

**ARISTOTLE
AND HIS
SCHOOL**

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Duckworth

To Hannah Arendt
with sincere wishes
from Felix Grayeff
London, March 29th, 1977

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An Inquiry into the History
of the Peripatos

With a Commentary on
Metaphysics Z, H, Λ and Θ

Felix Grayeff



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him Regent. So conditions at the Macedonian court were unfavourable, even threatening, for a youth of Greek birth and a favourite of the toppled royal house at that. It is therefore possible that Aristotle's premature journey to Athens (for he was still a minor) was partially due to the unrest in Macedonia.

It can be assumed that Aristotle joined the Academy as soon as he arrived in Athens, doubtless in accordance with the wishes of his guardian. The choice of the Academy was not a matter of course. At that time there was another famous school, that of Isocrates, which engaged in keen rivalry with the Academy.¹ Both schools, as institutions, were something new, at least in Athens. There had, it is true, long been travelling teachers or Sophists; Socrates, too, had collected a circle around himself and held discussions with strangers and friends in the streets and in the market-place. But the establishment of schools (*thiasoi*), sacred fraternities, with their own land and temples was a development—an epoch-making one!—of that period only. When Aristotle became a member, the Academy had been in existence for about twenty years. Besides philosophical dialectic, mathematics and science were taught there. And yet, what characterized it in this early phase, was a desire not so much to spread knowledge as to inquire into thought itself and explore its power. Indeed one may say that a new awareness of the power of thought had provided the stimulus to found the Academy. For while previously it had been generally accepted that poets and sages were the teachers of the Greeks, now it was felt that only those practised in thinking—methodically trained philosophers—were capable of guiding their fellow men; that they alone—if anyone at all—would be able to solve the problems of mankind, those of the individual and those of the community. For it was thought that if one knew and could define justice, courage and piety, one would be able to realize virtue both in oneself and in one's State, and make a happy life (*eudaimonia*), possible. One must appreciate what great enthusiasm, even euphoria, filled the Academy in its early period, and that, as is only natural with a new discovery, excessive hopes for the future were pinned on it. And just as Aristotle arrived in Athens, such expectations had reached their zenith. The master himself, the head of the school, Plato, had travelled to Sicily in order to find, through philosophy, a successful solution to an extremely difficult situation.

¹ See Isocrates, *Antidosis* 84; 261 ff.; 267 ff.

Plato had already been called upon once or twice before to give new laws to cities plagued with unrest, that is to say, to act as a political leader.¹ Until now, he had declined such tasks, but he was unable to refuse the invitation to Sicily. So, just as Aristotle joined it, the Academy was beginning to play a political role. However, it soon became apparent to Plato and his friends that many obstacles had to be overcome before philosophy could be made the basis of legislation, even in a monarchic State. An unexpected development occurred: philosophy itself was drawn into the turmoil of conflicting interests and party strife—an unfortunate turn symbolic for all future history. And yet Plato's Sicilian journey was the beginning of the Academy's political activities which continued for several decades. This is an aspect of the history of the Academy that has not yet been fully appreciated: no monograph on it has yet been written. Still, the political involvement of the schools was not unusual. Isocrates, the successor of the Sophists, was after all not only a teacher but also a political writer and consequently a politician, with pan-Hellenic tendencies. The Academy, on the other hand, as far as we can tell, always supported Athenian interests, at least as long as these were compatible with those of Sparta (at this time Athens and Sparta were usually allies). Thus the Academy achieved considerable consequence in Athens, and the *dêmos* of Athens could not but take a lively interest, particularly in Plato's Sicilian venture. For it was after all not so long ago that Athens had tried to conquer Sicily and incorporate it into the Attic maritime empire.

This, then, was the position of the Academy at the time of Aristotle's arrival in Athens. Plato himself was absent; in his place the mathematician Eudoxus of Cnidos was temporarily in charge of the school. We do not know which teachers first instructed Aristotle. It may be assumed that Plato's nephew and subsequent successor Speusippus (born about 407) was already lecturing, as was Xenocrates of Chalcedon, Plato's second successor as principal of the school (born about 396); it appears that later he and Aristotle were, for some time, friends. We know of other members of the Academy through Diogenes Laertius (Diog. L. III, 46), but none of them is named as Aristotle's teacher. It is however recorded that Aristotle received instruction from a pupil of Isocrates,

¹ Plato had been invited to legislate for the people of Megalopolis; Diog. L. III, 23.

the orator and tragic poet, Theodectes of Chios—that is, outside the Academy. Aristotle did not meet Plato himself until after Plato's return from Sicily. Plato, it is said, respected and praised the diligence and talent of the younger philosopher. He called him 'reader' and 'reason' (*nous*), as an anecdote has it.

Aristotle belonged to the Academy for twenty years, first as pupil, then as teacher and author. However fundamental this period must have been in his development, one must accept the fact that very little about it can be established with certainty. All we learn from Diogenes Laertius is that he held classes in dialectic and taught rhetoric (Diog. L. v, 3). It is impossible to say whether this was the sum total of his work as a teacher. Rather more can be deduced about his literary work, though even here much remains obscure. The works of Aristotle are, of course, divided into two groups: the esoteric, which were not published in the philosopher's lifetime, and the exoteric, i.e. books or pamphlets intended for a wider public, which Aristotle brought out himself. The former are preserved for us in the 'Corpus Aristotelicum'; of the latter, on which Aristotle's fame as an outstanding writer of the Platonic school rested in antiquity, only fragments survive.¹ These can be divided into philosophical, rhetorical and political writings.

