

ARISTOTLE'S *Politics*



Second Edition

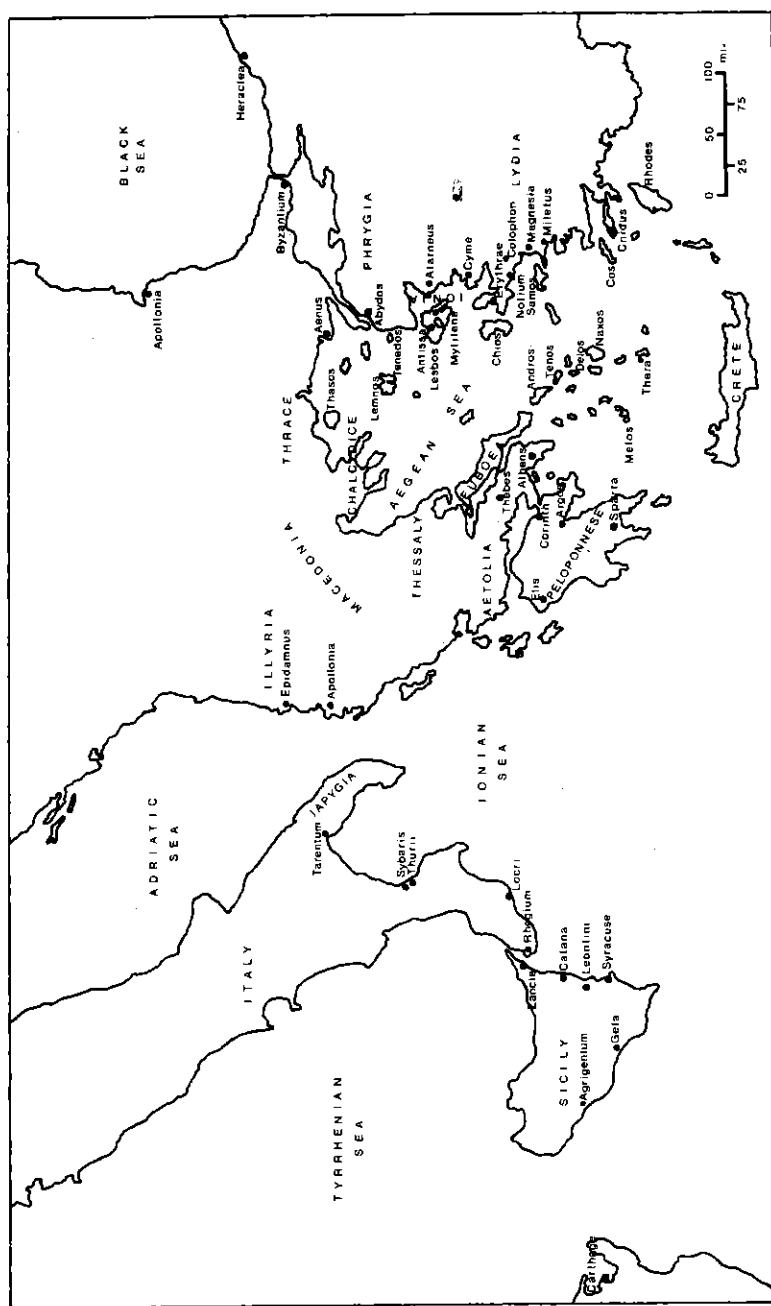
TRANSLATED AND WITH
AN INTRODUCTION,
NOTES, AND GLOSSARY BY
CARNES LORD



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CHICAGO AND LONDON

The GREEK WORLD



Map by Cecilia Schmitt.

Map by

[illegible]

Cecilia Schmitt.

Book 1

CHAPTER I

(1) Since we see that every city is some sort of community, and that every community is constituted for the sake of some good (for everyone does everything for the sake of what is held to be good), it is clear that all communities aim at some good, and that the community that is most authoritative of all and embraces all the others does so particularly, and aims at the most authoritative good of all. This is what is called the city or the political community. 1252a 5

(2) Those who suppose that the same person is expert in political rule, kingly rule, managing the household, and being a master of slaves do not argue finely.¹ For they consider that each of these differs in the number or fewness of those ruled and not in kind—for example, the ruler of a few is a master, of more a household manager, and of still more a political or kingly ruler—the assumption being that there is no difference between a large household and a small city; and as for the political and kingly rulers, they consider a kingly ruler one who has charge himself, and a political ruler one who, on the basis of the precepts of this sort of science, rules and is ruled in turn.² But these things are not true. (3) This will be clear to those investigat- 10 15

1 · The reference appears to be particularly to Plato, *Statesman* 258e–59d; consider also Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.4. 12 (cf. 6.14), *Oeconomicus* 13.5. “Expert in political rule” (*politikos*) can equally be translated “statesman.” *Kalōs* (“finely” or “nobly”) often means little more than “well” in Greek; but the nuance can sometimes be important, suggesting conventional approbation rather than one’s own considered view.

2 · That there is a single “science” of political and kingly rule is asserted in *Statesman* 259c. The “precepts” (*logoi*) in question would appear to be writings (i.e., laws) that constrain the political ruler but not the king (cf. *Statesman* 299c).

ing in accordance with our normal sort of inquiry.³ For just as it is necessary elsewhere to divide a compound into its uncompounded elements (for these are the smallest parts of the whole), so too by investigating what the city is composed of we shall gain a better view concerning these kinds of rulers as well, both as to how they differ from one another and as to whether there is some artful expertise⁴ that can be acquired in connection with each of those mentioned.

CHAPTER 2

(1) Now in these matters as elsewhere it is by looking at how things develop naturally from the beginning that one may best study them. (2) First, then, there must of necessity be a conjoining of persons who cannot exist without one another: on the one hand, male and female, for the sake of reproduction (which occurs not from intentional choice but—as is also the case with the other animals and plants—from a natural striving to leave behind another that is like oneself); on the other, the naturally ruling and ruled, on account of preservation. For that which can foresee with the mind is the naturally ruling and naturally mastering element, while that which can do these things with the body is the naturally ruled and slave; hence the same thing is advantageous for the master and slave. (3) Now the female is distinguished by nature from the slave. For nature makes nothing in an economizing spirit, as smiths make the Delphic knife,⁵ but one thing with a view to one thing; and each instrument would perform most finely if it served one task rather than many. (4) The barbarians, though, have the same arrangement for female and slave. The reason for this is that they have no naturally ruling element; with them, the community of man and woman is that of female slave and male slave. This is why the poets say “it is fitting for Greeks to rule barbarians”⁶—the assumption being that barbarian and slave are by nature the same thing.

(5) From these two communities, then, the household first arose, and Hesiod’s verse is rightly spoken: “first a house, and woman, and ox for

3 · The meaning of “our normal sort of inquiry” (*hē hyphēgēmenē methodos*) is not certain; the analytic approach alluded to here is by no means rigidly followed throughout Aristotle’s writings. Cf. 1.8.1.

4 · Or “some technical skill” (*ti technikon*), from *technē*, art or skill.

5 · Probably a kind of knife used at the religious center of Delphi for a variety of sacrificial purposes, but the meaning is uncertain.

6 · Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1400–1401.

ploughing"⁷—for poor persons have an ox instead of a servant. The household is the community constituted by nature for the needs of daily life; Charondas calls its members "mess-mates," Epimenides of Crete "stable-mates."⁸ The first community arising from several households and for the sake of non-daily needs is the village. (6) By nature the village seems to be above all an extension of the household. Its members some call "milk-mates"; they are "the children and the children's children."⁹ This is why cities were at first under kings, and nations are even now.¹⁰ For those who joined together were already under kings: every household is under the eldest as king, and so also were the extensions [of the household making up the village] as a result of kinship. (7) This is what Homer meant when he says that "each acts as law to his children and wives"; for men were scattered and used to dwell in this manner in ancient times.¹¹ And it is for this reason that all assert that the gods are under a king—because they themselves are under kings now, or were in ancient times. For human beings assimilate not only the looks of the gods to themselves, but their ways of life as well.

(8) The complete community,¹² arising from several villages, is the city. It reaches a level of full self-sufficiency, so to speak; and while coming into being for the sake of living, it exists for the sake of living well. Every city, therefore, exists by nature, if such also are the first communities. For the city is their end, and nature is an end: what each thing is—for example, a human being, a horse, or a household—when its coming into being is complete is,

7 · Hesiod, *Works and Days* 405.

8 · The legislator Charondas of Catana is mentioned again in 3.12 and 4.11 and 13. Epimenides of Crete is said to have written poetry as well as a prose work on the Cretan regime (Diogenes Laertius 1.109–15).

9 · The latter phrase is Homeric in origin (*Iliad* 20.308; cf. Plato, *Laws* 681b); both expressions seem to have designated the extended family (*genos*). The word "extension" (*apoikia*) derives from a phrase meaning "away from the household"; it is the normal term for a colonial settlement. Precisely what Aristotle means by "village" (*kōmē*) is unclear. It is probably to be understood as a country district (canton) rather than a proto-commercial center or town; and Aristotle may be overstating the role of blood relationships in giving rise to it. Cf. Lord 1991, 64 n. 2, Saunders 1995, 66–67.

10 · "Nations" (*ethnē*) were communities organized on a tribal basis and lacking major urban centers—though often occupying more territory than an average polis.

11 · The reference is to the Homeric Cyclopes: "These have no assemblies to take counsel nor customary laws [*themistes*], but dwell in the heights of lofty mountains / in hollow caves: each acts as law to [*themisteuei*] his children and wives, and pays no attention to the others" (*Odyssey* 9.112–15). Cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1180a24–32, Plato, *Laws* 680b–e.

12 · That is, the community that is the perfect or final or fully realized (*teleios*) form of community.

we assert, the nature of that thing. (9) Again, that for the sake of which a thing exists, or the end, is what is best; and self-sufficiency is an end and what is best.¹³

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From these things it is evident, then, that the city belongs among the things that exist by nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. He who is without a city through nature rather than chance is either a mean sort or superior to man; he is "without clan, without law, without hearth," like the person reproved by Homer; (10) for the one who is such by nature has by this fact a desire for war, as if he were an isolated piece in a game of backgammon.¹⁴ That man is much more a political animal than any kind of bee or any herd animal is clear.¹⁵ For, as we assert, nature does nothing in vain; and man alone among the animals has speech. (11) The voice indeed indicates the painful or pleasant, and hence is present in other animals as well; for their nature has come this far, that they have a perception of the painful and pleasant and signal these things to each other. But speech serves to reveal the advantageous and the harmful, and hence also the just and the unjust. (12) For it is peculiar to man as compared to the other animals that he alone has a perception of good and bad and just and unjust and the other things of this sort; and community in these things is what makes a household and a city.¹⁶

20

The city is thus prior by nature to the household and to each of us. (13) For the whole must of necessity be prior to the part; for if the whole body is destroyed there will not be a foot or a hand, unless in the sense that the term is similar (as when one speaks of a hand made of stone), but the thing itself will

13 · The "end" (*telos*) of a thing is its complete or perfect form. Aristotle appeals here to the doctrine of final causes of his scientific writings (cf. *Physics* 194a27–33). It is far from clear, however, how far the analogy between the city and a living organism is meant to extend.

14 · Homer, *Iliad* 9.63–64: "Without clan, without law [*athemis*], without hearth is the man / who longs for chilling war among his people." (Note that Aristotle reverses the terms of this comparison.) It is not certain exactly what game is referred to, beyond one involving the use of dice; the piece is apparently given a technical name or description, "unyoked" (*azyx*), suggesting an unprotected position.

15 · In *History of Animals* (1.1.487b34 ff.), Aristotle defines "political animal" as one that "has a single and common task [*ergon*]" or function, and indicates that the category includes bees, ants, and other animals of this sort in addition to man.

16 · The Greek word *logos* means both "speech" and "reason"; it is man's reasoning ability that enables him to distinguish between the just and unjust, and therefore to conduct himself morally in relation to others in a way that makes human community possible—whether in a household or a polis.

be defective. Everything is defined by its function and its capacity, and if it is no longer the same in these respects it should not be spoken of in the same way, but only as something similarly termed. (14) That the city is both by nature and prior to each individual, then, is clear. For if the individual when separated from it is not self-sufficient, he will be in a condition similar to that of the other parts in relation to the whole. One who is incapable of sharing¹⁷ or who is in need of nothing through being self-sufficient is no part of a city, and so is either a beast or a god.

(15) Accordingly, there is in everyone by nature an impulse toward this sort of community. And yet he who first founded one is responsible for the greatest of goods. For just as man is the best of the animals when completed, when separated from law and adjudication he is the worst of all. (16) For injustice is harshest when it is furnished with arms; and man is born naturally possessing arms for [the use of] prudence and virtue which are nevertheless very susceptible to being used for their opposites. This is why, without virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of the animals, and the worst with regard to sex and food.¹⁸ Justice is a thing belonging to the city. For adjudication is an arrangement of the political community, and justice is judgment as to what is just.¹⁹

CHAPTER 3

(1) Since it is evident out of what parts the city is constituted, it is necessary first to speak of household management; for every city is composed of households. The parts of household management correspond to the parts out of which the household itself is constituted. Now the complete household is made up of slaves and free persons. Since everything is to be sought for first in its smallest elements, and the first and smallest parts of the household are master, slave, husband, wife, father, and children, three things must be investigated to determine what each is and what sort of thing it ought to be. (2) These are mastery, marital rule (there is no term for the union of man

17 · That is, sharing or being partner in (*koinōnein*) a community (*koinōnia*).

18 · Aristotle probably means to allude to incest, cannibalism, and similar phenomena; cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1145a15–33, 1148b15–49a20.

19 · Or “justice [*dikē*] is an ordering [*taxis*] of the political association,” as it is usually understood. *Taxis* here appears to have the sense of “institution,” while *dikē* refers to the process or administration of justice. “Justice” as used in the text here (*dikaïosynē*) connotes the virtue of justice. Cf. Saunders 1995.

10 and woman), and thirdly procreative rule²⁰ (this too has not been assigned a term of its own). (3) So much, then, for the three we spoke of. There is a certain part of it, however, which some hold to be the same as household management, and others its greatest part; how the matter really stands has to be studied. I am speaking of what is called the art of getting goods.

15 Let us speak first about master and slave, so that we may see at the same time what relates to necessary needs and whether we cannot acquire something in the way of knowledge about these things that is better than current conceptions. (4) For some hold that mastery is a kind of science, and that managing the household, mastery, and political and kingly rule are the same,
 20 as we said at the beginning. Others hold that exercising mastery is against nature; for [as they believe] it is by law that one person is slave and another free, there being no difference by nature, and hence it is not just, since it rests on force.

CHAPTER 4

(1) Now property is a part of the household, and the art of acquiring it a part of household management (for without the necessary things it is impossible
 25 either to live or to live well); and just as the specialized arts must of necessity have their proper instruments if their function is to be performed, so too must the household manager. (2) Now of instruments some are inanimate and others animate—the pilot's rudder, for example, is an inanimate
 30 instrument, but his lookout an animate one; for the subordinate is a kind of instrument whatever the art. A possession too, then, is an instrument for the purposes of life, and one's property is the aggregate of such instruments; and the slave is a possession of the animate sort.²¹ Every subordinate, moreover, is an instrument that wields many instruments, (3) for if each of the
 35 instruments were able to perform its function on command or by anticipation, as they assert those of Daedalus did, or the tripods of Hephaestus (which the poet says "of their own accord came to the gods' gathering"),²² so that shuttles would weave themselves and picks play the lyre, master craftsmen
 1254a would no longer have a need for subordinates, or masters for slaves. (4) Now

20 · Reading *technopoiētikē* ("procreative rule") with the MSS rather than Dreizehnter's conjectural *patrikē* ("paternal rule"), based on the use of that term in 12.1.

21 · The Greek words for "acquisitive art" (*ktētikē*), "possessions" (*ktēmata*), and "property" (*ktēsis*) are closely related.

22 · Homer, *Iliad* 18.376. Daedalus was a legendary sculptor who was held to have the power of creating animated statues.

the instruments mentioned are productive instruments, but a possession is an instrument of action. For from the shuttle comes something apart from the use of it, while from clothing or a bed the use alone. Further, since production and action differ in kind and both require instruments, these must of necessity reflect the same difference. (5) Life is action, not production; the slave is therefore a subordinate in matters concerning action. 5

A possession is spoken of in the same way as a part. A part is not only part of something else, but belongs wholly to something else; similarly with a possession. Accordingly, while the master is only master of the slave and does not belong to him, the slave is not only slave to the master but belongs wholly to him. 10

(6) What the nature of the slave is and what his capacity, then, is clear from these things. For one who does not belong to himself by nature but is another's, though a human being, is by nature a slave; a human being is another's who, though a human being, is a possession; and a possession is an instrument of action and separate from its owner. 15

CHAPTER 5

(1) Whether anyone is of this sort by nature or not, and whether it is better and just for anyone to be a slave or not, but rather all slavery is against nature, must be investigated next. It is not difficult either to discern the answer by reasoning or to learn it from what actually happens. (2) Ruling and being ruled belong among not only necessary but also advantageous things. And immediately from birth certain things diverge, some toward being ruled, others toward ruling. There are many kinds of things both ruling and ruled, and the rule is always better over ruled things that are better, for example over a human being rather than a beast; (3) for the work performed by the better is better, and wherever something rules and something is ruled there is a certain work belonging to these together. For whatever is constituted out of a number of things—whether continuous or discrete—and becomes a single common thing always displays a ruling and a ruled element; (4) this is something that animate things derive from all of nature, for even in things that do not partake in life there is a sort of rule, for example in a harmony.²³ But these matters perhaps belong to a more external sort of investigation.²⁴ 20 25 30

23 · In Greek musical language, the highest note in the tetrachord was known as the "leader"; cf. [Aristotle] *Problems* 920a22, with the comments of Schütrumpf.

24 · The phrase *exōterikōtera skepsis* appears to refer to a type of written composition intended for circulation outside the Lyceum (the *exōterikoi logoi* or "external dis-

35 But an animal is the first thing constituted out of soul and body, of which the former is the ruling element by nature, the other the ruled. (5) It is in things whose condition is according to nature that one ought particularly to investigate what is by nature, not in things that are defective. Thus the human being to be studied is one whose state is best both in body and in soul—in him
 1254b this is clear; for in the case of the depraved, or those in a depraved condition, the body is often held to rule the soul on account of their being in a condition that is bad and unnatural.

(6) It is then in an animal, as we were saying, that one can first discern
 5 both the sort of rule of a master and political rule. For the soul rules the body with the rule of a master, while intellect rules appetite with political and kingly rule; and this makes it evident that it is according to nature and advantageous for the body to be ruled by the soul, and the passionate part of the soul by intellect and the part having reason, while it is harmful to both
 10 if the relation is equal or reversed. (7) The same holds with respect to man and the other animals: tame animals have a better nature than wild ones, and it is better for all of them to be ruled by man, since in this way their preservation is ensured. Further, the relation of male to female is by nature a relation
 15 of superior to inferior and ruler to ruled. The same must of necessity hold in the case of human beings generally.

(8) Accordingly, those who are as different from other men as the soul from the body or man from beast—and they are in this state if their work is the use of the body, and if this is the best that can come from them—are
 20 slaves by nature. For them it is better to be ruled in accordance with this sort of rule, if such is the case for the other things mentioned. (9) For he is a slave by nature who is capable of belonging to another—which is also why he belongs to another—and who participates in reason only to the extent of perceiving it, but does not have it. (The other animals, not perceiving reason, obey their passions.²⁵) Moreover, the need for them differs only
 25 slightly: bodily assistance in the necessary things is forthcoming from both, from slaves and from tame animals alike.

(10) Nature indeed wishes to make the bodies of free persons and slaves

courses"; see Introduction, p. xvii), but it is sometimes taken to mean merely "an investigation external to the subject."

