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sous la direction de
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lui-même – produisent, ou au moins conditionnent, des valeurs éthiques. De même, à un niveau plus général, il n'y a pas d'explication biologique tant des choix éthiques humains que de la naissance et de l'histoire des cités. La nature s'est contentée de donner – ce qui, assurément, n'est pas peu de chose – les conditions physiques nécessaires au développement éthique des êtres humains et à la naissance et à l'histoire des cités. L'une des conséquences de cela, bien vue par Kullmann, c'est que toute naturelle qu'elle soit, la cité n'est pas une *substance* (*ousia*) naturelle, et Aristote résiste fort bien à la tentation de la « naturaliser » au point d'en faire un organisme naturel.

Ces réflexions mènent à une révision substantielle et intéressante de la description des schèmes explicatifs aristotéliciens. En politique nous voyons la nature doter les êtres humains de capacités dont ils peuvent se servir, tout en les laissant libres d'en faire l'usage qu'ils veulent, voire pas d'usage du tout. En n'insérant pas les êtres humains dans un déterminisme biologique, Aristote repousse définitivement le spectre de la sociobiologie.

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Aristotle's Arguments for his Political Anthropology and the Natural Existence of the *Polis*

MANUEL KNOLL

INTRODUCTION

Aristotle's *Politics* is not only famous for its theory of constitutions, but for its statements about human nature. According to the central claim of Aristotle's political anthropology, man is by nature a political animal (*phusei politikon zôon*)[1]. This famous statement is presented as the conclusion of the first set of arguments that Aristotle develops in the second chapter of book I of the *Politics* (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252a24–1253a3). Aristotle's statement is inextricably linked with the claim that the *polis* exists by nature (*phusei*), which he mentions in the same phrase, as part of his conclusion: "From these considerations it is evident that the *polis* is one of the things that exist by nature, and that man is by nature a political animal" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a1–3)[2]. Evidently, the claims that the *polis* exists by nature and that man is by nature a political animal are complementary.

It is important to notice that Aristotle's claims are both theses that are critical responses to philosophical views that prevailed in his time. According to Fred D. Miller, "The thesis that the *polis* is (or exists) by nature is the core of Aristotle's political naturalism. It is clearly a response to those, like the sophists, who claim that the *polis*—together with its laws and justice—exists by convention rather than by nature"[3]. Similarly, Wolfgang Kullmann pronounces that it is "important for Aristotle to fight the conception that the state occurred by convention [*nomôi*] and is based on a social contract"[4].

1. According to our sources, the term "zôon politikon" was first used in Plato's *Phaedo*. In this dialogue, Socrates claims that the souls of moderate and just men will reincarnate in a "political and gentle species (*politikon kai êmeron genos*)" like bees, wasps, and ants, or once more in the human species (82 b).
2. All my translations from the *Politics* are based on the edition by W. D. Ross (1957).
3. Miller (1995, p. 37).
4. Kullmann (1991, p. 107). In the following phrase W. Kullman states: "The biological observations offer good arguments against this thesis, which goes back to Democritus and was probably also advocated by the Sophists".

For W. Kullmann, Aristotle's thesis that the *polis* exists by nature is directed in particular against Democritus and maybe Protagoras; F.D. Miller relates it to the Sophist Kallikles and his argument in Plato's *Gorgias* (482 c–484 c)[5]. In the myth Protagoras relates in the dialogue Plato named after him, he claims that at the beginning humans lived scattered. Only after many unsuccessful attempts to form a political community they managed to do so with the help of Zeus who sent them justice and a sense of shame (*Prot.*, 322 a–d). Kallikles' argument proceeds from the opposition of nature (*phusis*) and law or custom (*nomos*), which is common to various sophists who criticize positive laws, and customs, by appealing to nature, the law of nature, and natural right. As a higher source of law, nature provides a standard to criticize man-made laws and political orders. The sophists Antiphon and Hippias of Elis understand the written laws of the *polis* and its customs as human conventions and criticize them by appealing to the natural equality of men[6]. Aristotle himself mentions in the *Politics* the opinion of the sophist Lykophron, who claimed in all likelihood that the *polis* "is merely an alliance", and that "law is only a covenant" and "a guarantor of men's just claims on one another" (*Pol.*, III, 9, 1280 b8–11)[7].

With regard to Aristotle's claim that man is by nature a political animal, Olof Gigon criticizes the many interpreters who are not aware that this is Aristotle's own highly unique thesis ("eine These höchst eigener Prägung")[8]. Far from being a common Greek view with his thesis Aristotle opposes the common weariness and aversion towards the *polis* that was generally considered a burden or a morally doubtful enterprise, from which one should stay away. According to O. Gigon, it was in particular Aristippos of Kyrene who declared that the philosopher doesn't need the *polis* and its laws, and that inner sovereignty can only be reached by detaching oneself from civil bonds and by retreating to a private life (cf. Xenophon, *Mem.*, 2, 1, 8–13)[9]. Contrary to these critics of the *polis*, Aristotle wanted to demonstrate his thesis that man cannot exist without the *polis*[10]. For Eckart Schütrumpf,

5. Kullmann (1991, p. 107, n. 43); Miller (1995, p. 37, n. 23).
6. For Hippias see Xen. *Mem.*, IV, 4, 13, and Plato, *Protagoras*, 337c–d. For Antiphon see Diels & Kranz 87 B 44A and 87 B 44B; cf. Nestle (1956, p. 208–212). For similar views of anonymous Sophists who claim that the origin of the laws – and very likely also of the political order –are conventions or covenants see Plato's *Republic*, 358e–359b.
7. For contractualist approaches in ancient legal and political philosophy see Sprute (1989).
8. Gigon (1973, p. 14). Contrary to Gigon, Hannah Arendt claims that with his theses that man is by nature a political animal and a living being who possesses *logos* "Aristotle only formulated the current opinion of the *polis* about man and the political way of life" (Arendt [1998, p. 27]).
9. In his comment on the *Politics*, O. Gigon claims in regard of Xenophon, *Mem.*, II 1, 8–13, that Aristippus looked upon the *polis* as merely a product of convention (*nomos*) and influenced with this view Epicurus and in all likelihood the cynics (Gigon [1973, p. 267]).
10. Gigon (1973, p. 14).

Aristotle's thesis that man is by nature a political animal is directed against the extreme individualism of Kallikles, who in Plato's *Gorgias* opposes common political and legal orders and claims that few outstanding individuals have the natural right to get more goods than the members of the crowd and to rule over them (482c–484c)[11].

Aristotle's claims that the *polis* exists by nature, and that man is by nature a political animal, are not self-evident. Rather, they have to be understood as theses that need to be substantiated by reasons and arguments. This becomes evident not only from the fact that they are responses to contemporary philosophical views, but from modern criticisms of Aristotle's political philosophy. In chapter 17 of *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes advances five arguments why men cannot, "as Bees, and Ants, live socially one with another"[12]. Contrary to these gregarious animals, men are egoists who compete with each other, which leads to conflict and war. For Th. Hobbes, the state does not exist by nature but is an "Artificiall man" that is created "by Art". In his *Second Discourse*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau talks about the natural man ("*l'homme naturel*") who is by no means a political animal (Préface)[13]. According to J.-J. Rousseau, the natural man ("*l'homme sauvage*") rambles all alone through the woods, in harmony with nature and himself (Première Partie). It is only through contingent accidents that the first transitory associations of men are formed and that, in the course of history, the state develops (Seconde Partie).

