

## STATE AND EDUCATION IN ARISTOTLE

Aristotle deals with education in *Politics*, mainly in book Z and H. The treatment of education in this classic book of political philosophy is not accidental<sup>1</sup>. It is explained by focusing his argument on the purpose and the preconditions of education as well as his opinion projecting on the mission and the construction of the constitution<sup>2</sup>. In Aristotle's famous definition of city-state (πόλις - κράτος) there is the phrase «while it comes into existence for the sake of life it exists for the good-life» (*Pol.* A2, 1252 b 30-1). That is, the «polis» exists fundamentally for securing of life in view of its material conditions, but it exceeds this, since its main aim is the manipulation of the citizens to the «good-life». In Aristotle, good-life (εὖ ζῆν) can not be achieved without virtue. For the man, in order to be rising into happiness (εὐδαιμονία), the subjective view of the good life (εὖ ζῆν)<sup>3</sup>, except of the appropriate external goods, needs to have indispensably and virtue as well. Moreover, Aristotle exalts virtue as the main presupposition for happiness and therefore good-life.

Virtue is closely connected with the personality of man<sup>4</sup>, but its acquisition presupposes the co-existence of different favourable elements and particularly of proper education (cf. *Pol.* Z 12, 1332 a 30-33). Thus, in Aristotle, education is the essential function of the polis, since its pursuit has been the good-life (εὖ

1. In Aristotle, the treatment of the subject of education is fuller indeed and more detailed than the treatment of any other subject connected with the ideal state but yet incomplete. Cf. E. BARKER, *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, New York, Dover, 1959, p. 423 and W.D. ROSS, *Aristotle*, London, Methuen, 1953<sup>6</sup>, p. 269.

2. The ideal state is only sketched by Aristotle in rough and the account of its constitution is a bare outline of the most general principles (see E. BARKER, *ibid.*, p. 423).

3. For the various opinions about the concept of happiness (εὐδαιμονία) as good-life (εὖ ζῆν) see, i.e., C. TSATSOS, *The Social Philosophy of Ancient Greeks*, Athens, I. Kollaros, 1980, pp. 231-233; J.L. ACKRILL, *Aristotle on Eudaimonia*, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 60, 1974, pp. 339-359; J.M. COOPER, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*, Cambridge, Mass., 1975 and *Contemplation and Happiness: a Reconsideration*, *Synthese*, 22, 1987, pp.187-216; T. IRWIN, *Aristotle's First Principles*, Oxford, 1988, pp. 608, 616-617. M.C. NUSSBAUM, *The Fragility of Goodness*, Cambridge, Mass., 1986, p.375; T.D. ROCHE, *Ergon and Eudaimonia in Nicomachean Ethics I: Reconsidering the Intellectuallistic Interpretation*, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 26, 1988, pp.175-94; W. KULLMAN, *Man as a Political Animal in Aristotle*, *A Companion in Aristotle's 'Politics'*, ed. by D. Keyt and Fr. D. Miller, Oxford, Blackwell, 1991, pp. 96 ff.

4. Cf. W. ONCKEN, *Die Staatslehre des Aristoteles*, Darmstadt, Aachen, 1964, part 2, book 3, p. 199: «Die Tugendbildung aber ist das Werk des Menschengesistes und des Menschenwillens».





ζῆν) of the citizens and its decisive presupposition has been the virtue which can be acquired through education<sup>5</sup>. The relation between education (παιδεία) and state (πολιτεία), with virtue (ἀρετή) as a central theme leads Aristotle to the claim that concludes *Politics* I: «That the virtue of a man and that of a citizen in the best state must of necessity be the same...» (12, 1288 a 39). The whole educational system which Aristotle conceives, is based upon his theory that education is part of politics. Certainly, this does not mean that at first the state requires of the young to participate in the political life, political conflicts and so on. It means merely, that Aristotle wishes the young to form such a character that corresponds to the demands of the state. It is in this sense that the education of a state must be adapted to the values which the state has chosen to adopt<sup>6</sup>.