Several unresolved questions arise in connection with the fragments. (1) In many cases it is uncertain whether a fragment really belongs to the published writings and not to the lectures.² In particular, many of the fragments collected together under the title *On Ideas* are quite close to the Corpus in style and content. (2) Moreover, a work's date of origin can never be determined with certainty. While it has often been assumed that the *ekdota* all belong to Aristotle's early period, there is no evidence for this assumption; in fact it is untenable. For example, *The Statesman* is addressed to Alexander, so must be late (about 330). And as *On Ideas*, whether genuine fragments of an *ekdoton* under this title are preserved or not, contained a critique of Plato's theory of ideas—and indeed in that form which Speusippus gave to it—this work is in all probability also late. So, no firm conclusions can be drawn from these *ekdota* about the early Aristotle.

¹ See *Fragmenta Selecta*, (ed.) Ross, Oxford 1955.

² No generally agreed conclusions have been obtained from the fragments, although many scholars have analysed them. See the bibliography in Ross's translation of select fragments, in *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. XII, Oxford 1952

On the other hand, we have fragments of works written entirely in the spirit of Plato and the Academy. The best preserved of these, including the *Protrepticus*, were obviously meant to win students for the Academy and arouse interest in philosophy. One may assume that Aristotle was respected within the Academy on account of these writings, in which his much-praised 'golden' style is discernible. Two things should be noted about the works of this group: (1) while they show the influence of Plato, they do not, as far as we can see, penetrate to the depths of Platonic philosophy; and (2) hardly anything in them points to a future Peripatetic philosophy. On the contrary, they occasionally contradict the views contained in the Corpus or at least have very little in common with them. For example, the discussion of the problem of the soul in *Eudemus* (the immortality of the soul is here the chief topic) is far removed from the epistemological standpoint and the close reasoning of *De Anima*. The *ekdota* of this group reflect the enthusiasm prevalent in the early days of the Academy, and they are addressed to a wide public. Aristotle wants all educated people to understand that even in practical life contemplative thought is highly useful.¹

Over and above his propagandist writings, Aristotle published, as did other members of the Academy, a considerable number of books or pamphlets on popular subjects, mostly in the form of dialogues; these too could not but enhance further the Academy's reputation. He wrote about rhetoric and poets; about love and drunkenness, riches and nobility of birth; about Sophists and philosophers. All these writings, it seems, contained historic parts—stories or anecdotes about well-known figures of the past. In the work *On Poets*, for instance, he tells an amusing tale about the descent and birth of Homer; he also discusses Orpheus's right to be called a poet. Another point may be mentioned. At some time, perhaps during the last decade of Plato's life (357–347), religious concepts and ideas originating in the Orient aroused great interest in Athens. Oriental prophets and sages—Zoroaster and the Persian Magi—became well known there and the Persian gods Ahuramazda and Ahriman were equated with Zeus and Hades.² This contemporary mood is reflected in Aristotle's popular writings, where both the worship of the starry heavens and the veneration of a

¹ See *Protrepticus*; Ross, *Fragm.* pp. 47 ff.

² See Jaeger, pp. 132 ff.

creator who had produced earth and heaven found eloquent expression, in words that occasionally recall the verses of the psalms and the prophetic books.¹

We can say, then, with some certainty that in the years when he belonged to the Academy Aristotle already displayed a literary versatility on which rested both his contemporary reputation and his fame during several centuries. On the other hand there is no clear evidence from which to conclude that, already in his Academic period, Aristotle was beginning to go his own way as a philosopher, as it were secretly or with a few intimates, or that he freed himself inwardly from Plato, starting his own independent philosophic development. It is true, one can hardly expect to hear about such profound aspects from the writers of the 'lives' which have come down to us. What is more important is that the surviving fragments of the undoubted *ekdota* hardly contain anything which would indicate a new, germinating Peripatetic philosophy. For as far as the criticism of the theory of ideas is concerned, this can date at the earliest from the period immediately after Aristotle's withdrawal from the Academy in 347 (as Jaeger assumes) or, far more probably, from the time of the founding of the Peripatetic school, after 335.

* * *

There can be no doubt that in the first decades of its existence the Academy consciously aspired to wield intellectual and political power in Greece. It succeeded in both, at least temporarily, despite some setbacks. For many of those educated at the Academy travelled abroad. They were particularly welcome at the courts of princes, where they acted as advisers and orators, as librarians and tutors; they spread Greek culture (as the Peripatetic philosophers did later), and wherever possible worked for Athens. Still, the greatest of the Academy's political enterprises was its first: the intervention in

¹ From the *ekdoton*, *On Philosophy*; Ross, *Fragm.* pp. 75 and 81 ff. B. Effe, in a well-argued recent study, has advanced the view that the doctrines of *On Philosophy* are entirely those of the mature Aristotle; see 'Studien zur Kosmologie und Theologie der aristotelischen Schrift "Ueber die Philosophie"', *Zetemata* 50, Munich 1970. But the new fragments which he would like to add to those usually attributed to *On Philosophy*, and on which his view is mainly based, are more likely to have come from esoteric than from exoteric writings; indeed, several of them are directly taken from the Corpus.

the affairs of Sicily. Plato went there twice,¹ and what happened in Sicily was of great significance both for Greek history and for the Academy.

