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PLATO'S *REPUBLICS*

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ABSTRACT: Various ancient sources refer to the Platonic work that we know as *Republic* in the plural. Aristotle seems to have made it possible to refer to *politeiai* as 'constitutions', actual or written, and therefore some of our texts are best explained as references to Plato's two written constitutions, *Republic* and *Laws*. One neglected reference that may perhaps be explained in this way occurs in the anonymous *Antiatticista*. A large number of references from the Alexandrian school of Platonism in late antiquity cannot be explained in that way, and should be understood with reference to the prevalent interpretation of the *Republic*, which gives equal weight to the internal (psychic) and external (civic) constitutions. The trickiest question is what it means in the titles of three commentaries dating from the early imperial era.

Introduction

The way that Plato's *Republic* was cited in antiquity has important consequences for our understanding of the history of its reception. In particular it has a bearing on the history of commentary on the work, on the interrelation between title and exegesis in late antiquity, and possibly even on the manuscript tradition since the important *Parisinus Graecus* 1807 (A) and dependent manuscripts placed '*Republics or On Justice*' at its commencement.¹ As we shall see, ancient titles were often not so much the definitive product of authorial intention as a convenient description for others referring to the work. The early absence of anything equivalent to the capital letter made it natural to think of many titles as being flexible, and it is well known that works like the *Phaedo* (*On Soul*) and *Critias* (*Atlantikos*) were regularly known by alternative titles in antiquity. There is a special problem that it was impossible to distinguish between Plato's *Republic* and his 'constitution', usually the constitution outlined within the *Republic*.

Various ancient sources refer to the Platonic work that we know as *Republic* in the plural: not *Politeia* but *Politeiai*. There has been a certain amount of discussion as to why this should be so.² The tradition of a plural title involves both philosophers and grammarians, two groups who ought to have interacted in

¹ Details in Slings (2003); note that Slings misleadingly reports the *Antiatticista* as preserving the plural title, without indicating that this was written only in one of a great many citations in the work.

² Westerink (1981); Dörrie & Baltus (1993), 203-4; Hatzimichali (2012) 72-73.

antiquity but might have done so only intermittently. The primary issue is whether the plural *Politeiai* was even used *as a title* before the fifth century AD. I begin with the evidence of a grammarian whose work has not been sufficiently pondered in this regard, and after a few extra lines on the grammatical tradition I move to the citations of the *Republic* by the philosophers, from Aristotle to late antiquity. Special attention must be paid to a number of citations of exegetical works on the *Politeiai* that appear to date from early imperial times.

1. The Antiatticist

It has recently come to my attention that there is a citation that uses the plural title in the anonymous Antiatticista, published in Bekker's 1814 *Anecdota Graeca*.³ This text is a collection of linguistic forms (words, inflections, and words in certain meanings) that failed to meet the approval of atticizing grammarians bent on removing *Koine* influences. In this text, arranged roughly in alphabetic order, the author notes where such words have been used in Attic and other respected Greek literature. At p. 110.19 Bekker we read:

Οικοδομεῖν· Πλάτων Πολιτείας.

The initial uncertainty as to his intention is whether he wishes to refer to the philosopher or the comic playwright, for he generally refers to Plato's *Republic* (i) with a singular title, and (ii) by book number, using an unfamiliar division into six books. However at six points he uses the expected words Πλάτων Πολιτεία, without mention of a book (82.11, 94.19, 94.30, 111.16, 116.9 and 25). Though it is conceivable that the plural form is some strange title from Plato Comicus, since other strange titles in the plural are known (normally indicating the identity of a chorus),⁴ one should be reluctant to affirm that Πολιτεῖαι was a comic title when examples of the citation of *Republic* in this plural form seem to exist. There is actually one example in the Antiatticista of the *Republic* being named as Πολιτικῶν (rather than Πολιτείας) at 100.20, citing book IV (of the six-book version) and clearly meant to refer to 462b8 (in our book V).

