

# Aristotle's "other *Politeiai*"

## Las "otras *Politeiai*" aristotélicas

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### Abstract

It is possible that the School of Aristotle had a 'broad' model as a point of reference for the *Politeia* of a community (pre-Greek, *ktisis*, places, toponyms, ethnonyms, heroic age, *archaiologia*, history of the community and/or institutions, laws and legislators, ancient kings and tyrants, 4th century institutions, coins, public or aristocratic banqueting, *agogai*, usages and customs, products of the earth, cults, myths, proverbs, poets, various episodes, *mirabilia*, ethnographic elements). The differences in character or structure will have been determined by the characteristics of the community and the documentation that the School in its in own time unearthed on each community. Although there undoubtedly was a tendency towards a certain form of structure and this is evident, the structuring of an *opusculum* into obligatory parts, as fixed contents, is rather a tendency of modern analysis. A definition of the *Athenaion Politeia* as 'atypical' must therefore be avoided since, in their variety, the quoted sources and the Heraclidean extracts demonstrate that such a fixed model does not exist.

**Keywords:** Aristotelian *Politeiai*, *Athenaion Politeia*, model, differences, community.

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## Resumen

Es posible que la Escuela de Aristóteles tuviera un modelo ‘amplio’ como punto de partida para redactar la *Politeia* de una ciudad (momento pre-griego, *ktisis*, lugares, topónimos, etnónimos, época heroica, arqueología, historia de la comunidad y/o instituciones, leyes y legisladores, antiguos reyes y tiranos, instituciones del siglo IV, monedas, *sysstia* y *symposia*, *agogai*, hábitos y costumbres, productos de la tierra, cultos, mitos, proverbios, poetas, episodios varios, *mirabilia*, elementos etnográficos). Las diferencias en el carácter y la estructura dependían de las características de cada comunidad y de la documentación disponible. Si bien a través de los *excerpta* y los fragmentos es evidente la presencia de una tendencia hacia un cierto tipo de estructura, no existía un modelo fijo (del que deriva la definición de ‘modelo atípico’ por la *Athenaion Politeia*) y su codificación es más bien una tendencia del análisis moderno.

**Palabras-clave:** *Politeiai* aristotélicas, *Athenaion Politeia*, modelo, diferencias, comunidad.

## 1. The “other *Politeiai*”

The title of this paper derives from the widespread habit of recognising the term “other *Politeiai*”<sup>2</sup> as the name given in 1999 by David Toye to the Aristotelian *Politeiai* wholly distinct from that of the Athenians, which was characterised by institutional peculiarities that apparently set it apart. Indeed, whether we agree or not with the individual aspects of Toye’s reading<sup>3</sup>, we

<sup>2</sup> In order to maintain a clear distinction between the two different realities, I use the term *Politeia* with upper-case P specifically to indicate writings focused on the *politeia* of a city or a people, i.e. the literary/historiographic product; I use the term *politeia*, which is written with the lower-case p, to indicate the tie which, in one form and another, unites a group of citizens, an abstract and, at the same time, concrete concept (the soul of the city: *psyche* for Isoc. VII 14; XII 138; *bios* for Aristotle *Pol.* 1295a 40ff.; in any case, *the life of the community*), the totality of that which makes a group into a community in terms of their identity, and/or technically in terms of institutions, and/or more generally in the concrete sense of a community’s life. By convention I use “Aristotle” or “the compiler” to mean whoever actually drafted the *opuscula* of the Aristotelian School. Due to the large amount of bibliography on the subject, the bibliography was mentioned in a very selective way. The very recent collection by Leonardi 2020 cannot be taken into consideration because of the quality of the translations of the extracts and fragments, and the ways in which it uses the previous bibliography on them.

