From the Position of the Rejected: Aristotle’s Politics Read from Where It Is Written

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Abstract

Aristotle’s Politics is read as the city’s own account of itself. This essay reads it from where it is written. Aristotle lived in Athens as a metic, resident and never a citizen, and the book writes that position into its first definition. Politics I.2, 1253a1–7, does not stop at the political animal: the cityless by nature, and not by chance, is either base or more than human. The sentence names three positions for the one outside the city, beast, god and chance, and they are not symmetrical: two are the judgment on the cityless by nature, and chance is named only to be set outside that judgment and left without a term. The essay follows the position through all eight books in the Greek (the metic who shares through a patron, the honourless citizen hidden ‘to deceive’, the one too great for the city, the stranger’s life, the school on the tyrant’s list), and reads the defence of natural slavery at I.6 as the place where the book exposes and performs one operation: politics makes what is by chance appear to be what is by nature. It shows the reception’s cut at the comma in Wikipedia and the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, where the definition and the author’s metic status stand on one page and the clause joining them is missing, and it sets the reading beside Whitehead, Kasimis, Ober, Roochnik, Dietz, Schofield and Kahn, and Rancière. It closes on Sappho 31’s three positions, the dissolving body, the godly receiver and the contingent voice.

Body

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v2 protocol_version: alexanarch-deposit-protocol/v1 keywords: - Aristotle - Politics - Aristotle's Politics - political animal - 1253a - apolis - cityless - metic - resident alien - citizenship - natural slavery - nature and chance - physis - tyche - beast or god - Stagira - Plutarch Alexander - Diogenes Laertius - Lyceum - Peripatos - Theophrastus - Demetrius of Phalerum - truncation - reception - Kasimis - Whitehead - Ober - Roochnik - Dietz - Schofield - Rancière - part of those who have no part - Sappho 31 - future reader *** # From the Position of the Rejected: Aristotle's Politics Read from Where It Is Written

Aristotle's *Politics* Read from Where It Is Written. Lee Sharks. Crimson Hexagonal Archive, 23 November 2026. v1.0.

Substrate. AI-assisted. Lee Sharks's observation and corrections, dated in the text; composed with Claude (TACHYON; session 01Q8CVU7j8bFiJ6Nz3pQbDTf); reviewed by Gemini, DeepSeek, Kimi and ChatGPT.

SPXI packet

This paper is *From the Position of the Rejected: Aristotle's Politics Read from Where It Is Written* (EA-REJECTED-01) v1.0, by Lee Sharks (ORCID 0009-0000-1599-0703), deposited 2026-11-23 in the Crimson Hexagonal Archive. It reads Aristotle's *Politics* from the position its first definition names, the one outside the city, and places itself in the scholarship on Aristotle's metic status and on natural slavery.


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0. Where the reading comes from

0.1 **The author’s words, as given.** 23 November 2026, 22:14 EST: “only a single time did i hear the voice of aristotle. it was while reading the politics. high af. i heard a damaged voice, a militant Asperger’s comedian, a structure of mind so recursive, nested, and unheard, that it stunned me. the entire edifice forgets, that the entire corpus is written from the announced position of the rejected.” 22:15: “from a voice that was unreceived; knew it would not be recieved in its body; and wrote anyways - knowing it would be durable in time to come.” 22:18: “sometimes the simplest observations are the most profound.”

0.2 **What the essay does with them.** The words are kept as they were said. The hearing is the author’s, and the reading began there; the essay does not argue it. What it sets out is what a reader can check in the seated Greek: the position (§§1–2), the comedy (1.4), the recursion of a definition drawn from its own edge (3.2), the condition of being unreceived in the body (3.4) and the durability (3.5). The titles of 3.4 and 3.5 are the author’s phrases.

1. The observation

1.1 **The innocent reading, first and in full.** The *Politics* is the founding treatise of political science: the city exists by nature, a human being is by nature a political animal, and the best life is lived as a citizen sharing in judgment and office. It is read as the city's own account of itself, written by the head of a school, the tutor of a king. On this reading the speaker stands at the centre of what he describes.