³ Bekker (1814). [Text of Antiatticist = 1.75–116] The surviving work is abridged (Lee forthcoming), with resultant problems in identifying quite what the Antiatticist himself was trying to say. The best internal indication of a date occurs at 79.31–32 reads as follows: 'Ἀθετεῖν φασὶν οὐ δεῖν λέγειν, ἀλλ' ἀναιρεῖν. ἰασὶν οὖν ὁ γραμματικὸς μέμφεται ἐπὶ τῇ λέξει Ἀρισταρχόν. In Tarrant (2012), 72 with n.55, I argue that for ἰασὶν οὖν we should read Ἰάσων (perhaps with οὖν), referring to Iason the grammarian mentioned by the *Etymologicum Magnum* (184.27), while Aristarchus is the Samothracian (c.220–143BC), successor to Aristophanes of Byzantium. A date any time up to the second century AD is theoretically possible.

⁴ Tarrant (2012), 55 and 63.

If we take the reference to *Politeiai* to refer to Plato's *Republic* we encounter the difficulty that the author will normally select the right voice in which to cite a verb, while both the references in Plato's *Republic* (372a6-7, 419a5-6) use this verb in the middle voice rather than the active. The active can be found in the *Charmides* (161e6, 165d5, both present infinitive), *Laws* (643b8, 858b7, present participles), and *Gorgias* (514b6, perfect indicative), though of these works only *Gorgias* is ever cited by the Antiatticista. In order to resolve the difficulties one might be led to propose various emendations. For instance, the text might possibly have read Οικοδομεῖν· ἀντὶ τοῦ οἰκοδομεῖσθαι. Πλάτων Πολιτείας (implying that the middle is used where the active would be normal),⁵ since the trouble with the active is that it is probably the more regular form in classical times, so that atticizing grammarians can hardly have frowned on it, at least when used in the simple sense of 'build'. It is forms rare in Attic that are likely to be cited in such a work.

One actually does find related terminology among the Atticist lexicographers, for Phrynichus rejects the *Koine* noun οἰκοδομή in favour of the Attic οἰκοδόμημα (*Eclogues* 395). Furthermore, as we shall see below, two late texts are witness to discussion by unknown grammarians of the active and middle voices of the verb οἰκοδομεῖν itself. Earlier objections to the misuse of building-related terminology may have prompted the Antiatticista's citation of this series of three connected terms—not only the verb in the active, but also (110.20-21) οἰκοδομία (cited only for Thucydides VII, but found at *Rep.* 394a5) and οἰκοδομησις (again only cited for Thucydides VII,⁶ but found at *Rep.* 401a3). These lines are very compressed, suggesting that something may have been lost in the abridgement of the original material. That in turn may possibly explain a lack of precision. One should therefore ask whether the grammarian is predisposed to a lack of precision at the point. With that end in view we shall examine the distribution of those cases where a book is not specified for *Republic* or for either Herodotus or Thucydides. We shall also consider when the wrong book is cited for Herodotus or Thucydides, though we cannot do this systematically for the *Republic* because the boundaries of most books are unknown, and it cannot be assumed that none of the content has been rearranged, as I have argued (Tarrant 2012).

The normal method of citing the *Republic* in this work is to follow the word that is subject to comment with 'Plato' [nom.] *Politeia* [gen.] book-number [dat.]; that order may follow the specification of a required sense or receive some further addition. A total of 26 cases follow this pattern. A further 7 cases have reversed

⁵ One might also consider the possibility that some alternative word for 'build' had been cited before dropping out, for instance κατασκευάζειν (for building a city at 557d3), but the omission of an etymologically unrelated form would be harder to explain, as would the presence of its entry at this point of the largely alphabetic lexicon.

⁶ This should have been the third book, III.2.2 or 21.1; the previous form was found at VII.6.4.

the genitive of the title and the book-number. But 7 cases (including the one under consideration) omit the book number, and place the title in the dative. In these seven, six cases fail to capture the correct form of the word in our texts, although this is usually the author's practice, with the result that a noun might be cited in any case, or a verb in any voice or tense. It is natural to infer that the bulk of the author's material comes from notes taken while reading the texts, resulting in greater precision, but that a few entries are based on memory, no attempt being made to check the original. The author wishes to add something further at this point, and he may either omit or guess at the correct book-number. Omissions are found as in table 1:

Bekker page	<i>Republic</i>	Thucydides	Herodotus	Total	Refs.	Percentage
77-81	0	0	0	0	20	0
82-83	1	0	1	2	7	28.57
84-91	0	0	0	0	15	0
92-95	2	3	0	5	19	26.32
96-106	0	0	1	1	37	2.7
107-111	2	1	0	3	23	13.04
112-116	2	1	2	6	12	41.67