Let us briefly outline the situation in which Plato was summoned. The tyrant Dionysius I, who had founded the dynasty, had been succeeded by his son, Dionysius II, in 367. The first tyrant had created a Sicilian empire with overseas possessions, in constant conflict with the Carthaginians, who occupied western Sicily. The eastern towns of Sicily, however much they would have preferred to be free, saw that they were protected by the tyrant from the Carthaginian invaders. So the monarchy had a firm foundation: it rested above all on its military strength, an army of mercenaries, a fleet and fortresses. It was still strong enough under Dionysius II to make its laws and decrees respected; it was still the best guarantee of order, and neither the old nor the young tyrant was personally unpopular. And yet there was discontent, which was probably, as always, caused by economic hardship, the ambition of individuals, the power of the factions and the mutual jealousy of the cities. Dionysius I had used his intimate knowledge of the country and its personalities to keep down all opposition through cunning or force. Now such measures seemed outdated. Something new was required. A reform party had arisen, the leadership of which was assumed by a powerful noble, Dion, a statesman related twice over by marriage to the tyrant's family, who was at the same time a friend or pupil of Plato.

Through Dion, Dionysius II was, shortly after his accession, referred to Plato. The young tyrant no doubt had a receptive mind: he was a child of the new era. Now it was explained to him that contemplative thought could lead far; that by setting high standards, he could establish a harmonious community life for all, instead of merely imposing unity by force. Plato was summoned and the Athenians urged him to go; what political goal Plato had in view is not recorded. Probably he wanted in the course of reforms to transfer the leadership in the towns to the new progressives, 'the best ones', so that they could then voluntarily form a Greek-

X ¹ See Plato, *Epistles*, especially VII; Plutarch, *Dion*. A new argument to prove the genuineness of the *Seventh Epistle* is contained in Professor K. von Fritz's recent, fine study on Plato in Sicily; see *Platon in Sizilien und das Problem der Philosophenherrschaft*, Berlin 1968. See also K. von Fritz's discussion of the philosophical part of the *Seventh Epistle*, in *Phronesis* XI (1966), pp. 117-53.

equally formally, with the highest honours, he was welcomed to Sicily. The Seventh Epistle describes in detail what happened then. At first it seemed as though this time Plato's plan was to succeed. Then there occurred a kind of coup d'état, in which the king's bodyguard played an important part. Plato was taken prisoner and held in the castle; he seemed to be in danger of his life. All over Greece people began to show concern for his fate; so the philosopher and his school became known everywhere. At last, freed from his Sicilian captivity through the intervention of Archytas, a statesman of southern Italy, Plato could return home to Athens for the second time.

Yet even this was by no means the end. Plato himself, one may assume, now retired from political activity, in order to write his last great dialogues. But the Academy continued the battle against the Sicilian monarchy. As the last attempt at reconciliation had failed, Dion recruited troops in Greece. With these he landed in Sicily, accompanied by friends from the Academy. He managed to drive out the tyrant and take over the government. But he could not carry through his further plans and his reign was short-lived and unhappy. Barely a year after his landing he was murdered by a member of the Academy, Callippus, who now succeeded Dion, but could assert himself just as little.

The Academy could not have been more deeply involved in the struggle for Sicily. Although it had not succeeded in pacifying the island (this was only to be achieved ten years later by Timoleon) it had overthrown the tyrant and given the word for the unification of the Sicilian Greeks against the Carthaginians. Moreover, its intervention in Sicily was by no means an isolated action. On several other occasions the Academy took a hand in shaping events to the advantage of Athens, or at least roused others to action. Men connected with the Academy killed the Thracian tyrant Cotys¹ as well as a tyrant in Pontus. The murderers of the former, who escaped, were celebrated in Athens as heroes and freedom fighters. The memory of the murderers of the Pontine tyrant, who were caught and crucified, was long honoured in the Academy. Later, the Academy was to participate in the most determined way in the struggle between Athens and Macedonia.

There is no direct information about Aristotle's attitude at this time; his name is nowhere mentioned in connection with Plato's

¹ On Cotys, see *Politics* 1311^b22.

voyages to Sicily. Still, he could not have stood aside as a mere spectator; indeed he supported the Academy's enterprise vigorously through his propagandist writings. It is remarkable that parts of the *Protrepticus* bear a great resemblance to parts of Plato's *Seventh Epistle* (which indicates that the *Protrepticus* was written in these years).¹ And on the whole, even if he did not in other respects participate actively in the Sicilian undertaking, the events associated with it must have had a profound influence on his development and on the formation of his character and personality. They fell, after all, in the first fourteen years of his membership of the Academy, where no doubt they provided a constant topic of conversation and occupied everyone's thoughts. During this whole period Aristotle was able to sympathize with the Academy's view. He, like the others, must have wished for the victory of the Greeks over the Carthaginians, and in the matter of the internal Greek quarrels, his views were not incompatible with those of the rest of the Academy. Several Chalcidian towns belonged to the second Athenian maritime confederation (which had been founded in 378), and as long as Thebes and not Sparta was the rival of Athens in the struggle for the possession of Chalcidice, Aristotle, like the Academy, was on the Athenian side. But his position within the Academy and in Athens in general was bound to undergo a fundamental change when, after the fall of Thebes, Macedonia became her chief opponent. That great turning-point of history, the rise of Macedonia, also represented a landmark in Aristotle's fortunes. Here it is necessary to describe briefly the Macedonian kingdom and its changing relations with the Greek city States, particularly Athens.

