

FROM POLITICAL MYTHOS TO ECONOMIC LOGOS: SECULARIZATION IN ARISTOTLE'S POLITICS

Abstract

The economic background of Aristotle's *Politics* goes far beyond the considerations on *oikonomia* in the first book, or the scattered references to economic principles throughout the whole work. It is the method of analysis of politics as an empiric, measurable and secularized discipline where his work is most linked with modern social sciences, economy among them. Secularization will be exemplified through three case studies: the oath, the concept of justice, and the idea of salvation / preservation. In all these cases, there is no concession to mythological or religious notions, but they are instruments of the logos, which constitutes a unique enterprise in Antiquity.

Keywords: Oikonomia, secularization, oath, salvation, justice, logos

It is well known that the word "economy" comes from the Greek *oikos-nomos*. It is also well known that the use of the term *oikonomia* in ancient Greece did not coincide with its current sense. When authors like Xenophon write a work called *Economics* they do not generally speak about production and resources at a political or international level, as when we speak today about Argentinian or world economics. They are referring strictly to the administration of the family goods, and how to use, maintain, and increase them. Yet neither would it be correct to say that there is no similarity at all with modern usages, for in fact the current sense of the word originates in a gradual derivation from the ancient one. In the 16th and 17th centuries, when modern political theory is developed, taking systematically the Latin translations of Aristotle as a point of departure, the most common way to read his *Politics* was in a joint volume along with the *Ethics* and the *Economics* (the latter today is attributed to his disciple Theophrastus). Historians give the Scottish philosopher James Stuart in 1716 the credit of first having taken the term from the domestic into the public sphere, accompanying it with the adjective "political" in his work *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy, Being an Essay on the Science of Domestic Policy in Free Nations*.

Now as the second part of the title of Stuart's work shows, the breaking of the umbilical chord with the ancient meaning is soft and gradual, since the new science refers to matters treated by Aristotle as belonging to the domestic sphere

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that in a certain way can be applied to the political one. The overlap of economics (in the ancient sense) and politics in Aristotle comes from the very introduction to the whole work in Book I, since it makes the polis the most perfect human association, constituted from a not self-sufficient, and therefore subordinated, entity, i. e. the family. A good part of Book I is dedicated to discuss “whether chrematistics is the same than economics, or a part, or ancillary to it... or something of different kind” (1256a). Aristotle distinguishes the kind of chrematistics (the science of acquiring goods) pertaining to the sphere of economics, from the kind of chrematistics alien to it: “all those who trade augment their wealth without limits. The cause is a close affinity between both kinds of chrematistics. Both use propriety, but not equally, for the one tends towards an end, and the other has a different end, increasing wealth. For this reason some believe that this is the function of economics and end up thinking that monetary wealth must be preserved or augmented indefinitely. The cause of such disposition is the desire of living (ζῆν), not of living well (εὖ ζῆν)” (1257b). The true economy does not focus on goods or wealth, but on men: “economy must pay more attention to men than to the possession of inanimate things, and to the human virtues more than to the possession of the so-called wealth, and more to the virtues of the free and to those of slaves” (1259b).

In a typically Aristotelian method, what is true for the basic level of the family is also valid for the superior level of the polis. In fact, a function of the magistrates is *oikonomia*, the administration of the public goods: “among the functions of magistrates, some are political (πολιτικά) and affect all citizens for a specific activity, as the general over the soldiers; others are administrative (οικονομικά), as when measurers of grain are often elected; others they are subordinate (πηρετικά), and when there are resources, slaves take care of these” (1299a). Its technical and administrative character is very relevant, for example in Aristotle’s advice for preserving tyranny (1314: τῆς τυραννίδος σωτηρία): “the way is to make it more like monarchy; the tyrant must act or seem to act representing well the role of king: worry about public funds, not spending in such presents that the people is irritated, when the product of their work and effort is harshly taken to give it generously to courtesans, foreigners and artists; he must take account of revenues and expenses, as some tyrants have already done, for if he governs in such way, he will seem an administrator rather than a tyrant (οὕτω γὰρ ἂν τις διοικῶν οἰκονόμος ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ τυραννός εἶναι δόξειεν)”. This invocation to technocracy in order to gain popular support is easy to relate to contemporary history—to put just one easy and uncontroversial parallel, the self-justification of Franco’s regime in Spain from the 60’s onwards.

