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Politeuma in Plutarch

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Politeuma
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RESUMEN

En varios estudios sobre la interpretación del término politeuma, Patrick Sänger sostiene que tiene tres significados básicos: a) "acto político", b) "la ciudadanía" o conjunto de ciudadanos activos", y c) "sistema de gobierno" y, por lo tanto, "estado" (originalmente polis), muchas veces con la connotación de "constitución". Aunque la interpretación de la palabra suele remontarse hasta Aristóteles, generalmente, se reconoce que sus significados básicos pueden hallarse también en las Literaturas Helenística y Romana, a veces, incluso utilizados uno junto a otro. Teniendo en cuenta la época en la que Plutarco escribió su obra y el vasto período de tiempo que abarca (especialmente en Vitae), podemos considerarlo una guía muy ilustrativa sobre el uso del término politeuma. La palabra se registra 75 veces a lo largo de su obra (63 ocurrencias en Vitae y 12 en Moralia). En la mayoría de los casos se la utiliza sólo una o dos veces en alguna biografía individual dentro de Moralia. Sin embargo, hay tres excepciones a este patrón general: las Vitae de Licurgo y Numa, incluyendo la Comparatio, que concentran 12 ocurrencias, aquellas de Agis/Cleomenes y Tiberio/Cayo Graco (más la Comparatio) con 13 y, finalmente, en An seni respublica gerenda sit dentro de Moralia, en 5 pasajes. En el presente artículo discutimos el modo en que Plutarco combina texto y contexto y cómo funciona el término politeuma según su contexto en las Vitae y en Moralia.

KEYWORDS

Politeuma
Plutarch
Politics
Citizenry
Constitution
State

ABSTRACT

In several studies on the interpretation of the term politeuma, Patrick Sänger argues that it has three basic meanings: (a) 'political act', (b) 'citizenry' or 'active citizenry', and (c) 'polity' and thus 'state' (in origin polis), sometimes having the connotation 'constitution'. Although the interpretation of the word can be traced back at least to Aristotle, it is generally acknowledged that its basic meanings can be found as well in Hellenistic and Roman literature, sometimes even used side by side. Taking into account the epoch in which Plutarch wrote his work and the wide chronological period that it covers (especially the Lives), it can be expected that Plutarch might be a very illustrative guide for the use of the term politeuma. The word occurs in fact 75 times throughout his work (with 63 occurrences in the Lives and 12 in the Moralia). In most cases, it is used only once or twice in a single biography or in a piece of the Moralia. There are, however, three exceptions to this global pattern: the Lives of Lycurgus and Numa (including the Comparatio), which concentrate 12 occurrences; those of Agis/Cleomenes and Tiberius/Gaius Gracchus (plus the Comparatio) with 13; finally, and from the Moralia, the An seni respublica gerenda sit, with 5 passages. This paper discusses the way Plutarch combines text and context, namely the way the concept of politeuma works in the context in which it is used throughout the Lives and the Moralia.

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1.*Politeuma*: the emergence of a labile concept[1]

In a recent review of the existence of communities organized as *politeumata* —representing a specific kind of association, especially during the Hellenistic period—, Patrick Sänger[2] argues convincingly that the term *politeuma* has several meanings and covers a very wide range of realities, such as defining simply a 'political act' of any kind up to the very specific and technical designation of ethnically categorized communities with a military background that can be described as semi-autonomous administrative units, as they existed in several towns or districts of Ptolemaic Egypt. It is therefore appropriate to start this analysis by recalling his words:[3]

> The word *politeuma* is frequently used in the Greek language, and has a wide spectrum of meanings. It can, for instance, refer to a 'political act' or appear as a term for 'government', 'citizenry' or 'state'. As a technical term *politeuma* can, in the context of a Greek city-state or *polis*, also refer to the political leading class of citizens as a sovereign body with specific rights. Therefore, in an oligarchic constitution the word refers to a section of the citizenry; in a democratic one to the entire citizenry. However, the word, as a technical term, is not just restricted to the political organisation of a classical Greek *polis*, but can also be applied to name a specific and organised group of persons within an urban area. In this context we are dealing, apart from one exception (namely a *politeuma* of soldiers in Alexandria […]), with minorities whose ethnic designation is pointing to a migrant background. The members of such a *politeuma* were concentrated in a certain district of a town, which was initially foreign to them and where they lived as an ethnic community.

