ARISTOTLE'S *POLITICS*: THE CITY OF BOOK SEVEN AND THE QUESTION OF IDEOLOGY

Two of the most important questions regarding the ideal city of the seventh book of the *Politics* are whether it is really Aristotle's 'best' πόλις or only one possible version of it, and what is its constitutional type. I argue that this city is both Aristotle's only absolutely best πόλις and a clear-cut aristocracy—an aristocracy both in general and in Aristotelian terms. I further argue that the way Aristotle sets this city up makes it immune to civil disorder, στάσις, a most crucial feature in view of Artistotle's emphasis on στάσις in the fifth book, and one definitely fitting with its ideal character. In order to secure this immunity, however, the philosopher envisages a social structure which minimizes the city's relevance to contemporary Greek politics. One interesting consequence of this analysis is that when this structure is carefully examined it turns out that, contrary to the orthodox view, Aristotle's best city is much closer to the *Republic* than to the *Laws*.[1]

But is the city of the seventh book the only ideal πόλις of the *Politics*? Aristotle portrays a perfect monarchy in the third book and some scholars have asked whether the best city of the last two books can actually be identified with one of the correct (ὀρθαί) constitutions of the third.

The perfect monarchy of the third book is predicated on the assumption of the appearance of a superhuman ruler, who is, in both moral and intellectual terms, incomparably superior to the other citizens. Since Aristotle maintains that merit ought to be the only criterion for the distribution of political power, such a ruler cannot legitimately be ruled by anyone else or even share ruling. This superhuman king is Aristotle's adaptation of Plato's philosopher–ruler, as the Stagirite's language clearly suggests: he is 'a god among men',[2] a phrase almost identical to the one Plato uses to characterize the rule of such a person in the *Politicus* 303B4.[3] Moreover, like the Platonic philosopher–rulers, the Aristotelian king is to be placed above the law, which means that his monarchy is not going to be constitutional but absolute.

Aristotle may have had another motive for describing absolute monarchy, παμβασιλεία, in positive terms: his association with the Macedonian court. Platonic connotations of infallible knowledge notwithstanding, in the third quarter of the

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[1] For recent arguments supporting this view see G. L. Huxley, 'On Aristotle's best state', in P. A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey (edd.), *Crux: Essays Presented to G. E. M. Ste Croix on his 75th Birthday*, *HPTh* 6 (1985), 142; C. Kahn, 'Comments on M. Schofield, "Ideology and philosophy in Aristotle's theory of slavery"', in Günther Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' "Politik"* (Göttingen, 1990), 31; R. Kraut, *Aristotle, Politics Books VII and VIII* (Oxford, 1997), 139–40; and especially D. J. Depew, 'Politics, music and contemplation in Aristotle's ideal state', in D. Keyt and F. D. Miller Jr. (edd.), *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics* (Oxford, 1991), 377–8. Depew asserts that both the cities of the *Laws* and of *Politics* 7 are colonies composed exclusively of leisured aristo-crats, but this is actually wrong. As I argue in T. Samaras, *Plato on Democracy* (New York, 2002), 221–3, the evidence for the majority of the citizens of the *Laws* tilling their own land is over-whelming.

[2] 1284a10–11.

[3] Aristotle's phrase is θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις and Plato's θεὸν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων. It is interesting that, although both philosophers make practically the same point, Aristotle's formulation indicates disbelief in the possibility of the appearance of such an individual.

fourth century B.C., in the mind of most Greeks, the only plausible candidates for the role of the superhuman ruler would be Philip and Alexander, and Aristotle's connection to them is well known.[4]

Neither Philip nor Alexander was very credible as a philosopher, however, and the assumption of absolute monarchy being Aristotle's favourite constitution does not dovetail with other parts of his theory. In the first book, Aristotle declares that whoever is not part of a human society is either a god or a beast.[5] Given that the superhuman ruler is described precisely as a god in 1284a10-11, it becomes open to doubt whether he can really be a member of the political community at all. Furthermore, like Plato, Aristotle concedes the extreme rarity of such a king[6] and, in the *Politics* as a whole, devotes much more space to the discussion of an ideal aristocracy and its education than he does to $\pi\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$.

It is therefore unnecessary to assume that there are two competing best states in the *Politics*, as Newman and Keyt do.[7] $\Pi\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is an ideal constitution that can come about only in the hardly likely circumstances in which a perfect ruler both appears and is recognized as such and gets to be discussed far less than the idealized aristocracy of Book 7.

