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Aristotle and Athens
Some Comments on Aristotle's Sojourns in Athens

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Aristotle and Athens: Some Comments on Aristotle's Sojourns in Athens

A number of reasons have been advanced by Aristotle's ancient biographers as to why the Stagirite went, or was brought by his "guardian" Proxenus, to Athens in the year 367 B.C.[1] According to one tradition, he moved there because of the advice given by the Delphic oracle.[2] The Arabic biographer Usaibia also relates that, in keeping with some ancient reports, "this happened because Proxenus and Plato were personal friends."[3] But we do not know whether this particular explanation is based on historical fact. Neither are we able to ascertain where Usaibia did find this bit of information. Naturally, there exists always the rather simple explanation that Aristotle's journey to Athens in 367 B.C. was motivated solely by his desire to secure the best education available at the time anywhere in the Hellenic world.[4] This would not be surprising with a young man who apparently was quite intelligent and whose ancestors were not only educated people, but were also of pure Hellenic stock and not, as some ill-informed authors have suggested, of Macedonian or "barbarian" origin.[5]

Aristotle's father, it must be borne in mind, was not only the court physician of King Amyntas of Macedonia, but also an intimate friend and advisor of the king.[6] Hence, Aristotle's more immediate family had rather close connections with the Macedonian royal house.

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1. See A.-H. Chroust, "Aristotle Enters the Academy," *Classical Folia*, vol.19, no.1 (1965), pp.21-29.

2. *Vita Marciana* 5 (hereinafter cited VM 5) ; *Vita Vulgata* 4 (VV 4) ; *Vita Latina* 5 (VL 5) ; I Anonymous, *Vita Syriaca* 4 (I VS 4) ; Ibn-an-Nadim, *Kitab al-Fihrist* 4 (I VA 4) ; Ibn Abi Usaibia, *Uyun al-Anba fi Tabaqat-al-Atibba* 3 (IV VA 3).

3. IV VA 3.

4. This is brought out, for instance, in VM 4 ; VV 3 ; VL 4 ; Al-Mubassir, *Kitab Mukhtar al-Hikam wa-Mahasin al-Kilam* 3-4 (II VA 3-4). II VA 3 also maintains that Nicomachus, the father of Aristotle, personally turned over the latter to a "school of poets, orators and school-masters" in Athens, when Aristotle was a mere eight years old. This story is probably a later invention. In any event, it is not well substantiated. See A.-H. Chroust, *op. cit. supra*, note 1, pp.21-22.

5. See, in general, A.-H. Chroust, "The Genealogy of Aristotle," *Classical Folia*, vol.20, no.2 (1966), pp.139-146.

6. Diogenes Lærtius V. 1 (DL V. 1) ; VM 1-2 ; VV 1-2 ; VL 1-2 ; I VS 1 ; II Anonymous, *Vita Syriaca* 1 (II VS 1) ; II VA 2 ; Al-Qifti Gamaladdin, *Tabaqat al-Hukama* 3 (III VA 3) ; IV VA 2 ; *Vita Hesychii* (*Vita Menagiana, Vita Menagii*) 1.

In 370/69 B.C. King Amyntas died, and he was succeeded by his oldest son, Alexander II, who was promptly assassinated by his uncle Ptolemy in 369 B.C. Ptolemy proclaimed himself regent, ruling Macedonia in the name of Perdiccas and Philip, the two younger brothers of the slain Alexander. In the ensuing inter-dynastic struggle, which ended with Ptolemy's assassination by Perdiccas in 365 B.C., Aristotle's father, who probably remained loyal to the family of Amyntas, might also have been slain.[1] This would then explain why Proxenus, the guardian of Aristotle, rather than Nicomachus, brought Aristotle to Athens in 367 B.C.[2] In any event, the several *Vitae Aristotelis* expressly mention the fact that by the time Aristotle went to Athens Nicomachus was already dead.[3] It might be conjectured, therefore, that during the regency of Ptolemy and after the death of his father Nicomachus, Aristotle might have been sent to Athens in order to get him out of "harm's way."[4] This being so, Aristotle's first arrival in Athens in the year 367 B.C. could very well be related with the dynastic struggles and disorders which convulsed Macedonia between 370/69 and 365 B.C.

