

PLATONIC METHODOLOGY IN THE PROGRAM OF  
ARISTOTLE'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY:  
*POLITICS* IV.1\*

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Aristotle begins *Politics* IV.1 with an introduction outlining the principles and methods to be followed in a constitutional theory which deals with its subject matter in its entirety. It is the purpose of this paper to give a new explanation of the concepts used by Aristotle in *Pol.* IV.1. First, however, the place of book IV within the *Politics* has to be addressed briefly.

The relative chronology of the books of Aristotle's *Politics* remains controversial. There is, however, agreement that *Pol.* IV–VI seem to presuppose intensive historical studies, which might be connected with the collection of constitutions undertaken at the Lyceum after 335 in Athens. In style, historical documentation, views regarding constitutions, etc. they are homogeneous. We seem to be justified in dating them back to the period of Aristotle's second sojourn in Athens, a view which is supported by the fact that the death of Philip of Macedon is mentioned.<sup>1</sup> The most disputed issue, whether *Pol.* VII/VIII are earlier or later than IV–VI, is irrelevant here.

In this paper I do not want to deal with the vexing question of the unitarian versus the analytic or genetic approach with regard to Aristotle's *Politics*. However, the genetic explanation has strongly influenced the understanding of the method adopted in *Pol.* IV–VI, and it is this traditional understanding of the background of Aristotle's methodology in *Pol.* IV–VI which I am questioning here.<sup>2</sup>

\* An earlier form of this paper was presented at the Aristotle Colloquium in Berlin in September 1986, at the APA meeting in New York in December 1987, and at the University of Tübingen in January 1989. I have profited from the contributions by the audiences. The anonymous referees of *TAPA* made me reconsider a number of points made in this paper.

<sup>1</sup> *Pol.* V.11, 1311b2.

<sup>2</sup> For the understanding of the structure and composition of Aristotle's *Politics* as a whole it certainly poses a problem that *Pol.* IV starts with a study of constitutions after Aristotle had devoted the entire preceding book (*Pol.* III) to exactly this. In *Pol.* III.1 he deepens his enquiry into constitutions by first giving a definition of πόλις (III.1, 1274b32ff.), then discusses some problems connected with his definition, and finally asks how many constitutions there are (III.6, 1278b6, ...σκεπτέον πότερον μίαν θετέον πολιτείαν ἢ πλείους, καὶ εἰ πλείους, τίνες καὶ πόσαι, καὶ διαφοραὶ τίνες αὐτῶν εἰσιν), just as he does later in *Pol.* IV.2, 1289b12, ἡμῖν δὲ πρῶτον μὲν διαιρετέον πόσαι διαφοραὶ τῶν πολιτειῶν, εἴπερ ἔστιν εἶδη πλείονα τῆς τε δημοκρατίας καὶ τῆς ὀλιγαρχίας.... In ch. 3, 1290a13ff. he objects to the commonly held view that there are only two constitutions and contrasts his own system (A24ff.) which differs from that out-lined in *Pol.* III. In *Pol.* IV.4, 1290b21ff. he promises to

W. Jaeger assumed that Aristotle's political theory in *Pol.* IV–VI was influenced by his research on biology<sup>3</sup>, a view which has found wide support.<sup>4</sup> Jaeger<sup>5</sup> based his view largely on *Pol.* IV.4, where Aristotle develops a system of constitutions by using a method of arriving at a classification of animals (1290B25).<sup>6</sup> However, this passage is undoubtedly a parallel version to *Pol.* IV.3,<sup>7</sup> which is introduced by the same question (see above, note 2) but presents a different understanding of μέρος when arguing for the existence of more than one constitution. In ch. 3 the μέρη are the three property classes of the rich, poor, and middle class. This is in fact the sociological basis of states as he uses it in *Pol.* IV–VI. *Pol.* IV.4, on the other hand, adopt a functional approach, deducing ten μέρη based on their necessary<sup>8</sup> contribution to the existence or well-being of the state. It is not surprising that poverty is not a μέρος according to *Pol.* IV.4, as it was in 3, because poverty has no “necessary function” for the existence of the state. Aristotle rather regards poverty of the δῆμος as an element of potential political disorder leading to a change of government.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, he recommends to politicians that they assist people in escaping poverty