As far as the constitutions of the third book are concerned, these are 'correct' ($\dot{o}\rho\theta\alpha\acute{\iota}$),[8] but not perfect constitutions. Aristotle's classification comes directly from Plato's *Politicus* and in the *Politicus* the perfect constitution is not any one of the $\dot{o}\rho\theta\alpha\grave{\iota}\ \pi o\lambda\iota\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$, but an entirely different one: the absolute rule of the $\pi o\lambda\iota\tau\iota\kappa\grave{o}\varsigma$ $\dot{\alpha}\nu\acute{\eta}\rho$, in other words the philosopher–ruler of the *Republic*. Plato makes this distinction explicit: the perfect constitution is to be separated from both correct and 'corrupt' ones and to be exalted as 'a god among men'.[9] Although, by Plato's own admission, the same name can be applied to both the lawful constitutional monarchy of the unphilosophical but law-abiding king and the faultless absolute monarchy of the knowledgeable Ideal Ruler,[10] there can be no question that these two are different constitutional species. Despite the fact that he never makes this point as clear as Plato, Aristotle ostensibly operates on the assumption that the $\dot{o}\rho\theta\alpha\grave{\iota}\ \pi o\lambda\iota\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$ are better than the $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\kappa\beta\acute{\alpha}\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, but not perfect. His own criterion is not only lawfulness, but also rule for the overall good of the $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\iota\varsigma$ rather than for the sake of the ruling party. But it does not follow from this that any aristocracy or democracy in which the rulers do not govern in their own narrow class interest becomes *ipso facto* perfect. There could be still many political decisions that the rulers get wrong despite their honourable intentions. More generally, Aristotle operates in this part of the text with existing cities in mind. His point is that those cities in which there will be no self-interested political domination by one individual or one social class will be better than those in which the rulers will only be concerned with their particular interests.[11] But this falls far short of making these cities ideal and Aristotle's language nowhere

[4] On this whole matter see H. Kelsen, 'The philosophy of Aristotle and the Hellenic–Macedonian policy', *International Journal of Ethics* 48 (1937), 37.

[5] 1253a29.

[6] 1332b23–7.

[7] W. L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1887), 291–2 and D. Keyt, 'Aristotle's theory of distributive justice', in Keyt and Miller (n. 1), 257, n. 43.

[8] 1278a18. The term $\dot{o}\rho\theta\acute{o}\varsigma$ does not necessarily entail perfection.

[9] 303B4.

[10] 301A–B.

[11] Aristotle makes this point explicitly in 1279a17–20.

suggests that any of their constitutions will be perfect. If we look a little more carefully at the context of the whole discussion, it becomes evident that the philosopher is thinking here of existing (mainland) Greek cities and the possibility of their amelioration, whereas the ideal city of Book 7 is probably to materialize, if at all, in a different geographical space and under different conditions. For these reasons, it can be seriously misleading to ask whether the ideal city of the seventh book corresponds exactly to any of the ὀρθαὶ πολιτεῖαι of the third. Huxley, who asks this question, realizes that the former is not identified with any of the latter, but then goes on to deny that it is an aristocracy on the grounds that its character does not correspond to the ὀρθή aristocracy of the third book.[12] Nevertheless, the fact that the two are different *kinds* of aristocracy does not cancel out the fact that they *are* aristocracies.

Actually, the city of Book 7 is an indisputable aristocracy, because its citizen body is co-extensive with a leisured landowning class which controls all the city's property[13] and whose members are not permitted to get involved in commerce or manual labour.[14] According to Aristotle's own constitutional analysis in the third book, democracy is typified by the fact that it bestows the privilege of citizenship to *banausics*, the native adult manual workers,[15] and aristocracy by the fact that it does not. Oligarchy is the kind of constitution that allows citizenship to some *banausics*, those who are involved in craftsmanship and are economically successful, but not to the θῆτες, the small land cultivators.[16] Given that in the πόλις of Book 7 neither *banausics* nor θῆτες are accepted into the citizen body, its constitution can only be defined as a straightforward, unmixed aristocracy. The fact that some of its institutions are egalitarian does not make it a 'democratic aristocracy',[17] because when the citizen body is substantially restricted, as in this case, equality amongst its members can perfectly well be aristocratic.[18] Actually, Aristotle himself declares that majority rule obtains equally in aristocracies, oligarchies and democracies.[19]

Nevertheless, the claim that in the ideal πόλις no manual workers are to be citizens generates one problem for Aristotle.

In the fifth book of the *Politics*, where the question of στάσις is examined at some length, the philosopher identifies the claim to citizenship of *banausics*, a group of free, *autochthonous* males who are not recognized as formal citizens in any other constitution except for democracy, as the main source of στάσις.[20] But although Aristotle himself emphatically disagrees with the enfranchisement of *banausics*,[21] in the third book he recognizes that their social characterization—and their corresponding political status—can be a thorny problem: if they are neither citizens, nor metics nor

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[12] Huxley (n. 1), 142–5.

[13] 1328b10–11, 1329a17–19 and 1329b41–1330a1.

[14] 1328b39–40, 1329a28–30; cf. 1329a19–21.

[15] 1278a17–18.

[16] 1278a18–25.

[17] J. Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule* (Princeton, 1998), 340–1.

[18] The analysis of Book 3 leaves no doubt that for Aristotle it is the extent to which a constitution confers citizenship on the lower, non-aristocratic classes which determines its character, not the existence of formal—or even substantive—equality amongst citizens.

[19] 1294a11–12.

[20] 1305b20–2, 1306b27–9, 1307a23–5, 1308a3–10, 1308b25–31, 1309a20–32. See also 1281b28–30, 1296b38–1297a6, 1297b2–8.

[21] 1278a8: Ἡ δὲ βελτίστη πόλις οὐ ποιήσει βάναυσον πολίτην.

slaves, how are they to be classified? The social typology of his time, as Aristotle implicitly recognizes, does not allow a fourth possibility.

> One problem concerning the citizen remains: Is it really the case that the citizen is he who has the right to take part in the government, or should we call workmen ($\beta a\nu a\acute{\upsilon}\sigma o\upsilon s$) also citizens? If we are to include these persons also, who have no part in governing, such goodness cannot belong to every citizen, this man being a citizen. But, if such a person is not a citizen, in what class are we to put him? He is not a resident foreigner ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\tau o\iota\kappa os$), nor a stranger ($\xi\acute{\epsilon}\nu os$). Can we not say that there is no absurdity here?[22]

Not surprisingly, given that there is no fourth group to which *banausics* may belong, Aristotle leaves his question ultimately unanswered.

