

**GREEK OLIGARCHIES**  
**THEIR CHARACTER AND**  
**ORGANISATION**

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BY

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## PREFACE

THE following dissertation was awarded the *Hare Prize* in 1894. The pressure of other work obliged me to postpone the preparation of it for the press until last year.

For the study of Oligarchic Constitutions in Greece there are no adequate materials. No oligarchic state has left us any historical literature; nor have we the record of the internal working of any oligarchy: in this inquiry, as in most branches of Greek history, we realise how little we know of any Greek states other than Athens. Our conception of oligarchic government, its character and its method, cannot fail to be partial and incomplete. If we except Aristotle's masterly treatise on political ideas and political forms, information on oligarchic constitutions is scattered over a very wide field, extending from the Lyrical poets to Plutarch. Inscriptions yield less that is valuable than we should expect or desire.

The lack of positive knowledge induced me to devote the first chapter to an examination of the place occupied by Oligarchy and Aristocracy in the Greek classification of constitutions. By a study of the definitions, which are, like the political terminology of the Greeks, too often vague and uncertain, we are able to arrive at the impression produced on the minds of the Greeks by the different governments, and thus we catch a reflection of their real character. In the second and third chapters I

have briefly discussed the causes of constitutional change and traced the development of constitutions, in order to show the place occupied by oligarchy in this process. Two Appendices deal with some problems of early Athenian history. In the fourth chapter the varieties of Oligarchy are discussed, and the last chapter is devoted to the organisation of oligarchic government. It is followed by an Appendix on the revolution of the Four Hundred at Athens.

Of modern books, I have made constant use of the second volume of Gilbert's *Handbuch der griechischen Staatsalterthümer*, which contains an invaluable collection of material. Mr Newman's Introduction to the *Politics of Aristotle* I have found most useful and suggestive. I have cited in my notes the other modern works to which I am indebted.

In preparing the work for press it is my pleasure to acknowledge most gratefully the help of Mr W. Wyse, of Trinity College, one of the adjudicators for the prize, who put many valuable notes at my disposal, and the kindness of Mr R. A. Neil, of Pembroke College, and of Mr J. W. Headlam of King's College, who read my proofs and gave me the benefit of many criticisms and suggestions.

LEONARD WHIBLEY.

PEMBROKE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.  
 February 3, 1896.

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[In the citations of Aristotle's *Politics* I have followed the text of Susemihl's small edition, as well as his numbering of the books. The first volume of Mr Newman's *Politics* is cited as 'Newman, *Introduction*.' References to Dr Gilbert's *Handbuch* are to the second German edition.]

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