There was and will always be a direct functional relation between state and education and, furthermore, between the aim of education and its inhalt. The harmony between these two levels is indispensable for the integrity and stability of the state<sup>7</sup>. Thus, because education is political, it is also moral. The citizens of the best state, as well as of any proper state, are turned to a moral life since their moral faculties have been trained towards the creation of a proper type of character. Aristotle considers that first the moulding of the character (ἦθος) must be pursued rather than the development of intellect (yet, see *Pol.* H1, 1337 a 38-39: «nor is it clear whether their studies should be regulated more with regard to intellect or with regard to character»)<sup>8</sup>. Certainly, for those who education is not something separated from the teaching and transmission of knowledge, it is very difficult to perceive a scheme that gives so little time to the young for serious mental studies, and sets as its main aim, until the twentieth first year of age, the direction of inclinations and the moulding of character. Aristotle anticipates an immediate training of intellect preceding the formation

5. Cf. W.L. NEWMAN, *The Politics of Aristotle*, t.1, New York, Arno Press, 1973, p. 343.

6. Cf. D.J. DEPEW, *Politics, Music, and Contemplation in Aristotle's Ideal State, A Companion to Aristotle's 'Politics'*, p. 347.

7. Cf., for example, a passage with proposals for the reform of the school curriculum, written by R.W. RICH, *The Content of Education*, University of London Press Ltd., 1950, cited in *A University Anthology for Overseas Students*, London, Longmans, 1955, p.59: «The purpose of society determines the purpose of the schools; the purpose of the schools decides the content of education. If society wants just technical efficiency, its educational provision will be mainly technical schools; if it wants 'cannon fodder' its schools will become pre-military training establishments; if it wants divisions in society, it will provide a disintegrated educational system; if it wants unity, it will provide for common experience in pre-adult life; if it doesn't know what it wants, its educational system will reflect the social chaos. In every case the curriculum is determined by the purpose of the society». Also, cf. A. CHRISTODOULIDI-MAZARAKI, *Towards a Re-definition of Education, Proceeding of the First Panhellenic Symposium of the Society for Aristotelian Studies, Young and Politics*, ed. by D.N. Koutras, Athens, Gutenberg, 1998, pp. 158 - 166.

8. Cf. W.L. NEWMAN, *op. cit.*, t. I, p. 354.



of character<sup>9</sup>.

The difference in evaluating of the aims that every system sets forth, has also as a result the use of different means for its attainment. Modern pedagogies aiming to develop the intellect, use the means that affect its development, while Aristotle, recognizing the priority of the will, focuses mainly on the means that mould the will, as for example on art, and this is not because he aims at the culture of an artistic nature (though, regarding music, he allows some room for something like that), but because through art he hopes to reach the moral perfection of man<sup>10</sup>. The differences which have appeared between Aristotle's conception of education and modern conceptions are not so radical. Any true education aims today, as much as it could in Aristotle's time at making people capable of doing their duty into the community to which they belong. Any true education affects the character and every mental discipline is a moral training. But, while the modern pedagogies pursue this result indirectly, putting the trust, among others, in the moral effect of games or of steady intellectual work<sup>11</sup>, Aristotle aims at producing the same result with direct methods and conscious efforts (for example, the use of artistic means to produce a direct effect is peculiarly greek). For Aristotle, morality is a matter of such vital importance that it is not allowed to be left to chance, but it must be *made* purposefully by the state<sup>12</sup>. Yet, the modern conception of education supports the idea that morality must *grow* without the coercion of the state but by every man for himself<sup>13</sup>.