From a legal and constitutional perspective, the most complex and also most interesting use of the term is the one mentioned last, which designates a reality that could be found during the Hellenistic period and that seems to be specific of the strategic political planning of the Ptolemies, as an ingenious way of promoting in the regions under their control migrant groups, probably military in their origin and usually sharing the same ethnic roots, by allowing them to govern themselves as administrative units. In fact, eight ethnic *politeumata* were identified for this period, all of them in areas controlled by the Ptolemies.[4] Two of them have attracted much attention, both consisting of Jewish groups: those of Herakleopolis and of Berenike.[5] The case of Herakleopolis in Middle Egypt is of capital importance, because a group of twenty papyri (*P.Polit.Iud.*, dated between 144/3 and 133/2 B.C.) was found there and made a determinant contribution to the understanding of the administrative function of the institution of the *politeuma*. This is because the papyri show that the officials who governed the Jewish *politeuma* dealt, on the one hand, with disputes that were internal (and sometimes also external) to the community associated to the *politeuma* and, on the other hand, they also provide a good impression of the range of legal issues these officials covered. The competences they had in the field of justice are comparable to those of Ptolemaic officials, a feature that seems to indicate that *politeumata* resembled semi-autonomous communities whose internal structure had obtained a public dimension, a transformation that was certainly due to a governmental decision. Although the Ptolemaic *politeumata* are not the main focus of this article, it needs to be stressed that this institution allowed the Ptolemies to attract and integrate migrant groups who were useful to their kingdom (especially for the army) and belonged to the upper part of the population (the *Hellenes*) by giving them a fixed place in the administration of Ptolemaic

Egypt.[6]

Despite the significance of this use of the term *politeuma* in a more technical meaning, in what respects constitutional and political history, it should hardly be expected to find it in Plutarch in that sense. However, the word does occur quite often in his oeuvre, both in the *Lives* and in the *Moralia*. It is the object of this work to make a first complete approach to the Plutarchan *corpus*, in order to see if those occurrences can be grouped under the regular categories covered by the term, whether they are used in a very broad and general sense or in a more technical one (even if not as technical as in the case of the communities established at the time of the Ptolemies). A global interpretation of this categorization will be put forward here, but a more focused study of the most expressive grouping of occurrences will be left to future approaches to this same question.

Etymologically, the term *politeuma* has the same root as πολίτης and πολιτεία, and the verbal forms πολιτεύω/πολιτεύομαι. It covers a wide range of meanings, which derive, as all the other words mentioned, from the concept of *polis*, as 'state', 'community of citizens', and also as the kind of administration developed in a specific *polis* during a certain period —and hence the specific 'political institutions' or 'political acts' that are characteristic of them.[7] It is with this latter meaning that the word first appears by the middle of the Fourth Century BC, in the work of the Attic orators, namely in Isocrates' *Areopagiticus* (VII. 78):

> Ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἢν μὲν οὕτως οἰκῶμεν τὴν πόλιν ὥσπερ νῦν, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως οὐ καὶ βουλευσόμεθα καὶ πολεμήσομεν καὶ βιωσόμεθα καὶ σχεδὸν ἅπαντα καὶ πεισόμεθα καὶ πράξομεν ἅπερ ἔν τε τῷ παρόντι καιρῷ καὶ τοῖς παρελθοῦσι χρόνοις· ἢν δὲ μεταβάλωμεν τὴν πολιτείαν, δῆλον ὅτι κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, οἷά περ ἦν τοῖς προγόνοις τὰ πράγματα, τοιαῦτ' ἔσται καὶ περὶ ἡμᾶς· ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν πολιτευμάτων καὶ τὰς πράξεις ὁμοίας ἀεὶ καὶ παραπλησίας ἀποβαίνειν.
>
> If we continue to govern Athens as we are now doing, then we are doomed to go on deliberating and waging war and living and faring and acting in almost every respect just as we do at the present moment and have done in the past; but if we effect a change of polity (*politeia*), it is evident by the same reasoning that such conditions of life as our ancestors enjoyed will come about for us also; for from the same political institutions (*politeumata*) there must always spring like or similar ways of life.[8]

