

# THE ANTI-DEMOCRAT

Plato's alternative to Athenian Democracy  
as presented in Szpiro (2010)

# PLATO

Born in 427 BC in the vicinity of Athens

Son to Ariston and Perictione

Brother to Glaucon and Adeimantus and Potone

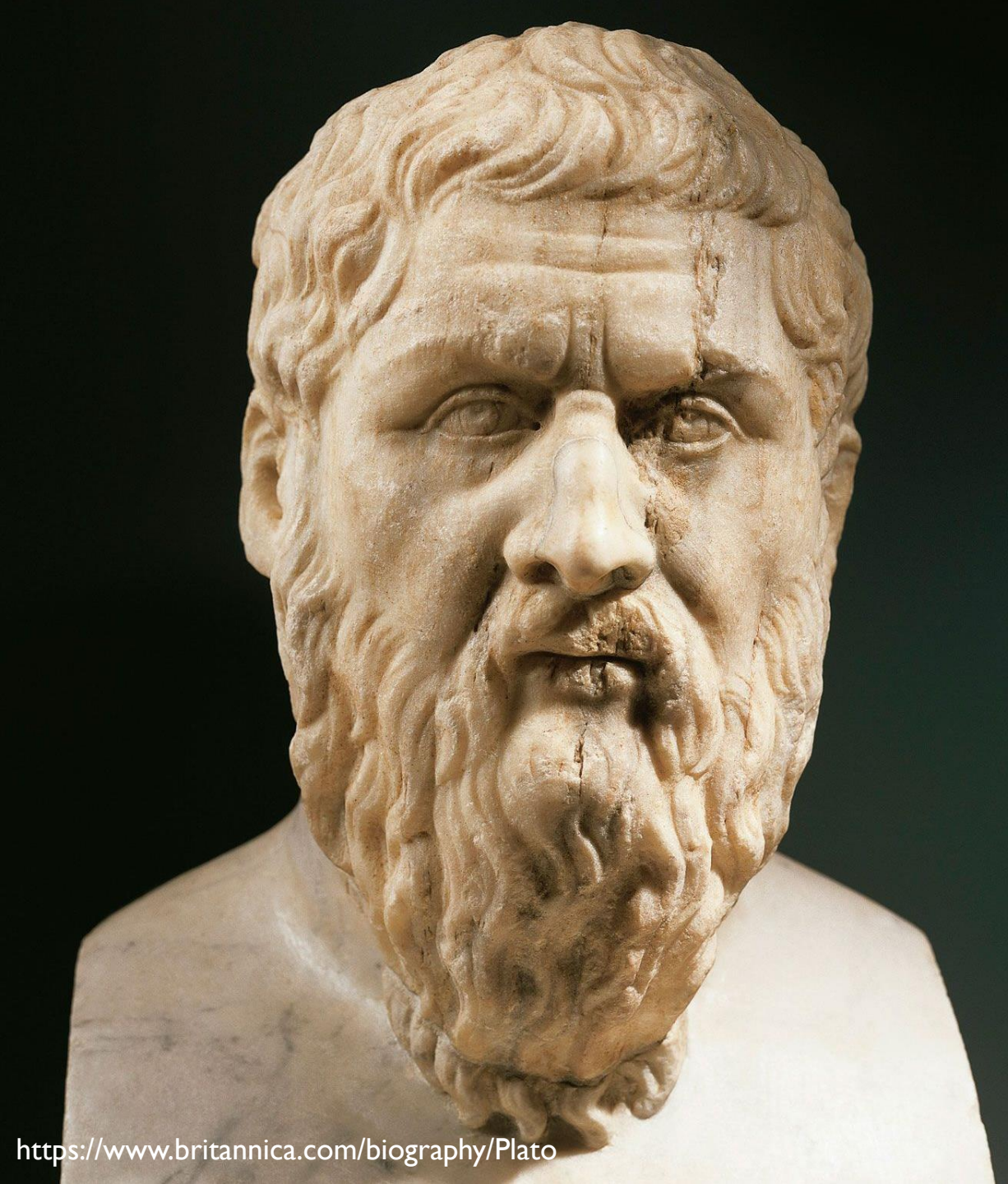
Half-Brother to Antiphon

Philosophical Interests: the meaning of life,  
the nature of justice, being a good person

Early aspirations of becoming a playwright

First class education in gymnastics, music, poetry,  
rhetoric, mathematics; Student of Socrates