According to an almost universally accepted tradition, Aristotle departed from Athens shortly after the death of Plato in 348/47 B.C., making it appear that the death of Plato was the main reason, if not the sole reason, for Aristotle's withdrawal from Athens.[5] There exists, however, another explanation for Aristotle's departure from Athens in 348/47 B.C. II VS 3-4 relates that "being frightened by the execution of Socrates, he [*scil.*, Aristotle] retired from Athens and stayed near the Hellespont. When Plato died, Speusippus . . . took charge of Plato's school . . . [and] sent a message [to Aristotle] asking him to come back . . ." And Diogenes Laertius (V. 2) laconically reports that "Aristotle left the Academy [and Athens?] while Plato was still alive." Both II VS 4 and DL V. 2 maintain (or imply) that Plato was still alive at the time Aristotle departed from Athens, but only II VS 3 states a definite reason why he did so : he was frightened

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1. See VM 3 ; VV 2 ; VL 3 ; IV VA 3. Nicomachus' early death may also be inferred from the fact that in his last will (DL V. 11-16) Aristotle mentions his mother but not his father.

2. See A.-H. CHROUST, "The Genealogy of Aristotle," *op. cit.*, pp.144-145.

3. VM 3 ; VV 3 ; VL 3. IV VA 3.

4. This might very well be "the advice" given by the Delphic oracle. See *supra*, p.186, note 2, — Alexander II and Perdiccas (when the latter died in 359 B.C., Philip became regent as well as guardian of Perdiccas' young son named Amyntas) pursued a philo-Athenian policy. Ptolemy, on the other hand, leaned strongly towards Thebes, the political rival of Athens. Hence, it would be reasonable to assume that a follower of Amyntas-Alexander-Perdiccas should seek political asylum in Athens which probably would not hand him over to a pro-Theban Macedonian ruler.

5. See A.-H. CHROUST, " Aristotle Leaves the Academy," to be published in *Greece and Rome*, in the near future.

by the execution of Socrates. This rather curious remark, which is subject to much misinterpretation,[1] calls for further explanation.

In the year 349/48 B.C., Philip of Macedonia undertook the subjugation of the Greek colonies in Chalcidice. To escape possible capture and destruction, the city of Olynthus entered into a defensive alliance with Athens. When Olynthus was attacked by Philip, an Athenian relief force was promptly dispatched to aid the city. The assistance, however, arrived too late to prevent the fall and sack of Olynthus in the summer of 348 B.C. This incident, together with Demosthenes' fiery and constant denunciations against Philip, led to the outbreak of violent anti-Macedonian sentiments and actions among the Athenians. Aristotle, it must be remembered, was a "Macedonian resident alien" in Athens, who was probably suspected of strong pro-Macedonian leanings or sympathies. It may also be surmised that he was not on the best personal terms with the majority of the Athenian populace.[2] In 367 B.C. he had come to Athens as a stranger from the "barbaric north" — to a city which openly discriminated against, and looked down upon, any non-Athenian. His father, as we have seen, had been closely affiliated with the royal house of Macedonia. Aristotle's more intimate family still had close ties with the Macedonian dynasty. It is also quite likely that during the more recent past he had made several visits to Macedonia, thus arousing suspicion as well as enmity. After all, his father's estate was in Stagira (or Pella), that of his mother in Chalcis on the island of Euboea.[3] He did not possess, nor was it possible under the Athenian laws of the time for him to possess, any real property in Athens, something which always aroused suspicion. The Athenians of that period could be as bigoted and anti-intellectual as they could be intolerant and xenophobic. Athens, it must be admitted, around 349/48 B.C. was ripe with malicious gossip, corruption, general and

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1. It may be argued here that II VS 3-4 is but a badly garbled account or a confused combination of two wholly unrelated incidents in the life of Aristotle : Aristotle's sojourn with Hermias of Atarneus (348/47-345 B.C.) and the indictment of Aristotle in 323 B.C. for alleged impiety (see *infra*), which prompted the latter to flee to Chalcis in order to escape condemnation and possible execution. See ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae* XV. 696A ; DL V. 5-6 ; II VA 20-21 ; IV VA 7 ; VM 41 ; VV 19 ; VL 43. — When the author of II VS 3 insists that Aristotle went to a place "near the Hellespont," he might well be alluding to Atarneus (or Assos) which is indeed "near the Hellespont."