However, once the etymological derivation is clarified, the debate about the presence of economic concepts in Aristotle must not be merely terminological. Philology does not entail slavishness to words and blindness to concepts. I will not dwell here either on the well-discussed question about how far Aristotle

anticipated the problems of modern economy.² Rather, I will try to show the relevance of the economic mode of reasoning in Aristotle's *Politics* through the presence of three principles that are the key of his intellectual construction, in contrast to Plato and other previous thinkers, and that permeate also the modern vision of human communities, susceptible of scientific analysis focused on the specific interest of its members: empiricism vs. abstraction, measurability vs. intuition, and secularization vs. sacralisation—which due to the theme of this monographic volume of the journal *Politics and Religion* will be explored more in detail. *Politics* was of course a central matter of discussion for the Greeks from archaic times, but it is with Aristotle when it becomes purely a matter susceptible of critical and rational analysis rather than of mythical narrations, metaphysical presuppositions, or religious ideologies. We may say, therefore, in Aristotle's work we find for the first time the reduction of politics to an economic issue, in the broadest sense of the word.

The first two dichotomies are easy to understand and need scarce explanation, but it is worth recalling that they are an important novelty in the philosophical and political discourse of Aristotle. Contrary to the primacy of philosophical abstraction in Empedocles, Parmenides, or Plato, an abstraction from which the knowledge of reality was derived and structured, Aristotle departs from an empirical method of analysis that is also applied to the political community: "the question must be examined according to the method that we propose. For as in the other matters it is necessary to divide the composite to its simplest elements (for these are also minimal parts of the whole) and this, considering of which elements the city is formed, we shall see in what these things differ and where a scientific result may be obtained" (1252a). Contrary to earlier aristocrats and poets who philosophized, like his master Plato, offspring of a noble family and frustrated writer of tragedies, Aristotle is the son of the physician who analyses the body politic as the body of the animals. There is no place in his work for religious revelation, philosophical authority or metaphysical aprioristic axioms—at least in a much lesser degree than earlier philosophers. Although modern economy, from orthodox Marxism to Chicago liberalism, often falls in a quasi-religious dogmatism, we must recall that economics as a science takes pride in its grounding on empirical reality. Aristotle's was an empiricism that no doubt departed from certain axioms about man, considering it a rational and social animal, but also from a realist vision in which the dependence of man on goods is the basis of economical and hence political life: "it is quite possible that necessity teaches men the indispensable things, and once these exist, those related to well-being and abundance should find their development, and thus we must think that is also the way with political institutions (1329b)".

Another title of pride of economy as a science is measurability, the possibility

2 Cf. Borisonik Hernán, *Dinero sagrado. Política, economía y sacralidad en Aristóteles*, Miño y Dávila, Buenos Aires, 2013.

of mathematising any analysis of reality, and also in this principle we may attribute to Aristotle the primacy over any other ancient thinker. Even clearly aprioristic concepts of metaphysical foundation, like *arché*, *meson* or *telos*, are used by Aristotle as susceptible of measurement and comparison through analogy. Political power, a typically intuitive concept, becomes in the *Politics* a measurable category, susceptible of being maintained, increased or lost through specific factors, just like capital. For instance, “the cause that there are several regimes is that any city has a great number of parts: from the multitude of families, some are necessarily rich, other poor, other of middle position, and the rich are armed and the poor without arms. We see also that the cause that in the people some are peasants, some merchants, other manual workers. And among the wealthy there are differences according to their wealth and the magnitude of their goods, for example, horse-breeding... of these parts, sometimes all participate in the government, sometimes less and sometimes more. Therefore, it is evident that there will necessarily exist several regimes, different between themselves according to their form, since these parts differ according to their form” (1289b-1290a).