<sup>3</sup> Toye’s opinion is that the *AP* was atypical both because it consisted of two rigidly separated sections – the first outlining the historical development of the *metabolai* which led to the constitutional forms of the 4th century, the second dedicated to a meticulous description of these constitutional forms – and for its exclusively institutional and historical-institutional subject matter, excluding any other aspect of usage, custom, or the daily facts of collective life, which are the generic constituent characteristics of a community (Toye 1999). His article allowed a substantial step forward in our studies by making it clear that not all the *opuscula* follow the same schema. However, the paper

have all appropriated his definition in order to distinguish two apparently different ways of compiling a 'special' *Politeia*<sup>4</sup> and we have made various investigations<sup>5</sup> in order to highlight the characteristics of the *opuscula* within the limits of what was preserved by indirect tradition and epitomes.

The two presumed alternatives of putting together a monograph on the *politeia* are well known.

- The so-called atypical model of the *Athenaion Politeia* (hereafter *AP*) of which, the first part being lost, what remains – beginning with the condemnation of the Alcmaeonids for the sacrilege of the Cilonians – is the diachronic sequence of the 11 *metabolai politeion* up to the time of Aristotle, and the (damaged) description of the institutions of the 4th century BCE. It appears as a rigorously institutional *opusculum*, clearly constructed along historiographical lines<sup>6</sup> in terms of the continuity proper to the local history<sup>7</sup>, although within a School and project that are both philosophical. A detailed analysis of the *AP* highlights that Aristotle does not show how in Athens the abstract laws of the polity find concrete application or how the political community realised its idea of justice<sup>8</sup>.

- The "other *Politeiai*", of which fragments have survived in which we find evidence that, from case to case, significant space was devoted to the phase of the *ktisis* (at least for cities of migration and colonisation<sup>9</sup>; in my opinion, more probably for all or nearly all) and sometimes to a contextualisation of the *ktisis* from the pre-Greek era, with attention to places, toponyms, poleonyms,

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shows a series of weaknesses. We can neither agree with its definition of the *Politeiai* as writings with the aim, among others, of giving the reader pleasure (Plut. *Non posse* 10 = *Mor.* 1093c), nor recognise a certain closeness to the writings to which D.H. *Th.* 5 refers; but above all, we cannot agree in believing that, in the absence of local materials and intermediate sources, the *Lokalgeschichte*, with the exception of Attidography, drew strongly on poetry and literature. This applies to all the smaller cities, whereas Athens and Sparta would have been better known to the audience of the *opuscula*. Toye's assessment of local historiography is wholly inadequate, confined to the contents of *archaiologiai*. But being conditioned in particular by an erroneous approach to the fragmentary historiography (for a summary of the bibliography about fragmentary historiography and his method, already fully established in 1999, cf. Polito 2009: vii, n. 6), Toye tries – with no basis in fact – to select in the *FGrHist* a narrow list of cities which, in his opinion, Aristotle could have known (cf. Hose 2002: 134). The most serious limitation of his assessments about the *Politeiai* does indeed consist in his deriving it from these premises.

<sup>4</sup> For distinction between "general *Politeiai*", i.e. *Politeiai* "ohne näheren Bestimmung gebraucht", and "special *Politeiai*", i.e., *Politeiai* "mit einer näheren Bestimmung in Genetiv", cf. Treu 1967, particularly 1936 (cf. also 1937-1947) and Meister 1990, 116-119. See also insights, more recently, Polito 2013: 166-167; Polito 2017: 12ff. with the rescaling of Jacoby's classification.

<sup>5</sup> Recently Dietze-Mager 2017; Dietze-Mager 2018; Erdas 2017; Polito 2017; Thomas 2019: 358-385.

<sup>6</sup> Polito 2017. For a careful audit of procedures in the use of sources and modes of drafting, see recently Vanotti 2019: 126 with a concluding final assessment and Vanotti 2020: 214-215.

<sup>7</sup> Cf., for example, Momigliano 1982: 55. For a different reading of this continuity Poddighe 2019.

<sup>8</sup> On the problem cf. Day-Chambers 1962: particularly 22-24, 50-65; Düring 1976: 530; Rhodes 1981: 20-28; Bertelli 1994: 98f.; Poddighe 2014: 35, 116-126; Polito 2017: 15ff., 30; Thomas 2019: 358-364; Vanotti 2019: 126.

