

## *Polis* and *Politeia* in Aristotle

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I begin with a mild protest. As everyone in this discussion is aware, the theme of this conference, *polis [esti] koinonia politon politeias*, is a phrase ruthlessly torn out of context by our respected organiser. The conclusion of an argument, and the half (the second half) of the protasis of a conditional clause cannot be regarded as a substantive definition. So let me start by putting the phrase back in its context, and considering what Aristotle is really trying to say at this point. We could of course evade many of the questions by insisting on leaving in Greek all the difficult words. But since the burden of my paper will be that Aristotle has a real problem here, and that that problem is also my problem, it is surely incumbent on me to begin by offering a translation and an explanation in modern terms.

Aristotle has been considering the question whether the city retains its identity as long as its citizens remain the same body of citizens (that is whether it is the citizens which define the city), or whether the city changes when the constitution changes. It is a typical Aristotelian *aporia*, in which he pushes to the limits the logical argument in order to establish the essential characteristic of a particular concept, or the essential relationship between two or more concepts, in this case the citizen, the city and the constitution (I give the crucial phrase in italics):

For if *the city is a type of community and is the community of citizens of a constitution*, then when the constitution becomes different in form and changes, it would seem necessary that the city too is not the same, just as we say that a chorus appearing as a comic and as a tragic chorus is different, though often it consists of the same men – and similarly that every other community and compound is different if the arrangement of the compound is different, as we say that the harmony of the same voices is different when it is Dorian and when it is Phrygian. If this is the case, it is clear that we must essentially call a city the same in respect of its constitution: whereas it may be called either a different name or the same name whether the same people are inhabiting it or completely different people (*Politics* III 3, 1276b1-13).

I have a further difficulty with the motto of our conference in that it is my personal opinion that the text quoted by our organiser is corrupt. The two consecutive genitives are most odd, and the text as we have it seems to me virtually untranslatable (though I have done my best): most commentators usually paraphrase it almost unrecognisably. Eaton saw the corruption, and Susemihl considered deleting the first genitive *politon*.<sup>1</sup> But I prefer the simple correction of Congreve, *politeia for politeias*. It seems indeed that Congreve is supported by the lost manuscript that lies behind William of Moerbeke's thirteenth century Latin translation, which reads: 'Siquidem est communicatio quaedam civitas, est autem communicatio civium *politia*, facta altera specie et differente politia, necessarium esse videbitur et civitatem non esse eandem.'

The only trouble with this text is that it is almost too neat, offering a perfect antithesis (apart from the absence of a definite article) with the previous clause: 'if the *polis* is a *koinonia*, and if the *politeia* is a *koinonia* of *politai*, when the *politeia* differs then the *polis* differs': that is, if A is a B and if C is also a B, being an arrangement of the members of A, when C changes, then A changes. My logical friends tell me that this is in fact a valid argument, as well as a view that Aristotle certainly held. For if giraffes are spotty and if giraffeness is the quality of being a giraffe, when giraffeness becomes striped then giraffes are no longer the same giraffes.

But let me leave this textual problem aside. Whatever Aristotle wrote or said, he is not here interested in asserting that the city *is* a community of citizens of a constitution, but in the consequence that, *if this is so*, then a change of constitution means a different city. Athens is no longer Athens under an oligarchy (or in Greek terms the Athenians are no longer the Athenians). This might lead us to question the hypothetical statement in the protasis; but, bizarre though his conclusion may seem to us, it is surely a logical consequence of Aristotle's view of the nature of the *polis*. To him it is indeed the *politeia* which defines the nature of the *polis*, not the citizens.

My paper presents a series of Aristotelian *aporiai*: it does not offer answers, but rather sympathy for Aristotle. For I find myself in almost the same difficulty, perhaps because I have consciously been trying to reach a formulation of the nature of the Greek *polis* which owes as much to Aristotle as to Weber and Durkheim. For me it is the rationality of the *polis* which distinguishes it from all other forms of political organisation.<sup>2</sup> Political organisations are normally time-bound, historically determined by a complex interplay of forces over generations: we can change them, but in doing so we are constrained by past traditions and by present

attitudes: we are not free to follow the dictates of reason, as the good citizens of Denmark have recently taught the rationalising functionaries of Brussels. The result is that, even when change is rationally planned, it often leads to unexpected and unwanted consequences; and the result is always a mess, a mixture of old and new with little more than random coherence. That after all was the chief justification for Karl Popper's espousal of the concept of 'piecemeal social engineering' as the only way forward for reform in a post-war world.<sup>3</sup> His view of politics is even more dominant in a post-ideological world.