Let us now focus on the third characteristic of Aristotelian political economy, perhaps less well known than the other two, but more directly related to the theme of politics and religion: the secularisation of discourse. I take this to be the usage in purely rational terms of categories, concepts, and terms that before pertained to the order of the mythical and the religious and therefore were not susceptible of analysis in empirical and measurable terms. *Mutatis mutandis* and with all the necessary cautions, it is a similar step to the modern establishment of economy as the primordial tool of scientific measuring of human condition from the earlier primacy of theology and philosophy. The classical expression to denominate this process, consecrated by the title of Wilhelm Nestle’s famous work, is “from *mythos* to *logos*”. Of course Nestle’s lineal vision is very much questioned and nuanced today, but when we approach the work of Aristotle we must take into account that this historical narrative responds precisely to the self-positioning of his own school as the teleological culmination of all previous philosophy.³

In effect, it was the Lyceum itself the first promoter of the idea that the history of Greek ideas could be described as an evolution from myth to reason, which would end up in the work of Aristotle himself. And in full consistent with such proud self-imaging, the *Politics* has very few references to myth, and they always have a merely ornamental value, in order to illustrate the reasoned demonstration and the empiric proofs that have been given previously. *Mythos* is

3 Nestle Wilhelm, *Vom Mythos zum Logos. Die des griechischen Denkens Selbstentfaltung Homer bis auf die Sophistik und Sokrates*, Kröner, Stuttgart 1940. The simplistic vision of a lineal progress is rightly rejected nowadays, for example in Buxton Richard (ed.), *From Myth to Reason? Studies in the Development of Greek Thought*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999. A fresh and updated study of the early usages of both term in Fowler Robert, “Mythos and Logos” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 131, 2011, pp. 45–66.

thus a final aesthetic complement to *logos*. Thus e. g. when speaking of sexual habits of warriors he praises Homer: “the first mythologist, not without reason (ὁ μυθολογήσας πρῶτος οὐκ ἀλόγως), united Ares with Aphrodite, for all warriors seem inclined to sexual relations, be it with men, be it with women” (1269b). And when speaking of music, he says: “there is good rational ground for the mythical account that the ancients transmit about the flute. They say that Athena, after having discovered it, threw it away. And it is not wrong to affirm that the goddess was disgusted because the flute deformed her face. However, it is more probable that it was because teaching how to play the flute does not contribute in anything to the development of intelligence, and it is to Athena to whom we attribute science and art” (1341b).

Now in the practical field of politics this demythologising trend is patent in the reorientation towards secular and rational grounds of matters that were previously approached preferably through the authority of poetic initiation or religious revelation. This is not of course a step undertook solely by one man or even one generation, but a slow and general process. As Leslie Kurke, Richard Seaford, Sitta Von Reden, and Hernán Borisonik have shown with great profusion of arguments, the invention, extension, and increasing circulation of money is a prototypical instance of how exchange of goods became, from a sort of aristocratic *potlatch* fully loaded with ideological and religious connotations, an exactly measurable operation, which could be devoid of any extraeconomical considerations, and promoted a fungibility of goods that facilitated their desecularisation.⁴ However, with Aristotle this intellectual process does become accelerated in respect to previous thinkers and is fully accepted in the theoretical level of his philosophical discourse. Let us focus on three case studies, from the simplest to the most complex: the discourses around oath, justice, and salvation, three previously unambiguously religious concepts that in Aristotle reach an absolutely secular status, and are therefore susceptible of empiric analysis and measurability.

The easiest example is the oath. The oath was, in the words of the orator Lycurgus only a few years earlier than Aristotle, “the sustainment of democracy (τὸ συνέχον τὴν δημοκρατίαν ὄρκος ἐστὶ). For there are three things on which our constitution is based: the magistrate, the judge, and the private citizen. Each of them makes an oath, as it must be (πίστιν δίδωσιν, εἰκότως). For often men have been deceived, and many criminals flee and escape from the dangers of the moment, and even remain unpunished by these crimes in the rest of their lives. But the gods would not be deceived by anybody who broke their judgement (οὐτ’ ἂν ἐπιορκήσαστις λάθοι), and nobody would escape their vengeance.

4 Kurke Leslie, *Coins, Bodies, Games, and Gold: The Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece*, Princeton, 1999; Seaford Richard, *Money and the Early Greek Mind: Homer, Philosophy, Tragedy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004; Von Reden Sitta, *Money in Classical Antiquity. Key Themes in Ancient History*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge/New York, 2010; Borisonik Hernán, *Dinero sagrado. Política, economía y sacralidad en Aristóteles*, Miño y Dávila, Buenos Aires, 2013.