prove again that there is “a greater number of constitutions” (πολιτεῖαι πλείους), as is his result there, 1291B14. If the *Politics* forms such a well-structured unity as the currently dominating unitarian trend makes us believe (E. Barker withdrew his earlier genetic analysis in *The Politics of Aristotle*, transl. with an introduction<sup>2</sup> [1946 repr. 1948] XLiff.; cf. I. Düring, *Aristoteles, Darstellung und Interpretation seines Denkens* [Heidelberg 1966] 476; A. Stigen, *The Structure of Aristotle's Thought* [Oslo 1966] 312ff.; R. G. Mulgan, *Aristotle's Political Theory* [Oxford 1977] 1; C. Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle* [1982] 25–27; more representatives of this unitarian approach cf. E. Schütrumpf, *Die Analyse der polis durch Aristoteles* [Amsterdam 1980] 318ff., esp. 318 n. 113), one wonders why after *Pol.* III, which dealt with this very topic of the number of constitutions, Aristotle should have taken up this issue again. Why is there a fresh start in *Pol.* IV? Why are the old questions asked again, but answered differently? Only *Pol.* IV–VI operate with subspecies of constitutions, not Book III.

<sup>3</sup> W. Jaeger, *Aristotle. Fundamentals of the History of his Development.*, trans. R. Robinson (Oxford 1934) 270, on *Pol.* IV: “The standard there is immanent and biological.”

<sup>4</sup> J. Day-M. Chambers, *Aristotle's History of Athenian Democracy* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1962). Aristotle's system of constitutions in *Pol.* IV–VI and his account of their relation to one another are based on Aristotle's theory of a natural teleology as set out in the biological works, cf. L. Bertelli, *Historia e Methodos* (Paravia 1977) 3ff., but cf. Schütrumpf (above, note 2) 327–41.

<sup>5</sup> (above, note 3) 270 n. 1.

<sup>6</sup> G. E. R. Lloyd, “The Development of Aristotle's Theory of the Classification of Animals,” *Phronesis* 6 (1961) 59–81.

<sup>7</sup> W. L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle* (Oxford 1887–1902) vol. I. 565–69, Appendix A.

<sup>8</sup> ἀναγκαῖος, in the analogy with parts of animals 1290B26; B37; applied to groups in state 1291A3; A7; A12; A23; A33; A36; B1.

<sup>9</sup> The last—and worst—species of democracy is that in which the poor take an active part because they receive pay, IV.6, 1293A1ff. For the contrast rich-poor cf. 12, 1296B22–23; 1297A1.

(*Pol.* VI.5<sup>10</sup>). Of the two analyses of society in *Pol.* IV it is undoubtedly that of 3, not that of 4, which forms the basis of the study of constitutions in book IV.<sup>11</sup> Earlier editors<sup>12</sup> are undoubtedly right to say that among the parallel versions the passage IV.4 cannot simply be regarded as a genuine part of *Pol.* IV. If *Pol.* IV.4 assumes a biological analogy for a system of constitutional theory,<sup>13</sup> this cannot simply be extended to *Pol.* IV–VI and made the basis of Aristotle's political philosophy in these books of the *Politics*.

# I

I want to demonstrate in this paper that in the methodology in *Pol.* IV.1 Aristotle followed the philosophical concept of a *technê*, in particular rhetoric, as developed by Plato in the *Phaedrus*. Such an explanation should not be regarded as farfetched, for the influence of the *Phaedrus* is evident from the beginning of the *Pol.* I.

