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Introduction

The following are detailed notes of Aristotle’s *Politics*, which were part of a Summer Project Grant, approved by the Maricopa County Community College District in 2014. I would like to thank them for allowing me to spend time and effort on this research.

Please be aware that in what follows, these are actual sentences of Aristotle’s text in some cases, but this is not the whole text. More importantly, I have deleted, paraphrased, and/or reworded many unnecessary words, phrases, sentences, and/or examples (when 2 or 3 would suffice), and added chapter headings (that should be very helpful), numbers, underlining, italicizing, and so on, to make the text easier to understand. I have also added any notes or objections I may have thought about along the way, which are underlined and highlighted in blue. I have also moved his examples nearer to when he describes a principle (sometimes he says, e.g., “X is Y and not-Y” and then gives an example of not-Y for several sentences, until finally getting to an example of Y; I moved the example to make it more easily accessible).

In addition, these notes are in no way to be thought of as being a substitute for reading all of the *Politics* for oneself; these notes are merely what I thought was most important, and put into a form that I could more easily understand. I use the following capitalized abbreviations: ARG = argument, OBJ = objection, REP = reply (to an objection), and EX(s) = example(s). Definitions are from the MAC Dictionary (v. 2.2.1) unless otherwise indicated, and are designated as follows: “Word to be defined [=definition – DY (ε to designate that it’s my note and not Aristotle’s definition)].”

The largest disclaimer comes as a result of the content of Aristotle’s argument(s) that slavery is expedient and morally correct (in Book I, Chapters 3-7)! I would hope that it is obvious that this author vehemently disagrees with any points Aristotle makes here about slavery being natural or in any way good. I am embarrassed that I had to give headings to those Chapters; however, this document is a testament of Aristotle’s, and not my, thought, so please direct any anger, discomfort, and incredulity to the spirit of Aristotle, and write out your own rebuttals to his view. I have only given several major OBJs against his views on slavery and leave others to the exercise of the reader.

Lastly, despite all these disclaimers, I do sincerely hope that these notes are of some value to the reader.
BOOK I:

I.1 Every State is a Community, Established for Some Good; the State is the Highest Community, Aimed at the Highest Good; My Opponents are Wrong that the Qualifications of Statesman, King, Householder and Master are the Same; We Need to Look at the State’s Elements (1252a-b).

Every state is some kind of community, and every community is established with a view to some good (since everyone always acts in order to obtain that which they think good). Of all communities, the state or political community is the highest of all, embraces all the rest, and aims at the highest good.

My opponents think that the qualifications of a statesman, king, householder, and master are the same, and that they differ, not in kind, but only in the number of their subjects. EXs: the ruler over a few is called a master; over more, the manager of a household; over a still larger number, a statesman or king, as if there were no difference between a great household and a small state. They distinguish the king and the statesman as follows: When the government is personal, the ruler is a king; when, according to the rules of the political science, the citizens rule and are ruled in turn, then he is called a statesman.

All this is a mistake: As in other sciences, so in politics, the compound should always be resolved into the simple elements or least parts of the whole. So we must look at the elements of which the state is composed, in order that we may see how the different kinds of rule differ from one another, and whether any scientific result can be attained about each one of them.

I.2 The Origin of the State: First Families, then Villages, then States Arise; a State is a Natural Creation; Man is a Political Animal; the State is Prior in Nature to the Family and Individual; When Perfected by a State, Man is Good; When Separated from Law and Justice, He is Bad; Justice is the Bond of Men in States (1252b-1253b).

Let us look at the state’s first growth and origin: First, there must be a union of those who cannot exist without each other – male and female – that the race may continue (these unions are formed, not of choice, but because, as with other animals and plants, mankind has a natural desire to leave behind them an image of themselves), and of natural ruler and subject, that both may be preserved. The mind’s foresight is by nature lord and master, and its body that gives effect to such foresight is a subject, and by nature a slave; hence master and slave have the same interest. Nature has distinguished between the female and the slave; nature is not niggardly, like the smith who fashions the Delphian knife for many uses; she makes each thing for a single use, and every instrument is best made when intended for one and not for many uses. Non-Greeks make no distinction between women and slaves, because there is no natural ruler among them: they are a community of slaves, male and female.