If the perjurer does not suffer it himself, at least his children and all his family are devastated by great disgraces" (*Contra Leocrates* 79). The oath, as this text declares as an absolutely self-evident idea, was not only one of the most archaic and venerable religious institutions, but also one with a religious aura that guaranteed general respect in the 4th century BCE⁵. By contrast, the oath is in Aristotle an antic relic which has practically no value at all. There are only two mentions in the *Politics*: first, "in the monarchy of heroic times, hereditary and legal according to the will of the subjects [...] the kings judged: some did it without making oaths, others made them (ὁμνούντες); the judgement (ὄρκος) consisted in raising the sceptre (τοῦ σκήπτρου ἐπανάτασις)" (1285b); secondly, "in oligarchies, oligarchs should defend the cause of the people, making oaths contrary to those that they now make (ὄρκους ἐναντίους ἢ νῦν ὁμνύναι). In effect, in some cities they swear "I will be hostile to the people and vote against the people whenever I can", when they should think and simulate the opposite, declaring in their oath (ὕπολαμβάνειν καὶ ὑποκρίνεσθαι τοῦναντίον, ἐπισημαινομένους ἐν τοῖς ὄρκοις) "I will not be unjust against the people". Aristotle criticizes the use of the oath as an instrument for the cohesion of oligarchs against the people, when it is actually against their interest. He even suggests making the opposite oath (perhaps with a touch of irony, although this Socratic resource is not so frequent in Aristotle). Once stripped of his sacral character, the oath is simply an instrument of internal cohesion and of persuasion of the other in the struggle for power. The context of this passage is analysis of the constitutional mutations, and the *horkos* is not even mentioned as a guarantee of the oligarchic regime, but as a mere tool of the interests of individuals or classes, which will preserve the regime or will change it according to their respective force. The two mentions of the *horkos* show Aristotle's purposeful design of historical evolution from Homeric times to his own philosophy: the oath had a sacral importance in the past, and now it is a mere instrument of the political struggle.

A second level of secularized discourse is justice, in which Aristotle's strategy is different. The traditional concept of Dike is not wholly abandoned, but its meaning is deprived of religious connotations. Already in Plato, other derivate, more abstract terms as *dikaiosyne* or to *dikaion* are preferred, so that the ancient name of the deity of justice, Zeus' assistant sitting at his right side, is demythologized and depersonalized. However, this is only the surface of a much deeper process of secularization. The foundational discourse about justice is in book I (1253ab): "Nature makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal that has speech. The voice is a sign of pain and pleasure and therefore other animals also possess it... but speech exists for declaring the convenient and the harmful, and the just and the unjust... and in the same way that the perfect man is the best of animals, when he is apart from law and justice he is the worst of all... justice,

5 Sommerstein Alan H. / Fletcher, Judith, *Horkos: The Oath in Greek Society*, Bristol Phoenix Press, Exeter 2007. Sommerstein Alan H. / Bayliss, Andrew J.. *Oath and State in Ancient Greece*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2013.

therefore, is a civic value, for justice is the order of political community, and the virtue of justice is the discernment of the just (ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη πολιτικόν· ἡ γὰρ δίκη πολιτικῆς κοινωνίας τάξις ἐστίν, ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ δικαίου κρίσις).

What Aristotle aims to show is that the sense of justice (*dikaiosyne*) is innate to man, consubstantial to his natural condition of social animal. This is a radical divergence from the traditional idea, expressed in poets like Hesiod and Solon, that Justice (Dike) is a deity that represents Zeus' action among mortals, an absolute principle that must be respected as a divine mandate. In Plato, the central concept of *dikaiosyne* is not any more a mythological entity, but as the *Republic* shows, starting as a quest for justice and ending up in Er's myth, its link to the divine is still perceptible and its absolute character unquestionable. In Aristotle, however, justice is a specifically human feature, not a divinely sent principle, and it is therefore susceptible of rational analysis, measurability, and instrumentation. Thus *dike* appears mostly in its specific meaning of "trial" and becomes a factor, among others, that fosters seditions against oligarchic regimes, and against which oligarchs must guard: "Fear is the reason for which those that have committed unjust deeds (ἡδίκηκότες), fearing that they will pay their punishment (δίκην), and those that are in the point of being victims of injustice (ἀδικεῖσθαι) and want to anticipate before suffering it (ἀδικηθῆναι). Thus in Rhodes the nobles were allied against the people because of the trials (δίκας) that had been promoted against them" (1302b20). Justice is an almost arithmetical factor in the struggle for power, and there is little difference between committing and suffering justice from this new, completely secular, point of view.