In *Pol.* I.1 (1252A7ff.) the view of the Platonic *Politikus* that no difference exists between a statesman and household manager, because the knowledge applied is the same, is called simply untrue (οὐκ ἀληθῆ). Aristotle goes on to say that this judgment would be understandable if one were to follow the normal method of inquiry, which consists in dividing a compound into its uncompound elements ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις τὸ σύνθετον μέχρι τῶν ἀσυνθέτων ἀνάγκη διαιρεῖν (1252A18). Nobody seems to have recognized that Aristotle comes very close here to a phrase used by Plato in the *Phaedrus*: 277B7 κατ' εἶδη<sup>14</sup> μέχρι τοῦ ἀτμήτου τέμνειν corresponds closely with Aristotle's μέχρι τῶν ἀσυνθέτων...διαιρεῖν. It is well known that the *Phaedrus* already introduces the diaretical method (and the term διαιρεῖν 266B4; 273E1). Yet Plato's terminology is not so rigid that he does not employ synonyms as well, τέμνειν being one of them.<sup>15</sup> The two other Platonic dialogues which develop the diaretical method, *Sophistes* and *Politikus*, never make use of the preposition μέχρι to express the final point of a diairesis, as Plato does in the *Phaedrus* and Aristotle in *Pol.* I.1. There is an additional reason for assuming that in *Pol.* I.1 Aristotle had Plato's *Phaedrus* in mind. The term τεχνικός used by Aristotle at the end of this passage (1252A22), seems to be

<sup>10</sup> Cf. E. Schütrumpf, *Xenophon. Vorschläge zur Beschaffung von Geldmitteln oder Über die Staatseinkünfte* (Darmstadt 1982) 45ff.

<sup>11</sup> The constitution whose members belong to the middle class *Pol.* IV.11, 1295A25 is based on the analysis of society in IV.3, 1289B30–31: ...τοὺς δὲ μέσους.

<sup>12</sup> e.g. R. Congreve (London 1874), cf. F. Susemihl, *Aristoteles Politica*<sup>3</sup> (Leipzig 1882) XXII and annot. crit. to 1290B22; for a more recent discussion Schütrumpf (above, note 2) 347–53.

<sup>13</sup> Fiedler, *Analogiemodelle bei Aristoteles. Untersuchungen zu den Vergleichen zwischen den einzelnen Wissenschaften*, Studien zur antiken Philosophie 9 (Amsterdam 1978), 163ff. points correctly out that this "method of combining" parts can not easily be adapted to constitutional theory where the changes between constitutions depend on τὸ κύριον, not differences in any other "parts."

<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that Aristotle in *Pol.* I.1, 1252A10 missed in Plato's *Politikus* a distinction according to εἶδος.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. for this aspect C. J. Classen, "Sprachliche Deutung als Triebkraft Platonischen und Sokratischen Philosophierens," *Zetemata* 22 (1959) 80–81.

unique for him in the sense implied here.<sup>16</sup> It is, however, one of the key terms in that part of the *Phaedrus* where Plato develops his methodology of rhetoric.<sup>17</sup>

The introductory chapter of *Pol.* I. presupposes Plato in two ways: the diairetical method of the *Politicus*, which ends with a single knowledge of ruling, is rejected because it does not grasp the substantially different conditions of the different communities. Instead Aristotle's program is to apply a diairetical approach (διαίρειν, 1252A18) which divides a compound into its uncompounded elements, a method<sup>18</sup> described by Plato in the *Phaedrus* in very much the same words.<sup>19</sup>

It is not surprising that Aristotle went back to the *Phaedrus* for the methodology of his political theory because, at the end of the *Phaedrus*, Plato himself extends his program of a philosophical rhetoric to include 'political speeches' or laws (278C1ff). The rules should apply not only to orators but to poets as well, τρίτον δὲ Σόλωνι καὶ ὅστις ἐν πολιτικοῖς λόγοις νόμους ὀνομάζων συγγράμματα ἔγραψεν (cp. D1). The *Phaedrus* contains a philosophical concept Plato wanted to see applied to lawgiving. Aristotle, therefore, did not need to adjust a Platonic concept to suit his different purpose, but simply to adopt it as Plato wanted it to be understood.

I would like to show here that the method of political philosophy as outlined in *Pol.* IV.1 and applied in *Pol.* IV–VI follows the Platonic methodology of the *Phaedrus*, but is not influenced by Aristotle's empirical research (e.g. in biology).

What is the program for a political theory in *Pol.* IV.1?<sup>20</sup> According to a methodical requirement which holds true for all *technai* which study their subject matter in its entirety and do not restrict themselves to any part of it, constitutional theory has to accept that its subject matter exists in conditions varying largely in quality. The theory of constitutions includes an investigation of

- a) the best state
- b) the best one under the existing circumstances
- c) each of the existing constitutions
- d) a constitution suitable for all the cities possible (1288B10ff.).