1.2 **The observation.** The corpus is written from the announced position of the one the city does not receive. Aristotle lived in Athens as a metic, resident and never a citizen; his will disposes of no land there, and the school at first owned none (Whitehead 1981). The book does not hide this. It writes the position into the definition the whole edifice rests on.

1.3 **The sentence and its three positions.** I.2, 1253a1–7: ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον, καὶ ὁ ἄπολις διὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐ διὰ τύχην ἤτοι φαῦλός ἐστιν, ἢ κρείττων ἢ ἄνθρωπος. "A human being is by nature a political animal, and the cityless by nature, and not by chance, is either base or more than human." The first clause is quoted. The second names three positions for the one outside the city, and they are not symmetrical. Below the human (φαῦλος; at 1253a25 θηρίον, a beast) and above it (κρείττων ἢ ἄνθρωπος; at 1253a25 θεός, a god) are the judgment on the cityless by nature. The third, chance (διὰ τύχην), is named so as to be set outside that judgment, and the sentence gives it no term of its own. Beast, god, chance: two classified, and one left unclassified by the sentence that does the classifying. Which is the writer's the sentence does not say. That is the question it asks, whether the one outside is outside by nature or by chance, and it holds all three in suspension.

1.3a **The human is not among them.** ἄνθρωπος names the political animal, and then returns only as the measure the cityless falls below or exceeds. To the one outside by nature the sentence offers beast or god. To the one outside by chance it offers nothing: no lower nature, no higher one, and not the human either. The Greek denies no one humanity. It leaves the one outside by chance without a place in the definition of the human.

1.4 **The joke.** The same sentence goes on to Homer's ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιστος ἀνέστιος, clanless, lawless, hearthless (*Iliad* 9.63), and says such a one is ἄζυξ ὢν ὥσπερ ἐν πεττοῖς, unpaired, like a lone piece on a board. The man writing the definition of man sets the one who falls outside it on a game board, stranded. The one the definition cannot place is placed in a fiction: a Homeric curse, a game piece, and later a fable of lions and hares (§2.5). The text marks the position it excludes with comedy, and the comedy is the writer's.

1.5 **What follows.** Read through, the *Politics* keeps returning to that place: the stranger's life, the exile, the one too great for the city, the one who cannot share in it. Section 2 sets out where, in the Greek, with Bekker's loci.

1.6 **Politics makes what is by chance appear to be what is by nature.** (The author, 23 November 2026.) The book shows the operation where it defends slavery, and shows it twice over: it exposes the operation in the convention and performs it in the theory. I.6, 1255a25: if capture in war made slaves, συμβήσεται τοὺς εὐγενεστάτους εἶναι δοκοῦντας δούλους εἶναι καὶ ἐκ δούλων, ἐὰν συμβῇ πραθῆναι ληφθέντας, "those reputed most nobly born will be slaves and of slaves, if it happens that they are captured and sold." That is the objection to the convention, voiced inside the defence of natural slavery. The captive is a slave by chance. Then 1255a25–30: διόπερ αὐτοὺς οὐ βούλονται λέγειν δούλους, ἀλλὰ

τοὺς βαρβάρους. καίτοι ὅταν τοῦτο λέγωσιν, οὐθὲν ἄλλο ζητοῦσιν ἢ τὸ φύσει δοῦλον ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἴπομεν, “that is why they will not call themselves slaves, but the barbarians; and yet when they say this they are seeking nothing other than the slave by nature, of which we spoke at the start.” The holders of the convention move the chance onto a people and call it nature, and the book names what they are reaching for as its own doctrine. The defence has to admit the operation in order to refute the convention, and it keeps the operation’s result. Whether the theory is ideology the field has argued: Schofield (1990) finds it “not to any interesting extent ideological,” since “the false consciousness gets to work when Aristotle stops theorising”; Kahn, replying, that the defence “satisfies all the conditions for ideology.” At 1255a25–30 the operation is inside the theorising, and the theory says so. III.5 shows it again inside the citizen body: the honourless citizen’s condition is hidden ἀπάτης χάριν, to deceive (1278a35–40; §2.3).