<sup>9</sup> Dietze-Mager 2017: 57f.; Erdas 2017: 51-55; Polito 2017: 31-37; Thomas 2019: 367.

ethnonyms, and the heroic age<sup>10</sup>; *ktiseis* and traces of an *archaiologia* which precedes the *ktisis* or constituted the evident nexus between the *ktisis* and a more historical section<sup>11</sup>; in a large number of cases an institutional first section laid out as a diachronic phase, by *metabolai*, and then sometimes a description of the present, as in the *AP*<sup>12</sup>; laws and legislators<sup>13</sup>, ancient kings and tyrants<sup>14</sup>; coins<sup>15</sup>; and also banqueting practices (public or aristocratic), *agogai*, usages and customs<sup>16</sup>, produce from the land<sup>17</sup>; in addition, oracles<sup>18</sup>, proverbs<sup>19</sup>, poets<sup>20</sup>, and, with nexuses that often remain obscure to us, traces of episodes concerning bloody events, sex, particular crimes, *mirabilia*, anecdotes and ethnographic elements<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 19, 22, 26, 30, 49, 55, 59, 62, 65, 66, 67, 74 Dilts; fr. 476 Gigon (= 473 Rose), 477 Gigon (= 474 Rose), 481 Gigon (= 477 Rose), 482 Gigon, 483 Gigon (= 478 Rose), 485 Gigon (= 481A Rose), 488 Gigon (= 482 Rose), 490 Gigon (= 495 Rose), 491 Gigon (= 486 Rose), 493 Gigon (= 613B Rose), 495 Gigon (= 488A Rose), 498 Gigon (= 491 Rose), 506 Gigon (= 501 Rose), 507 Gigon (= 511 Rose), 509/510 Gigon (= 504 Rose), 511 Gigon (= 507 Rose), 512 Gigon (= 596 Rose), 513 Gigon (= 508 Rose), 516 Gigon (= 511 Rose), 517 Gigon (= 512 Rose), 519,1 Gigon (= 514 Rose), 524 Gigon (= 526 Rose), 527,2 Gigon (= 521B Rose), 528,2 Gigon (= 522B Rose), 535 Gigon (= 540 Rose), 539 Gigon (= 532 Rose), 552 Gigon (= 546 Rose), 564 Gigon (= 555 Rose), 568 Gigon (= 560A Rose), 588 Gigon (= 570 Rose), 596 Gigon, 597 Gigon (= 579 Gigon), 612 Gigon (= 595 Rose). Cf. Polito 2001: 249-254; Erdas 2017: 51-55. Cf. also Bertelli 2017; Thomas 2019: 366ff.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 10, 16, 19, 22, 25, 26, 30, 46, 49, 55, 57, 59, 62, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 74, 68, 74, 75 Dilts; fr. 483 Gigon (= 478 Rose), 485 Gigon (= 481 Rose), 498 Gigon (= 491 Rose), 500 Gigon (= 493 Rose), 502 Gigon (= 497 Rose), 504,1 Gigon (= 498A Rose), 511 Gigon (= 507 Rose), 512 Gigon (= 506 Rose), 513 Gigon (= 508 Rose), 523,1 Gigon (= 520 Rose), 527 Gigon (= 521 Rose), 528 Gigon (= 522 Rose), 535,1 e 3-4 Gigon (= 528 Rose), 541 Gigon (= 533 Rose), 559/560 Gigon (= 549 Rose), 561 Gigon (= 550 Rose), 568 Gigon (= 560A Rose), 569 Gigon (= 562 Rose), 572 Gigon (= 561B Rose), 575 Gigon (= 560B Rose), 589 Gigon (= 571 Rose), 608 Gigon (= 591 Rose), 617 Gigon (= 601 Rose). Cf. Thomas 2019: 369ff.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Polito 2017: 32 and nn. 98-105; Erdas 2017: 57-48.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 9, 24, 39, 61, 63 Dilts; fr. 540 Gigon (= 535 Rose), 542 Gigon (= 536, 537 Rose), 543 Gigon (= 538 Rose), 544 Gigon (= 534 Rose), 548 Gigon (= 542 Rose), 549 Gigon (= 543 Rose). Cf. Polito 2001: 250f.; Erdas 2017: 57-59.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 10, 16-17, 19-20, 21, 22, 23, 36, 48, 55, 64, 69 Dilts; fr. 492 Gigon (= 486B Rose), 521 Gigon (= 516, Rose), 522 Gigon (= 517 Rose), 533 Gigon (= 527 Rose), 534 Gigon (= 519 Rose), 535,1 Gigon (= 528A Rose), 536 Gigon (= 529 Rose), 539 Gigon (= 532 Rose), 540 Gigon (= 535 Rose), 541 Gigon (= 533 Rose), 542,1 Gigon (= 536, 537AB Rose), 543 Gigon (= 538 Rose), 544 Gigon (= 534 Rose), 545 Gigon (= 539 Rose), 548 Gigon (= 542 Rose), 549 Gigon (= 543 Rose), 588 Gigon (= 554 Rose) 589 Rose (= 571 Rose), 606 Gigon (= 588 Rose).