2. Shortly before his death Aristotle is said to have written a letter to Antipater in which he pointed out that "in Athens things which are proper for a citizen are not proper for an alien," and that "it is dangerous [for an alien] to live in Athens." VM 42 ; VV 20 ; VL 44. See also ELIAS (olim David), *Comment. in Porphyrii Isagogen et in Aristotelis Categorias* (prooem.), *Comment. in Arist. Graeca*, vol. XVIII, part 1 (edit. A. Busse, 1900), 123, 15 ff.

3. This becomes manifest in Aristotle's last will and testament. See DL V. 14, where Herpyllis may elect to stay either in the house of Aristotle's mother in Chalcis or in the house of Aristotle's father in Stagira.

ill-concealed ill-feeling towards, and almost paranoid distrust of, everyone "foreign," especially of persons who had come from much despised (and feared) Macedonia. In this atmosphere of resentment, anger, and frustration, which thanks to Demosthenes' inflammatory perorations was vented on everything and everyone Macedonian, Aristotle feared that he might suffer "the fate of Socrates."[1] Hence he decided to depart from Athens — probably in the late summer of 348 B.C. — seeking refuge with Hermias of Atarneus.[2]

Should our interpretation of II VS 3-4 prove to be correct, then this priceless text would seem to contain, in a highly condensed form, the sole surviving biographical bit of information which satisfactorily accounts for Aristotle's precipitate flight from Athens in the year 348 B.C., several months before Plato's death. As shall be shown presently, the circumstances surrounding and producing this hasty departure closely parallel those necessitating Aristotle's withdrawal from Athens to Chalcis in the year 323 B.C.

As regards Aristotle's return to Athens in 335/34 B.C.,[3] the ancient biographers have relatively little to say.[4] The majority of these authors seem to imply that when Alexander invaded Asia in 334 B.C., or was about to get ready for this invasion (of which Aristotle apparently did not approve), Aristotle felt free to depart from Pella

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1. Socrates might also have been the victim of political entanglements and animosities. It is not unreasonable to conjecture that Socrates' trial and condemnation in 399 B.C. was basically a political incident in the bitter struggle between the "democratic" and the oligarchic factions in Athens. See A.-H. CHROUST, *Socrates: Man and Myth — The Two Socratic Apologies of Xenophon* (London, 1957), pp. 164 ff.; 189 ff. Socrates had, or was suspected of having, close ties with some of the much despised Thirty Tyrants, especially with Critias and Charmides.

2. The reason why in 348 B.C. Aristotle decided not to retire to Chalcis on the island of Euboea (as he did in 323 B.C., see *infra*), where he had a house by his mother, is probably the following; on the instigation of Philip of Macedonia the island of Euboea had revolted against Athens in 349/48 B.C. An attempt on the part of the Athenians to retake the island miscarried. In view of this unsettled situation Aristotle might have preferred not to go to Chalcis. And since Stagira had been destroyed by Philip in 348 B.C., — it was later rebuilt due to Aristotle's intercession with Philip — he could not retire to his native city.

3. VM 24; VV 23; VL 24; DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS, I. *Epistola ad Ammaeum* 5; APOLLODORUS, *Chronicle*, in: DL V. 10. — DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS, *loc. cit.*, relates that this happened during the archonship of Evaenetus (335/34 B.C.), while APOLLODORUS, *loc. cit.*, maintains that he did so in the second year of the 111th Olympiad (335/34, B.C.).