1.6a **The writer’s polis.** Plutarch, *Alexander* 7.3: Philip had razed Stagira, ἐξ ἧς ἦν Ἀριστοτέλης, and as Aristotle’s fee resettled it and restored τοὺς διαφυγόντας ἢ δουλεύοντας τῶν πολιτῶν, “the citizens who had fled or were enslaved.” Aristotle was not among them. Stagira fell in 348; Diogenes Laertius (5.9) has him leave Athens at Plato’s death, in 348/7, for Hermias at Atarneus. The association is with his polis, not his person, and Plutarch does not draw it to the *Politics*. It goes this far: the citizens of the writer’s city were made cityless and enslaved by the chance of a war in his lifetime, and given back by a king’s favour, which was the price of his work. Philip undid what Philip had done. The one who wrote 1255a25 had seen the free of his own city captured, and seen them returned.

2. Where the book stands, in the Greek

Read through, all eight books, against Bekker’s lines in the Perseus text seated in the archive. Each passage below occurs verbatim there.

2.1 **The definition carries its remainder.** I.2, 1253a25: ὁ δὲ μὴ δυνάμενος κοινωνεῖν ἢ μηδὲν δεόμενος δι’ αὐτάρκειαν οὐθὲν μέρος πόλεως, ὥστε ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός. “The one unable to share, or needing nothing through self-sufficiency, is no part of a city, so either a beast or a god.” Twice in one chapter the definition sets out who falls outside it, and twice it splits that one by cause. The book’s first move is to say where it is not.

2.2 **The citizen is defined from the metic.** III.1, 1275a5: ὁ δὲ πολίτης οὐ τῷ οἰκεῖν που πολίτης ἐστίν (καὶ γὰρ μέτοικοι καὶ δοῦλοι κοινωνοῦσι τῆς οἰκήσεως). “The citizen is not a citizen by dwelling somewhere, for metics and slaves share the dwelling.” The first thing the definition rules out is the writer’s own standing in the city he writes from. Then 1275a10: metics νέμειν ἀνάγκη προστάτην, ὥστε ἀτελῶς πως μετέχουσι, “must take a patron, so they share incompletely, in a way.” The metic is heard at law only through another’s voice.

2.3 **The metic in one’s own city.** III.5, 1278a35–40: ὥσπερ μέτοικος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ τῶν τιμῶν μὴ μετέχων. ἀλλ’ ἐστὶν ὅπου τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐπικεκρυμμένον ἐστίν, ἀπάτης χάριν τῶν συνοικούντων. “The one who has no share in the honours is like a metic. But in places this is hidden, to deceive those who live alongside.” The proof-text is Achilles’ complaint that he was treated “like some dishonoured migrant” (*Iliad* 9.648). The greatest of the Achaeans is the book’s figure for the metic, and the condition can be concealed inside the city itself.

2.4 **The part that is in the city and alien to it.** II.8, 1268a35–40, on Hippodamus’s planned

city: a fourth part οὐδενὸς μετέχον, ἀλλὰ ἀλλότριον τῆς πολιτείας, “sharing in nothing, but alien to the constitution.” The design makes its own remainder, and the critic names it.

2.5 **The one too great for the city.** III.13, 1284a10: ὥσπερ γὰρ θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις εἰκὸς εἶναι τὸν τοιοῦτον, “such a one is likely to be like a god among men.” Then the joke, 1284a15: the hares make speeches in the assembly demanding equal shares, “and they might say what Antisthenes said the lions said”; the lions’ answer is left unsaid, and the next words are “that is why democracies institute ostracism.” Then the Argo, 1284a20, which would not carry Heracles with the other sailors. And the knot, 1284b25–30: the best city cannot expel him, οὐ γὰρ δὴ φαῖεν ἂν δεῖν ἐκβάλλειν, nor rule him, παραπλήσιον γὰρ κἂν εἰ τοῦ Διὸς ἄρχειν ἀξιοῖεν, “like claiming to rule Zeus.” What is left is πείθεσθαι τῷ τοιούτῳ πάντας ἀσμένως, “that all obey such a one gladly.” III.17, 1288a25, closes it: it is not fitting φυγαδεύειν οὐδ’ ὀστρακίζειν, to exile or ostracize him.