The first thing to arise is the family, and Hesiod is right (“First house and wife and an ox for the plough”), for the ox is the poor man’s slave. The family is the association established by nature for the supply of men’s everyday wants.

When several families are united for something more than the supply of daily needs, the first society to be formed is the village. The most natural form of the village appears to be that of a colony from the family, composed of the children and grandchildren (“suckled with the same milk”). The Hellenic states were originally governed by kings before they came together, as the non-Greeks still are. Every family is ruled by the eldest, and therefore in the colonies of the family, the kingly form of government prevailed because they were of the same blood. Homer says, “Each one gives law to his children and to his wives,” because they lived dispersedly, as was the manner in ancient times. Men say that the Gods have a king, because they themselves either are or were in ancient times under the rule of a king. They imagine the forms and ways of life of the Gods to be like their own.
When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life. Therefore, if the earlier forms of society are natural, so is the state, for it is the end of them, and the nature of a thing is its end. What each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a man, a horse, or a family. Besides, the final cause and end of a thing is the best, and to be self-sufficing is the end and the best.

So the state is a creation of nature, and man is by nature a political animal. He who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity; he is like the, “Tribeless, lawless, heartless one,” whom Homer denounces – the natural outcast is immediately a lover of war.

Man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals. Nature makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal who has the gift of speech. Whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals (their nature attains to the perception of pleasure and pain and the intimation of them to one another, and no further), the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. It is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state.

Further, the state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part; EX: if the whole body be destroyed, there will be no foot or hand, except homonymously, as we might speak of a stone hand; for when destroyed the hand will be no better than that. [DY OBJ]: Aristotle said that the family arises first, before the state, but now is saying that the state is by nature prior to the family.] Things are defined by their function and power; and we ought not to say that they are the same when they no longer have their proper quality, but only that they are homonymous. The proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing; he is like a part in relation to the whole. He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god; he is no part of a state. A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature, and yet he who first founded the state was the greatest of benefactors. Man perfected is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all; since armed injustice is the more dangerous, and he is equipped at birth with arms, meant to be used by intelligence and virtue, which he may use for the worst ends. Thus, if he has not virtue, he is the most unholy and savage of animals, and the most full of lust and gluttony. Justice is the bond of men in states; the administration of justice (the determination of what is just) is the principle of order in political society.

I.3 Household Management Consists at least of Master, Slave, Husband, Wife, and Children; We Must Consider These Relations; We Will Consider Master and Slave First (1253b).

Since the state is made up of households, we must speak of household management [oikonomías]. A complete household consists of slaves and freemen. Let us begin with the household’s/family’s fewest possible elements: master and slave, husband and wife, father and children. We must consider what each of these three relations (master and servant, the marriage relation, and the paternal relation) is and ought to be. Another element of a household is the so-called art of wealth acquisition (according to some, it is identical with household management, according to others, a principal part of it).

Let us first examine master and slave, looking to the needs of practical life and also seeking to attain some better theory of their relation than exists at present. Some opine that the rule of a master is a science, and that the management of a household, and the mastership of slaves, and the political and royal rule, as said, are all the same. Others affirm that the rule of a master over slaves is contrary to nature, and that the distinction between slave and freeman exists by convention only (not by nature); and being an interference with nature is therefore unjust.
I.4 Property is Necessary in a Household; Slaves are Living Instruments of Their Masters, Instruments of Action, and Possessions (1253b-1254a).