For about a decade, as intimated, Macedonia had been crippled by internal disturbances and external wars. A party supporting the murdered king's brother was formed to oppose the Regent, Queen Eurydice's lover; the former was backed by Athens, the latter sought help from Thebes. Athens proved itself superior; the Regent was overthrown and killed. But the new king did not rule long either and fell in battle against the Illyrians. Then an epoch-making change occurred. The next ruler, Philip II, the youngest son of Amyntas and Eurydice, Aristotle's contemporary, not only

¹ Ross, *Fragm.* pp. 49-52 (*Protrepticus*). Compare Plato, *Epistles* VII, 328D ff. and 334D ff. In both the *Seventh Epistle* and the *Protrepticus* virtue is extolled as against pleasure; the philosopher is compared with the physician and is described as the only good legislator, while a unique role is assigned to philosophy.

freed Macedonia from external intervention, but also began to exploit the internal Greek disputes to his own advantage, and in this was so successful that by the end of his reign he was master of all Greece. The Macedonians were a warlike people, lacking only discipline and organization; Philip gave them both, and soon his army had become invincible. At the beginning of his reign it was Philip's intention not to allow any enmity between himself and Athens to arise while he still feared her power. The Athenians' leading statesman at this time was Eubulus, under whom trade and commerce flourished, and it seems there was general prosperity. Eubulus, it is true, also endeavoured to check the expansion of Macedonian power, but his chief aim was the preservation of peace, through a policy of coming to terms with Philip. However, voices were soon raised in opposition; a passionately patriotic party formed under the leadership of Demosthenes, which called for open war against Philip, not only in Athens, but also in the rest of Greece. Again, it was over the possession of Chalcidice that a quarrel flared up. Philip's first success was the capture of Amphipolis, which made him master of the Pangaic gold-mines. As a result, the Attic maritime confederation collapsed, and Isocrates, who supported Eubulus, advised the Athenians to accept the dissolution of their empire. The moderates were still trying to pursue their policy of peace. But when Philip began to besiege Olynthus, the capital of the Chalcidian federation, and this city sent an embassy to Athens to ask for help, Eubulus lost the power and influence he had long enjoyed and the party of Demosthenes became dominant. It was decided to send an Athenian army to Chalcidice—too late. Olynthus fell (348) and the majority of the Chalcidian towns surrendered. Stagira, Aristotle's birth-place, resisted, but was subdued and had to swear the oath of allegiance to Philip.

In the same year (347), Aristotle left Athens. A violently anti-Macedonian atmosphere was prevalent there. Whether Aristotle's position had already become difficult during the immediately preceding years cannot be determined. Disturbances now broke out, directed against the friends of Macedonia. According to an ancient source, an accusation was made against Aristotle himself,¹ and although the source is unreliable (its story might refer to 323), there may well be a grain of truth in it. For if at that time even

¹ See Düring, p. 59; also Chroust in *Historia* 15, 2 (1966), pp. 185 ff. and *Greece and Rome* 14, 1 (1967), pp. 39-43.

Athenians came under suspicion of being corrupted by Philip, how much more likely was suspicion to turn against a metic, in particular against someone who had grown up at the Macedonian court, and who was a native of Chalcidice, which had just become a Macedonian province? Moreover, Aristotle, it seems, had taken no action during the siege of Stagira, while he might have been expected to help in the defence of his native city. A few years later, the Academician Cleon resolutely held Byzantium against Philip (Plut. *Phokion*, 14).

Still, it is conceivable that it was not political reasons which caused Aristotle to leave Athens at this time, but the internal affairs of the Academy. It so happened that, in the same year in which Stagira fell, Plato died, and his nephew Speusippus became head of the school. Diogenes Laertius says in one place (Diog. L. v, 2) that Aristotle had broken away from the Academy even in Plato's lifetime, but in another (Diog. L. v, 9) that he did not leave Athens until after Plato's death. No doubt it would have been disagreeable for Aristotle to work at the Academy under Speusippus, whose philosophy he rejected; it was the theory of ideas in its Speusippean form that later became the chief target of Peripatetic criticism. But, however much one may suspect that Aristotle left Athens because he no longer wanted to stay at the Academy, it is clear, from the destination of the journey on which he now set out, that the political motive was the deciding one; and furthermore, that not only was he acting on Macedonian instructions but that he had in all probability been in contact with emissaries from Philip for some time. For he now set out for the court of the tyrant Hermias, who ruled Assos in Asia Minor (in the Troad), an outpost of Greece, a district bordering on Persia and of great significance for all Philip's military plans against the Persian empire. And here—it must also be emphasized—Aristotle was received with unusual honours.

* * *

Assos in the Troad faces the island of Lesbos; it had been colonized by Greeks and belonged to Mysia. The population consisted mostly of Mysian peasants, day-labourers and slaves; to these was added a Greek, mainly Ionic, upper class. To all appearances an independent monarchy (*tyrannis*), Assos was in reality dependent on the Persian

king. A few facts have been recorded about the ruler of this period, Hermias.¹ He was, it is said, of Bithynian origin (as was Xenocrates), without doubt a Greek. According to a hostile tradition he was a eunuch and began as a slave, becoming the confidant of his predecessor, the tyrant Eubulus, after whose violent death he seized power. For more than twenty years he had kept his throne, doubtless by managing to keep in favour with the Persians without alienating his Greek subjects. He was rich enough to support an army of mercenaries. His court possessed a certain glamour, and he established, here on colonial soil, a centre of Greek culture. Two philosophers from the Troad who had been trained at the Academy, Erastus and Coriscus, worked here.² He therefore fostered cultural relations with Athens, which, since it no longer feared her, the Persian government tolerated and even favoured.