4. DL V. 4 relates that "when he [*scil.*, Aristotle] thought he had stayed long enough with Alexander, he departed for Athens." Similar views can be found in VM 24; VV 23; VL 24; I VA 10; II VA 19, and *ibid.*, 24-25; IV VA 6, and *ibid.*, 22-23. DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS, *loc. cit.*, connects Aristotle's return to Athens with the death of Philip in 336 B.C. — The story, found in VM 24, VV 18 and VL 24, that after the death of Speusippus (in *c.* 339 B.C.) the Academy recalled Aristotle asking him to run the school together with Xenocrates is a late invention. See also II *Vita Syriaca* 4.

and moved back to Athens, leaving his ill-fated nephew Callisthenes with Alexander. Aristotle's return to Athens in 335/34 B.C., however, might have been connected with another incident in the expansionist policy of Macedonia. After the assassination of King Philip in the summer of 336 B.C., Alexander, by a speedy show of force, immediately restored the *Synedrion* or Confederacy of Corinth, originally established by Philip in 338 B.C. He accepted the submission of the Greek cities, including that of Athens. Subsequently he turned upon the Illyrians, Epirotes and Thracians, who likewise had revolted. Suddenly rumors began to spread throughout Greece that Alexander had been slain in battle somewhere in Thrace. Thebes, Athens, and other Greek cities at once raised the banner of revolt against their Macedonian overlords. But Alexander was very much alive. With lightning-like speed he descended once more upon Greece, took the city of Thebes by storm (early in September of 335 B.C.), and destroyed it. He then moved on to Athens which promptly submitted in abject surrender. All this took place in the fall of 335 B.C., and it was about this time that, according to what seems to be reliable tradition, Aristotle returned to Athens. Thus it appears that Aristotle moved back to Athens almost in the van of the conquering Macedonian phalanx — that he, so to speak, came back, or was brought back, by the force of arms. In any event, it is a rather curious, not to say suggestive, phenomenon that the enforced submission of Athens to Macedonian might in the fall of 335 B.C. and Aristotle's rather sudden re-appearance in Athens should so closely coincide.

But there is more evidence in support of the assumption that Aristotle's return to Athens in the year 335/34 B.C. in some way was related to Alexander's retaking of the city. Ancient tradition is replete with stories that Aristotle exchanged many letters with kings and statesmen,[1] that he had much influence among the great men of his time,[2] and that many honors were bestowed upon him by kings and cities.[3] Moreover, according to these reports, he had many interviews (diplomatic negotiations?) with kings.[4] By these negotiations and dealings he promoted their interests and proved very useful to them.[5] Aristotle's biographers also refer to the many beneficial deeds and outstanding services he rendered the city of Athens, as well as to his many intercessions with King Philip and Alexander on behalf of the Athenians in order to promote the interests of Athens and secure the

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1. See I VA 9 ; IV VA 16. Similarly II VA 36 and IV VA 25. DL V. 26 lists letters of Aristotle to Philip, Alexander, Antipater (nine books), Mentor, Olympias, Hephaestion, and others. See also *Vita Hesychii* 10 (no. 137).

2. IV VA 15.

3. II VA 28 ; I VA 7-8.

4. IV VA 16.

5. IV VA 16 ; II VA 25 ; VM 16, and *ibid.*, 20 ; VL 16, and *ibid.*, 20 ; DL V. 2.

generous treatment of the city by the Macedonians.[1] It is not impossible and, as a matter of fact, quite likely, that in the year 335 B.C. Aristotle interceded with Alexander on behalf of Athens. In any event, while Thebes was razed to the ground after the abortive anti-Macedonian uprising, Athens was not only spared by Alexander, but apparently treated quite generously. This might have been the work of Aristotle. Now we might also understand the story, told by Usaibia,[2] that "on account of his many good deeds and the outstanding services he had rendered them, the Athenians called an assembly of the people in order to pass a decree and vote on an inscription in honor [of Aristotle]. They had this inscription engraved on a stone column, which they set up on the highest point of the city, called The Summit [the Acropolis]. In this inscription they related that Aristotle of Stagira, the son of Nicomachus, had served to city well by his many good deeds and by his numerous acts of assistance and kindness, as well as by all his services to the people of Athens, and especially by his interventions with King Philip [and Alexander] for the purpose of promoting their interests and for seeing to it that they were treated kindly [by Philip and Alexander]. Hence, the people of Athens wanted to make it quite clear that they were aware of, and grateful for, the good which had resulted from all this ; that they bestowed upon him distinction, honor, and praise ; and that they would forever keep him in faithful and honored remembrance."[3]

According to the general biographical tradition, Aristotle finally withdrew from Athens in the summer or early fall of 323 B.C., that is, approximately one year before he died in Chalcis.[4] The reason or reasons for this second and apparently hurried departure are stated in Diogenes Laertius (DL V. 5-6) as follows : "Aristotle . . . was indicted for impiety by the hierophant Eurymedon or, according to Favorinus in his *Miscellaneous History*, by Demophilus. The basis of this indictment was the hymn he had composed in honor of . . . Hermias, as well as the honorific inscription for Hermias' statue in Delphi . . ."[5]

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1. IV VA 17-18.