This paper claims that Aristotle wrote the second chapter of book I of the *Politics* (*Pol.*, I, 2) primarily in order to explain, and substantiate, his two theses that the *polis* exists by nature and that man is by nature a political animal. It argues that these two theses, though connected, have to be clearly distinguished, which is not always done in the literature[14]. The thesis that man is by nature a political animal is a central part of Aristotle's political anthropology that defines man also as a living being who possesses reason and speech (*zôon logon echon*) (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a9–10). In *Pol.*, I, 2, the definition of man as an animal who possesses *logos* serves mainly as an argument to support Aristotle's thesis that man is by nature a political

11. Schütrumpf (1991, p. 212).
12. Hobbes (1973, p. 88).
13. Rousseau (1997).
14. In a recent publication Adriel Trott wrongly claims: "It is generally accepted in the literature that *Politics* I. 2 includes four relatively distinct arguments for the naturalness of the polis" (Trott [2014, p. 42]). In accordance with the focus of her book, *Aristotle on the Nature of Community*, this claim undervalues the importance and relative independence of the thesis that man is by nature a political animal. In particular, the argument from *logos* or the linguistic argument is, as this paper will demonstrate, primarily an argument for this thesis and only in the second place for the natural existence of the polis. The argument of the natural priority of the *polis* is an argument for both theses.

animal. In order to substantiate these claims, this paper reconstructs and examines the reasons and arguments Aristotle presents to support his two theses. Where these arguments exactly begin and end and which one of the two theses they precisely substantiate is not always easy to discern. By clarifying Aristotle's arguments, a better understanding of the chapter, his two theses, and his political anthropology can be achieved. However, the text of *Pol.*, I, 2 allows for alternative reconstructions, and a review of the literature reveals a variety of different interpretations of this dense and complex chapter. Scholars disagree whether "political animal" should be interpreted in a broad biological sense or in the narrow sense that the term can only be applied to humans who live in a *polis*[15]. This paper argues that in *Pol.*, I, 2 Aristotle understands the term in a narrow sense because the whole chapter focuses on the concept of the *polis*. Another problem concerns the interpretation of Aristotle's claim that the *polis* "is by nature prior (*proteron*) to the household and to the individual" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a18–19). David Keyt and Fred D. Miller both understand this claim as an independent third thesis and theorem[16]. This interpretation is not convincing. Rather, Aristotle's claim functions as a strong argument for the thesis that man is by nature a political animal. By demonstrating that the claim of the natural priority of the *polis* is not an independent claim, this paper also shows that Aristotle's arguments in *Pol.*, I, 2, and his political anthropology, have to be regarded as a coherent unity. This result gives support to the concluding argument that Aristotle neither defends an organic theory of the *polis* nor has a "tendency towards totalitarianism"[17]. In his writings, Aristotle mentions seven times that man is a political animal[18]. Apart from the passage in *Historia Animalium*, most of these occurrences of the statement are much less significant then *Pol.*, I, 2[19]. This is why this paper focuses on the second chapter of book I of the *Politics* and its context.

Research on Aristotle's *Politics* has to face some well-known philological and philosophical problems and questions: Should we regard Aristotle's *Politics* as a unified work or do we have to understand it as a composition of an earlier and a later treatise or as a collection of political essays that were

15. Miller (1995, p. 30–31).
16. Cf. Keyt (1991). In treating the natural priority of the *polis* as an independent third thesis and theorem, Miller (1995, p. 45–56) follows Keyt.
17. Barnes 1990, p. 259.
18. *Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a1–3, 7–9; *Pol.*, III, 6, 1278b17–30; *EN*, I, 7, 1097b8–11; *EN*, VIII, 12, 1162a17–19; *EN*, IX, 9, 1169 b16–19; *EE*, VII, 10, 1242a22–27; *HA*, I, 1, 487b33–488a14.
19. For a detailed examination of the occurrences in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Eudemian Ethics* see Morel in this volume.

written in different periods of his life[20]? Do the eight books of the *Politics* contain a coherent theory or are there serious inconsistencies of doctrine or of method between the books? Can different statements in different books be combined to such a thing as *the* political philosophy of Aristotle? As this paper focuses on the arguments of one chapter of book I, one could suppose that the problems about the larger context of the chapter are irrelevant for it. However, a proper understanding of the content of chapter two and its placement at the beginning of the *Politics* allows for some conclusions about the unity of the *Politics*.

Several strong arguments can be made that the *Politics* is a unified work[21]. One of these arguments is based on the fact that at the end of the last paragraph of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle drafts a plan or program for a unified treatise on political science or political philosophy that is more or less a sketch of the content and structure of the *Politics*[22]. Not only this last paragraph, but the whole last chapter of book X is a transition to the *Politics*. At the beginning of this chapter, Aristotle concludes that though he has given in outline a sufficient account of happiness, the different virtues, friendship, and pleasure, his undertaking is not completed yet. As the aim

20. For an overview of the controversy between a genetic-analytic and a unitarian view of the *Politics* see Rowe (1991), and Schütrumpf (1980, p. 287–326). The view, that Aristotle's teaching developed over his lifetime, was popularized by Werner Jaeger's renowned book which was first published in 1923 (Jaeger, 1955). W. Jaeger distinguishes mainly between the speculative "*original Politics* (*Urpolitik*)" (books II, III, VII, and VIII), and the later empirical books IV–VI. Before W. Jaeger, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf had already considered two groups, books IV–VI, and books VII/VIII, as two independent doctrinal systems ("zwei selbständige lehrgebäude"), which were written at different times (Wilamowitz-Moellendorf [1893, p. 355]). The introduction to the *Companion to Aristotle's Politics* leaves the question of an appropriate interpretation open: "But it remains an open question whether there are any major inconsistencies of approach or of doctrine in the *Politics* and, consequently, whether there are any problems that the discovery of different chronological strata could clear up" (Keyt, Miller [1991, p. 5]).
21. Our sources do not allow us to provide final and incontestable evidence for a strong unitarian thesis, according to which the eight books of the *Politics* should be viewed as a coherent and unified work. However, many reasons and arguments can be given for a weak Unitarian thesis, according to which the eight books of the *Politics* develop a coherent and unified theory of constitutions. Many alleged inconsistencies of the *Politics* don't exist or disappear if one takes seriously Aristotle's distinction between four different tasks of constitutional theory, which he outlines at the beginning of book IV. For my arguments against the genetic-analytic approach and for both the strong and the weak Unitarian thesis see Knoll (2009); (2011a); (2011b); (2012).
22. See my arguments in Knoll (2011a, p. 128–130). Though for different reasons, Christopher Rowe arrives at the same conclusion: "It is fair to say, then, that the *Nicomachean Ethics* leads us to expect a work of more or less exactly the kind we have: one which sets "the constitution of an absolute ideal" side by side with more realistic preoccupations. And this is surely enough to show that Aristotle is serious when he himself claims at the beginning of *Politics* Book IV that both kinds of enterprise are equally part of political science" (Rowe [1991, p. 72–73]).

of practical science is to put knowledge into practice, he still has to examine the right education for becoming virtuous and thus for happiness or human flourishing (*eudaimonia*). Such an education needs to be regulated by law. Therefore, what is left to do is to examine laws and legislation (*nomothesia*) more closely. For Aristotle, legislation is a branch of the art or science of politics (*politikê*), and laws are the product of it (*EN*, X, 10, 1180b30–31, 1181a24). Before he outlines his plan or program of the *Politics*, Aristotle declares that the examination of laws and legislation, together with research on constitutions, will complete his philosophy of man (*hê peri ta anthrôpeia philosophia*), which is a philosophy of human affairs and human conduct (*EN*, X, 10, 1181b15).

The term "philosophy of man" is very close to the term "practical philosophy", because the main sub-disciplines of both sciences are ethics and political science. However, the last chapter of book X makes clear that the subject matter of the philosophy of man comprises also a science which we call today pedagogy or education. Though book VIII and the end of book VII of the *Politics* contain most of Aristotle's thoughts on this subject matter, he reflects on education in various other contexts of his practical philosophy. The core and foundation of Aristotle's philosophy of man, however, is his political anthropology, which doesn't only claim that man is by nature a political animal but defines man as a living being who possesses *logos*. Both Aristotle's ethical writings and his treatise on political science or political philosophy are based on his political anthropology[23]. Aristotle's definition of man as the living being who possesses reason and speech is also a central thesis and starting point of his political psychology (*EN*, I, 13) that is closely linked to his political anthropology. After introducing the project of a philosophy of man at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, at the beginning of the *Politics* Aristotle presents its core, his political anthropology and the arguments that support it. This substantiates the view that the *Politics* is a continuation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* which more or less carries out the plan or program that is outlined in its last chapter[24]. However, the observation that Aristotle understands the political anthropology he elaborates and substantiates in *Pol.*, I, 2 as part of his philosophy of man is not only interesting in regard to the questions of the unity of the *Politics* and of the relation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the *Politics*. The fact that Aristotle chooses the term "philosophy of man" in order to characterize the whole of his practical science also indicates how important and central his views about human nature and therefore *Pol.*, I, 2 are for his practical philosophy.

23. Already Aristotle's human function (*ergon*) argument in book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, from which he develops his core definition of human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) as virtuous activity of the soul (*psychê*), is based on his political anthropology and especially on his definition of man as a living being who possesses reason and speech (*EN*, I, 6, 1097b22–1098a20; cf. Knoll [2009, p. 224–231]).