But I see the Greek city like Aristotle, as rationally determined. It has a history of course, but that history is determined by conscious change for the most part successfully carried out, and leading in various cities to a final form, a natural *telos*. The institutions are rationally interrelated and their working shows an acceptance of reason as the basis of political argument; in contrast to Rome, history neither explains nor justifies the institutions and political acts of the archaic and classical Greek city: I hasten to add in the case of Athens that, by the age of Demosthenes and even more by that of Lycurgus, history is gaining in importance as a justification for the constitution and for political action.

Like Aristotle, in order to create a believable social institution, I agree with Professor Ober in laying great emphasis on the notion of the city as a community or association (*koinonia*), and of the developed city as a network of interconnecting *koinoniai*, thus granting the *polis* both a unity and a social diversity necessary to its existence in history: Professor Ober has rightly emphasised this particular aspect of Aristotelian thought.<sup>4</sup> But increasingly it seems to me that it is not sufficient simply to appeal to the concept of *koinonia* in order to make plausible the concept of the *polis* as a teleologically or rationally ordered entity independent of history. The problem remains with us, and can be seen to exist for all such attempts to create a meaningful order in history.

For Aristotle the *polis* is a natural phenomenon, to be explained as the proper ordering of human communities. There is firstly a necessary element of ordering, related to the vulnerability of man as an animal, as he explains in book I: physical danger and the complex needs of man require that he live in communities. But these communities can be ordered either in accordance with a command structure or by justice. The family for instance is a command structure, but the union of families towards the creation of cities is accompanied by the increasing importance of justice. Aristotle therefore excludes from his analysis those forms of statehood which continue to build on power structures – oriental despotisms,

theocracies, tribal societies. The reason for this is teleological: man is by nature an animal of the *polis* – by biological nature not necessity, for he possesses the faculty of language and therefore the ability to distinguish justice and injustice (1253a9-15). Man has an end which can only be achieved in the context of a *polis*; for the ultimate fulfilment of all man's potentialities, he needs the *polis*. That is why he says at both the beginning and the end of the *Ethics* (*NE* I 2-3, 1094a18-1095a13; X 9, 1181b1-23) that the study of ethics must be completed by the study of politics, which alone will provide knowledge of the form of association compatible with man's nature. Even the philosopher with his theoretical wisdom can exist as a whole man only within the *polis*, which alone can satisfy all aspects of his soul, the vegetable, the animal and the divine. Man is 'an animal of the *polis* (*politikon zoon*)', just as other animals find their *telos* in the pack or the hive; indeed he is the 'most political' of all gregarious animals (*Pol.* I 2, 1253a7-9).<sup>5</sup> The *polis* is made by man as the highest form of organisation for man; and it is the nature of man as of all biological entities to aim at his end (cf. *Pol.* III 9, 1280a25-1281a11).<sup>6</sup>

So the development of society from the individual through the family to the city is natural, in accordance with man's nature. Here comes the first *aporia*: if that is true, why is it that not all humanity tends towards this *telos* of the city? History suggests that there are many successful and civilised societies which do not aim at the city. The answer for Aristotle lies in the different grades of humanity: 'Polis-ability' (*politike arete*), the ability to live together in just societies, is not distributed equally: it is universal in the sense that all have a certain basic share in it (since all can speak and reason), but it is distributed differently according to ethnic differences (*Pol.* III 10-13, 1281a11-1284b34). Some cultures may be naturally monarchic, in that one man possesses all or most of the political virtue; others are naturally oligarchic since a group of men outweighs the rest of the community in political virtue. The Greeks have a natural disposition to relatively equal distribution of political virtue, and therefore the *polis* is their natural habitat. Moreover it is biologically more advanced (as we might say), or teleologically more correct, to have a fairly even distribution of essential human characteristics throughout the community; and societies that have evolved towards the *polis* have thereby shown that they are the most human, while societies that exist under the despotism of one man or with unequal distributions of political privilege show themselves to be, not merely historically unfortunate, but natural slaves: their humanity is of a lesser grade, and they may legitimately be used in the service of the higher more human Greek city (*Pol.* I

5, 1254a17-1255a2). We may dislike this answer and believe it to be false, but it is nevertheless rational in being based on observation in conformity with a theory.