<sup>16</sup> Düring (above, note 2) 489 Anm. 375.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. 270D2; 271E7; 273A3; B2; E3. The *Phaedrus* uses it eight times, the much more voluminous *Rep.* only once, just as *Sophistes* and *Politicus* only once.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Phys.* I.4, 187B11 οὕτω γὰρ εἰδέναι τὸ σύνθετον ὑπολαμβάνομεν, ὅταν εἰδῶμεν ἐκ τίνων καὶ πόσων ἐστίν. *Anal. Post.* II.13, 96B15ff. διελεῖν τὸ γένος εἰς τὰ ἅτομα τῷ εἶδει... deals with the logical classification for the purpose of definition, cf. as well *Top.* II.2, 109B14–15.; II.6, 120A34–35. διαίρουντα κατ' εἶδη μέχρι τῶν ἀτόμων. Fiedler (above, note 13) 161–62 is critical of Düring's attempt to explain this method in biological terms. He points out this method is universally applied and even its origin is not necessarily to be found in zoology. Fiedler, however, does not refer in this context to Plato *Phaedrus*. Where he deals with it (185 n. 3; 198), he discusses the passages concerned to determine whether Aristotle took over the analogies with medicine from medical authors or Plato.

<sup>19</sup> μέθοδος, 1252A18—this as well is a favorite term in the *Phaedrus*, used three times within one page, 269D8; 270C4; D9.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Schütrumpf (above, note 2) 121ff.

This is not an enumeration of constitutions (as in *Pol.* III.7; IV.2), but rather a list of various kinds of relations between existing circumstances and forms of state: a constitution is (proceeding in the reverse order) either suited to all states (d); or it lags behind what would be possible in a city according to the circumstances (c); or it makes the best of the existing conditions (b); the ideal state (a) would have to be seen as a special case, as the best constitution under desirable prevailing conditions.

With the exception of the best state and of the constitution suitable for most states, no constitution corresponds in any definite way to the four points of the program of *Pol.* IV.1; depending on the prevailing conditions the same constitution, for instance the "farmer democracy" (IV.6, 1292B25ff.; VI.4, 1318B9ff.), can be the best constitution according to the circumstances (b) or merely the existing constitution, while the best constitution according to the circumstances would be the Polity, so that the farmer democracy lags behind (c).

A systematic presentation of the constitutions with an interest in classification and the intrinsic values of the different types (contrast *Pol.* III.7) thus becomes less important. All four points in the program of IV.1 are merely varying positions within the possible relations between given conditions and constitution. The central question, for Aristotle, is which constitution is suited to which conditions (τίς τίσιν ἀρμόττουσα, 1288B24). The political theorist must be familiar with the factors decisive for the political life and set up constitutions corresponding to the given conditions. This approach is widely regarded as Aristotle's main contribution to political philosophy.<sup>21</sup> However, such a view seems to overlook the fact that Plato expressed himself in a very similar way when he declared that the philosopher-king needs the πόλις προσήκουσα (*Rep.* VI.492A3; 497A3, A10)—Aristotle uses ἀρμόττων instead. The different constitutions in Plato's *Republic* are presented as depending on the different ἡθῆ of the citizens.<sup>22</sup>

I believe that not only the idea of interdependence of constitution and conditions of the population in Aristotle's *Politics* is Platonic,<sup>23</sup> but also that the method as a whole set out in *Pol.* IV.1 and the way it is expressed go back to Plato; not, however, to one of his works in political philosophy, but rather to the *Phaedrus*.

According to this dialogue, the art of persuasion is *psychagôgia*. Therefore the aspiring orator has to learn how many *eidê* the soul has (271C10). Rhetoric is treated in analogy to medicine, for both are *technai* (270B1–6); if pursued seriously, they require an exact knowledge of the total φύσις of their subject. For rhetoric, this means that one has to examine first whether the soul in itself is uniform or whether it is a composite consisting of many different parts like the body (270C10ff.; 271A4ff.); if the soul consists of many parts their number

<sup>21</sup> Newman (above, note 7) III, p xxxi, "We learn...a lesson which we have not been taught before, and which Arist. appears to have been the first to teach. This is that the same constitution is not in place under all circumstances."