24. This is a strong argument against W. Jaeger's view that the form of the *Politics* which has been handed down to us was certainly not drafted a priori according to a unified plan and was not composed in a single mental act of creation (Jaeger [1955, p. 276]). This is as well a strong argument against E. Schütrumpf's opinion that the *Politics* represents a new beginning ("Neueinsatz") and doesn't present itself as a continuation of the ethical writings (Schütrumpf [1991, p. 171]). Pondering the issue whether the *Politics* is a continuation of the ethical writings, E. Schütrumpf (1991) only focuses on the short first chapter of the first book of the *Politics*. This seems to be the reason why he doesn't notice the continuation from the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the *Politics*.

THE FIRST SET OF ARISTOTLE'S ARGUMENTS (*POL.*, I, 2, 1252A24–1253A3)

Before Aristotle starts the arguments for his political anthropology, he remarks in the first chapter that he will apply an analytic method. The *polis* is a composite whole and the best way to examine it is to resolve it into its simplest, and smallest, elements[25]. These elements are not primarily the individuals, but the three relations of husband and wife, master and slave, and father and children (*Pol.*, I, 1, 1252a17–23, cf. *Pol.*, I, 3, 1253b4–8). The first set of Aristotle's arguments proceeds from the two original communities of man and woman, and master and slave, to the household (*oikia*), and from there to the village (*kômê*), and finally to the *polis*. He introduces this argument with the remark that the investigation will be most successful, if it examines how its subject, the *polis*, develops from the beginning (*ex archês*) (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252a24).

Many interpreters have understood this remark to mean that the first set of Aristotle's arguments is only or mainly a genetic and historical account of the origin, and development, of the *polis*[26]. Such an account can already be found in Plato's *Republic* and the *Laws*[27]. In the *Republic*, Plato sees the origin of the *polis* in the human needs that can only be satisfied through cooperation and division of labor as the individual is not self-sufficient (*autarkês*) (*Rep.*, II, 369b–e). He presents an idealized history of the development of the *polis* in three stages, starting with the "basic" and "healthy" *polis*, in which everyone does what he can do best. Over time, the multiplication and refinement of needs leads to luxury and to an unhealthy way of

25. In book VII Aristotle understands the *polis* as a thing composed according to nature (*kata phusin sunestôta*) (*Pol.*, VII, 8, 1328a22). Cf. book *Pol.*, III, 1, 1274b38–41.

26. Cf. Schütrumpf (1991, p. 185–187). Anglo-Saxon scholars usually talk about the "genetic argument" (Keyt [1991, p. 128–131]; Trott [2014, p. 43–50]).

27. According to W. Kullmann (1991, p. 96), "There can be no doubt that Aristotle has Plato in mind, who is concerned in both the *Republic* (II.369aff.) and the *Laws* (III.676aff.) with the coming into being of the *polis*". For Aristotle's recourses to Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, and for the similarities and differences of their account of the origin, and development, of the *polis*, see also Schütrumpf (1991, p. 186, 192–193, 200–201).

life. This way of life is characteristic of the "feverish" *polis* (*Rep.*, II, 372d-e). The excessive needs and greed (*pleonexia*) lead to war and an estate of warriors. In the course of their education the "feverish" *polis* gets purified, which leads to a "cathartic" *polis* (*Rep.*, III, 399e).

At the beginning of book III of the *Laws*, Plato declares that city-states must have existed for an "enormously long time" and that "during that period, thousands upon thousands of states have come into being, while at least as many, in equally vast numbers, have been destroyed" (*Laws*, III, 676b-c)[28]. The main reasons for this were floods and plagues. After the great flood most people died and only a few survived on the mountain tops. People lived "scattered in separate households and individual families in the confusion that followed the cataclysms" (*Laws*, III, 680d)[29]. The eldest member of the family ruled as a justified king. In the later development, "several families amalgamate and form larger communities", and this is the kind of progress that leads to the origin of the *polis* (*Laws*, III, 680e ff.)[30].

Aristotle picks up some important elements of Plato's reflections on the coming into being of the *polis*. Contrary to Aristotle, Plato's idealized history of the development of the city in the *Republic* mentions neither the household or family (*oikos*) nor the village as elements of the *polis*. However, for both Plato and Aristotle, men who do not live in a *polis* cannot satisfy all material and intellectual needs and thus are not self-sufficient. For Aristotle, the *polis* is even defined through its self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b29–1253a1). In book II of the *Politics* he declares: "A household (*oikia*) is more self-sufficient than the individual, and a *polis* more than a household, and a *polis* is fully realized only when the community is large enough to be self-sufficient" (*Pol.*, II, 2, 1261b11–13). In *Pol.*, I, 2, Aristotle doesn't elaborate the economic aspect of the self-sufficiency of the *polis*, which implies cooperation and division of labor. However, by mentioning master and slave as one of the smallest elements of the *polis*, he makes clear that slave labor contributes in a substantial way to attaining self-sufficiency[31]. Without the *polis*, as an individual, man cannot lead a fully self-sufficient life. Because the individual is a part in relation to a whole, it needs the *polis* (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a25–27). This is, as will be shown below, not only an economic reason why man is by its nature a political animal.

28. Saunders' translation (1997).
29. Saunders (1997).
30. W. Kullmann remarks: "Behind Plato's description, especially in the *Republic*, is surely Democritus's theory of the origin of culture, which we can find in another version in the Hippocratean work *On Ancient Medicine*" (1991, p. 97; cf. p. 100).
31. The natural end (*telos*) of the union of master and slave is their preservation or survival (*sôtêria*) (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252a30–34).

For Aristotle's account of the origin and development of the *polis*, Plato's *Laws* are even more important than the *Republic*. Like Plato in the *Laws*, he refers to Homer's description of the Cyclopes and declares that "they lived dispersedly, which was the way in which people used to live in ancient times" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b23–24). "This is clearly", as W. Kullmann rightly comments, "an allusion to an historical original state of man"[32]. Obviously, the first set of Aristotle's arguments in chapter two includes at least some assumptions about the historical development of the *polis*. For Aristotle, like Plato in the *Laws*, in ancient times people lived not as isolated individuals, but "scattered in separate households and individual families". For Aristotle, the household is the oldest natural community (*koinonia kata phusin*) (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b13). He even quotes Hesiod, who lived around 700 BC, as a historical source to confirm: "First house, and wife, and an ox for the plough" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b11–12). In this quote Hesiod talks about a household of a poor family of peasants that is composed mainly of husband and wife, not of master and slave. Poor farmers, who play an important role in Hesiod's poetry, couldn't afford slaves. The ox had to substitute for the slave. Like Plato in the *Laws*, for Aristotle, the development proceeds from several households to the village. The children and grandchildren of one family found their own households. This is the most natural (*kata phusin*) form of how the village comes into being. Like in the house, in the village the eldest member of one family rules as a king. Therefore, kingship is the primordial political constitution or form of ruling (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b15–22).

The genetic and historical remarks on the origin, and development, of the *polis* only play a subordinate role in the first part of chapter two[33]. They only supplement the arguments Aristotle presents in order to substantiate his two theses that the *polis* exists by nature and that man is by nature a political animal. The underlying premise of the whole chapter, as will be shown below, is Aristotle's teleological understanding of nature (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b31–1253a1; cf. *Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a9). According to this understanding, nature is a hierarchical order of ends, in which every living being, every natural community of living beings, and every part of a living being has a given end (*telos*) and a specific function (*ergon*).

The first set of Aristotle's arguments is based on his analytic method. However, instead of applying this method and presenting the different

32. Kullmann (1991, p. 97).
33. In line with this, W. L. Newman observes: If "Aristotle deals with the question of the origin of the state, he deals with it only incidentally, and in course of proving that the state exists by nature" (Newman [1887a, p. 36]). W. Kullmann arrives at a similar conclusion when he states of Aristotle's argument that "the theme of the development enters into the discussion only in a subsidiary fashion. It is the basic elements of the *polis* that are here brought into focus" (Kullmann 1991, p. 100). Cf. Ottmann (2001, p. 175).

analytical steps in taking apart the *polis* into its smallest elements, he presupposes the analysis as already finished and takes its results for granted. He starts off from the two original communities of man and woman, and master and slave, which are the basic elements of the household. From the family, Aristotle proceeds to the village, which consists of several households. From the village he progresses to the *polis*, which is composed of several villages. What Aristotle presents in the first part of chapter two is not the analysis of the *polis*, but its synthesis out of its different elements. Th. Hobbes has called the latter method the synthetic or compositive method which is a counterpart of the analytic or resolutive method. In order to understand how a clock works, it is necessary to first take it apart, and then construct it again out of its parts[34]. Aristotle combines the composition of the *polis* out of its elements with the presentation of aspects of its historical development.