Property is a part of the household, and the art of acquiring property is a part of the art of managing the household; no man can live well, or indeed live at all, unless he is provided with necessaries. As in the arts that have a definite sphere, the workers must have their own proper instruments for the accomplishment of their work, so it is in the management of a household. There are living instruments (e.g., lookout man on a ship, or a servant in the arts) and lifeless instruments (e.g., ship’s rudder). Thus, a possession is an instrument for maintaining life. So in the family, a slave is a living possession [DY OBJ: I deny that one can own a person as a possession, including children, adults, and, for that matter, even perhaps pets], and property a number of such instruments; and the servant is himself an instrument for instruments. If every instrument could accomplish its own work, obeying or anticipating the will of others (i.e., if the shuttle would weave and the plectrum touch the lyre), chief workmen would not want servants, nor masters slaves. There are instruments of production (e.g., shuttle, from which we get something else), whilst a possession is an instrument of action (e.g., of a garment or of a bed there is only the use). Further, as production and action are different in kind, and both require instruments, the instruments that they employ must likewise differ in kind. But life is action and not production, and so the slave is the minister of action. Again, a possession is spoken of in the way that a part is; the part is not only a part of something else, but wholly belongs to it, as with possessions. The master is only the master of the slave; he does not belong to him, whereas the slave is not only the slave of his master, but wholly belongs to him. The nature and office of a slave: he who is by nature not his own but another’s man, is by nature a slave and so also a possession. A possession is an instrument of action, separable from the possessor.

I.5 Some are by Nature Slaves; it is Necessary and Expedient that There is Ruler and Ruled; Just as There is Ruler (Soul) and Ruled (Body) Within a Person, There is Ruler and Ruled Between Master and Slave; Nature Would Like to Distinguish Between Freemen and Slaves’ Bodies and Souls so Slavery is Expedient and Right (1254a-1255a).

Is anyone intended by nature to be a slave, and for whom such a condition is expedient and right, or rather is not all slavery a violation of nature?

There is no difficulty in answering this question, from reason and fact: It is necessary and expedient that some should rule and others be ruled; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.

There are many kinds both of rulers and subjects. Better rule is exercised over better subjects; EX: to rule over men is better than to rule over wild beasts; the work is better which is executed by better workmen. In all composite wholes and made up of parts, whether continuous or discrete, the distinct ruling and subject element comes to light. Such a duality exists in living creatures, originating from nature as a whole; even in lifeless things there is a ruling principle (e.g., a musical mode). A living creature consists in the first place of soul and body, and of these two, the one is by nature the ruler and the other the subject. We must look for the intentions of nature in things that retain their nature, and not in corrupted things. So we must study the man in the most perfect state both of body and soul so we can see the true relation of the two (in bad/corrupted natures, the body will often appear to rule over the soul, because they are in an evil and unnatural condition). In living creatures, there is both a despotical and a constitutional rule; the soul rules the body with a despotical rule, whereas the intellect rules the appetites with a constitutional and royal rule. The rule of soul over body, and of the mind (the rational element) over the passionate is natural and expedient (the equality of the two or the rule of the inferior is always hurtful). The same holds good of animals in relation to men; tame animals have a better nature than wild and all tame animals are better off when they are ruled by man (since they are preserved). The male is by nature superior and rules, and the female is inferior and ruled; this principle necessarily extends to all mankind. Where there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals (as in the case of those whose business is to use their body, and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. He who can be, and so is, another’s, and he who participates in reason enough to apprehend, but not to have, is a slave by nature. [DY OBJ: According to Aristotle’s reasoning, it seems that anyone can be a slave; how about
someone who loses their reasoning momentarily, as in drunkenness or comas? Plato was sold into slavery for making a tyrant mad, but he still had reason, so was he not by nature a slave but only accidentally a slave, to Aristotle? And what is Aristotle’s attitude to all women being slaves, if they do not have reason and are by nature inferior to men? The lower animals cannot even apprehend reason but obey their passions. The use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; both with their bodies minister to the needs of life. Nature would like to distinguish between the bodies of freemen and slaves, making the one strong for servile labor, the other upright and useful for political life in the arts both of war and peace. The opposite often happens (some have the souls and others have the bodies of freemen). If men differed from one another in their mere bodily forms as much as the statues of the Gods do from men, all would acknowledge that the inferior class should be slaves of the superior. And if this is true of their bodies, how much more the forms in their souls? But the beauty of the body is seen, whereas the beauty of the soul is not seen. So, some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and for freemen slavery is both expedient and right. [DY OBJ: This commits the fallacy of Non Sequitur: Aristotle stated that nature would LIKE to distinguish between the bodies and souls, but just admitted that he cannot show the difference in either the bodies or souls of freemen v. slaves, and so the conclusion that some men are by nature free and some slaves does not follow.]

