

1023-Z1-923

**Carlos Bovell\*** ([carlosbovell@yahoo.com](mailto:carlosbovell@yahoo.com)). *Can Philosophers Learn How to Solve Problems from Mathematicians (Meno 86e-87c)?* Preliminary report.

Mahoney and several others schematize the progression of analysis as follows, where  $P$  represents the hypothesis proposed:  $P \rightarrow P_1 \rightarrow P_2 \rightarrow P_n \rightarrow K$ . Rather than deny the known fact with which they had hoped to eventually link  $K$ —that a man is not taught anything except knowledge—Socrates feels compelled to abandon  $K$ . This is something that Plato thought mathematicians would not typically do. Whether he is right or not on this count is neither here nor there for our present study. What does matter is that Plato incorporated into his philosophical inquiries a method putatively taken from geometers and adapted it to whatever degree for his own philosophic purposes. The germane fact is that Plato (at least in one place) attempts what might be called a mathematically inspired, axiomatic philosophical inquiry into the nature and properties of virtue, where axioms seem to be thought of as hypotheses. The inquiry ultimately fails—even if a positive position is finally enunciated in the *Meno*, it, too, must be subjected to the same type of procedural examination—yet the procedure itself is still entertained as showing at least initial promise for helping philosophers begin toward solutions to problems in philosophy.

(Received September 23, 2006)