

VI. Accidents in Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 26.1

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I

Aristotle,¹ *Ath(ēnaïōn) pol(iteia)* 26.1 (after the Council of the Areopagus was deprived of supervision over the state): "It began to happen (*synebainen*) that the constitution was further relaxed because of those who vigorously played the demagogue." Why "it began to *happen* that . . ."? Why not simply "the constitution began to be further relaxed . . ."? What does *symbainein* with a dependent infinitive say that a simple verb might not have said in this case or in twenty-eight other cases where *symbainein* (or its synonym, *sympiptein*) occurs in *Ath. Pol.* 1–41?²

The question here raised is not whether public order did suffer because of demagogues, or even whether there were vigorously active demagogues at Athens in the decade from 461 to 451 (legitimate questions for the historian to raise), nor even why Aristotle may have thought this to be the case (a legitimate historiographical question). Rather, the question is why Aristotle says that it began to *befall* or to *happen* that the constitution was being impaired. It is a question concerned with understanding Aristotle's argument rather than with excerpting from it remarks to be tested for historical utility.

II

It seems possible, *prima facie*, that Aristotle used *symbainein* in *Ath. Pol.* 26.1 only to cite an event at Athens, that he did not undertake to account for the event. On this view, the event is not

¹ This paper is based on research undertaken for a forthcoming book by Mortimer Chambers and the present writer. The problem of interpreting *symbainein* in historical contexts needs somewhat fuller treatment than it could receive in the book.

² *Symbainein* occurs 25 times (omitting a quotation from a decree, *Ath. Pol.* 39.3) in Aristotle's narrative history of constitutional changes at Athens (§§ 1–41); it occurs not once thereafter in the treatise. *Sympiptein* occurs four times in §§ 1–41, not thereafter. *Tychē* does not occur in the *Ath. Pol.*; *tynchanein* occurs only to state what is the case (for whatever reason) or what is the case simultaneously with another event or circumstance, as commonly; cf. Burnet on *Phaedo* 58A and on *Euthyphro* 5E, 6D, 8A.

significantly put down to chance, and *symbainein* is employed in its causally least committal sense.³ Thus, after Areopagite power was curtailed "it began to happen (*simpliciter*) that constitutional order was further relaxed." *Symbainein* is merely a matter of style, a device equivalent to the Biblical expression *egeneto de*, "and it came to pass that . . ." And, on this view, every statement in the *Ath. Pol.* reporting an event affecting Athens might as easily open with the words "and it happened that . . ."

Yet such a simple, *prima facie* interpretation of *symbainein* here is not possible; some variety of causation is clearly in question, since *Ath. Pol.* 26.1 furnishes, as context for the remark under examination, the following:

. . . (a) it began to happen (*synebainen*) that the constitution was being further relaxed (b) because of those who vigorously played the demagogue. (c) For during this period it happened (*synepesse*) that the more seemly of the citizens had no leader, (d) but instead there was Cimon at their head, son of Miltiades, (e) who was somewhat young (?) and had but lately emerged in politics; (f) and above and beyond this (sc. it happened that) a majority (sc. of these more seemly citizens) had perished in war. (g) For, since expeditionary forces in that period were drawn from a hoplite muster-roll, (h) and since the generals leading them were inexperienced at war and got their office because of family repute, (j) it kept happening (*aiei synebainen*) that of those who went out two or three thousand would perish on each occasion; (k) and with this result: the seemly citizens both of the commons and of the well-off were being expended.

It will be seen that brute, unaccountable chance could legitimately be invoked in a historian's narration of these events. War is a hazardous activity, and it could easily have seemed fortuitous to Aristotle that conservatives should ever lack firm leadership. Hence (it will be thought) *sympiptein* in (c) and *symbainein* in (j).