<sup>22</sup> IV.435E–36A.; he repeats this in the introduction to the decline of the constitutions in *Rep.* VIII.544D6, which are linked to the predominant *êthos* in the population.

<sup>23</sup> There is an earlier approach to this view in Hippocrates *Aer.* ch. 16.

has to be stated (270D6 ἀριθμησάμενον, cp. 273E1).<sup>24</sup> Second, “after one has classified the (different) kinds of men and speeches, and the ways of being affected, the (expert) will tell the reasons in each case, adapting them to each other...” (διαταξάμενος τὰ λόγων τε καὶ ψυχῆς γένη καὶ τὰ τούτων παθήματα δίεισι πάσας αἰτίας, προσαρμόττων ἕκαστον ἑκάστω..., 271B).

I see the following points of agreement between this part of Plato’s *Phaedrus* and Aristotle *Pol.* IV.1:

First, Aristotle chooses as his starting point a general concept of *technê* which is not limited to a narrow section of its subject matter (1288B10ff.); he points out its comprehensive task; the occupation of the statesman and lawgiver falls under this general methodology of *technê*. In precisely the same way, Plato had formulated a general concept of investigation appropriate for *technê*, which has to be followed if it is really to be *technê* in the strict sense. He required a study of the whole subject it deals with, and then demanded for a scientific rhetoric a procedure along the same lines. Both philosophers use the analogy of medicine.

Second, just as Plato insisted on finding out whether the subject in question was uniform or was comprised of different kinds (*eidê*), the number of which had to be stated (see above), so Aristotle prescribes the same method for theorists examining constitutions (*Pol.* IV.1, 1289A7). They cannot fulfill their task unless they know how many *eidê* a constitution comprises. In *Pol.* IV, more than one chapter deals with the question of how many constitutions there are, e.g. 3 and 4. In 7, in keeping with this principle, Aristotle criticizes those theorists, including Plato, who want to enumerate the constitutions (ἀριθμεῖν τὰ τῶν πολιτειῶν εἶδη, 1293A41) because they leave out the Polity—the complete number of the elements a subject comprises has to be known first, as Plato had demanded in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>25</sup>

In *Pol.* IV Aristotle links the number of constitutions to the number of parts in the population. Accordingly in IV.3 and 4 (for the parallel version see above) Aristotle examines the parts (*merê*, *eidê*) of which the population consists. Here again he is critical of omissions: Plato, in his list of the parts of the polis, left out the most important ones (4, 1291A10ff.). In this criticism of one aspect of Plato’s political theory he nevertheless uses one element of Platonic methodology from the *Phaedrus*, emphasis on the complete number. This results in a new system of constitutions, extending the number of possible constitutions considerably by including subspecies of each constitution as well. The subject matter is, to use Plato’s terms, not ἀπλοῦν but πολυειδές, as

<sup>24</sup> For this demand in the context of διαίρεσις cf. as well *Philebus* 16D. A. v. Fragstein, *Die Diairesis bei Aristoteles* (Amsterdam 1967) 79 n. 2, when discussing this passage refers to *Phaedrus* 270D.

<sup>25</sup> W. D. Ross, *Aristotelis Politica* (Oxford 1957) 110, with his conjecture ὁρισμὸν instead of transmitted ἀριθμὸν 1, 1289A21 fails to see the methodological background, cf. above note 24; Schütrumpf (above, note 2) 349 with note 11. ἀριθμὸν...τῆς πολιτείας ἑκάστης is a variation for A8 πόσα πολιτείας...εἶδη.

διαίρεσις in connection with the number of kinds distinguished *Pol.* IV.2, 1289A27; B12; 3, 1290A2; A24; 10, 1295A8; 15, 1299A12; 16, 1300B18; VI. 8, 1321B4; VII 1, 1323A24; 9, 1329A30; 10, 1330A11; 14, 1333A16; A24; 17, 1336B41.