At the beginning of chapter two, Aristotle's declares that the investigation has to examine how the subject, the *polis*, develops from the beginning (*ex archês*) (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252a24). This remark does not need to be understood only in a genetic and historical sense. It can also have the analytic-synthetic meaning that the research examines how the *polis* begins, or originates, from the smallest elements out of which it is composed[35]. The first two elements Aristotle mentions are the female and the male, and master and slave. With regard to these two original communities he declares that there "must be a union of those who cannot exist without one another" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252a26–27). Men cannot exist without each other; this is why they unite in the first forms of natural communities. This statement can be understood as Aristotle's first thesis that makes it plausible that man is by nature a political animal.

Aristotle substantiates his first thesis with the existence of two original communities that are both defined through their natural ends and both arise from necessity (*anagkê*) (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252a26). The natural end (*telos*) of the union of man and woman is the reproduction of the species. This original community exists by nature (*phusei*) in a biological sense, because it doesn't come into being by choice, but from man's "natural desire to leave behind an image of himself", which man has in common with other animals and plants (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252a28–30, cf. 1253a30–31). The natural end (*telos*) of

34. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, chap. 6; cf. Höffe (2001, p. 22).
35. Because he understands the examination of the development of the *polis* from the beginning (*ex archês*) merely in a genetic and historical sense, and because he seems to be not aware that the analytic and synthetic method often go together, E. Schütrumpf is mistaken in thinking that in chapter 2 Aristotle abandons the analytic method, which he had proclaimed in chapter 1: "Das in Kap. 1 in Aussicht gestellte analytische Verfahren, den Staat in die kleinsten Einheiten zu zerlegen, wird im 2. Kap. nicht befolgt, stattdessen kündigt Ar. ein neues methodisches Verfahren an: die Dinge in ihrer Entstehung und Entwicklung zu betrachten" (Schütrumpf [1991, p. 185, cf. p. 185–187]).

the union of master and slave is their preservation or survival (*sôtêria*) as individuals, which can be interpreted as a natural instinct[36]. As there are natural (*phusei*) rulers and natural subjects, they have to unite into a community which is beneficial (*sumpheron*) for both of them. Aristotle's criterion for natural rulers is the capacity to "foresee by the exercise of mind", and for natural subjects to carry out these things with their body (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252a30–34). With these brief remarks, Aristotle anticipates his doctrine of slaves by nature, which is the main topic of book I[37]. The slaves by nature have the function (*ergon*) of doing the necessary work in the city. After introducing these two forms of natural communities, Aristotle argues that they are two distinct communities. The female and the slave are by nature (*phusei*) distinct (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252a34–1253b1). This is already a first illustration of Aristotle's doctrine that there are different forms of ruling, which he had already mentioned in chap. 1 (*Pol.*, I, 1, 1252a7–16)[38].

In the first paragraphs of chapter two, the third basic element of the household or family, the relation of father and children, is only mentioned through man's "natural desire to leave behind an image of himself". The household or family is the "union according to nature (*koinonia kata phusin*) for the satisfaction of daily needs" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b12–14). The basic household is composed out of the relations of husband and wife and of master and slave. The human slave can only be afforded by families that are economically well off. In poor families, the ox had to substitute for the slave as a slavish element is a natural and necessary part of a family. For Aristotle, there is certainly no genetic step from the relation of husband and wife to the household, because husband and wife are simply the essential parts of the house.

The next step in the synthesis of natural communities towards the *polis* is the village (*kômê*), as a union of several families. The end (*telos*) of the village is "something more than the satisfaction of daily needs" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b15–16)[39]. Aristotle doesn't make clear what he exactly means by this and where he draws the line between a village and a *polis*. Finally,

> the *polis* is a perfect community (*koinonia teleios*) formed from the union of several villages. It has attained the limit of virtually complete self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*). The *polis* comes into existence for the sake of mere life

36. Cf. Keyt (1991, p. 128).
37. For my interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine of slaves by nature see Knoll (2009, p. 149–156).
38. In the household, a Greek man rules differently as a husband over his wife, than as a master over the slaves. This doctrine, which Aristotle elaborates to some extent in book I of the *Politics*, is a criticism of Plato's doctrine of rulership (cf. Plato, *Politikos*, 258e–259d).
39. For an attempt at a detailed reconstruction of Aristotle's argument that the village exists by nature see Keyt (1991, p. 129).

(*zên*), but it exists for the good life (*eu zên*). Hence, every *polis* exists by nature (*phusei estin*) because the first forms of community exist by nature. The *polis* is the end (*telos*) of these communities, and the nature (*phusis*) of a thing is its end (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b27–32).

Aristotle claims that the *polis* is a perfect community. He substantiates this thesis with the arguments that only the *polis* is self-sufficient and enables a good and perfect life[40]. The self-sufficiency of the *polis* means that it can satisfy all human needs and provide virtually all human goods[41]. Aristotle's concept of self-sufficiency should not be understood merely in an economic sense. One end (*telos*) of the *polis* is certainly the survival or subsistence of its citizens, which Aristotle refers to as "mere life (*zên*)" (cf. Plato, *Rep.*, II, 369 d). However, this is not the specific end of the *polis* in itself, but of all the households out of which it is composed. The natural end of the *polis* is the good life (*eu zên*) or human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) of its citizens. Because the *polis* is able to realize this end and to satisfy all material and intellectual needs, it is the perfect community.

In the paragraph quoted above, Aristotle gives the two main arguments for his thesis that the *polis* exists by nature, and not by convention. After he demonstrated, step by step, that all forms of community out of which the *polis* is composed exist by nature, he concludes that the *polis* has to exist by nature. The *polis* exists by nature because all of its elements, especially the original communities of man and woman, and master and slave, exist by nature (*phusei*)[42]. The empirical fact that man cannot exist alone, and unites in natural communities, partly supports Aristotle's thesis that man is by nature a political animal, which again substantiates his thesis that the *polis* exists by nature. In line with his argument, in the *Physics* Aristotle chooses living organisms, like animals and plants, as main examples to illustrate the term "by nature (*phusei*)" (*Physics*, II, 1, 192b8–10). Contrary to artifacts, living organisms have the beginning (*archê*) of their changes and their existing state (*stasis*) in themselves and not in a craftsman's mind. They have an internal drive (*hormê*) to move in space, to grow or to fade away, and

40. Cf. another link of a perfect life to a self-sufficient life (*Pol.*, III, 9, 1280b31–35). Cf. another link of the *polis* to self-sufficiency (*Pol.*, VII, 4, 1326b2–24).
41. Cf. Aristotle's classification of goods as (1) external, (2) of the body, (3) of the soul (*psychê*) (*EN*, I, 8, 1098b12 ff.). In his argument, Aristotle presupposes that it is understood that self-sufficiency is a central goal and definition of the *polis* (cf. Plato, *Rep.*, II, 369 b). Cf. the concept of self-sufficiency (Schütrumpf [1991, p. 203–205]).
42. Cf. Schütrumpf (1991, p. 206). Against Aristotle's argument it can be objected that it commits the fallacy of composition. However, for D. Keyt, the argument tacitly relies on the principle of the transitivity of naturalness. For an argument that the principle of transitivity of naturalness "is false within the context of Aristotle's own philosophy", and a convincing counter-argument see Keyt (1991, p. 130–131).

to change their qualities (*Physics*, II, 1, 192b13–18). Living organisms like humans, and natural bodies like the *polis*, persist and change from inner beginnings and internal causes[43]. These inner beginnings and internal causes are exactly what Aristotle understands as nature (*phusis*). Thus in the *Physics* he defines nature as "a principle or cause of being moved and of being at rest" (*Physics*, II, 1, 192b21–22, cf. *Physics*, II, 9, 200b12–13).

Aristotle's first argument for the natural existence of the *polis* sheds some light on the controversial question of whether Aristotle perceives "a higher natural being in the *polis*" or attributes to it "any kind of substantial character"[44]. Though Aristotle implies that the *polis* has a nature (*phusis*) of its own (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b31–32), and though he conceives of the individual as a part in relation to a whole, he seems to presuppose that essentially the *polis* is not something else, or more, than its citizens. In line with this, in book III, Aristotle mentions a controversy on what the *polis* is, and declares that the *polis* consists of a certain number of citizens that is enough for a self-sufficient life (*Pol.*, III, 1, 1274b38–41, 1275b20–21). In book II, he emphasizes against Plato's ideal of the greatest possible unity of the *polis* that the *polis* is in its nature (*tên phusis*) a multitude (*Pol.*, II, 2, 1261a18; cf. *Rep.*, V, 462a–b). In accordance with the *nomos* (law, custom) of his time, he only attributes citizenship to males, which also explains why the three communities which make up the family, or household, are all centered on the man.