<sup>15</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 24, 37 Dilts; fr. 479,1-2 Gigon (= 476 Rose), 480,3 Gigon (= 476C Rose), 485/486 Gigon (= 481 Rose), 492 Gigon (= 485B Rose). Cf. Erdas 2017: 59-61.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 10, 12-13, 15, 28-29, 38, 42, 43, 44, 46, 48, 53, 54, 56, 58, 60, 72, 73, 76 Dilts; fr. 544 Gigon (= 534 Rose), 554,2 Gigon (= 547AB Rose), 557 Gigon (= 553 Rose). Cf. Thomas 2019: 365ff., 371f.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 41, 47, 54 Dilts; fr. 505 Gigon (= 495 Rose).

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 16, 17, 55, 70 Dilts; fr. Rose 491-492 (Gigon = 486B Rose).

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 24, 30, 34, 38 Dilts; fr. Rose 494 Gigon (= 487 Rose). Thomas 2019: 368ff.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 9, 10, 11, 14, 25, 50, 60, 64 Dilts; fr. 520 Gigon (= 515 Rose), 534,1 Gigon (= 519A Rose), 570 Gigon (= 564 Rose). Cf. e.g. Thomas 2019, 472f.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. Heraclid. *Exc.* 15, 21, 22, 24, 31, 42, 45, 58, 62, 64, 71, 72 Dilts; fr. 483,1 Gigon (= 478A Rose), 487 Gigon (= 483 Rose), 492 Gigon (= 486B Rose), 497 Gigon (= 489 Rose), 499 Gigon (= 492 Rose), 502 Gigon (= 497 Rose), 503 Gigon (= 499 Rose), 509 Gigon (= 504A Rose), 514 Gigon (= 509 Rose), 520 Gigon (= 515 Rose), 522 Gigon (= 517 Rose), 523 Gigon (= 520 Rose) 528,1

These structural nuclei are developed along diachronic lines, specific to the *Politeiai*, constituting the frame which makes each of them "un insieme più o meno organico"<sup>22</sup>, in that the necessary presence of a diachronic section responds to the Aristotelian theory of institutional development<sup>23</sup> and, while it opens the way for the historicization of the statutes, allows the organisation of research outcomes according to the historiographical category of the time, drawn from local history<sup>24</sup>. Although only partially demonstrable because of its fragmentary state<sup>25</sup>, the continuative dimension remains indispensable<sup>26</sup> as a foundation both of the historical layout and of the features that guaranteed the community's identity<sup>27</sup>. The literary genre consolidates and enriches<sup>28</sup> itself through the deeply institutional elements of the Aristotelian School, but loses none of those from the preceding *opuscula* (as far as we know: Critias, the so-called Old Oligarch, and Xenophon): it maintains unaltered, at least in many of the 158 *opuscula*<sup>29</sup>, those "contenuti che, in una forma o nell'altra, sono espressione della comunità e della sua organizzazione a tutti i livelli"<sup>30</sup>. From this derives a strong sense of identity in the *Politeiai*<sup>31</sup>, which was already implied by their historical-continuative aspect: it is the identity-forming potency that the description of a community can assume when we do not see its *politeia* solely as a technically institutional fact, but as the way citizens learned how best to be together over time. And the recent hypothesis may be correct in foregrounding, on the basis of our *opuscula*, the emphasis on the community under discussion as a *polis* at the precise historical moment when the *polis* was suffering or dying<sup>32</sup>. In fact, the literary genre achieves the historicization of the events and characteristics (political, institutional, human, social, religious, ethnic, etc.) which have made the community and endowed it with its identity.