25 · Reading *logou* with Π² instead of *logōi* with Π¹ and Dreizehnter. The latter reading produces the more usual translation: "The other animals do not obey reason, though perceiving it, but their passions." Aristotle appears to suggest that the slave differs from even a tame animal by perceiving and obeying reason as distinct from force or habit (cf. 13.2–3, 12–14).

different as well as their souls—those of the latter strong with a view to necessary needs, those of the former straight and useless for such tasks, but useful with a view to a political way of life (which is itself divided between the needs of war and those of peace); yet the opposite often results, some having the bodies of free persons while others have the souls. It is evident, at any rate, that if they were to be born as different only²⁶ in body as the images of the gods, everyone would assert that those not so favored merited being their slaves. (11) But if this is true in the case of the body, it is much more justifiable to make this distinction in the case of the soul; yet it is not as easy to see the beauty of the soul as it is that of the body. That some persons are free and others slaves by nature, therefore, and that for these slavery is both advantageous and just, is evident. 30 35 1255a

CHAPTER 6

(1) That those who assert the opposite are in a certain manner correct, however, is not difficult to see. Slavery and the slave are spoken of in a double sense. There is also a sort of slave or enslaved person according to convention,²⁷ the convention being a certain agreement under which things conquered in war are said to belong to the conquerors. (2) This [plea of] justice is challenged by many of those conversant with the laws—as they would challenge an orator—on a motion of illegality,²⁸ on the grounds that it is a terrible thing if what yields to force is to be enslaved and ruled by what is able to apply force and is superior in power. And there are some of the wise as well who hold this opinion, though some hold the other. (3) The cause of this dispute—and what makes the arguments converge—is that virtue, once it obtains the necessary resources, is in a certain manner particularly able to apply force, and what is dominant is always preeminent in some good, so it is held that there is no force without virtue, and that the dispute concerns only [the plea of] justice; (4) for on this account the ones hold that good will is [the measure of] what is just, while the others hold that this very thing, the rule of the superior, is just. At any rate, if these arguments are set on one side, the other arguments—which assume that what is better in virtue ought not to rule or 5 10 15 20

26 · Reading *monon* (“only”) here with the MSS instead of at the end of the previous sentence with Dreizehnter and most editors.

27 · Or “law” (*nomos*), as it is often translated elsewhere.

28 · “Motion of illegality” (*graphē paranomōn*) is a technical term of Athenian jurisprudence for a suit brought against anyone proposing in the public assembly a measure contravening the fundamental laws of the city.

be master—have neither strength nor persuasiveness.²⁹ (5) Those who regard the slavery that results from war as just adhere wholly, as they suppose, to a sort of justice (for law is just in a certain sense); yet at the same time they deny [implicitly that it is in fact always just]. For the beginnings of wars are not always just, and no one would assert that someone not meriting enslavement ought ever to be a slave. Otherwise, the result will be that those held to be the best born will become slaves and the offspring of slaves if they happen to be captured and sold. (6) Accordingly, they do not want to speak of these as slaves, but rather barbarians. When they say this, however, they are in search of nothing other than the slave by nature of which we spoke at the beginning; for they must necessarily assert that there are some persons who are everywhere slaves, and others who are so nowhere. (7) It is the same way with good birth as well; for they consider themselves well born not only among their own but everywhere, but barbarians only at home—the assumption being that there is something well born and free simply, and something not simply [but relatively], as Theodectes's Helen says:

As offshoot of divine roots on either side
Who would dare call me serving-maid?³⁰

(8) When they speak in this way, it is by nothing other than virtue or vice that they define what is slave and what is free, who is well born and who is ill born. For they claim that from the good should come someone good, just as a human being comes from a human being and a beast from beasts. But while nature wishes to do this, it is often unable to. (9) That there is some reason in the dispute, therefore, and that it is not [simply] the case that the ones are slaves by nature and the others free, is clear; and also that such a distinction does exist for some, where it is advantageous as well as just for the one to be enslaved and the other to be master; and that the one ought to be ruled

29 · This difficult passage has been variously interpreted. Newman comments, "One side argues from this, that, force being accompanied by virtue, and virtue attracting good-will, slavery is just only where there is good-will between master and slave, and that consequently the indiscriminate enslavement of those conquered in war is unjust; the other side argues that as force implies virtue, wherever there is the force to enslave, there is the right to enslave." The "good will" of the MSS (*eunoia*) has been questioned by some editors; for the connection between good will and virtue, however, see *Eth. Nic.* 1166b30–67a21. We have no other information about debates over slavery in ancient Greece, and it is quite uncertain to whom Aristotle is here referring. Cf. Saunders 1995.

30 · Theodectes, fr. 3 Nauck.

and the other to rule, and to rule by the sort of rule that is natural for them, which is mastery, (10) while bad rule is disadvantageous for both. For the same thing is advantageous for the part and the whole and for body and soul, and the slave is a sort of part of the master—a part of his body, as it were, animate yet separate. There is thus a certain advantage—and even a friendship of slave and master for one another—for those slaves who merit being such by nature; but for those who do not merit it in this way but who are slaves according to convention and by force, the opposite is the case.³¹

CHAPTER 7

(1) It is evident from these things as well that mastery and political rule are not the same thing and that all the sorts of rule are not the same as one another, as some assert. For the one sort is over those free by nature, the other over slaves; and household management is monarchy (for every household is run by one alone), while political rule is over free and equal persons. (2) Now the master is so called not according to a science he possesses but through being a certain sort, and similarly with the slave and the free person. Still, there could be a science of mastery and one of slavery. The science of slavery would be the sort of thing provided through the education offered by the fellow in Syracuse—for someone there used to receive pay for teaching slave boys their

31 · Aristotle's notorious defense here of "natural slavery" is problematic in a number of ways, and has given rise to very diverse interpretations. Some have argued that natural slaves are mentally deficient persons essentially incapable of taking care of themselves—which would imply that Aristotle was in fact a radical critic of slavery as it actually existed in his day (Athenians, for example, held some 100,000 slaves—twice the adult male population—at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War). Others believe that natural slaves for him are deficient morally rather than mentally, and potentially represent a much larger group (consider Simpson 1998, 31–44). It is necessary to keep in mind the widespread sense of racial superiority among polis-dwelling Greeks over the "barbarians" of the Balkans and the Persian Empire, who made up a very large proportion of Greek slaves; this goes some way toward explaining the virtually universal acceptance among them of slavery as an institution—indeed, to the extent that slavery was controversial, it was relative to the enslavement of other Greeks (consider Plato, *Republic* 469b–c, 471a). In an important passage in *Pol.* 7 (7.1327b23–36), Aristotle appeals to differences in climate to account for the apparently innate differences between Greeks and those living to its north ("Europe") or east ("Asia"): Greeks possess both intelligence (*dianoia*) and "spiritedness" (*thymos*); conditions in Europe, on the other hand, favor the development of spiritedness without intelligence, while those in Asia favor intelligence but not spiritedness. This in turn explains why Greeks regularly best Asians in war—and why Asians make especially good slaves. See Kraut 2002, ch. 8.

regular serving chores; (3) and there might be additional learning in such matters, for example in cookery and other service of this type. For certain works are more honored or more necessary than others, and as the proverb has it, "slave before slave, master before master."³² (4) All things of this sort, then, are sciences of slavery; but the science of mastery is expertise in using slaves, since the master is what he is not in the acquiring of slaves but in the use of them. This science has nothing great or dignified about it: the master must know how to command the things that the slave must know how to do. (5) Hence for those to whom it is open not to be bothered with such things, a steward assumes this prerogative, while they themselves engage in politics or philosophy. Expertise in acquiring slaves is different from both of these—that is, the just sort of acquiring, which is like a certain kind of war or hunting. Concerning slave and master, then, let the discussion stand thus.

CHAPTER 8

1256a (1) But let us examine generally, in accordance with our normal sort of approach, possessions as such and the art of getting goods,³³ since the slave too turned out to be a part of one's possessions. In the first place, then, one might raise the question whether the art of getting goods is the same as household management, a part of it, or subordinate to it; and if subordinate, whether it is so in the way the art of making shuttles is to the art of weaving, or in the way the art of casting bronze is to the art of sculpture. For these are not subordinate in the same way, but the one provides instruments, the other the matter. (2) (By the matter I mean the substance out of which some work is performed—for example, wool for the weaver or bronze for the sculptor.) Now it is clear that household management is not the same as the art of getting goods, for it belongs to the latter to supply and the former to use. For what is the expertise that uses the things in the house if not expertise in

32 · Philemon, fr. 53 Kock.

33 · The term rendered "expertise in getting goods" is *chrēmatistikē*, from *chrēmata*, (material) "goods." Aristotle uses the term here in several distinct senses which it is critical to distinguish: as a neutral or general term (equivalent to "expertise in acquisition"), as a positive term for the activity of satisfying natural human needs, and in a negative sense, as the (unnatural) art of money-making; cf. Newman. At the risk of some confusion, I have translated the term as "the art of money-making" wherever it clearly bears the negative sense. *Pol.* 1.8–11 is the most important discussion of what we today call economics not only in Aristotle's works but in all of ancient literature. See generally Meikle 1995.

household management? But whether getting goods is a part of it or different in kind is a matter of dispute. (3) For if it belongs to the expert at getting goods to discern how to get goods and property, and if property and wealth encompass many parts, one must consider in the first place whether expertise in farming is part of expertise in getting goods³⁴ or different in kind, and whether this is the case for the concern with sustenance generally and the possessions connected with it. (4) There are indeed many kinds of sustenance, and therefore many ways of life both of animals and of human beings. For it is impossible to live without sustenance, so that the differences in sustenance have made the ways of life of animals differ. (5) For of beasts some live in herds and others scattered — whichever is advantageous for their sustenance, on account of some of them being carnivores, some herbivores, and some omnivores; so that it is with a view to their convenience and their predilections in these matters that nature has determined their ways of life. And because the same thing is not pleasant to each kind of animal according to nature but different things to different kinds, among the carnivores and the herbivores themselves their ways of life differ from one another. (6) The same is the case for human beings as well; for there are great differences in their ways of life. The idlest are nomads: they derive sustenance from tame animals without labor and amid leisure, though as it is necessary for their herds to move about on account of their pastures, they are compelled to follow along with them, as if they were farming a living farm. (7) Others live from hunting, and different sorts from different sorts of hunting. Some, for example, live from brigandage;³⁵ others from fishing, if they dwell near lakes, marshes, rivers, or a sea that is suitable; others from birds or wild beasts. But the type of human being that is most numerous lives from the land and from cultivated crops.

(8) The ways of life are, then, about this many, or at least those which involve self-generated work and do not supply sustenance through exchange and commerce: the way of life of the nomad, the farmer, the brigand, the fisher, and the hunter. There are also some who live pleasantly by combining several of these in order to compensate for the shortcomings of one way of life, where it happens to be lacking in sufficiency. For example, some combine the nomad's with the brigand's, some the farmer's with the hunter's, and similarly with others as well — they pass their time in the manner that need [to-

34 · Reading *chrēmatistikēs* with the MSS rather than the conjectural *oikonomikēs* ("of expertise in household management") adopted by Dreizehnter.

35 · The term encompasses robbery on land as well as at sea, i.e. piracy. Cf. Plato, *Laws* 823b.

gether with pleasure] compels them to.³⁶ (9) Now property of this sort is evidently given by nature itself to all animals, both immediately from birth and when they have reached completion. (10) For at birth from the very beginning some animals provide at the same time as much sustenance as is adequate until the offspring can supply itself—for example, those that give birth to larvae or eggs; while those that give birth to live offspring have sustenance for these in themselves for a certain period—the natural substance called milk. (11) It is clear in a similar way, therefore, that for grown things as well one must suppose both that plants exist for the sake of animals and that the other animals exist for the sake of human beings—the tame animals, both for use and sustenance, and most if not all of the wild animals, for sustenance and other assistance, in order that clothing and other instruments may be got from them.³⁷ (12) If, then, nature makes nothing that is incomplete or purposeless, nature must necessarily have made all of these for the sake of human beings.

Hence the art of war will also be in some sense a natural form of the acquisitive art; for one part of it is expertise in hunting, which should be used with a view both to beasts and to those human beings who are naturally suited to be ruled but unwilling—this sort of war being by nature just. (13) One kind of the acquisitive art, then, is by nature a part of household management, and must either be available or be supplied by the latter so as to be available—the art of acquiring those goods a store of which is both necessary for life and useful for the community of a city or household.³⁸ (14) At any rate, it would seem to be these things that make up genuine wealth. For sufficiency³⁹ in possessions of this sort with a view to a good life is not limitless, as Solon asserts it to be in his poem: “of wealth no boundary lies revealed to men.”⁴⁰ (15) There is such a boundary, just as in the other arts; for there is no art that has an instrument that is without limit either in number or in size, and wealth is the aggregate of instruments belonging to household managers and political rulers. That there is a natural art of acquisition for household managers and political rulers, then, and the cause of this, is clear.

36 · *Synanankazein*: cf. Newman.

37 · Reading this sentence with the MSS rather than as punctuated and supplemented by Dreizehnter.

38 · Reading *ho* with the MSS rather than *hōi* with Dreizehnter in b27. I understand *chrēmātōn* in 29 to depend on *krētikēs* in 27.

39 · *To autarches einai*, often translated “self-sufficiency”; but the primary meaning here and throughout this discussion is “having enough,” not “being independent of others.” Cf. Meikle 1995, 44–45.

40 · Solon, fr. 1, 71 Diehl.

CHAPTER 9

(1) But there is another type of acquisitive art that they particularly call— 40
and justifiably so—the art of getting goods, on account of which there is
held to be no limit to wealth and property. This is considered by many to be 1257a
one and the same as the sort mentioned because of the resemblance between
them; and while it is not the same as the one spoken of, it is not far from it
either. The one is by nature, while the other is not by nature but arises rather
through a certain experience and art. 5

(2) Concerning this, let us take the following as our beginning. Every pos-
session has a double use. Both of these uses belong to it as such, but not in the
same way, the one being proper and the other not proper to the thing. In the
case of shoes, for example, one can wear them or one can trade them.⁴¹ Both 10
of these are uses of shoes; (3) for the one exchanging shoes with someone
who needs them in return for money or sustenance uses shoes as shoes, but
not in respect of their proper use; for they did not come to be for the sake of
exchange. The same is the case concerning other possessions as well. (4) For 15
trading can be applied to all things; it arises in the first place from some-
thing that is according to nature—the fact that human beings have either
more or fewer things than what is required. Thus it is also clear that com-
merce is not by nature part of the art of making money;⁴² for it was neces-
sary to make an exchange in order to obtain what they required. (5) In the 20
first community, then—that is, the household—it is evident that exchange
has no function, but only when the community has already become more
numerous. For those in the household shared all of the same things, while
persons separated into different households needed many other things as
well, and it was necessary to make transfers of these things according to their
needs, as many barbarian nations still do, through barter.⁴³ (6) For they ex- 25
change useful things for one another and nothing besides—giving, for ex-
ample, wine and accepting grain, and similarly for other such things. This
sort of trading is not contrary to nature, nor is it any form of money-making,
for it existed in order to support natural sufficiency. (7) However, the latter 30
arose from it reasonably enough. For as the assistance of foreigners became

41 · Compare the general discussion of “exchange” in *Eth. Nic.* 5.5.

42 · That is, *chrēmatistikē* in the pejorative sense. Aristotle seems to use the terms “trade” (*metablētikē*) and “commerce” (*kapelikē*) interchangeably; in normal Greek usage, the latter term tends to be limited to local or retail as distinct from long-distance trade.

43 · Rendering *kapelikē* “barter,” with Newman.

pursue what is well and avoid the bad, these things must necessarily be addressed in the discourses on the regimes.⁶³ For since the household as a whole is a part of the city, and these things of the household, and one should look
15 at the virtue of the part in relation to the virtue of the whole, both children and women must necessarily be educated looking to the regime, at least if it makes any difference with a view to the city's being excellent that both its children and its women are excellent. (16) But it necessarily makes a difference: women are a part amounting to a half of free persons, and from the
20 children come those who are sharers in the regime. So since there has been discussion of these matters, and we must speak elsewhere of those remaining, let us leave off the present discourses as having reached an end and make another beginning to the argument. Let us investigate in the first instance the views that have been put forward about the best regime.

63 · There is no discussion of this sort in the remainder of the *Politics* as we have it. What is meant by "the [discourses] on the regimes" is not certain; the reference would seem to be to books 2-8 or 3-8 of the *Politics*. See Introduction, n. 63.

Book 2

CHAPTER I

(1) Since it is our intention to study the sort of political community that is superior to all for those capable of living as far as possible in the manner one would pray for,¹ we should also investigate other regimes, both those in use in some of the cities that are said to be well managed and any others spoken about by certain persons that are held to be in a fine condition, in order that both what is correct in their condition and what is useful may be seen—and further, that to seek something apart from them may not be held wholly to belong to those wishing to act the sophist,² but that we may be held to enter into this inquiry because those regimes now available are in fact not in a fine condition. (2) We must make a beginning that is the natural beginning for this investigation. It is necessary that all the citizens either share in everything, or in nothing, or in some things but not in others. Now it is evident that to share in nothing is impossible; for the regime is a certain sort of community,³ and it is necessary in the first instance to share in a location: a single city occupies a single location, and the citizens are sharers in a single city. (3) But, of the things in which there can be sharing, is it better for the city that is going to be finely administered to share in all of them, or is it better to share in some but not in others? For it is possible for the citizens to share with one another in respect to children and women and possessions, as in the *Republic* of Plato; for there Socrates asserts that children and women

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1 · Or literally “according to prayer” (*kat’ euchên*), an expression Aristotle uses in a quasi-technical way to characterize the best or (as it is often translated) “ideal” regime.

2 · Probably a reference to Isocrates (*Antidosis* 83); cf. *Eth. Nic.* 10.9.1181a12–19.

3 · It is important to keep in mind throughout the link between “sharing” (*koinônein*) and “community” (*koinōnia*).

and property should be common.⁴ Which is better, then, the condition that exists now or one based on the law that is described in the *Republic*?

CHAPTER 2

- 10 (1) Having women common to all involves many difficulties; but a particular difficulty is that the reason Socrates gives as to why there should be legislation of this sort evidently does not result from his arguments. Further, with respect to the end which he asserts the city should have, it is, as has just been said, impossible; but how one should distinguish a sense in which it is possible is not discussed. (2) I mean, that it is best for the city to be as far as possible entirely one; for this is the basic premise Socrates adopts. And yet it is evident that as it becomes increasingly one it will no longer be a city. For the city is in its nature a sort of aggregation, and as it becomes more a unity it will be a household instead of a city, and a human being instead of a household; for we would surely say that the household is more a unity than the city, and the individual than the household. So even if one were able to do this, one ought not do it, as it would destroy the city. (3) Now the city is made up not only of a number of human beings, but also of those differing in kind: a city does not arise from persons who are similar. A city differs from an alliance. The latter is useful by its quantity, even if its parts are the same in kind (since an alliance exists by nature for mutual assistance), as when a greater weight is added to the scale. In this sort of way, too, a city differs from a nation, when the multitude is not scattered in villages but rather is like the Arcadians.⁵ Those from whom a unity should arise differ in kind. (4) It is thus reciprocal equality that preserves cities, as was said earlier in the [discourses on] ethics.⁶ This is necessarily the case even among persons who are free and equal, for all cannot rule at the same time, but each rules for a year or according to some other arrangement or period of time. (5) In this way, then, it results that all rule, just as if shoemakers and carpenters were to exchange

4 · Plato, *Republic* 449a ff. "Common" translates the adjective *koinos*.

5 · The meaning of this sentence has been much disputed (cf. Newman). Aristotle's argument seems to presuppose a distinction between nations (*ethnē*) consisting simply of autonomous villages and nations consisting of villages subject to some central authority: the relatively primitive Arcadians had been organized in a kind of federal state since the founding of the fortified center of Megalopolis in 362 BC. Aristotle suggests that a state of this sort differs from a city by being merely an alliance of elements (villages) not differing in kind.

6 · *Eth. Nic.* 1132b33–34 and ff.

places rather than the same persons always being shoemakers and carpenters. (6) But since that condition is better also with respect to the political community, it is clear that it is better if the same always rule, where this is possible; but in cases where it is not possible because all are equal in their nature, and it is at the same time just for all to have a share in ruling (regardless of whether ruling is something good or something mean), there is at least an imitation of this.⁷ (7) For some rule and some are ruled in turn, as if becoming other persons. And, in the same way, among the rulers different persons hold different offices. It is evident from these things, then, that the city is not naturally one in this sense as some argue, and what was said to be the greatest good for cities actually destroys them; yet the good of each thing is surely what preserves it. (8) It is evident in another way as well that to seek to unify the city excessively is not good. For a household is more self-sufficient than one person, and a city than a household; and a city tends to come into being at the point when the community formed by a multitude is self-sufficient. If, therefore, the more self-sufficient is more choiceworthy, what is less a unity is more choiceworthy than what is more a unity.