Aristotle emphasizes, showing a rather polemical spirit against those who ignored this and assumed that there is only one democracy or one oligarchy (IV.1, 1289A7ff.). Aristotle himself does not mention subspecies of constitutions outside *Pol.* IV–VI.<sup>26</sup>

Third, Plato and Aristotle agree in beginning with the human. Plato linked the *eidê* of speech and soul to each other in such a way that the conditions in the *logos* should be accommodated to those of the soul. The conditions in man, i.e. the *eidê* of the soul, are the starting point, because it is to them that the kinds of speech have to be adjusted, *προσαρμόττων* (271B2, cp. D2; D5; E2). Similarly in Aristotle the conditions in the population, the *parts*<sup>27</sup> the polis consists of, are the basis to which the constitutions have to correspond, *ἀρμόττοντα*, a key term in this chapter, used five times (1288B12; B15; B24; B34; 1289A13, cp. VI.1, 1317A16).

From the Platonic tradition I believe one can explain one problem in *Pol.* III. In chapters 1–5 Aristotle mentions a number of constitutions—democracy, oligarchy, tyranny (1276A9) and aristocracy (1278A19)—but in 6 the proper examination of the constitutions is introduced with the statement “having determined these questions, we have next to consider whether there is only one constitution or many, and if many, what they are, and how many, and what the differences between them are” (1278B6–8). In chapters 1–5, however, the existence of more than one constitution was already presupposed, yet I do not believe that one should, following the method of the analytic school, regard this chapter as being out of place here. In book III, Aristotle, having completed preliminary topics and turned to the proper examination of constitutions, thought it necessary to do this according to the methodology of *technê* taken over from the Platonic *Phaedrus*.<sup>28</sup>

In the same way Aristotle introduces the study of kingship in *Pol.* III.14 with a programmatic remark that he must first examine (*διελέσθαι*) whether kingship embraces many kinds (1284B40–41)—just as Plato had required this for any *technê*. It is, therefore, not surprising to see that in *Pol.* III.8, preparing to give his study on constitutions more depth, Aristotle starts with a comment on the method to be followed, namely that someone who deals with a subject in a philosophical way is not allowed to leave out anything (*καταλείπειν*). Once again the strict requirements generally valid in the field of *technê* are presupposed, then applied to the study of constitutions and linked with the requirements of totality, i.e. the study of a topic in its completeness.<sup>29</sup>

One of the methods applied by Aristotle in the *Politics* is undoubtedly the diaretical one (cp. *διελεῖν* III.6, 1278B31; IV.3, 1290A24; IV.10, 1295A8 *τυραννίδος δ' εἶδη δύο μὲν δειλόμεν*). No concept other than that of the Platonic *διαίρεσις* of the *Phaedrus* is known to me—or has been pointed out by anybody—which shows so many elements in common with the methodology in

<sup>26</sup> This is a strong argument against the unity of the *Politics*, in which today everybody seems to believe, uncritically in my opinion.

<sup>27</sup> In 1291B17 the term used is *εἶδος*.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Arist. 1278B7 *κἂν εἰ πλείους* with *Phaedrus* 270D5 *ἐὰν δὲ πλείω εἶδη* ..., the identically expressed protasis is followed in both texts by the same conclusion, to give the complete number of species, *ἀριθμησάμενον* in Plato corresponds to *πόσαι* in Arist.

<sup>29</sup> *Phaedrus* 272 B1 *ἐλλείπη*.

*Pol.* IV.1–VI.15, 1299A12<sup>30</sup> employs all elements of the diairetical method of the *Phaedrus*: διαίρειν leads to a statement of the number and the resulting procedure of προσαρμόσαι, precisely the term used by Plato *Phaedrus* 271B2. The *Politicus*, criticized by Aristotle in *Pol.* I. where he introduces the diairetical approach and, for other reasons, the *Sophistes* were not the models Aristotle followed: the dichotomy of this type of Platonic διαίρεσις is rejected by Aristotle.<sup>31</sup> The *Phaedrus*, on the other hand, does not limit its diairetical procedure to a dichotomy, and this openness for multiple distinctions is shared by Aristotle in the *Politics*.<sup>32</sup>