Gigon (= 522A Rose), 540 Gigon (= 535 Rose), 541 Gigon (= 533 Rose), 542,1 Gigon (= 536, 537AB Rose), 543 Gigon (= 538 Rose), 546 Gigon (= 541 Rose), 547,1 Gigon (= 540 Rose), 557 Gigon (= 553 Rose), 558 Gigon (= 554 Rose), 565,1 Gigon (= 557 Rose), 595 Gigon (= 578 Rose), 600 Gigon (= 583 Rose), 592 Gigon (= 575 Rose), 613 Gigon (= 596 Rose). Cf. also Dietze-Mager 2017: 61ff.; Thomas 2019: 369ff. The perhaps excessive gathering of themes by Thomas 2019: Chap. 9, gives a clear picture of the variety and wealth of the contents.

<sup>22</sup> Erdas 2017. Cf. Heraclid. *Exc.* 62.

<sup>23</sup> Polito 2017: 32f.

<sup>24</sup> Recently Polito 2017: 38. On this topic see Poddighe 2019: 283ff.

<sup>25</sup> But the unitary nature of the various sections in Heraclides constitutes a guide: Polito 2001: 201-228.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *infra*.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Thomas 2019.

<sup>28</sup> "(...) pour ce qui est de la notion même de *politeia*, l'accord d'Aristote avec toute l'époque classique paraît beaucoup plus profond encore: à ce sujet, on retrouve chez lui la même complexité et les mêmes ambiguïtés qu'auparavant" (Bordes 1980: 250). See also Bordes 1982; Polito 2001: 245-264; Polito 2017.

<sup>29</sup> According to the numbers of D.L. V 27 (143): cf. Moraux 1951: 164.

<sup>30</sup> Polito 2017: 38. The term community is used in this study intentionally to refer without distinction to *poleis* and *ethne* (on the *Politeiai* of *ethne* cf. Dietze-Mager 2017: 48ff.; 2018: 31ff.).

<sup>31</sup> Thomas 2019: 358-385.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

But not all the themes listed will have found space in all the *Politeiai*: some of those that have been passed down consist of the occurrences that typically aroused the curiosity of the quoting sources; other aspects, however, could have been missed from this list, reabsorbed into the tradition that has not preserved them for us; but, if we consider a hypothetic *specimen* to stand for them all, perhaps we might imagine a sort of model containing the recurring elements – not “obligatory” but most usually present – in the “other *Politeiai*”. This does not mean that all the compilers keep to this, nor that all the *poleis* offered political situations or that documentary material (institutional or otherwise) was available, but each had its different characterizing aspects and at least some compilers may have followed such a ‘rich’ model<sup>33</sup> and, besides, various *opuscula* have given abundant material, differing from case to case. Unfortunately, however, in “other *Politeiai*” the *excerptor*’s<sup>34</sup> cuts or the choices made by the quoting source have intervened, causing the loss of connections between what has the contents of the original *opuscula*. Hence the modern efforts to try and reconstruct them, an effort always conditional upon the awareness of its hypothetical nature. Hypothesising about what themes might be included in the *Politeia* of a given city from a few decontextualised references is like an editor of fragments drafting and numbering the corpus of the surviving fragments after identifying the material that is to be attributed to them: the gamble of putting together a few certainties and many hypotheses.