However, for the foundation of any educational system its relation with psychology must be also considered important since we have already referred to Aristotle's views on the interdependence between education, politics and ethics, we must next examine their psychological basis. Education is a development of the soul in which we discern three stages. Aristotle writes: «But there are admittedly three things by which men are made good and virtuous, and these three things are nature (φύσις), habit (ἔθος) and reason (λόγος)» (*Pol.* H 12, 1332 a 39-40; cf. 13, 1334 b 6-7, 1327 b 37-39, 1332 b 10-11)<sup>14</sup>. In the first

9. Cf. *ibid.* t.I, p. 373.

10. Cf. *Pol.* H 9. 1340 b11-15; Cf. PLATO, *Republic* Γ, 401 b-d; C.I. DESPOTOPOULOS, Plato's Critique on Poetry, *Annals of Aesthetics*, 5, Athens, 1966, p. 199; A. CHRISTODOULIDI-MAZARAKI, The Art and the Society, in *Scientific Yearbook of Panteion University*, Athens, 1978, p. 453; C. LORD, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle*, Ithaca, 1982 and D.J. DEPEW, *op.cit.*

11. See W.D. ROSS, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

12. E. BARKER, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

13. See, i.e., the opinions of I. ILLICH, *De-Schooling Society*, London, 1971, p. 50; Cf. P. FREIRE, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, England, Penguin Books, 1972 and A. CHRISTODOULIDI-MAZARAKI Towards a Re-definition of Education, *op. cit.*, (section 2: The relation between teacher and pupil: autocracy or autonomy).

14. This is a view inherited to Aristotle from previous references and specially from Protagoras (Fr. 8: Mullach, Fr. Philos. 6, t.2, 137), Socrates (Xen., *Mem.* 3,9,1) and Plato (*Phaedr.*, 269 b).



stage, in which natural disposition excels, man is of course beyond the reach of education. But, yet, in this stage the lawgiver is in a position to secure the proper conditions for an ideal disposition; firstly, by postulating a population of Greeks for the ideal state and secondly by regulating marriage with a view to the improvement of its offspring<sup>15</sup>. This was, for Aristotle, as well as for Plato, the prestage of education. But the aim of Aristotle in regulating these conditions is ultimately moral: he argues for a good physique, as the proper habitation of a good disposition.

However, the stage of habitual temperament (ἔθος) is that which is peculiarly amenable to education: it belongs to the age of desire, which is the age of youth. Desire is composed of appetite (ὀρεξις), spirit (θυμός) and will (βούλησις). It is the normal state or condition of the irrational half of the soul, as opposed to reason and intelligence (cf. *Pol.* Z 13, 1334 b 18-21). Reason and intelligence (deliberation) should control desire: «because spirit and will, and also appetite, exist in children even as soon as they are born, but it is the nature of reasoning and intelligence to arise in them as they grow older» (1334 b 23-25); therefore, youth, which is all desire, and in which reason and intelligence (deliberation) are developed, must be trained and controlled by age in which reason is most nearly pure. Education should attend a development, in which each stage duly corresponds to the growth of the human being who is its subject. The development of education accordingly begins with the training of the body, proceeds to the training of appetite which is the irrational part of the soul and culminates in the training of reason. But, Aristotle says, the «irrational soul» of youth is not entirely irrational: «appetite and indeed desire in general have a certain element of reason, in so far as they are disposed to hear and obey its voice» (*EN* A 13, 1102 b30-31, cf. *Pol.* Z 13, 1333 a 18-20)<sup>16</sup>. For, the soul of youth is pliable, habits may be inculcated, which will never be lost, though they may develop in later life into methods of rational self-direction. Here it deserves to be noted that education should discover those influences which will most deeply imprint a lasting mark on the young soul, which must be drilled in courage, self-control and each of the other virtues. According to Aristotle, these virtues are not taught but are first attained through empirical knowledge, until

15. The same view is found in Plato where the education with all the hygiene of childhood (see *Laws* B, 653 a - 654 a; Z, 790 b - 792 b; 793 d-797 a), pregnancy and procreation of children (see *Laws* ΣΤ, 775 b-e; 783 e; 783 a; 785 a; Z, 789 e - 790 a) and this the collection of fiances (see *Laws* Δ, 721 b-d; ΣΤ, 771 e - 772 a; ΙΑ, 925 d - 926 b and *Politicus*, 310 c-311 a) remains παιδεία πρὸς ἀρετήν (cf. *Laws* ΙΒ, 963 a).