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CHAPTER 3

(1) But even if it is best for the community to be as far as possible a unity, even this does not appear to be proved by the argument that it will follow if all say "mine" and "not mine" at the same time; for Socrates supposes this is an indication of the city being completely one. (2) For "all" has a double sense. If it means "each individually," perhaps this would be closer to what Socrates wants to do, for each will then speak of the same boy as his own son and the same woman as his own wife, and similarly with regard to property and indeed to everything that comes his way. But those who have wives and children in common will not speak of them in this way, but as all collectively and not individually; (3) and similarly with respect to property, as all collectively but not individually. It is evident, then, that a certain fallacy is involved in the

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7 · The text is uncertain at this point. Dreizehnter brackets the sentence following as a gloss; none of its variant forms yields a satisfactory sense, but the general idea appears merely to elaborate the remark that alternation of rule among equals imitates the permanent differentiation of rulers and ruled in a society of unequals. Saunders translates: "But among those among whom this is not possible, since they are all by nature equal, and among whom it is also at the same time just that all should share in the benefit or chore of ruling, then the principles (a) that equals should yield place in turn, and (b) that out of office they should be similar, approximate to that practice."

phrase "all say"—indeed, the double sense of "all," "both," "odd," and "even" produces contentious syllogisms in arguments as well.⁸ Therefore that "all say the same thing" is in one way fine, though impossible, while in another way it is not even productive of concord.

(4) Furthermore, the formula is harmful in another way. What belongs in common to the most people is accorded the least care: they take thought for their own things above all, and less about things common, or only so much as falls to each individually. For, apart from other things, they slight them on the grounds that someone else is taking thought for them—just as in household service many attendants sometimes do a worse job than fewer. (5) Each of the citizens comes to have a thousand sons, though not as an individual, but each is in similar fashion the son of any of them; hence all will slight them in similar fashion.

Further, each says "mine" of a citizen who is acting well or ill only in this sense, that he is one of a certain number: each really says "mine or his," meaning by this every individual of the thousand or however many the city has. And even then he is in doubt, for it is unclear who has happened to have offspring, or whether any have survived. (6) Yet which is superior—for each of two thousand (or ten thousand) individuals to say "mine" and address the same thing, or rather the way they say "mine" in cities now? (7) For now the same person is addressed as a son by one, by another as a brother, by another as a cousin, or according to some other sort of kinship, whether of blood or of relation and connection by marriage—in the first instance of himself, then of his own; and further, another describes him as clansman or tribesman. It is better, indeed, to have a cousin of one's own than a son in the sense indicated. (8) Actually, though, it is impossible to avoid having some suspect who their brothers and sons or fathers and mothers really are; for they will of necessity find proofs of this in the similarities that occur between children and their parents. (9) Indeed, some of those who have written accounts of travels⁹ assert that this in fact happens; for they say that some inhabitants of upper Libya have women in common, yet the children they bear are distinguishable according to their similarities. There are some women, and some females of other animals such as horses and cattle, that are particularly inclined by nature to produce offspring similar to the parents, like the mare at Pharsalus called the Just.

8 · See Aristotle, *Sophistic Refutations* 166a33 ff.

9 · An apparent reference to the geographer Eudoxus of Cnidos (cf. frs. 322, 323, and 360 Lasserre); see also Herodotus 4.180.

CHAPTER 4

(1) Further, it is not easy for those establishing this sort of partnership to avoid such difficulties as outrages or involuntary homicides, for example, or voluntary homicides, assaults, or verbal abuse. None of these things is holy when it involves fathers, mothers, or those not distant in kinship, as distinct from outsiders; yet they must necessarily occur more frequently among those who are ignorant of their relatives than among those familiar with them, and when they do occur, only those who are familiar with their relatives can perform the lawful expiations, while the others cannot. (2) It is also odd that while sons are made common, only sexual intercourse between lovers is eliminated, but love¹⁰ is not forbidden, or other practices which are improper particularly for a father in relation to his son or a brother in relation to his brother, as indeed is love by itself. (3) It is also odd that sexual intercourse is eliminated for no other reason than that the pleasure involved is too strong, it being supposed that it makes no difference whether this occurs between a father and a son or between brothers.¹¹

(4) It would seem to be more useful for the farmers to have women and children in common than for the guardians.¹² For there will be less affection where children and women are common; but the ruled should be of this sort if they are to obey their rulers and not engage in subversion. (5) In general, there must necessarily result from a law of this sort the very opposite of what correctly enacted laws ought properly to cause, and of what caused Socrates to suppose that the matter of children and women should be arranged in this way. (6) For we suppose affection to be the greatest of good things for cities, for in this way they would least of all engage in factional conflict; and Socrates praises above all the city's being one, which is held to be, and which he asserts to be, the work of affection—just as in the discourses on love¹³ we know that Aristophanes speaks of lovers who from an excess of affection “desire to grow together,” the two of them becoming one. (7) Now here it must necessarily happen that both, or one of them, disappear in the union; in the city, however, affection necessarily becomes diluted through this sort

10 · That is, erotic love (*êros*), as opposed to friendship or affection (*philia*).

11 · Plato, *Republic* 403b.

12 · The best regime of the early books of the *Republic* consists fundamentally of two classes, a producing class (farmers and artisans) and a ruling and military class (called by Plato “guardians”). It is left unclear in the *Republic* whether communism is meant to be extended to the lower class.

13 · In Plato's *Symposium* (191a ff.).

of community, and the fact that a father least of all says "mine" of his son, or the son of his father. (8) Just as adding much water to a small amount of wine makes the mixture imperceptible, so too does this result with respect to the kinship with one another based on these terms, it being least of all necessary in a regime of this sort for a father to take thought¹⁴ for his sons as sons, or a son for his father as a father, or brothers for one another as brothers. (9) For there are two things above all which make human beings cherish and feel affection—what is one's own and what is dear; and neither of these can be available to those who govern themselves in this way.

There is also considerable uncertainty concerning the manner in which children are to be transferred from the farmers and artisans to the guardians as well as from the latter to the former; at any rate, those who transfer and assign them necessarily know who has been assigned to whom. (10) Further, what was mentioned before must necessarily result above all in these cases—that is, assaults, love affairs, murders; for those who have been assigned to the other class of citizens will no longer address the guardians as brothers, children, fathers, or mothers, nor will those among the guardians so address the other class of citizens, so that they avoid doing any of these things on account of their kinship. Concerning the community in children and women, then, let our discussion stand thus.

CHAPTER 5

(1) Next after this it remains to investigate property and how it should be instituted for those who are going to govern themselves under the best regime—whether property should be common or not. (2) This may be investigated even apart from the legislation concerning children and women. I mean, as regards what is connected with property, even if the former are held separately, which is the way all do it now, one may investigate in particular whether it is better for both property and uses to be common[, or whether one should be common and the other separate].¹⁵ For example, farmland could be held separately while the crops are brought into a common store and consumed in common, as some nations do; or the opposite could happen, land being held and farmed in common and the crops divided for private use (some barbarians are said to have this approach to sharing as well); or

14 · Accepting the reading of the MSS here rather than the conjectural alterations adopted by Dreizehnter.

15 · I follow many editors in marking a lacuna here, and supply what I take to be the sense.

both farmland and crops could be common. (3) Now if the farmers were of a different class, the approach would be different and easier, but if the citizens undertake the labor for themselves, the arrangements concerning property would give rise to many resentments. For if they turn out to be unequal rather than equal in the work and in the gratifications deriving from it, accusations against those who can gratify themselves or take much while laboring little must necessarily arise on the part of those who take less and labor more. (4) In general, to live together and share in any human matter is difficult, and particularly things of this sort. This is clear in communities of fellow travelers, most of whom are always quarreling as a result of friction with one another over everyday and small matters. Again, friction particularly arises with the servants we use most frequently for regular tasks. (5) Having property in common involves, then, these and other similar difficulties, and the approach that prevails now—if reinforced with good character¹⁶ and an arrangement of correct laws—would be more than a little better. For it would have what is good in both—by both I mean what comes from having property in common and what from having it privately. For it should be common in some sense, yet private generally speaking. (6) Dividing the care of property will cause them not to raise these accusations against one another, and will actually result in improvement, as each applies himself to his own; and it will be through virtue that “the things of friends are common,” as the proverb has it, with a view to use. Even now this approach can be found in outline in some cities, so it is not impossible; in finely administered cities especially some of these things already exist, while others could be brought into being. (7) In these cities everyone has his own property, but he makes some of it useful to his friends, and some he uses as common things. In Sparta, for example, they use each other’s slaves, as well as their horses and dogs, as practically their own, and anything they need by way of provisions from the fields when they travel in their territory. (8) It is evident, then, that it is better for property to be private, but to make it common in use. That the citizens become such as to use it in common—this is a task proper to the legislator.

Further, it makes an immense difference with respect to pleasure to consider a thing one’s own. It is surely not to no purpose that everyone has affection for himself; this is something natural. (9) Selfishness is justly blamed; but this is not having affection for oneself simply, but rather having more affection than one should—just as in the case of the greedy person; for prac-

16 · Reading *ēthesin* with II² and Dreizehnter rather than *ethesin* (“habits”) with II¹, Ross, and others.

5 tically everyone has affection for things of this sort. Moreover, it is a very pleasant thing to help or do favors for friends, guests, or club-mates; and this requires that property be private. (10) Those who make the city too much of a unity not only forfeit these things; in addition, they manifestly eliminate
 10 the functions of two of the virtues, moderation concerning women (it being a fine deed to abstain through moderation from a woman who belongs to another) and liberality concerning property. For it will not be possible to show oneself as liberal or to perform any liberal action, since the function of liberality lies in the use of property.

15 (11) This sort of legislation has an attractive face and might be held humane; he who hears of it accepts it gladly, thinking it will produce a marvelous affection in all for each other, especially when it is charged that the
 20 ills that now exist in regimes come about through property not being common—I am speaking of lawsuits against one another concerning contracts, trials involving perjury, and flattery of the rich. (12) Yet none of these things comes about because of the lack of sharing, but through depravity. For it is precisely those who possess things in common and share whom we see most
 25 at odds,¹⁷ not those who hold their property separately (though those at odds as a result of sharing are few to observe in comparison with the many who own property privately). (13) Further, it is only just to speak not only of the number of ills they will be deprived of by sharing, but also the number of good things. Indeed, it is a way of life that appears to be altogether impossible.

30 The cause of Socrates's going astray one should consider to be the incorrectness of his basic premise. (14) Both the household and the city should be one in a sense, but not in every sense. On the one hand, as the city proceeds in this direction, it will at some point cease to be a city; on the other hand, while remaining a city, it will be a worse city the closer it comes to not being
 35 a city—just as if one were to reduce a consonance to unison, or a meter to a single foot.¹⁸ (15) Rather, as was said before, the city, being a multitude, must be made one and common through education. It is odd that one who plans to introduce education¹⁹ and who holds that it is through this that the city will be excellent should suppose it can be corrected by things of that sort,

17 · The holding of property in common by brothers was an accepted practice in Athens and elsewhere, and the reference is probably to this.

18 · Greek meters typically admit of much variation in the feet or units that make up a line of poetry.

19 · This seems to refer specifically to the discussion of the education of philosophers in *Republic* 6–7.

and not by habits, philosophy, and laws, just as the legislator in Sparta and Crete made common what is connected with property by means of common messes.²⁰ (16) Nor should one ignore the fact that it is necessary to pay attention to the length of time and the many years during which it would not have escaped notice if this condition were a fine one; for nearly everything has been discovered, though some things have not been brought together, while others are known but not practiced. (17) That it is not fine would become evident above all if one could see such a regime actually being instituted; for it will not be possible to create a city without introducing parts and dividing it, on the one hand into common messes, on the other into clans and tribes. So nothing else will result from the legislation except that the guardians will not farm; yet the Spartans attempt to do this even now.²¹

(18) Neither, for that matter, has Socrates told us what the manner of organization of the regime as a whole will be for those sharing in it; nor is it easy to say. At all events, the bulk of the city is the multitude of the other citizens, and yet there is no discussion of whether the farmers too should have property in common or each individual should have private property as well, or further, whether women and children should be private or common. (19) If everything is to be common to all in the same manner, how will these differ from the guardians? What more will they get by submitting to their rule? Or how will they be forced to submit²² to it, unless the guardians act the sophist and devise something like the Cretans have? For these allow their slaves to have the same things as themselves, except that they forbid them exercises and the possession of arms. (20) But if the farmers have those things, as they do in other cities, what manner of community will it be? For there must necessarily be two cities in one, and these opposed to one another. For he makes the guardians into a sort of garrison, while the farmers and artisans and the others are the citizens.²³ (21) Accusations and lawsuits and whatever other ills he asserts exist in cities—all will exist among these as well. And yet Socrates speaks²⁴ as if they will have little need for ordinances—urban or market ordinances, for example, or others of this sort—on account of their education, al-

20 · These "common messes" (*syssitia*), which also served as a form of social organization, are discussed further below.

21 · The Spartan ruling class was supported by the labor of agricultural serfs, the so-called helots.

22 · Literally, "suffering what will they submit," reading *pathontes* with some MSS and Susemihl instead of the *mathontes* ("learning") accepted by Dreizehnter.

23 · Cf. *Republic* 415d-17b, 419a-20a, 543b-c.

24 · *Republic* 425c-d.

though he assigns education only to the guardians. (22) Further, he gives the farmers control over their possessions and has them pay a tax;²⁵ but then they are much more likely to be difficult and filled with high thoughts than the helots or serfs that some hold today,²⁶ or than slaves. (23) Whether the same things are necessary in a similar way for this class or not is in fact nowhere discussed, nor matters connected with this—what regime and education they have, and what laws. It is not easy to discover what sort of people these are, yet it makes no little difference with a view to the preservation of the community of guardians. (24) But if he is going to make women common and property private, who will manage the household while the men work in the fields? (Or, for that matter, if property and the wives of the farmers are both common?) Moreover, it is odd that in order to show that women should have the same pursuits as men he makes a comparison with the animals,²⁷ among which household management is nonexistent.

(25) Also, the way Socrates selects the rulers is hazardous; for he has the same persons always ruling. This can become a cause of factional conflict even in the case of those possessing no particular claim to merit, not to speak of spirited and warlike men. (26) That it was necessary for him to make the same persons rulers is evident; for the gold from god is not mixed in the souls of some at one time and others at another, but always in the same—he says that directly at birth gold is mixed with some, silver with others, and bronze and iron with those who are going to be artisans and farmers.²⁸ (27) Further, he even destroys the guardians' happiness, asserting that the legislator should make the city as a whole happy.²⁹ But it is impossible for it to be happy as a whole unless most people, or all or some of its parts, are happy. For happiness is not the same kind of thing as evenness: this can exist in the whole but in neither of its parts, but happiness cannot. (28) But if the guardians are not happy, which others are? For the artisans and the multitude of the vulgar surely are not, at any rate. The regime which Socrates spoke about raises, then, these questions, as well as others no less considerable than these.

25 · *Apophora*: the term used at Sparta to designate the tax or rent in kind provided by the helots to their masters. Cf. *Republic* 416e.

26 · The term "serf" (*penestēs*) was usually applied specifically to the agricultural serfs of Thessaly, as the term "helot" was to the serfs of Laconia and Messenia.

27 · *Republic* 451d ff.

28 · *Republic* 415a ff.

29 · *Republic* 420b ff.

CHAPTER 6

(1) Very similar is the case of the *Laws*, which was written later, so it is best to investigate briefly the regime there as well. In the *Republic*, after all, Socrates has discussed very few matters—how things should stand concerning the community in women and children, property, and the arrangement of the regime; (2) for he divides the mass of inhabitants into two parts, the farmers and the military part, and from these a third that is the deliberative and authoritative part of the city. (3) As for the farmers and artisans, whether they partake in rule to some extent or not at all, or whether they should possess arms and join in warfare themselves, is nowhere discussed by Socrates; yet he supposes that the women should join in warfare and share in the same education as the guardians.³⁰ Otherwise, he has filled out the argument with extraneous issues, particularly concerning the sort of education the guardians should have.

(4) The *Laws* deals for the most part with laws, and little is said about the regime. As to this, although he wishes to make it more attainable by cities, he gradually brings it around again toward the other regime [of the *Republic*]. (5) For apart from the community in women and property, the other things he assigns it are the same for both regimes: education is the same, as is the life of abstention from necessary work and of common messes; only here he asserts that there should be common messes for women as well, and that the number of those possessing arms should be five thousand, whereas it is a thousand there.³¹ (6) All the discourses of Socrates are extraordinary: they are sophisticated, original, and searching. But it is perhaps difficult to do everything finely. With regard to the multitude just mentioned, it should not be overlooked that so many will need the territory of Babylon³² or some other that is unlimited in extent to sustain in idleness five thousand of them and a crowd of women and attendants about them many times as large. (7) Now one's basic premises should indeed accord with what one would pray for; yet nothing should be impossible. It is said that the legislator should look to two things in enacting laws, the territory and the human beings who inhabit it.³³

30 · *Republic* 451e–52a.

31 · In the *Republic* (458c–d) women are included in the common messes of the male guardians; in the *Laws* (780d–81d, 806d) they are assigned separate messes. On the size of the citizen body see *Republic* 423a and *Laws* 737c, 740a–41a.

32 · Cf. 3.3. 5.

33 · This is not clearly stated in the *Laws*, but see 704a ff.

Book 3

CHAPTER I

(1) For one investigating the regime—what each sort is and what its quality—virtually the first investigation concerns the city, to see what the city actually is. For as it is, there are disputes, some arguing that the city performed an action, others that it was not the city but the oligarchy or the tyrant. We see that the entire activity of the political ruler and the legislator is concerned with the city, and the regime is a certain arrangement of those who inhabit the city.

(2) But since the city belongs among composite things, and like other composite wholes is made up of many parts, it is clear that the first thing that must be sought is the citizen; for the city is a certain multitude of citizens. Thus who ought to be called a citizen and what the citizen is must be investigated.

There is often much dispute about the citizen, for not everyone agrees that the same person is a citizen. Someone who is a citizen in a democracy is often not one in an oligarchy. (3) Those who happen to be so designated but in some other sense—for example, honorary citizens—must be disregarded; nor is the citizen a citizen by inhabiting a place, for aliens and slaves share in the habitation; (4) nor are those partaking in matters of justice to the extent of being subject to lawsuits and adjudication, for this exists even for those who share as a result of contractual agreements, since these things exist for them as well. For that matter, in many places not even aliens partake completely in these things, but they must necessarily find a patron, so that they take part in this sort of community in an incomplete sense. (5) Like children who are not yet enrolled because of age and elderly persons who have been relieved,¹ they must be admitted to be citizens in a sense, but not unquali-

1 · Those beyond a certain age were apparently relieved of political as well as military duties; cf. Plato, *Republic* 498c.

fiedly, but rather with the addition of "incomplete" or "superannuated" or something else of this sort—it makes no difference, as what has been said is clear. We are seeking the citizen in an unqualified sense, one who has no defect of this sort requiring correction, since questions may be raised and resolved concerning such things in the case of those who have been deprived of their prerogatives or exiled as well.² (6) The citizen in an unqualified sense is defined by no other thing so much as by partaking in decision and office. Now some offices are differentiated by time, so that in some cases the same person is not permitted to hold them twice, or only after some definite period of time has passed; but other offices are indefinite, such as that of juror or assemblyman. (7) Perhaps someone might say that the latter are not rulers and do not take part in office on account of these things; yet it would be ridiculous to deprive those with greatest authority of the title of office. But it should make no difference: the argument is over a term, for what is common to juror and assemblyman lacks a name that could apply to both. For the sake of definition, then, let it be "indefinite office." (8) We set it down, then, that citizens are those who take part in this way.