It is characteristic of Aristotle's theoretical focus that he does not stop to consider the interesting historical question, how other breeds of lesser humanity might reach their appropriate political forms. One could construct an answer for him, perhaps by charting a progression from family to village to tribe to oriental despotism rather than city; but even if Aristotle accepted this possible alternative he would I think see the two processes as separate, a bifurcation of human social development rather than an example in the non-Greek case of arrested development; for the tribe plays little part in his construction of the city. The fact is Aristotle's focus is on the *polis* not the *ethnos*, and the loss of his *Barbarian Customs* is no great loss either to political philosophy or to history.

The second *aporia* is I think more difficult for Aristotle. The *politeia* is the political organisation of the *polis*: since the *polis* is teleologically determined, should not all *politeiai* be the same, or at least tend to the same form? Why do different cities have different constitutions? It is true (as Prof. Christensen has reminded me) that although Greeks are a happy mixture of the northern 'thumetic' and the Asiatic 'dianoetic' types, ideally suited to the highest political development (*Pol.* VII 7, 1327b18-36), they themselves vary within a certain range; and some Greeks are less perfect than others, more barbarian-like in one or the other respect. However Aristotle does not make this the basis for a classification of constitutions. And even if the genetic or historical starting-point in different cities were held to be different, there should still be convergence towards the one ideal constitution, which will not need to be imposed by the philosopher, but will emerge as part of the rational-historical process.

There is of course a very important sense in which Aristotle believes that there is one best constitution, and that history is tending towards it. That constitution is aptly called the *politeia*, as if it encapsulated the essence of all political experience (*Pol.* IV 8-9, 1293b22-1294b40). In practical terms it is a modified democracy, a late-fourth century Athenian version of democracy laced with a bit (but a very small bit) of Spartan institutions – Aristotle being rather more critical of Sparta than Plato, as a result of the collapse of the Spartan myth. Such a 'hoplite' democracy is clearly what was emerging at Athens with the reforms of the *ephebeia* and the conservative tendencies of the age of Eubulus and Lycurgus.

But again Aristotle does not believe that all six forms of constitutions

are by-products of a development towards the one *politeia*. Must we believe that Spartans and Corinthians have a different distribution of political virtue from Athenians, as well as believing that Athenians have gone too far? A possible modern solution might be that this is in part what Aristotle means when he says that politics is not an exact science, but true only 'for the most part': it is not simply that the generalisations and rules of the science have to allow for exceptions; it may also be that the practitioners have to allow in human societies that they can only roughly aim at the target (*NE* I 3, 1094b12-27; cf. *Rhet.* I 2, 1357a22-34); perhaps the range of city organisations from Sparta to Athens is an index of the approximateness of the teleological process: all are really part of the same pattern, and there is ultimately no great difference between them. But Aristotle is far too interested in the detailed varieties and changes between constitutions for this explanation to be satisfying to him.

Aristotle's own answer to this problem is given at *Pol.* IV 3 (1289b27-1290a29). The variety of constitutions results from the diversity of citizens. All cities are composed of families; these families are rich or poor or middle class. The *demoi* may be involved in agriculture, in trade or manufacture. The rich too differ in respect of wealth and property, birth and merit. This gives rise to a variety of constitutions, for a *politeia* is an ordering of offices in relation either to power or equality.

This is Aristotle in his proto-Marxist or economic mode:<sup>7</sup> the economy is seen to complicate the picture, in accordance with the struggle for power or the principles of an arithmetical or proportional justice. It involves very different principles from those which assert the biological necessity of the *polis*. For on this analysis the *polis* and the *politeia* are basically an ordering of *citizens*, and it should therefore be the citizens, not the constitution, which define the city.

Aristotle's interest in the substantive variety of constitutions compounds the problem. For it introduces a third *aporia*: how do constitutions change? How do they develop through history? In so far as each constitution approximates to the ideal, it should be immune from change, or capable only of one directional change. Aristotle is far too aware of the multifariousness and complexity of actual historical developments to be satisfied with this.