But if it is the question of *banausics* which lies at the root of $\sigma\tau\acute{a}\sigma\iota s$, Aristotle finds himself in the seventh book on the horns of a dilemma: if a disenfranchised *banausic* class is present in the city, social peace cannot, given the preceding analysis, be guaranteed. If it is not, however, a potentially greater problem arises: such a city will be ideally harmonious in social terms; but, to the extent to which the major problem of most Greek cities was exactly the political standing of *banausics*, Aristotle's best city maintains its ideal character only by failing to address the principal social problem of its time, in other words only by becoming irrelevant to the political realities of most of the Greek world.

Aristotle never quite makes plain whether *banausics* will be present in the city or not, but all the textual evidence that does exist points towards their absence.[23] The philosopher distinguishes the propertied citizens from the farmers 'who must either be slaves or foreigners who live in outlying areas ($\delta o\acute{\upsilon}\lambda o\upsilon s$ $\mathring{\eta}$ $\beta a\rho\beta\acute{a}\rho o\upsilon s$ $\mathring{\eta}$ $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota o\acute{\iota}\kappa o\upsilon s$)'.[24] Since membership in any of these groups would disqualify someone

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[22] 1277b33—1278a1.

[23] J. M. Cooper, 'Justice and rights in Aristotle's *Politics*', *RMeta* 49 (1996), 867, n. 18, argues that although Aristotle never fully clarifies the point,

> he can hardly have seriously intended that … *all* the native-born free persons … should attain through the educational and other institutions of his city the extremely high levels of moral and intellectual accomplishment that he requires for the exercise of the rights of citizenship: that would be more than we could wish for even in our 'prayers', and his Greek readers could not be expected to grasp such an intention on his part without its being distinctly expressed.

Cooper therefore assumes that a group of second-class citizens, distinct from metics and slaves but not participating in government, are present in the city. But, in 1332a28-38 Aristotle is clearly optimistic about the possibility of the lawgiver educating the citizens and producing virtue in them, and the fact that citizenship is not widely conferred means that there is an increased possibility of the citizens achieving virtue. Moreover, if there is a class of nominal citizens without any political power, Aristotle will be guilty of the same mistake for which he plainly accuses Plato in 1297a7–13, that is of 'misleading the $\delta\hat{\eta}\mu os$', and the existence of such a class of formal but disenfranchised citizens will be a constant threat to the social order of the best $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\iota s$. Finally, as far as Cooper's *ex silentio* argument is concerned, it appears that Aristotle does clarify that there will not be 'second-class' citizens in his city. In 1332a34–5 he writes that 'all of our citizens share in the political system' ($\mathring{\eta}\mu\hat{\iota}\nu$ $\delta\grave{\epsilon}$ $\pi\acute{a}\nu\tau\epsilon s$ $o\acute{\iota}$ $\pi o\lambda\hat{\iota}\tau a\iota$ $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi o\upsilon\sigma\iota$ $\tau\hat{\eta}s$ $\pi o\lambda\iota\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}as$).

Having said that, Cooper is right in pointing out that if no non-active citizens exist in the best city, the common good of all the citizens—the criterion of the rectitude of a constitution in Book 3—will be identified with the good of the party in power, but not in assuming that the two 'ought to' be different. Because in this city the ruling class is co-extensive with the citizen class, the common good of both is the same. So, even as they seek their own advantage the rulers seek the advantage of all citizens, and the criterion of Book 3 is neither formally nor substantively violated.

[24] 1329a25–6.

from even potential citizenship in any Greek city, this passage indicates the absence of an *autochthonous* farming class. Aristotle also states that 'those who farm should be distinct from [the citizens]'[25] and that

[a]s for those who farm, certainly—since one should express one's highest hope—they should be slaves. They should not all be of the same race, nor should they be spirited, because then they will be useful in their work and can be relied upon not to revolt. As a second best, they should be foreigners who live in outlying areas (περιοίκους), whose nature is similar to that just mentioned.[26]

The suspicion that no Greeks will be involved in farming is now confirmed. According to what Aristotle writes in the seventh chapter of the Book 7, Asians have 'intelligent minds' and are 'skilled in crafts', but they 'lack … spirit',[27] whereas Greeks have both intelligence and spirit.[28] Since the περίοικοι will have a character similar to that of slaves, they cannot be Greek and thus they cannot form the *banausic* or *thetic* class which could pose a threat to the established constitutional order.