2. IV VA 17-21.

3. It will be noted that the text of Usaibia follows rather closely the traditional pattern of Greek honorific inscriptions or decrees. Unfortunately, we possess no other historical evidence that would support Usaibia's account. We know, however, that King Philip (or Alexander) set up a statue for Aristotle in Stagira. See PAUSANIAS, VI. 4. 8 ; VM 15 ; VL 15.

4. See A. H. CHROUST, "Aristotle's Flight from Athens in the Year 323 B.C.," to be published in *Historia*, in the near future.

5. ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae* XV. 696A, insits that Eurymedon made the motion to have Aristotle indicted for impiety, while Demophilus actually pressed the official charges. The parallel with the technical maneuvers of Anytus and Meletus in Socrates' trial in 399 B.C. is rather obvious, provided our sources concerning Socrates (Plato and Xenophon) contain reliable information. Neither the *Vita Marciana*, *Vita Vulgata*, nor the *Vita Latina*

Athenaeus, on the other hand, vigorously and at great length denies that Aristotle's hymn dedicated to the memory of Hermias was a religious paean (and, hence, an act of "blasphemy"), as alleged by Demophilus, but rather a *scolion*.[1] Presumably on the authority of Ptolemy-el Garib, II VA 20-21 and IV VA 7-10 insist that a hierophant by the name of Eurymedon gave a "wholly distorted account" of Aristotle's philosophy,[2] that this Eurymedon did so from mere jealousy and because he bore an old personal grudge against Aristotle, and that Eurymedon claimed that Aristotle neither worshipped the traditional gods of the city nor otherwise showed them the proper respect.[3] According to II VA 20, Eurymedon also called Aristotle "a man who should be shunned by everyone." "When Aristotle learned about this," II VA 21 continues, "he withdrew from Athens . . . fearing that they [*scil.*, the Athenians] might do to him what they had done to Socrates whom they had executed."[4] The reports contained in II VA and IV VA seem to be in accord with the traditional stories connected with the indictment of Socrates in 399 B.C. Like the charges brought against Socrates at that time,[5] the charge of impiety made against Aristotle in 323 B.C. might very well have been a "token charge" — a screen-issue for what was an essentially political incident motivated by political resentment and prejudice.[6]

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mention the indictment of Aristotle, but merely relate that "the Athenians turned against him [*scil.*, Aristotle]." VM 41 ; VV 19 ; VL 43. II VA 20 and IV Va 7 mention that Eurymedon had charged Aristotle with impiety, but they do not refer to the hymn in honor of Hermias or the honorific Delphic inscription, as, for instance, Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus do. The *Vita Hesychii* 6, on the other hand, explicitly cites the "sacrilegious" hymn.

1. ATHENAEUS, *op. cit.*, XV 696A-696E (frag. 675, Rose). See also DL V. 7-8 ; LUCIAN, *Eunuch.* 9 (frag. 675, Rose) ; MIMERIUS, *Oratio* VI. 6-7. Athenaeus' ultimate source is probably Hermippus. See ATHENAEUS, *op. cit.*, XV. 696EF.

2. See here also ORIGEN, *Contra Celsum* I. 380.

3. This account recasts some of the events which, according to the testimony of Plato and Xenophon, probably transpired during the trial of Socrates in 399 B.C.

4. IV VA 8-9 in substance restates II VA 21, adding, however, that no one interfered with Aristotle's voluntary departure from Athens.

5. See A.-H. CHROUST, *Socrates : Man and Myth — The Two Socratic Apologies of Xenophon* (London, 1957), pp.164 ff. ; 189 ff.