16. This conception corresponds to the platonic conception of θυμός as disposed to take the side of reason (*Republic* Δ, 441 a). See A. CHRISTODOULIDI-MAZARAKI, *The «Eros» in Platonic Philosophy. Plato and Freud*, Thesis, Athens, 1983, p.240, n.3; Y. Brès, *La psychologie de Platon*, Paris, Vrin, 1973, p. 165, n.39.



man at last reaches the stage of reason, whereby there is no need neither for the feelings to be appealed nor for the willing forces of soul, because those original modes (ὀρέξεις) he tried to subdue and harmonize with the moral modes of action, there should be done definitely habits (ἔθῃ). Now man will appeal to the reason and through it will learn to appreciate the conceptions according to which he has been acting, so that he will gain the stage of rational self-direction. Thus the development of the human soul which began almost in embryonic age and continued till middle age, reaches its final limit, when reason – that element of the highest differentiation of man – has become conscious of itself and has learned to use its powers. Now, at last, man can have self-direction and so it may be said that the supreme «end»<sup>17</sup> of education is the perfect freedom.

Reason is not only practical, but also theoretical. Through education of reason man learns not only to control his actions, but also to contemplate the truth. In this way, he arrives at activities which do not only prove useful and necessary for the preservation of his life, but also satisfy his psychical and intellectual needs<sup>18</sup>.

Thus we see that as the state has gone through its stages of household (οἶκος, οἰκία)<sup>19</sup> and village (κώμη) in order to reach to the final stage of polis, so man reaches to the final stage of reason through its stages of natural disposition (φύσις) and habitual temperament (ἔθος). While the state has *grown*, man has been *made*. But he has also been made along lines which were inevitable, and which his own nature from the first dictated, by the development of his natural capacities, and only where the nature is inadequate, art completes it: «for», says Aristotle, «all art and education aim at filling up nature's deficiencies» (*Pol. Z* 2, 1337 a 2-3). There is nothing arbitrary in education. Therefore, Aristotle expresses the view that education cannot be left to private initiative, as it was done in most greek states (*Pol.* 1337 a 6). Aristotle refers «that education must necessarily be one and the same for all and that the superintendence of this must

17. Cf. *Pol.*, Z 13, 1334 b 15-18: «and that reason and intelligence are for us the end of our natural development, so that it is with view to these ends that our engendering and the training of our habits must be regulated».

18. Cf. *Pol.* Z 13, 1333 a 25-33; E. BARKER, *op. cit.*, p. 427; also D.J. DEPEW, *op. cit.*, p. 360 and n. 11,12.

19. For the household as the first form of association, see C.I. DESPOTOPOULOS, *The family of Aristotle, Researches*, 1, Athens 1977, p. 208; S. MEIKLE, *Aristotle and exchange value, A Companion in Aristotle's 'Politics'*, p. 164; W. KULLMANN, *Man as a Political Animal in Aristotle*, pp. 95 ff. Also cf. M. DEFOURNY, *Aristote Études sur la «Politique»*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1932, p. 381; B. YACK, *The problems of a Political Animal. Community, Justice, and Conflict in Aristotelian Political Thought*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p. 79; P. SCHMITT-PANTEL, *Collective Activity and the Political in the Greek City*, in *The Greek City: Homer to Alexander*, ed. by O. Murray and S. Price, Oxford, Clarendon, 1990, pp. 199-213; Fr. WOLFF, *Aristote et la Politique*, Paris, P.U.F., 1991 (Le deuxième chapitre du livre I; tr. gr. Athens, 1995, p. 56).



be public<sup>20</sup>, and not on private lines, in the way in which at present...» (*Pol.* 1337 a 23-26; cf. *EN* I 10, 1180 a 29). The end pursued by the community which is bound together in the state is one and the same for every member: the education, which its members need in order to attain that end, must be one and the same for all and in order that the education may be uniform, it must be committed to the care of the state. Aristotle in *Politics* H writes: «It is clear then that there should be legislation about education and that it should be conducted on a public system» (1, 1137 a 35-36). If man is a «member» of the state, the state to which he belongs must so regulate the training of its member, that he will fill the place for which he is meant in its «economy»<sup>21</sup>. The state cannot neglect to imbue its citizens with peculiar tone and temper which every state maintains from its establishment. For example, it is the glory of Sparta to Aristotle, as well as to Plato, that she should have realised the necessity of a common training of her citizens for the end which she chose to pursue.