In the diairetical method as employed in *Pol.* I and in the methodological introduction to a study of constitutions in *Pol.* IV.1, there is no trace of biological influence.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, it was not only Plato in the *Phaedrus* who saw rhetoric as a subject closely related to lawgiving, for we find their close connection in Aristotle as well. He regards rhetoric not only as an offshoot of dialectics but as an offshoot of the ethical discipline as well. Ethics deserves the name *politikê*, and this is one reason why rhetoric claims to be *politikê* also (*Rhet.* I.2, 1356A25). The notion of the ἀρμόττον, which is so important for Aristotle in *Pol.* IV–VI is a rhetorical concept, adopted e.g. by Isocrates.<sup>34</sup>

Following Plato's *Phaedrus* (265D3), Aristotle demands in the *Poetics* (7, 1451A4; 23, 1459A33) that the plot be εὐσύνοπτος, just as he requires this in the *Pol.* I (II.12, 1274A37; VII.4, 1326B24; 5, 1327A1–2) for the territory and population of a state. In Aristotle's *Politics*, we often come across the political

<sup>30</sup>...δεῖ δύνασθαι διελεῖν κατὰ πόσους ἐνδέχεται γενέσθαι τρόπους, κάπναιτα προσαρμόσαι ποίαις ποίαις πολιτείαις συμφέρουσιν.

The *Phaedrus* complements the diairetical method with a synthetic approach, cf. 265D3, Εἰς μίαν τε ἰδέαν συνορῶντα ἄγειν τὰ πολλαχῇ διεσπαρμένα..., cf. 266B3. Did Aristotle follow this in *Pol.* IV.9, 1294A33, ληπτέον γὰρ τὴν τούτων διαίρεσιν, εἴτα ἐκ τούτων...συνθετέον?

<sup>31</sup> *De part. anim.* I.2–4 rejects the Platonic dichotomy, cf. Fragstein (above, note 24) 88; 105; H. Flashar, *Die Philosophie der Antike* (Basel-Stuttgart 1983) Vol. 3, 404.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle in his *Politics* is closer to the *Phaedrus* for another reason: he does not use lengthy sequences of διαίρεσεις which *Politicus* and *Sophistes* apply, cf. Fragstein (above, note 24) 95; 106 for the difference between the Aristotelian and Platonic διαίρεσις of *Politicus* and *Sophistes*.

<sup>33</sup> Fiedler (above, note 13) 161–67 has a good chapter on this.

In *Pol.* II.5, 1264B4ff. Aristotle argues against Plato's inferences from animal behavior on political relations.

The method outlined in *Pol.* I.1 of dividing a compound into its uncompound elements ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις τὸ σύνθετον μέχρι τῶν ἀσυνθέτων ἀνάγκη διαιρεῖν (1252A18) employs σύνθετον and ἀσύνθετον in a sense different from that in the biological writings. In *Historia animalium* I.1, 486A2, σύνθετον is what can be divided in ἀνομοιομερῇ whereas ἀσύνθετον is divided in ὁμοιομερῇ. This refers to a difference between the qualities of the elements out of which something consists.

<sup>34</sup> 5.155, ἀρμόττειν τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν, cf. the similar context in Aristotle's *Pol.* IV.1, 1289A2, where to destroy the ὑπάρχουσαι (πολιτεῖαι) is to contravene the demands of the ἀρμόττον. ἀρμόττον is a term used in literary criticism as well, cf. Arist. *Poet.* 15, 1454A22.



requirement of the proportion of the parts<sup>35</sup>, something we find in his *Rhetoric* in almost the same words with regard to rhetoric.<sup>36</sup> This rhetorical proportion was developed earlier in Plato's *Phaedrus*.<sup>37</sup>

However, I do not want to trace Aristotle's political theory back to the philosophy of rhetoric, be it Platonic or Aristotelian.<sup>38</sup> Rather, the passages quoted earlier which link the abilities for political leadership, statesmanship, and rhetoric have to be explained by the fact that both disciplines are related to *technê*. Although it is common knowledge that Aristotle distinguishes between the field of *technê* (ποιεῖν) and πράξις, nevertheless *technê* can be used to a certain degree to illustrate the area of πράττειν, and is used to explain certain aspects in the *Politics*.<sup>39</sup> It is not surprising that in *Pol.* IV Aristotle shows that he was influenced by a method developed by Plato in the *Phaedrus* for a *technê* which satisfies philosophical requirements.