But however accidental these events, some account is given for them. Aristotle does not invoke brute, unaccountable chance here. (g) and (h) account causally for (j), and (d) and (e) explain how (c) is to be understood. And so, also, all the portions

³ *Symbainein* for "happen, turn out," with no attempt to indicate the causation that might explain a given happening, a common use for the word: so *Ath. Pol.* 28.5 (cf. G. Kaibel, *Stil und Text der Politeia Athēnaiōn des Aristoteles* [Berlin 1893] 185); so also *Ath. Pol.* 13.3, 16.6, 19.6, 40.2 *fin.*, and 41.1. Frequently in historical contexts: Thuc. 1.74.1, 1.98.4, 4.73.2, 7.30.3, 8.104.5; Hdt. 2.120.3; and so, commonly, of future contingency: Thuc. 2.74.1, 3.3.3, 6.34.9.

of text from (c) through (k) are a causal explanation for the vigorous efforts of the demagogues. And these efforts in turn account for a slackening of the constitution in the decade 461–451. So obvious are the causal relationships here that the whole passage could readily be recast so as to suggest no chance or accident at all. Aristotle's particles, conjunctions and grammatical constructions by themselves carry the causal relationships. Whatever is accidental about the events signalled by *symbainein* and *sympiptein* is not accidental in the sense that no explanation can be found for the events themselves.

III

At first sight *symbainein* and *sympiptein* seem familiar and unperplexing in *Ath. Pol.* 26.1 because the words commonly occur in historical narrative. The easy assumption is that Aristotle's use of the words resembles other historians' use of them. Comparison is indicated. Herodotus 7.166 is unusually susceptible to analysis and will serve as a paradigm: "It happened (*synebê*) that on the same day Gelon and Theron in Sicily conquered Hamilcar the Carthaginian and the Greeks at Salamis conquered the Persian." No difficulty here. Perfectly acceptable causal sequences led up to the battle of Himera on the one hand and, on the other, to the battle of Salamis; but chance arranged that they coincide in time (or such is the report). The statement of Herodotus resists any attempt at rewriting that would eliminate the element of chance or coincidence. In this instance two separate causal series are separately entrained, and accident resides in their meeting or convergence (*syn-bainein*). The two series could also have been said to coincide (*syn-iptein*).

Other instances⁴ of *symbainein* and *sympiptein* similarly yield their etymological senses intact.⁵ The convergence or coincidence so specified may concern policy; hence *symbainein* for

⁴ Apart from such cases as are cited in note 3 above.

⁵ This is not to suggest that the words should be compelled to revert to primitive senses that underlie developed meanings. The words commonly in historical contexts do mean "happen." But we may legitimately ask how "happenings" that merited the word *symbainein* appeared (or originally appeared) to Greeks. Hence, the suggestion is, rather, that the words, as they developed the sense "happen," betray an uncomplicated, straightforward mechanistic view of causation (cf. note 13 below), according to which events entrain events; but any jostling that occurs between a series of entrained events is a "happening" to some degree accidental.

"agree, come to terms, make a treaty, capitulate."⁶ It may concern prediction and fulfilment; hence of oracles, "accord, correspond with events, come true."⁷ It may concern separate computations of accounts; hence "tally."⁸ Separate lines of reasoning (e.g. those represented by major and minor terms of a syllogism) may converge in a conclusion; hence *symbainein* for "result" from reasoning or argument.⁹ Or, again, the convergence may be that of two hitherto independent lines of action or causation; hence *symbainein* (and *sympiptein*) commonly in historical narrative for "happen by coincidence, result as an unforeseen upshot" (so Hdt. 7.166 cited above). There is one common element in all these senses of *symbainein*: each of two actions or circumstances is conceived as explicable without reference to the other, but their mutual convergence or conjuncture is not so readily explicable in reference to either by itself.

So Thuc. 5.14.1: "It happened (*xynebē*) that, immediately after the battle at Amphipolis and after Rhamphias' withdrawal from Thessaly, neither side undertook further war." Unaccountable chance is not in question, each side will have been able to account for its own policy of peace, the historian (see Thuc. 5.14.1-3) is not at a loss to explain Spartan and Athenian quietude. But it was fortuitous (or seemed so to the author, at any rate) that separate policies, separately determined, should in the winter of 422/1 so correspond. One line of causation crossed another, producing an unforeseen upshot.¹⁰

⁶ Hdt. 1.13.1, 3.146.3; Thuc. 2.5.6, 3.25.2, 3.27.1, 4.81.2, etc.; decree quoted in *Ath. Pol.* 39.3.

⁷ Aesch. *Pers.* 802; Soph. *Tr.* 173, 1164; Aristoph. *Eq.* 220; Thuc. 2.17.2. Eur. *Hel.* 622-23 is similar, as are also Thuc. 5.26.3, Hdt. 9.101.2 *init.*

⁸ Hdt. 1.32.3, 1.116.1, 2.3.1; Thuc. 5.26.3. *Ath. Pol.* 21.3 may be compared for similarities.