Aristotle claims that the realized *polis* is the end (*telos*) of the original forms of natural communities. This thesis is the core of his teleological argument for the natural existence of the *polis*, which presupposes his teleological understanding of nature. Aristotle's thesis assumes that the *polis* already inheres in the more basic communities, as an end. Indeed, he declares that by nature (*phusei*) "there is an impulse or instinct (*hormê*) in all men" towards a *polis* (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a29–30). In the terminology of his philosophy of nature, the *polis* inheres as a natural end in all men as a potentiality (*dunamis*). Just as a seed has the inner impulse to grow and become a tree, through individual

43. Aristotle understands the *polis* as a thing composed according to nature (*kata phusin sunestôta*) (*Pol.*, VII, 8, 1328a22). Cf. book *Pol.*, III, 1, 1274b38–41. In book V of the *Politics* Aristotle examines the inner beginnings and internal causes in a *polis* which lead to uprising (*stasis*) and to a change (*metabolê*) of its constitution.
44. Kullmann (1991, p. 109). After a longer discussion of this question W. Kullmann concludes: "Any kind of substantial interpretation of the political is far from Aristotle's mind" (1991, p. 114). Pierre Pellegrin, in this volume, agrees with Kullmann's conclusion and says "que toute naturelle qu'elle soit, la cité n'est pas une *substance* (*ousia*) naturelle, et Aristote résiste fort bien à la tentation de la "naturaliser" au point d'en faire un organisme naturel" (p. 30). Bernard Yack, who quotes some of the older literature on this issue, also defends the opinion that Aristotle does not think "of the polis as a substance with its own nature" (Yack, 1993, p. 92). On the contrary, A. M. Trott claims that, for Aristotle, the polis has "a nature of its own" (Trott [2014, p. 51]).

men the *polis* as a whole attains an impulse towards its realization (*energeia*). Though the inner beginnings and internal causes of the development of the *polis* lie in individual men, human beings are fundamentally unequal for Aristotle[45]. Neither is the impulse or instinct (*hormê*) to found a *polis* equally strong in all men, nor do they all have the ability for legislation. Aristotle praises the first lawgiver and founder of a new *polis* as the cause of the greatest goods (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a30–31)[46]. Through his natural instinct and through his political ability the *polis* comes to be by nature[47]. Just as a seed needs time to turn into a tree, Aristotle understands the realization of the *polis*, like Plato in the *Nomoi*, as a historical development from the family to the village to the *polis*. Aristotle's genetic, and historical, account of the development of the *polis* supports, and illustrates, his teleological argument for the natural existence of the *polis*. According to its underlying teleological concept, Aristotle understands nature primarily as the form (*eidos*, *morphê*) of a thing (*Physics*, II, 1, 193b6–7). The form has the source or beginning of its motion in itself and thus is both an efficient cause and a final cause. As an inner disposition and end of human beings the *polis* has an inner drive towards its complete realization. The *polis* doesn't have this drive as a separate form or essence (*ousia*), but through individual men. The perfect development of man is inextricably linked to the existence of the *polis*. Therefore, it is the human essence or form, the *logos*, which drives the development of the *polis* and moves it to its perfection[48]. When a thing

45. Cf. Knoll (2009, p. 135–140).
46. Nature and the natural impulse or instinct towards a political community, which it gives to man, can be interpreted as its first order efficient cause, while the lawgiver and founder can be understood as its second order efficient cause. It is possible that Aristotle thinks of men like the fabulous Lykurgos, Minos or Rhadamanthys.
47. Aristotle doesn't explicitly claim that the *polis* comes to be by nature (*phusei gignetai*), but his thesis that it exists by nature and his account of its development imply this claim. Aristotle compares a lawgiver and founder of a new *polis* with a craftsman. While the latter needs the right material, the former needs mainly the right people and the right territory for his enterprise (*Pol.*, VII, 4, 1326b39–1327a8). In the *Physics*, Aristotle contrasts things that come to be by nature with things that come to be by art (*technê*) (II, 1, 192b8 ff.). For D. Keyt and F.D. Miller, this leads to an inconsistency of Aristotle's position which F.D. Miller calls the "nature–craft dilemma" (Miller [1995, p. 38], Keyt [1991, p. 119–120, 140]). However, as the fundamental drive of the lawgiver is a natural one, and as he is himself by nature, the conclusion that the *polis* comes to be by nature is justified. In the case of a *polis* it is not a man who generates a man, but a man who generates an association and order among men. This order (*taxis*) or form (*eidos*) is the constitution of the *polis* (*Pol.*, III, 1, 1275 a36–38; 3, 1276b1–4).
48. Aristotle addresses the *logos* later in *Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a7–18. Cf. p. 48-50 of this paper. The interpretation that in the end, for Aristotle, the *logos* is the driving force of the development of the *polis* is inspired by Hegel. The German philosopher takes up Aristotle's teleology and applies it to his understanding of history, according to which reason moves history in a progressive way (Hegel [1980]). However, Aristotle's concept of *logos* and Hegel's concept of reason are not identical.

has realized its final end or when it is fully developed, it has fully realized its potentiality or its nature. It has arrived at its natural state, which is not only its final but its best state. The *polis* is natural because through its self-sufficiency it satisfies all human needs and allows man to fully realize his natural potentiality, especially his *logos*, in a perfect life[49]. Therefore, the *polis* and its self-sufficiency is the natural end of the original communities, which realizes itself in a historical process (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b32–1253a1; *Physics*, II, 1–2, 193b3–194a33)[50].

THE SECOND SET OF ARISTOTLE'S ARGUMENTS (*POL.*, I, 2, 1253A3–39)

After finishing the first set of his arguments, Aristotle presents as the conclusion not only once more his claim that the *polis* exists by nature, but introduces his famous statement that man is by nature a political ànimal (*phusei politikon zôon*): "From these considerations it is evident that the *polis* is one of the things that exist by nature, and that man is by nature a political animal" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a1–3). This is to some extent surprising, because the arguments of the first part of chapter two rather substantiated the claim that the *polis* exists by nature[51]. Aristotle's arguments certainly made his statement about man plausible, but they neither substantiated it

49. Cf. Aristotle's human function (*ergon*) argument (*EN*, I, 6, 1097b22–1098a20). In his comment on *Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b34–1253a1, in which Aristotle states that "the final cause (*eneka*) and end of a thing is the best, and self-sufficiency is the end and the best", W. L. Newman declares that "the state brings that which is best; hence it exists by nature, for nature brings the best". He continues: "A new proof is here adduced of the naturalness of the State, drawn not from the fact that it is the completion of natural societies like the household and village, but from the fact that its end is the best, the end which Nature pursues" (Newman [1887b, p. 119–120]).
50. For a more detailed discussion of the meaning of Aristotle's thesis that the *polis* exists by nature see Miller (1995, p. 37–45). F.D. Miller distinguishes between an "internal-cause interpretation" according to which "'exists by nature' has the same sense in *Pol.*, I, 2, as in *Physics*, II, 1", and the traditional teleological interpretation, which he holds to be the correct one (Miller [1995, p. 37, 41, n. 37]). According to the teleological interpretation, "a thing exists by nature if, and only if, it has as its function the promotion of an organism's natural ends and it results, in whole or in part, from the organism's natural capacities and impulses. The *polis* satisfies both of these conditions for natural existence" (Miller [1995, p. 40–41]). The interpretation given above shows that these interpretations should be viewed less as alternative but more as complementary interpretations.
51. E. Schütrumpf has good reasons to ask: "Wieso macht die vorausgegangene Darstellung der Entwicklung der Gemeinschaft zum Staat klar, daß der Mensch von Natur ein zoon politikon ist?" (1991, p. 207–208). Other interpreters, like Jean-Louis Labarrière (2004, p. 104, 115), assume that the first part of Aristotle's arguments has sufficiently proved that man is by nature a political animal and that the following argument about the difference of man between other political animals has a different goal. This chapter will show that Aristotle gives the most important arguments for man being by nature a political animal only after he laid out his arguments for the natural existence of the *polis*.

sufficiently, nor made clear what he exactly means by it. Later in the chapter, Aristotle declares that by nature (*phusei*) "there is an impulse or instinct (*hormê*) in all men" towards a *polis* (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a29–30). If one takes this as one central meaning of the statement that man is by nature a political animal, than Aristotle's conclusion could refer to this instinct as the driving force of the development of the *polis*. Or maybe Aristotle included his statement about man in his conclusion, because he thinks that it can be derived from the thesis that the *polis* exists by nature. One argument could maybe read: If the *polis* exists by nature, and if the *polis* is essentially nothing other, or more, than its members or citizens, than man is by nature a political animal. Whatever the explanation for Aristotle's conclusion may be, he gives the most important arguments for this thesis only in the second part of *Pol.*, I, 2.