Not a long time after, Aristotle gives the term a more technical use, to describe the kind of institutions that exist within a certain *polis*, and more specifically the people who were 'entitled to share the government' of that *polis* (i.e. those who had an 'active citizenry'), a capacity that was granted to them by the kind of constitution or polity (*politeia*) in which they were living. This is in fact clearly stated in the *Politics*, III.1278b8-14).[9] Some two centuries later, Polybius provides another important contribution to the shaping of the meaning of *politeuma*, expanding it to the concept of 'state' with the connotation of 'constitution', which traditionally corresponded respectively to *polis* and *politeia*, two words sharing the same etymological root.[10] This broader conceptual understanding of the word ends up by becoming characteristic of the term during the Hellenistic period, but the several fundamental connotations presented in Isocrates, Aristotle and Polybius can in fact be found side by side in later times, even in texts by the same author. As Sänger

concisely puts it, summarizing the use of the term in Hellenistic and Roman times:[11] "we can point out three basic meanings of the word πολίτευμα: first, 'political act', second, 'citizenry' or 'active citizenry', third, 'polity/*Gemeinwesen*' respectively 'state'." If this is the case, it can in fact be expected that Plutarch constitutes a good guide to the use of the term *politeuma* in this later period. It is this possibility that is now going to be tested, taking as reference the three basic groupings of the term as presented by Sänger.

2.*Politeuma* in Plutarch

Ruppel, in a study published many years ago (1927), but that continues to be central in discussing the emergence and the meaning of the term *politeuma*, collected and analysed all the literary and documentary evidence that was known by the time he made his fundamental research. Ruppel approaches a large number of authors and could not possibly have examined all the pertinent passages in detail. Even so, he dedicates several pages to Plutarch[12] and calls attention to more than forty passages from the *Lives* and the *Moralia*. Ruppel groups those occurrences of *politeuma* around seven different categories: the regular use in Attic language (*attischer Sprachgebrauch*) respecting political acts and political events; activities of politicians and the results deriving from them (*Tätigkeit der Staatsmänner und ihre Ergebnisse*); authorities and magistrates (*Behörden und Ämter*), comparable to the Platonic *archai* and *timai*; full citizenship (*volles Bürgerrecht*); not simply any regular magistracy, but specifically the highest post in a state (*die höchste Stelle*); the constitution (*Staatsverfassung*); and finally the abstract concept of state (*der abstrakte Begriff 'Staat'*). The conclusion he draws from his analysis is somewhat ambivalent: in fact, Ruppel maintains that the examples in Plutarch bring nothing new to the history of the concept, but he also argues that the work of the biographer has the advantage of showing previous developments of the concept in their full implementation. As a closing remark, Ruppel further admits the possibility that, in some cases, the influence of the original sources can be detected in Plutarch, although he provides no instance of that kind of direct inspiration from Plutarch's possible "*Quellen*".[13]

During the research conducted for the preparation of this paper, it was possible to identify a much higher number of passages where the term *politeuma* occurs in Plutarch's works (75). The method followed to categorize them was not simply to confront them with Ruppel's classification or even to try to introduce other items. On the contrary, the operation was to test the way those passages could fit into a more concise cataloguing of the term, inspired by that of Sänger, as it was briefly evoked at the end of the last section. It must be acknowledged right from the beginning that the use of the term *politeuma* is sometimes rather loose and, therefore, that its categorization in those contexts depends perhaps more than it should on one's sensibility in reading the text. On the other hand, even if Sänger's broader categories seem to be capable of incorporating the whole bulk of references, it will be argued as well that Plutarch brings also some new contribution to the concept (as happens with the use of *politeuma* as equivalent to the idea of 'law' or 'ordinance'), thus partially contradicting Ruppel's final statement that Plutarch has nothing new to offer in what respects the use of *politeuma*.