⁹ Commonly in Plato, e.g. *Gorg.* 498E; cf. Aristotle, *APr.* 1.24B, 19, among other instances cited in Bonitz, *Ind. Aristot.* 713B, 10 ff. Cf. also the related causal verb *symbibazein*, "put arguments together," hence "draw a conclusion, infer," e.g. in Plato, *Resp.* 504A, with Adam *ad loc.*

¹⁰ Other examples: Thuc. 5.14.4 *init.* (expiration of the thirty-year Spartan-Argive treaty was a *coincident* circumstance of which Spartan deliberations took note) and 4.79.3 (Spartan motives and Thracian motives accidentally *converged*; Brasidas departed in consequence to aid Perdiccas and Thracian cities in their revolt). Further examples from Thucydides are cited by Classen-Steup on 5.10.7. Similarly, Herodotus' use of *sympherein* (whence *symphora*), e.g. in 1.19.1, 2.111.1, 8.88.1; occasionally *xympherein* also in Thucydides in this Herodotean sense, e.g. 7.44.1. For *xympôtōma* = coincidence of circumstances, see Thuc. 4.36.3. Instances of *symbainein* for convergence of separately explicable events or circumstances are in the *Ath. Pol.* 11.2 (there

Not all contexts for "happen" specify two clear causal series in convergence. It was natural to abbreviate. One line of causation could be left for context to make clear, the other specified. In some instances this abbreviation can be seen in process; thus Hdt. 6.103.2: "It befell (*synebê*) Cimon while he was in banishment to win an Olympic victory," a victory with ultimately fatal consequences (so Hdt. 6.103.2-3). Two converging lines of action have a perfectly clear explanation—in the context: on the one hand, the mares were exceptional (they won Cimon three victories in all), so that his winning was not undue; and on the other, Cimon was in banishment from Athens,¹¹ because of a political situation which his victory (as it turned out) aggravated. It struck Herodotus as accidental that these two unrelated lines of causation should have crossed and resulted in the *lèse majesté* felt by the Pisistratids.

Thucydides shows the process of abbreviation completed, with a form of *sympiptein* in 4.68.3. Athenians had entered Megara in 424 at the invitation of traitors in the city. The surprised Peloponnesian garrison there at one moment thought that all the Megarians had turned traitor, "for it happened that the Athenian herald, all on his own, gave the word that whoever of the Megarians wished should join forces with the Athenians." Only context (4.68.2-3) supplies as one causal series the surprise and confusion among the Spartans. This confusion, when it was crossed by the Athenian herald's words (causation here: "all on his own"), resulted in an accident: the Spartans falsely inferred from the words they had overheard addressed to Megarians.¹²

Now, it is unclear just how Aristotle's use of *symbainein* and converged on Solon the disaffection of the upper classes and the disappointment felt by both factions over his reforms), 23.2 (there coincided in point of time Athenian preparedness for war and their good repute among the Greeks and their leadership at sea), and 37.1 (there converged on Theramenes his own exclusion from citizenship and the Thirty Tyrants' authorization to put him to death).

¹¹ The text here is *autôi pheugonti . . . synebê*. The dative of person with participle indicates the causal line on which his victory converged. Grammatically and causally similar are Thuc. 1.1.3, 2.61.2 and also *Ath. Pol.* 6.2, 21.3, *symbainêi*.

¹² Other examples in Thuc. 2.38.2 (abbreviation: *hêmin* = the Athenians, supply from context *hêgemoneousi*: "on us while prosecuting empire the advantage of enjoying imported products converges") and 5.16.1 (sc. *heautoi* from context: Nicias thought that repute for unbroken success would befall himself in pursuing unadventurous policies). There is abbreviation also in *Ath. Pol.* 16.4 (with *autôi* sc. "in encouraging the poor to acquire or remain on farms") and 21.3 *fin.* (sc. "Cleisthenes if he divided the Athenians into twelve tribes").

sympiptein in *Ath. Pol.* 26.1 can be assimilated to the uses just illustrated from Herodotus and Thucydides. When he says that "it began to happen that the constitution was further relaxed" and adds "because of those who vigorously played the demagogue," he presents one line of action that has an upshot; but there is no indication for what or whom or which other line of activity this was an *accidental* upshot. Briefly, events are entrained and the result is alleged to be an accident, but it is left unclear just why the result was accidental and not merely an expected outcome of mechanically entrained events.¹³ So also in the cases of an accidental lack of a leader for worthy citizens and the accidental loss of worthy citizens in the first Peloponnesian war: for whom or what were these accidents and not just occurrences to be taken in stride because they were explicable?

