

Primary source analysis



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HERE HERE YOUR HERE HERE Aristotle and Politics “ Politics” is a historical document narrated by Aristotle, one of the world’s most renowned philosophers and educators in history. Aristotle was known for his lessons on how to achieve the betterment of mankind, devoting much of his life to attempting to illustrate the importance of self-control, moderation and obedience of the common man. This particular document was written in 350 B. C., in Athens, during a period of war, conquest and rather savage leadership regimes that continued to enforce strict rules and regulations on citizens. The document has historical significance due to the fact that these old-world regimes continued to use their wealth and political influence to force the common citizen to work vigorously as laborers to help build Greece into an empire. The poor were often mistreated and subjected to intense, sometimes brutal employment with minimal wages or opportunities. Aristotle is attempting to illustrate the importance of democracy as a foundational value system in political leadership and identify the risks associated with wealthier individuals coming to power and creating unfair, self-centered governments. Aristotle identifies that tyrannical leadership is often created by those who were born into wealth and influence who do not learn important lessons regarding compliance and submission. Aristotle points out that the most valuable position in a society is within the middle class ranks since it is here where lessons about servitude, ethical behavior and moral principles are developed. The rich, on the other hand, seem to be more influential and eventually rise to authority in government without having the important lessons learned about how to treat others properly. Key terms in this document include democracy and oligarchy. These are governmental structures that are either governed by the people (as in a democracy) or one

that consists of only a few influential rulers such as those who maintain military superiority or the wealth needed to gain authority and prestige. People in oligarchies tend to enforce their own will and objectives on the common man that creates a division between the rich and the poor that continues to put middle class citizens in lesser positions financially and in terms of their community status. Aristotle identifies that it is important for governments to be managed and constructed by middle class citizens since they hold key lessons on servitude, community togetherness, and moral servitude. The document is important for historians due to the fact that Aristotle was eventually imprisoned for his public teachings that often spoke out against bad government. He was considered a threat to the oligarchy government structure and those who had gain authority through their economic and military influence. Aristotle always attempted to gain support from the common man and he presented his teachings in very public forums in the hopes that he would gain a following of listeners and followers. The government always attempted to restrict his publicity and this primary source is another example of historical leadership that was oppressed by government. Bibliography Aristotle. " Politics", MIT University. (350 B. C.) Accessed April 3, 2011 at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.4.four.html>