Table 1: Citations without book-number

Clearly the omissions of book numbers are concentrated at certain points, including 82-83, 92-95, and the last few pages. They are less striking when part of a list of authorities, as in the case of Herodotus at 83.31, but the impression of inaccurate memory-work may be enhanced, as when the lexical entry is misspelt, as at 100.23 (if the text is correctly preserved) with *ισχόφωνον* for Herodotus' *ισχνόφωνον* (4.155).⁷ The overall problem increases towards the end of the work, which seems unnaturally compressed. We do not meet the entries for mu until p. 107, thirty pages through Bekker's text, and nu to omega are disposed of in pp. 109-116. Entries seem too few as well as too brief. References that lack the citation of a book number for these works are particularly common at pp. 113-16. The compression may have been the work of an epitomator, which Lee (2013) has quite reasonably argued for, though one would have to postulate a process that is, in general, much more ruthless at the end than at the beginning.⁸ An alternative might be that the work was never properly finished. From p. 110 none of the remaining seven references to Plato's *Republic* are entirely unproblematic, and an example would be the citation of the simple verb instead of the compound *ἐπιχρωματίζειν* (*Rep.* 601a5). There is no guarantee that the author had found the

⁷ Besides the omission of the nu, note the Antiatticista's default accusative for a form that had appeared in the nominative in Herodotus.

⁸ Rather than a diligent epitomator carefully excising the same kind of unwanted material throughout, it seems that this would be a person who has increasing doubts about the overall use of the work in question as he approaches the end of the task.

compound in his text,⁹ but, seeing that the book number is not given, faulty memory may well be to blame. However, of six references to other Platonic works at pp. 110-116, only p. 116.29, which I relate to *Gorgias* 485e7,¹⁰ should give any concern.

If we conclude that the failure to cite a book number is an indication that the original author is working from memory rather than notes taken while reading, then we are not expecting that the reference to *Politeiai* rather than to a single *Politeia* is aiming to convey precise information. Most likely it is just an observation that, in spite of the grammarians' tendency to condemn certain *oik*-terms in certain senses, many of them were entirely legitimate. If we had known that Plato Comicus had written a play of this title then we should see it as a reference to him, but in the present circumstances it seems more probable that we are dealing with some kind of attempt to derive the forms required from Plato the philosopher, an author who does indeed use many of them. However, the author is unlikely to have temporarily forgotten the usual title of the *Republic* that he employs so often elsewhere,¹¹ and we should consider seriously the possibility that he is trying to refer either to more than one version of the *Republic* (*Politeiai*)¹² or more likely to those Platonic works that deal with constitutions (*politeiai*). Not only would this latter solution help to explain the active voice of the verb (cf. *Laws* 643b8, 858b7), but as we shall see there may have been a precedent for the use of the plural in this sense in Aristotle.

I believe that the correct solution to the problem in the *Antiatticista* actually involves both *Republic* and *Laws*. If the Atticists were going to condemn a sense of *οικοδομεῖν* then one possibility might be the *Koine* use as 'edify' (LSJ 3), with a personal object, but Plato could not be said to offer any comparable example. More probable here is that an exception had been made to the use of the active in what is properly the middle sense, of having a house built rather than performing all the work oneself. It could be argued that this is the sense in which Plato intends both middle-voice forms in the *Republic*, particularly at 419a5-6 but possibly also at 372a6-7. However, the active forms in *Laws* both relate to the actual builder,¹³ one learning to be a builder and needing to play at building

⁹ Tarrant (2012), 60 n.24.

¹⁰ Tarrant (2012), 57.

¹¹ Here again I mention the single exception of the work's being cited as '*Politics*' at 100.20.

¹² This possibility arises only if the six-book arrangement differed significantly in content from the ten-book work, as Tarrant (2012) has argued; but the author shows no other signs of awareness that a fuller version exists. This should be balanced against the fact that he shows no signs of having studied *Laws*.

¹³ Both examples of the active in *Charmides* (161e, 165d) also involve the actual act of building, though this is not so clear at *Gorgias* 514b, where one may only assume that the 1st person plural subject will include the actual builder.