I.6 There is Slavery by Nature and by Convention (the Agreement that Whatever is Taken in War Belongs to the Victors); Some Reject the Argument by Convention; Philosophers Disagree, Some of Them Inconsistently Only Using “Slave” of Foreigners; the Abuse of the Master’s Authority is Injurious to Master and Slave (1255a-1255b).

My opponents are right in a certain way: The words slavery and slave are used in two senses: (1) by convention and (2) by nature. (1) The convention is a sort of agreement that whatever is taken in war is supposed to belong to the victors. Many jurists impute this right, as they would an orator who brought forward an unconstitutional measure: they detest the notion that, because one man has the power of doing violence and is superior in brute strength, another shall be his slave and subject. Even philosophers disagree. This is the origin of the dispute: virtue (when furnished with means) actually has the greatest power of exercising force; as superior power is only found where there is superior virtue of some kind, power seems to imply virtue, and the dispute to be simply one about justice (it is due to one party identifying justice with goodwill, while the other identifies it with the mere rule of the stronger). If these views are thus set out separately, the other views have no force or plausibility against the view that the virtuous ought to rule, or be master. Others, clinging to a principle of justice (convention is a sort of justice), assume that slavery in accordance with the custom of war is just, but simultaneously deny this. What if the cause of the war be unjust? And no one would ever say that he is a slave who is unworthy to be a slave. If this were the case, men of the highest rank would be slaves and the children of slaves if they or their parents chanced to have been taken captive and sold. That is why people do not like to call themselves slaves, but confine the term to foreigners. Yet, in using this language, they really mean the natural slave of whom we spoke at first; it must be admitted that some are slaves everywhere, others nowhere. The same principle applies to nobility: People regard themselves as noble everywhere, and not only in their own country, but they deem foreigners noble only when at home, thereby implying that there are two sorts of nobility and freedom, the one absolute, the other relative. Helen of Theodectes says, “Who would presume to call me servant who am on both sides sprung from the stem of the Gods? What does this mean but that they distinguish freedom and slavery, noble and humble birth, by the two principles of good and evil? They think that as men and animals beget men and animals, so from good men a good man springs. Nature intends to do this often but cannot.

So there is some foundation for this difference of opinion: all are not either slaves by nature or freemen by nature. [DY: Presumably because there is slavery by convention, according to Aristotle], there is in some cases a marked distinction between the two classes, rendering it expedient and right for the one to be slaves and the others to be masters: the one practicing obedience, the others exercising the authority and lordship which nature intended them to have. The abuse of this authority is injurious to both; the interests of part and whole, of body and soul, are the same, and the slave is a part of the master, a living but separated part of his bodily frame.
Hence, where the relation of master and slave between them is natural they are friends and have a common interest, but where it rests merely on convention and force the reverse is true.

I.7 The Master’s Rule is Not Constitutional but Monarchical; There is a Science of the Master and Slave (1255b).

So, the rule of a master is not a constitutional rule, and all the different kinds of rule are not, as some affirm, the same as each other. There is one rule exercised over subjects who are free by nature, those slaves by nature. The rule of a household is a monarchy (every house is under one head); constitutional rule is a government of freemen and equals. The master is called a master because he is of a certain character (not because he has a certain science); this also applies to the slave and the freeman. But there is a science for the master and for the slave. The science of the slave is instructing slaves in their ordinary duties (e.g., cookery and similar menial arts). Some duties are more necessary or honorable, but all such branches of knowledge are servile. The science of the master teaches the use of slaves. This science is not anything great or wonderful; the master need only know how to order that which the slave must know how to execute. Those who are above toil have stewards who attend to their households while they occupy themselves with philosophy or with politics. But the art of justly acquiring slaves differs both from the arts of the master and slave, being a species of hunting or war.