2.1.*Politeuma* as ‘political act’, ‘political measure’ or ‘law’

The kind of references that fall under this first heading corresponds to more than half of all the passages (forty-four or forty-five, depending on the way the term *politeuma* is interpreted at *An seni* 784D: as ‘political act’ or as ‘governmental activity’, in the sense of being an expression of a specific kind of ‘constitution’). This is hardly surprising, because in those contexts *politeuma* describes a political act of any nature, in general terms. An example from the *Life of Lycurgus* is enough to illustrate this pattern. It occurs when Plutarch is speaking about the creation of the *syssitia* (*Lyc.* 10.1):

> Ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ἐπιθέσθαι τῇ τρυφῇ καὶ τὸν ζῆλον ἀφελέσθαι τοῦ πλούτου διανοηθείς, τὸ τρίτον πολίτευμα καὶ κάλλιστον ἐπῆγε, τὴν τῶν συσσιτίων κατασκευήν, ὥστε δειπνεῖν μετ' ἀλλήλων συνιόντας ἐπὶ κοινοῖς καὶ τεταγμένοις ὄψοις καὶ σιτίοις.
>
> In order to give an extra blow against luxury and eradicate the desire for wealth, he laid on his third and most efficient political device (*politeuma*): the establishment of common messes, so that they should eat together, sharing the same food and bread.

A similar usage of the word can be found in the same biography in a related context (*Lyc.* 8.1), and in the *Life of Pompeius* (*Pomp.* 21.5), but in two other instances taken again from the biography of Lycurgus (*Lyc.* 11.1 and 28.1) the connotation of the term is closer to the idea of ‘law’ or ‘ordinance’. Although the meaning ‘law’ can still be understood in broad sense as being an expression of a ‘political act’ of a certain statesman, it should nevertheless be expressly ranked among those variants of the word *politeuma* involving some kind of novelty.

The Roman pair of Lycurgus’ biography, the *Life of Numa*, provides an instance of *politeumata* being used to describe a bulk of ‘political measures’ (*Num.* 17.1), and the same is also implied in the *synkrisis* (*Comp. Lyc. et Num.* 2.1). The term is used again in mentioning the activity of another legislator —Solon—, when referring to the emblematic *seisachtheia* and the ban of engaging the body of a debtor as personal security for a loan (*Sol.* 15.2). Caesar is credited with a similar measure, which Plutarch labels with the same name of the Solonian political initiative, inscribing it in a set of ‘political measures’, at *Caes.* 37.2: ἐπιτίμους ἐποίησε, καὶ σεισαχθείᾳ τινὶ τόκων ἐκούφιζε τοὺς χρεωφειλέτας, ἄλλων τε τοιούτων ἥψατο πολιτευμάτων. Again, as happened already with Numa, but now in describing the deeds of Solon’s Roman pair, in the *Life of Publicola*, the plural *politeumata* occurs in order to define a bulk of laws or the political activity as a whole (*Publ.* 11.1: ἐχρήσατο τῇ μοναρχίᾳ πρὸς τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ μέγιστα τῶν πολιτευμάτων). It is an interesting detail that Plutarch decided to underline here that Publicola accomplished his deeds based on a special personal authority (τῇ μοναρχίᾳ), thus suggesting that his ‘political measures’ corresponded as well to a certain profile of ‘governmental activity’ that reflected a specific kind of constitutional arrangement (see infra 2.3).