(642b-c), and, in an elaborate analogy (858b), one who is actually 'building' a law-code out of assembled materials. So Plato's two *constitutional works* are actually a model of how the two voices should be employed. Clearly the surviving version of the *Antiatticista* does not specify this, but it may well be that the epitomator has omitted material that would have cited Plato's *Politeiai* as a possible source for the correct use of the voices of this verb, material ultimately derived not from the *Antiatticista*'s personal reading but from one of the grammarians whose work he draws on and qualifies; for grammarians had at some time certainly discussed the voices of *οικοδομεῖν* in relation to both Homer and Demosthenes.¹⁴

This solution, like almost any solution that will appeal to the loss of information thanks to the activities of an epitomator, can be regarded as provisional only. The *Antiatticista* is not an easy author to fathom. We must now look at the remaining evidence.

2. Boethus the Platonic Lexicographer

Another linguistic work cites Plato in a similar way centuries later, the *Etymologicum Magnum*. Elsewhere it cites the *Republic* quite normally in the singular (e.g. 31.20, 199.7, 769.35, 777.14), but at 789.45 we read of the word *φᾶυλος*:

καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ῥαδίου· Πλάτων Πολιτειῶν πρώτῳ.¹⁵

This late citation would be irrelevant to our present purpose, but for the fact that the entry has a complicated history, and this has led to its being regarded as fragment 5 of Boethus the Platonic lexicographer, who may not be far separated in date from the *Antiatticista*. Owing to the complications, there is no guarantee that either the fragment itself, assigned to Boethus because of structural similarities with fragments 1 and 4,¹⁶ or more particularly the plural form of the Platonic title, goes back to early imperial times. The Platonic title may have resulted from a very late 'correction'.¹⁷

¹⁴ Thomas Magister, p. 214.13-16 Ritschl (s.v. *κατασκευάζω*), shows that grammarians had discussed the correct use of the active and middle voices of *οικοδομεῖν* in relation to Demosthenes, while a scholion on *Iliad* 24.281a shows that this example had already been used to illustrate the meaning of the Homeric middle at a time when Homeric scholarship had flourished.

¹⁵ For 'first' it is clear from the citation of *Rep* 423c5-6 that 'fourth' should be read if the usual ten-book arrangement is being cited; for details see Dyck (1985), 79-80, 83-84.

¹⁶ Dyck (1985), 83-84.

¹⁷ For the special problems of dating any individual pieces of text within lexical works see Bonelli (2008), 25: 'aucun argument de la forme 'Notre texte du *Lexique* fait référence à X: donc Timée a écrit après X' n'est solide, car il est toujours possible que la référence à X soit un ajout tardif.' One must expect common material with no acknowledgment of borrowing, and allow that alien

3. Aristotle

Aristotle has no difficulty in using the singular for the title of the work we know as '*Republic*', and it is the only title used when discussing that work in *Politics* II.1-6 (1261a6, 9; 1264b28), but at IV.7 we read that 'people use only the four [constitutions] just like Plato in the *politeiai*' (1293b42-94a1). I avoid a title-indicating capital letter, since Aristotle did not have it available, and for the same reasons I omit the brackets in which modern editors enclose 'just like Plato'.¹⁸ I assume that Aristotle is referring to the two written 'constitutions' (1260b29-30) of Plato that he had dealt with previously at II.1-6, both of which had failed to take note of the 'polity' (in Aristotle's special sense), allegedly contenting themselves with just four forms, monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, and aristocracy. This is hardly an accurate account of *Republic* VIII-IX where five constitutions are enumerated, nor of *Statesman* 291d-292a (three or five, with six at 302d-e); it is less a distortion of *Laws* IV 709e-713a,¹⁹ where Plato comes frustratingly close to using the word *politeia* in its Aristotelian sense. While Dörrie-Baltes (III, 204 n.1) supports Westerink's (1981) proposal to interpret this reference as a general one to Plato's political works, it is perhaps unnecessary to be certain of what Aristotle wrote here; we need to suppose only that the text that was transmitted could be taken to refer to Plato's two works that discussed his type of constitution.