6. Neither the *Vita Marciana*, the *Vita Vulgata*, the *Vita Latina*, nor the Syriac or Arabic *Vitae Aristotelis* mention the allegedly sacrilegious hymn to Hermias or the honorific inscription for Hermias in Delphi. The story that Aristotle composed a speech in his own defense (DL V. 9, who quotes Favorinus), is apparently spurious. This is stressed in IV VA 10. See also FAVORINUS, in : ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae* 697AB. But there might have existed a "*Defense* (or *Apology*) *of Aristotle*" by some unknown author or authors. — O. Gigon, "Interpretationen zu den Aristoteles-Viten," *Museum Helveticum*, vol. 15 (1958), p. 178, concedes, though somewhat reluctantly, that the charge of impiety against Aristotle might have been a mere pretext for dealing effectively with a much hated philo-Macedonian.

Aristotle, it has already been shown, was always an unwanted "resident Macedonian alien" (*metic*) in Athens — a city which had become increasingly intolerant, anti-intellectual and, indeed, xenophobic. He lived in the city more by sufferance than by right, always subject to arbitrary and capricious prosecution (and persecution), as well as sudden expulsion.[1] His close ties with King Philip, Alexander, and later with Antipater[2] of course were suspect in essentially anti-Macedonian Athens.[3] It is hardly surprising, therefore, that he should be suspected of being an enemy of the Athenian patriots and an opponent of all efforts to throw off the Macedonian yoke — a key foe of the anti-Macedonian party (including Demosthenes, Lycourgus, Hypereides, Chares, Charidemus, Ephialtes, Diotimus, Himeraeus, Merocles, and others). Already in 348 B.C. Aristotle had experienced the effects of a sudden outbreak of anti-Macedonian sentiment. Then, too, he was compelled to flee Athens, seeking refuge with Hermias of Atarneus. After the abortive anti-Macedonian uprising in 335 B.C., when the Athenians made their timely submission to Alexander, he dared to come back and live among his former enemies, protected by the Macedonian military might. Then, in the year 323 B.C., the news reached Athens that Alexander had died in Babylon in the month of June. This time the news proved to be correct. Antipater at this very moment had been summoned to join Alexander in Asia and, hence, could no longer protect Aristotle or enforce the Macedonian domination of Athens. Since in the year 335/34 B.C. Aristotle had returned to Athens in the van of the conquering Macedonian army, he was probably more intensely disliked than ever by the Athenians who in all likelihood considered him a political agent of their conqueror and oppressor. And this general popular opinion might not have been too far from the actual truth. Thus, when in 323 B.C. Athens revolted once more againts its Macedonian overlords, Aristotle was naturally one of the prime targets of popular persecution and wrath.

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1. It could be argued that since Aristotle allegedly founded his own school in Athens in 335/34 B.C., he must have had some standing in the Athenian community. This reasoning overlooks two salient facts, however : (1) it is by no means certain and, as a matter of fact, quite unlikely, that in the year 335/34 B.C. Aristotle established any such independent school which was on an equal footing with the Academy, and (2) when Aristotle returned to Athens in 335/34 B.C., he apparently did so with the help of Alexander and his army, a circumstance which surely did not enhance the Stagirite's popularity with the average Athenian.

2. This fact is also stressed by Plutarch, Arrian, Curtius Rufus, Quintilian, Dio Chrysostom, Pliny, Aelian, Athenaeus and many other authors. As a matter of fact, in his last will and testament (DL V. 11-16) Aristotle names Antipater as one of his executors.

3. Tradition has it that Aristotle went at least on one diplomatic mission to Macedonia in behalf of Athens. DL V. 2 ; DIODORUS SICULUS XVI. 77 and XVI. 84. The *Vitae Aristotelis* in general are replete with stories about the many public services Aristotle had rendered the city of Athens (by interceding with Macedonia). See VM 20, VL 20 ; IV VA 17-21.

