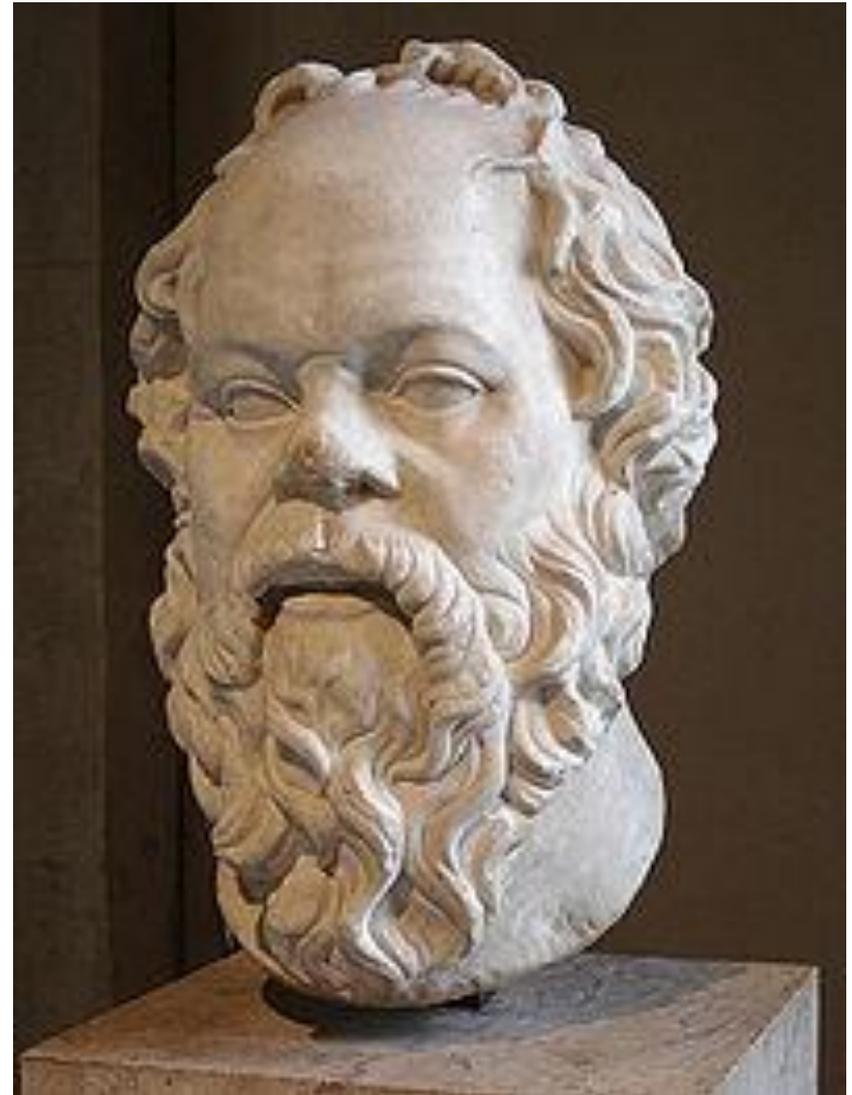


Socrates

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1 November 2012



Learning Objectives

- Know the sources for our information about Socrates
- Know his basic argument about the “Good”
- Know about Socrates’ trial
- Understand the basic plot of Plato’s *Crito*
- Know Socrates’ argument for remaining in Athens to await his execution

Socrates

c. 469 BC–399 BC

- Four Sources-historical Socrates
 - Aristophanes - 5th Century Comic Poet
 - Xenophon – Military General
 - Plato – Philosopher And Companion
 - Aristotle – Philosopher And Pupil Of Plato

Socrates

- Aristophanic Socrates
 - Comedic – Expect Exaggeration And Distortion
- Xenophontean Socrates
 - Didactician
 - Quick To Give Advice
 - Paragon Of Common Morality And Religious Practice
- Platonic Socrates
 - Moral Philosopher
 - Mathematician, Metaphysician, Epistemologist, And Ontologist As Well As Moral Philosopher

