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## ARISTOTLE'S PEDAGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

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**ABSTRACT:** Classical antiquity, education had been formed in proportion with the social and political system of each city-state, as Aristotle briefly formulates in his work *Politics* (1310). Social education is the core of his political and pedagogical philosophy, aiming at shaping the worthy citizen and underlying a clear distinction between the individual (=idiotis) and the citizen (=politiss), since "the whole must necessarily precede the part" (*Politics* 1253a19-24). His pedagogical approach focuses on an all-round psychosomatic balance and development. The system of his pedagogical philosophy is based on Ethics (Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*). The pedagogical approach presupposes experience and teaching, since virtue has two natures: the intellectual and the moral one, through which wisdom and intellect can be achieved. The philosopher laid the principles of formal logic as the basis of the scientific research, however, Rhetoric and Poetry keep an important position, the reason being human mankind is "mimetic". The present article starts with Aristotle's work as a student at Plato Academy and ends with his pedagogical work on the

exemplary "twin" (teacher-student) Aristotle - Alexander. The pedagogical philosophy of Aristotle is proven as primarily practical.

**KEY-WORDS:** Aristotle's Ethics, Politics, Poetics Rhetoric

In classical antiquity, education was commensurate with the social and political system of each city (state), as Aristotle briefly formulates in his *Politics* (1310). Social education is at the heart of his political and pedagogical philosophy, aiming at shaping the virtue citizen with a clear distinction between the individual and the citizen, as "the whole must necessarily precede the party"<sup>1</sup>.

The city-state should ensure that citizens become "virtue". Legislative measures should regulate youth education to cultivate their sense of justice, good and beautiful and avoid selfishness and greed. Virtues lead humanity to meditation.

The purpose of youth education should be their all-round psychosomatic development. The system of Aristotle's pedagogical philosophy is based on Ethics and especially on his work *Nicomachean Ethics*. The approach presupposes experience and teaching, since virtue has two natures, an intellectual and a moral one. In this respect, wisdom and intellect can be achieved. The purpose of human actions is the bliss, defined as energy in accordance with virtue. Virtue is the measure between two extremes, namely, the "excess" and the "lack"<sup>2</sup>. The extremes are opposed to each other and the mean. Gentleness is a virtue as the mean of anger and anesthesia, "bravery," the mean of godliness and cowardice, "glory" as a mean of indifference and wonder. Supplements to virtue are also the goods of the body (power, health, beauty) and the goods of fortune (wealth, kindness, etc.).

Also Aristotle has divided virtues into *moral* and *intellectual* virtues. *Intellectual virtue owes its birth and growth primarily to teaching (that is why and what it needs for it is experience and time), while moral virtue is the result of ethics (and her own name, moreover, Only a slight difference from the word ethos). Hence no moral virtue exists in ourselves by nature*<sup>3</sup>. Aristotle believes that human character is formed through "hexis", through practice and not merely a passive habituation; it is possible to acquire a way of behaving which becomes a second nature. "At the end of

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle *Politics*, 1253a 19-24

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1104 a 25 – 26, 1106 a 29

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1103 a 14 - 17

Nicomachean Ethics, the responsibility for the achievement of moral virtues lies within the man himself. It is entirely up to him whether he will reach his goal whether he will acquire a morality and a soul efficacy. Aristotle mentions that in order to achieve virtues man has to act deliberately and with free will (*προαιρούμενος* and *βιαίως καί ἀμετακινήτως*) and without changing his attitude<sup>4</sup>. In order to achieve it, he has to make a painful struggle, to add his soul to virtuous acts, to cultivate it "by the law". Such views were supported by Plato<sup>5</sup>. So wisdom is primarily achieved with the assistance of a teacher, but a person becomes good only by his will and persistence in the practice of virtue. Therefore, in order to reach this goal, he has to make a painful effort. This is why apart from theory, Aristotle emphasizes on the importance of practical life of man and especially to the practice of virtues. We can become righteous by doing righteous deeds, wisely by doing prudent deeds, since the people who do righteous and prudent deeds are already righteous and prudent, just as grammars and musicians are already doing grammar and musical<sup>6</sup>. Also we can slowly acquire the habit of despising the things that cause fear and dealing with them, becoming brave, and when we become, we have a great deal of power to deal with<sup>7</sup>.

The extremes are opposed to each other and the mean. Gentleness is a virtue as the mean of anger and anesthesia, "bravery," the mean of godliness and cowardice, "glory" as a mean of indifference and wonder. The philosopher does not omit to point out that besides virtue, man should also have acquired external goods as his nature is not self-sufficient only with philosophical thought and theory. Therefore, goods such as health and wealth are essential<sup>8</sup>. Supplements to virtue are also the goods of the body (power, health, beauty) and the goods of fortune (wealth, kindness, etc.).