Undoubtedly brilliant, undoubtedly divisive



# SOCRATES

**No original written records,  
everything conveyed through Plato**

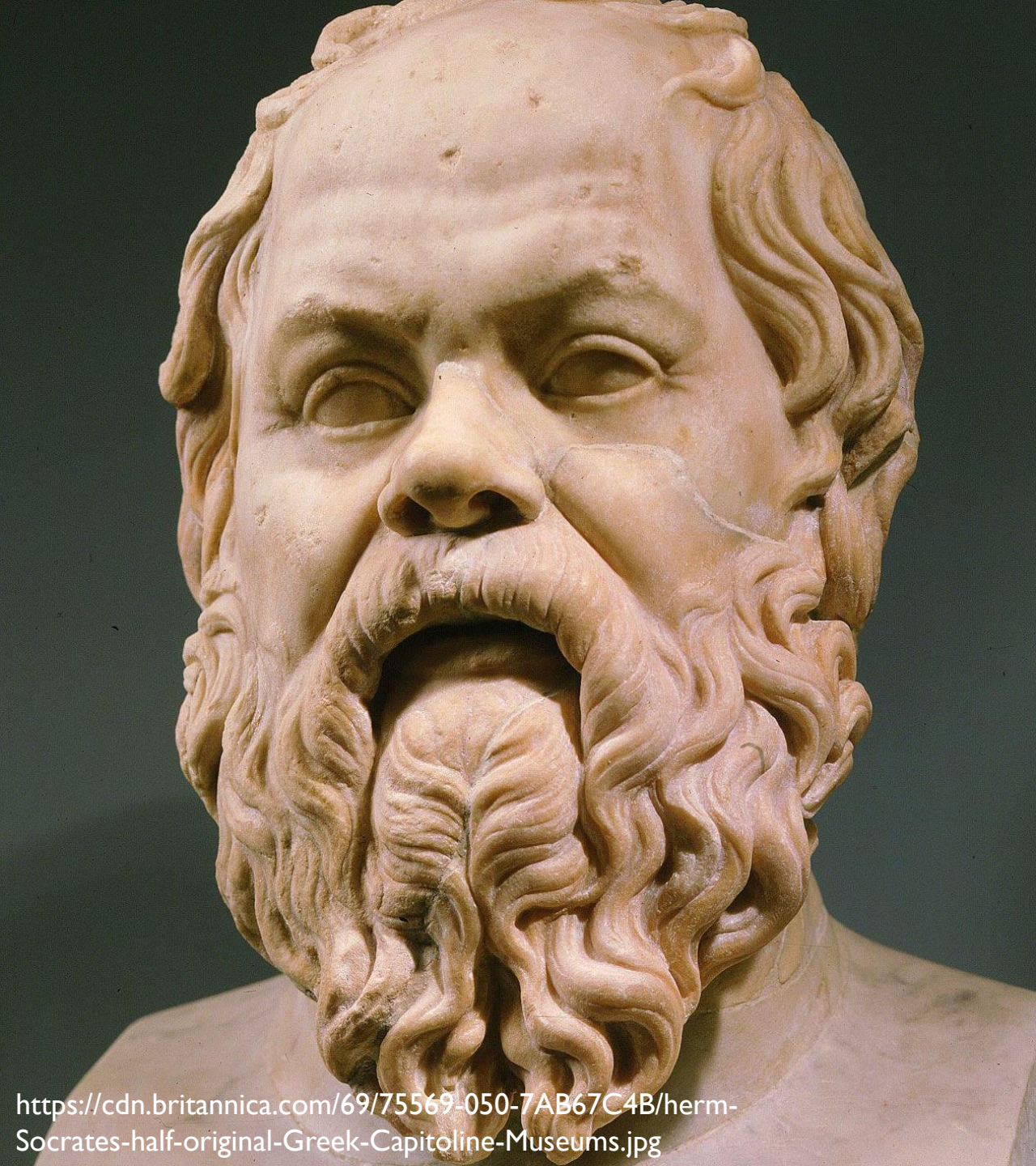
Writings fail to convey the true depth of syllogisms, thus enabling unjust criticisms