This problem is in turn connected to a fourth *aporia*: how are we to explain *stasis*? It is clear that political *stasis*, irreconcilable political differences leading to civil war and the destruction of whole communities, was endemic in the Greek world, and that Greek political institutions

never found a way of dealing with it (except possibly for the device of tyranny, that is the suspension of political life). This was a problem for all Greeks, not just historians and philosophers – Thucydides (III 82) expressed the general view when he saw *stasis* as a *nosos*, a disease of the body politic, for the most part inexplicable and incurable like the Great Plague itself: it had to be described so that it might be recognised in future in terms of symptoms and consequences. But Greek thinkers are strangely silent about the possible causes, taking refuge in a vivid but traditional descriptive picture without analysis.<sup>8</sup> As I have argued elsewhere ('Cities of Reason' p.20-1), this relates to a basic difference between ancient and modern conceptions of politics: the absence of the conception of politics as the conflict of interests, the insistence on the community as a unity and the political act as the expression of the communal will, all this can be seen as one of the important consequences of the Greek *polis* as a *koinonia*, the embodiment of community values. But once true class war emerged, the Greeks had no way of controlling its consequences; and the absence of the conception of politics as conflict between interest groups, or a struggle for power, remains a basic weakness in Greek political thought.

Aristotle's own attempt to answer the problem of the general causes of *stasis* is given at the start of book V, and reflects his view of the reasons for the diversity of constitutions in book IV. The real cause of *stasis* is inequality. Men are both equal and unequal in many respects, and therefore desire either to be unequal in all respects or to be equal in all respects. Both inequality and equality are seen as types of justice; all men (and therefore all *poleis*) aim at justice, but they have different ideas as to what it is. Aristotle then proceeds to his long analysis of the ways in which inequality manifests itself; but the fundamental cause of *stasis* lies in inequality: *pantachou gar dia to anison he stasis* (1301b26).

This analysis too locates the origin of *stasis* in economic causes, and leads us back ultimately to the discussion in book I 8-11 on the economic basis of the *polis*. My point is that there are really two conceptions of the *polis* in Aristotle: one is of the economic and necessary *polis*, the other is of the natural and just *polis*. The necessary *polis* allows of diversity of constitution and change, the natural *polis* does not. The necessary *polis* is based on the concept of the *polis* as a community of citizens (*koinonia politon*) in all their diversity, in which the *politeia* reflects the economic activities of the citizens, and is closely related to the conception of them as producers and agents. The natural *polis* is based on the concept of a *polis* as simply a *politeia*, an ordering of the citizen body (*politai*) in rela-

tion to office holding (*archai*: *Pol.* III 6, 1278a8-9; IV 1, 1289a15-18). In this second case the *politai* are subordinate to the *politeia*, and when the *politeia* changes, the *polis* must change.

All these *aporai* are related, in that all concern the consequences of history for political theory. The possible effects of varieties of human nature, the differences in the development of *politeiai* and the variety of their final forms, the difficulty of explaining how they change, are all disturbances introduced by history into the theoretical picture. As Aristotle saw, it is not enough to say that politics is an inexact science valid only for the most part. His programme of the study of real *politeiai* was not just in order to provide the factual basis for his theoretical generalisations; it was an essential expansion of the theory.

In books IV-VI of the *Politics* Aristotle tried to tackle this basic weakness in his theory. In book IV he considered the relation of existing constitutions to the theory of politics, and the variety of such constitutions. In book V he considered the general causes of revolution and stability, and the causes of *stasis* in each variety of constitution. In book VI he turned to the modes of improving the stability or performance of democracies and oligarchies. The introduction which justifies all these books emphasises the practical nature of the art of politics: theory should lead to the improvement of existing political life. But there is in these books an element of casuistry that is ultimately unsatisfying.<sup>9</sup> The practical application of theoretical views often degenerates into little more than clever tricks for promoting or overthrowing constitutions; and we learn little further about why this variety of constitutions exists and why there is no simple progression towards an ultimate *politeia*; even Plato had believed in a cycle of constitutions. The casuistry of political forms, how to stabilise, how to revolutionise, does not reveal why stability does not exist or the structural reasons for change.

The task Aristotle perhaps only dimly perceived in these books was carried on by his disciples with relentless efficiency. The great collections of examples of constitutions, laws and revolutions associated with the early Peripatos, from Theophrastus to Dicaearchus and Demetrius of Phaleron, constitute the most sustained programme of research into chance and change in political institutions in the ancient world. Our present fragments present little more than a collection of random factoids, and the conceptual framework is difficult to discover. But as H. Bloch argued long ago,<sup>10</sup> it goes back to the perceptions of Aristotle himself.

