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Dear Joel,

Very gladly I received word from you. Thank you in particular for sending me an advance copy of your paper. I really wanted to have a better look on it, because you valiantly addressed a central and thorny problem. I believe there is much potential in it, and as a result of this my remarks grew considerably in scale. The issues you raise are highly important, and if I differ from your analysis, it is because I think that an even more "unitarian" interpretation of Aristotle's theory on the relevant topics can be given. I also enclose a copy of my paper at that Conference. My basic point was to give in a very condensed but inclusive form a coherent account of the Aristotelian political system in its fundamental articulation: even to deduce it through a thorough application of the teleological principle. Unfortunately I have not yet ready an Excursus which will counteract and supplement the abstract handling in the paper by a detailed study of a significant theme, namely the relationship among the several principles of division employed by Aristotle in different sections of Politics for the distinction and definition of the various constitutions. I have also had myself a very hard pressing and intensely laborious time, and the commitments extend relentlessly into the future, with only a brief respite in September envisaged. It^{so} happened that I am just now writing that Excursus.

Now, what I shall say on your paper here falls under two headings: the diagnosis of the tension you discern between moral and political phronesis on the one hand, and the solution you suggest for the relaxation of that tension on the other.

A) The upshot of Aristotle's discussion on the relationship between good man (ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός) simpliciter and excellent citizen (σπουδαῖος πολίτης), is given by himself at the end of Γ5 (1278a40–b5): the two are identical only in some constitutions, and even there the identity pertains to the "politician" (πολιτικός) and ruler (κύριος), or potential ruler, of public affairs (τῆς τῶν κοινῶν ἐπιμελείας). Further on in the same book Γ (18, 1288a37–9), with explicit reference back evidently to the discussion in Γ4–5,

Aristotle states that it has been shown in that previous passage that the virtue characteristic and constitutive of man (in excellence) is the same with the virtue characteristic and constitutive of citizen (in excellence) in the best politeia (πόλις ἀρίστη). There is no question in Γ4–5 of the Aristotelian polity (Πολιτεία), which is not discussed per se at all in that Book, either in the general section or in the treatment of Βασιλεία - Ἀριστοκρατία at its second part. (I cannot see why you consider that Aristotle plainly introduces the distinction you are making in the discussion of the polity in Book Γ). The passage in Γ4 §§9–10 (or ΓIII §§9–10, anyway 1277b7 sqq.) to which you apparently refer as "Book 3 chapters 9 and 10" is neutral as to which specific constitution falls under its description, in tune with the introductory and preliminary nature of the developments in the first three Books. But clearly the ἀρίστη πόλις is there meant as well. Besides the development there is an answer to a counterargument (ἀλλ' ἔστι τις etc.) to the general thesis that the virtues of ruler and ruled are different. The thesis is firm (cf. A13, 1259b21–1260a24). Otherwise there would be no reason and no justification for the ruler to rule and the ruled to be ruled (1259b 34–36). The difference between the virtue of the ruler and the corresponding one of the ruled (e.g. ruler–valour / ruled–valour, ruler–justice / ruled–justice, ruler–temperance / ruled–temperance etc.) lies precisely in the possession or non–possession of full phronesis, i.e. of the intellectual aspect of moral virtue (cf. 1260a 14–24, where the ruler is said to have necessarily the perfect moral virtue, i.e. the moral virtue crowned with the relevant intellectual virtue of phronesis; some in fact wanted to change ἠθικῶν in a17 to διανοητικῶν in order exactly to enhance the point, but it is not needed). This is why Aristotle maintains in 1277b25 sqq. that phronesis is peculiar to the ruler alone: he knows, so to speak, the rationale of morality, the reason constituting each virtue as the μεσότης which it is (cf. the definition of virtue in Ethics); the others act καθ' ἕξις on belief, on ἀληθῆς δόξα, if they are correctly drilled and instructed – and here the question of education, modes of life and cultural identity in general of a πόλις comes to the forum imperiously). And so it is that the excellence of a constitution and πόλις is a work of knowledge and deliberate choice (ἔργον ἐπιστήμης καὶ προαιρέσεως). Incidentally, in 1277a28–9, Aristotle is not saying that the δόξα ἀληθῆς is the phronesis of the ruled, but that the δόξα ἀληθῆς is the ἀρετή of the ruled (in the sense that it represents the knowledge–equivalent of the fully blown intellectual knowledge of phronesis, such gnostic aspect being necessary to integrate in whatever way the several moral virtues in a coherent whole of human