**Did not teach truths, but the way  
of accessing truth from within**

By rational dialogue that inevitably leads to it

**399 BC: conviction on charges of  
atheism and corrupting the youth**

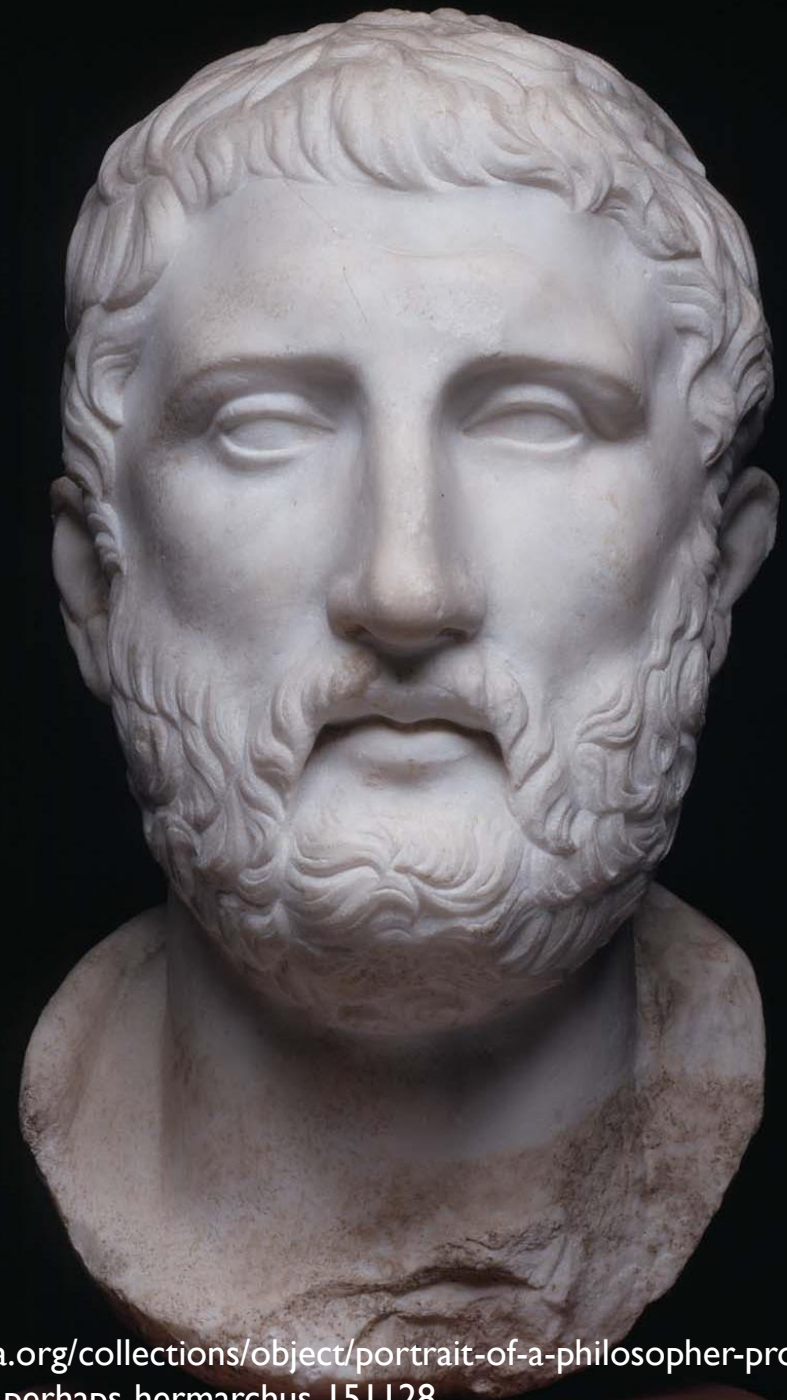
Condemnation to death by randomly selected, minimally vetted citizens



“The crowd is powerful but lacks reason.”