material may have been added. A vitally important modern case of such additions is the TLG text of Timaeus' *Platonic Lexicon* that uses the 'text' of Baiter et al. (1839), which has been 'restored' to proper alphabetic order and infused with much alien material from lexica and Byzantine encyclopaedias (Bonelli, 2008, 9). Baiter and his colleagues had in fact distinguished other material by the use of a different font. Hence the entry in the *Antiatticista* that we have dealt with will also appear (falsely) as a passage of Timaeus Sophista! In this appendix (970-1010) appear 9 further glosses of a linguistic character that appear to refer to '*Republics*'. Their narrow range suggests a single source, which is ultimately the *Eclogues* attributed to the very late Thomas Magister, the standard edition of which is Ritschl (1832). Thomas continues the Atticist tradition, drawing on earlier authors extensively (Lee 2013). The problem is that one cannot date the cluster of references to *Politeiai*. None of this cluster cite books three to ten. Some of those that cite a book relate to specific passages in *Republic* I or II, though 995b11 does not obviously do so, 986a12 seems to be citing via Aristides' speech *Against Plato on Rhetoric* 11.27, and 986a15 actually relates to *Theaetetus* 143a4. At 975b7 one reads 'in one of his *Republics*' as if the intention was to say 'either *Republic* or *Laws*', and the quotation is imprecise enough to leave doubts as to which work is cited.

¹⁸ Westerink (1981) 112; I ignored here the possibility that there has been a gloss at this point, which affects my argument only if the gloss is late enough to have been unknown to the *Antiatticista*.

¹⁹ The most exact parallel to Aristotle's group of four is not at 710e3-6, which omits aristocracy and includes tyranny, but at 712c2-5 where Cleinias is speaking, and explains why he omits tyranny.

4. Commentary-titles

Early in the history of commentary on Plato we find two titles that couple the term most often used to denote a commentary, *hypomnêma* or *hypomnêmata*, with the name of Plato and the plural *Politeiai*. They have naturally been taken to indicate some kind of commentary on the *Republic*. However, though we are familiar with many interpretative works that relate to the *Republic*, we do not actually know of any tradition of commenting on the *Republic* that involved a succession of lemmata taken in order in the same way as most surviving commentaries on Plato did. Unlike other Proclan commentaries, the Proclan 'Commentary' on the *Republic* consists of a series of hermeneutic essays. We do not have papyrus fragments that can with confidence be said to come from a regular commentary on the work. We are aware of several works on aspects of the *Republic*,²⁰ especially its mathematical aspects, whose authors included Clearchus, Dercyllides, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, possibly Theon of Smyrna,²¹ and possibly Taurus of Sidon (or Beirut).²² Again, of the two of Plutarch's *Quaestiones Platonicae* that concern the *Republic*, the third (1001c-1002e) is concerned with mathematics (namely the Divided Line), while the ninth is not. Thanks to Proclus (in *Remp.* II.96.10-15 = Dörrie-Baltes III 76.4), and ultimately probably to Porphyry, we have quite a list of pre-Porphyrian interpreters who tackled the Myth of Er in particular, but most probably did so in works on the nature of the soul. Hence, what we lack is a reference to regular commentaries,²³ and one of the reasons for this was no doubt the likelihood that such a commentary would have been a monumental undertaking, longer than the Platonic original. It is appropriate therefore that we take a fresh look at the plural titles, asking whether they could not have been exegetical works that set out to discuss Plato's constitutions, i.e. the arrangements for governance and social organisation, in both *Republic* and *Laws*.

²⁰ See Dörrie-Baltes (1993) 80.1, 3, 5-7.

²¹ If the *Commentary on the Republic* (Dörrie-Baltes III 80.6 = Theon, *Expositio* 146.3-4 Hiller) was not primarily mathematical, then the *Expositio* might almost be regarded as the required sort of work owing to the liberal use it makes of various passages of the *Republic*.

²² The identity of the two is unproven; the fragment (Dörrie-Baltes III 80.7) is derived from a work relating to mechanics (Ps-Hero) and purportedly giving a definition of geometry, while the parallel passage in the anonymous *Commentary on the Theaetetus* (col. XV) is treating *simple* as opposed to *systematic* knowledge in particular: a distinction relevant to mathematics, which is prominent in the context. Taurus may have been commenting on the epistemology of *Republic* VI-VII, as Mansfeld suggested (1983, 61).

²³ By 'regular commentary' I am thinking of a lemmatic commentary dealing primarily with philosophic issues; we cannot be certain what a primarily linguistic commentary on the *Republic* (such as Schironi 2005, especially 431, attributes to Aristarchus) might have looked like.