excellence). The text which you quote should be translated "phronesis is not the [peculiar] virtue of one who is ruled, but rather true opinion [is the characteristic virtue of the ruled]": he has a true opinion of what the μεσότης in each virtue is, not true knowledge, as the man who possesses intellectual perfection in the field of actions and passions, things to be done (πρακτά) and felt (παθητά); the μεσότης of moral virtue is ὡς ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὀρίσειεν. Your formulation in this respect needs, therefore, I think, rephrasing.

Aristotle makes clear that his distinction between ruler – virtue and ruled – virtue is independent from (though analogous to) the differences between what constitutes a good master and a good slave or a good man and a good woman. The distinction in question pertains to free men (and similar in genus) alike. There are two distinct justices according to which a free man will rule and be ruled respectively with regard to questions of justice (1277b18–21 and context). Freedom in itself does not bridge the gap between ruler and ruled. There are virtuous free men unfit to rule (as lacking the necessary intellectual competence) in any constitution – this is the distinct implication.

Is citizenship then perhaps incompatible with the existence of such a gap? It depends on how citizenship is defined. And this is why Aristotle introduces a discussion of this issue in Γ.5 in immediate sequence to his treatment of the question regarding the identity or otherwise of man–virtue and citizen–virtue (Γ4); indeed, the latter development ends up with a recapitulation of basic results from the former analysis. Citizen for Aristotle is primarily he who rules or participates in ruling (1278a36. Cf. 1275a22 sqq. and preceding context). Citizen simpliciter (πολίτης ἀπλῶς), citizen preeminently (μάλιστα πολίτης) is the full citizen who exercises administrative, deliberative – legislative – decretive, and judiciary jurisdiction in society. Constitutions which grant the legal title without the full reality of citizenship (i.e. rule) to the people simply hide the fact of that crucial diminutio capitis with the aim of deceiving those who are de facto merely co-inhabitants and not true citizens (συνοικοῦντες rather than συμπολιτευόμενοι, 1278a39. Cf. 1275a7). In fact, there are no ruled citizens in the ἀρίστη πόλις, only young men who are potential and future leaders, all of them. (The ruled differ from the rulers in point of age not of personal identity). In it, the excellence (virtue) of citizen and ruler is the same with that of the best man (1333a11). In 1277a14–6 (in a context where Aristotle does not discuss polity, but treats in general terms of basic concepts previously to his division of constitutions), I suppose you have followed a defective text;

the passage runs: φαμέν δὴ τὸν ἄρχοντα τὸν σπουδαῖον ἀγαθόν εἶναι καὶ φρόνιμον, τὸν δὲ πολιτικόν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι φρόνιμον. It is ἀγαθόν, not σοφόν, and, most importantly, πολιτικόν, not πολίτην as you translate. In fact Congreve wanted to make the point more emphatic and changed πολιτικόν to πολίτην οὐκ (not to πολίτην)! But it is unnecessary: the text is eloquent as it stands; the point is about rulers and "politicians", people involved in the care of the commonwealth (ἐπιμέλεια τῶν κοινῶν).