I.8 Property and Wealth Acquisition; Household Management is Not Identical to the Art of Acquiring Wealth; Modes of Subsistence of Men: Shepherds, Brigands, Fishermen, Husbandmen; Nature Gives Property to All (Animals and Humans) Throughout Life; Nature Does Nothing in Vain and Makes Animals for Human’s Sake; the Art of War is a Natural Art of Acquisition; One Kind of the Art of Acquisition is Part of Household and State Management by Nature (1256a-b).

Let us now inquire into property and the art of wealth acquisition, in accordance with our usual method (a slave has been shown to be a part of property). First: Is the art of acquiring wealth the same as the art of managing a household or a part of it, or instrumental to it? If it is instrumental to it, is it so, in the way that the art of making shuttles is instrumental to the art of weaving, or in the way that the casting of bronze is instrumental to the art of the statuary (for they are not instrumental in the same way, but the one provides tools and the other material)? [“Material” = the substratum out of which any work is made; EXs: wool is the material of the weaver, bronze of the statuary.]

The art of household management is not identical with the art of acquiring wealth, for the one uses the material that the other provides. The art that uses household stores can be no other than the art of household management. There is, however, a doubt whether the art of acquiring wealth is a part of household management or a distinct art. If the getter of wealth has to consider whence wealth and property can be procured, but there are many sorts of property and riches, then are husbandry, and the care and provision of food in general, parts of the art of household management or distinct arts? There are many sorts of food, and so there are many kinds of lives both of animals and men; they must all have food, and the differences in their food have made differences in their ways of life. Some beasts are gregarious, others are solitary; they live in the way which is best adapted to sustain them, accordingly as they are carnivorous or herbivorous or omnivorous; and their habits are determined for them by nature with regard to their ease and choice of food. But the same things are not naturally pleasant to all of them; and therefore the lives of carnivorous or herbivorous animals further differ among themselves. In the lives of men too there is a great difference. The laziest are shepherds, who lead an idle life, and get their subsistence without trouble from tame animals; their flocks having to wander from place to place in search of pasture, they are compelled to follow them, cultivating a sort of living farm. Others support themselves by hunting, which is of different kinds. EXs: brigands [≡a member of a gang that ambushes and robs people in forests and mountains – DY], fishermen dwell near lakes or marshes or rivers or a sea in which there are fish; others live by the pursuit of birds or wild beasts. Most men make a living from the cultivated fruits of the soil (husbandmen). Such are the modes of subsistence that prevail among those whose industry springs up of itself, and whose food is not acquired by exchange and retail. Some gain a comfortable
maintenance out of two employments, eking out the deficiencies of one of them by another: thus the life of a shepherd may be combined with that of a brigand, the life of a farmer with that of a hunter. Other modes of life are similarly combined in any way that the needs of men may require. Property, in the sense of a bare livelihood, is given by nature herself to all, both when they are first born, and when they are grown up. Some animals bring forth, together with their offspring, so much food as will last until they are able to supply themselves; EXs: the verminous (=producing wormlike young; Merriam-Webster) or oviparous (=of a bird, etc.) producing young by means of eggs that are hatched after they have been laid by the parent — DY] animals; and the viviparous (=of an animal) bringing forth live young that have developed inside the body of the parent — DY] animals have up to a certain time a supply of food (milk) for their young in themselves. We may infer that, after the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for the sake of man (the tame for use and food; the wild, if not all, at least the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments). If nature makes nothing incomplete, and nothing in vain, the inference must be that she has made all animals for the sake of man. So, from one point of view, the art of war is a natural art of acquisition, which includes hunting, an art which we ought to practice against wild beasts, and against men who, though intended by nature to be governed, will not submit; war of such a kind is naturally just.

