

ANTISTHENES FROM ATHENS

A student of Socrates, he developed an Ethical side to Socrates teachings



"Not to unlearn what you have learned is the most necessary kind of learning."

"Be rather insane than satisfied"

"As iron is eaten away by rust, so the envious are consumed by their own passion"

"Pay attention to your enemies, for they are the first to discover your mistakes."

ANTISTHENES FROM ATHENS

Biography

Born between 445 BCE to 440 BCE in Athens

He was only a half-citizen. Father was from Athens and mom was from Phrygian or Thracian

In his youth he was engaged in military exploits. He acquired fame in the Battle of Tanagra (426 BCE, age 19)

1st studies were under the direction of Gorgias (specialist in the art of persuasion), a Sophist who instructed him in rhetoric
Grew unsatisfied with his schooling.

He turned to Socrates for continuing his education

He was so taken by Socrates that he returned to convince his friends to leave Gorgias and to follow Socrates instead.

So impressed was he by Socrates that he traveled daily from his home in Piraeus to Athens where Socrates taught. 10 miles daily!

To say his dress was unkept was an understatement

He frequently appears in threadbare and ragged cloak

Unshaven

Carried a sack and staff/cane like a wandering beggar

Personal hygiene was poor

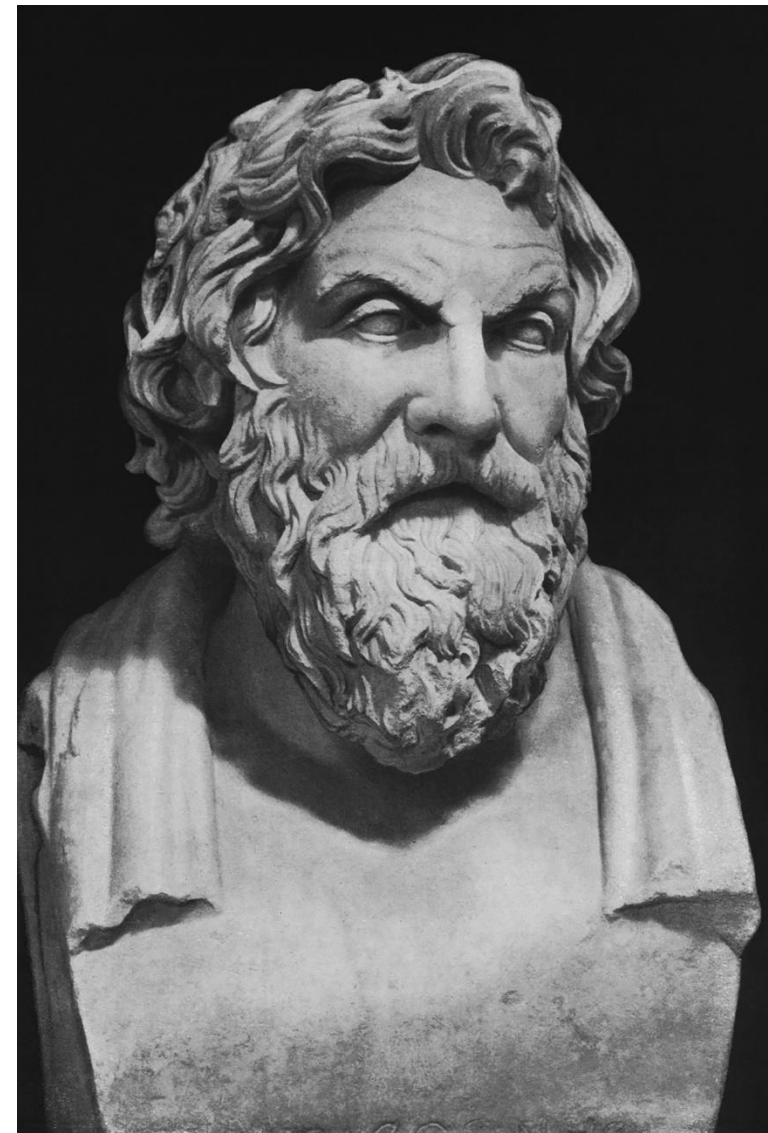
Socrates remarks that Antisthenes strove to expose, rather than conceal, the tattered state of his dress.

- This meant as an expression of opposition to the gradually increasing luxury of the age, intending to bring men back to their original simplicity in life and mannerisms. He appears to have carried to excess his virtues zeal against the luxury, although some accounts may have been exaggerated.

He was present at Socrates death, and never forgave the prosecution

- ↳ Following Socrates death, Antisthenes established a school in the only gymnasium open to those of half-Athens's descent. The place was called "Cynosarges", hence its followers bore the name "Cynics"

Died c.365 BCE



Philosophy (major ideas)

He believed that **words were direct links to reality**, that all propositions were either true or meaningless, and that it was impossible for there to be contradicting statements

“Moral Theory”: **Virtue is necessary for happiness**

- ↳ Ethics, morality, values
 - **Virtue could be taught**, but once it is learned it will never be lost
 - Be the master and controller of one’s self
 - He argues that wisdom and virtue are the same (this is Socrates view)
 - ↳ Socrates: approach wisdom through questioning
 - ↳ Antisthenes: become aware of the uncertainty of knowledge through experience

On religions: **everything is regulated by divine intelligence, to benefit good people who are friends of God**

- While **society had many Gods, nature has only one God**
- God cannot be known or recognized in any form or figure, since he is like nothing on Earth
 - ↳ Hence, undoubtedly arose his explanation for deity representation in mythology

Said the “wise” could never act foolishly

Genuine happiness may not be attainable to the human being, because humans must depend on knowledge through experience