Therefore, the end for an ideal state is the creation of one and sole educational system. And it is attainable in Aristotle's ideal state since in it there is no distinction of classes, each of them with its separate mission and so its separate system of education. There is no class of rulers, distinct from the ruled, needing to be trained in the virtues of authority, as the ruled in those of obedience. There is indeed a difference, but it is a difference of ages and not of classes<sup>22</sup>; and there are accordingly no separate schemes of education for different classes, but different stages in a single scheme for different ages. But on the whole education will be fundamentally one and the same for every citizen: «But since we say that the goodness of a citizen and ruler are the same as that of the best man....» (*Z* 13, 1333 a 11-13), the education which makes a good citizen will be the same as that which makes a good man<sup>23</sup>. And the good man in the same way as the good citizen will have for its final aim the supremacy of reason; and if it trains the irrational element of human soul it will train it with the rule of the rational.

The division of soul in two parts, «of which one is in itself possessed of reason while the other is not rational in itself but capable of obeying reason» (1333 a 17-19), it follows the distinction of the reason «possessed» in practical

20. See W. Oncken, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

21. Cf. E. BARKER, *op. cit.*, p. 428; N.L. Newman, *op. cit.*, t.1, p. 353. This term is already used by Aristotle, (*Pol.* A 2, 1253 b 2, 3, 1256 a 5; *E.N.* A 1, 1094 a 9, b 3; *ΣΤ* 8, 1141 b 32) although not exactly with the same meaning.

22. *Pol.* H 13, 1332 b 36-41: «Nature has given the distinction by making the group that is itself the same in race partly younger and partly older, of which two sets it is appropriate to the one to be governed and for the other to govern; and no one chafes or thinks himself better than his rulers when he is governed on the ground of age, especially as he is going to get back what he has thus contributed to the common stock when he reaches the proper age».

23. E. BARKER, *op. cit.*, p. 429; W.L. Newmann, *op. cit.*, t. 1, p. 344.



reason and in theoretical reason<sup>24</sup>, to which correspond proportional forms of life. Theoretical reason means leisure<sup>25</sup> spent in high contemplation, in peace, in the choice of things beautiful and good. But a state requires action for its survival. It has to anticipate the training of the young for war, and has to choose what is necessary and expedient (*Pol.* Z 13, 1333 a 31-33). However, during the training of its youth, it must not forget that business is for the sake of leisure, that war is for the sake of peace, that the choice of things necessary and useful is means for the attainment of things noble (*Pol.* 1333 a 35 ff.). It will train the irrational part of the soul as obeying to the rational. It will do things which are not themselves things of reason for the sake of the things which are. It has been the mistake of Sparta's training that it has reversed this order. Sparta has taken things necessary and useful as in themselves beautiful and good: she has used her leisure as a means of action and peace as a preparation for war: «they express admiration for the aim of its founder on the ground that he framed the whole of his legislation with a view to conquest and to war» (1333 b 14-15). Sparta has trained, for instance, the whole spirit of the Spartan youth to war, that in war it might be satisfied. And because she has misconceived virtue, she, who alone of Greek cities has trained her citizens to virtue, has profited nothing of all her training (*Pol.* 1334 a 40-b 4).

There is therefore only one education which the state educational system can offer with the purpose to create the good citizen, and is exactly the same education as that which creates the good man. That is not only the one, but the best and consequently the only able to guide man to virtue, and as to happiness (εὐδαιμονία εὖ ζῆν), the supreme aim (τέλος) of man and state.

