Antiphon the Sophist Encyclopedia Article

Antiphon the Sophist

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Antiphon the Sophist

480-411 B.C.

Greek orator and statesman who first proposed the method of exhaustion for squaring the circle. Antiphon suggested that a regular polygon be inscribed in a circle, and the number of its sides successively doubled until the difference in areas between the polygon and the circle would have been exhausted. His method received criticism from Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) and others, and it appears likely that Antiphon believed a circle to be a polygon with a nearly infinite number of sides; nonetheless, he greatly advanced efforts to equate the area of a circle with that of a square.