The plural *politeumata* is used again in the *Lives* of Pericles (*Per.* 9.1; 12.1) and of Alcibiades (*Alc.* 16.1) to embrace their ‘political activity’ as a whole, providing a very illustrative example of what Ruppel has called “*Tätigkeit der Staatsmänner und ihre Ergebnisse*”. A similar situation is perceived in those passages where Plutarch describes (as *politeuma* or as *politeumata*) the deeds of the Roman statesmen Cato (*Ca. Ma.* 26.1), Marius (*Mar.* 35.1), Crassus (*Crass.* 13.2; *Comp. Nic. et*

Crass. 2.1)[14], Antonius (*Ant.* 9.1), and the effects of political struggle upon them and the state (*Mar.* 4.7; *Caes*. 8.7; 13.3; 14.16; *Cic*. 23.5; *TG et CG* 7.7; 8.8; 12.2; 30.7; 32.5; 33.8; *Comp. Ag., Cleom. et Gracch.* 2.5; 5.4). Within this topic, it is worth quoting in full a passage in the *Life of Sulla*, because it provides perhaps the most elucidative example of *politeuma* being used to describe a clearly defined 'political act' (*Sull.* 34.5):

> "Ὡς καλόν," ἔφη, "σοῦ τὸ πολίτευμα, ὦ νεανία, τὸ Κάτλου πρότερον ἀναγορεῦσαι Λέπιδον, τοῦ πάντων ἀρίστου τὸν ἐμπληκτότατον.
>
> And he said: "What a beautiful political act, young man, to proclaim Lepidus in preference to Catulus, the most impulsive instead of the best of all men.

With Sertorius (*Sert.* 23.1), *politeumata* falls under the same global meaning of 'political act', although it denotes more precisely the ability to conduct 'political negotiations' or 'political diplomacy' (cf. also *Arat.* 35.3). A passage in the *Life of Pompeius* applies the word *politeuma* to define a 'course of policy' started by Caesar, which brought him great favor in the present and would increase his power in the future (*Pomp.* 47.1; cf. also *Caes.* 4.8). This is an interesting example, because the word is used to inscribe a far-reaching political program in a broad timeline (cf. *TG et CG* 15.1; 30.2). At *Agis et Cleom.* 2.8, an interesting connection of reciprocity is established between 'public acts' (*politeumata*) and the *timai* that they stimulate in a positive way. Later in the same work (*Agis et Cleom.* 3.9), a similar use of the term is registered, although those 'public acts' are perceived more in the sense of 'manners' or 'public behavior', or even as 'conduct' (as in *Dem*. 14.5; *Oth.* 4.1).

It is certainly significant that all those examples are taken from the *Lives*, with the exception of only two passages from the *Moralia*: one is from the *De laude ipsius* (546D) and the other from the *An seni respublica gerenda sit* (784D). The latter, however, is ambivalent, and can also be understood in a meaning closer to a more abstract 'governmental activity', as happens in fact with the other four passages from the same work (see section 2.3).

Some partial conclusions can already be drawn from this survey: the term *politeuma* (or the plural *politeumata*) is used in Plutarch, most of the time, in the sense of 'political act', even if a wide range of connotations can be detected in the way this public action is perceived, from 'law', 'political plan' 'political project' up to 'behavior' or 'conduct'. It should not go unnoticed that the word can be used to define a precise 'political act', restricted to a particular context, but it happens more often that it covers the implications of a certain deed in a broader timeline, i.e. the way those acts affect the people responsible for them, the future course of events or even the state. Finally, because almost all the examples are taken from the *Lives*, the implication is that the term *politeuma* understood as 'political act' is used mainly to describe a statesman in action, thereby in the making of his biography, and much less in theoretical meditations as could be expected from the *Moralia*.