Socrates vs. Sophists

- Sophists Promise To Teach *Arete* (Excellence, Virtue)
- Socrates Asks The Questions

What Makes Virtue Truly A Virtue,
The Good Truly Good

Socratic Convictions

The Good

- Epitome Of Everything Man Strives For
- About Which Every Man Is Concerned
- Has An Essence That Can Only Be Good
- Concerned With The Core Of Personality – The Soul (*Psyche*)
- Striving For *Arete*
 - Concern For Perfect Knowledge
 - Caring For The Soul

Socrates' Trial

- Discussed By Plato And Xenophon
- Charges Against Socrates
 - Does Not Recognize The State Gods
 - Introduces New Divinities
 - Corrupts The Youth
- Loses The Trial Due To Speaking Arrogantly And Did Not Defend Himself Well

Plato & Socrates

- Most of our evidence for Socrates comes from Plato
- Not easy to distinguish between their views
 - Sometimes portraying the historical Socrates
 - Sometimes uses Socrates as a literary device to convey his own Philosophy
- Scholars believe the real Socrates concentrated on ethical questions

Plato's *Crito*

- Dialogue between Crito and Socrates
- Major Topics
 - Crito's arguments on why Socrates should escape to exile
 - Socrates' arguments for not escaping
 - Friends in danger
 - Public Opinion doesn't matter
 - He would destroy the State
 - He had an agreement with the State
 - Repercussions in Afterlife

Crito

- Crito mentions that he is in with the warden
- Socrates says that it is not fitting at his age to resent dying
- Crito begins to try and persuade Socrates to escape
 - He will be deprived of a friend
 - His friends' reputation is at stake – they could have paid for his escape but didn't
- Socrates – should not care about the majority - only the opinion of reasonable people and whether one is wise or foolish

Crito

- Socrates is afraid his friends will be in danger if they help him
- Crito says Socrates should think of
 - The expense won't be too much
 - Accuses him of showing no concern for his children
 - Accuses him of a lack of courage

Crito

Socrates Argument

- Reputation
 - Uses the analogy of the trainer/doctor – if one listens to the majority one will damage is body
 - We should listen to one who understands what it is to be just
 - To act rightly
 - To live well or as one should



“S: And that the good life, the beautiful
life, and the just life are the same;
does that still hold or not?

C: It does hold

Socrates Argues Against Escape

- Doing someone a wrong is always wrong, even when done in response to a wrong done to you
 - Doing harm to people is wrong
 - Breaking a fair agreement is wrong
- Trying to escape will injure the State of Athens and its laws



“S: ...the laws and the state came and confronted us as asked: “Tell me, Socrates, what are you intending to do? Do you not by this action you are attempting intend to destroy us, the laws, and indeed the whole city, as far as you are concerned? Or do you think it is possible for a city not to be destroyed if the verdicts of its courts have no force but are nullified and set at naught by private individuals?””

Socrates' Argument

- He would be intending the destruction of the state
 - Neither the State nor the laws can survive if private individuals ignore the decisions of the court

Socrates' agreement with the State

- The Athenian State made him what he is
- He is not dissatisfied with how the Athenian State did
- His behavior was sufficient indication of his agreement
 - He could have left Athens at any time
 - He stayed – he has never been away except for military service
 - He chose death as opposed to exile

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- If he leaves the city he will make himself a laughingstock



“S: ...Be persuaded by us who have brought you up Socrates. Do not value either your children or your life or anything else more than goodness, in order that when you arrive in Hades you may have all this as your defense before the rulers there. If you do this deed, you will not think it better or more just or more pious here,



“...but if you depart after shamefully returning wrong for wrong and injury for injury, after breaking your agreements and commitments with us, after injuring those you should injure least – yourself, your friends, your country and us – we shall be angry with you while you are still alive, and our brother, the laws of the underworld, will not receive you kindly, knowing that you tried to destroy us as far as you could