But farming is not the only potential *banausic* activity. In fact, the most politically active part of the *banausic* class in Athens was involved in either craftsmanship or trade. For citizens, Aristotle categorically prohibits either activity.[29] But if citizens are not to engage in them, who will? The philosopher does not make any explicit statements on this issue, but, in the sixth chapter, it looks as if he assumes that commerce will be in the hands of foreigners.[30]

Aristotle is more explicit when it comes to the question of who will man the city's navy:

cities need not have the populousness associated with the nautical crowd (περὶ τὸν ναυτικὸν ὄχλον); for they ought not to be part of the city. For the force that embarks to fight is free and consists of foot soldiers; and it has authority and power over the ship. And if the city has a multitude of subjects who live in outlying areas (περιοίκων) and who farm the land, then there are bound to be plenty of sailors.[31]

Given that both Plato in the *Laws*[32] and Aristotle in the *Politics*[33] place considerable emphasis on the significance that naval power had for the development of democracy (through enhancing the political role of *banausics*), the term ναυτικὸς ὄχλος could be read here as a synonym for βάναυσος ὄχλος. In fact, it is very difficult to see which other social group Aristotle could designate with it in this context. If this is the case, the term indicates the absence of a *banausic* class from the perfect city. Nevertheless, it is also possible to take this part of the text as an Aristotelian exhortation to the rulers of his city not to use *banausics* in military roles, so that they do not give them the opportunity to make political demands. But the two readings are not mutually exclusive, and to the extent that the passage gives us any insight into the question of the existence of *banausics* in the best city, it points towards their absence.

If *banausics* are not present in Aristotle's ideal city, however, the latter can hardly function as a paradigm for most contemporary Greek πόλεις. Apparently, it will be of very little assistance to the politician fighting social unrest in his home city. How can we account for this feature of Aristotle's model πόλις? Admittedly, the philosopher has a potent reason not to include *banausics* in the best city and then disenfranchise them: this would potentially—or even probably—lead to στάσις. But why not accept

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[25] 1329b37.   [26] 1330a25–30.   [27] 1327b27–8.
[28] 1327b27–31.   [29] See n. 21.   [30] 1327a11ff.
[31] 1327b7–13.   [32] 707a–c.   [33] 1274a12–15 and 1304a21–4.

banausics as citizens? Such a move would both solve the *banausics'* social categorization problem and allow the best city to remain relevant to the everyday reality of Greek politics. Why does Aristotle not make it?

The answer lies, in my opinion, in the philosopher's commitment to the aristocratic ideology[34] of the classical period.[35] Aristotle's contempt for manual labour, a contempt quintessential to this ideology, entails that he could never endorse the enfranchisement of *banausics*. Despite the fact that this is the only move that can resolve the issue of their social characterization, the philosopher decisively rejects it in the construction of his ideal πόλις. It is revealing that, although Aristotle operates throughout the *Politics* on the assumption of the moral—and in consequence political—incompetence of *banausics*, he does not support this thesis by anything stronger than an analogy between *banausics* and slaves:[36] in the first book he claims that 'virtue pertains to [the workman] to the precise extent that slavery does', because 'the skilled mechanic has a kind of delimited slavery'.[37] Since slaves are 'completely without the deliberative element',[38] this delimited slavery rules out the possibility of the *banausics* acquiring virtue. It means, in fact, that *banausics*, like slaves, do not have the ability to manage their own lives or, *a fortiori*, take political decisions. But apart from the *banausic–slave* analogy, Aristotle hardly has any argument to offer for the workers' psychological inferiority. The closest he ever gets is when he claims that 'they often skimp their work through intemperance',[39] hardly a statement that philosophically justifies their complete disenfranchisement.[40]

[34] I use the term 'ideology' in a neutral sense, as designating a system of—in this case political—ideas.

[35] It could be argued that Aristotle disenfranchises manual labourers because he ascribes to a 'perfectionist' theory of citizenship, i.e. to a theory suggesting that the citizen should be able to achieve a certain standard of intellectual and moral excellence, and *banausics* lack the predisposition or the free time to achieve such excellence. The claim that Aristotle does have such a 'perfectionist' view of citizenship has been advanced by M. Nussbaum, 'Nature, function and capability: Aristotle on political distribution', *OSAP* suppl. vol. (1988), 145–84. Nussbaum credits Aristotle with a 'distributive conception' of justice, according to which a city is good if it secures for its members the conditions for the best possible life, and argues that this concern goes beyond the group of formal citizens. Nevertheless, I see no good reason to take the passages on which her interpretation most heavily relies, 1324a24-5 and 1325a7ff., as referring to groups other than citizens (this point is convincingly argued by D. Charles, 'Perfectionism in Aristotle's political theory: reply to Martha Nussbaum', *OSAP* suppl. vol. [1988], 191–2). Nussbaum admits that Aristotle believes that in a good city all the citizens must be virtuous and that this view, which goes against the 'distributive conception' of justice explains his disenfranchisement of *banausics*. But no matter whether Aristotle relies on a distributive conception of justice or is a perfectionist who believes that in a good city all citizens must be good, the crucial point for my argument is that his exclusion of *banausics* from citizenship is not supported by an explicit psychological theory which would explain why they are unfit for incorporation in the political body. Without such a theory, this exclusion can be plausibly interpreted as ideological.

[36] On the denial of citizenship to *banausics* in Book 7, Keyt (n. 7), 264, remarks that 'Aristotle offers no justification for the subservient position of the lower order in his best polis beyond that which is implicit in his theory of natural slavery.'

[37] 1260a40–b1.   [38] 1260a12.   [39] 1260a38–9.

[40] According to Ober (n. 17), 306, not only does Aristotle not have a compelling argument for the psychological inferiority of *banausics*, but this group actually meets both the psychological and the empirical criteria for political participation:

> even the poorest native laborers fulfilled all of the expected criteria of the political animal: they were, on the face of it, 'complete humans,' and they were also likely to be the heads of *oikoi* and thus the authoritative rulers over women and children (if not over slaves). As such, the deliberative element was authoritative in their souls, and they had the experience of ruling over others.