IV

It is possible, however, that the line of action represented by "relaxation of the constitution" is conceived to have crossed some such line of activity as "political life at Athens." In effect, if words such as *tois Athēnaiois politeuomenois* are supplied or understood with the verb, the first *synebainen* in *Ath. Pol.* 26.1 may be an interpretable use of the word after all, and the treatise as a whole may be taken to supply context for Aristotle's "and it began to happen." Further, the other two instances of *symbainein* and *sympiptein* may be similarly construed. Both of these signal accidents for political life at Athens. This interpretation makes the statements of Aristotle seem somewhat tautological; it is not yet clear in what sense "relaxation of the constitution" or "lack of conservative leadership" is distinguishable from political life at Athens.

But the interpretation at any rate allows Aristotle's words to fulfil their common function; and in support of this interpretation,

¹³ "Mechanically entrained events" is used here (and below) in a simple sense. Historians give us a nexus of mechanical causation when they offer good reasons for accepting a judgment of *propter hoc*, wherever evidence may have seemed to the casual eye to encourage the judgment *post hoc*. There is no suggestion that historians may not (or do not) employ teleological reasoning when accounting for policies, movements, national aspirations, etc.; though it may be pointed out that accounts in teleological terms may often be translated into perfectly good (and sometimes better) accounts in mechanical terms. Such translation was allowed by Aristotle; cf. *Phys.* 2. 195A, 8-11.

one may cite a comparable use of *symbainein* by Aristotle elsewhere than in historical narrative, e.g. *Politics* 5.1302B, 33–1303A, 10:

For just as a body is compounded of parts, and there is need for these to grow in ratio to each other so that due proportion may obtain (and if not, the body dies, whenever the foot grows to four cubits but the rest of the body remains only two spans long, or on occasion the body might change [*metabaloî*] into the form of another creature, should it not grow proportionately in point of quantity as well as of quality), so also the city is compounded of parts, one of which very often grows unnoticed, for instance, the mass of poor citizenry in democracy and polities. And on occasion this befalls because of accidents [*symbainei . . . dia tychas*], as for example at Tarentum, . . . at Argos, . . . and at Athens, when they were suffering reverses in infantry battles, the upper class was reduced in number because, at the time of the [first] Peloponnesian War, military forces were drawn from the muster-roll.

Not only does Aristotle here also, as in *Ath. Pol.* 26.1, attribute explicitly to chance both the losses among Athenian notables and a consequent alteration in the Athenian constitution;¹⁴ but the argument itself that he is illustrating with the example of Athens goes far toward clarifying his reasons for invoking chance doubly with the words *symbainei . . . dia tychas*. The assumptions behind the argument are the familiar ones of Aristotle's teleology. Due proportion is the natural thing, whether specifically in politics or generally in nature.¹⁵ There are examples in history of accidental departure from political proportion, just as there may be monsters or mutants occurring in nature. That they occur shows frustration of natural impulses and deviation from natural forms on this or that occasion (by accident); but the natural ends and forms subsist, comprising whatever is the case either always or generally. Doctrine explicitly takes note of chance (*Phys.* 2.4–6; *Metaph.* 6.2, 11.8). An accident, *symbebêkos*, is whatever occurs neither always nor generally. An accident may impinge on

¹⁴ The expression *symbainei . . . dia tychas* in 1303A, 3 is not pleonastic. It means that the efficient causes which in these instances make *metabolai* befall (*symbainei*) are themselves accidents (*tychas*), i.e. accidents entrain accidents. Hence, that "alteration of constitution" is an accident is assured by *symbainei*; that its cause (viz. losses among the upper class) is also accidental is assured by *dia tychas*.