## 2. The approaches of the research

Two different approaches can be clearly distinguished in this research. On the one hand there are scholars closely tied to the study of the Athenian model who dedicate themselves to the interpretation of the *AP*, and indeed limit their research to the single, well-documented Athenian case without using the fragments to look for possible links with the other *Politeiai*. This research looks for the most correct interpretation of a single *opusculum*, one that is both most famous and has reached us in the most complete form. The question that this approach suggests is whether the interpretation proposed from time to time may be understood in a certain way as distinctive of the *AP* – in which case it is really atypical – or extends hypothetically also to the other (or to some other) *Politeiai*. In the latter case, all the *Politeiai* would be interpreted in the

<sup>33</sup> “The *Politeiai* evidently treated customs and practices. This suggests a wide conception of both *polis* and *politeia* itself. Moreover, this would answer to the way political thinkers saw customs, laws and practices as essential components of a *polis* and elements that needed careful thought by any reformer because they would form the character of the city and contribute to good or bad order”.

<sup>34</sup> Polito 2001: 229-243.

same way as the most complete of them, the *AP*, has been from time to time by various scholars.

On the other hand, there are those who search minutely through the *Politeiai*, making a sort of global classification of extracts and fragments in order to understand the type of writing that this historiographic genre entails. In recent years the approach of proceeding by geographical area<sup>35</sup> has shown itself to be particularly useful in revealing certain peculiarities, either typological or regional, and consequently the tendency to match a presumed 'broad'<sup>36</sup> model of the *opusculum*<sup>37</sup> to the characteristics of the geographical area it belongs to, such as the typology of the individual community under examination or its mythic-historical heritage or the experience of concrete events which have determined its physiognomy. In the light of the elements adopted above, I can consider myself as belonging to this line of thought<sup>38</sup>.

A few days ago, in the discussion at the University of Salerno of a doctoral seminar on the subject of Asian *Politeiai*, the Chair of the session<sup>39</sup> formulated a significant evaluation of the most recent studies in this second line of thought on the topic of the *Politeiai*. She highlighted how a clearly delineated outcome has been reached on the *Politeiai* in themselves: i.e., the conclusion that, while on the one hand, they assume fixed nuclei, on the other, they allow the possibility of variations that do not influence their belonging, or not, to the genre. Such a *modus operandi* on the School's part would mean that the drafting of the individual *opuscula* would have taken into account all the elements that might have influenced the structure and contents of a *Politeia*, beginning with the community under examination and possibly the other communities in relation to it or to the compiler. She went on to say – and we can fully share her opinion – that, despite our differences, it is to be hoped that a dialectic can be achieved, one that avoids unhelpful exegetical cavils and catalogues which have no reason to exist.

As a result, there is an opportunity to avoid a rigid definition of atypicality for the *AP*, in that such a definition would presuppose the existence of a fixed Aristotelian model to which all the *opuscula* could be related: in other words, it would require a rigid 'typical' model to which the 'atypical' one would fail to conform, and the quoting sources and the Heraclidean extracts (on which, see the notes on pp. 415-417), in their variety, demonstrate that such a fixed model does not exist.

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<sup>35</sup> Pezzullo 2017, Erdas monograph in preparation (but cf. previously Erdas 2016; Ead. 2017), Dietze-Mager 2018: 26ff.; Annalisa Savino, doctoral thesis in preparation.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. also Mulhern 2015: 102.

<sup>37</sup> Which may not be the mechanical application of the Athenian model.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. at least Erdas 2017; Polito 2017; Thomas 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Maria Elena De Luna, who is especially concerned with the relationships between history and theory in Aristotle's *Politics*.

Thus, it cannot be denied that a recurring base remains in the Aristotelian *opuscula*, but it must not be made absolute (the incompleteness of the *AP* must not be forgotten, and the *fragmenta prioris partis* prompt us to hypothesise the presence of an *archaiologia*; there is still an open question about the presence of a *ktisis* for the large cities even outside the lands of migration or colonisation<sup>40</sup>). At the same time, a great elasticity is revealed in the literary/historiographic genre, this kind of special history with a local character<sup>41</sup> – which derives the elements that form its identity from the local character – that is monography about the *politeia*. In this way, and without difficulty, the genre includes *opuscula* – both fragmentary and otherwise – from the first 5th century exemplars to the abundant Aristotelian production<sup>42</sup>. Incidentally, the hypothesis was left open above that the *AP* really is to be considered atypical. Nevertheless, elements from different genres lead to different considerations.