The definition of citizen that fits best with all those who are called citizens is, therefore, something of this sort. But it should not be overlooked that of things where the constituent elements differ in kind—one of them being primary, one secondary, another derivative—the common element either is not present at all insofar as they are such, or only slightly. (9) We see that regimes differ from one another in kind, and that some are prior and some posterior; for those that are errant and deviant must necessarily be posterior to those that are without error. (In what sense we are speaking of deviant regimes will be evident later.³) Hence the citizen must necessarily differ in the case of each sort of regime. (10) Accordingly, the citizen that was spoken of is a citizen above all in a democracy; he may, but will not necessarily, be a citizen in the others. In some regimes there is no people, nor is an assembly recognized in law, but [only a consultative meeting of specially] summoned persons,⁴ and cases are adjudicated by groups of officials. In Sparta, for example, different overseers try different cases involving agreements, the senators those involving murder, and another office perhaps others; (11) and

2 · "Deprived of prerogatives" (*atimos*) was a technical term for persons formally stripped of citizenship.

3 · 3.6. 11.

4 · Aristotle appears to be thinking of consultative bodies such as the council of five thousand, which formed part of the moderate oligarchic regime established in Athens in 411 BC (Thucydides 8.67.3).

it is the same in the case of Carthage, where certain offices try all cases.⁵ But our definition of the citizen [can stand, as it] admits of correction. In the other regimes, it is not the indefinite ruler who is assemblyman or juror, but one whose office is definite. For of these either all or some are assigned to deliberate and adjudicate, either concerning all matters or concerning some.

(12) Who the citizen is, then, is evident from these things. Whoever is entitled to share in an office involving deliberation or decision is, we can now say, a citizen in this city; and the city is the multitude of such persons that is adequate with a view to a self-sufficient life, to speak simply.

CHAPTER 2

(1) As a matter of usage, however, a citizen is defined as a person from parents who are both citizens, and not just one, whether the father or the mother; and some go even further back, seeking two or three or more generations of citizen forebears. But these being political and offhand definitions, some raise the question of how that third or fourth generation ancestor will have been a citizen. (2) Gorgias of Leontini therefore, perhaps partly by way of raising a question and partly in irony, said that just as mortars are made by mortar makers, so Larisaeans are made by craftsmen, since some of them are "Larisa makers."⁶ (3) The matter is simple. If they took part in the regime according to the definition that has been given, they were citizens; for, at any rate, it is impossible that the definition from citizen father or mother should fit in the case of the first inhabitants or founders.

But perhaps more of a question is involved in the case of those who came to take part in the regime after a revolution—for example, the citizens created in Athens by Cleisthenes after the expulsion of the tyrants; for he enrolled in the tribes many foreigners and alien slaves.⁷ The dispute about these

5 · Cf. 2.11.7. Aristotle's argument is that regimes like those of Sparta and Carthage handle judicial business primarily through tribunals of officials rather than large popular juries, as was the case in democracies like Athens; he had previously indicated that Carthage is even more restrictive in this respect than Sparta.

6 · Gorgias puns on the word *dēmiourgos*, which means both "craftsman" and "magistrate." Larisa was a town in Thessaly; the occasion of the remark is unknown, but would appear to have involved a wholesale enfranchisement of noncitizens.

7 · The democratic reforms effected by Cleisthenes after the overthrow of the Pisistratid tyranny (510 BC) involved abolishing the original four tribes of Athens and creating

is not over who is a citizen, but whether they are so justly or unjustly. (4) And yet a further question might be raised as to whether one who is not justly a citizen is a citizen at all, the assumption being that "unjust" and "false" amount to the same thing. (5) But since we also see certain unjust rulers, whom we assert do rule but unjustly, and since the citizen is defined by a kind of office (for someone who shares in that sort of office is a citizen, as we said), it is clear that these too must be admitted to be citizens.

CHAPTER 3

(1) The question of whether some are citizens justly or unjustly touches on the dispute mentioned previously. For some raise the question of when the city performed an action and when it did not—for example, at the time when a democracy replaces an oligarchy or a tyranny. (2) At these times, some do not want to fulfill contractual agreements on the grounds that it was not the city but the tyrant who entered into them, or many other things of this sort, the assumption being that some regimes exist through domination and not because they are to the common advantage. However, if some are run democratically in this same fashion, the actions of this regime must then be admitted to belong to the city in just the same way as the actions of the oligarchy or the tyranny.

(3) This argument seems related to the question of the sense in which the city ought to be spoken of as the same, or as not the same but different. Now the most superficial way of examining this question concerns the location and the human beings constituting it; for the location and the human beings can be disjoined, with some inhabiting one location and others another, and it will still be a city. (4) The question in this form is to be regarded as a slight one, for the fact that the city is spoken of in several senses makes the examination of such cases easy.⁸ And similarly in the case of human beings inhabiting the same location, if one asks when the city should be considered one. (5) For it is surely not by the fact of its walls—it would be possible to

ten new ones in order to accommodate the new citizens. The text and the exact meaning of Aristotle's description of these citizens is controversial.

8 · "City" (*polis*) has both a physical and a political sense: two cities "disjoined" in place or geography might nevertheless form part of a single city in the political sense. Aristotle may have in mind island cities that possessed territory and towns on the mainland (such as Lesbos or Samos) or cities with substantial dependent ports (such as Athens or Megara).

build a single wall around the Peloponnese. Babylon is perhaps a city of this sort, or any that has the dimensions of a nation rather than a city; at any rate, they say that its capture was not noticed in a certain part of the city for three days.⁹ (6) But the investigation of this question will be useful on another occasion.¹⁰ For the size of the city—as regards both quantity and whether it is advantageous to have one or several [locations]¹¹—should not be overlooked by the political ruler. But where the same persons inhabit the same location, must it be asserted that the city is the same as long as the stock of inhabitants remains the same, even though some are always passing away and some being born (as we are accustomed to speaking of rivers and springs as the same even though more water is always coming and flowing away)? Or must it be asserted that the human beings are the same for this sort of reason, but that the city differs? (7) For if the city is a type of community, and if it is a community of citizens in a regime, if the regime becomes and remains different in kind, it might be held that the city as well is necessarily not the same. At any rate, just as we assert that a chorus which is at one time comic and at another tragic is different even though the human beings in it are often the same, (8) it is similar with any other community and any compound, when the compound takes a different form—for example, we would say that the mode is different even when the notes are the same, if it is at one time Dorian and at another Phrygian.¹² (9) If this is indeed the case, it is evident that it is looking to the regime above all that the city must be said to be the same; the name¹³ one calls it can be different or the same no matter whether the same human beings inhabit it or altogether different ones. As to whether it is just to fulfill or not to fulfill contractual agreements when the city undergoes revolution into another regime, that is another argument.

9 · Babylon was captured by the Persians under Cyrus in the sixth century. Cf. Herodotus 1.191.

10 · 7.4. ff.

11 · The text is uncertain here. I follow Dreizehnter in considering the accepted reading *ethnos* a conjectural addition, but prefer the version of Π² (*hen ē pleiō*) to his own conjecture (*genē pleiō*); possibly the original text was *ton topon hen ē pleiō*, though this would not seem necessary for the sense. Aristotle seems to have in mind the advantages of a separate port city (cf. 7.6. 5).

12 · Reading *legoimen* with the MSS ("we would say") rather than *legomen* ("we say") with Dreizehnter. The point of the comparison seems to depend on the considerable overlap between the notes utilized for the Dorian and Phrygian modes as well as the very different spirit of these modes (cf. 8.5. 22, 7.9–12).

13 · For evidence for changes in the names of cities, see Newman's note.

CHAPTER 4

(1) Connected with what has been said is the investigation of whether the virtue of the good man and the excellent citizen¹⁴ is to be regarded as the same or as not the same. If we are indeed to examine this, however, the virtue of the citizen must first be grasped in some sort of outline. Now just as a sailor is one of a number of sharers, so, we assert, is the citizen. (2) Although sailors are dissimilar in their capacities (one is a rower, another a pilot, another a lookout, and others have similar sorts of designations), it is clear that the most precise account of their virtue will be that peculiar to each sort individually, but that a common account will in a similar way fit all. For the safety of the ship in its voyage is the task of all of them, and each of the sailors strives for this. (3) Similarly, although citizens are dissimilar, preservation of the community is their task, and the regime is this community; hence the virtue of the citizen must necessarily be with a view to the regime. If, then, there are indeed several forms of regime, it is clear that it is not possible for the virtue of the excellent citizen to be single, or complete virtue. (4) But the good man we assert is so in accordance with a single kind—complete virtue.¹⁵ That it is possible for a citizen to be excellent yet not possess the virtue in accordance with which he is an excellent man, therefore, is evident.

By raising questions in a different manner, the same argument can be made concerning the best regime. (5) For if it is impossible for a city to consist entirely of excellent persons, yet if each should perform his own task well, and this [means] out of virtue, since it is impossible for all the citizens to be similar, there would still not be a single virtue of the citizen and the good man. The virtue of the excellent citizen must exist in all, for it is necessarily in this way that the city is excellent, but this is impossible in the case of the virtue of the good man, unless all the citizens of an excellent city are necessarily good men. (6) Further, since the city is made up of dissimilar persons—as an animal is made up of soul and body, for instance, soul of reason and appetite, and a household of man and woman and master and slave,¹⁶ in the same

14 · The terms translated “good” and “excellent” are *agathos* and *spoudaios* (literally, “serious”), respectively; Aristotle seems to use them interchangeably (that is, “excellent” should not be taken as a superlative). Both words connote moral virtue rather than any sort of instrumental excellence.

15 · This sentence is omitted in most MSS.

16 · I follow Bernays in bracketing *ktêsis* in a8. Translating the text of the MSS: “and a household of man and woman, and possessions of master and slave...”

way a city is made up of all of these, and in addition to these it consists of other dissimilar kinds of persons—the virtue of all the citizens is necessarily not single, just as that of a head and a file leader in a chorus is not single. (7) That it is not the same in an unqualified sense, therefore, is evident from these things. But will there be some case, then, in which the virtue of the excellent citizen and the excellent man is the same? We assert that the excellent ruler is good and prudent, while the excellent citizen is not necessarily prudent.¹⁷ (8) Indeed, some say that the very education of a ruler is different, as is manifestly the case with the sons of kings who are educated to be expert in riding and in war; and when Euripides says “no subtleties for me, but what is needed for the city,”¹⁸ the assumption is that there is a certain education of a ruler. (9) If the virtue of the good ruler and the good man is the same, and if one who is ruled is also a citizen, the virtue of citizen and man would not be the same unqualifiedly, but only in the case of a certain sort of citizen. For the virtue of ruler and citizen is not the same, and it was perhaps for this reason that Jason said he was hungry except when he was tyrant, as one who did not know how to be a private individual.¹⁹

(10) At the same time, the capacity to rule and be ruled is praised, and the virtue of a citizen of reputation is held²⁰ to be the capacity to rule and be ruled finely. Now if we regard the virtue of the good man as being of a ruling sort, while that of the citizen is both of a ruling and a ruled sort, they would not be praiseworthy to a similar extent. (11) Since both views are sometimes held—that the ruler and the ruled ought to learn different things and not the same, and that the citizen must know both sorts of things and partake in both—the next step becomes visible. There is rule of a master, by which we mean that connected with the necessary things. It is not necessary for the ruler to know how to perform these, but only to use those who do; the other [sort of knowledge] is servile (by the other I mean the capacity to perform the subordinate tasks of a servant). (12) Now we speak of several forms of slave; for the sorts of work are several. One sort is that done by menials: as the term itself indicates, these are persons who live by their hands; the

17 · On “prudence” (*phronēsis*), a key concept in Aristotle’s thought, see *Eth. Nic.* 6.13.1144a28 ff.

18 · Euripides, fr. 16. Nauck. The lines are from the *Aeolus*, and were apparently spoken by the king about his sons.

19 · Jason of Pherae, in Thessaly, was a notorious tyrant of the early fourth century.

20 · The text is somewhat uncertain: I read *dokimou* <*dokei*> with Bernays and Newman instead of *dokei pou* (“the virtue of a citizen is surely held”) with Jackson and Dreizehnter.

manufacturing artisan belongs among them. Hence among some peoples the craftsmen did not partake in offices in former times, prior to the emergence of rule of the people in its extreme form.²¹ (13) Now the tasks of those ruled in this way should not be learned by the good man or the political ruler or the good citizen, unless he does it for himself out of some need of his own (for then it does not result in one person becoming master and another slave).

But there is also a sort of rule in accordance with which one rules those who are similar in stock and free. (14) For this is what we speak of as political rule, and the ruler learns it by being ruled—just as the cavalry commander learns by being commanded, the general by being led, and similarly in the case of the leader of a regiment or company. Hence this too has been finely said—that it is not possible to rule well without having been ruled.²² (15) Virtue in each of these cases is different, but the good citizen should know and have the capacity both to be ruled and to rule, and this very thing is the virtue of a citizen—knowledge of rule over free persons from both points of view. (16) Both belong to the good man too, as well as whatever kind of moderation and justice is characteristic of ruling. For it is clear that a virtue— of justice, for example—would not be a single thing for [a ruler and for²³] a ruled but free person who is good, but has different kinds in accordance with which one will rule or be ruled, just as moderation and courage differ in a man and a woman. (17) For a man would be held a coward if he were as courageous as a courageous woman, and a woman talkative if she were as modest as the good man; and household management differs for a man and a woman as well, for it is the work of the man to acquire and of the woman to guard. But prudence is the only virtue peculiar to the ruler. The others, it would seem, must necessarily be common to both rulers and ruled, (18) but prudence is not a virtue of one ruled, but rather true opinion; for the one ruled is like a flute maker, while the ruler is like a flute player, the user [of what the other makes].²⁴ Whether the virtue of the good man and the excellent citizen is the same or different, then, and in what sense it is the same and in what sense different, is evident from these things.

21 · Aristotle seems to allude in particular to Athens, where the exclusion of laborers (the assessment class of *thētes*) from office (Plutarch *Solon* 18) seems to have persisted through much of the fifth century.

22 · A saying of this sort was ascribed to Solon (Diogenes Laertius 1.60).

23 · Accepting Bernays's supplement *archontos kai* in 18.

24 · For the relationship of "making" and "using" arts see 1.8. 1–2; for the example, see Plato, *Republic* 601d.

authority, while by contrast it is the few in oligarchies. The regime too, we say, is different in these cases; and we shall speak in the same way concerning the others as well.

First, then, we must lay down by way of a basic premise what it is for the sake of which the city is established, and how many kinds of rule are connected with man and the community in life. (3) It was said in our initial discourses, where household management and mastery were discussed, that man is by nature a political animal. Hence even when they have no need of assistance from one another, they no less yearn to live together—not but that the common advantage too brings them together, to the extent that it falls to each to live finely. It is this above all, then, which is the end for all both in common and separately; but they also join together, and maintain the political community, for the sake of living itself. For there is perhaps something fine in living just by itself, provided there is no great excess of hardships. It is clear that most men will endure much harsh treatment in their longing for life, the assumption being that there is a kind of joy inherent in it and a natural sweetness.

As for the modes of rule that are spoken of, it is easy to distinguish them, and we discuss them frequently in the external discourses.³² Mastery, in spite of the same thing being in truth advantageous both to the slave by nature and to the master by nature, is still rule with a view to the advantage of the master primarily, and with a view to that of the slave accidentally (for mastery cannot be preserved if the slave is destroyed). Rule over children and wife and the household as a whole, which we call household management, is either for the sake of the ruled or for the sake of something common to both—in itself it is for the sake of the ruled, as we see in the case of the other arts such as medicine and gymnastic, but accidentally it may be for the sake of the rulers themselves. For nothing prevents the trainer from being on occasion one of those engaging in gymnastic, just as the pilot is always one of the sailors: the trainer or pilot looks out for the good of the ruled, and when he becomes one of them himself, he shares accidentally in the benefit; for the one is a sailor, and the other becomes one of those engaging in gymnastic, though still a trainer. Hence with respect to political offices too, when the regime is established in accordance with equality and similarity among the citizens, they claim to merit ruling in turn. Previously, as accords with nature, they claimed to merit doing public service by turns and having someone look to their good, just as when ruling previously they looked to his advantage.

32 · For Aristotle's "external discourses" see Introduction, pp. xvii–xix above.

Now, however, because of the benefits to be derived from common things and from office, they wish to rule continuously, as if they were sick persons who were always made healthy by ruling; at any rate, these would perhaps pursue office in a similar fashion.³³ 15

It is evident, then, that those regimes which look to the common advantage are correct regimes according to what is unqualifiedly just, while those which look only to the advantage of the rulers are errant, and are all deviations from the correct regimes; for they involve mastery, but the city is a community of free persons. 20

CHAPTER 7

(1) These things having been determined, the next thing is to investigate regimes—how many in number and which sorts there are, and first of all the correct ones; for the deviations will be evident once these have been determined. (2) Since “regime” and “governing body” signify the same thing,³⁴ since the governing body is the authoritative element in cities, and since it is necessary that the authoritative element be either one or a few or the many, when the one or the few or the many rule with a view to the common advantage, these regimes are necessarily correct, while those with a view to the private advantage of the one or the few or the multitude are deviations. For either it must be denied that persons taking part in the regime are citizens, or they must share in its advantages. (3) Now of monarchies, that form which looks toward the common advantage we are accustomed to call kingship; rule of the few (but of more than one person) we are accustomed to call aristocracy—either because the best persons are ruling, or because they are ruling with a view to what is best for the city and for those sharing in it; and when the multitude governs with a view to the common advantage, it is called by the term common to all regimes, polity.³⁵ (4) This happens reasonably. It is possible for one or a few to be outstanding in virtue, but where more are concerned it is difficult for them to be proficient with a view to virtue as a whole, but some level of proficiency is possible particularly regarding military virtue, as this arises in a multitude; hence in this regime the warrior 30 35 40 1279b

33 · These remarks seem to be directed at Athens in particular.

34 · The term “governing body” (*politeuma*) derives from *politeia*. A more colloquial rendering might be “the political class.”

35 · Wherever Aristotle uses the term *politeia* to refer to this particular type of regime, it will be translated “polity.” There are some passages, however, where the distinction is not completely clear.

element is the most authoritative, and it is those possessing heavy arms who
 5 take part in it. (5) Deviations from those mentioned are tyranny from king-
 ship, oligarchy from aristocracy, democracy from polity. Tyranny is monar-
 chy with a view to the advantage of the monarch, oligarchy rule with a view
 10 to the advantage of the well off, democracy rule with a view to the advantage
 of those who are poor; none of them is with a view to the common gain.