In a way it appears that Aristotle's sojourn in Athens, at least after 335 B.C., was irrevocably bound up with the Macedonian fortunes of war. A Macedonian defeat or the death of its great soldier-king (which would unavoidably lead to serious internal disorders in Macedonia) or the absence or impotence of one of his lieutenants automatically spelled disaster for Aristotle, cutting short his stay in Athens.[1]

In support of the contention that Aristotle's flight from Athens in the year 323 B.C. was prompted primarily by political factors, the following additional piece of evidence may be adduced : A story, which eloquently presages the political troubles Aristotles was about to experience in Athens, can be found in IV VA 17-21. Here we are told that some Athenians (pro-Macedonian partisans?) had moved or decreed to dedicate and erect a public inscription on the Acropolis honoring Aristotle and the many public services he had rendered the city.[2] This motion or decree, IV VA 20 relates, was vehemently opposed by an Athenian named Aimaraus (Himeraeus). Himeraeus, we know, was a prominent and very active member of the anti-Macedonian faction in Athens, and probably a personal enemy of Aristotle, the "Macedonian."[3]

Although the extant *Vitae Aristotelis* advance no less than three major reasons for the action taken against Aristotle in 323 B.C. — the "blasphemous" hymn to Hermias as well as the honorific inscription dedicated to Hermias ; the close political and personal ties which existed between Aristotle and the Macedonian royal house ; and the "distorted interpretation" of Aristotle's teachings which had led people to believe that he did not worship properly — minute analysis of all these allegations should divulge that his political and personal connections with Philip, Alexander and Antipater, in the final analysis, constituted the primary and most urgent reason for the attacks upon Aristotle in the year 323 B.C. and, concomitantly, the prime cause for this hasty flight. Thus, it should be persuasively

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1. It is not impossible that Democharès in his "oration against the philosophers," delivered in 306 B.C., revived some of the charges originally made by the anti-Macedonian faction in Athens in the year 323 B.C. against Aristotle. See EUSEBIUS, *Praeparatio Evangelica* XV. 2. 6.

2. See also VM 20 ; VL 20 ; DL V. 2. — So far as we know, the Athenians apparently never passed such a decree (or even proposed one), and they probably never erected a statue or inscription honoring Aristotle. It is not impossible, however, that IV VA 17-21 (or its source) might refer to the honorific inscription which the Amphyctionic League at one time dedicated to Aristotle in Delphi. See W. DITTENBERGER, *Syll. Inscript. Graec.* 3, no. 275 ; AELIAN, *Varia Historia* XIV. 1. Late in 323 B.C., when the Amphyctionic League joined the general Greek uprising against Macedonia — the co-salled Lamian War — this inscription was forcibly removed.

3. Himeraeus, together with other prominent anti-Macedonian political leaders in Athens, was executed by Antipater after the battle of Crannon and the re-occupation of Athens by the Macedonians in the early fall of 322 B.C. Demosthenes, in order to escape execution by the Macedonians, committed suicide. See PLUTARCH, *Demosthenes* 28. 4.

clear that the general political situation in Athens in the summer of 323 B.C. precipitated Aristotle's withdrawal to Chalcis. The confirmed news of Alexanders's sudden death (and Antipater's absence) presented the Athenian patriots with an unexpected — and unprecedented — opportunity to regain political independence from Macedonian domination. Athens simply rose in revolt, as she had done previously in 335 B.C. on the false rumor of Alexander's unexpected death in Thrace. As other Greek cities joined the uprising (designated the Lamian War), Aristotle found himself surrounded on all sides by undisguised hostility. Fearing the worst, he simply left Athens, never to return. It is not impossible that the Athenians actually intended to bring formal charges and start legal proceedings against Aristotle.[1] But these proceedings, if they were in fact initiated, were really a mere pretext to formally vent the hatred the average Athenian had for anything Macedonian and for Aristotle in particular — the Macedonian resident alien and "political agent" of Macedonia.