In *NE* 1181b 15ff.<sup>43</sup> the School of Aristotle presents all the *Politeiai* collected (ἐκ τῶν συνηγμένων πολιτειῶν) as a tool for formulating, on an inductive basis (the *realia*), the theoretical reflections of the *Politics*<sup>44</sup>:

πρῶτον μὲν οὖν εἴ τι κατὰ μέρος εἴρηται καλῶς ὑπὸ τῶν προγενεστέρων πειραθῶμεν ἐπελθεῖν, εἶτα ἐκ τῶν συνηγμένων πολιτειῶν θεωρήσαι τὰ ποῖα σώζει καὶ φθείρει τὰς πόλεις καὶ τὰ ποῖα ἐκάστας τῶν πολιτειῶν, καὶ διὰ τίνας αἰτίας αἱ μὲν καλῶς αἱ δὲ τοῦναντίον πολιτεύονται<sup>45</sup>.

It is like saying that a collection of *politeiai* was made in order to theorise the abstract rules of politics on the basis of the *realia* they contained: i.e., a procedure that was at least partly inductive. In other words, this work would at the same time have made possible the drafting in the *Politeiai* of the rediscovered *realia* and, in the *Politics*, the abstract reflection arising from those *realia*. This is what the Aristotelian School is telling us in these lines moving from the *NE* to the *Pol.*, promising a work that opens out according to the School's customary method, by developing theory from the study of the concrete. How perfectly this may reflect the truth of the matter or whether other reasoning

<sup>40</sup> We seem to be led in this direction by, for example, the first brief period of the Corinthian extract which refers back to the phase before its eponym (Heraclid. *Exc.* 19 Dilts).

<sup>41</sup> On the relation between *politeia*/history and local historiography cf. now also Poddighe 2019; Thomas 2019.

<sup>42</sup> It is no coincidence that in Chap. 9 of Thomas 2019 the comparative *wider* continuously returns.

<sup>43</sup> It is possible that *NE* 1181b 15 ff. derives from drafting by the School after Aristotle's death and the layout of the books of the *Politics*, of which *NE* offer a summary, reflects the order we have today.

<sup>44</sup> After a long debate, cf. finally, Dietze-Mager 2018: 49f.

<sup>45</sup> "In the first place, therefore, we will try to review whether what our predecessors said was, at least partly, correct; then we will try to abstract from the collected *politeiai* (*Politeiai*?) which things save the *poleis* and which destroy them, and which things save and destroy each of the *politeiai*, and the reasons why some are well governed and other are not".



tools might have accompanied the inductive method in order to achieve the finished product of the *Pol.*, it must be acknowledged that we cannot say.

### 3. Conclusions: from the examination of the texts

Nevertheless, in terms of its own aims, this operation will necessarily have had the principal intention of seeking material which the School considered helpful for the study of the good life in the community of the *polis* rather than mere usages, customs and ethnography for a pleasant reading. And in some cases, in extracts and fragments from the indirect tradition, we glimpse, with a reasonable degree of certainty, the traces of a model containing both a historical section (whose value in identity-formation has been emphasised above), which is not necessarily dedicated only to the history of institutions and a descriptive section on the institutional theme<sup>46</sup>. This does not rule out the possibility that the *Politeia*, in both sections, also contained material that is less technical to our modern eyes, but gave space to the description of the community's life in a broader sense, characterised by what it was, from the foundation to the last detail of the *modus vivendi* in a society.

It was highlighted above<sup>47</sup> that, from extracts and fragments, some *Politeiai* show the same model. In this study the following can be added:

- some manifest both of the aspects so far discussed, a layout comprising the two 'Athenian' parts and a technically politico-institutional topic (*Spartans, Cyrenians, Corinthians*);

- in others there is only a trace of the diachronic section (*Tenedians, Samians, Cymans and Rhegians*)<sup>48</sup> which, in addition, is not always cleansed of different, anecdotal references: thus, of "other" material in which we can neither reconstruct nor rule out a possible original connection with a political or institutional topic<sup>49</sup>;

<sup>46</sup> But cf. *infra* n. 51.

<sup>47</sup> *Polito* 2017: 32.