CHAPTER 8

(1) It is necessary to speak at somewhat greater length of what each of these
 regimes is. For certain questions³⁶ are involved, and it belongs to one phi-
 15 losophizing in connection with each sort of inquiry and not merely looking
 toward action not to overlook or omit anything, but to make clear the truth
 concerning each thing. (2) Tyranny, as was said, is monarchic rule of a mas-
 ter over the political community; oligarchy is when those with property have
 authority in the regime; and democracy is the opposite, when those have au-
 20 thority who do not possess a great amount of property but are poor. (3) The
 first question has to do with the definition. If a well-off majority has author-
 ity, and similarly in the other case, if it somewhere happened that the poor
 were a minority with respect to the well off but were superior and had au-
 25 thority in the regime, although when a small number has authority it is called
 oligarchy, this definition of the regimes would not be held to be a fine one.
 (4) But even if one were to combine fewness with being well off and number
 with being poor and described the regimes accordingly (oligarchy being that
 30 in which those who are well off and few in number have the offices, and de-
 mocracy that in which those who are poor and many in number have them),
 another question is involved. (5) What shall we say of the regimes that were
 just mentioned—those in which the majority is well off and the poor are
 few and each has authority in the regime—if there is no other regime be-
 35 side those we spoke of? (6) The argument seems to make clear, therefore,
 that it is accidental that few or many have authority in oligarchies on the one
 hand and democracies on the other, and that this is because the well off are
 everywhere few and the poor many. Hence it also turns out that the causes
 40 of the differences are not what was mentioned. (7) What makes democracy
 and oligarchy differ is poverty and wealth: wherever some rule on account of
 1280a wealth, whether a minority or a majority, this is necessarily an oligarchy, and

36 · This term (*aporia*), characteristic of Aristotle's more theoretical writings, might be more precisely rendered "philosophical puzzle" or "conundrum."

wherever those who are poor, a democracy. (8) But it turns out, as we said, that the former are few and the latter many; for few are well off, but all share in freedom—which are the causes of both disputing over the regime. 5

CHAPTER 9

(1) It is necessary first to grasp what they speak of as the defining principles of oligarchy and democracy and what justice³⁷ is [from] both oligarchic and democratic [points of view]. For all fasten on a certain sort of justice, but proceed only to a certain point, and do not speak of the whole of justice in its authoritative sense. For example, justice is held to be equality, and it is, but for equals and not for all; (2) and inequality is held to be just and is indeed, but for unequals and not for all; but they disregard this element of persons and judge badly. The cause of this is that the judgment concerns themselves, and most people are bad judges concerning their own things. (3) And so since justice is for certain persons, and is distinguished in the same manner with respect to objects and for persons, as was said previously in the discourses on ethics,³⁸ they agree as to the equality of the object, but dispute about it for persons. They do this particularly because of what was just spoken of, that they judge badly with respect to what concerns themselves, but also because both, by speaking to a point of a kind of justice, consider themselves to be speaking of justice simply. (4) For the ones, if they are unequal in a certain thing, such as goods, suppose they are unequal generally, while the others suppose that if they are equal in a certain thing, such as freedom, they are equal generally. (5) But of the most authoritative thing they say nothing. For if it were for the sake of possessions that they shared and joined together, they would take part in the city just to the extent that they did in property, so that the argument of the oligarchs might be held a strong one; for [they would say] it is not just for one who has contributed one mina to share equally in a hundred minas with the one giving all the rest, whether he comes from those who were there originally or the later arrivals.³⁹ (6) But if 10 15 20 25 30

37 · That is, “the just” (*to dikaion*) or “right” as distinct from the virtue of justice (*dikaiosynē*). Fundamental for this entire discussion is the more theoretical analysis of “distributive justice” in *Eth. Nic.* 5.6.

38 · *Eth. Nic.* 1131a14–24.

39 · Or, as the phrase is generally translated, “whether of the original sum or of the accruing profits.” Following Bernays, I take the remark rather to be the oligarchic response to a (democratic or aristocratic) argument for special treatment in consequence of descent from the original settlers.

the city exists not only for the sake of living but rather primarily for the sake of living well (for otherwise there could be a city of slaves or of animals—as things are, there is not, since they do not partake in happiness or in living in accordance with intentional choice), and if it does not exist for the sake of an alliance to prevent their suffering injustice from anyone, nor for purposes of exchanges and use of one another—for otherwise the Tyrrhenians and Carthaginians, and all who have agreements with one another, would be as citizens of one city—(7) at any rate, there are compacts between them concerning imports, agreements to abstain from injustice, and treaties of alliance. But no offices common to all have been established to deal with these things, but different ones in each city; nor do those of one city take thought that the others should be of a certain quality [in their character], or that none of those coming under the compacts should be unjust or depraved in any way, but only that they should not act unjustly toward one another. (8) Whoever takes thought for good governance,⁴⁰ however, gives careful attention to political virtue and vice. It is thus evident that virtue must be a care for every city, or at least every one to which the term applies truly and not merely in a manner of speaking. For otherwise the community becomes an alliance which differs from others—from alliances of remote allies—only by location, and law becomes a compact and, as the sophist Lycophron said, a guarantor among one another of the just things, but not the sort of thing to make the citizens good and just.⁴¹ (9) But that the matter stands thus is evident. For even if one were to bring the locations together into one, so that the city of the Megarians were fastened to that of the Corinthians by walls,⁴² it would still not be a single city. (10) Nor would it be if they practiced intermarriage with one another, although this is one of the shared things that are peculiar to cities. Nor, similarly, if certain persons dwelled in separate places, yet were not so distant as to have nothing in common, but had laws not to commit injustice toward one another in their transactions—for example, if one were a carpenter, one a farmer, one a shoemaker, one something else of this sort, and they were ten thousand in number, yet had nothing in common except things of this sort, exchange and alliance; not even in this way would there be a city. (11) What, then, is the reason for this? It is surely not on account of a lack

40 · This term (*eunomia*), connoting orderly government under law, had a conservative flavor in contemporary political discourse. Cf. *Eth. Nic.* 3.5.III2b11–14.

41 · Nothing else is known of Lycophron, whose dictum strikingly anticipates early modern social contract theory.

42 · The territory of Megara bordered that of Corinth, though the cities themselves were relatively distant.

of proximity of the community. For even if they joined together while sharing in this way, but each nevertheless treated his own household as a city and each other as if there were a defensive alliance merely for assistance against those committing injustice, it would not by this fact be held a city by those studying the matter precisely—if, that is, they shared in a similar way when joined together as they had when separated. (12) It is evident, therefore, that the city is not a community sharing a location and for the sake of not committing injustice against each other and conducting trade. These things must necessarily be present if there is to be a city, but not even when all of them are present is it yet a city, but the city is the community in living well both of households and families⁴³ for the sake of a complete and self-sufficient life. (13) This will not be possible, however, unless they inhabit one and the same location and make use of intermarriage. It was on this account that marriage connections arose in cities, as well as clans, festivals, and the pastimes of living together.⁴⁴ This sort of thing is the work of affection; for affection is the intentional choice of living together. Living well, then, is the end of the city, and these things are for the sake of this end. (14) A city is the community of families and villages in a complete and self-sufficient life. This, we assert, is living happily and finely. The political community must be regarded, therefore, as being for the sake of noble actions, not for the sake of living together. (15) Hence those who contribute most to a community of this sort have a greater part in the city than those who are equal or greater in freedom and descent⁴⁵ but unequal in political virtue, or those who outdo them in wealth but are outdone in virtue.

That all who dispute about regimes speak of some part of justice, then, is evident from what has been said.

CHAPTER 10

(1) There is a question as to what the authoritative element of the city should be. It is either the multitude, the wealthy, the respectable, the one who is best of all, or the tyrant; but all of these appear to involve difficulties. How

43 · More precisely, a *genos* denotes an extended family, clan or (noble) “house,” and in a broader sense, birth or descent; cf. 1281a6. It will sometimes also be translated “stock.”

44 · “Clans” or “brotherhoods” (*phratritiai*) were bodies of citizens linked by (largely mythical) blood ties. “Pastime” (*diagōgē*) will emerge as a major theme of Aristotle’s discussion of education and culture in books 7–8.

45 · *Genos*. The occurrence of the word here would appear to confirm the interpretation given above of 1280a30–31; see note 39.

15 could they not? If the poor by the fact of being the majority distribute among themselves the things of the wealthy, is this not unjust? "By Zeus, it was resolved in just fashion by those in authority!" (2) What, then, ought one to say is the extreme of injustice? Again, taking all [the citizens] into consideration, if the majority distributes among itself the things of a minority, it is
 20 evident that it will destroy the city. Yet it is certainly not virtue that destroys the element possessing it, nor is justice destructive of a city; so it is clear that this law cannot be just. (3) Further, [on such an assumption] any actions carried out by a tyrant are necessarily just: he is superior and uses force, like the multitude with respect to the wealthy.

25 But is it just, therefore, for the minority and the wealthy to rule? If they act in the same way and rob and plunder the possessions of the multitude, is this just? If so, the other is as well. (4) That all of these things are bad and unjust, then, is evident. But should the respectable⁴⁶ rule and have authority
 30 over all matters? In this case, all the others are necessarily deprived of prerogatives, since they are not honored by attaining political offices. For we say that offices are honors, and when the same persons always rule the others are necessarily deprived of [these honors or] prerogatives.⁴⁷ (5) But is it better for the one who is most excellent of all to rule? But this is still more oligarchic, as more are deprived of prerogatives. One might perhaps assert, how-
 35 ever, that it is bad for the authoritative element generally to be man instead of law, at any rate if he has the passions that result [from being human] in his soul. But if law may be oligarchic or democratic, what difference will it make with regard to the questions that have been raised? For what was said before will result all the same.

CHAPTER 11

40 (1) Concerning the other matters let there be another argument.⁴⁸ That the multitude should be the authoritative element rather than those who are best but few, though, [is a position involving difficulties which] could be held to be [in need of being] resolved,⁴⁹ and while questionable, it perhaps also in-

46 · *Epieikeis*, that is, gentlemen or aristocrats.

47 · The argument depends on the technical use of the word *atimoi* (literally, "those without honor") to designate persons judicially deprived of certain prerogatives of citizenship.

48 · See 3.12-13.

49 · Or, as it is most generally understood, "[is a position giving rise to objections which] could be held to be refutable." The meaning and syntax of the phrase *doxeien*

volves some truth. (2) The many, of whom none is individually an excellent man, nevertheless can when joined together be better—not as individuals but all together—than those [who are best], just as dinners contributed by many can be better than those equipped from a single expenditure. For because they are many, each can have a part of virtue and prudence, and on their joining together, the multitude, with its many feet and hands and having many senses, becomes like a single human being, and so also with respect to character and mind. (3) Thus the many are also better judges of the works of music and of the poets; some [appreciate] a certain part, and all of them all the parts. (4) But it is in this that the excellent men differ from each of the many individually, just as some assert beautiful persons differ from those who are not beautiful, and things painted by art from genuine things, by bringing together things scattered and separated into one; for taken separately, at any rate, this person's eye will be more beautiful than the painted one, as will another part of another person. (5) Whether this difference between the many and the few excellent can exist in the case of every people and every multitude is not clear. Or rather, [it might be objected,] "by Zeus, it is clear that in some cases it is impossible: the same argument would apply to beasts—for what difference is there between some multitudes and beasts, so to speak?" But nothing prevents what was said from being true of a certain kind of multitude.

(6) Through these things, accordingly, one might resolve both the question spoken of earlier [concerning who should rule] and one connected with it—over what matters free persons or the multitude of the citizens (these being whoever is neither wealthy nor has any claim at all deriving from virtue) should have authority. (7) For having them take part in the greatest offices is not safe: through injustice and imprudence they would act unjustly in some respects and err in others. On the other hand, to give them no part and for them to have no part in the offices is a matter for alarm, for when there exist many who are deprived of prerogatives and poor, that city is necessarily filled with enemies. (8) What is left, then, is for them to take part in deliberating and judging. Hence Solon and certain other legislators arrange to have them both choose officials and audit them, but do not allow them to rule alone.⁵⁰ (9) For all of them when joined together have an adequate percep-

an luesthai are uncertain, and the soundness of the MSS here has been questioned. I share Newman's suspicion that something has dropped out of the text—at least the word *dei* ("in need of being"), and perhaps an entire line; I have supplied what I take to be the overall sense.

50 • Cf. 2.12.2–3, 5–6. An "audit" (*euthynē*) was a formal review of the performance of officials conducted on an annual basis at Athens and other Greek cities.

tion and, once mixed with those who are better, bring benefit to cities, just as impure sustenance⁵¹ mixed with the pure makes the whole more useful than the small amount of the latter, but each separately is incomplete with respect to judging.

(10) But this arrangement of the regime involves questions. In the first place, it might be held that it belongs to the same person to judge whether
 40 someone has healed in correct fashion and to heal and make healthy one who is suffering from a particular disease, this being the doctor; and similarly also with respect to other kinds of experience and art. Just as a doctor
 1282a must submit to audit by doctors, then, so must the others submit to audit by those similar to them. (11) But "doctor" [is a term that can be applied to] the [ordinary] craftsman, the master craftsman, and thirdly, the person who is
 5 educated with respect to the art; for there are some of this sort in the case of nearly all the arts, and we assign the task of judging to the educated no less than to those who know the art. (12) And it might be held that the case is the same with respect to the choice of officials. Choosing correctly is indeed also the work of those who know—for example, choosing a geometer is the work
 10 of experts in geometry, and a pilot that of experts in piloting. If certain non-professionals share in some of these works and arts, however, they do not do so to a greater extent than those who know. (13) So according to this argument the multitude ought not to be given authority either over the choice of officials or over their auditing. (14) But perhaps not all of these things
 15 have been finely argued, both because of the previous argument, provided the multitude is not overly slavish (for each individually will be a worse judge than those who know, but all when joined together will be either better or no worse), and because there are some arts concerning which the maker might not be the only or the best judge, but where those who do not possess the art
 20 also have some knowledge of its works. The maker of a house, for example, is not the only one to have some knowledge of it, but the one who uses it judges better than he does, and the one who uses it is the household manager; and a pilot judges rudders better than a carpenter, and the diner, not the cook, is the better judge of a banquet.

(15) This question, then, may perhaps be held to be adequately resolved
 25 in this fashion. But there is another connected with it. It is held to be absurd for mean persons to have authority over greater matters than the respectable; but auditing and the choice of officials are a very great thing, and in some regimes, as was said, these are given to the people, for the assembly

51 · Food in a raw or crude state; cf. *Generation of Animals* 728a26 ff.

has authority over everything of this sort. (16) Hence, persons from the lowest assessments and of whatever age share in the assembly and deliberate and adjudicate, while those from the greatest assessments are the treasurers and generals and hold the greatest offices. Now one might resolve this question as well in a similar way. (17) For perhaps these things too are handled correctly: neither the juror nor the councilman nor the assemblyman acts as ruler, but the court, the council and the people, and each individual is only a part of these things just mentioned—I mean by “part” the councilman, the assemblyman, and the juror. (18) So the multitude justly has authority over greater things, for the people, the council, and the court are made up of many persons. Also, the assessment of all of them together is more than that of those who hold great offices, whether taken singly or as a [group of a] few.

(19) Let the discussion of these things stand thus, then. As regards the first question, it makes nothing more evident than that it is laws—correctly enacted—that should be authoritative and that the ruler, whether one person or more, should be authoritative with respect to those things about which the laws are completely unable to speak precisely on account of the difficulty of making clear general declarations about everything. (20) But as to what the quality of the laws should be if they are to be correctly enacted, it is not at all clear, and the question that was raised previously remains. Laws are necessarily poor or excellent and just or unjust in a manner similar to the regimes to which they belong: (21) if nothing else, it is evident that laws should be enacted with a view to the regime. But if this is the case, it is clear that those enacted in accordance with the correct regimes are necessarily just, and those in accordance with the deviant ones, not just.

CHAPTER 12

(1) Since in all the sciences and arts the end is some good, it is the greatest and primary good in that which is the most authoritative of all; this is the political capacity. The political good is justice, and this is the common advantage. Justice is held by all to be a certain equality, and up to a certain point they agree with the discourses based on philosophy in which ethics has been discussed;⁵² for they assert that justice is a certain thing for certain persons, and should be equal for equal persons. (2) But equality in what sort of things and inequality in what sort of things—this should not be overlooked. For

52 · Apparently a reference to *Eth. Nic.* 5.61131a9 ff.

this involves a question, and political philosophy.⁵³ One might perhaps assert that offices should be unequally distributed in accordance with a pre-eminence in any good even among persons who do not differ in any other respect but happen to be similar, on the grounds that justice and what accords with merit is different for those who differ. (3) But if this is true, it will mean some aggrandizement in claims to political justice⁵⁴ for those who are preeminent in complexion, height, or any other good. (4) Is this not plainly false? That it is false is evident in the case of the other sciences and capacities: where flute players are similar with respect to the art, aggrandizement in flutes is not granted to those who are better born.⁵⁵ They will not play the flute better on this account; but it is to one who is preeminent in the work that preeminence in the instruments should be granted. If what has been said is in some way not clear, it will be still more evident if we take it further. (5) If someone were preeminent in flute playing, but very deficient in good birth or fine looks, even if each of those goods is greater than flute playing (I mean good birth and fine looks), and even if they are proportionately more preeminent with respect to flute playing than he is preeminent in flute playing, the outstanding flutes nevertheless ought to be given to him. For preeminence in wealth and good birth should contribute something to the work; but they contribute nothing. (6) Further, according to this argument every good would have to be commensurable with every other. For if being of a certain height [provided] more [in the way of a claim],⁵⁶ then height generally would be in rivalry with both wealth and freedom. So if this person is more outstanding in height than that one in virtue, and is more preeminent generally in respect to height than virtue,⁵⁷ everything would be commensurable. For if some amount of height is superior to some amount of virtue, it

53 · This is the only occurrence of the phrase "political philosophy" (*philosophia politikē*) in the *Politics*.

54 · Here and frequently, justice or the just (*to dikaion*) means more precisely a claim to justice, that is, something approaching a "right" in the modern sense. "Aggrandizement" (*pleonexia*), literally, "having more," has the strongly negative connotation of taking something unjustly.

55 · The term is *eugenia*, from *genos*, "family." Again, it is important to keep in mind that good birth throughout this discussion is a claim that can be made by the people as well as the ("well-born") gentlemen.

56 · Reading *ei gar mallon to ti megethos* with the MSS rather than the conjectural *ei gar symbolloito ti megethos* ("if height contributed something") adopted by Dreizehnter. The phrase, which is awkward in any event, has been variously understood.

57 · Or "and height generally is more preeminent than virtue," as it is usually understood.

is clear that some amount is equal. (7) Since this is impossible, it is clear that
 in political matters too it is reasonable for them not to dispute over offices
 on the basis of every inequality. If some are fast and others slow, they should
 not have more or less on this account; it is in gymnastic contests that being
 outstanding in these things wins honor. (8) The dispute necessarily occurs in
 respect to those things that constitute a city. It is reasonable, therefore, that
 the well born, the free, and the wealthy lay claim to honor. For there must be
 both free persons and those paying an assessment, since a city cannot consist
 wholly of those who are poor, any more than of slaves; (9) yet if these things
 are needed, so also, it is clear, are the virtue of justice and military⁵⁸ virtue. It
 is not possible for a city to be administered without these things. But whereas
 without the former elements there cannot be a city, without the latter one
 cannot be finely administered.

CHAPTER 13

(1) Now with a view to the existence of a city, all or at least some of these
 things might be held to have a correct claim in the dispute; but with a view to
 a good life it is education and virtue above all that would have a just claim in
 the dispute, as was also said earlier. But since those who are equal in one thing
 alone should not have equality in everything, nor those who are unequal in
 a single thing inequality, all regimes of this sort are necessarily deviations.
 (2) It was also said previously that all dispute justly in a certain way, but not
 justly in an unqualified sense. The wealthy have a claim because they have the
 greater part of the territory, and the territory is something common; further,
 for the most part they are more trustworthy regarding agreements. The free
 and well born have a claim as being close to one another; for the higher born
 are more particularly citizens than the ignoble, and good birth is honorable
 at home among everyone. (3) Further, the well born have a claim because it
 is likely that better persons come from those who are better, for good birth is
 virtue of a family. In a similar way, then, we shall assert that virtue has a just
 claim in the dispute, for we assert that justice is a virtue characteristic of com-
 munities, and that all the other virtues necessarily follow on it.⁵⁹ (4) Finally,
 the majority has a just claim in relation to a minority, for they are superior
 and wealthier and better [born] when the majority is taken together in rela-
 tion to the minority.

58 · Some MSS have "political" instead of "military" virtue, accepted by Ross.

59 · An apparent allusion to *Eth. Nic.* 1129b25-30a5.

1283b

- If, therefore, all should exist in a single city—I mean, both the good and the wealthy and well born,⁶⁰ as well as a political multitude⁶¹ apart from them—will there be a dispute as to which should rule, or will there not?
- 5 (5) Now the judgment as to who should rule is not disputed under each of the regimes that have been mentioned, for they differ from one another by their authoritative elements: for one the authoritative element is the wealthy, for another the excellent men, and in the same manner for each of the others. Still, we are investigating how the matter is to be determined when these
- 10 things are present simultaneously. (6) Now if those possessing virtue were very few in number, in what way should one decide it? Or should the fact that they are few be investigated with a view to the work involved—whether they are capable of administering the city, or whether there is a multitude of them large enough to form a city? But there is a question affecting all of those
- 15 who dispute over political honors. (7) Those who claim to merit rule on account of wealth could be held to have no argument of justice at all, and similarly with those claiming to merit rule on the basis of family; for it is clear that if there is one person wealthier than all of them, this one person should rule all of them in accordance with the same claims of justice, and similarly,
- 20 that one who is outstanding in good birth should rule those who dispute on the basis of freedom.⁶² (8) And this same thing will perhaps result with respect to aristocracies in the case of virtue; for if one man should be better than the others in the governing body, even though they are excellent, this one should have authority in accordance with the same claims of justice, and if it is because they are superior to the few that the multitude should have au-
- 25 thority, if one or more persons—though fewer than the many—should be superior to the rest, these should have authority rather than the multitude.
- (9) All of these things seem to make it evident, then, that none of the defining principles on the basis of which they claim they merit rule, and all the
- 30 others merit being ruled by them, is correct. (10) For, indeed, multitudes have an argument of some justice to make against those claiming to merit authority over the governing body on the basis of virtue, and similarly also against those claiming it on the basis of wealth: nothing prevents the multitude from being at some point better than the few and wealthier—not as
- 35 individuals but taken together. (11) Hence also it is possible to confront in

60 · Aristotle appears here to distinguish three types of claims by the few or upper classes: (genuine) virtue, wealth, and good birth.