The first argument for the thesis that man is by nature a political animal is a rather feeble argument from the negative: "who by nature and not by mere accident is without a *polis* (*ho apolis dia phusin*), is either below or above humanity" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a3–4). Aristotle presents a variation of this argument a few paragraphs later: "But who is incapable to live in a community, or who has no need to do so because he is self-sufficient, is no part of a *polis*, so he must be either a beast or a god" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a27–29). As man is by nature neither a god, nor a beast or a bad creature, he must be by nature a political animal. It is remarkable that after both variations of his arguments, Aristotle characterizes the bad man, or the beast, in detail as lawless, war-loving, unholy, and the most savage of all animals etc. In these arguments the opposite of "political" seems to be not "social" or "communal", but "solitary" or "asocial".

The second argument begins with a frequently discussed statement that is usually translated like this: "It is evident that man is more of (*mallon*) a political animal than bees or any gregarious animal" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a7–9). Aristotle's statement is puzzling and definitely not self-evident. The etymologically related terms "*polis*" and "political" clearly refer to a specifically human form of community and not just to any form of association. Aristotle transfers these terms into the world of animals and thereby compares a beehive and an ant hill with a *polis*. Therefore, the question: what does he exactly mean by "mallon", obviously arises. Does it refer to a difference in quantity or in quality, to a difference in degree or in nature? Jean-Louis Labarrière, who examines all conceivable meanings of the comparative adverb "mallon", concludes that there are two possible translations or interpretations. If one understands "mallon" in a quantitative sense, it means that man is in "a higher degree" or "more of" a political animal than other gregarious animals. If one understands "mallon" in a qualitative sense, it

means that man is "rather" a political animal than other gregarious animals, or that only man can appropriately be called "political"[52].

In the literature, there are two lines of interpretation of the meaning of Aristotle's statement that man is by nature a political animal. Though not all scholars seem to be aware of the two meanings of "mallon", these two lines correspond to the two possible translations[53]. One line of interpretation favors a wider understanding that is based on a paragraph of *Historia Animalium*, in which "political animal" is used as a biological description. According to this line of interpretation, in the *Politics* Aristotle doesn't revoke his biological understanding of the term "political", but supplements it with the comparative term "*mallon*" in the sense of "more" or "in a higher degree"[54]. In *Historia Animalium*, Aristotle distinguishes animals that live gregariously from animals that live solitarily. Of the gregarious animals, some live politically and some are scattered. Animals that live politically "are those that have a function or activity in common (*koinon ergon*), which not all the gregarious animals do. Of this sort are man, bee, wasp, ant, and crane" (*HA*, I, 1, 488a7–10)[55]. In regard to the wider biological understanding of "political animal", Richard Mulgan concludes that Aristotle had the desire "to accommodate his political theory to his general biological principles"[56].

The other line of interpretation favors a narrower understanding of "political animal"[57]. It links the term "political" to the "*polis*" as a human institution, which excludes all other social entities. Therefore, only man is a

52. Labarrière (2004, p. 101, 105, 111 n. 1). The observation that there are two possible translations of "mallon" and of two possible interpretations of Aristotle's statement has already been made by Mulgan (1974, p. 443). Most English and German translators of the *Politics* like Barker, Rackham, and Jowett, or like Gigon and Susemihl, understand and translate "mallon" in a quantitative sense. An exception is E. Schütrumpf, who translates "mallon" with "eher". Cf. Schütrumpf (1991, p. 212).

53. Keyt (1991, p. 123), Kullmann (1991, p. 99, 101), Miller (1995, p. 31), Trott (2014, p. 85) just translate "mallon" with "more of" or with "to a greater degree". Yack (1993, p. 64) translates it with "much more" without explaining what this is supposed to mean. Miller is begging the question when he claims "that Aristotle evidently uses 'political animal' in the broader, biological sense at *Pol.*, I, 2 1253 a 29–30" (1995, p. 31).

54. Cooper (1990, p. 224–225, n. 6), Höffe (2001, p. 24), Kullmann (1991, p. 99–101), Labarrière (2004, p. 105, n. 2, p. 120), Miller (1995, p. 31–32). According to W. Kullmann, "Unfortunately nothing certain can be said about the chronological relation between the introduction to the *HA* and the *Politics* and its parts" (1991, p. 106, n. 40). However, the fact that in the *Politics* Aristotle refers to *Historia Animalium* is an indication that this work has been written earlier.

55. Cf. the comments on the text of this paragraph of *Historia Animalium* by Mulgan (1974, p. 438–439), and Cooper (1990, p. 224–224, n. 5).

56. Mulgan (1974, p. 445). Kullmann (1991, p. 106, n. 41) takes Mulgan's interpretation to be a "convincing result".

57. Arendt (1998, p. 27), Bodéüs (1985), Keyt (1991, p. 123–124), Schütrumpf (1991, p. 212–217).

political animal, because only man lives in a *polis*[58]. According to this line of interpretation, man is "rather" a political animal than other gregarious animals as only man can appropriately be called "political". Therefore, when Aristotle speaks in *Historia Animalium*, I, 1 of animals such as bees or ants as political animals he must be "speaking loosely" or must be using the term "political" in a metaphorical sense. Evidently, this line of interpretation leads to a contradiction between Aristotle's statements in *Pol.*, I, 2 and in *Historia Animalium*, I, 1.

Before Aristotle explains his claim that "man is *mallon* a political animal than bees or any gregarious animal" he refers to his teleological understanding of nature: "Nature, as we claim, makes nothing in vain" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a9). In the next clause, he gives his second famous statement about human nature: "Man is the only animal (*zôon*) who possesses speech and reason (*logos*)" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a9–10). In the following paragraph, he distinguishes *logos* (speech/reason) from voice (*phonê*). While nature gives voice to all animals that breathe, it gives the gift of *logos* only to man (*HA*, IV, 9, 535a27–b3; cf. *DA*, II, 8, 420b5–412a7). The natural end of voice is to signify the sensations of pleasure and pain that all animals perceive. Through reason, all men have a sense (*aisthêsin echein*) for the advantageous and harmful (*sympheron kai to blaberon*), the good and the bad (*agathon kai to kakon*), and the just and the unjust (*dikaion kai to adikon*)[59]. To give man such a sense, and such perceptions, is a natural end of reason. The natural end of speech is to give man the capability to communicate, and explain (*deloun*), their perceptions about these phenomena to others. The community (*koinonia*) in these perceptions, and concepts, creates (*poiein*) the household and the *polis* (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a10–18). With this last statement Aristotle concludes his explanation and argument with regard to why "man is *mallon* a political animal than bees or any gregarious animal".

In almost all translations of this paragraph "logos" is translated only with "speech", and not as well with "reason". However, it is through "logos" in the meaning of "reason" that man has a sense (*aisthêsin echein*) for the advantageous, good, and just. Language is not enough to allow for such perceptions that precede their communication to others. The term "aisthesis" should be translated in this context not with "sensation" but with "sense" or "cognition". For Aristotle, spoken words are only symbols (*sumbola*) of affections in the mind or the soul (*en tê psychê pathêmaton*), which are likenesses or

58. Though J.P. Cooper favors the wider biological understanding of "political animal", he links the meaning of "political" to the *polis* (Cooper [1990, p. 221]).
59. One reason why, for Rawls, all men are equal as moral persons is because they all possess a "sense of justice". With regard to this term, John Rawls refers to it at the beginning of § 39 of his *Theory of Justice* to *Pol.*, I, 2 (Rawls [1971, p. 19, 243, 505]).

images (*homoiomata*) of the things (*pragmata*) that cause these affections. As spoken words are different in every language, they are conventional symbols. As they are only means in order to express the cognitions and thoughts of the mind, which are the same for all humans, they cannot give man a sense for the advantageous, good, and just (cf. Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 16a3–8; cf. *On Soul*, III, 3–8, 427a17–432a14)[60].