But if Aristotle is an adherent of the aristocratic ideology of his time, what about the famous 'summation argument' which is typically cited as evidence of pro-democratic leanings? As we shall now see, a close reading of the text not only does not bear out the assumption of a democratic Aristotle, but actually confirms his aristocratic predilection.

In the eleventh chapter of Book 3 Aristotle writes:

the view that the masses rather than the few best men should be sovereign would seem to be held and to contain some difficulty and perhaps some truth. For the many, none of whom is a good man, may (ἐνδέχεται) nevertheless be better than the few good men when they get together. Not that each by himself will be better but that as a whole they will be … For each of these many may possess some part of goodness and wisdom; and when they get together, as the mass may be a single man with many feet and many hands and many senses, so it may be with their character and thought (διάνοιαν).[41]

On a superficial reading, this may look like an endorsement of democracy.[42] The assertion that the goodness and wisdom of *hoi polloi* can be superior to that of the few, even if the latter are individually better men, can provide the basis for such an endorsement. Nevertheless, the passage is deeply ambiguous. Aristotle claims that *hoi polloi may* (ἐνδέχεται) be wiser than the few. But only the assertion that any large group is *always* wiser than a small one would signify unconditional espousal of democracy, and Aristotle never says this. On the contrary, he states that '[i]t is not clear that *every* demos and *every* majority can excel the few good men in this way. Or, rather, it is pretty clear that some of them cannot.'[43] Moreover, as Keyt points out, the 'summation argument' does not legitimize the opening of administrative positions to all citizens, as required by democracy. It merely concedes, rather half-heartedly, that the many may come up with a better judgement when they come together in the Assembly or the popular courts.[44]

As far as universal access to the greatest officialdoms in the state is concerned, Aristotle writes

[i]t is unsafe for them [those who are not rich and have no claim whatever to goodness] to share in the highest offices, for their injustice and folly would inevitably lead them into crimes and mistakes. But it is dangerous to allow them no share at all, for a city in which there are many poor men excluded from office must be full of enemies. The remaining alternative is for them to share in deliberation and judgment … Their perceptions are adequate for this when they are all together, and when mixed with the better sort they benefit the cities … but individually each of them makes an imperfect judge.[45]

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[40] (cont) If this is the case, Aristotle's disenfranchisement of this kind of person can only be explained on ideological grounds:

respectable opinion … held that working at trade or (a fortiori) manual labor was, by its very nature, so demeaning as to corrupt the soul and make its possessor incapable of ruling. Members of the critical community (in common with other Greek aristocrats) held that the exchange relationship implied by laboring for another (if not labor in and of itself) rendered the wage-earner a quasi-slave in that he was dependent upon a (pay) master for his sustenance. Moreover, his lack of leisure denied him the opportunity to develop political virtue and he was therefore unsuitable as a participating citizen.

[41] 1281a40–1281b7.
[42] R. Robinson, *Aristotle, Politics: Books III and IV* (Oxford, 1995), 39, for example, thinks that this chapter 'expounds an important consideration in favour of democracy, including our kind of democracy as well as Aristotle's'.
[43] 1281b15–18.
[44] Keyt (n. 7), 272.   [45] 1285b25–38.

With this passage, the suspicion that Aristotle meant the 'summation argument' as a recommendation for democracy can be completely abandoned. The many are now credited with mere 'adequate perception' instead of wisdom. As individuals, they are characterized by 'injustice and folly'. Actually, Aristotle's opposition to the social presuppositions of democracy goes so deep that moral and intellectual ineptitude are ascribed to individuals on the basis of their social class alone. It now becomes crystal clear that the many can never legitimately control the state. They can participate in politics—indeed they should—but only because this decreases social tensions within the city. Nothing could be further from democratic doctrine than this assumption.

It is true that in the same chapter Aristotle attacks Plato's antidemocratic doctrine that politics is an art which requires expertise. But when he returns to the issue of the wisdom of the many, he makes a statement which makes it absolutely plain that the 'summation argument' was not given with anything like Athenian democracy in mind: '[a]ccording to the previous argument, although each by himself is a worse judge than the experts, yet all together they will be no worse or even better (unless they happen to be a hopelessly slavish lot) (ἂν ᾖ τὸ πλῆθος μὴ λίαν ἀνδραποδῶδες)'.[46]

The 'slavish lot' can only be *banausics*. In the first book Aristotle claimed that 'the skilled mechanic has a kind of delimited slavery'[47] and there is no other social group that he could be referring to by the word πλῆθος here.[48] But if democracy is typified, by Aristotle's own admission, by the fact that it gives full political privileges to *banausics*, then the 'summation argument' becomes irrelevant to it: it only applies to constitutions without such a 'slavish lot' in their citizen body, in other words to aristocracies and oligarchies. Moreover, Aristotle's overall argument is so unabashedly anti-egalitarian that it is irredeemably incompatible with modern political liberalism as well.[49]

So, Aristotle's 'summation argument' does not provide any real support for democracy. Even if Aristotle was unqualifiedly in favour of majority rule—which quite obviously he is not—this would not be enough to turn him into a democrat, because majority rule without widely conferred citizenship is not democratic. Actually, as already noted, the philosopher himself points out that majority rule can be applied equally well in aristocracies, oligarchies, and democracies.[50]

This analysis demonstrates that, contrary to the orthodox view, Aristotle's best city is much more similar in spirit to the πόλις of Plato's *Republic* than to that of the *Laws*. Despite the fact that some of Aristotle's practical measures come from the *Laws*, there can be no question that the political order of the best city is closer to that of Callipolis.