¹⁵ The *polis* exists by nature, *physei* (*Pol.* 1.1252B, 30); hence it is specifically open to analysis on principles and by procedures used when analyzing nature generally. The analogy of city and animal organism is also found in *Pol.* 4.1290B, 25 ff.; *De motu anim.* 703A, 28 ff., with which cf. *Pol.* 4.1291A, 24 ff.

nature and may even deflect a creature from fulfilment of natural ends. The cause of an accident is random, *tychon*, and anything random is indefinite or indefinable, *aoriston*. Hence there can be no speculation (*theôria*) about things that happen by chance, nor can there be scientific knowledge (*epistêmê*) concerning them.¹⁶ In point of fact, however, political philosophy can profitably sift historical facts (*Pol.* 4.1288B, 37 ff.) and group accidental occurrences for practical purposes (*Pol.* 5 *passim*¹⁷). External causes of revolution or change can be distinguished from internal causes, and against the latter precautions may be taken.¹⁸

Some such assumptions underlie Aristotle's argument in *Pol.* 5 about loss of proportion in the Athenian constitution during the first Peloponnesian War. The argument runs thus: losses among the upper class were unduly heavy; this was accident, and it entrained a further accident that directly befell the state (it converged on public life at Athens); this further accident was disruption of natural proportion in the state; political fulfilment could not be served by such disruptions; a *metabolê* in the constitution took place. So, also, the same argument in a fuller form at *Ath. Pol.* 26.1: the fact that "of those who went out two or three thousand perished on each occasion" was an accident, though it is an accidental upshot well explained—to our minds—by the fact that their generals were inexperienced. A further accident according to *Ath. Pol.* (though not *Pol.* 5) compounded the misfortune of lost proportion, namely, the accidental absence of a strong leader among the upper class, an undue circumstance that could not be construed as serving political fulfilment. Finally, on the principle that chance does not work for fulfilment of due purpose, it was attributable to chance that demagogues, taking the opportunity offered by absence of a vigorous leader of the upper class, caused a process of slackening in the constitution. This was accidental in the sense that natural political ends were not served. A *metabolê* in the constitution was in the making; it was being relaxed.

¹⁶ Cf. *APo.* 2.95A, 8–9; *Metaph.* 5.1025A, 24–25; 6.1026B, 3–4 and 31–33; 1027A, 19–20.

¹⁷ Accidental happenings are especially germane to *Pol.* 5, on change and revolution, where *syμβainein* occurs with particular frequency—and with good reason. No constitution essentially (*kata physin*) includes the revolution or alteration that destroys it.

¹⁸ *Pol.* 5.1307B, 19–25; cf. 4.1288B, 23–24; 5.1307A, 5–12; 5.1312B, 37.

In effect, *symbainein* in *Ath. Pol.* 26.1 is a philosopher's term. It is (so to speak) causally "absolute." When used absolutely, *symbainein* requires one only of two converging causal series to be named, viz. the mechanical series that is found to be converging on a teleological series. As for this latter, it must be assumed or taken for granted in a given Aristotelian context.

Criteria, then, for identifying an accident are often teleological, not only in the *Politics* and frequently elsewhere in the corpus of Aristotelian writings, but in the *Ath. Pol.* as well. *Symbainein* and *sympiptein* are not restricted by Aristotle to cases where one line of mechanically motivated events crosses another such line (though these too were for Aristotle accidents¹⁹). The words are used also when such a line of mechanical causation crosses or impinges on a line of teleologically motivated actions. The upshot of such impingement is an accident, whether or not an ordinary historian (concerned usually to observe mechanical series of causes) would think it so. To identify an accident in this sense one must first know all the varieties of political action that are due or proper for fulfilling a given form of constitution at a given time, since only if these are known can an event, any event, be specified as accidental. Political philosophy, not history, controls the aggregate of duly end-fulfilling activities, for these activities comprise the objects of political *theôria*.

This is unique equipment for a historian to have available (neither Thucydides nor Herodotus had anything comparable). Did Aristotle proceed to use it in the *Ath. Pol.* elsewhere than in §26.1?

Accidents in the following passages are candidates for consideration: 16.7, 19.1, 22.1, 23.2, 24.3, (26.1,) 27.1, 34.1, 34.2, 41.2. In all these cases chance events appear to be crossing or interrupting not other readily specifiable series of actions but (simply) general political activity at Athens—in Aristotle's terms, the form of constitution established at the given time. These cases may profitably be quoted in confrontation with a list drawn up by Aristotle for inclusion in the *Ath. Pol.*, namely, with (a part of) the summary tabulation of *metabolai* in political structure at Athens (§ 41.2):

¹⁹ Thus *symbainein* in *Ath. Pol.* 23.2 and 37.1, cited in note 10 above; in 6.2, 21.3, cited in note 11 above; and in 16.4 (and *sympiptein* in 21.3 *fin.*), cited in note 12 above.