Another typical example is the traditional issue of the distribution of land, which a practical legislator like Solon had formulated in religious terms (fr. 36 W, 4-7: "I took from the great mother of the Olympian gods, black Earth, the boundary stones which were fixed on her everywhere; she was a slave and now she is free"). Now in the ideal state designed in Book 7 (in the traditional numbering), Aristotle shows that his vision of equality and justice is not only arithmetic, but oriented towards moderating the most powerful force of destabilization of general interest, namely, particular interest (*to idion*): "this equality and justice are maintained and there is agreement about the wars against the neighbours" (1330a19: τό τε γὰρ ἴσον οὕτως ἔχει καὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἀστυγείτονας πολέμους ὁμοιοτικώτερον).

Our third example of secularization is Aristotle's usage of the imagery of salvation, for which the most common Greek word is *soteria*, an absolutely key term in the *Politics*. When analysing salvation in ancient Greece we must free ourselves from modern concepts, which are permeated by ideas of a universal, objective, reified salvation predominant since Late Antiquity, derived both from Christian religion and from the Imperial ideology of *Salus publica*, inherited by the modern state. In ancient Greece the etymology of the word is illuminating: in Homer we find only the verb *saoein* derived from the adjective *saos* (safe and

sound); the Attic verb is *soizein*, used both to save from a punctual danger and to preserve (continuously). Aristotle uses *soizein* as the standard verb to speak of preservation (*soteria*) of political regimes, as in his programmatic paragraph: “we must treat the preservations of constitutions in general and each one separately. Firstly, it is clear that if we know why constitutions are destroyed we know also why they are preserved, for opposites produce opposites, and destruction is contrary to salvation” (1307b30: Περὶ δὲ σωτηρίας καὶ κοινῆ καὶ χωρὶς ἐκάστης πολιτείας ἐχόμενόν ἐστιν εἰπεῖν. πρῶτον μὲν οὖν δῆλον ὅτι, εἴπερ ἔχομεν δι’ ὧν φθειρόνται αἱ πολιτεῖαι, ἔχομεν καὶ δι’ ὧν σώζονται. τῶν γὰρ ἐναντίων τὰναντία ποιητικά, φθορὰ δὲ σωτηρία ἐναντίον).

Now the substantive *soteria* is not built on the verb, but on the agent *soter*, i. e. saviour. Neither the agent nor the abstract exist in Homer, where there are only saving actions from the gods (which do not even imply an offer of a life after death).⁶ In archaic sources *soter* firstly appears as a religious epithet reserved for gods: Poseidon, Castor, Pollux, Zeus, are *soteres*. They are not absolute transcendent saviours as later (and Christian) deities, but rescuers from specific dangers. Yet as presupposing a supernatural aid, the epithet implies a miraculous and divine element that reserved the epithet for gods—the Homeric narrative schema in which the only subject of *saoein* are the gods, is transplanted to *soter* and *soteria*, which in their first instances imply a narration whose protagonist is a god who saves against a specific danger. Later, in classical times, when mortals are considered capable of saving other mortals, the religious implications of the term are kept. For instance, Plato in the *Theaetetus* says that men can save in specific dangers due to their knowledge, but he admits that they are commonly considered gods: “in the greatest dangers, in wars or illnesses or tempests, we take as gods those in power, because we expect them to be saviours, though they differ from us just in knowledge” (170ab).⁷

All these religious connotations of the term *soteria* are absolutely rejected by Aristotle, in whose preserved work there is not even one case of the agent noun *sotêr*. From the about 50 cases of the abstract *soteria*, most are distributed in the *Politics* and in works about animals: in both it has the same sense, i. e. defence, preservation, survival.⁸ Just as in the sphere of animals it refers to their defence against natural dangers, also in the sphere of political regimes it refers to their preservation against political threats. For instance, “for all the animals it is better to be subordinated to man, for thus they achieve their security (σωτηρία)... and the same happens necessarily between men” (1254b). But there is no unique danger, neither a personalized saviour, even less a divine one, but an abstract de-

6 For an analysis of divine saving actions in Homer, and the lack of any unified concept of salvation, cf. my own Herrero de Jáuregui Miguel, “Quando un dio salva”, in C. Bonnet / G. Pironti (eds.), *Gli dèi di Omero*, Roma, Carocci, 2016, 265-298.

7 For Plato’s terminology and imagery of salvation, cf. Menn Stephen “Plato’s Soteriology?” in Adluri Vishwa (ed.) *Philosophy and Salvation in Greek Religion*, Berlin-New York, De Gruyter, 2013, pp. 191-216.