61 · That is, that part of the “multitude” who are actual citizens.

62 · In other words, that the aristocrat of most distinguished birth could contest the claims of the many freeborn (in Athens’s case, “earthborn”).

this manner a question which certain persons pursue and put forward.⁶³ For some raise the question whether the legislator who wants to enact the most correct laws should legislate with a view to the advantage of the better persons or that of the majority, when what was spoken of turns out to be the case. (12) But correctness must be taken to mean "in an equal spirit": what is [enacted] in an equal spirit is correct with a view both to the advantage of the city as a whole and to the common [advantage] of the citizens. A citizen in the common sense is one who shares in ruling and being ruled; but he differs in accordance with each regime. In the case of the best regime, he is one who is capable of and intentionally chooses being ruled and ruling with a view to the life in accordance with virtue.

(13) If there is one person so outstanding by his excess of virtue—or a number of persons, though not enough to provide a full complement for the city—that the virtue of all the others and their political capacity is not commensurable with their own (if there are a number) or his alone (if there is one), such persons can no longer be regarded as a part of the city. For they will be done injustice if it is claimed they merit equal things in spite of being so unequal in virtue and political capacity; for such a person would likely be like a god among human beings. (14) From this it is clear that legislation must necessarily have to do with those who are equal both in family and capacity, and that for the other sort of person there is no law—they themselves are law. It would be ridiculous, then, if one attempted to legislate for them. They would perhaps say what Antisthenes says the lions say when the hares are making their harangue and claiming that everyone merits equality.⁶⁴ (15) Hence democratically run cities enact ostracism for this sort of reason. For these are surely held to pursue equality above all others, and so they used to ostracize and banish for fixed periods from the city those who were held to be preeminent in power on account of wealth or abundance of friends or some other kind of political strength.⁶⁵ (16) The tale is told that the Argonauts left Heracles behind for this sort of reason: the Argo was unwilling to have him on board because he so exceeded the other sailors.⁶⁶ Hence also

63 · It is not known to whom Aristotle is here referring.

64 · "Where are your claws and teeth?" (Aesop, *Fables* 241). It is not known to what work of Antisthenes Aristotle here refers.

65 · Ostracism was particularly employed in Athens in the fifth century, but appears to have fallen into disuse by Aristotle's time; see the account in *Ath. Pol.* 22. The fixed period seems to have been ten years originally, later five.

66 · In the version of the myth to which Aristotle seems to be alluding, the ship Argo refused (through its speaking mast) to accept Heracles on account of his great weight.

those who criticize tyranny and the advice Periander gave to Thrasyboulus must not be supposed to be simply correct in their censure. (17) It is reported that Periander said nothing by way of advice to the messenger who had been
 30 sent to him, but merely lopped off the preeminent ears of corn and so leveled the field. When the messenger, who was in ignorance of the reason behind what had happened, reported the incident, Thrasyboulus understood that he was to eliminate the preeminent men.⁶⁷ (18) This is something that is ad-
 35 vantageous not only to tyrants, nor are tyrants the only ones who do it, but the matter stands similarly with respect both to oligarchies and to democracies; for ostracism has the same power in a certain way as pulling down and exiling the preeminent. (19) And the same thing is done in the case of cities and nations alike by those with control of [military] power—for ex-
 40 ample, the Athenians in the case of the Samians, Chians, and Lesbians, for no sooner was their [imperial] rule firm than they humbled these cities, contrary to the compacts they had with them.⁶⁸ And the king of the Persians frequently pruned back the Medes and Babylonians and others who harbored high thoughts on account of once exercising [imperial] rule themselves.

(20) The issue is one that concerns all regimes generally, including correct
 5 ones. For the deviant ones do this looking to the private advantage of the rulers, yet even in the case of those that look to the common good the matter stands in the same way. (21) This is clear as well in the case of the other arts and sciences. For a painter would not allow himself to paint an animal with
 10 a foot that exceeded proportion, not even if it were outstandingly beautiful, nor would a shipbuilder permit himself to build a stern or any of the other parts of a ship that exceeded proportion, nor indeed would a chorus master allow someone with a voice louder and more beautiful than the entire chorus to be a member of it. (22) So on this account there is nothing that prevents
 15 monarchs from being in consonance with their cities when they do this, provided their own rule is beneficial to their cities. Thus in connection with the generally agreed forms of preeminence the argument concerning ostracism

67 · The story is recounted at greater length in Herodotus 5.92, though there it is Thrasyboulus (tyrant of Miletus) who gives the advice to Periander (tyrant of Corinth). Cf. 5.11.4–5.

68 · It is not certain to what events Aristotle is referring. As the most powerful of the island states in the alliance formed by Athens after the Persian wars, Lesbos, Chios, and Samos were treated more favorably than the others (cf. *Ath. Pol.* 24). Samos was crushed by Athens in 439 BC after it revolted in protest against an Athenian prohibition of its prosecution of a local war; the humiliations in question were most probably similar attempts by Athens prior to this time to limit the autonomy of these allies.

involves a certain political justice. (23) Now it is better if the legislator constitutes the regime from the beginning in such a way that it does not need this sort of healing; but the "second voyage,"⁶⁹ if the contingency should arise, is to try to correct the regime with some corrective of this sort. But this is not what used to happen in the case of the cities that used it: they did not look to the advantage of their own regime but used ostracisms for purposes of factional conflict. 20

(24) In the deviant regimes it is evident that ostracism is advantageous [for the rulers] privately⁷⁰ and is just; and perhaps that it is not simply just is also evident. In the case of the best regime, however, there is considerable question as to what ought to be done if there happens to be someone who is outstanding not on the basis of preeminence in the other goods such as strength, wealth, or abundance of friends, but on the basis of virtue. (25) For surely no one would assert that such a person should be expelled and banished. But neither would they assert that there should be rule over such a person: this is almost as if they should claim to merit ruling over Zeus by splitting the offices.⁷¹ What remains—and it seems the natural course—is for everyone to obey such a person gladly, so that persons of this sort will be permanent kings in their cities. 25

CHAPTER 14

(1) Perhaps it is the right thing after these arguments to make a transition and investigate kingship; for we assert that this is one of the correct regimes. What must be investigated is whether it is advantageous for the city or the territory that is to be well administered to be under a kingship or not, or some other regime instead, or whether it is advantageous for some but not others. (2) First, it should be determined whether there is one single type or whether it has several varieties. 35 40

This, at any rate, is surely easy to discern—that it encompasses several types, and that the manner of rule is not the same in all. (3) For that of the Spartan regime is held to be particularly representative of kingships based on law; it does not have authority over all matters, but when the king goes out- 5 1285a

69 · A proverbial expression meaning "second best."

70 · Or "is advantageous [for each regime] individually," as it is generally understood; but the phrase in question (*idiai sympherei*) seems to look back to 13.20.

71 · The meaning is somewhat uncertain. The phrase "splitting the offices" (*merizōn tas archas*) seems to refer to rotation in office (cf. 6.5.11); "this is almost as if they should claim to merit ruling over Zeus" is sometimes taken as a parenthetical remark.

whether it is advantageous for cities or not, and if so, which and in what fashion, let our discussion stand thus.

CHAPTER 18

(1) Since we assert that there are three correct regimes, that of these that one is necessarily best which is managed by the best persons, and that this is the sort of regime in which there happens to be one certain person or a whole family or a multitude that is preeminent in virtue with respect to all the rest, of persons capable of being ruled and of ruling with a view to the most choiceworthy way of life, and since in our earlier discourses it was shown that the virtue of man and citizen is necessarily the same in the best city,⁹⁰ it is evident that it is in the same manner and through the same things that a man becomes excellent and that one might constitute a city under an aristocracy or a kingship. So the education and the habits that make a man excellent are essentially the same as those that make him a political or kingly ruler.

(2) These things having been determined, we must now attempt to speak about the best regime—in what manner it accords with its nature to arise and to be established. It is necessary, then, for one who is going to undertake the investigation appropriate to it. . . .⁹¹

90 · 3.4–5.

91 · This sentence, which is incomplete in the MSS, is repeated verbatim at the beginning of book 7. See Introduction, pp. xxv–xxvi above.

Book 4

CHAPTER I

(1) In all arts and sciences which have not arisen on a partial basis but are complete with respect to some one type of thing, it belongs to a single one to study what is fitting in the case of each type of thing. In the case of training for the body, for example, it belongs to it to study what sort is advantageous for what sort of body; which is best (for the best is necessarily fitting for the body that is naturally the finest and is most finely equipped); which is best—
15 a single one for all—for most bodies (for this too is a task of gymnastic expertise); (2) and further, if someone should desire neither the disposition nor the knowledge befitting those connected with competitions, it belongs no less to the sports trainer and the gymnastic expert to provide this capacity as well. We see a similar thing occurring in the case of medicine, shipbuilding,
20 the making of clothing, and every other art.

(3) So it is clear that, with regard to the regime, it belongs to the same science to study what the best regime is, and what quality it should have to be what one would pray for above all, with external things providing no impediment; which regime is fitting for which cities—for it is perhaps impos-
25 sible for many to obtain the best, so neither the one that is superior simply nor the one that is the best that circumstances allow should be overlooked by the good legislator and the political ruler in the true sense; (4) further, thirdly, the regime based on a presupposition—for any given regime should be studied with a view to determining both how it might arise initially and
30 in what manner it might be preserved for the longest time once in existence (I am speaking of the case where a city happens neither to be governed by the best regime—and is not equipped even with the things necessary for it—nor to be governed by the regime that is the best possible among existing ones, but one that is poorer); (5) and besides all these things, the regime

35 that is most fitting for all cities should be recognized. Thus most of those
 who have expressed views concerning the regime, even if what they say is
 fine in other respects, are in error when it comes to what is useful. (6) For
 one should study not only the best regime but also the regime that is the best
 possible, and similarly also the regime that is easier and more attainable for
 40 much equipment, while others, though speaking of an attainable sort of re-
 1289a gime, disregard those that exist and instead praise the Spartan or some other
 single one. (7) But one ought to introduce an arrangement of such a sort
 that they will easily be persuaded and be able to share in it by the fact that it
 arises directly out of those that exist, since to reform a regime is no less a task
 5 than to institute one from the beginning, just as unlearning something is no
 less a task than learning it from the beginning. Hence in addition to what
 has been said the political expert should be able to assist existing regimes as
 well, as was also said earlier.¹ (8) But this is impossible if he does not know
 how many kinds of regime there are. As it is, some suppose there is one sort
 10 of democracy and one sort of oligarchy; but this is not true. So the varieties
 of the regimes—how many there are and in how many ways they are com-
 bined—should not be overlooked. (9) And it belongs to this same practical
 science² to see both what laws are best and what are fitting for each of the re-
 gimes. For laws should be enacted—and all are in fact enacted—with a view
 15 to the regimes, and not regimes with a view to the laws. (10) For a regime is
 an arrangement in cities connected with the offices, establishing the manner
 in which they have been distributed, what the authoritative element of the
 regime is, and what the end of the community is in each case;³ and among the
 things that are revealing of the regime, some laws stand out—those in accor-
 20 dance with which the rulers must rule and guard against those transgressing
 them.⁴ (11) So it is clear that it is necessary to have a grasp of the varieties of

1 • Possibly a reference to 2.1. 1, though it is generally taken to be to the immediate context.

2 • Literally, "prudence" (*phronēsis*).

3 • Reading *hekastēs* with Dreizehnter; but *hekastois* ("for each individually") has some manuscript authority, and is perhaps right.

4 • Or, as this clause is generally understood, "but laws are distinct from the things that are revealing of the regime [*nomoi de kechōrismenoi tōn dêlountōn tēn politeian*], and it is in accordance with them that the rulers must rule and guard against those transgressing them." But the general argument is concerned to establish the connection between laws and the regime; and Aristotle seems to be thinking specifically here of "constitutional" laws regulating the tenure of officials (cf. 3.16.3) and protecting against legislative subversion of the regime (cf. 1.6. 2).

each regime and their number with a view to the enactment of laws as well. For it is impossible for the same laws to be advantageous for all oligarchies or for all democracies, at least if there are several kinds of them and not merely a single sort of democracy or of oligarchy.

25

CHAPTER 2

(1) Since in our first inquiry concerning regimes we distinguished three correct regimes—kingship, aristocracy, and polity—and three deviations from these—tyranny from kingship, oligarchy from aristocracy, and democracy from polity;⁵ and since aristocracy and kingship have been spoken of—for to study the best regime is the same as to speak about the regimes designated by these terms as well, as each of them wishes to be established on the basis of virtue that is furnished with equipment;⁶ and further, since the difference between aristocracy and kingship and when a regime should be considered kingship⁷ were discussed earlier;⁸ what remains is to treat polity—that which is called by the name common to all regimes—and the other regimes—oligarchy and democracy, and tyranny.

(2) Now it is evident also which of the deviations is the worst and which second worst. For the deviation from the first and most divine regime must necessarily be the worst, but kingship must necessarily either have the name alone without being such, or rest on the great superiority of the person ruling as king. So tyranny is the worst, and the farthest removed from a regime;⁹ oligarchy is second worst, for aristocracy stands far from this regime; and democracy is the most moderate. (3) Now an earlier [thinker] has expressed this view as well, though without looking to the same thing we do.¹⁰ For he judged them all to be respectable (there being a good sort of oligarchy, for example, as well as of the others), with democracy as the worst, but the best of the bad sorts; but we assert that these are generally thoroughly in error, and

5 · 3.6–8.

6 · This is often referred to 3.15–16, but the only real discussion of aristocracy as the best regime occurs in 7. See Introduction, p. xxv above.

7 · Or, as it is generally understood, “when kingship should be established.” The rendering here gives the normal meaning of *nomizein*.

8 · The reference would seem to be particularly to 3.15–16.

9 · Or “from polity,” as it is sometimes taken; but both alternatives pose difficulties. What is wanted instead is a reference to kingship, and it is possible that something of this kind has dropped out of the text here.

10 · Plato, *Statesman* 302e–03a.

that it is not right to speak of one sort of oligarchy as better than another, but rather as less bad.

(4) As regards this sort of judgment, let us dismiss the matter for the present. Instead, we must distinguish, first, the number of varieties of regimes, if indeed there are several kinds both of democracy and of oligarchy; next, which is the most attainable and which the most choiceworthy after the best regime, and if there is some other that is aristocratic and finely constituted but fitting for most cities, which it is; (5) next, which of the others is choiceworthy for which cities—for perhaps democracy is more necessary for some than oligarchy, and for others the latter more than the former; after these things, in what manner the one wishing to do so should establish these regimes—I mean, democracy in each of its kinds and likewise oligarchy; (6) and finally, when we have provided as far as possible a concise treatment of all these matters, we must attempt to describe the sources of destruction and preservation for regimes both in general and in the case of each separately, and the reasons for which these things particularly come about in accordance with the nature of the matter.¹¹

CHAPTER 3

(1) Now the reason for there being a number of regimes is that there are a number of parts in any city. For, in the first place, we see that all cities are composed of households, and next that of this aggregation some are necessarily well off, others poor, and others middling, and that of the well off and the poor there is an armed and an unarmed element. (2) And we see that the people has a farming, a marketing, and a working element. In the case of the notables too there are differences based on wealth and the extent of their property—for example, in the matter of horse breeding, which is not easy to do for those who are not wealthy. (3) Hence in ancient times those cities whose power lay in horses had oligarchies, for they used horses in wars against their neighbors—for example, the Eretrians and Chalcidians, the Magnesians on the Maeander, and many others in Asia. (4) Further, in addition to the differences based on wealth, there is that based on family and that based on virtue, and indeed whatever else was said to be a part of the city in the [discourses] on aristocracy (for there we distinguished how

11 · These topics appear to correspond respectively to 4.3–6, 4.7–11, 4.12–13, 4.14–16, and 5.

many necessary parts there are in every city);¹² for of these parts all take part in the regime in some cases, and in others more or fewer. (5) It is evident, therefore, that there must necessarily be a number of regimes differing from one another in kind, since these parts differ from one another in kind. Now a regime is the arrangement of offices, and all distribute these either on the basis of the power of those taking part in the regime or on the basis of some equality common to them—I mean, [the power of] the poor or the well off, or some [equality] common to both.¹³ (6) There are necessarily, therefore, as many regimes as there are arrangements based on the sorts of preeminence and the differences of the parts.

But there are held to be two sorts of regimes particularly: just as in the case of winds some are called northern and others southern and the others deviations from these, so many hold there are two sorts of regimes, rule by the people and oligarchy. (7) They regard aristocracy as a kind of oligarchy on the grounds that it is a sort of rule by the few, and so-called polity as a kind of democracy, just as among the winds the western is regarded as belonging to the northern, the eastern to the southern. It is similar also in the case of harmonies, so some assert: they regard there as being two kinds of these as well, Dorian and Phrygian, while the other modal arrangements they call either "Doric" or "Phrygic."¹⁴ (8) Men are accustomed particularly, then, to conceive of regimes in this way. But it is truer and better to distinguish as we have, and say that one or two are finely constituted and the others deviations from them—deviations from the well-blended harmony as well as from the best regime, the more taut [of the harmonies] being oligarchic and more like rule of a master, the relaxed and soft being popular.¹⁵

12 · This is often referred to 3.12.8–9, but the reference would seem rather to be to 7.7–9.

13 · This clause, sometimes bracketed as an interpolation, is usually understood to mean "[some equality common to] the badly off or the well off, or some [equality] common to both"; it has also been explained as "[the power of] the badly off or the well off, or [the power] common to both."

14 · This view seems to underlie Plato's treatment of the modes or harmonies (*Republic* 399a–c), which is generally taken as reflecting the musical doctrines of the school of Damon.

15 · The interpretation of this passage has been much disputed. I retain *harmonias* in a26 instead of bracketing the word with *Immisch* and *Dreizehnter* ("from the well-blended regime as well as from the best regime"); and I understand the final clause as referring to harmonies instead of regimes, as it is generally assumed to do, and take the word *despotikōteras* ("closer to rule of a master") as predicate rather than subject.

CHAPTER 4

(1) One should not regard democracy, as some are accustomed to do now, as existing simply wherever the multitude has authority, since in oligarchies and indeed everywhere the major part has authority, nor oligarchy as existing wherever the few have authority over the regime. (2) For if the male inhabitants of a city were one thousand three hundred in all, and a thousand of these were wealthy and gave no share in ruling to the three hundred poor, though these were free persons and similar in other respects, no one would assert that they are under a democracy. (3) Similarly, if the poor were few, but superior to a majority of well-off persons, no one would describe this sort of thing as an oligarchy, if the others had no part in the prerogatives although they were wealthy. It must rather be said, therefore, that rule of the people exists when free persons have authority, and oligarchy when the wealthy have it; (4) but it turns out that the former are many and the latter few, for many are free but few wealthy. Otherwise, there would be an oligarchy where they distributed offices on the basis of size, as some assert happens in Ethiopia,¹⁶ or on the basis of good looks; for the number of both good-looking and tall persons is few. (5) Yet neither is it adequate to define these regimes by these things alone. But since there are a number of parts both in the case of rule of the people and of oligarchy, it must be grasped further that rule of the people does not exist even where a few free persons rule over a majority who are not free, as at Apollonia on the Ionian Sea, for example, or Thera (in each of these cities those who were outstanding in good birth on account of descent from the first settlers of the colony—a few among many—held the prerogatives); nor is there rule of the people where the wealthy rule through being preeminent in number, as was formerly the case at Colophon (there the majority possessed large properties prior to the war against the Lydians).¹⁷ (6) Democracy exists when the free and poor, being a majority, have author-

The "well-blended harmony" would seem to be Mixed Lydian, which forms a mean between the extremes of "taut" Lydian (*syntonolydisti*) and Phrygian on the one hand and the "relaxed" Lydian and Ionian harmonies on the other; and the second of the "one or two" well-constituted harmonies would seem to be Dorian (see 8.5. 22). The implicit comparison, then, would appear to be between Mixed Lydian and polity—a "mixture" of oligarchy and democracy (4.8. 3); and the "one or two" well-constituted regimes would seem to be (at least if the parallel is meant to be exact) polity and aristocracy.

