

Aristotle's Theory of Citizenship in Context

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Short description

In *Politics* III.1, Aristotle says, “What effectively distinguishes the citizen proper from all others is his participation in giving judgement and in holding office” (T. A. Sinclair translation, in Penguin). My goal in this talk is to put Aristotle’s statement into its historical context, to discuss its implications for Aristotle’s political theory, and to open up discussion of the meaning of citizenship in the Greek world after Aristotle. Some of the questions that I will address are:

- What is a polis?
- What is the relation of a “polites” to a “polis”?
- Who, according to Aristotle, SHOULD “give judgement and hold office”?
- Who actually DID “give judgement and hold office”? I have a section on the Athenian Politeia here.
- What are the implications of Aristotle’s account of citizenship for the Hellenistic world?
 - Are there any poleis after the Alexander?
 - Who participates in judgement and holding office after Alexander?
- Possibly (if there is time) some comments on the implications of Aristotle’s ideas about citizenship for the 21st century.