

347 BCE- Aristotle leaves Athens

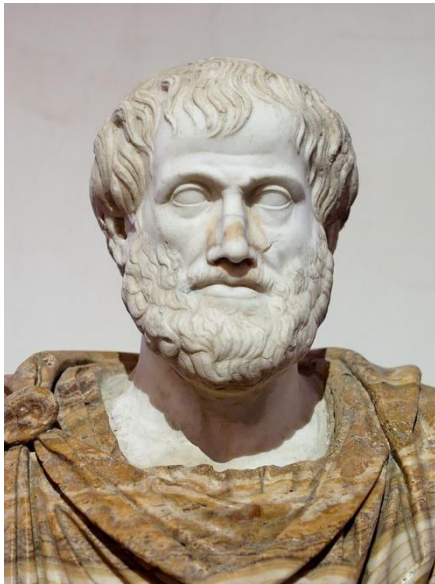


Figure 1:
Aristotle, Roman
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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotle_Altemps_Inv8575.jpg)

Aristotle was a philosopher and student of Plato who was born outside of Athens (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012; D. L. 5.1.1). He was not a citizen and thus spent 20 years living in Athens as a Metic after arriving at Plato's academy in 367 BCE (Ober, 1998, p.290). Not only was he non-Athenian, he also had Macedonian ties due to his father having been a physician in the Macedonian court, which would lead to political difficulty (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012; Barnes, 2000, p.9). This is because Demosthenes and his anti-Macedonian allies were in power in Athens, owing to a hostile reaction to Olynthus falling to Macedonian power in 348 BCE (Barnes, 2000, p.14). In fact, some of the anti-Macedonian views were so strong that some Greeks maintained the opinion that the Macedonians, in reality, were not Greek (Errington, 2006).

All of this culminates to the most likely explanation for Aristotle's sudden departure from Athens in 347 BCE (Barnes, 2000, p.14). This is because although no reason for his leave is reported in any reliable manner, his Macedonian ties would certainly lead to political difficulties which would have been solved with his exit (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012). However, scholars have also theorised that he may not have approved of Speusippus being chosen to replace Plato, which as such could have influenced his decision to leave (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012). Though, due to him leaving before Plato's death (D. L. 5.1.2) and the fact that this occurred certainly for political reasons in 322 BCE (Barnes, 2000, p.14), it is more likely that the anti-Macedonian sentiments were the main catalyst. This is because his departure in 322 BCE proves that the political climate in Athens was one which was not welcoming to those showing sympathy to those who were Macedonian and demonstrates for certain the solution Aristotle would take in such a hostile situation (Barnes, 2000, p.14).

Following his departure, his first stop was in Atarneus, of which he had both family ties and the ruler Hermias would be friendly to both Macedonia and Philosophy (Barnes, 2000, p.14; D. L. 5.1.3). He did not stay there, however, and after a couple of years he was travelling once more and conducting a large portion of his biological research as he went (Barnes, 2000, p.14, Barnes, 2000, p.30). Thereby demonstrating that his departure was one which was helpful for his work and that he was someone who took advantage of any and all opportunities brought to him (Osborne and Nussbaum, 2012).

After Lysippos (-390-300). Bust of Aristotle. [Marble Bust]. Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotle_Altemps_Inv8575.jpg (Accessed 29 January 2020).

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