

343 BCE- Aristotle is Employed as a Tutor

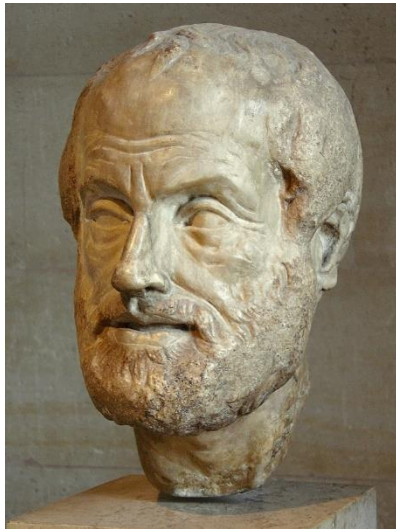


Figure 1:
Aristotle bust,
Roman copy
(Image from:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristoteles_Louvre.jpg)

Aristotle was a student of Plato and a proficient philosopher (Badian, 2006). He was not an Athenian which did lead to some political difficulties in life due to him living in Athens for a number of years and him being considered to be friendly with the Macedonians, but also lead to him not being Athens-centric with him travelling to a number of places within his lifetime (Badian, 2006; Natali, 2013, p.7). It was due to this that in 343 BCE, Aristotle started to tutor Alexander the Great after his father, Philip of Macedon invited him to Mieza (Badian, 2006; Barnes, 2000, p.9).

Therefore, Aristotle stayed within the court from 343 to 340 BCE and ensured that Alexander received an education to prepare him for being in a position of power in later life (Badian, 2006; D. L.

5.1.3). Alexander's education was focused on literature, especially that of Homer (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012; Badian, 2006). Under Aristotle's tutelage, Alexander's great exposure to Greek literature would be a huge influence, the heroes within the stories becoming examples of how to act when in a position of responsibility (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012; Badian, 2006). It was also likely that Aristotle's tutee also studied political theory and history as it would give him more of a well-rounded education and such topics would be of much use towards success as a ruler (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012). However, despite Aristotle's life of philosophy, there is no evidence that he instructed Alexander in such topics and there is no clear information about what Aristotle thought of his student's thoughts and own personal philosophy (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012). Aristotle did not do all this work without compensation, however. As it is clear that in return for his work, Aristotle's hometown was restored from its destruction by Philip from a previous conquest (D. L. 5.1.3). This demonstrates that Aristotle did have a good amount of influence within the court and that he was respected as a tutor enough for these events to occur (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012).

Aristotle wrote many works in which his beliefs were imparted, and within *Politics* his opinions about monarchy were detailed (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012). His work demonstrates that he believes that only if a person was far superior, would they be justified to rule in the position as an absolute monarch- "but the man that is so exceptionally outstanding has come to overtop the whole community" (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012; Aristot. Pol. 3.1288a). Aristotle believed that men were easily swayed and "passion warps the rule even of the best men", demonstrating that he held great expectations for any ruler, and therefore would have high expectations for Alexander (Aristot. Pol. 3.1287a). However, due to the relationship between Aristotle and Alexander becoming more distant in later life, there is therefore no records as to whether Aristotle believed that these conditions were ever met or whether he believed that Alexander became a man who was superior enough to rule (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012).

After Lysippos (-390-300). Portrait bust of Aristotle. [Bronze Bust]. Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristoteles_Louvre.jpg (Accessed 29 January 2020).

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