The works concerned are attributed to Potamo of Alexandria, from the Augustan age, and Onosander (first century A.D.?). A third plural title that fails to include the term *hypomnēma(ta)* is a work in three books ascribed to Manaichmus (of unknown date). In all cases the title comes from the Suda under the entries for the authors concerned, who are in every case called philosophers, and in the case of Onosander and Manaichmus 'Platonic philosophers'.²⁴ Thus we cannot be entirely sure whether we are dealing with a title bestowed on the commentary by its author, or one that had come to be used many centuries later, for the transmitted title of Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Republic* actually uses the plural term, though Proclus' own practice in the text is to refer to the *Republic* by its normal singular title. However, there seems to be something of a pattern in the Suda's references to scholarship on the *Republic* from centuries earlier, and on balance I favour accepting that titles referring to Plato's *Politeiai* did exist in this period, which is not far removed in date from that of the Antiatticista.

It has been suggested that the plural title may be linked somehow with Thrasyllus,²⁵ since Diogenes Laertius (3.57) reports that this latter counted up to 56 dialogues of Plato by dividing the *Republic* into ten and the *Laws* into twelve. Even so, the term 'dialogue' must surely be wrong here, as the number would include the collection of thirteen *Epistles* (counted as one). Thrasyllus was thus presumably counting papyrus scrolls. The count is only undertaken in the context of the tetralogies, associated with Thrasyllus both by Diogenes (3.56) and by Albinus (*Prologue* 4), and the tetralogies themselves count the *Republic* and *Laws* only once. The title of the *Republic* remains singular at D.L. 3.56, 3.60, and 3.62 (twice). Finally, the idea that these works tackled the separate books of the *Republic* might be taken to imply that all or most books were treated exegetically, but it is scarcely credible that Manaichmus' three-book work about the *Republic* could be treating so much material. Indeed the failure of all three authors to attract the attention of the Neoplatonists suggests that their contribution did not seriously overlap with the interests of later Platonism. From what little the Suda tells us about Onosander we would expect a practical work, with a possible emphasis on the military arrangements. And it is difficult (but not impossible) to imagine a professed Eclectic like Potamo embarking upon a complete set of lectures on a very long work of Plato. Could it not be, then, that these exegetes are using the plural *politeiai* for the same reason as Aristotle and the Antiatticista, because it is a type of Platonic subject matter to which they are referring rather than a single dialogue? It is *possible* that all had written works that compared the positions of *Republic* and *Laws* on certain matters of constitutional arrangement.

²⁴ It should be assumed that Potamo is the Alexandrian 'Eclectic' discussed by Diogenes Laertius (1.21), whose testimonies are discussed fully in Hatzimichali (2012).

²⁵ See Hatzimichali (2012) 73; Baltes (1993) 202. Neither lacks for alternative explanations.

It is clear, I believe, that prior to chapter 34 of Alcinous' *Didascalicus* (from the second century AD perhaps) there had been some discussion of the different types of constitution supposedly found in Plato, with the *non-foundational* (ἀνυπόθετος) constitution being the subject matter of *Republic* and two kinds of constitution that work upon pre-existing foundations (ἐξ ὑποθέσεως) being the subject of *Laws* and *Epistles*. Interestingly, this division and its terminology had its roots in the fourth book of Aristotle's *Politics* (1288b21-39), before mention of Plato's 'constitutions' is made at 1293b1. It is certain that Alcinous is crediting Plato with outlining a plurality of *politeiai* (188.8-9, 188.36), and unlikely that this was an innovation of his own.

Frankly it is difficult to make any decision on the basis of such slender evidence, but the principal conclusion that I would draw is that one should avoid referring to these philosophers as authors of 'commentaries on the *Republic*'. Even if they were, that is not what we are told about them.

iv. Platonists after Proclus and the interpretation of the *Republic*

This is no longer what the plural means when we reach the Alexandrian Platonists who followed Ammonius, son of Hermeias. Ammonius himself, like Proclus if unlike Proclus' biographer Marinus (*VProc.* 14), does not seem to use the plural to indicate a title,²⁶ but Olympiodorus wavers. The title appears only in the singular in the commentaries on the *Alcibiades* and the *Phaedo*,²⁷ but once in the singular and once in the plural in that on Aristotle's *Meteorologica*.²⁸ In the *Gorgias*-commentary it is found nine times in the plural and between three and five times in the singular according to one's stance on details.²⁹ At 241.4-242.4 we have a microcosm of this situation, with three plurals and two singulars, including one of each at 241.12! Some inconsistency is perhaps not unexpected in a commentary 'from the voice'. In the related, but anonymous, *Prolegomena to Plato's Philosophy* there are four singulars and perhaps five plurals.³⁰ In other authors of this school, we find Pseudo-Elias having plurals at *Isag.* 14.22.26 and 22.44.17, followed by singulars at 22.44.18 and 23, while Philoponus has two plurals in the commentary on Nicomachus, of which 32.1 is a genuine reference

²⁶ Note that there is a plural at II.227.3 which translators concur in seeing as a reference to *Laws* VI 757a; hence this is further confirmation of the plural to be used inclusively of *Laws*.

