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ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ IN ARISTOTLE'S *POLITICA*:
AN ANNOTATED CATALOGUE

INTRODUCTION

What follows is an annotated catalogue of the 522 occurrences of πολιτεία in Aristotle's *Politica*, based on Ross's text. It includes eight tables, one for each book. Each table has six columns—one for the Bekker line number, one each for the four senses which I think that Aristotle from time to time intends, the columns being named after Bonitz's numbering (see below), and a notes column. Where there are two occurrences in a single Bekker line, I have designated them a and b. The four senses are citizenship, citizen body, arrangement of offices or constitution, and regime. There is some symmetry here, with the abstract senses first and third and the concrete senses second and fourth. As Denniston reminded us, the Greeks were comfortable using an abstract noun in a concrete way just as we are; like Thucydides, we sometimes speak of the youth when we intend young people.¹ Schofield has gone so far as to suggest that citizenship is the core meaning of πολιτεία and that citizenship is a condition.² What a core meaning and a condition are in this context remain to be explained, though I believe that they can be.

For some occurrences I do not identify a sense, since the text sometimes, in my view, does not permit it. I have marked these occurrences as inexplicit in the notes column. Also, in some occurrences, it seems that Aristotle may intend more than one sense, and in these cases I have marked more than one column.

The tables compare my view of Aristotle's intention in each occurrence with the widely used Penguin translation of Sinclair-Saunders, which represents well the translation tradition of the most recent revival of interest in Aristotle's *Politica*, dating back to the middle of the twentieth century. For each occurrence I insert 's.-s.' in the appropriate column to indicate how Sinclair-Saunders translates, except where no translation is offered, which occurs occasionally, and which I indicate in the notes column; 'm.' in the appropriate column to indicate what I think Aristotle intends; and occasionally an initial which indicates how another author translates. In the notes column, where no attribution is given, 'm.' is to be understood. Occasional entries in the notes column identify expressions which may be useful for interpretation as well as out-of-the ordinary translations.

Sinclair-Saunders, with its notes and supplementary matter, has helped many recent students, including myself, to appreciate more fully Aristotle's thoughts about the things related to the citizen—the apparent subject of the work. Still, the tendency of Sinclair-Saunders to render πολιτεία uniformly by 'constitution' risks distorting Aristotle's sense, since it is out of touch with at least part of settled Greek usage in both literature and inscriptions as well as with

¹J.D. Denniston, *Greek Prose Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 28.

²M. Schofield, *Plato: Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 33.

historical English usage. ‘Constitution’ is a fairly old word in English, but it didn’t acquire its current political senses until comparatively recently, and whether the current senses convey the senses of Aristotle’s πολιτεία is something that must be argued for rather than assumed.

To my knowledge, the other main attempt to consider the senses of πολιτεία in the *Politica* was that of Hermann Bonitz and his collaborators in the *Index Aristotelicus* of 1870, though its coverage was not complete. Bonitz divided the occurrences into eight divisions, including my four senses, two of which—my b.3.a. and b.3.b.—he included under the one number 3; I include his listings under 3 in the second and fifth columns. The other divisions represent uses rather than senses, and they sometimes are identified in the notes column.

In his seventh division (b.7), Bonitz includes examples of the so-called πολιτεία, which is supposed to be a mixture. Many English translators give ‘polity’. Certainly Aristotle has expressions which correspond to this division, though, once the mixture is acknowledged, it remains to be decided what precisely is being mixed. One might mix citizen bodies, for example, as Alexander did, and one might mix regimes, giving some offices to the wealthy and some to the indigent. As these mixtures occurred, the constitution or arrangement of offices might remain the same, though it might prove elastic over time. This is an issue which the catalogue may help scholars to address.

Although Newman and Robinson, for example, acknowledged occasionally that they were not able to decipher Aristotle’s intent, they did not isolate a class of occurrences in which the text was inexplicit, as I have tried to do. While Bonitz did not identify occurrences as inexplicit either, he did describe the occurrences in his eighth division (b.8) as *civitatis formae descriptae a philosophis* without linking these occurrences to any of the four senses, which perhaps has a somewhat similar force. Such occurrences are especially prominent in Book II, where Aristotle either introduces a section on an author about whom he will say something substantive eventually or concludes a section in a formulaic way. Modern authors do something similar; it often is difficult to tell from the first sentences or from the summary of an article or a chapter exactly what the author has in mind or how the author might be using an important word; the article or chapter as a whole is supposed to explain it. My criterion for labeling an occurrence as inexplicit has been what can be derived from the immediate context, usually the sentence. Where a sense is not accessible in the immediate context, I have been reluctant to identify one.

The catalogue is offered as a working document. Indeed, it shows explicitly where scholars of the past have disagreed with one another and might not agree with me, and so it indicates where more discussion may be appropriate. I shall welcome any information that may make the catalogue more faithful to Aristotle’s intentions.

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