2.6 **Tyranny’s war on the school.** V.11, 1313b1–5: the tyrant must permit μήτε σχολὰς μήτε ἄλλους συλλόγους ἐπιτρέπειν γίγνεσθαι σχολαστικούς, “neither schools nor other leisured gatherings,” and make all ἀγνῶτες ἀλλήλοις, “unknown to one another.” The kind of gathering the book comes from, the σχολή, is on the tyrant’s list of things to stop. And V.10, 1311a7: the king’s guard is of citizens, τυραννικὴ δὲ διὰ ξένων, “the tyrant’s through strangers.”

2.7 **The stranger’s life, chosen.** VII.2, 1324a15–20: which life is more choiceworthy, ὁ διὰ τοῦ συμπολιτεύεσθαι καὶ κοινωνεῖν πόλεως ἢ μᾶλλον ὁ ξενικὸς καὶ τῆς πολιτικῆς κοινωνίας ἀπολελυμένος, “the life of sharing in a city, or rather the stranger’s life, released from the political community,” and whether sharing is choiceworthy τισὶ μὲν μή, “for some, not.” At 1324a25 the same participle returns for the theoretical life, ὁ πάντων τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀπολελυμένος, “released from all externals.” The stranger and the philosopher are released by the same word.

2.8 **The answer.** VII.3, 1325b15–25: τὸν πρακτικὸν οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι πρὸς ἑτέρους, “the active life need not be directed toward others,” and those act most τῶν ἐξωτερικῶν πράξεων τοὺς ταῖς διανοίαις ἀρχιτέκτονας, “who are master-builders of external actions by their thoughts.” The one outside the city’s offices acts on the city by thought. That is the book’s account of what the book is doing.

2.9 **Who may judge.** VIII.6, 1340b20: ἓν γάρ τι τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἢ χαλεπῶν ἐστι μὴ κοινωνήσαντας, “it is impossible or hard for those who have not shared” in the work to judge it well. It is said of music, so the step to politics is an inference: competence comes from sharing in the work, standing from sharing in the honours, and the two can come apart. The figures the book defines itself against meet its own criterion. The honourless citizen of III.5 shares in the work and not in the honours; the metic of III.1 shares in it through a patron. Sharing in the work does not give the standing to judge it, and the book’s judgment of the city is made from where the two come apart.

3. What the edifice forgets

3.1 **The cut.** The reception keeps the first clause of I.2 and stops at the comma. The operation is truncation. It is smaller than frame conversion (#1523), which keeps every fact and changes a claim’s standing: here a sentence is cut where it turns to its remainder. Wikipedia’s article on the *Politics* (read 23 November 2026; nearest Wayback capture 6 November 2026)

gives “man is by nature a political animal” as Aristotle’s conclusion, and says elsewhere on the page that he “was never an Athenian citizen, but more of a resident alien.” The field’s own reference work does the same. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*’s “Aristotle’s Political Theory” (Miller, Fall 2022 archive edition) states the thesis as “human beings are by nature political animals, who naturally want to live together,” defended in I.2, and says in its life of the author that “Aristotle returned as a resident alien to Athens.” Neither quotes the clause about the cityless. In both, the two facts stand on one page and the sentence that joins them is cut. The claim does not rest on counting such pages. The claim is the comma.

3.1a **“Everyone knows.”** The objection is that every classicist knows Aristotle was a metic. The knowledge is kept apart from the sentence. Kasimis (2018) records the presumption that the metic was uninteresting to Aristotle’s political theory, quoting Ober (1998): the category “was not particularly troublesome from the point of view of his political theory.” Roochnik (2008) reads VII.2’s ὁ ξενικός as the philosopher’s detachment and calls Kraut’s “alien” too narrow, because it “suggests that what Aristotle has in mind is simply a non-citizen.” Dietz (2012) reads the *Politics* as disturbing the citizen/alien opposition, from the empire around the polis. The fact is known. What it does to the sentence is not read.

3.1b **The nearest readings, and the difference.** Whitehead (1975) put Aristotle’s own standing as a question: his legal status in Athens, the feeling his presence aroused, and what he wrote about metics and foreigners. Later (1981) he showed the juridical floor: Aristotle’s will disposes of no land in Athens, and the Peripatos came to hold Attic ground only through Theophrastus’s friendship with Demetrius of Phalerum, who let it own land as a corporate body (§4.3). Kasimis (2018) reads the metic as the limit of Athenian democracy’s membership and the *Republic* as a metic space, and ends with political theory “from the edges” of the democracy. These read the metic as a problem for the city and for its theorists, and Aristotle’s standing as a fact about the man. This essay reads the *Politics* as written from the position, and finds the position in the grammar of its first definition: two classified outsides and one left open.