Now, however, after Philip's victories in Chalcidice, the overall political situation began to change. It was no longer the ancient Greek cities but Macedonia which appeared as the champion of pan-Hellenic aspirations. Assos gained in importance as a strong point, a bridge-head for a possible Greek attack on Persia. Athens too recognized this; out of hatred for Philip, Demosthenes warned the Persians of Macedonian intentions against Asia Minor and even tried to form an alliance with Persia to protect Assos against Philip. Much depended on the attitude of the ruler of Assos, Hermias. For many years he had tacked skilfully, reconciling Persians and Greeks with one another. But now—just as Aristotle arrived in Assos—he changed course sharply. He went over to Philip's side and made a secret military treaty with him. And about the same time he bestowed honours on Aristotle, indeed, took him into his family by marrying him to his niece, or adopted daughter, Pythias.

Aristotle's close relationship with Hermias was taken much amiss in Academic circles.³ This and a great deal of other evidence supports the view that Aristotle went to Assos on Philip's behalf. Obviously Hermias saw Macedonia as the rising power, through whose goodwill alone he would be able to secure his throne, and

¹ See D. E. W. Wormell, 'The literary tradition concerning Hermias of Atarneus', in *Yale Classical Studies* 5 (1928); Demosth. *Oratio* x, 31 with scholia. Compare Jaeger, p. 119.

² See Plato, *Epistles*, vi.

³ See Diog. L. v, 11.

with whom he wanted to ally himself closely. If, then, he made Aristotle his son-in-law, he must have regarded him as Philip's favoured representative and ambassador, almost as a member of the Macedonian court. Only this can explain his action. Although there exists no special study of the matrimonial policy of the Greek tyrants, a glance at the history of Cylon, of Pisistratus and of Dionysius and his son shows—as might be expected—that the tyrants entered into or arranged marriages in order to achieve power or to maintain themselves in it. For Aristotle too this marriage meant many and great advantages. Through it he rose almost to the rank of prince, and acquired a fortune befitting his new position.¹ He never forgot what he owed to his marriage with Hermias's daughter. He always treated his wife with reverence as a princess, and when she died, after ten years of marriage, he raised a shrine to her in his house, at which he offered her sacrifices as though to a goddess removed to heaven. He had a daughter by her, who bore her mother's name, Pythias. Nor did he marry again after his wife's death. It is true that in later years he enjoyed a happy relationship with a woman from his home town of Stagira, Herpyllis, who gave him a son, Nicomachus, but he never made this second companion his legal wife.

Let us now see what happened in Assos while Aristotle resided there. Hermias, after ruling for twenty years with Persian support, was preparing to defect openly from Persia. It may be that Demosthenes denounced him, or that his own subjects betrayed him; in any event the Persian government became suspicious of his designs and after some hesitation decided on military intervention. A Persian army was sent to Assos. Soon Hermias found himself besieged in his citadel in Atarneus. In which year the campaign took place (certainly after 347, and before 341) or how long the siege dragged on, we do not know. At last the Persian commander managed to defeat Hermias by trickery. He invited him to a conference. Hermias accepted, but hardly had he left his castle when he was declared a prisoner and taken to Persia in chains. Put on trial in Susa, he was subjected to torture, but even so did not betray his Macedonian friends. Although he admitted nothing, he was found guilty and executed by crucifixion. Aristotle, however, with his wife and probably his servants, as well as the other philosophers who had belonged to Hermias's court, had managed to

¹ Aelianus, *Var. Hist.* IV, 19; Athenaeus IX, 398^e. See Düring, pp. 298 ff.

At about this time, as far as we know, Aristotle too arrived in Macedonia.

It was a different Macedonia from that which Aristotle had left as a youth twenty-five years before. Then civil wars had torn the country, now it was united under Philip. Order had been achieved, and that joyful consciousness of strength which accompanies or precedes great national deeds permeated all classes of the population, the princes in command of the army as well as those who fought in the ranks of the phalanx. Philip himself was revered as hardly a king of the Greek world had been before him. Nor was he satisfied with anything less than limitless flattery, from his own courtiers as well as from strangers. Below the surface, the intrigues at the Macedonian court probably never ceased, but openly nobody dared speak of Philip without comparing him if not to the gods, at least to Hercules.

Whether Aristotle came on Philip's invitation or of his own accord, chancing his luck, as it were, cannot be said. It is likely that he travelled through Chalcidice and that there he visited his native town of Stagira, which had been half-destroyed by Philip. For according to Plutarch (*Alex.* VII) he prevailed on the Macedonian kings to rebuild the town and allow its banished inhabitants to return. One may guess that he was asked by the exiles to intercede on their behalf and that this request served him as a pretext for his journey to Macedonia. Of course, Plutarch also tells us that Aristotle was summoned to Macedonia as Alexander's tutor, but, by all accounts, this famous story can only be a legend which originated much later. For Plutarch himself, reporting the story in the seventh chapter of his biography of Alexander, where he draws on a Stoically moralizing source, informs us in the fifth chapter—as a historian—that naturally Alexander had a large number of tutors and teachers; that the official director of his studies was a prince, his maternal uncle Leonidas, while the actual director was a philosopher or orator from Acarnania, Lysimachus. At this time, moreover, as Jaeger has pointed out,¹ Aristotle was by no means the outstanding philosopher that Plutarch knew of. In fact, the legend cannot have arisen earlier than towards the end of the first century B.C., at which time not only was Alexander famous as the greatest conqueror, but Aristotle was famous as one of the foremost thinkers. At best, then, Aristotle was among those who lectured occasionally to the young

¹ See Jaeger, p. 120.