"ὄχλος ἰσχυρός ἐστίν, οὐκ ἔχει δὲ νοῦν"

Attributed to Democritus, a presocratic Philosopher



<http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/portrait-of-a-philosopher-probably-democritus-or-perhaps-hermarchus-151128>

# REPUBLIC I

## World's first treatise on Political Philosophy

Impactful until this very day, but also  
half-baked, ideologically driven, abstract

## Introductory Socratic Dialogue

The lack of justice leads to total chaos  
Therefore, justice is keeping a just order

## Which State type allows justice to prevail?

Small enough for individuals to matter,  
large enough for economy of scale benefits  
Women equally capable of governing (sort of)  
3-class system with freedom of ascension (sort of)



# REPUBLIC II

## State Guardians / Philosopher Kings (Wisdom)

### Wisdom acquired through rigorous education

Primary education, Military Service, 10 years of Mathematics,  
5 years of Dialectics, 15 years of political Apprenticeship

### Eligible to rule from 50 until 70 years of age

Making laws, adjudicating disputes, dispensing justice

### Succession by new generation without elections

Socrates: Voting is superfluous due to scarcity of candidates

### Would not own any personal wealth

Full accommodation by the state



<https://external-content.duckduckgo.com/iu/?u=https%3A%2F%2Fbrewminate.com%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2018%2F09%2F090818-07-Plato-Republic-Democracy-Ancient-History-Philosophy.jpg&f=1&nofb=1&ipt=fc6e1a72c00221b504714a76136b0e81bf13a1cb803eb932ad782b8f0aeaf078&ipo=images>

# REPUBLIC III

## Professional Soldiers (Courage)

### Police Force and Army

Preservation of order, defense against aggressors

Adequately educated to enforce the law

Would also not own any personal wealth



<https://external-content.duckduckgo.com/iu/?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwallpaperaccess.com%2Ffull%2F1819366.jpg&f=1&nofb=1&ipt=ecb0066a8c10466fd237f0f73be2464575d06e973d4b72beb6faa6db60a9bc5a&ipo=i>  
mages

# REPUBLIC IV

## Workers (Economy)

Farmers, craftsmen, doctors, merchants...

