
This is the second time in recent years that I have been asked to review a translation of Aristotle's Politics; and for the second time I find some embarrassment in the task, being myself responsible for a rival version (the 1981 revision of Sinclair's Penguin edition). However, perhaps that is in a sense more of a qualification than a disqualification; at any rate, having 'declared my interest', I see no reason not to press ahead and make any necessary comparisons as impartially as I can.

Everson's edition is one of the first to appear in an ambitious new series launched by the Cambridge University Press, 'Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought'. The version he prints, that of Jowett, has a long history. Published in 1885 and based on Bekker's 1831 Greek text, it was lightly revised by Ross (using Immisch's 1909 Teubner text) in 1921 for inclusion in the Oxford Translation of Aristotle. In 1984 it appeared in the second of the two volumes of The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation, ed. J. Barnes (Princeton University Press), with 'slight revisions' and 'conserved with only mild emendations' (pp. ix-x of vol. I); this time the Greek text is Dreizehnter's (1970). What we are offered, then, is Barnes' light revision of Ross's light revision of Jowett. What are its characteristics?
Fluency, clarity, and grace, most certainly; for nothing that Jowett wrote was inelegant. But obviously the edition is not intended just for pleasure or edification; it is addressed to a thoughtful, academic readership, for whom accuracy is a prime requirement. I have therefore submitted to close examination two of the three passages I scrutinised when reviewing Carne; Lord’s translation of 1984 (Classical Review, 36 [1986], 216-9).

I i (1252a1-23)

(i) The fourth word of the Greek, horōmen, 'we see', is omitted; clearly Aristotle should be allowed to assert that his claim ('every state is an association', etc.) is a matter of common observation.  
(ii) a3, 'everyone' is a welcome marginal improvement on the slightly archaic 'mankind' for pantes, 'all'; and in any case Aristotle means neither men as distinct from gods nor men as distinct from women. (iii) a3-4, délōn, 'it is clear', omitted. (iv) a5, for kuriōtē, 'most sovereign' (association), we have 'highest', which is insufficiently specific, lacking the notion of power or authority or finality present in the Greek. (v) a5, the first kai is epexegetetic, a nuance not lost by translating 'and', but perhaps expressible better by 'i.e.'. (vi) a7 ff., the -ikos words denote not skills ('qualifications') but the roles of the various rulers: the analysis is functional. (vii) a9, gar ('for') is not 'and': it gives the reason for the preceding statement: 'for they reckon that...' would be better. (viii) a16, the Greek says not that 'the citizens' rule and are ruled in turn, but that the (various kinds of) rulers act thus. (ix) a16, 'called' is not in the Greek. (x) a16-17, five