One kind of the art of acquisition, then, is a part of household management by nature, insofar as the art of household management must either find ready to hand, or itself provide, such things necessary to life, and useful for the community of the family or state, as can be stored. They are the elements of true riches; the amount of property needed for a good life is not unlimited, although Solon says, “No bound to riches has been fixed for man.” But there is a boundary fixed, just as there is in the other arts; the instruments of any art are never unlimited, either in number or size, and riches may be defined as a number of instruments to be used in a household or in a state. So, there is a natural art of acquisition that is practiced by managers of households and by statesmen.

I.9 The Art of Acquisition (Given by Nature) is Not Identical to the Art of Wealth Acquisition (Gained by Experience and Art); There are Two Uses of Everything We Possess: Proper and Improper; Retail Trade is Not a Natural Part of Wealth Acquisition; the Origin of Coinage; Retail Trade is Unnecessary and Unlimited; Acquiring Food Provisions is a Natural, Necessary and Limited Art of Household Management and Wealth Acquisition; Why Some People Think Retail Trade is the Aim of Household Management When it is Not, and Absorb Themselves in Acquiring Unlimited Money (1256b-1258a).

Another kind of the art of acquisition commonly and rightly called the art of wealth acquisition suggests the notion that riches and property have no limit. Many think the art of wealth acquisition is identical with the art of acquisition, because they resemble each other closely. But though they are not very different, neither are they the same. The art of acquisition is given by nature; wealth acquisition is gained by experience and art.

Consider the following: There are two uses of everything that we possess: both belong to the thing as such, but not in the same manner: One is the proper, and the other the improper, use of it. EX: A shoe is used for wear, and/or used for exchange; both are uses of the shoe. He who gives a shoe in exchange for money or food does indeed use the shoe as a shoe, but this is not its proper use, for a shoe is not made to be an object of barter. The same may be said of all possessions, for the art of exchange extends to all of them, and it arises at first from what is natural, from the circumstance that some have too little, others too much. So we may infer that retail trade is not a natural part of the art of acquiring wealth; had it been so, men would have ceased to exchange when they had enough. In the first community (family), this art is obviously of no use, but it begins to be useful when the society increases. [DY OBJ]: Can one not barter one’s property with a family member? [For the members of the family originally had all things in common; later, when the family divided into parts, the parts shared in many things, and different parts in different things, which they had to give in exchange for what they wanted, a kind of barter which is still practiced among barbarous nations who exchange with one another the necessaries of life and nothing more; EX: Giving and receiving wine in exchange for corn, and the like. This sort of barter is not part of the wealth acquisition art and is not contrary to nature, but is needed for the satisfaction of men’s natural wants. The other form of exchange grew, as might have been inferred, out of this
one. When the inhabitants of one country became more dependent on those of another, and they imported what they needed, and exported what they had too much of, money necessarily came into use. The various
necessaries of life are not easily carried about, and hence men agreed to employ in their dealings with each other
something that was intrinsically useful and easily applicable to the purposes of life (e.g., iron, silver, and the like).

DY OBJ: I am relatively certain that Aristotle says elsewhere that money is only instrumentally good; if so, that
would seem to be inconsistent with this statement that coins are intrinsically useful. The value of coins was at
first measured simply by size and weight, but in process of time they put a stamp upon it, to save the trouble of
weighing and to mark the value.

When the use of coin was discovered, retail trade (the other art of wealth acquisition) arose out of the
barter of necessary articles; at first, retail trade was probably a simple matter, but became more complicated as
soon as men learned by experience whence and by what exchanges the greatest profit might be made.

Originating in the use of coin, the art of acquiring wealth is generally thought to be chiefly concerned with it,
and to be the art that produces riches and wealth, having to consider how they may be accumulated. Riches are
assumed by many to be only a quantity of coin, because the arts of acquiring wealth and retail trade are
concerned with coin. Others maintain that coined money is a mere sham, a thing not natural, but conventional
only, because, if the users substitute another commodity for it, it is worthless, and because it is not useful as a
means to any of the necessities of life, and, indeed, he who is rich in coin may often be in want of necessary
food. How can that be wealth, if a man may have a great abundance of wealth and yet perish with hunger (e.g.,
Midas in the fable, whose insatiable prayer turned everything that was set before him into gold)?