Behind this later industry and behind the central books of the *Politics*



lie Aristotle's own collection of 157 *Politeiai*. It is perhaps here that we might expect Aristotle to face in concrete terms the problem of historical development and change in relation to the concept of the *polis*. The model of Aristotelian investigation is provided by the *Athenaion Politeia*; for this purpose it makes not the slightest difference whether it is by Aristotle himself or a pupil, for we must surely believe that it was Aristotle who provided the plan of research. I would also assume that all (or almost all) other *Politeiai* were designed according to the same model; that assumption is certainly capable of fitting the evidence available for most cities in Aristotle's day, and conforms to the fragmentary evidence we possess in the majority of cases.<sup>11</sup>

The model chosen by Aristotle is surely new as a literary genre or research project; no previous writer can have designed works of this type, for he would have lacked the incentive.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand it is eminently sensible as a response to the needs of Aristotelian theory, and capable of being carried out by any reasonably competent member of the team. The model consists of a historical section based on the available literary sources, with some occasional but not systematic reference to documentary evidence; this is followed by a descriptive section of the political constitution of the city.

It may be that the fact that in the *Ath. Pol.* the word *politeia* denotes exclusively the political institutions of Athens suggests that Aristotle was not primarily concerned in any of these works with the wider ideological and educational issues: if so, the *Constitution of the Lakedaimonians* and that on the Cretans would have had a scope very different from the works of Xenophon, Ephorus and others, and very different from Aristotle's own observations in the *Politics*. I think this is a very difficult question which needs more thought; but, while social and cultural characteristics are not entirely absent from the surviving fragments of Aristotle's *Politeiai* and from the epitome of Herakleides, these do concentrate on historical events and political institutions.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand we might imagine that the *Constitution of the Athenians* was misleading in this respect, since Aristotle did not regard Athens as being a *paideia* of anything.

What is clear is that, however standard the model, each city's *Politeia* will have looked different according to the sources available for the research and contemporary analysis. It is exactly a hundred years since Wilamowitz in his seminars of 1891/2 and through the summer of 1892 was working on the significance of these facts; it is appropriate to pay homage to the first serious modern work on Athenian local history, *Aristoteles und Athen* (Berlin, 1893).

A century later, thanks to his work and that of a succession of scholars, among whom we should mention above all Felix Jacoby and our two colleagues at this colloquium, Mogens Herman Hansen and Peter Rhodes, the evidential basis of the *Constitution of the Athenians* is clear. Part 1 (chapters 1-41) is dependent on the tradition of the Atthis, especially on Androtion; this is filled out in a way that is almost certainly untypical of the Atthis (as it was of serious Greek historical works in all periods before the Judaeo-Christian historians) by quotations from poetry and semi-literary documents, genuine and forged; very occasionally and on a casual basis, appeal is made to official or inscriptional material, but there is no sign of systematic archival research by the author, who uses the texts but does not follow the methods of the Atthis. In contrast Part 2 (chapters 42-69) is based on the revision of the democratic law code inscribed in the *Stoa Basileios*; it is arranged by magistracies and offices, and ends with the procedure of the lawcourts; there is no place for a wider less institutional analysis.<sup>14</sup> Given the available materials and purpose of the project, this was a sensible and economical way of organising the research: and (as I have said) it was one which was followed as far as possible for most of the *Politeiai*. For there are many parallels between the techniques of the *Constitution of the Athenians* and those found in the fragments of other works: to give one example, the layout and style of argument in Plutarch's *Lycurgus* chapter 6, with its use of documents, philology and poetry, is clearly derived from Aristotle, and is closely parallel to the *Ath. Pol.*'s discussion of Solon.<sup>15</sup>