According to the understanding of "political animal" in *Historia Animalium*, the statement that man is a political animal is not a definition in the strict sense, because "living or being political (*politikon*)" is not the specific difference that distinguishes man from all other animals. A definition is composed out of the genus and the last specific difference. Therefore, only the statement that man is a living being or an animal that has *logos* (*zôon logon echon*) is a definition of man in the strict sense[61]. Depending on whether one favors a narrow or a wider understanding of "political animal" in *Pol.*, I, 2, by "living or being political (*politikon*)" Aristotle presents a second strict definition of man or not in the chapter. However, the relation of these two definitions provides Aristotle with another argument for his thesis that man is by nature a political animal. Since man has speech, it can be derived that he is a political animal. Speech is not the capacity of an isolated individual and a private gift. It refers to the community with others, and to communication about questions of good and bad, just and unjust etc[62]. Similarly, from the fact that man has reason it is possible to derive that he needs the *polis* in order to develop the rational potentials of his psyche through education and learning. Through its self-sufficiency, the *polis* makes it possible for man to develop his ethical and intellectual virtues and to realize them as a citizen in a political life, or as a scientist or philosopher in a theoretical life. If man is able to do this, he realizes his function and specific activity (*ergon*), the good and happy life, which is the natural end of the *polis* (cf. Aristotle's human function (*ergon*) argument in *EN*, I, 6, 1097b22–1098a20).

60. Cf. Labarrière (2004, p. 103, n. 1) for a translation of "aisthesis" with "sensation" and a critique of Hegel's translation of "logos" with "reason (*Vernunft*)".
61. Cf. Kullmann (1991, p. 101).
62. From the fact that man has speech it can be derived not only that he is a political animal, but also that he is a household animal. In the final clause of the argument that explains why man is *mallon* a political animal than other gregarious animals, Aristotle links the *polis* to the household: "The community in these things creates the household and the *polis*" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a18). Aristotle's combination of these two human communities seems to be the consequence of the contrast between men and animals which is characteristic for this argument. And of course, in the household considerations of what is advantageous, good, and just, also play an important role. However, as justice in the full sense of the concept has to do with trade, laws, law courts, and the distribution of political offices, it is ultimately linked to the *polis* (*EN*, V): "Justice is something political (*politikon*)" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a37). The household, as Aristotle shows, is not the final step of human development.

For Aristotle, through the natural gift of *logos*, man is placed above the other animals in the natural hierarchy of living beings. The same is true for the political community man creates. The other gregarious animals have no sense for what is advantageous, just and good. They cannot communicate about their common good. Both capabilities are essential for the creation and permanence of the *polis*. The *polis* is not only defined through its self-sufficiency, but through the good life. Such a life presupposes cooperation for the common good (*koinê sumpheron*) and the realization of justice in the constitution and the laws of the *polis*[63]. In the last two phrases of chapter two, Aristotle declares: "Justice is something political (*politikon*); for justice, which is the verdict (*krisis*) on what is just, is the order of the political community" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a37–39). Through cooperation for the common good in a well-ordered political community, and through the development, and exercise, of the ethical and intellectual virtues, human beings realize the natural end of the *polis*, the good and happy life. This end, and common activity or function (*koinon ergon*), of human beings has a much higher rank than the common end, and function, of the other animals. The realization of this end, and common activity, presupposes the *polis* as a specifically human institution. This is why "man is rather (*mallon*) a political animal than bees or any gregarious animal". The comparative term "rather (*mallon*)" clearly refers to a difference in quality or in nature not in quantity or in degree. To be political and to live in a *polis* is a proper quality of man[64].

According to Aristotle's account in *Pol.*, I, 2, man is the only political animal. The term "political animal" doesn't just mean "social or communal animal". It refers to the *polis* in the sense of the exclusively Greek city-state and expresses that man is a "*polis*-animal" or that man needs the *polis* or belongs to it. A strong argument for this interpretation can be made from the fact that the whole of chapter two is focused on the concept of the *polis*, which it analyses. In the chapter, Aristotle aims at an adequate understanding of the *polis* as the specifically human form of community. From the first set of his arguments Aristotle concludes not only that the *polis* is by

63. Cf. Knoll (2009, chap. I, IV, and VIII).
64. In his innovative interpretation Refik Güremen claims that the comparative term "mallon" must be understood in a zoological sense and analyzed accordingly (Güremen, p. 4). He understands "mallon" quantitatively as a difference of the more and less. Some birds have longer legs, some have shorter. With regard to the first part of chapter 2, Güremen's point is that "man is more political because he is an animal of multiple communities, differing in form" (*Ibid.*, p. 6). This interpretation would be convincing if Aristotle had claimed in *Pol.*, I, 2 that man is by nature a social animal (*phusei zoon koinônikon*) as he does in *EE*, VII, 10, 1242a19–b1. But the communities of the house or family and the village are not political communities. This is why the meaning of the comparative term "mallon" cannot be understood with regard to these communities.

nature, but that man is by nature a political animal. In this conclusion, like in most usages of the term in his writings, "political animal" clearly refers to the *polis* formed by humans[65]. In *Pol.*, I, 2, Aristotle not only examines how the *polis* is composed, how it originates, and how it develops, but gives several definitions of the *polis*. In the context of the first set of his arguments Aristotle defines the *polis* through its self-sufficiency and through its end, the good life. In the context of his argument which explains why man is rather a political animal than other gregarious animals he defines the *polis* mainly as a beneficial, moral and legal community. That also this argument focuses on the concept of the *polis* is indicated by the fact that it ends with the word "*polis*" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a18). The following argument, which is left to be examined, claims the natural priority of the *polis*. Aristotle's thorough analysis of the concept of the *polis* in *Pol.*, I. 2 explains why he revokes the imprecise and metaphorical use he had made of the term "political" in *Historia Animalium*. By saying that "man is rather (*mallon*) a political animal than bees or any gregarious animal", he implicitly corrects himself. However, one can still go on to call gregarious animal like bees and ants "political animals", but only in a loose or metaphorical sense[66]. For Aristotle, man is not simply a political animal, but a political animal "by nature". The attribute to be political "by nature" appears as opposed to being political "by habituation", which means that man has a natural disposition to live in a *polis*[67].

The last argument for the thesis that man is by nature a political animal starts with Aristotle's claim that the *polis* "is by nature prior (*proteron*) to the family and to the individual" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a18–19). In this argument, which takes up once more the definition of the *polis* through its self-sufficiency, Aristotle mainly addresses the relation of the *polis* to the individual. What exactly he means by the natural priority of the *polis* is the subject of an old scholarly controversy. According to one interpretation, the *polis* is prior in a historical and temporal sense to the family and to the individual.

65. In the ethical writings, the term *politikon zôon* is not only linked to the *polis* (*EN*, VIII, 12, 1162a17–19; *EE*, VII, 10, 1242a22–27), but to being a citizen (*politês*) (*EN*, I, 7, 1097b8–11). In *Pol.*, I, 2 it is linked to the *polis*, and in *Pol.*, III, 6 to the political community (*politikê koinônia*) (1278b17–25). Cf. Mulgan (1974, p. 440–441, 443).
66. P. Pellegrin, who understands "mallon" in *Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a8, in the sense of "rather" or "plutôt que", distinguishes between a "basic (basique)" and a "full (plein)" sense of "political", and concludes that "il faut plutôt dire 'politique' celui qui remplit les conditions du sens plein, à savoir le fait de vivre en cité, que celui qui vit seulement en groupe en accomplissant une oeuvre commune" (in this volume, p. 28). In regard to Aristotle's two different understandings of "political animal" in *Pol.*, I. 2 and *Historia Animalium*, Richard Mulgan (1974, p. 444) comments that "it is quite plausible that he may not have noticed, any more than most of his subsequent commentators and translators, that he was being inconsistent" (Cf. Mulgan [1977, p. 23–24]).
67. Cf. Labarrière (2004, p. 101).