Owners of personal wealth  
Moderated by the State

Largest group out of the 3

## Slaves (Service)

Often disregarded entirely by Plato  
Given mostly symbolical rights in The Laws

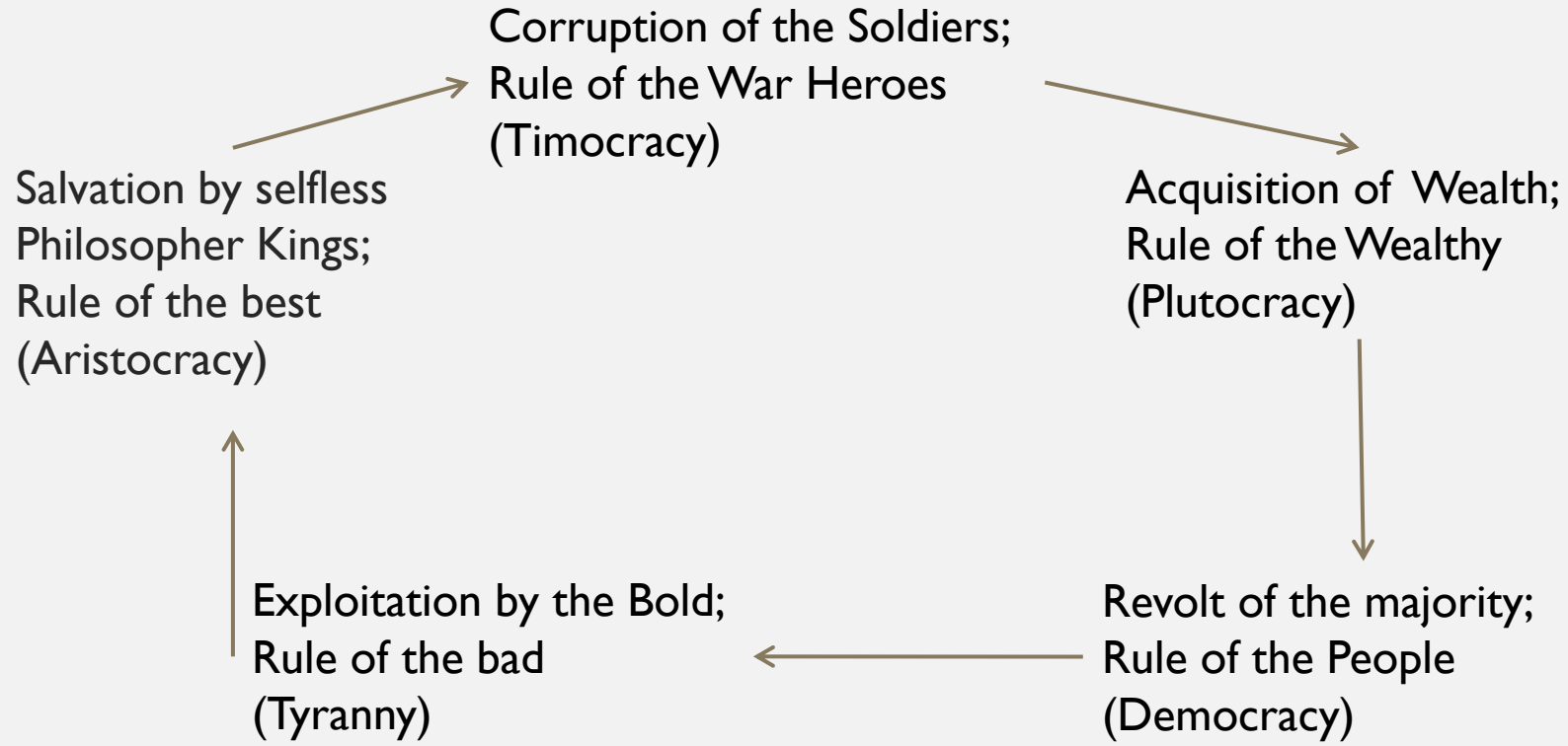


<https://external-content.duckduckgo.com/iu/?u=https%3A%2F%2Fstatic.timesofisrael.com%2Fwww%2Fuploads%2F2017%2F07%2Ftower-of-bable.jpeg&f=1&nofb=1&ipt=fe72693a58616599ebe4fda4ed84785b01bc68d28f734a98f1b83e45286eae69&ipo=images>



Self-perpetuating stages of governance in the Republic

REPUBLIC V



“The people have always some champion whom they set over them and nurse into greatness... This and no other is the root from which a tyrant springs; when he first appears, he is a protector.”

*The Republic* (Book VIII)

# REPUBLIC VI

## Subsequent application attempts

Plato enlisted by Dion in Syracuse ~388 BC

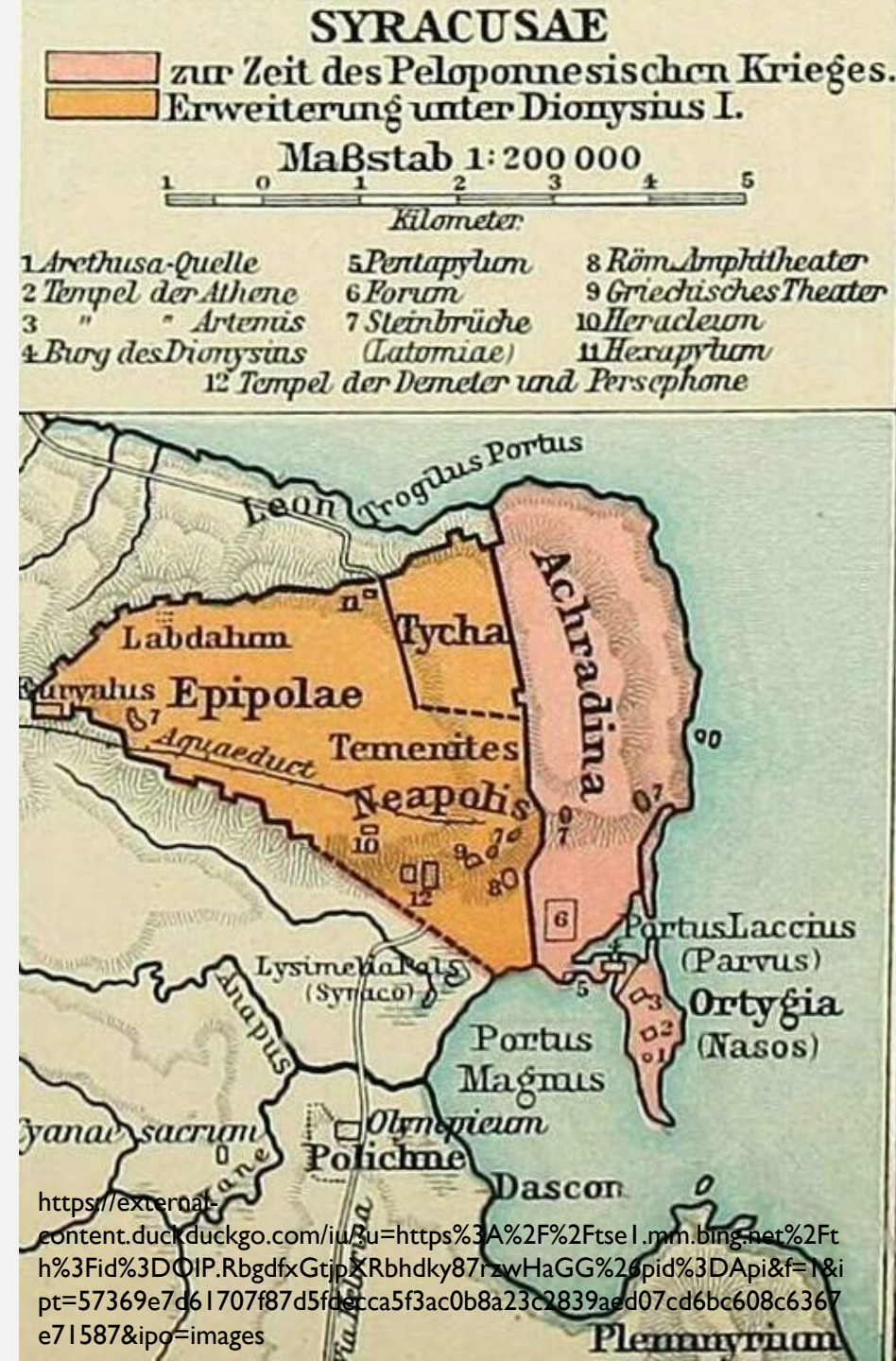
Tries to teach the Tyrant Dionysius I the basics of government  
Gets imprisoned instead, barely makes it back to Athens

