

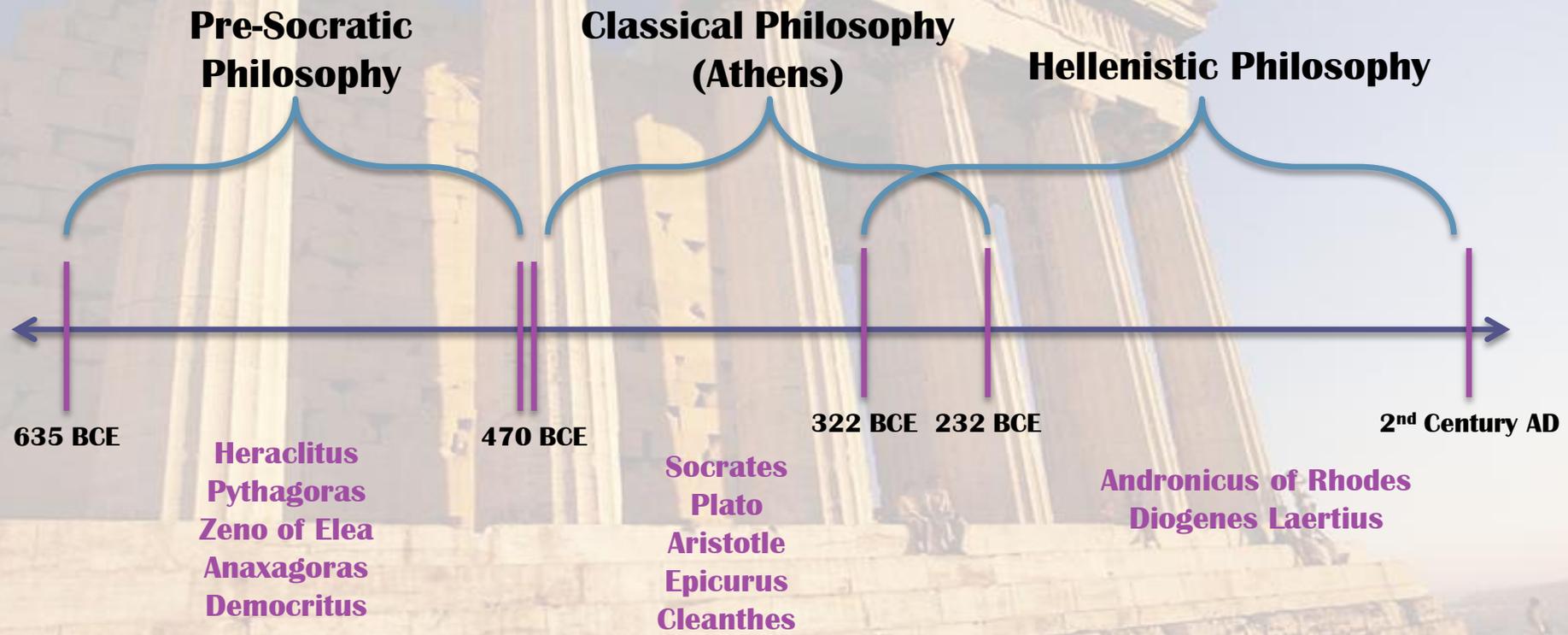
ANIMALS IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

Bioethics & Animals (Spring 2013)

Laura Guidry-Grimes

TIMELINE

Note: dates are approximate



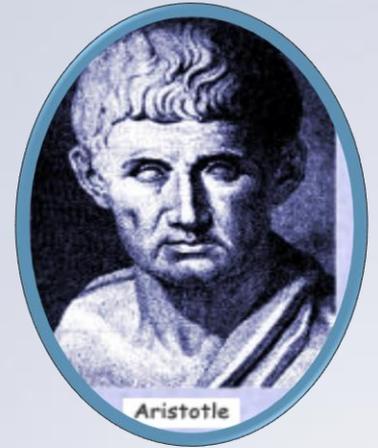
HUMANS VS. NONHUMANS: WHAT IS CRUCIAL?

- **Language?**
 - **Necessary for complex thoughts, feelings, perceptions, communication?**
- **Reasoning?**
 - **Basic, syllogistic, or something more complex?**
 - **Are non-humans completely without reason, feeling, perception?**
- **Religious function, closeness to divinity?**
 - **Humans closer to the deities?**
 - **Non-humans as essential messengers, sacrifices? Or ultimately unimportant for religious communion?**
- **Having a soul?**
 - **Which part of the soul?**
- **Moral agency?**
 - **Demonstrates higher-order thinking?**
 - **Capacity for contractual agreements, promises?**

ANIMALS AS DIRECTLY CONSIDERABLE?