So men rightly seek a better notion of riches and of the art of acquiring wealth. Natural riches and the
natural art of wealth acquisition are a different thing; in their true form they are part of the management of a
household; whereas retail trade is the art of producing wealth only by exchange, concerned with coin; coin is the
unit of exchange and the limit of it. There is no bound to the riches that spring from this art of wealth
acquisition. As in the art of medicine there is no limit to the pursuit of health, and as in the other arts there is no
limit to the pursuit of their several ends, for they aim at accomplishing their ends to the uttermost (but there is a
limit of the means, for the end is always the limit): so, too, in this art of wealth acquisition there is no limit of the
end, which is riches of the spurious kind, and the acquisition of wealth. But the art of wealth acquisition that
consists in household management, on the other hand, has a limit; the unlimited acquisition of wealth is not its
business. So, from one point of view, all riches must have a limit; nevertheless, as a matter of fact, we find the
opposite to be the case; all acquirers of wealth increase their hoard of coin without limit. The source of the
confusion is the near connection between the two kinds of wealth acquisition; in both, the instrument is the
same, although the use is different, and so they pass into one another; each is a use of the same property, but
with a difference: accumulation is the end in the one case, but there is a further end in the other. So some
persons are led to believe that acquiring wealth is the object of household management, and the whole idea of
their lives is that they ought either to increase their money without limit, or at any rate not to lose it. The origin
of this disposition in men is that they are intent upon living only, and not upon living well; and, as their desires
are unlimited, they also desire that the means of gratifying them should be without limit. Those who do aim at a
good life seek the means of obtaining bodily pleasures; and, since the enjoyment of these appears to depend on
property, they are absorbed in acquiring wealth: and so arises the second species of wealth acquisition. As their
enjoyment is in excess, they seek an art that produces the excess of enjoyment: and, if they are not able to supply
their pleasures by the art of acquiring wealth, they try other causes, using in turn every faculty in a manner
contrary to nature. EX: The quality of courage is not intended to make wealth, but to inspire confidence;
neither is this the aim of the general’s (victory) or of the physician’s art (health). Nevertheless, some men turn
every quality or art into a means of acquiring wealth; this they conceive to be the end, and to the promotion of
the end they think all things must contribute.

Thus, we have considered the (unlimited) art of wealth acquisition (retail trade) which is unnecessary,
and why men want it; and also the different, necessary (limited) art of wealth acquisition, which is a natural part
of the art of household management, concerned with the provision of food.
I.10 Wealth is Presupposed for Acquiring Wealth for the Household and State Manager; the Duty of the Household Manager is to Order the Things That Nature Supplies; the Art of Acquiring Wealth from Fruits and Animals is Always Natural; Usury, Which Makes a Gain Out of Money Itself, is the Most Hated Exchange, and is the Most Unnatural of All Modes of Acquiring Wealth (1258a-b).

Wealth is presupposed by the art of acquiring wealth for the manager of a household and of the statesman. As political science does not make men, but takes them from nature and uses them, so too nature provides them with earth or sea or the like as a source of food. Likewise, the duty of the household manager is to order the things that nature supplies (like the weaver who has not to make but to use wool, and to know, too, what sort of wool is good and serviceable or bad and unserviceable). Were this otherwise, it would be difficult to see why the art of acquiring wealth is a part of household management and the art of medicine not; surely household members must have health just as they must have life or any other necessity. The answer: As from one point of view the master of the house and the ruler of the state have to consider health, from another point of view the physician has to; so in one way the art of household management, in another way the subordinate art, has to consider wealth. But, strictly speaking, as said, the means of life must be provided beforehand by nature; the business of nature is to furnish food to that which is born. That is why the art of acquiring wealth out of fruits and animals is always natural.

