The Doubly-Divided Line

The Visible

A | B | C | D | E
---|---|---|---|---
imagination  | belief  | discursive thought / reasoning  | understanding / “intellection”  |
  *eikasia*    |  *pistis* |  *dianoia*                     |  *noēsis*                      |
  ( copy  | model  ) | ( copy  | model  )                      |
“shadows and reflections”  | animals, plants, and artifacts  | reasoning from hypotheses to a conclusion  | intuitive return to unhypothetical first principle(s) |

The Geometry of the Line

- Divided according to the “golden section,” Φ (Phi).
- Small : Large :: Large : Whole
- AB : BC :: AC : CE
- CD : DE :: AC : CE
- BC = CD (The two middle segments are of equal length.)
- AC = DE (The first two segments together are equal in length to the fourth segment.)
- All other segments are incommensurable.
- All of the smaller segments are incommensurable with the line as a whole.

Other Significant Features

- This is a single, continuous line →
  - The cosmos itself, and our cognitive grasping of it, are continuous and unified.
- All of the divisions are made by the same ratio (*logos*). →
  - The cosmos itself is crafted according to analogy (*analogia*).
- Larger and smaller divisions →
  - Diminishing power (but still genuine and connected).

Questions

- What about the “vision of the Sun” and “the Good”, discussed by Socrates just before the divided line?
- In general, what does this image suggest about how we *as individuals* live and think?