2.2.*Politeuma* as 'citizenry' or 'active citizenry'

This categorization is the less expressive in Plutarch's work. In fact, there are only three examples from the *Lives* (*Phoc.* 28.7; *Agis et Cleom.* 32.3; *Cic*. 30.2), and they all share the common trait of

dealing with the access to the citizen body and with the number of those who were entitled to have full citizenry. The passages from the biographies of Phocion and of Cicero both emphasize that a criterion for access to the full citizenship status (or conversely for being excluded from it) had to do with wealth. As remarked already by Ruppel,[15] who identified as well only those same three passages, the roots for this distinction are already in Aristotle, who clearly stated that richness is a dividing line between oligarchic and democratic governments.[16]

2.3.*Politeuma* as 'state' (in origin *polis*), 'constitution' or as 'governmental activity'

The passages that fall under this last classification are, similar to the first one, quite abundant in number. Let us start with those that are equivalent to the original meaning of *polis* as 'city', 'city-state' or simply 'state'. The term *politeuma* is used with this sense in the biographies of Theseus (*Thes.* 35.4), Romulus (*Rom.* 20.2)[17], Lycurgus (*Lyc.* 4.5; 30.2), Dion (*Dion* 47.3), and it occurs also in the *Moralia* (*Aet. Rom. et Graec.* 291E).

In what respects the use of *politeuma* to define the idea of 'governmental activity' as an expression of a specific constitutional arrangement (and not simply as a 'political act' of any kind), it can be found quite often in the *Lives*, as happens in the biographies of Lycurgus (*Lyc.* 27.3, although here the expression πολιτευμάτων διαφόρων may imply as well different forms of featuring a 'constitution'), Numa (*Num.* 2.6), Solon (*Sol.* 9.3), Themistocles (*Them.* 4.5), Aemilius Paullus (*Aem.* 28.2), the *synkrisis* of Lysander and Sulla (*Comp. Lys. et Sull.* 1.2), and Agesilaus (*Ages.* 20.3 = *Apophth. Lac.* 212C, even if the expression μεταστάσεως τοῦ πολιτεύματος may imply the idea of a change in the 'constitution'). It is also with this meaning that the word *politeuma* is most commonly used throughout the *Moralia* (*De fort. Rom.* 322E; *An seni* 793B; 793C; 795C; 796B; and most probably 784D, if it is interpreted in this sense and not as 'political act';[18] *Praec. ger. reip.* 818D; *Quaest. Plat.* 1011B).

Finally, the use of the term *politeuma* in the sense of 'constitution', following the track initiated by Polybius,[19] appears as well relatively often in Plutarch. Most of the passages occur in the *Lives*. This is the case with the biography of Lycurgus (*Lyc.* 7.1), the *synkrisis* of Lycurgus and Numa (*Comp. Lyc. et Num.* 2.3), Lucullus (*Luc.* 5.5),[20] Agesilaus (*Ages.* 33.2; and possibly 20.3 = *Apophth. Lac.* 212C). Even if the attribution to Plutarch of the work *Decem oratorum vitae* is suspect, it presents a very interesting combination of the term *politeuma* (as the kind of governmental activity that derives from a specific 'constitution') with a form of the related verb πολιτεύω (πολιτευσαμένων), used in the sense of 'administering public affairs'. The passage comprises as well a reference to *politeia*, thus providing a curious example of how those terms and concepts could combine in a close context (*Dec. or. vit.* 851F).

Two passages were left to the end in order to ponder the possibility (even if very cautiously) that they may imply a special use of the word *politeuma*. The first passage occurs in the *synkrisis* of Nicias and Crassus (*Comp. Nic. et Crass.* 2.7). In this passage, the expression ἑλληνικώτατον πολίτευμα could perhaps be understood as a new expansion of the several meanings of the term *politeuma*, although Ruppel[21] ranked it within the regular use in Attic language (*attischer*

Sprachgebrauch). *Politeuma* is used here as a way of endorsing a 'cultural trait' or the kind of 'aspiration' that is typical of the Greeks. Even so, this does not necessarily mean that the term *politeuma* is in itself equivalent to the idea of 'aspiration', and may simply imply that the 'political act' behind it is the vivid expression of this sense of 'Greekness'.[22]