This claim may at first sight seem paradoxical. Is not there a large *banausic* citizen class in the *Republic*? The sheer fact of their inclusion into the citizen body makes, of course, Plato's Callipolis much more relevant to the social reality of the Greek πόλις than Aristotle's best city. Nevertheless, the attribution of citizenship to the *Republic*'s Producers is hardly more than an empty gesture, a smokescreen, because although

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[46] 1282a14–16.

[47] 1260a40–b1.

[48] Metics and slaves were automatically excluded from political participation and so it is inconceivable that they could feature as judges in political matters.

[49] Within its historical context, the disenfranchisement of *banausics* is qualitatively different from the disenfranchisement of women, metics, and slaves, because it is hotly debated in political theory and because it can be used as a criterion for the classification of different constitutional types.

[50] See n. 19.

Plato nominally includes them in the political community, he completely denudes them of even the most inconsequential form of political participation.[51] In other words, in terms of real political power, their citizen status means nothing.[52] What is Plato's reason for conceding this paper citizenship instead of disenfranchising *banausics*, or even, like Aristotle, leaving them out of his city altogether? The answer cannot be that this would lead to a shortage of labour, since slaves are present in the *Republic*.[53] It is rather that if Plato had left *banausics* outside the citizen body, his work would fail to address the fundamental social and political issue of its period. To suggest the economic and political domination of a citizen class over non-citizen groups would be only to suggest the obvious: all Greek cities, regardless of constitution, shared this essential characteristic. As Plato realizes, however, any model city will not be relevant to the realities of the Greek world, unless it addresses the social and political issues which arise within the group of the free, *autochtonous* males who at least aspire to citizenship, and especially the *banausic* question. Plato's response to this question is to include the free born non-leisured adult males[54] into the citizen body, but absolutely deny them any role in government.

[51] The Producers as individuals are not bestowed with any virtue in the *Republic*. The closest Plato ever comes to attributing a virtue to them is in 431E where he writes that temperance 'exists among [both] the rulers and the ruled' (τὸ σωφρονεῖν ἐνεῖναι ἀμφοτέροις τοῖς ἄρχουσι καὶ τοῖς ἀρχομένοις). Nevertheless, as T. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory* (Oxford, 1977), p. 329, n. 26, remarks, this is not what Plato means:

> [i]n a temperate state (a) the same belief about who should rule *enestin* in rulers and ruled, 431a9; (b) this concord about who should rule is temperance, 432a4; (c) the state's temperance, unlike its wisdom and courage is not *en merei tini* of the state, 431e10, but is spread through the whole city, 432a2. These uses of *en* might mislead us into thinking all the individuals are temperate … But Plato says only that all the classes in the state contribute to the state's temperance, which implies nothing about the temperance of individuals.

Moreover, the assumption that the Producers individually possess the virtues of justice and temperance is incompatible both with the work's moral psychology and with its political theory. The essence of what it is to be a Producer from a psychological point of view, is to be dominated by the irrational part of one's soul. Given this fact, and given the way Plato describes the Producers' ψυχή in passages like 495B–E and 590C, there can be no question that the Producers cannot act rationally and virtuously without ceasing to be, psychologically at least, Producers (nor can it be claimed that it is possible for the appetitive part of the soul to act rationally due to a rational part within it. Given the way Plato draws the distinction between reason and appetite in Book 4, an appetitive part ruled by a rational sub-part within it is not an appetitive part any more. It is simply a contradiction in terms). In addition, if the Producers were just and temperate (i.e. they had the most important political virtues of the *Republic*), Plato's absolute denial of a political role to them would become unjustifiable: why deny some form of participation to a class whose members a can demonstrate at least some rationality? For a detailed defence of this interpretation see Samaras (n. 1), 24–48.

[52] Nor does Plato display any interest in the well-being of the Producers as such. His only concerns are their unreserved obedience to the orders of their rulers and the εὐδαιμονία of the city as a whole, which does not necessarily imply the εὐδαιμονία of each particular class. Plato fails even to name the producing class consistently, using different names for it in different passages. He does not prescribe any kind of general education for its members, and he explicitly sanctions the possible use of violence against the producing class as such (414B, 415D–E, 590D). It is actually difficult to see how individual Producers can be εὐδαίμονες, since they lack knowledge, they are morally heteronomous, politically impotent, and they sustain with their labour the Guardian and Auxiliaries classes which absolutely control their life.

[53] Their existence is proved by a remark in 433D. The reason that Plato almost completely ignores them throughout the *Republic* is that he takes their presence for granted or, as G. Vlastos, 'Does slavery exist in Plato's *Republic*?', in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton, 1973), 141, aptly puts it, he admits them 'in his society without thinking of them as a proper part of the *polis*'.

[54] Plato allows for the participation of women too, a revolutionary approach for his time.

