

ARISTOTLE, Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία 20.5: GENITIVUS
PARTITIVUS OR COMPARATIONIS?

In *Živa Antika* 21 (1971) 131—133, M. Sironić has revived the interpretation of the genitive in *ἔτι δὲ πρότερον τῶν Ἀλκμεωνιδῶν Κήδων ἐπέθετο τοῖς τυράννοις* as partitivus. His suggestion is based on what follows in the text: *διὰ μὲν οὖν ταύτας τὰς αἰτίας ἐπίστευεν ὁ δῆμος τῷ Κλεισθένει*. The αἰτίαι are to be found in chapters 19 and 20 which form an introduction to the reforms of Cleisthenes described in chapter 21. In these chapters there is emphasis on the γένος Ἀλκμεωνιδῶν and the part the Alkmeonids played against the tyranny: this theme is summed up in the text which immediately precedes 20.5: *κατασχόντος δὲ τοῦ δήμου τὰ πράγματα . . . τὰ πολλὰ διετέλεσαν*.

Although I have expressed the opinion¹ that a better structural explanation of these chapters is to consider chapter 20 (admittedly carrying over the anti-tyrannical stance of the Alkmeonids from chapter 19) as an introduction to chapters 21 and 22, this is not a serious objection to Sironić's argument. A major reservation may, however, be expressed about his conclusion, since it seems to be based on the assumption that, for Aristotle, the Alkmeonids played the major and almost the only part in the expulsion of the tyrants. Let us examine four passages which, in their parallel form, seem to speak against this assumption:

(A) οἱ φυγάδες ὧν οἱ Ἀλκμεωνίδαι προειστήκεσαν αὐτοὶ μὲν δι' αὐτῶν οὐκ ἐδύνατο ποιήσασθαι τὴν κάθοδον, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ προσέπταιον (19.3)

(B) ὅθεν ὕστερον μετὰ ταύτην τὴν συμφορὰν ἦδον ἐν τοῖς σκολιοῖς (19.3)

(C) αἰτιώτατοι γὰρ σχεδὸν ἐγένοντο τῆς ἐκβολῆς τῶν τυράννων οἱ Ἀλκμεωνίδαι, καὶ στασιάζοντες τὰ πολλὰ διετέλεσαν (20.4)

(D) ἔτι δὲ πρότερον . . . διὸ καὶ ἦδον καὶ εἰς τοῦτον ἐν τοῖς σκολιοῖς (20.5)

¹ *Ring Composition in Aristotle's ATHENAION POLITEIA*, *AJP* 90 (1969) 406—423, esp. 418—421

A. shows that, while the Alkmeonids were in the forefront of anti-tyrannical activity, they were not the only ones so involved. Further (19. 4—5). while the Alkmeonids were influential through Delphi in gaining the Spartans to their side, Spartan fear of the Argive-Peistratid friendship was equally influential (οὐκ ἔλάττω μοῖραν) in this regard and, ultimately, the expulsion of the tyrants was due to Spartan intervention.

B. introduces the skolion which does not mention the Alkmeonids specifically². Its reference to ἄνδρας . . . ἀγαθούς τε καὶ εὐπατρίδας, if it includes the Alkmeonids, includes them only as part of a larger group.

C., which is at once a summary of and a commentary on the previous action, states the prominence of the Alkmeonids (αἰτιώτατοι³) but immediately detracts (σχεδόν) from that prominence.

The parallelism between B and D is clear from the specific link used by Aristotle:

ἦδον ἐν τοῖς σκολιοῖς
ἦδον καὶ εἰς τοῦτον ἐν τοῖς σκολιοῖς

Formally, *AthPol* 20.5 is a digression⁴ written to clarify σχεδόν. The clarification would be pointless if Kedon were an Alkmeonid, and the parallelism of the two skolia shows that it is unnecessary to look specifically for Alkmeonids in either. Thus, we should retain the usual interpretation: Ἀλκμεωνιδῶν is genitivus comparationis.

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² Cf. F. Jacoby, *Atthis* (Oxford, 1949) 339 note 53.

³ For αἰτιώτατοι used without qualification cf. *AthPol* 32. 2 and 33.2.

⁴ Cf. Keaney, *op. cit.* (in note 1) 418 note 26.