

THE TITLE OF PLATO'S REPUBLIC

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Rather than miss the opportunity of offering my congratulations to Professor Turyn, I venture to contribute a small note which, though in itself of no great importance, has nevertheless a certain interest for the tradition of the Plato text and is therefore not inappropriate to the occasion.

From Aristotle down to Damascius Plato's *Republic* is known by the familiar title Πολιτεία, in the singular. The leading group of manuscripts, however, i.e. Paris. gr. 1807 (A) with its cognates Malatestianus xxviii.4 (M) and Marc. gr. 185 (D), has the plural Πολιτεῖαι, and this corresponds to a practice that became current at Alexandria about the second quarter of the sixth century A.D.

Before coming to the point, I must eliminate two apparent earlier occurrences. The first is found in Aristotle, *Pol.* IV 7, 1293 a 42 - b 1: (usually only four types of constitutions are listed, monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, aristocracy, while the fifth, called πολιτεία, tends to be forgotten) καὶ χρῶνται ταῖς τέτταρσι μόνον, ὥσπερ Πλάτων ἐν ταῖς πολιτεῖαις. This is Bekkers's text; Barker in his translation (Oxford 1946) capitalizes Πολιτεῖαις ("as Plato does in the Republic"). But since Aristotle always cites the *Republic* as ἡ Πολιτεία (see instances in Bonitz' *Index*, 613 b 21-25), O. Immisch, following a suggestion of Spengel's, punctuated in the Teubner edition (1909): καὶ χρῶνται ταῖς τέτταρσι μόνον (ὥσπερ Πλάτων) ἐν ταῖς πολιτεῖαις. This solution was adopted also by Ross (OCT, 1957), Rackham (Loeb ed.) and Jowett in the Oxford translation: "like Plato, in their books about the state, they recognize four only." It is not very satisfactory, because it depends entirely on the modern device of parentheses: even in a (post-Aristotelian) punctuated text a point after Πλάτων would hardly have

sufficed to prevent the obvious misunderstanding. If Aristotle meant what these editors try to make him say, he could simply have written: καὶ χρῶνται ταῖς τέτταρσι μόνον ἐν ταῖς πολιτείαις, ὡς περὶ Πλάτων. A simpler way out of the difficulty is to understand ἐν ταῖς πολιτείαις as "in his works on political theory," so as to include both the *Republic* and the *Laws*, cf. II 6, 1264 b 26-28 (σχεδὸν δὲ παραπλησίως καὶ τὰ περὶ τοὺς νόμους ἔχει τοὺς ὕστερον γραφέντας· διὸ καὶ περὶ τῆς ἐνταῦθα πολιτείας ἐπισκέψασθαι μικρὰ βέλτιον) and 1266 a 28-30 (τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ τὴν πολιτείαν τὴν ἐν τοῖς νόμοις τοῦτον ἔχει τὸν τρόπον).

The other instance is Proclus, *In Timaeum* II 227.2-4 Diehl: ἡ γοῦν ἰσότης ταυτότης τίς ἐστι· διὸ καὶ ἐν ταῖς πολιτείαις [*Legg.* VI 757 a ss.] φιλίας εἶναι ποιητικὴν τὴν ἀριθμητικὴν ἀπέφαινε. To refer to the *Republic*, Proclus always uses the singular; nor is he likely to have confused the *Laws* with the *Republic*, since his quotations are on the whole accurate, and he was familiar with the passage in question, which he cites repeatedly (*In Alcib.* 3.6-9; the immediate sequel *In Tim.* II 78.28; 90.14; 198.18; 220.23; *In Remp.* I 289.2; II 263.11). Festugière (Paris 1967) therefore translates: *Platon dans les "Constitutions,"* with a note referring to III 353.12 (ἐν τοῖς πολιτικοῖς σκέμμασι). The fact of the matter is that Diehl misplaced his reference, which ought to follow ἀπέφαινε, the sense being: "therefore Plato declared [*Laws* 757 a] that in commonwealths, too, arithmetic brings about friendship."

In the school of Ammonius, son of Hermias, however (though not yet, as far as I have found, in Ammonius himself), the plural appears with considerable frequency, as the following list will show.

Olympiodorus, *In Gorgiam* (Leipzig 1970): plural 44.8; 64.3; 80.12; 164.6; 190.20; 221.14; 241.4; 12; 26 (singular 5 times). *In Meteora* (CAG XII 2): plural 100.20 (but singular 144.33). (*In Alcib.* and *In Phaed.* singular only.)

Asclepius, *In Nicomachum* (ed. Tarán, Philadelphia 1969) ια 68 and Philoponus, *In Nicomachum* (ed. Hoche, Wesel 1864) ιε 43-44: plural. Philoponus revised Asclepius' commentary, which he copies in the present passage. (Asclepius, *In Metaphysica* [CAG VI 2], and Philoponus, *De aeternitate mundi*, use the singular throughout.)

Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy (Amsterdam 1962): plural 17.24; 26.6;36; 27.9 (πολιτικῶν MS.); 27.29; singular 4 times.

Ps.-Elias, *In Isagogen* (Amsterdam 1967): plural 14.15 and 22.8 (singular twice).

Olympiodorus, Asclepius and Philoponus are all Alexandrians and pupils of Ammonius, Olympiodorus being probably the youngest of the three (495/505 - after 565). The unknown author of the *Prolegomena* can with some probability be assigned to the same time and place, while the equally unknown Ps.-Elias is later and seems to have taught at Constantinople. The difference in usage between one work and another, especially in the case of Olympiodorus, can be accounted for by the fact that these commentaries, which are not writings, but lectures, were taken down by different redactors. In other Olympiodoreans, Elias (CAG XVIII 1), David (CAG XVIII 2) and Stephanus (CAG XV, Book III), there are no examples of the plural at all. The sixth-century Athenians (Damascius, Simplicius) consistently use the singular.

The origin of the fashion is not easy to determine. It is not likely to have sprung from a misunderstanding of the passage in Aristotle's *Politica* discussed above, for this work, though theoretically it had its place in the curriculum, was not really a part of the teaching routine and therefore little known. A more probable cause is the custom, in introductions to philosophy in general and to Aristotelian philosophy in particular, of constructing a correspondence between Plato's and Aristotle's political writings, as in Ps.-Elias 22.8: ἔγραψε γὰρ καὶ ἐκάτερος καὶ Πολιτικὸν καὶ Πολιτείας, καὶ ἐν μὲν τῷ Πολιτικῷ τὸν αὐτὸν ἔχουσι σκοπὸν, ἐν δὲ τῇ Πολιτείᾳ διαφωνοῦσιν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ Ἀριστοτέλης συνὼν καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τῷ κτίστῃ <σν> πολιτείας λέγεται μετ' αὐτοῦ περιελθεῖν, ὃν ἀνεγράψατο τὸν βίον... ὁ δὲ Πλάτων ἔγραψε Πολιτείαν, ἐν ἣ διαλέγεται πῶς χρὴ κρατεῖν καὶ τάττειν πολιτείαν. It is true that Ps.-Elias is the latest of his group and that in the earlier parallel texts (Elias, *In Categ.* 116.20-23 and David, *In Isag.* 24.29-31) the wording is more accurate and Plato's work is referred to only in the singular. Yet the accepted practice of confronting the two, added to the fact that Plato

did, after all, deal at length with various kinds of constitutions, may have led to the use of the plural.

However this may be, the fact itself seems to justify the supposition, if such an inference can be drawn from the title alone, that Paris. gr. 1807 and its group derive from a sixth-century copy in the Alexandrian school.

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