The second passage has to do with the *Life of Publicola*, in what respects the moving into Rome of a significant number of Sabines —'five thousand families with their children and wives' (πεντακισχιλίους οἴκους ἀναστήσας μετὰ παίδων καὶ γυναικῶν)—, headed by Attius Clausus,[23] at the invitation of Publicola (*Publ.* 21.9-10). According to Plutarch, they were warmly received into the community and given land (τοὺς μὲν γὰρ οἴκους εὐθὺς ἀνέμειξε τῷ πολιτεύματι, καὶ χώραν ἀπένειμεν ἑκάστῳ). The expression ἀνέμειξε τῷ πολιτεύματι suggests that they were integrated with the rest of the population, on equal terms, and therefore *polimeuta* probably means the attribution of the status of 'citizenry'.[24] However, taking into consideration the military background that provides the context for the migration of this group of Sabines, and that early Rome needed badly to attract people in order to increase its strength and power —besides her traditional image of a city ready to provide sanctuary to the needy—,[25] it is conceivable that Plutarch may have been influenced by the use of the term *politeuma* to denote, in the technical sense, a community constituted by migrant population and a strong military profile. This is not stated openly, but the supposition is not entirely unreasonable. If so, even this very specific connotation of *politeuma* (as discussed in the opening section of this work) could have left some traces in Plutarch's work. However, the fact that not much is known about the early Sabines and the way they were integrated into the Roman state advises particular caution regarding this possibility.[26]

3. Final conclusions

Taking this information as a whole, it is now possible to make a global appreciation of the way the term *politeuma* (or *politeumata*) is used in Plutarch's work. It is undeniable that the biographer is a major source for the reception of this concept in Roman times. The term occurs much more often in the *Lives* than in the *Moralia*, and this may be explained, in large part, by the fact that the meaning of *politeuma* as 'political act' (and other related connotations) is the one that appears most often, to describe the political activity of the statesmen portrayed by Plutarch. It becomes also clear that sometimes the term occurs in the texts in close connection, but with slightly different connotations. This gives consistency to the idea that, by the time Plutarch wrote his work, the meaning of *politeuma* had already a long lasting tradition, and that the biographer was able to use its wide range of meanings according to what would fit each specific context, Greek and Roman alike. Despite this, it is also possible that Plutarch made his own contribution to enlarge the meaning of the term, by using it in a new specific way, as equivalent to the idea of 'law' or 'ordinance', even if a regulation may in itself be considered the practical expression of a 'political act'.

Taking the whole *corpus* of references in Plutarch, it is conceivable as well to pursue additional lines of research, like the one deriving from the interesting circumstance that in the work *An seni respublica gerenda sit* there is a special concentration of occurrences of the term *politeuma* (a case even rarer to observe in the *Moralia*) and that they all tend to correspond to the meaning of

'governmental activity' or 'political activity'. It is probable that this recurrent use (interlaced with the occurrence of other *polis*-related terms) provides Plutarch the ground for drawing in this particular work what may be called a 'conceptual iconography' depicting the way old men should engage in politics, but this is a subject to be dealt with separately, in a different study.[27]

Notas

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2 (2013). The subject is taken up again by Sänger (2016), in a paper written in German that explores the same basic argument, although extending and concretizing the discussion around the meaning of the term *politeuma*. I thank the author for having provided me a copy of this work while it was still at proof stage, as well as other material, and for being always available for helpful discussion and friendly criticism during the preparation of this paper, although he cannot be held responsible for the perspectives here expressed, except where his opinions are textually quoted. For the main questions dealing with the *politeuma*, see also Ruppel (1927); Biscardi (1984); Zuckerman (1985-1988); Lüderitz (1994); Hansen (1994).

3 Sänger (2013: 52). See also Sänger (2015: 35-38).

4 This is probably true even for the *politeumata* at Sidon. See Sänger (2013: 53-57 and 61).

5 Another possible Jewish *politeuma* may have existed as well in Alexandria, as seems to be implied by the so called 'Letter of Aristeas', although it is not attested by independent documentation as were those of Herakleopolis and of Berenike, and so its existence (although quite probable) cannot be taken as certain.

