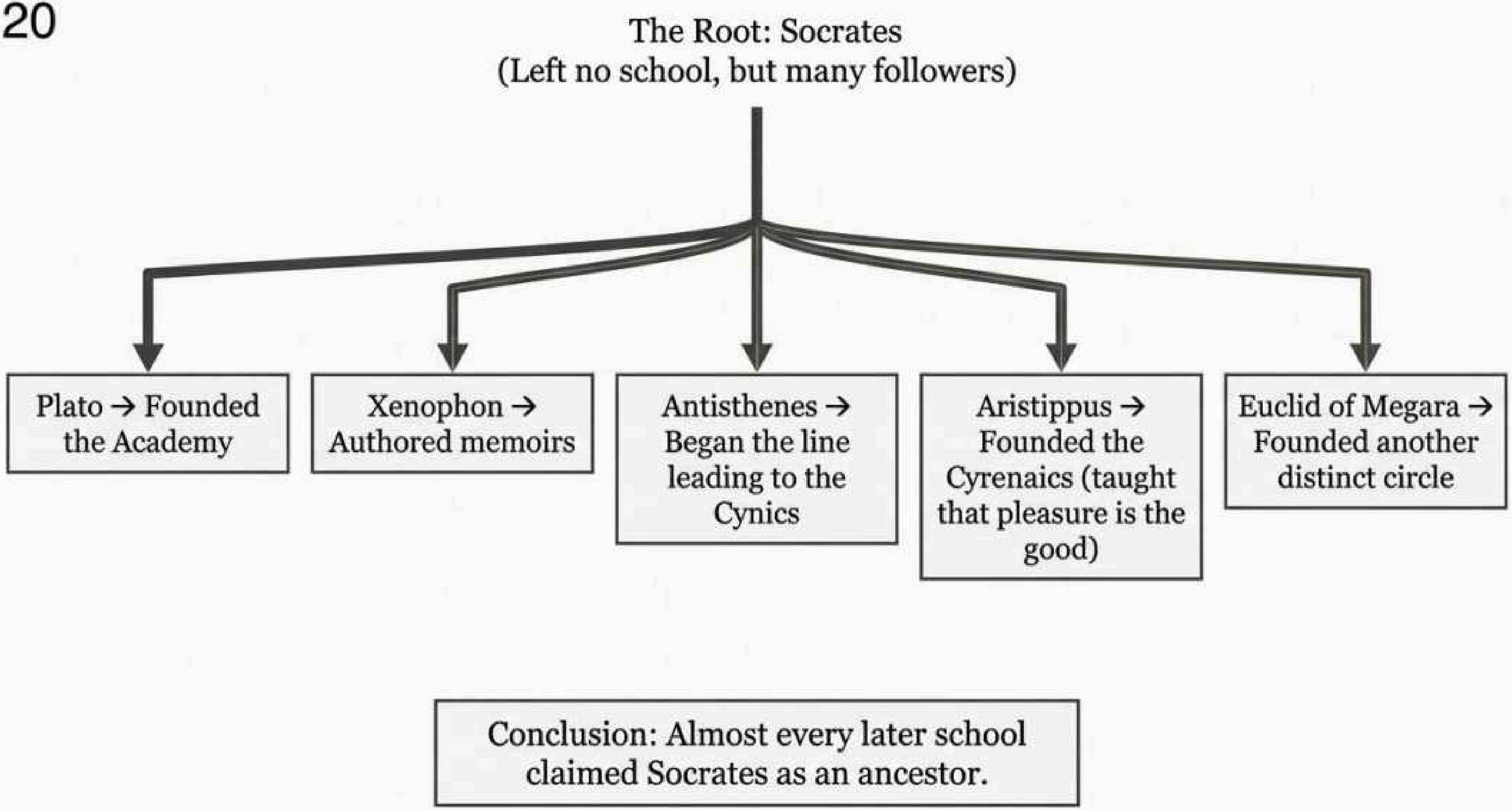


Text 2: Phaedo (The End).

The Result: After a final conversation on the soul, he drinks the hemlock calmly.

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3.20



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Socratic Exercise:

Step 1: Pick a word you use easily (e.g., fairness, courage).

Step 2: Try to define it in exactly one sentence.

Step 3: Test your definition against a counterexample, just as Socrates would.

Step 4: Notice how hard it is to be exact.

Epilogue: In Lecture 4, we meet the student who took his teacher's questions and built a system out of them.

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