²⁷ I count nine cases in the former, and only one in the latter.

²⁸ Singular at 144.33, plural at 100.19.

²⁹ At 41.14 it is not clear that this is a title, and at 100.19 it is used to refer to *Laws* 709e. This may be either a simple mistake resulting from a slip in oral delivery (for the index to Westerink's 1970 text shows that Olympiodorus was quite familiar with *Republic*, as also with book IV of *Laws*) or a case where the term is used, albeit confusingly, to mean simply 'constitution'.

³⁰ One must allow that 17.29 may be a joint reference to *Republic* and *Laws*.

to the *Republic*, and 15.53 actually refers to the *Laws*. Asclepius also has the plural at *in Nicomachum* 11.68. It may be relevant that the important early manuscript Parisinus A has the plural title, for Westerink feels that this owes its origin to this early manuscript's having been influenced by an Alexandrian exemplar.³¹ It does not of course indicate the true title of the work.

The sudden explosion of unambiguous references to the *Republic* in late antiquity demands an explanation. The special prominence of Olympiodorus here, and above all of his *Commentary on Plato's Gorgias*, offers a clue. The *Republic* is seldom far away from Olympiodorus' mind in this commentary, as has been previously observed.³² 'Constitutional happiness' had become the key link between *Republic* and *Gorgias*, and the emphasis was firmly on the inner constitution within the soul of the individual, mirroring that of the state (*in Gorg.* proem, 4-5). Whereas Proclus had tended to stress that constitution of soul and state were one and the same (*in Remp.* I.11.12-13), Olympiodorus prefers to see an analogous relationship between the two. So whereas for Proclus it was probably more accurate to see the constitution that is the subject of the *Republic* as one constitution with two manifestations, in Olympiodorus the *Republic* is indeed a work that promotes *two* constitutions.³³

Hence we have found a theoretical basis for believing that one would correctly refer to the *Republic* by the plural title *Politeiai*. Of course books VIII-IX had spoken about a plurality of inferior constitutions, both civic and individual, but they were not *Plato's* constitutions. Up until this period the conventional title had not yet seemed a problem for the philosophers.³⁴

Conclusion

For these reasons it would seem to be illegitimate to expect that the early imperial *hypomnēmata* that used the plural *Politeiai* should be using it for the same reason as the Alexandrian Neoplatonists (particularly Olympiodorus) did centuries later. They simply did not have the same theoretical basis for doing so. To the best of

³¹ Westerink (1981), 115.

³² Tarrant (1997).

³³ There may be another factor that applies here. Proclus, presumably following Iamblichus, had rejected the inclusion of *Republic* and *Laws* in his restricted curriculum precisely on the grounds that each is a plurality of *logoi*, as reported in the *Prolegomena* (26.3). In this context the *Prolegomena* employs the plural title.

³⁴ It is noticeable that in the passage of Olympiodorus' *Commentary on Aristotle's Meteorologica* the one passage that uses the plural title (100.19-24) is actually discussing the way that the ideal constitution relates to the discussion of justice that had been begun. However, it would be very difficult to establish any clear pattern of reference in the *Prolegomena* or the *in Gorg.*

our knowledge Marinus is the first Neoplatonist known to employ the plural title, in his *Life of Proclus* of AD485-6. Nor can we be sure that he did so for the same reason as Olympiodorus and some of his Alexandrian colleagues. Before the fifth century AD the default explanation of any title-like reference to Plato's *politeiai* should be that it is a reference to the political systems as found in both the *Republic* and the *Laws*. Such a hypothesis makes best sense of the reference in Aristotle's *Politics*, helps to explain the active voice and the omission of a book-number in the *Antiatticista*, and does not run counter to what we know of exegetical works involving the *Republic*.

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