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24. W.L. NEWMAN, *op. cit.*, t. III, p. xlv, says that: «The direct education of the reason... will be directed to the development both of the practical and the contemplative reason, and will make the development of the latter its supreme end». This speculation tends to support the view that contemplation is a «dominant end» in Aristotle's ideal state. But he also says that *Politics* ΣΤ 1-3 «represents the political and the contemplative lives as akin, both being rich in *kalai praxeis*», in contrast to *EN* I, which privileges contemplation (t.I, p. 303; see Newman's interpretation of the argument of *Pol.* Z 1-3, t. I, pp. 298-305). «Dominant end» readings of the role at contemplation in *Pol.* Z - H have invited criticism by F. SOLMSEN, *Leisure and Play in Aristotle's Ideal State*, *Rheinisches Museum*, 107, 1964, pp.25-27, who points out that it is not clear all the citizens are presumed capable of contemplative knowledge (Z 14, 1333 a 28-30). See D.J. DEPEW, *Politics, Music and Contemplation*, pp.350 ff.

25. Cf. P. DEMONT *Le loisir dans la Politique d'Aristote*, *Aristote Politique: Études sur la Politique d'Aristote*, par P. Aubenque et A. Tordesillas, Paris, P.U.F., 1993, pp. 216 ff.



## ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ ΣΤΟΝ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗ

Ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης ἔχει πραγματευθεῖ γιὰ τὴν παιδεία κυρίως στὸ Ζ καὶ στὸ Η βιβλίο τῶν *Πολιτικῶν*. Ἡ ἔνταξη τῆς πραγματείας γιὰ τὴν παιδεία στὸ κλασικὸ αὐτὸ βιβλίο πολιτικῆς φιλοσοφίας δὲν εἶναι τυχαία. Ἐξηγεῖται ἀπὸ τὴ γνώμη ποὺ ἔχει ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης γιὰ τὴν ἀποστολὴ καὶ τὶς προϋποθέσεις τῆς παιδείας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τὴ γνώμη ποὺ ἔχει γιὰ τὴν ἀποστολὴ καὶ τὴ σύσταση τῆς πολιτείας.

Στὸν περίφημο ὁρισμὸ του γιὰ τὴν πόλη – κράτος μὲ τὴ φράση «γινομένη μὲν τοῦ ζῆν ἔνεκεν οὓσα δὲ τοῦ εὖ ζῆν» δηλώνεται ὅτι ἡ πόλη ὑπάρχει βασικά γιὰ τὴν ἐξασφάλιση τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ τὴν ἄποψη καὶ τῶν ὑλικῶν ὅρων της, ἀλλὰ δὲν ἐξαντλεῖται σ' αὐτὸ μόνο, ἔχει οὐσιαστικὸ σκοπὸ τὴ χειραγώγηση τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ πρὸς τὸ «εὖ ζῆν». Ὅμως τὸ εὖ ζῆν, κατὰ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη, δὲν εἶναι δυνατόν νὰ ἐπιτευχθεῖ χωρὶς τὴν ἀρετὴ. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος δηλαδὴ γιὰ νὰ ὑψωθεῖ στὴν εὐδαιμονία ποὺ εἶναι ὑποκειμενικὴ ἄποψη τοῦ εὖ ζῆν, χρειάζεται, ἐκτὸς ἀπὸ τὰ πρόσφορα ἐξωτερικὰ ἀγαθὰ, νὰ ἔχει καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴ. Μάλιστα ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐξαίρει τὴν ἀρετὴ ὡς τὴν κύρια προϋπόθεση τῆς εὐδαιμονίας, καὶ ἄρα τοῦ «εὖ ζῆν». Ἡ ἀπόκτηση ὁμως τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀπὸ τὸν ἄνθρωπο προϋποθέτει τὴ συνδρομὴ διαφόρων εὐνοϊκῶν στοιχείων. Ἔτσι, γιὰ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη, ἡ παιδεία ἀποτελεῖ οὐσιαστικὴ λειτουργία τῆς πολιτείας, ἀφοῦ ἐπιδιώξῃ της εἶναι τὸ «εὖ ζῆν» τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ βασική του προϋπόθεση εἶναι ἡ ἀρετὴ, ποὺ μέσο γιὰ τὴν ἀπόκτησή της εἶναι ἡ παιδεία.

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