Consequently, Aristotle considers as happy the man who acts according to the virtues, and at the same time he has a share in the other goods. According to the philosopher the highest aim for a human being is *eudaimonia* which is defined as prosperity<sup>9</sup>. But the question arises, whether there is a motivation for man to exercise virtue. According to Aristotle the answer is the pleasure or dissatisfaction that accompanies our actions. This means that whoever stays away from the bodily

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1105 a 31

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Leges*, 792

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* 1105 a 17-20

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1104 b 1-3

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1102 a

pleasures and that pleasures him, is a man of prudence; he is the one who dislikes this thing; also: the man who stands to face all the dangerous things, and this gives him pleasure. Or, if he does not, he is unhappy; he is a fool; he is the coward who dislikes this thing. It is profound that moral virtue is in fact related to pleasure and dissatisfaction: our pleasure is excited to do devious things; our dissatisfaction keeps us away from the beautiful things<sup>10</sup>. This means that Aristotle opens the way for a practical philosophy since he mentions that all men from the very early age have the opportunity to become morally virtuous and practically wise. However, in order to achieve this goal, they must have adopted the right habits since their childhood.. Then they should have practical wisdom (*phronêsis*), which is always in close correlation with moral virtues<sup>11</sup>. However, in order for Ethics to have a pedagogical character, it should include the experience and the teaching through which people can become moral personalities<sup>12</sup>.

Aristotle is aware of the difficulty of establishing *ethos* in the souls of young people. A prerequisite is the morality, from which arises the moral concept (1103a, 17) Therefore, it is not enough for virtues to exist in human nature or nature, but man is required to participate in them and to be perfected through ethics. (1179 b).

Aristotle's ethics influenced had a major impact in his anthropology that anthropology refers clearly to the soul. The soul consists of the "alogo", (*ἄλογον*) (nologic) (here we see rushes, passions and the depth of human personality) and the "ellogon" (*ἔλλογον*) (here we see practical virtues and also mental ones). Cognitive virtues are intellectual abilities such as thinking and combining processes<sup>13</sup>. Aristotle's teaching leads to today's reflection on the conscious and unconscious "psyche" of man, which has been founded by representatives of the Depth Psychology.

Philippe II paying great attention to his son education called upon the top philosopher of his days, Aristotle from Stagira. Aristotle undertook the responsibility of the Philosophical formation of the 13-year-old Alexander in Pella, and in the Nymphs Sanctuary, at Miessa, near Stagira, along with a group of young people. According to Plutarch and Arrian: "It seems that Alexander was not only taught Ethics and Political Science, but also the secret and deeper teachings that men called them audience and supervision, that were not passed on to many."

<sup>10</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1103 a 14 -18

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1144 b 14-17

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Eudemia*, 1214a, 19-21

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1102-1103

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Aristotle performed Alexander's inauguration in Orphan issues, rhetoric, medicine, ethics as well as occult teachings known as "akroamatikes" (=hearing). When once, during his campaign, Alexander learned that Aristotle had given these reasons, titled: "Metaphysics," he wrote to him expressing his disagreement and complain in a letter. *"Alexander greets Aristotle hoping to be good. You did not do the right thing by publishing the listening grounds, since we would not differ from each other if the reasons we were educated became common to everyone. Because I prefer to differ from others in terms of education, rather than strength. Be well"*<sup>14</sup>.

Regarding Alexander's particular preference in the Iliad, it can be attributed to the origin of his mother Olympiad from the genus of Achilles, who is the main hero of the Trojan war and whose character and behavior in the battles, raise the admiration or even the exemplification of Alexander because he may also see his character similarity with Achilles.

In Athens the Platonic Academy, headed by Xenocrates, continued to be the basic influence of Greek thought. With Alexander's permission and the necessary royal funding, Aristotle inaugurates his own high school (lyceum), where he spent the rest of his life in the Athenian capital, teaching, researching and writing.

Aristotle took care of the throne's successor to convey a pan-Hellenic spirit with his lessons. Such courses were the Homeric epics, which Aristotle had specially formulated for Alexander and who, as it is said, brought with him on his headboard during his Asia campaign. During his campaign he also brought with him and studied the works of the three great tragic Euripides, Aeschylus and Sophocles.

Those widespread texts attracted the interest of Aristotle from his studies at the Academy of Plato, so that he later wrote about his work "Poetics". Aristotle's interest attracted both the Homeric epics and the tragedies, because through their morality, the characters of the people are described, depending on their social position and their historical tradition. Those texts, appropriately commented by Aristotle to the young Alexander, were very beneficial to the future Great Commander.

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Aristotle considered epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, poetry poetry and music to be mimetic, each with imitation in medium, subject and form. For example, music imitates itself with the means of rhythm and harmony, while dance imitates only the rhythm, and poetry with the tongue. Aristotle was an intense and systematic collector of puzzles, folklore and proverbs; he and his school had a special interest in the endearments of the Delphic Oracle and studied the Aesop's tales.

The conquests of Alexander the Great became the cornerstone of the Hellenistic kingdoms of the Successors and Descendants of. The total territory of his empire, at its 323 BC area, is estimated at 5,200,000 square kilometers, and includes pieces from 26 present countries (Greece, Albania, Skopje, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Israel, India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan.

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