Aristotle rejects this solution, not out of any interest in the political well-being of *banausics*, but because he is sceptical about its practicality:

Many even of those who want to construct aristocratic constitutions make the mistake not merely of giving more to the prosperous, but also of misleading the demos. False goods inevitably give rise sooner or later to a true evil. And the encroachments of the rich do more to destroy the constitution than those of the demos.[55]

Although the Guardians and the Auxiliaries do not technically own the city's property, they control it through their political domination. They also control the labour of all other citizen and non-citizen groups, and they sustain themselves on the surplus of the city's production.[56] There can be no question, therefore, that they correspond to the propertied classes in the real world.[57] Aristotle thinks that Plato's attempt to deceive the $\delta\hat{\eta}\mu o\varsigma$[58] is unlikely to succeed and that it will eventually create an unstable and $\sigma\tau\acute{a}\sigma\iota\varsigma$-prone city. It is for this reason that Aristotle opts for an entirely different solution to the *banausics'* problem. Instead of allowing them a completely meaningless citizenship, he omits them from his best $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\iota\varsigma$ altogether.

Despite the fact that it is noteworthy, this difference between the two philosophers is a difference in tactics rather than strategy. They absolutely agree on the fundamental point, the exclusion of all non-leisured individuals from 'real', meaningful citizenship, and they bar such individuals from political decision-making and 'honours'. In both the *Republic* and the seventh book of the *Politics*, any kind of manual labour completely disqualifies someone from substantive political participation.[59]

From this point of view, Aristotle's perfect city is a definite aristocracy very close in spirit to the *Republic*, but not to the *Laws*. The latter dialogue, although including many signs of Plato's adherence to the aristocratic ideology of his era, departs from the *Republic* in one fundamental way: it is not grounded on the assumption that

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[55] 1297a7-13.

[56] This is made absolutely clear in 416E: 'their food shall be provided by the other citizens as an agreed wage ($\mu\iota\sigma\theta\acute{o}\nu$) for the duties they perform as guardians'.

[57] Newman (n. 7) 502, n. 2 and Ober (n. 17), 315, rightly interpret 1297a7-13 as referring to the *Republic*.

[58] The word is here clearly designating the lower classes, to whom Aristotle occasionally refers as 'the poor'.

[59] Kahn (n. 1), 31, misses this point when he asserts that there is a real difference between the *Republic* and the *Politics* in that the former work allows citizen status to craftsmen and farmers whereas Aristotle's best regime does not:

The importance of Aristotle's commitment to the defence of institutionalised inequality will emerge more clearly if we consider the class structure for the 'best constitution' which he outlines in Book H (chs. 8–9). When we compare this with the class structure of Plato's *Respublica*, we see that Aristotle has unified Plato's two upper classes (rulers and soldiers) and assigned to them the property which Plato reserved for the third class, the mass of citizens. In Aristotle's scheme this third class, the bulk of the population, are no longer citizens at all; they are only necessary conditions, not *parts* of the *politeia*. In other words Plato's farmers and artisans have not only been disenfranchised, they have been enslaved: their labor serves to support the leisure of the ruling class.

Nevertheless, artisans and farmers are practically disenfranchised in the *Republic* no less than they are in *Politics* 7. They have no part in government whatsoever and they cannot question the rulers' decisions that absolutely determine every aspect of their life. Moreover, 'their labor serves to support the leisure of the ruling class[es]' in a manner identical to the one presented in the *Politics*. So, all one can say is that the Aristotle of the *Politics* is simply more honest than the Plato of the *Republic*.

all forms of manual labour ought absolutely to bar someone nearly entirely[60] from political participation. More specifically, agricultural labour on one's own land is now implicitly separated from other types of $\beta\alpha\nu\alpha\nu\sigma\iota\alpha$[61] and is treated as absolutely compatible with active citizenship. Whereas all other labouring groups (merchants, sailors, wage-earners, craftsmen) are excluded from such citizenship, the small free landholders who work in their own fields, are not. This is not an insignificant departure from the *Republic*'s doctrine. The fact that in the *Laws* there is at least one non-leisured group which is not unequivocally excluded from 'real', active citizenship means that Plato has abandoned the uncompromising position of the absolute incompatibility of any kind of manual labour and political participation. It also means that, compared to the *Republic*, the *Laws* involves a noticeable extension of 'real', meaningful citizen privileges.[62] The *Republic*'s Guardians and Auxiliaries correspond, as already noted, to the small minority of leisured aristocrats in the real world, and the same is true of the higher classes in the *Laws*. The lower classes of Magnesia, however, consist of landowning, but not leisured, farmers. In the real world, therefore, they correspond to what has been described as a 'middling' class of relatively well-off, but not very wealthy peasants, who cultivate their own land. In terms of both economic power and social status, this class occupies a middle position between the traditional aristocracy and the $\delta\hat{\eta}\mu\sigma$, and, at least according to some scholars, it constitutes the backbone of the classical $\pi\acuteo\lambda\iota\varsigma$.[63] It is also the class which provides the bulk of the city's soldiers, the $\acuteo\pi\lambda\hat{\iota}\tau\alpha\iota$. As a general rule, the $\acuteo\pi\lambda\hat{\iota}\tau\alpha\iota$ are free, self-employed farmers, who take up arms and fight in case of war. These farmers are distinguished from the poorer adult free males who make up the majority of the $\delta\hat{\eta}\mu\sigma$ in a number of ways: they are able to afford their own armour, they fight at war, they own land, and, unlike other manual labourers, they do not work for anybody else. It is to this group that Plato extends 'real' citizenship in the *Laws*, as demonstrated both by the large number of non-leisured farmers who are given the privilege of political participation and by the abandonment of the *Republic*'s aristocratic model of a small, professional army, in favour of the ideal of the $\acuteo\pi\lambda\iota\tau\eta\varsigma$, the farmer–soldier.[64] This expansion of 'real' citizenship to a social group beyond the

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[60] Although members of the higher classes are more encouraged to participate in politics in the *Laws*, no citizen is barred from doing so and, most importantly, all major officialdoms are open to all citizens.