- **Similar to humans (who are DC) in morally important ways?**
 - **Soul?**
 - **Part of creation (belong to the divine)?**
 - **Reasoning, loyalty, sentience?**
- **Or mainly valued for their purpose?**
 - **Sporting, entertainment**
 - **Aesthetic pleasure, food**
 - **Profit**
 - **Rituals**
 - **Communal bonding**
 - **Moral or scientific education**

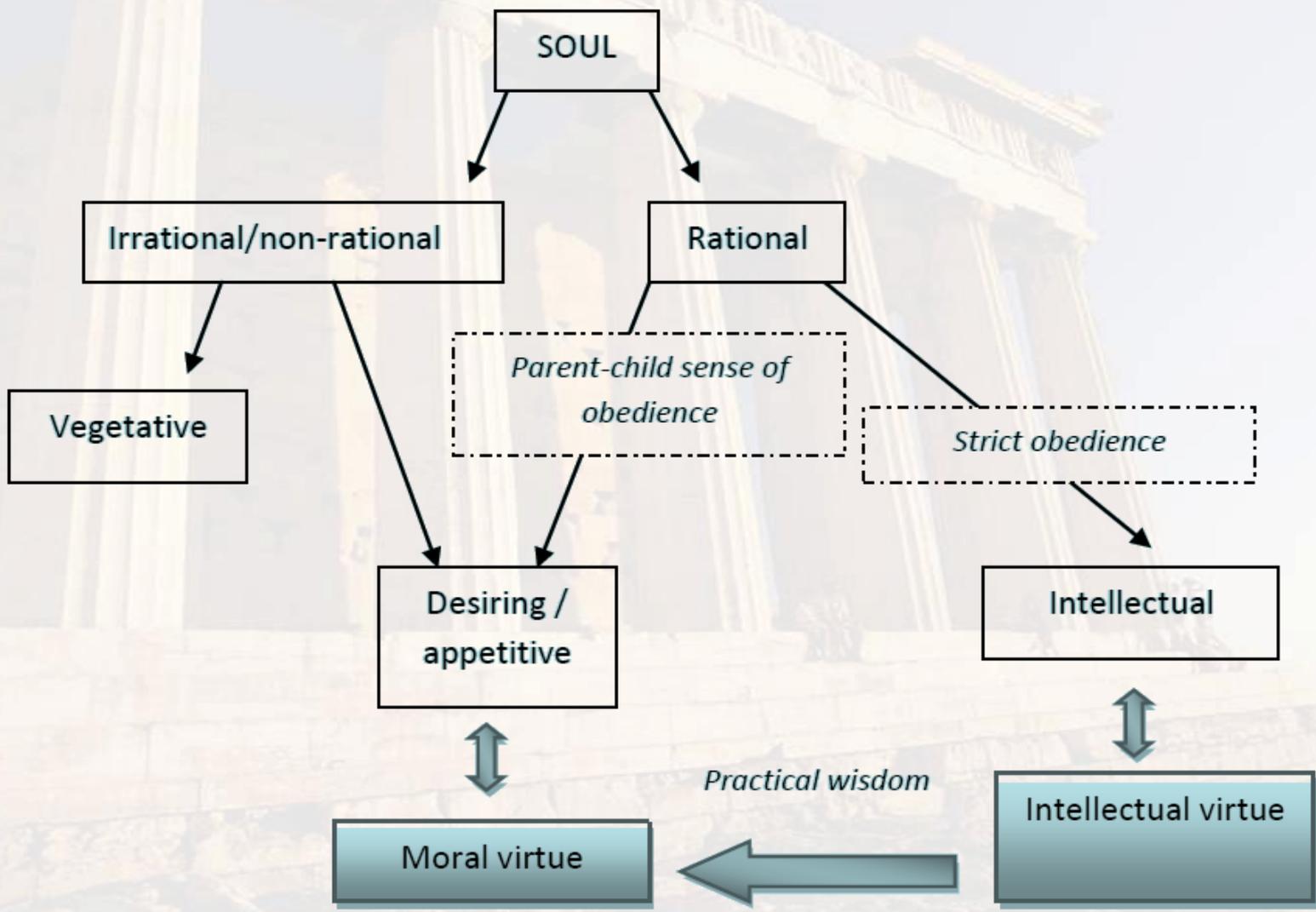
ARISTOTLE



- **384-322 BCE**
- **Biologist, philosopher, logician**
- **Each creature has a *telos*, or specified and distinguished end – determined physical, mental, and social traits (*teleology*)**
 - **Great Chain of Being: humans as most perfect animal**
 - **Functions unite and organize organisms**
 - **Humans' proper function is *reason*.**
- ***Eudaimonia* = happiness / flourishing**
 - **Distinct from mere pleasure**

ARISTOTLE: PARTS OF THE SOUL

From *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, Chapter 13



SIMILARITIES: HUMANS AND NONHUMANS

- **Physical**

- **Organs, blood flow, growth**
- **Nutritional, reproductive needs**

- **Mental**

- **“something equivalent to sagacity” (588a20)**
- **Learning**

- **Emotional/relational**

- **Timidity/courage, temper, fear**
- **Friendship, enmity, family ties**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What are some similarities between ancient and contemporary debates on the use of animals?**
- **From a philosophical perspective, what is difficult about basing obligations of respect on a particular conception of the soul?**
- **Do you agree with Aristotle that it can be difficult demarcate the different forms of life along the gradient of functions and abilities that each has?**
- **Are the analogues that Aristotle highlights between humans and non-humans compelling?**
 - **Do you think we can potentially draw any normative conclusions from them?**



QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?