<sup>48</sup> Incidentally, the section describing the 4th century systematically disappears from the tradition, attracting less interest from the selectors.

<sup>49</sup> Two recent observations by Rosalind Thomas are worthy of reflection: "We seem to be in the midst of *polis* history and local tradition. Jacoby noted on this Milesian example [the story of Antheus and Kleoboia] that *Politeiai* evidently did not disdain 'Novellen', this one being of considerable political significance [*FGrH* IIIb Kommentar (Text), 412 (on 496, F 1)]. Indeed, such stories are absolutely part of the city's past, its story, its identity, and could not be left out" (Thomas 2019: 369). "Another notable feature is that they included stories of early kings and powerful men and women, and the intervention of ordinary women as well as men. In other words, they did not offer a simple vision of the political community of male citizens, but a somewhat wider community. Here there seems to be an interesting clash or tension between the shock of local detail, with individuals and local conflicts, and the grander overarching theories of political change. Some examples of conflict in the *Politics* may reveal this tension. We must suspect that they derived from the *Politeiai* and thus local traditions. [...] The written *Politeiai* surely helped to crystallize the view that *polis* and *politeia*

- finally, in others there is a prevalence of residues of ethnographic, anecdotal material which clearly attracted more attention from the selector.

In conclusion, the Aristotelian School declares the *Politeiai* to have been born out of the work done in collecting the *realia* so as to abstract from them, using the inductive method, the rules for collective life and the phenomena of *soteria* and *katalysis* of each form of *politeia*, both the healthy and the degenerate. Already an institutional context in the modern sense. When setting out on a piece of research, however, one does not know where it will lead: this will have been the case with the research carried out into the *politeiai* by the School of Aristotle for the *Politics*. The subjects present in the “other *Politeiai*” show evidence of cases where the compiler found himself faced with data that were not specifically politico-institutional but more general – they have been listed above and are repeated in n. 51 – but could nevertheless be channelled into a *Politeia*: that is, into an *opusculum* about the most intimate nature of that community through other forms in which the community itself manifested its identity in historical continuity. And if the compiler had the sensitivity to collect them, it means that again in the 4th century, as in the *Politeiai* of the 5th, they were felt to be proper to this historiographic genre<sup>50</sup>. How much these last may also have helped the more technical reflections of the *Politics*, we cannot say. Fate, then, has decided what tradition should preserve and what should be lost. In the light of the reflections made here, there is an acceptable possibility that for the monography on the *politeia* of a community, the School made reference to a ‘broad’ model, such as the subjects listed above<sup>51</sup>, some fixed, others optional: what determined the differences in character or structure will have been the characteristics of the community<sup>52</sup> and the documentation that the School in its own time had unearthed on each<sup>53</sup>. There undoubtedly was a tendency towards a certain form of structure and this is evident, but to structure an *opusculum* into obligatory parts, as fixed contents, is rather a tendency of modern analysis.

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comprised this wider community they would not have offered data supporting a single unified vision of a *polis*” (Thomas 2019: 379, 383).

<sup>50</sup> On the *Politeia* as a historiographic genre cf. recently Tober 2010; Polito 2017; Thomas 2019.

<sup>51</sup> Pre-Greek, *ktisis*, places, toponyms, ethnonyms, heroic age, *archaiologia*, history of the community and/or institutions, laws and legislators, ancient kings and tyrants, 4th century institutions, coins, public or aristocratic banqueting practices, *agogai*, usages and customs, products of the earth, cults, myths, proverbs, poets, various episodes, *mirabilia*, ethnographic elements: cf. *supra*.

<sup>52</sup> *E.g.*, the *Common Politeia of the Arcadians*, which begins with the foundation of the assembly of the Ten Thousand in fr. 483A Rose = 487,1 Gigon (Harp. s.v. Μύριοι ἐν Μεγάλῃ πόλει, p. 208 Dindorf).

<sup>53</sup> From which I would conclude that there is no typical or atypical *Politeia*, agreeing with Thomas 2019: 372 that “the *Athenaion Politeia* is rather unusual again, but then perhaps for Athens the major local curiosity and custom was the democracy itself”.

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