Alexander, especially as in any case it was one of the tasks of a philosopher or Sophist resident at court that he should play his part in the education of the younger generation. In short, the true purpose of Aristotle's stay in Macedonia, which lasted about seven years, must be sought elsewhere, in the realm of politics and, in particular, in connection with Philip's plans to unite all Greece under his leadership.

The most influential of the Greek cities was still, or once more, Athens. This city could be Philip's most dangerous opponent or his most valuable ally. With Athens on his side he could dominate Greece. Therefore Philip's policy after his return from Thrace was almost exclusively directed at winning over Athens, by peaceful means if possible. There is no need to discuss here the economic and diplomatic measures he took for this purpose. The role of cultural policy in his calculations is, however, important for us. The school of Isocrates in Athens was in sympathy with his efforts; it had Hellenic and cosmopolitan tendencies, and Isocrates himself saw in Philip the champion of Greece, who would bring Greek enlightenment to a barbarian world. The Academy, however, supported Athenian and patriotic policies; it inclined towards the party of Demosthenes, which fought Philip bitterly. Its head at this time, Plato's nephew Speusippus, was without doubt an opponent of Macedonia (despite the conclusions recent commentators have drawn from the spurious thirtieth Sophist epistle).¹ When Philip besieged Byzantium (340), an Academician, Cleon, went to the city and, rousing the fighting spirit of the inhabitants (as Gylippus had done in Syracuse), he triumphantly succeeded in holding Byzantium against Philip. So if the Academy's attitude were to change, if it were directed by a man whom Philip could trust, this would be of inestimable value to the king. Athens was Hellados Hellas, 'Greece's Greece'. Aristotle had been a member of the Academy for twenty years; he had worked there with the other *hetairoi*, and he knew Athens. Speusippus was old; the question of his successor was bound soon to become acute. No doubt Aristotle was welcome at the Macedonian court and received help in every way because it was hoped that, when the time came, he would, as scholarch, take charge of the Academy in Athens.

This, then, was the purpose of Aristotle's stay in Macedonia and the task for which he was preparing himself. As is to be expected,

¹ See Bickermann and J. Sykutris in *Ber. Leipz. Ges.* 80 (1927), p. 2.

no particulars of how he went about the latter are found in our records, least of all details about his intellectual development at this time. Since, however, we learn that, when he arrived in Athens some seven years later, he brought with him an extensive library, as well as abundant other teaching material, and since he was doubtless accompanied by assistants, we may deduce that Aristotle collected material and books in Macedonia and that within his circle of helpers he undertook or directed research. One may well ask what kind of studies these were. First, it is certain that the biological studies which had been begun earlier were continued in Lesbos for many years, but were not taken up in Macedonia; the evidence for this is the absence in the *Historia Animalium* of place-names relating to Macedonia. So Aristotle's studies now lay in other fields, and it may be presumed that their range was now much wider and that he began to collect, or to have collected, data on the history of philosophy and science, on early poetry and poets, perhaps even on the history of cities and their constitutions. And since, according to Diogenes Laertius, Aristotle himself as a lecturer had already held classes in dialectic, he no doubt assembled further material for use in such classes—arguments, proofs, refutations of fallacies. This material, it seems, is preserved in *Topics* books II–VII, which do not presuppose the discovery of the syllogism and seem to be borrowed from, or stimulated by, the Academy.¹ Callisthenes, Aristotle's nephew, was certainly one of his assistants; he later accompanied Alexander to Asia, but he fell into disgrace and was executed for attempted regicide. That Theophrastus was probably his assistant in Macedonia has been mentioned above. It is likely that during his stay in Macedonia Aristotle also wrote and published new works, on poetry, wealth, and concerning the duties of kings. In one of the latter he toned down—apparently in accordance with, or perhaps shaping, Macedonian views—one of Plato's famous sayings. The world would not recover its health, Plato had said, until philosophers were kings and kings philosophers. Kings, Aristotle declared, should not themselves be philosophers, this would produce grave disadvantages; but they should have philosophers as advisers.²

Whether he was already beginning to formulate his criticism of

¹ See Ross, *Aristotle*, London 1923, p. 56; Jaeger too holds the *Topica* to be early (p. 84).

² *Them. Or.* 107^{c-d}; Ross, *Fragm.* p. 62.

Macedonia, but he was not destined to achieve new triumphs. The quarrels at his court now broke out openly. At enmity with his son Alexander, Philip had divorced Olympias and at once married again, this time the daughter of a Macedonian noble. If his new wife gave him a son, he was to be the heir to Macedonia. But the discord in the royal family began to endanger the throne itself; a rebellion threatened in Epirus, Olympias's home country. Philip therefore decided to confirm Alexander as his successor, pacifying Olympias. But it was too late; the hatred that had been aroused was too deeply rooted. At a festive procession intended to symbolize the reconciliation, Philip was murdered.

Alexander ascended the throne, acclaimed throughout Macedonia. At the head of his army he quelled revolts that broke out against him in Greece. Within a year, Athens lay at his feet, as it had at his father's before him. Without delay he resumed Philip's policy of friendship. The Macedonian influence was to penetrate Athens peaceably. The Academy was to be spared all interference in its teaching and administration; Xenocrates was to continue as its head. Still, teachers of philosophy whom he could trust should work in Athens. So Aristotle was sent to Athens, not for the purpose of reshaping the Academy, but of opening a new school of his own, whose achievements would if possible surpass those of the Academy.