THE LIST OF METABOLAI

THE NARRATIVE HISTORY

Fourth: the tyranny of Pisistratus
(and his sons).

16.7: "later, upon (Pisistratus') sons' accession, it happened that the tyranny became harsher by far."

19.1: after the attempt on the Pisistratids by Harmodius and Aristogiton "it began to happen that the tyranny was harsher by far."

Fifth: the constitution of Cleisthenes.

22.1: "for it had happened that the tyranny obscured the laws of Solon by disuse and that Cleisthenes enacted new laws aiming at popular support."

Sixth: the domination by the Areopagites.

23.2: "it befell them (sc. the Athenians) about this time to be at once well-trained for war and to be in good repute among the Greeks and to hold the leadership by sea."

Seventh: the constitution "which Aristides adumbrated . . .

24.3: "for it began to happen that more than 20,000 citizens were being supported out of tribute-moneys and revenues."

. . . and Ephialtes fulfilled by putting down the council of the Areopagus; during which period it happened that the city on account of its demagogues made its worst mistakes."

26.1a: "for it began to happen that the constitution became even more slack because of those who vigorously played the demagogue."

26.1b: "it happened that the more seemly citizens had no leader."

26.1c: "it kept happening that two or three thousand (of the more seemly citizens) would perish" on each expedition.

27.1a: with the emergence of Pericles as demagogue "it happened that the constitution became even more democratic."

27.1b: as a consequence of gaining the sea-empire "it happened that the masses, now with increased confidence, began to take the whole constitution into their hands."

Eighth: the establishment of the Four Hundred.

Ninth: the restored democracy.

34.1: after the battle at Arginusae "it happened that all the victorious generals were condemned on a single vote . . . when the *dēmos* had been thoroughly deceived by agitators."

Tenth: the tyranny of the Thirty.

34.2: as a consequence of the battle at Aegospotami "it happened that Lysander, now master of the city, established the Thirty in power."

Eleventh: the (second) restored democracy, beginning with the return from Phyle and the Piraeus, from which time the constitution "has continued without interruption to the present time, constantly placing additional power in the hands of the masses."

In detail, now. Accidents signalled by *symbainein* in Aristotle's narrative correspond in four cases here to tabulated changes of constitution (fifth change ~ 22.1, sixth change ~ 23.2, seventh change ~ 26.1a, tenth change ~ 34.2). In four cases accidents altered the tenor of public life but not so forcibly that outright change of constitution resulted (16.7; 19.1; 27.1a, of which 27.1b is a partial specification). In three cases (19.1; 24.3; 26.1a) there occurs the imperfect of *symbainein*, indicating not sole

accidental events but rather the initiation of accidental processes. Of these processes, that in 19.1 entrained actions (described in *Ath. Pol.* 19.2–6) resulting in a *metabolê*, viz. the expulsion of Hippias. The process specified in 24.3 begins²⁰ during a period of constitutional evolvment; there was here no sharp change.²¹ The accidental process mentioned in 26.1a got under way with Ephialtes' legislation against the Areopagites and (we may take it) continued coterminously with radical democracy at Athens,²² viz. while there were in effect the constitutions resulting from the seventh, ninth and eleventh *metabolai*.²³ This last process, that of 26.1a (proximate cause: demagogues) may be taken to include as component events the accidents of 27.1a (cause: the demagogue Pericles) and of 34.1 (cause: agitators, *subintellege* "demagogues"). And finally, the process of *Ath. Pol.* 26.1a is summarized within

²⁰ The text: *συνέβαιεν . . . πλείους ἢ δισμυρίους ἄνδρας τρέφεσθαι*. Peculiarly unamenable: "it was accidentally coming to pass (beginning to come to pass? an accidental process was afoot? an accidental process got started?) that . . . more than 20,000 were being supported." Such a number could be said to receive support regularly, or even to begin to get support: *dismyrioi etrephonto*. But in what sense was it in the course of happening, or did it begin to happen, that they were (all of them at once) being supported? The imperfect of *symbainein* with present infinitive occurs in a similarly odd passage in Thuc. 5.14.4, concerning the Spartan-Argive thirty-year treaty (winter 422/1): *ξυνέβαινε . . . τὰς . . . σπονδὰς ἐπ' ἐξόδῳ εἶναι*, but cf. 5.28.2 (summer or autumn 421): *ἐπ' ἐξόδῳ . . . αἱ σπονδαὶ ἦσαν*. The treaty could not have been "at expiration" both in the winter of 422/1 and in the summer or autumn of 421. (Gomme *ad* 4.14.4 is undecided whether the treaty was settled in 451 or 450; *ATL* 3.304 assigns it to 451.) If Thuc. 5.14.4 can mean "it was a coincident circumstance faced by the Spartans that their treaty with Argos *would* expire," hence—reading *εἶναι* as subject to the verb (cf. Goodwin, *MT* §745)—" (future) expiration of the treaty was becoming a coincident factor," then *Ath. Pol.* 24.3 may mean "the process was getting under way that *would* mean support for more than 20,000," or, "support for (what was to end up as) more than 20,000 was getting under way." A host of historical objections to *Ath. Pol.* 24.3 would be thereby mitigated though not totally set aside (cf., e.g., Wilamowitz, *Ar. u. Ath.* 1.159; Busolt, *GrG* 3.1. 29).