Now, if I am right, there surely cannot exist people permanently deprived of rule in an ἀρίστη πόλις, and yet really happy, εὐδαίμονες. But this does not in the least mean or imply that such men cannot or do not exist in all other kinds of constitution. On the contrary: the more corrupt a constitution is, the more likely men of true excellence, and hence eudaemonia, will live afar from the corridors of political power. Of course such excellence and eudaemonia is also more dependent in fortune for its genesis and maintenance, on benevolent contingencies of birth, growth, education, environment and life generally, in order to counterbalance the adverse influence of a defective society. It is also more difficult for anybody to move against the current. Consequently, fewer will reach perfection in any constitution than those who could achieve it under the best constitution. It is like the case where some crew would not assume the salvation of ship, lives and cargo as the overruling end of their actions on board, but consider, say, the swiftness or gain in transportation such supreme aim. All their skills and calculations have been geared to the attainment of such Ends. The man knowledgeable in navigation who happens to be among them sees the perilous course on which they would often embark, but will be unable to persuade them into a better way; he may even, with all his knowledge, participate in the common destruction as a result of their folly and ignorance. But this could not hinder him from representing an excellent specimen of naval lore in vivo, and being a genuinely happy man for that. Only he would encounter more obstruction in his formation and function than he could have experienced within a properly constituted team; he would therefore be a more rare exception.

Real eudaemonia, as involving human perfection, cannot be widespread anyway, let alone universal, even in the context of Aristotelian Ethics. How many, under any conditions, may obtain wisdom in the Aristotelian sense? But the point is that in ἀρίστη πόλις excellence and eudaemonia are indeed maximized. I do not think that there is any stress between common sense and teleology in Aristotle. You have certainly put

*cf. e.g. 17,
1279a39-41.*

your finger to the wound when identifying teleology as the real drive behind all this. This is veritable Aristotelianism. But I am afraid that the common sense pole is more of a modern interpretative preoccupation. Aristotle's healthy and impeccable realism is another thing. But he never gave false signs or alarms: deliberate progress towards the best polity has to be stepwise and gradual, like the succeeding rings in the teleological chain of reality. Human Perfection and perfect Eudaimonia pertain certainly to human nature as such, and are therefore, in this sense, open and available to everybody; yet few will actually attain them. Just as salvation is offered to all in Christianity through the Sacrifice of the God-Man; but there is no statistics as to the number of those elect who will choose to follow the Way and be, consequently, really saved. And just as matter and the elements exist for the sake of the ultimate manifestation of contemplation; but only small portions of them will actually provide the seat for noetic illumination.

Finally, about the Kingship counterexample. Kingship is grouped by Aristotle with Aristocracy, and treated, I believe, as a limiting case of it. (Cf. Δ , 2, 1289a31 sqq.; E, 10, 1310b2; 31 sqq.). The rationale of absolute kingship is simple: the existence of a charismatic individual far above all others in human excellences, the best attainment of a perfect man, virtuous, prudent and wise. It is precisely such a gap between one member and the rest of society, even taken collectively, which justifies $\pi\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$, indeed cf. 1289a25 makes it the natural (fitting) form of constitution in this case (Γ 17, 1288a15–cf. 1284a 19). Certainly, there can be only one man really enjoying complete 8-15; 1284b eudaimonia here: the king himself. But he (being thoroughly good and wise 27-34 as he is) will earnestly and effectively work for the amelioration of the social mass through, primarily, the institution of proper education and legislation conducive to the maximal realization of the human End. If he is successful (as he normally should be), proper Aristocracy will ensue: as many men as possible will be able to attain the required high levels of perfection and they will form the governing body as well as the entire citizenry of the State. I don't see anything unaristotelian or counterintuitive in this conclusion.