* * *

Aristotle's return to Athens in 335 after twelve years' absence attracted a great deal of attention. He came with ample means; with books and teaching materials of all kinds, maps, models etc., and a staff of assistants, the most important of whom was Theophrastus. All this is reliably recorded; in addition it is related that personally too he was splendidly equipped, luxuriously attired, with gold rings on every finger; that he dined like a prince and was waited on by an unusually large number of slaves.¹ Such accounts may of course be based on later gossip, of the kind directed against other school heads and philosophers. What is certain is that he did not return to Athens as a travelling Sophist, unsure of the future, but as a man

¹ Regarding Aristotle's luxury see Diog. L. v, 16; Düring, pp. 374 (Lyco the Pythagorean) and 381 (Theodoretus).

is the variety of subjects treated by them that no one ventures to approach any significant matter without prior knowledge of their works.' Rightly, therefore, one sees the Lyceum as the first university almost in the full, modern sense of the word, while this cannot be said of the two great schools which preceded the Peripatos, the Pythagorean and Platonic schools. Similarly, the library which Aristotle installed at the school was the first comprehensive collection of books in history, and later served as a model for the famous State libraries of Alexandria and Pergamum.

Although Platonism was fundamental to the Peripatetic school, a characteristic attitude became evident, whether deliberately adopted from the beginning or developing gradually: an inclination towards empiricism allied to contemplation. The Sophists and philosophers of the early fourth century had directed their thinking towards the question of how one could raise or improve man and human society; Plato himself had outlined the ideal State. In the Peripatetic school, however, observation took the place of speculation, description (e.g. of constitutions) that of Utopias. Intuition was replaced by research, the reforming zeal by an industrious collecting of data. In short, philosophy became apolitical; the thinking power of youth was directed towards the examination of minute detail and disinterested contemplation. History was taught, not least the history of philosophy. Jaeger justly emphasizes that Aristotle was the first to treat even the Sophists impartially.¹ Earlier philosophical views were collated and expounded, Plato no longer being considered the outstanding master but only one of the famous sages of former times (*Metaph. A*). So one may well say that the move away from the State and towards private life usually ascribed to the influence of the Stoa actually had its origins in the Peripatetic school. Its effect even seemed to reach the Academy. Its members too refrained from all open political activity, and it is said that Xenocrates, apparently as an example to others, led a secluded, almost 'monastic' life. Of course, the Peripatetics' never-ending attention to detail aroused the scorn of contemporaries. In a comedy their investigations of fish and their habits are described as 'a wonder for fools'. Thinking, it appeared, had ceased to be exciting, through the move to empiricism, which was soon regarded as the hallmark of the Peripatetic school; especially as here the criticism of the Platonic theory of ideas, whether in its original form

¹ See Jaeger, p. 129.

teaching and research programme, whose execution he directed and organized. He had attracted pupils from the entire Greek world. And not only had he established the school, he also gave it once and for all its character and direction, based on Platonism, despite the move to empiricism, and although he himself as well as his colleagues and successors adapted to the spirit of the new era in several respects, particularly in political and social spheres. In the following period, as we shall see, the Peripatetic school was to prove a more faithful guardian of the Platonic tradition than the Academy itself. Furthermore, as head of the school, Aristotle had to perform other important duties; he had to steer a middle course between the wishes of the Athenians and Macedonian interests. In fact, he did manage to keep up good relations with the Athenian government, and probably also achieved a harmonious relationship with the Academy. On the other hand he kept up a constant, official, apparently business-like correspondence with Antipater who, as Alexander's viceroy, governed Greece from Macedonia, and he also remained in frequent contact with Alexander himself. In addition to all this he wrote a large number of semi-popular books which were intended to satisfy the thirst for knowledge and education of the Greeks in the mother-country and the developing empire, while for Alexander and his advisers he drew up numerous memoranda. No doubt, therefore, in the twelve or thirteen years in which he directed the Peripatetic school, Aristotle was engaged in many varied and important activities; which, one might assume, filled his time and absorbed his strength. And yet, all that he accomplished in this respect is supposed to have been a mere *parergon*, an almost insignificant fraction of his true achievement. According to a tradition which arose about two hundred and fifty years after his death, which then became dominant and even today is hardly disputed, Aristotle in these same years also lectured—not once, but two or three times, in almost every subject—on logic, physics, astronomy, meteorology, zoology, metaphysics, theology, psychology, politics, economics, ethics, rhetoric, poetics; and he wrote down these lectures, expanding and amending them several times, until they reached the stage in which we read them. However, still more astounding is the fact that the majority of these subjects did not exist as such before him, so that he would have been the first to conceive of and establish them, as systematic disciplines.