However, this interpretation clearly contradicts the account Aristotle gives of the historical origin, and development, of the *polis* in *Pol.*, I, 2[68]. A more appropriate interpretation states that the natural priority of the *polis* means what Aristotle calls a priority in essence (*ousia*) or in nature (*phusis*): What is prior in essence or in the order of nature is posterior in generation or in the order of becoming. Aristotle's example is that the man is prior in essence or in nature to the boy, but posterior in generation (*Physics*, VIII, 7, 261a13–15; *Metaphysics*, IX, 8, 1050a4–7)[69]. Analogously, the *polis* is prior in essence or in nature to the household and the individual, but posterior in generation[70]. This interpretation of priority is obviously connected to Aristotle's teleological understanding of nature. Indeed, Aristotle's argument for the natural priority of the *polis* is party a restatement of his previous arguments. It supports in particular his teleological argument for the natural existence of the *polis*, which claimed that the *polis* is the end (*telos*) of the original communities (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1252b31–32)[71]. As human beings need the *polis* in order to fully develop their natural potentiality, they have an inner disposition towards the *polis* and naturally aim at its development.

Aristotle supports the claim that the *polis* "is by nature prior to the family and to the individual" with the principle that "the whole is necessarily prior (*proteron*) to the part" (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a20). In the following phrases, Aristotle substantiates this principle by applying it to the relation of a human organism to its organs. This elucidates the way that, in the context of his argument Aristotle also holds a different meaning of the term "priority" to be relevant: "A thing is said to be prior to other things when, if it does not exist, the others will not exist, whereas it can exist without the others" (*Physics*, VIII, 7, 260b17–19; *Metaphysics*, V, 11, 1019a2–4)[72]. That the whole is prior to

68. For literature and a convincing explanation of the interpretation that the *polis* is prior in a historical and temporal sense see Kullmann (1991, p. 98–99). For arguments against this interpretation see Schütrumpf (1991, p. 218).
69. Keyt (1991, p. 126), Mulgan (1977, p. 31); cf. Miller (1995, p. 46–47).
70. However, as argued before, the *polis* is not a natural essence or separate form.
71. For R. Mulgan, "The argument that the *polis* is prior is therefore nothing more than a restatement in more technical language of Aristotle's doctrine, based on his conception of happiness, that the *polis* is natural" (1977, p. 32). However, Mulgan somehow contradicts himself by stating rightly that the argument occurs "as part of the argument that man is a 'political animal'" (*Ibid.*, p. 30). At the beginning of his chapter on *The Whole and its Parts* R. Mulgan gives the most accurate account, "Aristotle also regards the *polis* as a "compounded whole". The main function of this doctrine is to unite and give theoretical coherence to a number of different features of the *polis*, most of which are described elsewhere in a less technical language" (1977, p. 28).
72. Translation by Hardie, Gaye (1991). Cf. Keyt (1991, p. 136), Mulgan (1977, p. 31). Despite the two different meanings of priority mentioned above, Aristotle calls both types of priority a priority in essence (*ousia*) or in nature (*phusis*) (*Physics*, VIII, 7, 260b17–19; *Metaphysics*, V, 11, 1019a2–4). Keyt (1991, p. 126–127) and Miller (1995, p. 46–47) both distinguish four types of priority in Aristotle's works.

the parts therefore means that if the whole does not exist, the parts will not exist, but the whole can exist without the parts. While a human organism can exist without a foot or a hand, a foot or a hand cannot exist without the human organism[73]. Severed from the human body, a hand ceases to be a hand, because it loses its function (*ergon*) and capability (*dunamis*). As a separate entity, a hand could only homonymously be called a hand like a hand of stone, because all things are defined by their specific function and by their capability (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a20–25).

For Aristotle, there evidently exists an analogy between the relation of a human organism to its organs and the relation of a *polis* to its individual members. Just as the organism as a whole is by nature prior to its parts, the *polis* is by nature prior to its citizens. Aristotle substantiates this claim by recalling the argument that the individual, separated from the *polis*, is not self-sufficient (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a26–27). Just as the individual organs of an organism can only fulfill their function as a part of the organism, man can only develop his capabilities and fulfill his specific function (*ergon*) as a member of the *polis*. The specific function of man is to develop and actively use his *logos* in a good and happy life. This was already a conclusion of Aristotle's human function (*ergon*) argument (*EN*, I, 6, 1098a7–8). Man needs the *polis* and its self-sufficiency to achieve happiness or human flourishing and to fully develop his natural potentiality (*dunamis*). Though a man is able to live as a hermit after he develops this potentiality, he could never fully develop it isolated from the polis[74]. For Aristotle, man is the best of animals when perfected, but the worst of all when separated from law and justice (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a31–33).

CONCLUSION

With his argument of the natural priority of the *polis* Aristotle demonstrates that without the political community man is only nominally a man, because he cannot realize his nature, or himself, as a man. The fact that man's realization as a man unalterably depends on the *polis* is a strong argument for Aristotle's theses that man is by nature a political animal and that he has a natural impulse towards the *polis*. The successful demonstration of these claims supports once more his thesis that the *polis* exists by nature (*Pol.*, I, 2, 1253a25–26). Aristotle's argument of the natural priority of the

73. As has already been mentioned, living organisms, like animals and plants, are the main examples Aristotle chooses to illustrate the term "by nature (*phusei*)" (*Physics*, II, 1, 192b8–10).
74. Cf. different interpretations of the problem of solitary individuals or people who are forced to live separately from the community Keyt (1991, p. 136) and Trott (2014, p. 62–64).

polis unites and connects various previous arguments and thereby gives his political anthropology considerable theoretical coherence. The misunderstanding that the natural priority of the *polis* is an independent argument, thesis, or theorem, obscures the fact that Aristotle's arguments in *Pol.*, I, 2, and his political anthropology, have to be regarded as a coherent unity. Though Aristotle's two theses that the *polis* exists by nature and that man is by nature a political animal have to be clearly distinguished, they are inextricably linked and the arguments for each of them substantiate the other thesis as well.

The view that the natural priority of the *polis* has to be regarded as an independent argument, thesis, or theorem encourages another common misunderstanding. This misunderstanding is based on the analogy Aristotle sees between the relation of a human organism to its organs and the relation of a *polis* to its individual members. This analogy has led to the interpretation that Aristotle defends an organic theory of the *polis* that subjugates the individual to the polis. According to such a theory, the individual is merely an instrument for the *polis* in the way that a hand has to serve the whole organism[75]. Jonathan Barnes even claims that Aristotle has a "tendency towards totalitarianism" and speaks with regard to the argument of the natural priority of the *polis* of "Aristotle's implicit totalitarianism"[76]. Barnes's interpretation has been rejected for good reasons[77]. Though *Pol.*, I, 2 focuses on the concept of the *polis*, with his claim of its natural priority Aristotle does not intend to make a statement about the ontological status of the *polis*[78]. Rather, his discussion of the relation of man and *polis* aims at demonstrating his thesis that man is by nature a political animal. That his analogy of man and body does not imply an organic theory of the *polis* is shown by Aristotle's critique of Plato's claim in the *Politieia* that the highest degree of unity is the greatest good (*megiston agathon*) for the *polis* (*Pol.*, II, 2–5; cf. *Rep.* V, 462 a)[79]. Because in this context Aristotle makes a statement about the ontological status of the *polis* that is clearly directed against Plato's

75. Therefore, R. G. Mulgan (1977, p. 32–35) examines the questions whether Aristotle counts as an individualist and to what extent the individual has to serve the interests of the *polis*.
76. Barnes (1990, p. 259–260, 263).
77. In his response to Jonathan Barnes, Richard Sorabji objects to Barnes's accusation by emphasizing that Aristotle's political philosophy moves away from Plato's totalitarianism in the *Politeia* (Sorabji [1990, p. 267–273]). Based on the results of his study of Aristotle's criticism of Plato's *Republic* in *Pol.*, II, 1–5, and in particular with regard to Aristotle's critique of Plato's objective of the highest possible unity of the city, also Robert Mayhew (1997, p. 125) rejects Barnes' accusation. For arguments against the accusation that Aristotle is a totalitarian political philosopher and against the opposite claim that he is a precursor of liberal individualism see also Trott (2014, p. 59–80).
78. Cf. Mayhew (1997, p. 18).
79. Cf. Mayhew (1997).

organic theory of the *polis*: "For the city is in its nature a sort of plurality (*plêthos gar ti ten phusin estin hê polis*)" (*Pol.*, II, 2, 1261 a 19; for Plato's organic theory of the *polis* see *Rep.* V, in particular 462 a–e).

In the dense and complex second chapter of book I of the *Politics*, Aristotle gives a thorough and profound analysis of man, the *polis*, and their relations. This analysis is not only the core and foundation of Aristotle's philosophy of man and of his ethical and political writings. As the impressive renaissance of Aristotle's practical philosophy in the twentieth century shows, it also keeps inspiring political philosophers up to today.

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