Athens must, however, have presented a particular problem to the Aristotelian researcher interested in change. On the one hand there must have been far more evidence for Athenian constitutional development than for most cities; on the other hand Athens was not much given to violent *stasis*; as many modern scholars have noted it was a city with a high degree of unity, a genuine element of *koinonia*, despite the variety of citizen types it contained, its freedom 'to live as one wished' and its economic diversity; Athens was a genuinely pluralist society. It was therefore not a very good example of radical constitutional changes: it might be thought rather to favour that other Aristotelian vision of the *polis* as a natural institution developing according to an inner logic. Nevertheless the author of our work makes the most he can of violent revolution: he carefully places the origins of democracy in a period of Solonian *stasis* (*Ath. Pol.* 5); and he shows extreme interest in the events of 411 and 404 (*Ath. Pol.* 29-38), neither of which are of any serious importance for the nature of the Athenian *politeia*. In contrast we may note his

total lack of interest in the restoration of democracy, simply because it was a non-violent (but nevertheless, as Hansen has taught us, fundamental) revolution.<sup>16</sup> It is obvious where our author's interests lie.

The history of the Athenian constitution is therefore conceived in narrow institutional terms, and as a series of sudden changes or *mini-staseis*. The theoretical basis of the *Ath. Pol.* is given in chapter 41, which (as Peter Rhodes has rightly said, o.c. p. 482) forms 'one of the most strikingly Aristotelian passages' in the work. Here the constitutional history of Athens is reduced to eleven changes or *metabolai*: the whole vocabulary describing these changes emphasises their radical nature by words like *metastasis*, *stasis*, *katalusis*, *katastasis*. This is the crucial theoretical chapter; and, as many commentators have noted, it has been tampered with. For there are in fact twelve, not eleven changes: the discovery of the forged constitution of Drakon has forced the author to insert another unnumbered revolution into the sequence, between numbers 2 and 3. This is usually thought to show that the constitution of Drakon is a late discovery, after the main body of the work had been completed; and there are other indications that this may be so.<sup>17</sup>

However I would like to suggest that it has also a far wider significance. It is generally assumed that the final 'author' of the *Ath. Pol.* inserted an additional constitution into an existing text, and that the original sequence of eleven constitutions was a considered verdict written by a first 'author' after he had completed his research and composed the historical narrative. I would rather see chapter 41 as the original schema of Athenian constitutional history set up by Aristotle, to which he required the historical evidence to conform, a framework constructed before the detailed narrative itself. As Peter Ghosh has brilliantly and finally proved, the original plan of Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is to be found inserted in the work itself, as the 'General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West' at the end of volume III, nearly a decade after they were written, and in order to form a conclusion to the work as originally conceived.<sup>18</sup> As in the case of Gibbon, I suggest that Aristotle has inserted his original plan of the historical section at the end of that section; and, as in the case of Gibbon, it is an inevitable consequence that the detailed narrative of the *Ath. Pol.* sometimes conflicts with its original plan, which fails to satisfy us in its new role as a conclusion. But in this case we have of course a further cause for puzzlement, for it may be that the man who laid down the plan and the man who carried it out are not one and the same, but master and pupil.

Chapter 41 is the crucial theoretical chapter. It shows that the *Constitution of the Athenians* was based on a model which was designed to answer questions posed by Aristotelian theory. Unfortunately it fails to answer those questions for two reasons. Firstly because the *stasis* model of political change may get over the static nature of the Aristotelian analysis of the *polis* as a *koinonia* by regarding all change as constituting immediately a new *polis* and a new *koinonia*; and it may solve the problem of the inevitability of a teleological development; yet it still does not explain why *stasis* occurs: it still does not accept that conflict is an intrinsic part of the political experience and requires institutions to mediate its effects. Like all other Greeks, Aristotle, after all his analysis of historical examples, is still unable to see that the *polis* has to be more than a *koinonia* if it is to survive class warfare.

Secondly of course, and more parochially, Aristotle's attempt fails because it is bad history. The history of Mytilene or Miletus or Corcyra might respond to the catastrophe theory of political change. But that theory is just not appropriate to the gradual development of Athenian political institutions: there were no revolutions in Athens; and to see Athenian history as a series of new constitutions attached to one named reformer and appearing in a single year is clearly false: to take two obvious examples, the Cleisthenic and the Ephialtic constitutions began with their eponyms, but each took more than a decade to come to fruition after the disappearance of their protagonists. Ironically, the one *Politeia* we possess is a *Politeia* of a city which is a particularly successful example of Aristotle's view of the *polis* as a *koinonia* (as Professor Ober points out in the second half of his paper): Aristotle would have been better using it to support his general theory, rather than trying to make it explain a weakness in that theory.