In 323 Aristotle's work in Athens came to a sudden end. Alexander died and the empire he had constructed broke up. Athens thought itself free again. The old, long-restrained hatred of Macedonia erupted violently. Demosthenes, recalled from exile, addressed the assembly, which gave him enthusiastic support. War against Antipater was decided on. Anti-Macedonian disturbances broke out; anger was directed against all those who had aided Macedonia's cause. Aristotle more than anyone was in danger. He could not stay. In good time, it appears, he left Athens with his family, for we read that he was able to take many of his possessions with him on his flight.¹

Proceedings on a charge of sacrilege (*asebeia*) had already been instituted against him (Diog. L. v, 6; 8). And not only he, but also several of his assistants left Athens; whether they too had to flee, or only considered it pointless to stay on longer in Athens, cannot be said. Eudemus set out for his native Rhodes, Dicaearchus for the Peloponnese (Cic. *Ad Att.* vi, 43), though both later returned to Athens. Whether the school as such was closed at this time is not known; but it is certain that neither the buildings nor the library nor the teaching material came to any harm, and least of all the grove itself, which as we know had already been popular in earlier times as a meeting-place for philosophers, Sophists and their admirers.² Among those who stayed, however, was Theophrastus. He came from Lesbos, which had long been allied with Athens, and it was he who, as Aristotle's successor, became the head of the Peripatetic school. But in which year his appointment or election took place or became effective, whether during the war that the Athenians waged against Antipater, or only after Athens had been defeated and subjugated again, remains uncertain. According to Diogenes Laertius (Diog. L. v, 36) Theophrastus took over in the 114th Olympiad, which embraces the years 324-320.

Aristotle found refuge in his mother's native town, Chalcis, on the island of Euboea, which was securely in Macedonian hands. Here he still owned the estate of his maternal grandparents, which included a larger and a smaller house, where he now established himself. Whether he was still active in Chalcis cannot be said. A report, according to which he attempted to measure the ebb and flow of tides in the straits of Euripus and drowned in the attempt,

¹ See Düring, pp. 374 and 381.

² See Düring, p. 357; Jaeger, pp. 319 ff.

is certainly invented.¹ In almost poetic tones, Jaeger portrays him in the period of his retirement as withdrawn into himself, a hermit, losing himself in the wonderland of myth.² He died, only about a year after his arrival in Chalcis (322 in October?) at the age of sixty-two or sixty-three, of a stomach complaint that had perhaps been aggravated by grief over his renewed expulsion from Athens and, as he must have assumed, the failure of his life's work. Even Delphi had revoked the honour it had once conferred on him.

* * *

His will, in all probability drawn up in Chalcis, is preserved (Diog. L. v, 11-16)—a remarkable document, informative in many ways.³ His humanity is revealed in the terms concerning his slaves: he decreed that they were to be freed eventually, and he wanted to see them generously provided for. It shows his practical wisdom and it confirms his wealth. The most carefully thought out provisions are those relating to his family, especially to Pythias, his daughter by his first marriage to the niece of the tyrant Hermias, and to his nephew Nicanor. Nicanor's parents were Aristotle's guardian Proxenus and presumably his sister Arimneste. Aristotle wanted Nicanor to marry Pythias as soon as she was grown up: obviously so that her fortune should stay within the family.⁴

Pythias's fortune, if separate from that of Aristotle, doubtless came from the estate of Hermias, and was either in Macedonia or still in Assos, which now belonged to the Graeco-Macedonian empire; this was probably an additional reason for Aristotle to appoint the Regent Antipater as chief executor of his will. And Aristotle ruled that even if something were to befall Pythias ('may it never happen') or if she were to die childless, Nicanor was to be her heir. But if Nicanor should suffer an accident, Theophrastus should be requested to take Pythias into his house as his ward, and to take decisions regarding the disposition of her inheritance, if he so

¹ Procopius, Eustatius etc.; see Düring, p. 347.

² See Jaeger, pp. 320-2.

³ For literature on Aristotle's will see Düring, p. 61.

⁴ It is doubtful whether Nicanor did marry Pythias. From Theophrastus's will it emerges that Pythias was married (for the second time?) to one Metrodorus and that from him she had a son called Aristotle. Theophrastus warmly recommended this younger Aristotle to the care of his colleagues (Diog. L. v, 53).

heads, there is no mention of the school, its library, maps etc. Whether he regarded the Peripatetic school as lost, or only wanted to avoid embarrassing the school and Theophrastus through the connection with his name (since of course he stood accused of sacrilege in Athens) cannot be determined. In any case, Theophrastus was without doubt closest to him after his family.¹

That Aristotle was a great, dominating personality, an outstanding writer, a man of comprehensive knowledge; an eminent administrator and organizer, gifted, too, with an unusual diplomatic skill—all this is certain. Whether he was also the author of the treatises of the Corpus Aristotelicum, and thus a creative philosopher comparable to Plato, cannot be established either by a study of the *ekdota* or the evidence regarding his life; although the latter causes one to doubt whether a man who, far from leading a quiet, undisturbed life, was uprooted several times and restlessly driven from place to place, could have found the strength and the opportunity required for such a work. A stronger or even irrefutable argument against Aristotle's sole authorship of the Corpus will emerge from an analysis of the treatises themselves. However, before we come to this, we must examine what happened to the Peripatetic school and its library after the death of Aristotle. For a study of their history, too, will shed some light on the nature and hence on the origin of the treatises.

¹ The opinion expressed by certain scholars, according to which the paragraph concerning the school has been lost, and the will is therefore incomplete, is quite unfounded. Equally untenable is the view, based solely on the absence of any reference to the school in the will, that Theophrastus was the founder of the Peripatos, and that Aristotle taught in Athens merely in a make-shift way. Against this see Diog. L. v, 5; 10; 36 ('Theophrastus succeeded to the headship'; *diedexato tîn scholên*). See also *Vita Hesychii* with a list of scholarchs. Besides, Aristotle probably held the Lyceum only on a temporary lease; see p. 50.