6 See Zuckerman (1985–1988); Sänger (2013: 63-66); (2016:41-44).

7 "Die innere Politik", as it is called by Ruppel (1927: 269).

8 Translated by George Norlin (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1929), available at *Perseus Digital Library.*

9 On Aristotle's use of *politeuma*, see Ruppel (1927: 272-275); Lüderitz (1994: 187-188); Hansen (1994), who comments on this specific passage.

10 To illustrate this pattern, see e.g. Polybius, I.3.7-8. For further examples, see Ruppel (1927: 275-279).

11 Sänger (Forthcoming) 5.

12 Ruppel (1927: 289-291).

13 Ruppel (1927:291): "Die Beispiele aus Plutarch bringen keine neue Bedeutung, zeigen aber die bisherige Entwicklung geradezu in voller Entfaltung. Vielleicht ist der Gedanke nicht gänzlich abzulehnen, daß hie und da die Ausdrucksweise der Quellen von Einfluß gewesen sei."

14 In dealing with *Comp. Nic. et Crass.* 2.1, Duff (1999: 269), translates πολιτεύμασι as 'political lives', but elsewhere, 258-259, he understood it as 'the two men's political conduct'; the implication is that the term clearly corresponds to the global idea of 'political activity'.

15 Ruppel (1927: 290).

16 See supra first section, and the commentary on *Pol.* III. 1278b8-14. Cf. *Pol.* III. 1279b7-9: ἡ δ' ὀλιγαρχία πρὸς τὸ τῶν εὐπόρων, ἡ δὲ δημοκρατία πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον τὸ τῶν ἀπόρων. In a passage mentioned infra in the third section (*Quaest. Plat.* 1011B), Plutarch recalls Demades' saying to the effect that the money given to the people for public shows (*therorika*) is the 'glue of a democracy' (ὡς ἔλεγε Δημάδης, κόλλαν ὀνομάζων τὰ θεωρικὰ τῆς δημοκρατίας).

17 In this case, it is interesting that the term *politeuma* occurs in close connection with the idea of looking for 'sanctuary' (ἀσυλίας δεδομένης) and with the expectation of being accepted in the newly founded city of Rome. See also infra commentary on *Publ.* 21.9-10.

18 In *An seni respublica gerenda sit*, Plutarch explores the wide semantic field covered by *polis*-related terms (Πολιεύς, πολιτικός, πολιτεία, πολίτης, πολιτεύω/πολιτεύομαι, πολίτευμα) and carefully interweaves them, allowing the emergence of a coherent 'conceptual iconography' that depicts the portrait of how old men should engage in politics. Given its complexity, however, this question will be dealt with separately, in a different study.

19 See supra section 1, commentary on Polybius I.3.7-8.

20 Tröster (2008: 83), speaks of τοῖς Σύλλα πολιτεύμασι in this passage as 'the institutions of Sulla', following the Loeb translation, although the context of political dispute favours the idea that there was a risk of constitutional change.

21 (1927: 289).

22 In a short reference to this passage, Duff (1999: 308 n. 70), translates the expression ἑλληνικώτατον πολίτευμα, which respects the conclusion of the Archidamian War by Nicias, as the 'most Greek political act', therefore in the same line as Ruppel.

23 Appius Claudius for the Romans; see Livy, *Ab Vrb. Cond.* II.16.4.

24 The same is implied by Livy (II.16.5): *his ciuitas data agerque trans Anienem*.

25 Above, in this same section (*Rom.* 20.2), the term *politeuma* (in the sense of 'state') was used in context connected with the idea of providing 'sanctuary' (ἀσυλίας δεδομένης) and attract migrant population into the city of Rome.

26 On the integration of this group of Sabines, see Cornell (1995: 76-77 and 174-175).

27 The preliminary results of this approach were presented as a paper ("The use of *politeuma* as 'conceptual iconography' in Plutarch") delivered at the annual meeting of the Réseau Européen Plutarque, held in Salerno (3-4 December, 2015), in a conference devoted to the topic "Literary Images and Iconography in Plutarch's Works".

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