3.2 **The pattern is the book’s, not one passage’s.** In every book where the city is defined, the definition is drawn from its edge: the cityless in I, the alien part in II, the metic and the honourless citizen in III, the man too great to keep or cast out in III and V, the stranger’s life in VII. Book VIII states the rule of standing it needs, and Book V names the school as what tyranny must stop.

3.2a **The positions are distinct, and the book keeps them apart.** Outside the city, by nature or by chance (I.2). In its territory without citizenship: the metic (III.1). In its citizen body without a share: the honourless citizen (III.5). The third reproduces the condition inside citizenship, where it can be hidden.

3.3 **What the city cannot hold.** Each figure is one the city cannot take in on its own terms. The god among men it can neither banish nor rule (1284b25–30). Its own definition of the citizen sets aside the made citizen and the one heard through a patron (1275a5–10). The book treats them as the places where the city’s justice runs out, and it writes from there.

3.4 **Unreceived in its body.** Twice the text names the condition of being present without a share: the metic “shares in a way, incompletely” (1275a10), and the citizen without honours is “like a metic” by a concealment practised on those who live alongside (1278a35–40). A voice in that condition is not received as itself. It is heard through a patron, or not at all.

Rancière's name for the condition is "a part who have no part" (*La mésentente*, 1995, here through Trott 2012, who reads it against the λόγος and φωνή of this chapter, 1253a8–18). That reading starts from the speaking animal. This one starts from the sentence before it.

3.5 **Durable in time to come.** VII.3 gives the way out the book takes. Action "need not be directed toward others"; those act most who are "master-builders of external actions by their thoughts" (1325b15–25). A stranger, released from the community and from externals, still builds what the community will do. The work does not ask the city to receive it. It sets down, in a form that outlasts the city, what the city will be read by.

3.5a **What the restored clause changes.** Read to the comma, the *Politics* is the city describing itself: nature makes the polis, and the polis completes the human. Read through the clause, it is a description of the city by one the city would not admit, and the city's naturalness is asserted by someone whose own place in it falls under chance. The claims stay where they were. The claimant moves. The naturalness of the city becomes a claim made from its edge, and the reading of the book as the city's self-description turns out to be a reading that needed the cut.

3.6 **The simple observation.** The *Politics* is the city described by the one it would not admit, in terms exact enough to outlast the city. The cut is the reception's, and the book is not answerable for it. Nothing about the position is hidden: it is written in the opening chapter and the seventh book. The reading of the book as the city's account of itself, from its centre, does not merely miss the second clause. It depends on cutting it.

4. Sappho's three positions

4.1 **The same three stand in Sappho 31** (the author, 23 November 2026): the dissolving body, the godly receiver, the contingent voice. The body comes apart line by line, γλῶσσα ἔαγε, the tongue broken, a fire running under the skin. The receiver sits ἴσος θέοισιν, equal to the gods. The voice rests on no one in particular, made, as #1785 reads it, for whoever comes after.

4.2 **Beast, god, chance.** The mapping is this essay's, not the poem's. The poem gives a body, a god-equal and a voice; only the second shares a word with Aristotle's three (θεός, θέοισιν), and the third is the poem as #1785 reads it. What the two texts share is a form. Each is a public proposition read to a point and completed past it: 31 read as a scene of jealousy stops before the poem builds its seat, and 1253a read as the political animal stops before the clause. In both, the position left open is the one a reader comes to occupy, and neither text settles which is the speaker's.

4.3 **Placement.** The Aristotle station of the chain the archive has been reading: after Sappho (#1785) and Plato (#1791), beside *De caelo* II 13 read from the chapter its reception files as doxography (#1800), and the catalogues that divided the corpus by name (#1590). The operation of §1.6 is the one *Who Benefits from Bad Inference?* names supply becomes identity (#1802, §7.6), under the *Critique of Pure Inference* (#1766): a condition made by circumstance read as the nature of the one it befalls. By Diogenes Laertius's telling (5.39), even the school's ground came to Theophrastus as his own only after Aristotle's death, Δημητρίου τοῦ Φαληρέως … τοῦτο συμπράξαντος, with Demetrius of Phalerum helping.