8 Micallella Dina, “Nomotheta e politico in Aristotele. Il problema della *soteria tes poleos*”, *Athenaeum* 61 (1983) 88-110.

fence against general and particular dangers. For example, “where the country is apt for horse breeding it is natural to establish a powerful oligarchy, for the security (σωτηρία) of their inhabitants depends on this force and horse breeding belongs to those that possess great fortunes” (1321a). The *soteria* implying defence and security is considered in purely human terms, empirical and measurable.

Therefore, there are neither religious nor moral connotations in the term, and all types of political constitutions are analysed under the cold polarity of *phthora* vs. *soteria*. Aristotle studies “for which causes the constitutions mutate and perish, and for which causes they are preserved and maintained” (1310a: ἐξ ὧν μὲν οὖν αἱ πολιτεῖαι μεταβάλλουσι καὶ φθείρονται, καὶ διὰ τίνων σώζονται καὶ διαμένουσιν). Therefore, to achieve *soteria* for each kind of constitution is a purely technical question: “the security (σωτηρία) of navigation is the function of all sailors, for that is the end to which each of them aspires; the same happens with citizens: even if they are unequal, their task is the security (σωτηρία) of the community, and the community is the constitution. Therefore the virtue of the citizen if necessarily in relation to the constitution” (1276b). The term is thus deprived of any implication of whether the constitution to be preserved is good and convenient or not, and offers us a pregnant formulation that seems like an anticipation of Benjamin Constant’s description of the liberty of the ancients as opposed to that of the moderns: “to live according to the constitution must not be considered slavery, but preservation” (1310a: οὐ γὰρ δεῖ οἶεσθαι δουλείαν εἶναι τὸ ζῆν πρὸς τὴν πολιτείαν, ἀλλὰ σωτηρίαν). This neutrality is due to the fact that in the *Politics* the *salvandum* is an abstract concept, the political regime or constitution (*politeia*), in contrast to the *salvanda* in earlier literature, namely an individual, a city, or some kind of human collective as the crew of a ship, the army, or the whole of Greece. Since the object to be preserved is the *politeia*, it does not depend from any deity or special men that can be thought similar to gods (like in the aforementioned passage in Plato’s *Theaetetus*), but on a series of measures that can be perfectly objectivised. There is no single way of salvation specific for each particular instance of danger as in Homer, for Aristotle is trying to find general rules; and at the same time, there is no single universal salvation as in Plato or later religions, but a plurality of ways of preservation according to the specific context. That is the reason why we find the plural form of the term, *soteriai*: “we will attempt to explain which are the ways of destruction and of preservation of constitutions (τίνες φθοραὶ καὶ τίνες σωτηρίαὶ τῶν πολιτειῶν) in general and separately, and which are natural causes that originate (πέφυκεν) these changes” (1289b).

The importance of Aristotle’s secularising enterprise can be fully appreciated not only if it is compared to previous texts, as we have been doing, but also if it is compared to the prompt return to religious basis of political theory in Hellenistic times—and even further in the Roman Empire and its later Christianisation. We may use the same instances that we have been considering as examples of

Aristotle's secularising political discourse, which was not continued in Antiquity and was only recovered in modern times. Firstly, it is hardly necessary to recall the relevance of the oath in Roman legal and political system, since *iusiurandum* stands at the very heart of several main principles of Roman law (i. e. *fides*), systematized by Fritz Schultz in his 1934 classical book. Secondly, there are numerous testimonies of the return to the idea of the divinely ordained Justice in different levels, for instance in a philosophical author like Plutarch or in Imperial political iconography⁹. And thirdly, there is an increasing importance of a religious conception of political *soteria*. Since the later semantics of this term offer the clearest contrast with its usage in the *Politics*, it is paradigmatic of Aristotle's uniqueness a brief reminder of its value in post-Aristotelian times.