[61] Although engaging in physical labour, like other *banausic* groups, free, self-employed farmers own land—traditionally a requirement for citizenship in the Greek world—and they do not work for a master. This means that it is possible to treat them differently from the rest of the *banausic* population. Crucially, in the passage where Plato makes the point that no citizen is to practice any other art ($\tau\acute{e}\chi\nu\eta$) than the pursuit of virtue (846E–847A), he uses the examples of the smith and the carpenter (846E3–4). Farming is not mentioned among the $\tau\acute{e}\chi\nu\alpha\iota$ which are incompatible with virtue.

[62] I fully agree with C. Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast* (Oxford, 2002), 417, that the 'conception of the good city as a community of the virtuous aiming in common for a life of virtue' permeates the *Laws*. Crucially, however, the kind of virtue required of the Magnesian citizens is not the perfect virtue of the Guardians of the *Republic*, which presupposes absolute knowledge and $\sigma\sigma\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha$, but a more easily attainable type of virtue, which is predicated on true opinion and $\phi\rho\acuteo\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ (see 653A7-8 and 688B2-3). As far as this less demanding type of virtue is concerned, Plato believes that it can be achieved by at least the majority of the citizens of the *Laws*.

[63] The most forceful statement of this position comes in V. Hanson's *The Other Greeks: The Family Farm and the Agrarian Roots of Western Civilization* (New York, 1995).

[64] On the other hand, this is the end of the line as far as meaningful inclusion into the citizen body is concerned. No class beneath the landowning farmers is permitted citizen status in Magnesia.

traditional aristocracy decisively shapes the constitutional character of the *Laws*. It entails that this dialogue, unlike either the *Republic* or *Politics* 7, is a relatively widely based moderate oligarchy and not an extreme aristocracy.

It is for this reason that, to the extent to which there may be a constitution corresponding to Magnesia in the *Politics*, it is not the city of Book 7, but the 'first kind of democracy' of 1291b30–8 and 1292b23–34. This is the best kind of democracy and it is very close to, if not actually indistinguishable from, the πολιτεία or 'mixed constitution' of the fourth book. But although Aristotle labels this constitution a democracy, it is in practice a moderate oligarchy predicated on a balance of power between the traditional aristocracy and a class of relatively prosperous free farmers who toil on their own land.

The fact that Aristotle believes that a βάναυσον πλῆθος can never achieve collective wisdom and therefore should be denied a political role makes it easier to understand why he excludes *banausics* from his best city. By adopting this course, however, he essentially evades what he himself recognizes as the cardinal political problem of his time, that is the social and political classification of *banausics*. In a sense, Aristotle is more reluctant than Plato to tackle this problem and this can call into question the relevance of his best city to practical Greek politics.

Nevertheless, there are two points that can be made in Aristotle's defence: first, unlike Plato whose political philosophy has to be extracted almost exclusively from his utopian constructions, Aristotle devotes a large part of the *Politics* to the discussion of actual, historical constitutions and to the identification of their strengths and weaknesses. He is therefore entitled to propose the constitutional arrangements that he regards as the best absolutely without expecting his audience to deduce his whole political thinking from them; and although his preference for aristocracy over democracy cannot be seriously questioned, in the middle books of the *Politics* he demonstrates a clear understanding of, and even some occasional sympathy for, democracy. Second, it is at least conceivable that different parts of the *Politics* were written with different conditions in mind. Whereas the middle books principally analyse the existing conditions of mid-fourth-century mainland Greece, the last two may have been constructed with the possibility of the foundation of new colonies in mind. Jaeger has noticed that certain aspects of the seventh book come from the philosopher's association with Hermias of Atarneus[65] and Huxley remarks that '[i]n Aristotle's time non-Greek περίοικοι in Greece itself would have been rare, especially in mainland Greece'.[66] The point is made more explicitly by Ober, who argues that Aristotle's best city is not supposed to be realized in mainland Greece, but in Asia Minor.[67] As we know from a number of sources, including Isocrates, many Greeks looked forward to the Macedonian conquest of that area and the foundation of colonies that would alleviate overpopulation and reduce social tensions in the 'old' Greek cities. In these colonies the Greeks would own the land and the subjugated locals would cultivate it. If this is the kind of πόλις that Aristotle has in mind in Book 7, then the best possible city cannot be implemented in a Greek city with a large population of Greek *banausics*, but only in the political context of a Greek city dependent upon the labour of non-Greeks. This interpretation goes a long way

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[65] W. Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of his Development* (Oxford, 1948), 288–90.
[66] Huxley (n. 1), 147.
[67] Ober (n. 17), 339–49.

toward explaining the social architectonic of Aristotle's best city, but it does not obliterate the fact that the latter is more of a blueprint for the prospective colonist of Asia Minor than for the politician facing social tensions at home.[68]

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[68] Translations: *Politics* 1 and 2, Saunders; 3 and 4, Robinson; 5 and 6, Keyt; 7 and 8 Kraut (Clarendon Aristotle Series); *Laws*, Saunders; *Republic,* Lee.