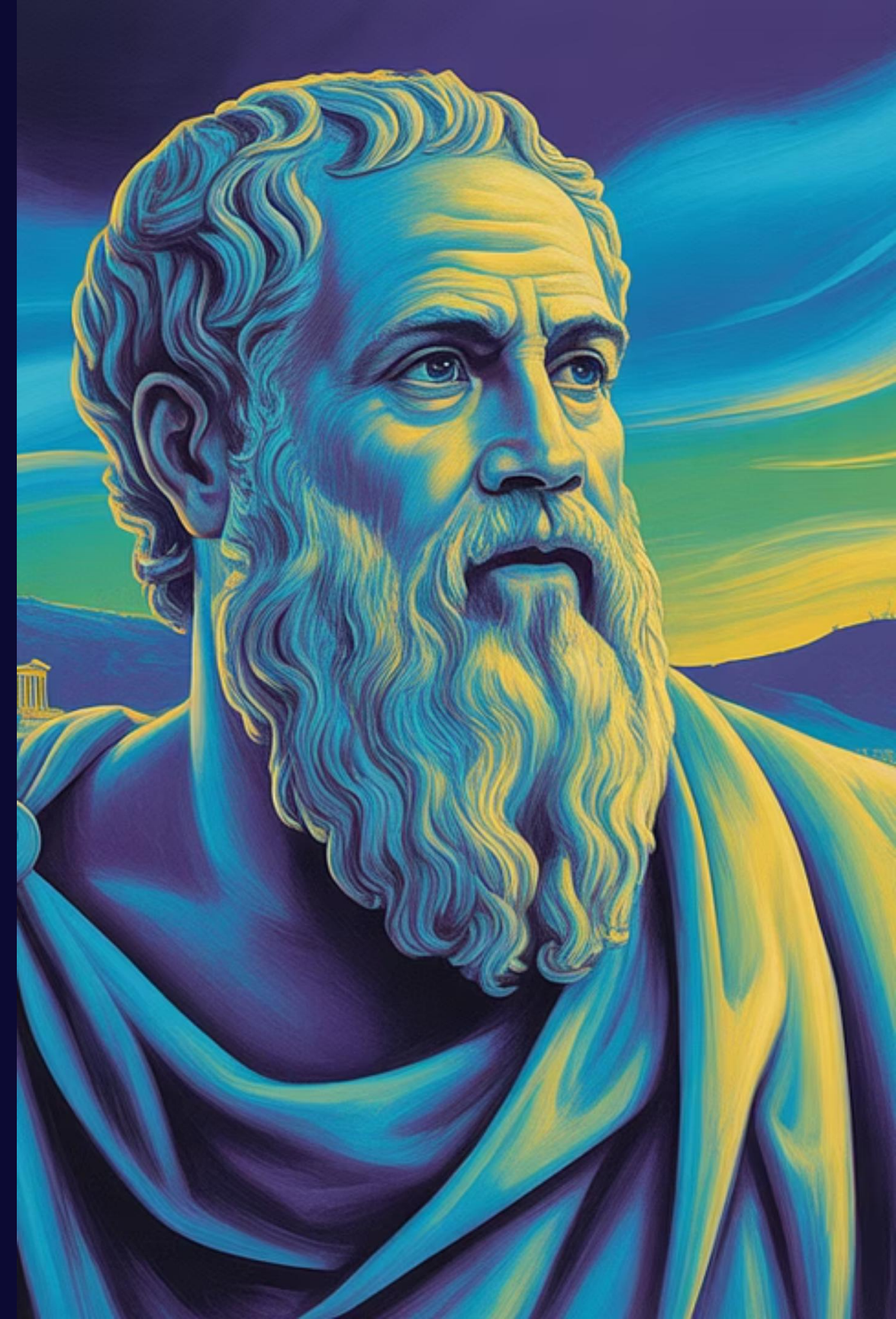


Plato: Philosopher of Justice and Political Theory

An exploration of Plato's life, political context, and enduring philosophical legacy



Introduction to Plato

Born in Athens in 427 BC and died in 347 BC

Influential Greek philosopher who founded the Academy in Athens

Student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle



The Peloponnesian War

Major conflict that shaped Plato's political thinking

Struggle between classes for political power

Hellenic Greek world divided by ideology and ambition



Political Division in Ancient Greece

Sparta

Supported by democratic factions

Military society with focus on discipline

Athens

Dominated by aristocrats and oligarchs

Centre of culture and philosophy



Plato's Critique of Self-Interest

- People unwilling to look beyond immediate self-interest
- Narrow focus on personal gain led to common ruin
- Collective misery resulted from failure to pursue common good
- This observation became central to Plato's political philosophy



Plato's Practical Politics

- Attempted to teach philosophy to the tyrant Dionysus II of Syracuse
- Failed mission resulted in Plato being sold into slavery
- Later ransomed by friends and returned to Athens
- Experience reinforced his views on the dangers of tyranny



Plato's Political Legacy

Rationalisation of Politics

- Politics could be guided by philosophical truth
- "The Republic" established his ideal state concept

Utopian Vision

- Created ideal standards as normative measuring rod
- Established philosophical framework for political critique