My conclusion is that the *Constitution of the Athenians* does not solve Aristotle's problem: it displays the same weaknesses as the analysis in the *Politics*, but in the historical mode. By asserting that the city is a community, and the constitution is a community of citizens, Aristotle is committed to believing in eleven (or twelve) *politeiai* each implying a completely new *polis* attached to the geographical locus popularly known as the city of Athens – eleven cities in place of one, and eleven sets of Athenians, whose identity of name disguises a complete discontinuity. QUOD EST ABSURDUM.<sup>19</sup>

## Notes

- 1 In his first edition (Leipzig 1872); see his discussion of the problem in F. Susemihl, R.D. Hicks, *The Politics of Aristotle I-V* (London 1894) 365.
- 2 'Cities of Reason', *The Greek City* ed. O. Murray and S. Price (Oxford, 1990) 1-25; 'History and Reason in the Ancient City', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 59 (1991) 1-13.
- 3 Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London, 1957).
- 4 See his contribution to this symposium, above, p. 129; also S. Everson, 'Aristotle on the Foundation of the State', *Political Studies* 36 (1988) 89-101.
- 5 In his response to this paper, Prof. Johnny Christensen rightly drew attention to *Hist. animal.* I 1, 488a, where living creatures are divided into either the gregarious or the solitary or those which are both, to which last man belongs; his gregariousness is 'political', having one common object in view, like the bee, the wasp, the ant and the crane. Of these some submit to a ruler, others are anarchic; but Aristotle does not categorise man in this respect.
- 6 For the problems in this conception see in general W. Kullmann, 'Man as a Political Animal', in D. Keyt, F.D. Miller, *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics* (Oxford 1991) 94-117.
- 7 See G.E.M. de Sainte Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London 1981) 69-80; S. Meikle, 'Aristotle and Exchange Value', in Keyt and Miller (o.c.) 156-81.
- 8 H. Ryffel, *Metabole Politeion* (Bern 1949); for Aristotle see R. Polansky, 'Aristotle on Political Change', in Keyt and Miller (o.c.) 323-45.
- 9 As E. Barker saw in his characterisation of the analysis as 'The Trimmer's Opinion of the Laws and Government': 'The Life of Aristotle and the Composition and Structure of Aristotle's Politics', *Classical Review* 45 (1931) 162-72, at p. 164.
- 10 H. Bloch, 'Studies in the Historical Literature of the Fourth Century B.C.: III Theophrastus' *Nomoi* and Aristotle', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* Suppl. 1 (1940) 355-76.
- 11 J.J. Keaney, *The Composition of Aristotle's Athenaiion Politeia* (New York 1992) 14 n.4 points out that the Arcadian League *Politeia* had no historical section, and that other cities, being no longer in existence, must have lacked a section on the present constitution; but with these exceptions the evidence supports the view below.
- 12 This was established by F. Jacoby, *Atthis* (Oxford 1949) 211-5, which remains the best characterisation of the *eidōs* of the *Politeia*. Keaney's attempt to relate the genre to the idea of *Kulturgeschichte* in antiquity (o.c. chs.2-3) seems to me to rest on a series of confusions.
- 13 See the useful comments of Keaney o.c. ch. 19. For Herakleides see H. Bloch, 'Herakleides Lembos and his *Epitome* of Aristotle's *Politeia*', *TAPA* 71 (1940) 27-39. For the dangers in drawing conclusions from such evidence, see P.A. Brunt, 'On Historical Fragments and Epitomes', *CQ* 30 (1980) 477-94.
- 14 For the sources of these two sections see P.J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaiion Politeia* (Oxford 1981) 5-37; for the *Stoa Basileios* see J.M. Camp, *The Athenian Agora* (London 1986) 100-5.
- 15 See my *Early Greece* (2nd edn London 1993) ch. 10.
- 16 M.H. Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes* (Oxford 1991) ch. 13.
- 17 Rhodes o.c. 84-7, 484-5. The only serious attempt to claim that the Draconian constitution is intrinsic to the original text is that of K. von Fritz, 'The Composition of Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens* and the So-called Draconian Constitution', *CP* 49 (1954) 73-93.
- 18 P.R. Ghosh, 'Gibbon's Dark Ages', *Journal of Roman Studies* 73 (1983) 1-23; 'Gibbon Observed', *ib.* 81 (1991) 132-56.

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