The striking parallelisms between the political and military fortunes of Macedonia and the sojourns of Aristotle in Athens are highly suggestive, to say the least. They may possibly imply that Aristotle was more than a mere "ivory tower philosopher" spending all his time in the exclusive pursuit of philosophic truths and theoretic speculations. He was, perhaps, a kind of political agent for, or representative of, Macedonia (the Macedonian royal house in particular), doing yeoman's duty for Philip, and later for Alexander and his lieutenant in Europe, Antipater. We must always bear in mind the following important facts : Aristotle's family, as we have seen, had very close ties with King Amyntas and apparently remained loyal to the sons of Amyntas during the turbulent years between 370/69 and 365 B.C. It was during these years of cruel inter-dynastic struggles that Aristotle's father Nicomachus might have been killed as a partisan of Alexander II, while Aristotle went to Athens for the first time, perhaps to escape the vindictiveness of Ptolemy. In the year 348 B.C., Aristotle fled from Athens and went to Hermias of Atarneus because of an outbreak of intense anti-Macedonian feelings in Athens. Although tradition has it that Aristotle went to Assos because the Platonic Academy had established there a sort of "foreign branch" in the persons of Erastus and Coriscus, two former members of the Academy,[2] it should not be overlooked that Hermias' small

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1. It could possibly be argued that Aristotle, the philosopher, should have acted like Socrates and should have faced his enemies in court, if necessary, rather than run away. It must be borne in mind, however, that Socrates was an Athenian and a citizen, while Aristotle was an alien who, as he himself admits, had no standing in Athens. See *supra*, p.188, note 2.

2. See PLATO (?), *Fifth Epistle, passim* ; A. H. CHROUST, "Plato's Academy : The First Organized School of Political Science in Antiquity," to be published in *The Review of Politics*, in the spring of 1967.

but strategically located domain, if Hermias could be won over to Philip's political designs, would furnish an ideal "bridgehead" for Philip's planned invasion of Asia Minor.[1] Aristotle probably returned to Macedonia in 343/42 B.C. The ancient biographies of Aristotle are replete with accounts of the many good deeds the Stagirite did for Greek cities and peoples, including Athens, during these years by using personnal influence with King Philip.[2] We are also told of diplomatic missions he undertook on behalf of Macedonia as well as Athens. In 335/34 B.C. he returned to Athens, the key city in the whole Corinthian Confederacy in the opinion of Macedonia, as well as the most renowned city in the Hellenic world. He returned, we may surmise, probably in order to help stabilize and enhance Macedonia's influence throughout Greece.[3] When Alexander — the only man who could have possibly held together Macedonia and its many conquests — died unexpectly in June of 323 B.C., Aristotle's position in Athens became utterly untenable. Antipater, to be sure, soon restored Macedonian control over Athens and Greece once more (in the fall of 322 B.C.), but by that time Aristotle was on his deathbed, if not already dead. Otherwise he might well have returned once more.

Anton Hermann CHROUST.

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1. Hermias of Atarneus in 341/40 B.C. was captured by the Persians (Mentor) and cruelly put to death, presumably for treasonable conspiracy against Persia. The Persians probably suspected — or perhaps knew about — Hermias' negotiations with Philip. See also DIDYMUS, *Comment. in Demosth.* (edit. H. Diels and W. Schubart) 6, 50 ff.

2. See, for instance, VM 15-16 and *ibid.* 20 ; VV 15 ; VL 15-16 and *ibid.* 20 ; I VA 8 ; II VA 27-28 ; IV VA 15-16. Additional "evidence" can be found in PLUTARCH, *Alexander, passim* ; DIODORUS SICULUS XVI. 52. 9 ; VALERIUS MAXIMUS, V. 6, 5 ; PLINY, *Historia Naturalis* VII. 109 ; PLUTARCH, *Ne suaviter quidem vivi posse secumdum Epicurum* 15 (*Moralia* 1097B) ; DIO CHRYSOSTOM, *Oratio* II. 79, and *Oratio* XLVII. 8 ; AELIAN, *Varia Historia* III. 17.

3. One may ask here why Aristotle did not return to Athens immediately after the battle of Chaeronea in August of 338 B.C. Thanks to his close association with the Macedonian royal house and with King Philip in particular Aristotle probably knew that Philip had "filled his house with bitterness and division." When Philip put away his wife Olympias and married Cleopatra, the daughter of Attalus, Aristotle anticipated serious troubles, inasmuch as this move also jeopardized Alexander's succession to the throne. Hence, it may be presumed, Aristotle assumed an attitude of "wait and see" before committing himself for either Philip or Alexander. This impasse was resolved only with the assassination of Philip in the summer of 336 B.C.