²¹ The seventh change brought forth "the constitution which Aristides adumbrated and Ephialtes fulfilled." The period of evolvment is conceived to lie between 478/7, the first assessment of the Delian League (*Ath. Pol.* 23.5, cf. 24.1) and 462/1, Ephialtes' legislation against the Areopagites (§ 25.2).

²² The process in question was the slackening of the constitution; its cause, the demagogues. For demagogues as virtually a defining feature of radical democracy, cf. *Pol.* 4.1292a, 15 ff.

²³ The government initiated by the ninth *metabolê* merely resumed the radical democracy which the Four Hundred cut short. This is shown by the wording of Aristotle's entry in the list: *ἐνάτῃ δὲ δημοκρατία πάλιν*. (There is no provision in *Ath. Pol.* 41.2 for a discrete constitution of Five Thousand as in § 33.) So also radical democracy was merely resumed after the Thirty and the Ten were put down. Cf. *Ath. Pol.* 41.2 *sub fin.*: the constitution has continued "constantly placing additional power in the hands of the masses, for the *dêmos* has made itself competent in all matters," etc.

§41.2 thus: during the period after Ephialtes' legislation "it happened that the city on account of its demagogues made its worst mistakes for the sake of (?) the empire at sea."

Here, then, *symbainonta* and *symbebékota* complement *metabolai*. Four instances of correspondence between *metabolé* and accident are not unexpected; outright change in constitutional form is the result *kat' exochên* of accidents. But the instances where there is not correspondence are of signal interest. These illustrate how Aristotle could, by pointed use of *symbainein*, bring under notice lesser accidents than those resulting in clearcut *metabolai*. In addition they show that he was constantly attentive to clearcut constitutional forms which he had distinguished and found illustrated within Athenian history. In consequence he could identify chance impingements on those forms. In short, his theoretical equipment was at every moment operative; it was not manifested only in the parcelling out of Athenian history into eleven portions, marked by *metabolai*, a parcelling out that might have been done when once the historical portion of the treatise had been shaped. On this showing, theory pervades and controls the historical chapters of the *Ath. Pol.*

V. CONCLUSION

Aristotle conceived Athenian history amenable to partition into fairly rigid epochs. This has always been recognized from the fact of *Ath. Pol.* 41.2, which lists eleven specific *metabolai*. But that the epochs should be referred for explanation to teleological doctrines in the *Politics* (as here argued from the specific case of Aristotle's use of *symbainein*) awaits its full appreciation. If the present argument concerning *symbainein* holds good, then the *Athênaiôn politeia* must be read in closest connection with the *Politics*. The reasoning that entails this conclusion runs thus: in Aristotle's way of conceiving the case, a doctrine about accidental change must presuppose other doctrines enumerating changes or events that are not accidents (developments or fulfillments of due ends). Only knowing the norms confers the ability to recognize anomalies. Specifically, only knowing constitutional forms and political ends confers the ability to recognize cases where natural ends are thwarted or constitutional forms are altered. *Politics* 5 is devoted to the varieties of change that may

affect constitutional forms; it presupposes *Politics* 4, which is especially rich in its treatment of constitutional forms. To the degree that the *Athênaiôn politeia* is obligated to *Politics* 5, then to that degree is it also obligated to doctrines which are presupposed for the purposes of *Politics* 5. The upshot is that the *Athênaiôn politeia* does not just collect for us materials concerning Athenian constitutional development; it is written in conformity with theory that is available to us in the *Politics*.