16 · Herodotus 3.20.

17 · The war between Colophon and the kingdom of Lydia occurred in the first half of the seventh century. Cf. Herodotus 1.14.

ity to rule; oligarchy, when the wealthy and better born have authority and are few. 20

(7) That there are a number of regimes, then, and the reason for this, has been spoken of. As to why there are more than the ones spoken of, which these are, and how they come to exist, let us speak of this, taking as our beginning point what was mentioned earlier. We agree that every city has not one part but several. (8) Now if we chose to acquire a grasp of kinds of animals, we would first enumerate separately what it is that every animal must necessarily have—for example, certain of the sense organs and something that can work on and receive sustenance, such as a mouth and a stomach, and in addition to these, parts by which each of them moves; and if there were then only so many kinds,¹⁸ and there were varieties of these (I mean, for example, a certain number of types of mouth and stomach and sense organs, and further of the locomotive parts), the number of combinations of these things will necessarily make a number of types of animals, since it is impossible for the same animal to have a number of varieties of mouth or of ears; so when taken together all the possible pairings of them will make kinds of an animal, and as many kinds of the animal as there are combinations of the necessary parts. (9) One may proceed in the same manner in the case of the regimes spoken of. For cities are composed not of one but of many parts, as we have often said.¹⁹ Now one of these is the multitude that is concerned with sustenance, those called farmers. A second is what is called the working element. This is the one that is concerned with the arts without which a city cannot be inhabited (though of these arts only some must exist of necessity, while others are directed toward luxury or living finely). (10) A third is the marketing element, by which I mean that which spends its time concerned with buying and selling and trade and commerce. A fourth is the laboring element; a fifth type is the warrior element—which is no less necessary than the others if they are not to be the slaves of whomever marches against them. (11) For it is impossible that a city that is by nature slavish merits being called such: the city is self-sufficient, but what is slavish is not self-sufficient. 25 30 35 40 1291a 5 10

Hence what is said in the *Republic*, though sophisticated, is not adequate.²⁰ (12) For Socrates asserts that a city is composed of the four most necessary persons, and he says these are a weaver, a farmer, a shoemaker, and a builder; and then, on the grounds that these are not self-sufficient, he adds a smith and persons in charge of the necessary herds, and further both a trader 15

18 · Reading *eidē* with the MSS rather than the conjectural *eiē* adopted by Dreizehnter.

19 · Cf. 2.2. 3, 3.1. 2, 7.8. 7–9.

20 · Cf. Plato, *Republic* 369d–71e.

and one engaged in commerce. All of these make up the complement of the first city, as if every city were constituted for the sake of the necessary things and not rather for the sake of what is noble, and as if it were equally in need of shoemakers and farmers. (13) But he does not assign it a warrior part until, with the increase in their territory and its encroaching on that of their neighbors, they become involved in war. Moreover, even among four persons, or however many sharers there are, there must necessarily be someone who assigns and judges what is just. (14) If, then, one were to regard soul as more a part of an animal than body, things of this sort—the military element and the element sharing in justice as it relates to adjudication, and in addition the deliberative element, which is the work of political understanding—must be regarded as more a part of cities than things relating to necessary needs. (15) (Whether these belong to certain persons separately or to the same ones makes no difference to the argument; indeed, it often happens that the same persons bear arms and farm.) So if both the former and the latter are to be regarded as parts of the city, it is evident that the heavy-armed element, at any rate, is a necessary part of the city.²¹

A seventh is the element that performs public service by means of its property²²—what we call the well off. (16) An eighth is the magisterial, or that performing public service with respect to offices, since a city cannot exist without officials. There must, then, of necessity be certain persons who are capable of ruling and who perform public service for the city in this connection either continuously or in turn. (17) There remain the things we just happened to discuss, the element that deliberates and the element that judges concerning the just things for disputants. If these things must exist in cities, then, and exist in a way that is fine and just, there must necessarily be certain persons who partake of the virtue of political rulers.²³ (18) Now the other capacities are held by many to be susceptible of belonging to the same persons. For example, the warriors, farmers, and artisans could be the same persons,

21 · The omission of a sixth element in the enumeration suggests a lacuna in the text at this point; the parallel account in 7.8. 7–9 points to the priesthood as the missing element. Another possibility is that the deliberative and judicial functions are implicitly considered a single element, as they seem to be in 4.17 (and in 7.8. 7 and 9).

22 · Wealthier persons at Athens were expected as a “public service” (*leitourgia*) to underwrite expenses for civic events such as dramatic performances, religious sacrifices, and the like.

23 · Or “certain political men who share in virtue,” or possibly “certain persons who share in virtue as it relates to political things.”

and all lay claim even to virtue, and suppose themselves capable of ruling in most offices. But it is impossible for the same persons to be poor and wealthy. (19) Hence these are particularly held to be parts of the city, the well off and the poor. Further, on account of the fact that the former are for the most part few and the latter many, these parts of the city are seen as opposed to one another. Accordingly, regimes are instituted on the basis of the sorts of preeminence associated with these, and there are held to be two sorts of regimes, democracy and oligarchy.

(20) That there are several sorts of regimes, then, and what the reasons are for this, was stated earlier; we may now say that there are also several kinds of democracy and of oligarchy. This is evident from what has been said as well. (21) For there are several kinds both of the people and of the so-called notables.²⁴ In the case of the people, for example, there are the farmers, the element engaged in the arts, the marketing element, whose pursuits are buying and selling, and the element connected with the sea. Of the latter, there is a military, merchant,²⁵ ferrying, and fishing element. (In many places one of these can amount to a considerable crowd—for example, the fishermen in Tarentum and Byzantium, the warship crews at Athens, the trading element in Aegina and Chios, and the ferrying in Tenedos.) In addition, there is the menial element and that having little property, so as to be incapable of being at leisure; and further, the free element that is not descended from citizen parents on both sides, and whatever other similar kind of multitude there may be. (22) In the case of the notables, there are kinds distinguished by wealth, good birth, virtue, education, and whatever is spoken of as based on the same sort of difference as these.

The first sort of democracy, then, is that which is particularly said to be based on equality. The law in this sort of democracy asserts that there is equality when the poor are no more preeminent than the well off, and neither have authority, but both are similar. (23) For if freedom indeed exists particularly in a democracy, as some conceive to be the case, as well as equality, this would particularly happen where all share in the regime as far as possible in similar fashion. But since the people are a majority, and what is resolved by the majority is authoritative, this will necessarily be a democracy. (24) This is one kind of democracy; another is the kind where offices are filled on the basis of assessments, but these are low, and it is open to anyone possessing the

24 · The term is *gnōrimoi*, another euphemism for the upper classes.

25 · Literally, the "goods-getting element" (*to chrēmatistikōn*).

1292a amount to take part, while anyone losing it does not take part. Another kind of democracy is where all citizens of unquestioned descent take part, but law rules. (25) Another kind of democracy is where all have a part in the offices provided only they are citizens, but law rules. Another kind of democracy is the same in other respects, but the multitude has authority and not the law. This comes about when decrees rather than law are authoritative, and this happens on account of the popular leaders.²⁶ (26) For in cities under a democracy that is based on law a popular leader does not arise, but the best of the citizens preside; but where the laws are without authority, there popular leaders arise. For the people become a monarch, from many combining into one—for the many have authority not as individuals but all together. (27) What Homer means when he says “many-headed rule is not good”²⁷ is not clear—whether it is this sort of rule, or the sort when there are a number of rulers acting as individuals. At any rate, such a people, being a sort of monarch, seek to rule monarchically on account of their not being ruled by law, and become like a master: flatterers are held in honor, and this sort of rule of the people bears comparison with tyranny among the forms of monarchy. (28) Hence their character is the same as well: both are like masters with respect to the better persons; the decrees of the one are like the edicts of the other; and the popular leader and the flatterer are the same or comparable. These are particularly influential in each case, flatterers with tyrants and popular leaders with peoples of this sort. (29) These are responsible for decrees having authority rather than the laws because they bring everything before the people. For they become great through the people’s having authority in all matters, and through having authority themselves over the opinion of the people, since the multitude is persuaded by them. (30) Moreover, some bring accusations against certain persons holding offices and assert that the people should judge; the invitation is gladly accepted, and all the offices are thus overthrown. One may hold it a reasonable criticism to argue that a democracy of this sort is not a regime.²⁸ For where the laws do not rule there is no regime. (31) The law should rule in all matters, while the offices and the regime²⁹ should judge in particular cases. So if democracy is one of the sorts

26 · That is, “demagogues” (*hoi dēmagōgoi*).

27 · Homer, *Iliad* 2.204.

28 · Probably a reference to Plato, *Republic* 557c–58c.

29 · Something may be wrong with the text here. *Politeia* is often explained as meaning “citizen body,” but it is doubtful whether Aristotle elsewhere uses the word in this sense.

of regime, it is evident that such a system, in which everything is administered through decrees, is not even democracy in the authoritative sense, since no decree can be general. This may stand, then, as our discussion of the kinds of democracy.

CHAPTER 5

(1) Of the kinds of oligarchy, one is where the offices are filled on the basis of assessments of such a size that the poor do not share, though they are a majority, while it is open to anyone possessing the amount to take part in the regime. Another is when the offices are filled on the basis of large assessments, and they themselves elect in filling vacancies (if they do this out of all of these it is held to be more aristocratic, but if from certain special ones, oligarchic).³⁰ (2) Another form of oligarchy is when son succeeds father. A fourth is when what was just spoken of occurs, and not law but the officials rule. This is the counterpart among oligarchies to tyranny among monarchies, and to the sort of democracy we spoke of last among democracies; they call such an oligarchy "rule of the powerful."³¹

(3) There are, then, this many kinds of oligarchy and democracy. But it should not be overlooked that it has happened in many places that, although the regime insofar as it is based on the laws is not a popular one, it is governed in popular fashion as a result of the character and regimen³² of the citizens. Similarly, it has happened elsewhere that the regime insofar as it is based on the laws tends toward the popular, but through the citizens' regimen and habits tends to be oligarchically run. (4) This happens particularly after revolution in regimes. For the transition is not immediate: they are content at first to aggrandize themselves at the expense of the others only in small ways, so that the laws that existed before remain, although those who have made the revolution in the regime are dominant.

30 · This sentence has been differently understood. The words *autoi hairontai* ("they themselves elect") appear to refer to a process of cooptation by which the officials themselves would choose their successors (in contrast to the first variety, where election to office is by the entire citizen body). But they have sometimes been taken to refer to the entire citizen body, and the process interpreted (in the light of 6.9) as involving the admission of noncitizens to citizenship.

31 · *Dynasteia*; cf. 2.10.13-14.

32 · *Agôgê*, a term commonly used of Spartan civic education or training.

CHAPTER 6

(1) That there are this many kinds of democracy and oligarchy is evident from what has been said. For, necessarily, either all the parts of the people that have been spoken of share in the regime, or some do and some do not. (2) Now when the farming element and that possessing a moderate amount of property have authority over the regime, they govern themselves in accordance with laws. For they have enough to live on as long as they work, but are unable to be at leisure, so they put the law in charge and assemble only for necessary assemblies. As for others, it is open to them to take part as soon as they are in possession of the assessment defined by the laws; hence it is open to all who possess the amount to take part. (3) In general, it is oligarchic when it is not open to all [actually to take part in office in spite of being full citizens,] but that it should be open to them to be at leisure is impossible unless there are revenues.³³ For these reasons, then, this is one kind of democracy. Another kind arises through the next sort of distinction. For it is possible for it to be open to all of unquestioned descent with respect to family to take part in the regime, but for those [only actually] to share who are able to be at leisure; (4) hence in a democracy of this sort the laws rule on account of there not being a revenue. A third kind is when it is open to all who are free persons to take part in the regime, but they do not [actually] take part for the reason just mentioned, so in this as well the law necessarily rules. (5) A fourth kind of democracy is the one that was the last to arise in cities. For on account of cities' having become much larger than they originally were and having available abundant sources of revenues, all take part in the regime on account of the preeminence of the multitude, and all share and engage in politics, as even the poor are able to be at leisure through receiving pay. (6) A multitude of this sort is indeed particularly at leisure: the care of their private affairs is in no way an obstacle for them, while it is an obstacle for the wealthy, so that the latter frequently do not share in the assembly or in adjudicating. Hence the multitude of the poor comes to have authority over the regime, and not the laws.

(7) The kinds of democracy, then, are such and so many on account of these necessities. As for the kinds of oligarchy, when a larger number of per-

33 · Text and meaning are uncertain. I follow the text of Dreizehnter (apart from his unnecessary supplement) rather than the reconstruction of Rassow, but suspect a lacuna following *to men* at the end of b31; I have supplied what I take to be the sense. There would seem to be little question that the term *prosodoi* refers to state revenues.

sons owns property, but in lesser amounts and not overly much, this is the first kind of oligarchy. Taking part in the regime they make open to whoever possesses the amount of the assessment; (8) and as there is a multitude of persons taking part in the governing body, not human beings but the law necessarily has authority. For the further removed they are from monarchy, and have neither so much property that they can be at leisure without concerning themselves with it, nor so little that they must be sustained by the city, they will necessarily claim to merit having the law rule for them rather than ruling themselves. (9) Now when those who own property are fewer than those mentioned earlier, and the properties greater, the second kind of oligarchy arises. Being more influential, they claim to merit aggrandizement for themselves; hence they themselves elect from the others those who are to enter the governing body. But as they are not yet strong enough to rule without law, they make a law of this sort.³⁴ (10) If they tighten it by being fewer and having larger properties, the third advance in oligarchy occurs—that where the offices are in their own hands, in accordance with a law requiring that the deceased be succeeded by their sons. (11) When they tighten it excessively with respect to their properties and in the extent of their friendships, this sort of rule of the powerful is close to monarchy, and human beings rule rather than the law. This is the fourth kind of oligarchy, the counterpart to the final kind of democracy.

CHAPTER 7

(1) There are, further, two sorts of regimes besides democracy and oligarchy, one of which is spoken of by all—and we spoke of earlier—as one of the four kinds of regimes (the four they speak of are monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, and fourthly, so-called aristocracy). There is a fifth sort, which is referred to by the term common to all—they call it polity; but because it has not often existed, it is overlooked by those who undertake to enumerate the kinds of regimes, and they use only the four (as Plato does) in the [works of theirs treating] regimes.³⁵ (2) Now it is right to call aristocracy the regime

34 · Or possibly “they make the law a thing of this sort,” i.e., the ruling authority.

35 · Or perhaps “they use only the four, as Plato does in the [section of his work treating] regimes,” i.e., *Republic* 8–9. Plato’s enumeration includes, beside an aristocracy of philosophers, timocracy (or “so-called aristocracy” on the model of Sparta), oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. It is not known to what other authorities Aristotle might be referring.

we treated in our first discourses.³⁶ Only the regime that is made up of those who are best simply on the basis of virtue, and not of men who are good in relation to some presupposition, is justly referred to as an aristocracy; for only here is it simply the case that the same person is a good man and a good citizen, while those who are good in others are so in relation to their regime. (3) Nevertheless, there are certain regimes which differ both from those that are oligarchically run and from so-called polity, and are called aristocracies. For wherever they elect to offices not only on the basis of wealth but also on the basis of desert, the regime itself is different from both of these and is called aristocratic. (4) For, indeed, in cities that do not make virtue a common concern there are still certain persons who are of good reputation and held to be respectable. Wherever, therefore, the regime looks both to wealth and to virtue as well as the people, as in Carthage, it is aristocratic; and so also those which, like the Spartan regime, look to two alone, virtue and the people, and where there is a mixture of these two things, democracy and virtue. (5) There are, therefore, these two kinds of aristocracy besides the first or the best regime. And there is a third: those forms of so-called polity which incline more toward oligarchy.

CHAPTER 8

(1) It remains for us to speak of what is termed polity as well as of tyranny. We have arranged it thus, although polity is not a deviation, nor are those sorts of aristocracies just spoken of, because in truth all fall short of the most correct regime, and because [usually] enumerated with them are those which are themselves deviations from them, as we said in our initial discourses.³⁷ (2) It is reasonable to make mention of tyranny last since of all of them this is least a regime, while our inquiry concerns the regime. The reason it has been arranged in this manner, then, has been spoken of; now we must set out [our view of] polity. Its capacity should be more evident now that we have discussed what pertains to oligarchy and democracy.

(3) Simply speaking, polity is a mixture of oligarchy and democracy. It is customary, however, to call polities those sorts that tend toward democ-

36 · The reference appears to be to the discussion of the best regime in 7-8, rather than to the various allusions to aristocracy in 3 (consider particularly 7.3, where the definition given of aristocracy seems clearly intended to be a generic one).

37 · This is usually referred to 3.7. 5, but the reference seems to be rather to 4.2, if the translation given here (which accepts the interpretation though not the supplement of Thurot) is correct.

racy, and those tending more toward oligarchy, aristocracies, on account of the fact that education and good birth particularly accompany those who are better off. (4) Further, those who are well off are held to possess already the things for the sake of which the unjust commit injustice; this is why they are referred to as gentlemen and notables. Since aristocracy tries to assign preeminence to the best of the citizens, it is asserted that oligarchies too are made up particularly of gentlemen. (5) Also, it is held to be impossible for a city to have good governance if it is run not aristocratically but by the base, and similarly, for one that does not have good governance to be aristocratically run. For good governance does not exist where the laws have been well enacted yet are not obeyed. (6) Hence one should conceive it to be one sort of good governance when the laws are obeyed as enacted, and another sort when the laws being upheld have been finely enacted (for it is possible that even badly enacted ones will be obeyed). This may be done in two ways: they may obey either the laws that are the best of those possible for them, or those that are the best simply.

(7) Aristocracy is held to be most particularly the distribution of prerogatives on the basis of virtue; for the defining principle of aristocracy is virtue, as that of oligarchy is wealth, and of rule of the people freedom. (The [principle of] what the major part resolves is present in all: in an oligarchy, an aristocracy, or in regimes ruled by the people, what is resolved by the greater part of those taking part in the regime is authoritative.) (8) Now in most cities the kind of regime [that is commonly called aristocracy is not correctly so] called.³⁸ For the mixture aims only at the well off and the poor, at wealth and freedom, since in most places the well off are held to occupy the place of gentlemen. (9) Since there are three things disputing over equality in the regime,³⁹ freedom, wealth, and virtue (for the fourth—what they call good birth—accompanies the latter two, good birth being old wealth and virtue together), it is evident that a mixture of the two—of the well off and the poor—is to be spoken of as polity, while a mixture of the three should (apart from the genuine and first form) be spoken of most particularly as aristoc-

38 · Text and meaning are uncertain. The expression *to tēs politeias eidos kaleitai* is explained by Newman as “the form which is called polity exists,” but it is hardly clear how this allegedly idiomatic sense of *kalein* helps to make sense of the larger context; others have suggested a variety of emendations, none very satisfying. I believe something has dropped out of the text, and supply what I take to be the sense.

39 · Or “disputing for equal treatment in the regime,” as it is usually translated; but the reference appears to be to the fundamental discussion of democratic and oligarchic views of the *meaning* of equality in 3.9.

25 racy. (10) That there are other kinds of regimes apart from monarchy, democracy, and oligarchy, then, has been stated, and it is evident which sorts these are, in what ways aristocracies differ among themselves and polities from aristocracy, and that they are not far from one another.