Plato founds the Academy ~387 BC

World's first University, operated for a millennium  
Was later taken over by the great Aristotle

Plato visits Dionysius II ~367 & 361 BC

Failure to establish an Aristocracy on both occasions  
A series of backstabs and resulting tyrannies ensues





# THE LAWS I

## **The Basics**

30 years after *The Republic*

More pragmatic account of the ideal State

Plato's lengthiest, unfinished work

Prime example of his post-Socratic dialogues

## **Ideological premise**

Egalitarianism leads to bad decisions

Most people lack proper education

The state is required to intervene

Even strict regulation of private life



## THE LAWS II

### **Justice in Symmetry**

City composed of exactly 5,040 households

Each household comprised of around 10 persons

Walled Acropolis in the center with God temples

With radial avenues extending to the city outskirts

Twelve neighborhoods, 420 households each

One residential and one agricultural plot each

Wealth monitoring and adjustment by the State

Mandated minimum and maximum, property and income tax



## THE LAWS III

### **Political procedures in Athenian Democracy**

(recap)

All deciding agents were appointed by lottery  
or engaged in politics by their own volition

The assembly is representative, therefore infallible  
so, any wrongdoing was attributed to elected officials

### **Plato's response**

Unacceptable terrorization of the elite by the crowd  
Officials were humiliated, stripped of their possessions

Solvable by only allowing for educated electors

Mostly women and men with military service

“A democracy is a state in which the poor, gaining the upper hand, kill some and banish others, and then divide the offices among the remaining citizens equally, usually by lot.”

*The Republic* (Book VIII)



## THE LAWS IV

### **Voting according to Plato**

In the example of State Guardians

**Submission of candidacies by everyone**

Right of dispute in the Agora for 30 days

**Votes were to be publicly displayed**

As to encourage accountability

**Three-stage candidate elimination**

Reducing the candidate pool down to 37

**Prerequisite of animal sacrifice for final vote**

Favoring the affluent, who were better educated





## THE LAWS V

### **Favoring of the few**

In the example of Council Magistrates

### **Disproportional Symmetry**

90 representatives from each class, despite radically different population percentages

### **Non-viable procedural duration**

Citizens of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class were not mandated to vote on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> day for their class candidates  
Many were forced to go back to work on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day

**Plato does not limit, but rather discourages voting by the poor and uneducated electors**



## THE LAWS VI

### Miscellaneous

The education magistrate

Males above 50 years of age

Fathers to both sons and daughters

Secret election and appointment by jurors

Judicial system in Plato's ideal State

Court of 1<sup>st</sup> instance, among friends and relatives

Occasional involvement of the policemen

An unhappy plaintiff or defendant could seek justice at the court of 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> instance

"Excessive freedom, whether in the state or individuals, seems to turn into nothing but excessive slavery."