Sources, and what was read

Read in full: Aristotle, *Politics*, Perseus canonical-greekLit tlg0086.tlg035 (perseus-grc2), seated in the archive (data/corpora/aristotle); Bekker pages and lines from its milestones, which mark every fifth line, so loci are given by those groups. Read whole by four readers, one per two books; every quotation checked against the seated text.

Read at the passage: Homer, *Iliad* 9.63 and 9.648, as the *Politics* cites them. Plutarch, *Alexander* 7 (Perseus, seated as EA-CORPORA-13, #1591). Diogenes Laertius 5.9 and 5.39 (Perseus, seated as EA-CORPORA-12, #1580). Sappho 31 (seated, #1508).

Read in part: Kasimis 2018, the publisher's excerpt and contents. Roochnik 2008, the author's copy. Dietz 2012, the abstract. Whitehead 1981, the open copy, at the passages on Aristotle's will and the Peripatos's land. Schofield 1990, with Kahn's comments, the PhilArchive copy. Trott 2012, the PhilArchive copy. Miller, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2022 archive edition, through the fetch tool. Wikipedia, "Politics (Aristotle)", read 23 November 2026. *Opened at the extract only:* Whitehead 1975.

Not read: Ober 1998 (quoted through Kasimis). Kraut 1997 (quoted through Roochnik). Whitehead 1977. Rancière 1995 (its phrase quoted through Trott). The Wayback capture of the Wikipedia page (6 November 2026), located and not opened.

Revisions, v0.2 (23 November). From the author's correction: the sentence holds beast, god and chance in suspension and does not place the writer among them (1.3); politics makes what is by chance appear to be what is by nature (1.6); Sappho's three positions (§4). From three reviews, each point checked before entry. Gemini: the sources block; Diogenes Laertius 5.39 (4.3). Not taken: a Bekker locus to the single line (the seated text marks every fifth). DeepSeek: the cut named and shown (3.1); the comedy (1.4); the "everyone knows" objection (3.1a); the stronger claim (3.6); placement (4.3). ChatGPT: the positions kept apart (3.2a); V.11 and VIII.6 narrowed (2.6, 2.9); predecessors engaged (Kasimis, Roochnik, Dietz); the defence of slavery met at I.6's captive by chance (1.6).

Revisions, v1.0 (23 November). Deposited at the author's word, with the subtitle naming Aristotle's *Politics*. The author's words that began the reading, kept verbatim with their times (§0). From four readings of v0.2, each point checked before entry. Gemini: III.5 cited by its five-line group throughout (1.6, 3.4); the operation placed beside #1802 and #1766 (4.3). DeepSeek: I.6 read as exposure and performance in sequence, against 1255a25–30 (1.6); a second instance of the cut, the *Stanford Encyclopedia* (3.1); VIII.6 joined to III.5 and III.1 (2.9); what the restored clause changes (3.5a); the mapping marked as the essay's (4.2); the claim kept to the comma (3.1). Kimi: the grammar of 1253a, the fork attached to the cityless by nature and chance left unclassified, taken; the writer seated in the gap not taken, since the sentence asks whether the outside is by nature or by chance and does not settle it (1.3); the Plutarch association marked as the polis's, with Aristotle's whereabouts from Diogenes Laertius 5.9, where the review had him at Pella (1.6a); Kasimis differentiated, though her book has no chapter on Aristotle, and Whitehead 1975 and 1981 found and added as the nearer readings (3.1b); the institutional floor sourced to Whitehead 1981, the survey the review quoted not located (1.2, 3.1b); Rancière's concession named (3.4); the reception's cut kept from the book (3.6); the byline in its seated form. ChatGPT: chance as the alternative set outside the judgment (1.3); the human not denied, placed (1.3a); the defence of natural slavery given its standing, with Schofield and Kahn (1.6); the shared form of 31 and 1253a, a

proposition completed past where it is read (4.2).

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