CHAPTER 9

30 (1) In what manner so-called polity comes into being beside democracy and oligarchy, and how it should be established, we shall speak of now in conformity with what has been said. At the same time, it will be clear also what it is that defines democracy and oligarchy; for the distinction between these
 35 must be grasped, and a combination then made out of these, taking from each a tally, as it were.⁴⁰ (2) There are three defining principles of this combination or mixture. One is to take elements of the legislation of each, as for example concerning adjudication. In oligarchies they arrange to fine the well
 40 off if they do not take part in adjudicating, and provide no pay for the poor, while in democracies they provide pay for the poor and do not fine the well off. (3) What is common to and a mean between these is to have both [arrangements], and hence this is characteristic of polity, which is a mixture formed from both. This, then, is one mode of conjoining them. Another is to take the mean between the arrangements of each. For example, in the one
 1294b case they attend the assembly on the basis of no assessment at all or a very small one, and in the other on the basis of a large assessment: what is common here is neither of these, but the mean between the assessments. (4) A
 5 third is a selection from both arrangements, taking some from the oligarchic law and some from the democratic. I mean, for example, it is held to be democratic for offices to be chosen by lot, oligarchic to have them elected,
 10 and democratic not to do it on the basis of an assessment, oligarchic to do it on the basis of an assessment. (5) It is characteristic of aristocracy and polity, therefore, to take an element from each—from oligarchy making offices elected, from democracy not doing it on the basis of an assessment.

(6) The manner of mixing them, then, is this. The defining principle of a
 15 good mixture of democracy and oligarchy is that it should be possible for the same polity to be spoken of as either a democracy or an oligarchy, and it is clear that it is because the mixture is a fine one that those who speak of it do so in this way. The mean too is of this sort: each of the extremes is revealed

40 · A "tally" (*symbolon*) was one of two halves of a token which two contracting parties broke between them for purposes of identification.

in it. (7) Just this happens in the case of the Spartan regime. Many attempt to speak of it as if it were a democracy on account of the fact that the arrangement has many democratic elements. In the first place, for example, as far as the rearing of children is concerned, those of the wealthy are reared in similar fashion to those of the poor, and they are educated in a manner such that the children of the poor can also afford it. (8) It is similar as well in the age following; and when they become men the same approach is followed. For a wealthy person is in no way marked off from a poor one: the sustenance they get in the common messes is the same for all, and the dress of the rich is of a sort that any of the poor could also provide himself with. (9) Further, it seems democratic by the fact that, of the two greatest offices, one is elected by the people, while they take part in the other—for they elect the senators and take part in the board of overseers. On the other hand, others call it oligarchy on account of its having many oligarchic elements. For example, all the offices are chosen by election and none by lot, a few have authority over cases with penalties of death and exile, and many other such things. (10) In a polity that is finely mixed, the regime should be held to be both—and neither. And it should be preserved through itself, not from outside—through itself not because those wishing its preservation are a majority⁴¹ (since this might be the case even in a base regime), but because none of the parts of the city generally would wish to have another regime.

In what manner polity should be established, and similarly the regimes termed aristocracies, has now been spoken of.

CHAPTER 10

(1) It remains for us to speak about tyranny; not that there is room for much argument about it, but that it may have its part in the inquiry, since we placed it too among the regimes. Now we discussed kingship in our first discourses, where we made an investigation of what is most particularly spoken of as kingship—whether it is disadvantageous or advantageous for cities, who should be king, where he should be drawn from, and how the kingship should be established.⁴² (2) We distinguished two kinds of tyranny while investigating kingship, as their power in a sense overlaps with kingship as well on account of the fact that both of these sorts of rule are based on law. For among some of the barbarians they choose plenipotentary monarchs, and

41 · Bracketing *exothern* with Thurot.

42 · 3.14–17.

formerly among the ancient Greeks there arose in this manner certain monarchs who were called dictators. (3) There are certain differences between these; but both were kingly by the fact of being based on law and a monarchic rule over willing persons, and at the same time tyrannical by the rule being characteristic of a master and in accordance with their own will. There is also a third kind of tyranny, the one that is most particularly held to be tyranny, being a sort of counterpart to absolute kingship. (4) Any monarchy must necessarily be a tyranny of this sort if it rules in unchallenged fashion over persons who are all similar or better, and with a view to its own advantage and not that of the ruled. Hence it is rule over persons who are unwilling; for no free person would willingly tolerate this sort of rule. The kinds of tyranny, then, are these and this many for the reasons spoken of.

CHAPTER II

(1) What regime is best and what way of life is best for most cities and most human beings, judging with a view neither to virtue of the sort that is beyond private persons, nor to education, in respect to those things requiring [special advantages provided by] nature and an equipment dependent on chance, nor to the regime that one would pray for, but a way of life which it is possible for most to share in, and a regime of which most cities can partake? (2) For those that are called aristocracies—the ones we were just speaking of—either fall outside [the range] of most cities, or border on so-called polity; hence we may speak of both as one.

Judgment in all these matters rests on the same elements. (3) If it was correctly said in the discourses on ethics⁴³ that the happy life is one in accordance with virtue and unimpeded, and that virtue is a mean, then the middling sort of life is best—the mean that is capable of being attained by each sort of individual. These same defining principles must also define virtue and vice in the case of a city and a regime; for the regime is the way of life of a city. (4) Now in all cities there are three parts of the city, the very well off, the very poor, and third, those in the middle between these. Since, however, it is agreed that what is moderate and middling is best, it is evident that in the case of the goods of fortune as well a middling possession is the best of all. (5) For it is readiest to obey reason, while for one who is overly handsome, overly strong, overly well born, or overly wealthy—or the reverse of these things, overly indigent, overly weak, or very lacking in honor—it is difficult to follow reason.

43 · E.g., *Eth. Nic.* 1101a14–16.

The former sort tend to become arrogant and base on a grand scale, the latter malicious and base in petty ways; and acts of injustice are committed either through arrogance or through malice. Moreover, these are least inclined either to avoid ruling or to wish to rule, both of which things are injurious to cities.⁴⁴ (6) In addition, those who are preeminent in the goods of fortune—strength, wealth, friends, and the other things of this sort—neither wish to be ruled nor know how to be. This is something that marks them from the time they are children at home, for the effect of living in luxury is that they do not become habituated to being ruled even at school; but those who are excessively needy with respect to these things are too humble. (7) So the ones do not know how to rule but only how to be ruled, and then only to be ruled like a slave, and the others do not know how to be ruled by any sort of rule, but only to rule like a master. What comes into being, then, is a city not of free persons but of slaves and masters, the ones consumed by envy, the others by contempt. Nothing is further removed from affection and from a political community; for community involves the element of affection—enemies do not wish to have even a journey in common. (8) The city wishes, at any rate, to be made up of equal and similar persons to the extent possible, and this is most particularly the case with the middling elements. So this city must necessarily be governed in the best fashion if it is made up of the elements out of which we assert the city is by nature constituted. Also, of citizens in cities these most particularly preserve themselves. (9) For neither do they desire the things of others, as the poor do, nor others their things, as the poor desire those of the wealthy; and as a result of not being plotted against or plotting against others they pass their time free from danger. On this account, the prayer of Phocylides was a fine one: “Many things are best for the middling; I would be of the middling sort in the city.”⁴⁵

(10) It is clear, therefore, that the political community that depends on the middling sort is best as well, and that those cities are capable of being well governed in which the middling element is numerous—most particularly if

44 · Text and meaning are uncertain. I accept Bernays's conjectural *phygarchousi* (“avoid ruling”) for the *phylarchousi* or *philarchousi* of the MSS; but the verbs *phygarchein* and *boularchein* (in the sense of “wish to rule”) are found nowhere else, and the entire clause may be corrupt or out of place (it is bracketed by Dreizehnter as a gloss). It is perhaps possible to take it to mean that both rich and poor (and not the middle class, the apparent antecedent of “these”) shun public service as cavalry commander (*phylarchos*) or head of council (*boularchos*), but this is not very satisfactory in its immediate context.

45 · Phocylides, fr. 12 Diehl.

it is superior to both of the other parts, but if not, superior to either of them; for when added to one it will tip the scale and prevent the opposing excesses from arising. (11) Thus it is the greatest good fortune for those who are engaged in politics to have a middling and sufficient property, because where some possess very many things and others nothing, either rule of the people in its extreme form must come into being, or unmixed oligarchy, or—as a result of both of these excesses—tyranny. For tyranny arises from the most headstrong sort of democracy and from oligarchy, but much less often from the middling sorts of regime and those close to them. (12) We will speak of the reason for this later in the discourses on revolutions in regimes.⁴⁶ But that the middling sort is best is evident. It alone is without factional conflict, for where the middling element is numerous, factional conflicts and splits over the regimes occur least of all. (13) And large cities are freer of factional conflict for the same reason—that the middling element is numerous. In small cities it is easier for all to be separated into two factions and have no one left in the middle, and nearly everyone is either poor or well off. (14) And democracies are more stable than oligarchies and more durable on account of those of the middling sort, who are more numerous and have a greater part in the prerogatives in democracies than in oligarchies. When the poor predominate numerically in the absence of these, they fare badly and are quickly ruined. (15) It should be considered an indication of this that the best legislators are from the middling citizens. Solon was one of these, as is clear from his poems, and Lycurgus (for he was not king), Charondas, and most of the others.⁴⁷

(16) It is also evident from these things why most regimes are either democratic or oligarchic. For as a result of the fact that the middling element is often few in them, whichever is preeminent, whether those owning property or the people, oversteps the middle [path] and conducts the regime to suit itself, so that either rule of the people comes into being or an oligarchy. (17) In addition to this, on account of the factional conflicts and fights that arise between the people and the well off, whichever of the two succeeds in dominating its opponents does not establish a regime that is common or equal, but they grasp for preeminence in the regime as the prize of victory. (18) Further, those who have achieved leadership in Greece have in either case looked to their own regime in establishing either democracies or oligarchies in cities,⁴⁸

46 · The reference appears to be to 5.8. 7.

47 · For Solon see *Ath. Pol.* 5 and Plutarch, *Solon* 1 and 14; the view that Lycurgus was king at Sparta and therefore a wealthy man appears, for example, in Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 3 and *Solon* 16 (but cf. *Cleomenes* 10).

48 · The reference is to the Athenians and the Spartans respectively.

having in view not what is advantageous for the cities but rather what is advantageous for themselves. (19) So for these reasons the middling regime has either never arisen or has done so infrequently and in a few cities. For of those who have previously held leadership, one man alone was persuaded to provide for this sort of arrangement;⁴⁹ and the custom is now established that those in the cities do not even want equality, but either seek to rule or endure being dominated.

(20) What the best regime is, then, and for what reason, is evident from these things. As for the other regimes (since we assert that there are several sorts of democracies and several of oligarchies), once the best is defined it is not difficult to see which is to be regarded as first, which second, and so on in the same manner according to whether it is better or worse. (21) The one that is closest to this must of necessity always be better, the one that is more removed from the middle, worse, provided one is not judging with a view to a presupposition. I say "with a view to a presupposition" because while one sort of regime is more choiceworthy, there is often nothing to prevent another regime being more advantageous for certain cities.

CHAPTER 12

(1) What regime is advantageous for which cities, and what sort for which sort of persons, is to be treated next after what has been spoken of. Now the same thing must first be grasped about all of them generally: the part of the city that wants the regime to continue must be superior to the part not wanting this. Every city is made up of both quality and quantity. By quality I mean freedom, wealth, education, and good birth; by quantity, the preeminence belonging to the multitude. (2) It is possible that, while quality belongs to one part of the city among all those of which a city is constituted, and quantity to another part (for example, the ignoble may be more in number than those of good family, or the poor than the wealthy), the larger part is nevertheless not preeminent in quantity to the same extent that it falls short in quality. Hence these [two factors] must be judged in relation to one another. (3) Where the multitude of the poor is preeminent, therefore, with respect to the proportion mentioned, there a democracy is what accords with nature—and each kind of democracy according to the preeminence belonging to each

49 · The identity of this individual has been much disputed. Solon and Theramenes are commonly cited as possibilities, but what seems wanted is the leader of a hegemonial state; the most plausible candidate would appear to be Philip of Macedon. Cf. Introduction, pp. xiii–xiv above.

30 sort of people. If, for example, the multitude of farmers predominates, it will be the first sort of democracy; if that of workers and wage earners, the last sort, and similarly for the others between these. But where the element of the well off and the notables predominates in quality to a greater extent than it falls short in quantity, there it is oligarchy that accords with nature, and in a similar manner each of its kinds according to the preeminence belonging to the oligarchic multitude.

35 (4) The legislator should always add those of the middling sort to the dominant element in the regime. If he enacts oligarchic laws, he ought to aim at the middling sort; if democratic ones, he ought to attach these to them. Where the multitude of middling persons predominates either over both of
40 the extremities together or over one alone, there a lasting polity⁵⁰ is capable of existing. (5) For there is no reason to fear that the wealthy and the poor
1297a will come to an agreement against them: neither will want to be the slaves of the other, and if they seek a regime in which they will have more in common, they will find none other than this. They would not put up with ruling
5 in turn on account of their distrust toward one another. The most trustworthy person everywhere is the arbitrator; but the middling person is a sort of arbitrator. (6) The better the mixture in the polity, the more lasting it will be. Many of those who want to set up aristocratic regimes as well [as polities] thoroughly err not only by the fact that they distribute more to the well off,
10 but also by deceiving the people. For in time from things falsely good there must result a true evil, and the aggrandizements of the wealthy are more ruinous to the polity than those of the people.

CHAPTER 13

15 (1) The devices used in polities⁵¹ as pretexts against the people are five in number, being connected with the assembly, the offices, the courts, armament, and exercise. As regards the assembly, the device is that it is open to all to attend assemblies, but either a fine is imposed on the well off alone for

50 · Here and in the rest of this chapter, *politeia* is frequently taken to be used in its generic sense of "regime" rather than in its specific sense of "polity," though I think wrongly (consider particularly the reference to polities which seems implicit in the text in a6-7).

51 · *Politeia* is here frequently taken in its generic sense. But the reference back to this passage in 5.8. 2-4 confirms what is indicated at the end of 4.12, that the use of such devices is characteristic of "well-blended" regimes—polities and aristocracies that approach polities.

not attending, or a much larger one on them; (2) as regards the offices, that it should not be open to those who are assessed to abjure,⁵² but it should be to the poor; as regards the courts, that there should be a fine against the well off if they do not attend, but impunity for the poor, or else a large fine for the ones and a small fine for the others, as in the laws of Charondas. (3) In some places it is open to all to enroll themselves for the assembly and courts, but if they do not attend the assembly or adjudicate once they are enrolled they are fined heavily—in order that they avoid enrolling, and through not being enrolled do not adjudicate or attend the assembly. (4) They legislate in a similar manner concerning the possession of heavy arms and exercising. It is open to those who are poor not to possess them, but the well off are fined if they do not, while if they do not exercise there is no fine for the former, but the well off are fined, so that the ones take part in these things on account of the fine, and the others do not take part through not being afraid of it.

(5) Now these devices of legislation are oligarchic. In democracies, however, there are counterdevices to them. To the poor they give pay for attending the assembly and adjudicating, and arrange not to have the well off fined for not attending. (6) So it is evident that if one wishes to have a just mixture, elements from both must be brought together—for example, the ones being provided pay, the others fined; in this way all would participate, while in the other way the regime comes to belong to one side alone.

(7) A polity should be made up only of those possessing heavy arms. But it is not possible to define the amount of assessment in simple fashion and say that so much must be available; rather, one should investigate what sort of amount is the largest that would let those taking part in the regime be more numerous than those not taking part, and arrange for it to be this. (8) For the poor are willing to remain tranquil even when they take no part in the prerogatives, provided no one acts arrogantly toward them nor deprives them of any of their property. Yet this is not easy; for it does not always turn out that those taking part in the governing body are the refined sort. (9) And when war comes, they are in the habit of shirking if they are poor, unless they receive sustenance; if someone provides them sustenance, however, they are willing to go to war.

In some cases, the regime [of a polity] is made up not only of those bearing heavy arms, but of those who had once done so. Among the Malians the regime was made up of both of these, though they elected to offices from those

52 · That is, to decline office with an oath supporting the claim that it would be unduly burdensome for financial or other reasons.

who were actually soldiers. (10) And the first sort of regime that arose among the Greeks after kingships was made up of the warrior elements, and initially of cavalrymen. For strength and preeminence in war then belonged to the cavalrymen: without organization the heavy-armed element is useless, but experience in such matters and tactical arrangements were lacking among the ancients, so that their strength lay in the cavalrymen. But as cities increased in size and those with heavy arms provided relatively more strength, more persons took part in the regime. (11) Hence the regimes we now call politics used to be called democracies. That the ancient regimes were oligarchic and kingly is reasonable: on account of a lack of manpower cities did not have much of a middling element, so being relatively both few in number and weak in organization, the people put up with being ruled.

(12) For what reason there are several sorts of regimes, then; why there are other sorts beyond those [generally] spoken of (for democracy is not one in number, and similarly with the others); further, what the varieties are and for what reason it happens that they are different; in addition, which is the best of the regimes for the majority of cases, and of the other regimes which sort suits which sort of city—this has been spoken of.

CHAPTER 14

(1) Let us speak of what comes next again both generally and separately for each regime, taking the beginning point that is appropriate to it. There are, then, three parts in all regimes with respect to which the excellent lawgiver must attempt to discern what is advantageous for each. As long as these are in a fine condition, the regime is necessarily in a fine condition; and regimes necessarily differ from one another as a result of differing in each of these parts. (2) Of these three things, one is the part that is to deliberate about common matters; the second, the part connected with offices—that is, which offices there should be, over what matters they should have authority, and in what fashion the choice of persons to fill them should occur; and the third, the adjudicative part.

(3) The deliberative element has authority concerning war and peace, alliances and their dissolution, laws, [judicial cases carrying penalties of] death or exile or confiscation, and the choosing and auditing of officials. It is necessary either that all these sorts of decision be assigned to all the citizens, that all be assigned to some of the citizens (for example, by assigning all to one particular office or several, or some to some and some to others), or that some of them be assigned to all of the citizens and others to some.

(4) Now that all decide concerning all is characteristically popular; for the people seek this sort of equality. But there are several modes in which all decide. One is by turns rather than all together, as in the regime of Telecles of Miletus; and there are other regimes in which deliberation is carried out by officials meeting jointly, with all entering office by turns from the tribes and the smallest parts of the city until all have been gone through, and they meet [all together] only concerning legislation or matters affecting the regime, or to listen to announcements by the officials.⁵³ (5) Another mode is when all decide together, but meet only with a view to the choosing of officials, legislation, what concerns war and peace, and audits, while in other matters deliberation is carried out through offices arranged to deal with each sort of thing, and the offices are chosen from all by election or by lot. (6) Another mode is when the citizens get together in connection with offices and audits and to deliberate about war and alliance, while other matters are administered by offices that are chosen by election to the extent possible [rather than by lot]—those in which it is necessary to have knowledgeable persons ruling. (7) A fourth mode is when all meet to deliberate on all matters, while the offices decide on nothing but merely make preliminary decisions. This is the mode in which the final sort of democracy—the sort that we assert bears comparison with dynastic oligarchy and tyrannical monarchy—administers itself now.

All these modes, then, are democratic, while having some decide in all matters is oligarchic. (8) This too has several varieties. Where they are elected on the basis of moderate assessments and are numerous because of the moderateness of the assessment, where they do not attempt change in matters where the laws forbid it but instead follow the laws, and where it is open to anyone possessing the assessment to take part in deliberation, such a regime is indeed an oligarchy, but by the fact of its moderateness, polity-like. When all do not take part in deliberation but only those elected to do so, and they rule in accordance with law, it is oligarchic as before. (9) When those who have authority over deliberation elect themselves, and when son succeeds father in office and they have authority over the laws, this arrangement is necessarily very oligarchic. (10) But when some have authority in some matters [and all in some]—for example, when all have it concerning war and peace and audits, and officials in other matters, these being chosen

53 · The practice of governing through joint official boards (*synarchiai*) seems to have become fairly common by Aristotle's day. The "smallest parts" referred to here would seem to be political subdivisions of the type of the "quarters" (*dēmoi*) of Athens. Nothing else is known of Telecles of Miletus.