Books IV–VI of the *Politics* date from Aristotle's later period, yet they do not reflect the preoccupation of his later years with empirical sciences, but rather genuine Platonic methodology. This could escape the attention of scholars because while they are accustomed to see Aristotle's political philosophy against the background of Plato's political philosophy, they do not generally consider the *Phaedrus*.

We know from *Pol.* I–II how critical Aristotle was of Plato's political philosophy, but—probably because of the strong language he used—we tend to overlook how much he still owed to Plato. In *Pol.* II.3, 1261B20ff. he criticized Plato's expectation of creating unity from a family organization where all guardians call everyone else father, brother, etc. For Aristotle this is a fallacy, since Plato ignored the different meaning of πάντες and ἕκαστος, just like the conclusion that one and three are even numbers because  $1 + 3 = 4$ , and four is an even number. Now we find Aristotle's argument—and Aristotle certainly had found it himself—in Plato's *Hippias. Ma.* 303B6. One could almost say that

<sup>35</sup> *Pol.* II.5, 1263B33ff.; V.3, 1302B34ff.; 9, 1309B21ff., cf. III.13, 1284B7ff.: "The painter will not allow the figure to have a foot which, however beautiful, is not in proportion to the rest of the body nor will the shipbuilder allow the stern or any other part of the vessel to be unduly large, any more than the chorus-master will allow any one who sings louder or better than all the rest to sing in the choir." Aristotle uses this analogy with art to justify ostracism.

<sup>36</sup> *Rhet.* I 4, 1260A23ff.

<sup>37</sup> 264C5, πρέποντα ἀλλήλοις; the idea is later used in relation to poetry in *Hor. ep.* II.3.1ff.

<sup>38</sup> In principle I have doubts about any such attempt, since it would imply that Aristotle could be an original thinker in biology, metaphysics, rhetoric etc. but failed to make any original contributions to political philosophy, and therefore had to take the methods and results over from the other fields of philosophy in which he was more successful. I cannot find any support for this view, which would lead to a depreciation of Aristotle's political or practical philosophy.

<sup>39</sup> III.4, 1276B21ff.; 6, 1278B40ff.; 12, 1282B30; 13, 1284B7ff.; 15, 1286A11ff.; VI.6, 1320B34ff.; VII.2, 1324B29; 13, 1331B34ff.; it is presupposed *Rhet.* I.15, 1375B20ff. cf. F. Heinemann, "Eine vorplatonische Theorie der technê," *MH* 18 (1961) 105–30, esp. 110–11. The limits of using a *technê*-analogy in *Politics* are shown *Pol.* II.8, 1269A19ff.; III.16, 1287A32ff., cf. for the difference as well *EN* II.3, 1105A26ff.

Aristotle criticizes Plato because he ignored something he himself had written in a different context.

I believe the situation in *Pol. IV* is similar. In the first chapter there is criticism of theorists—certainly Aristotle included Plato—who concentrated on the ideal state (1288B37). Indeed, by rejecting in the *Laws* the lofty political ideal of the *Republic* and designing a framework which was less remote from reality, Plato had extended the scope of his political theory but still limited himself to a small segment of what political philosophy could embrace. For Aristotle, Plato had failed to define and deal with the tasks of political philosophy as a clearly defined discipline in all its aspects. Yet the methodology for such a discipline which Aristotle wanted to establish—as he did in other fields—could be found in Plato’s program of a scientific rhetoric which approaches its subject not partially, but in its totality, by analyzing all the types of natures human beings have and by devising the types of speeches appropriate to the different *eidê* of human natures. Aristotle’s concept of a complete political theory which analyses the conditions in the population of a state, the types of people, and links the various possibilities to a very refined set of constitutions is not based on Aristotle’s own empirical studies (e.g. in biology), the methods of which he then adapted to political philosophy, but rather adopts all the central elements of Plato’s methodology in the *Phaedrus*. Aristotle in *Pol. IV* fulfilled the program Plato had outlined for rhetoric, which included lawgiving.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> J. L. Ackrill, *Aristotle The Philosopher* (London 1981) 157 underrates the philosophical content when, evidently referring to *Pol. IV–VI*, he writes that these books are “of a mainly historical interest.”