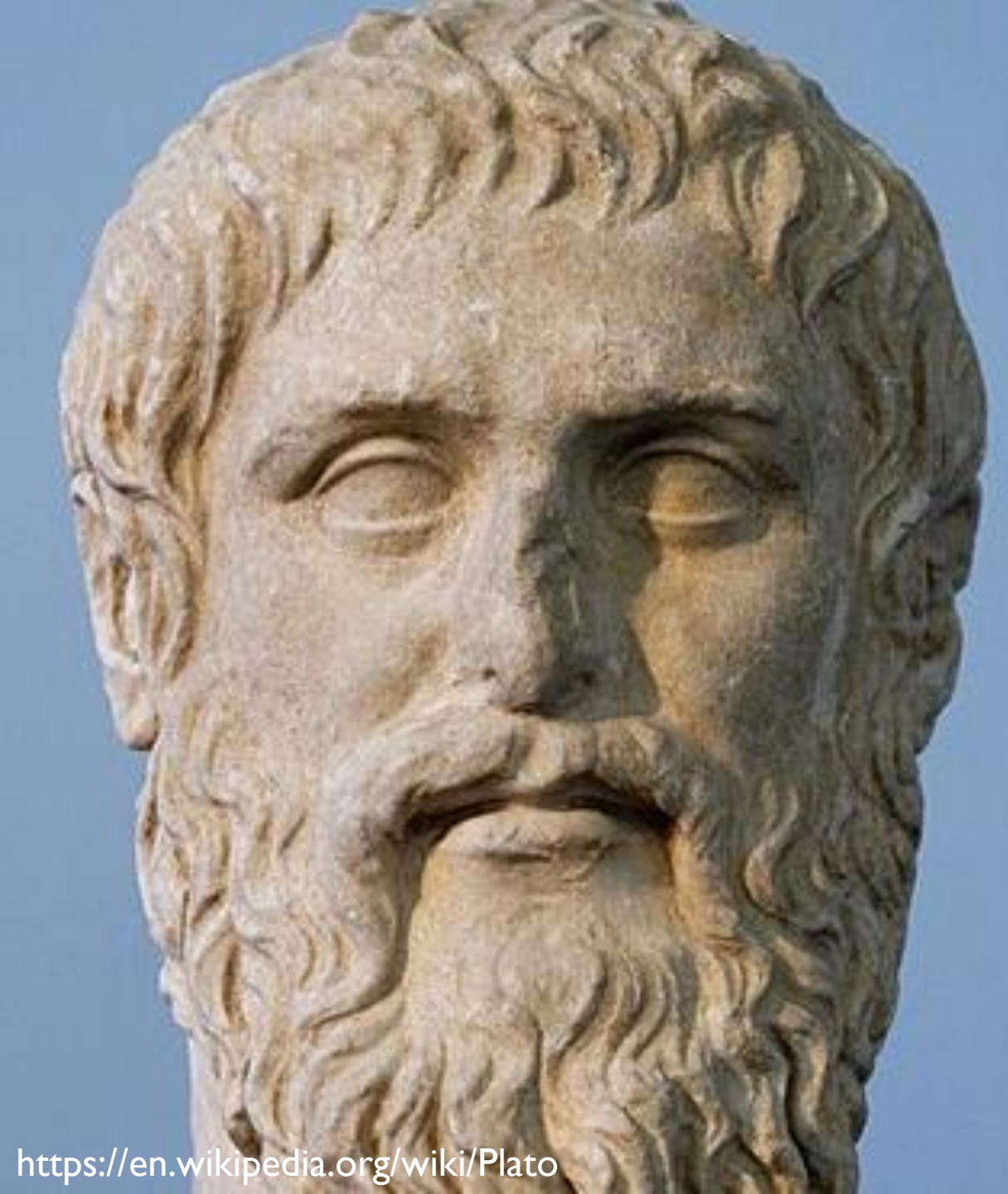
*The Laws*

# SUMMARY

Plato distrusted Athenian Democracy, because it allowed uneducated and unqualified people to participate in governance.

He advocated for a government led by the wise and knowledgeable and introduced structured electoral processes to ensure it.

He nevertheless also incorporated elements of lotteries and indirect elections to create balance and limit the concentration of power.



PREFERENTIAL VOTING

EPISTEMIC VOTING

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c3/Raphael\\_School\\_of\\_Athens.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c3/Raphael_School_of_Athens.jpg)