B) I cannot help still thinking that my remark at Ierissos provides the main point regarding your proposed resolution of the difficulties (IV). You appropriately and correctly connect NE Z, 1141b24 sqq. with NE E, 1130a22–3. Aristotle affirms the numerical (not generic) identity of the two realities, while ascribing to them difference with regard to being or definition or $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. Cf., most characteristically, Physics 202a13–21: interval AB is just the same with interval BA, although they differ in their conception and

definition. Cf. also De Anima Γ, 425b26 sqq. (In Γ, 424a25 the case is not exactly analogous: it is here about the numerical identity, with difference in being, between a thing and its essential power). The same habit of character, the same ἔξις if viewed in itself and simpliciter (ἢ τοιάδε ἔξις ἀπλῶς) is virtue, if viewed in relation to something else (ἢ πρὸς ἕτερον) is justice (in its general acceptation). General justice is just virtue considered in the relation that it bears to other men, in how it affects the relation of the virtuous subject to others. Virtue in itself is the formed habit of passion and action in the individual in question. Evidently, it is through his passions and actions that anybody is related to others. A certain pattern of passions and actions entails one definite type of human relationship, and vice versa. The law, so to speak, of an individual's passions and actions is the law of his behaviour, and, hence, the law of his relationship to others. There is nothing added over and above what is included in virtue to complete it into justice. It is merely a question of perspective.

Just the same with the other passage. The selfsame ἔξις of intellectual discrimination of ends and means in actions and of proper attitudes in passions (phronesis) if directed to society at large is called by an appropriate variety of names depending on the particular field to which it is referred and on which it is exercised (οἰκονομική, νομοθετική, πολιτική βουλευτική, πολιτική δικαστική), while it may also be called πολιτική in general, distinct from the proper and specific πολιτική; if directed to the individual and applied to its life, it is called by the common name, phronesis. In ordinary parlance "phronesis" signifies prudence as connected with the individual itself, passions and actions measured in a way to realize its own good; but beyond the question of linguistic propriety, the philosophical point is that the same ἔξις, considered in its varying applications to different fields, constitutes what is denoted by the various names.¹⁰

After all, the End for Ethics and Politics is just the same: human perfection and eudaimonia.

Again, this is, I believe, thoroughly Aristotelian. Human nature is susceptible of a certain perfection, and this is the End of life. Phronesis is the power of intellectual discernment in matters of how that End can be practically attained. The same ability is involved in devising the best constitution, or promoting legislation in any constitution (whether with a view to a general amelioration of the human material and thus a change and betterment of the constitution, or, contrarywisely, to its preservation such as it is), or deliberating or judging for the commonwealth – or acting in furtherance of one's own eudaemonia. The exercise of phronesis in the ἀρίστη πόλις, is complete in that it involves the unimpeded simultaneous

and congruous realization of both the individual and the social good. In all inferior constitutions, its exercise is obstructed, segregated and multi-oriented. Nonetheless, it is the same knowledge, ability and habit of mind and soul that is operative in all its relations and aspects. How one comes about such attainment in flawed societies is another matter. Fortune must play quite a role in this, surely. But it must be the natural tendency of nature to reach its proper perfection in even the most adverse circumstances that at bottom accounts for the miracle. Under any cultivational regiment Earth may bring forth a product to marvel at.

This far then in my positive criticism of your paper. Let me know of whatever you would want to say on it or on my enclosed paper.

I am sorry to hear that you will not come to this year's Conference on Greek philosophy. It was truly nice meeting and talking to you at Ierissos, and I was looking forward to seeing you this summer in Samos and Patmos. If it is merely a question of application and time-table formalities, perhaps you can let me know as soon as possible.

With best wishes and friendly regards,
Yours sincerely,

Apostolos Pierris

PS. Boudouris told me that very long ago either Paula Gottlieb or Judith Swanson (he couldn't remember!) asked and got my address from him. As I have received no letter from either, and as it happened more than once that correspondence sent has not reached me this winter because of a particular distribution-problem in my place, I wonder whether, in case that you do have contact with them, you could just check about this.

*Always, the most obvious escapes correction! It is aristē polis — feminine.
You can play on the other hand with ἀριστήρις, one word!*

f.