As it is well known, Hellenistic sovereigns, like the Egyptian Ptolemies or the Pergamene Attalids, employed often the title *Soter*, "Saviour", as one of the mechanisms to support the cult of rulers as deities. Festivals called *Soteria* flourished from the 3rd to 1st centuries BCE in different cities, as collective celebrations of a historical or mythical salvation by a divine or divinized saviour.¹⁰ And with Romanization the Imperial ideology fostered a renewed version of the ancient cult of *Salus* under different titles (*Salus Publica*, *Salus Reipublicae*, *Salus Augusta*, etc.), which definitely sacralised the preservation of the State. Christian *salus* / *soteria* would be understood as universal salvation and the equilibrium and coexistence between temporal and spiritual *salus* would be a main factor of medieval political theory. The secular, measurable and neutralized political *soteria* of Aristotle was forgotten for many centuries. Even in Latin translations, from those of William of Moerbeke onwards, terms like *salus* or *iustitia* were inevitably re-sacralised, and given a religious connotation that they previously did not have¹¹. Only in the 16th and 17th centuries translators would painstakingly recover the secular dimension of Aristotelian political analysis, which only in our own times has been fully appreciated.¹²

9 Cf. my own study, Herrero de Jáuregui Miguel, "Dike y otras deidades justicieras como personas míticas en Plutarco" in Leão Delfim (ed.) *Nomos, Dike and Dikaosyne in Plutarch*, Coimbra 2012, 161-180.

10 On these festivals, the best known of which is that in Delphi to celebrate the defeat of Galatians due to Apollo's intervention, cf. Nachtergaele Gael, *Les Galates en Grece et les Sôtéria de Delphes*, Brussels, 1977. It is illustrative the comparison with the only appearance of the term in Aristotle's *Politics*, where it has a completely utilitarian sense completely alien to any religious or moral implication: "These procedures and similar ones are typical of the tyrant and they preserve his power, whence they do not lack any sort of evil" (1314a: ταῦτα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τυραννικὰ μὲν καὶ σωτήρια τῆς ἀρχῆς, οὐθὲν δ' ἄλλοίτι μοχθηρίας).

11 A typical example is 1315a: "the most dangerous are those that willingly destroy their life (τὸ ζῆν διαφθείραντες) if they can kill him; for those that attack moved by anger do not care about their own life, as Heraclitus said (fr. 15 DK), when he stated that it is terrible to fight anger, for it is bought to the price of life (χαλεπὸν φάσκων εἶναι θυμῷ μάχεσθαι, ψυχῆς γὰρ ὄνεισθαι). The Latin translation by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (Paris, Vascosan, 1548) translates *salus, anima*, and *redimere* which have clear Christian connotations: *hi sunt maxime formidandi ac diligentissime cavendi, qui modo necem inferant nihil sunt de salute sua solliciti. Itaque maxime caveri debent, qui se aut sibi caros affectos esse contumelia putant. Nihil enim sibi parcunt qui per iram inferuntur, auctore Heraclito: "Difficile est", inquit, "cum ira pugnare, quippe quae anima redimitur".*

12 For the reception of Aristotle's *Politics* in Western political thought, cf. Aubonnet Jean, *Aristote. Politique*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1960, pp. CXX-CXCVI. Paradoxically, the secularization of politics as an autonomous discipline starts with Machiavelli with a rejection of (the scholastic) Aristotle.

To sum up. It may be debated how far Aristotle anticipated some principles of modern economy. But it is undeniable that his work constituted a unique attempt in Antiquity of applying to political theory the same principles that define modern political economy: an empiric, measurable, and secular science, founded on *logos* rather than on *mythos*. The fact that social sciences, economy and politics among them, still often fall under the spell of myth, must not make us forget that they truly belong to (and can only be meaningful within) the realm of reason, as their most illustrious cultivator in Antiquity proudly recognized.

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ОД ПОЛИТИЧКОГ МИТА ДО ЕКОНОМСКОГ ЛОГОСА: СЕКУЛАРИЗАЦИЈА У АРИСТОТЕЛОВОЈ ПОЛИТИЦИ

Сажетак

Економска позадина Аристотелове Политике иде много даље од промишљања економије у првој књизи, или у односу на неке раштркане мисли о економским принципима који прожимају цело дело. То је метод анализе политике као једне емпиријске, мерљиве и секуларизоване дисциплине где је његов рад највише повезан са модерним друштвеним наукама, и економијом између осталих. Секуларизација ће бити илустрована кроз три студије случаја: заклетву, концепцију правде и идеју спасења. У сва три случаја, нема назнака митолошких или верских примеса, али су оне све инструменти логоса, који представља посебан подухват антике.

Кључне речи: економија, секуларизација, заклетва, спасење, правда, логос

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