There are two sorts of wealth acquisition, as said; one is a part of household management (necessary and honorable), the other is retail trade (exchange is justly censured: It is unnatural, and a mode by which men gain from one another). The most hated sort, and with the greatest reason, is usury, which makes a gain out of money itself, and not from the natural object of it. Money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest. And this term interest, which means the birth of money from money, is applied to the breeding of money because the offspring resembles the parent. Thus, of all modes of acquiring wealth, usury is the most unnatural.

I.11 The Practical Art of Wealth Acquisition has Three Kinds: the True/Proper Kind Including Knowledge of Livestock and Husbandry, the Kind of Exchange Involving Timber and Mining, and the Kind of Exchange Involving Commerce, Usury, and Service for Hire; Stories of Thales and a Sicilian Who Created Wealth from Monopolies; the Statesman Needs to Know These Things (1258b-1259a).

Let us discuss the practical part of wealth acquisition. (The theory thereof may be studied by a free man, but will only be practiced from necessity). The useful parts of wealth acquisition are: [A] (1) the knowledge of live-stock (which are most profitable, and where, and how); EXs: What sort of horses, sheep, oxen, or any other animals are most likely to give a return. A man ought to know which of these pay better than others, and which pay best in particular places (some do better in one place than another). (2) husbandry; EXs: tillage, planting, the keeping of bees and of fish, fowl, or of any animals which may be useful to man. These are the divisions of the true or proper art of wealth acquisition and come first. Another main kind is [B] Exchange (this division is intermediate between wealth acquisition types [A] and [C], and is partly natural), concerning industries that make their profit from the earth, and from things growing from the earth which, although they bear no fruit, are nevertheless profitable; EXs: the cutting of timber and all mining. The art of mining itself has many branches, for there are various kinds of things dug out of the earth. The third main kind is [C] Exchange (this division is third most important), which has three divisions: (1) commerce (the most important division), of which there are three kinds: (a) ship owning, (b) the conveyance of goods, and (c) exposure for sale (these differ as they are safer or more profitable); (2) usury; and (3) service for hire (two kinds: mechanical arts, and unskilled, bodily labor). Those occupations are most truly arts in which there is the least element of chance; they are the meanest where the body is most maltreated, the most servile where there is the greatest use of the body, and the most illiberal where there is the least need of virtue.

Various persons have written works upon these subjects; EXs: Chares and Apollodorus treated tillage and planting. There are also scattered stories of the ways in which individuals have succeeded in amassing a fortune; all this is useful to persons who value the art of acquiring wealth. There is the financial scheme of
Thales the Milesian, which involves a principle of universal application, but is attributed to him on account of his reputation for wisdom. He was reproached for his poverty, which was supposed to show that philosophy was of no use. According to the story, he knew by his skill in the stars while it was yet winter that there would be a great harvest of olives in the coming year; so, having a little money, he gave deposits for the use of all the olive-presses in Chios and Miletus, which he hired at a low price because no one bid against him. When the harvest-time came, and many were wanted all at once and of a sudden, he let them out at any rate that he pleased, and made a quantity of money. Thus he showed the world that philosophers can easily be rich if they like, but that their ambition is of another sort. He is supposed to have given a striking proof of his wisdom, but, as said, his scheme for acquiring wealth is of universal application, and is nothing but the creation of a monopoly. (It is an art often practiced by cities when they are in want of money; they make a monopoly of provisions.)

A Sicilian man, having money deposited with him, bought up all the iron from the iron mines; afterwards, when the merchants from their various markets came to buy, he was the only seller, and without much increasing the price he gained 200%. When Dionysius heard, he told him that he might take away his money, and that he must not remain at Syracuse (he thought that the man had discovered a way of making money that was injurious to his own interests). He made the same discovery as Thales; they both contrived to create a monopoly for themselves. Statesmen ought to know these things; a state is often as much in want of money and of such schemes for obtaining it as a household, or even more so; hence some public men devote themselves entirely to finance.

I.12 The Second and Third Parts of Household Management: The Rule of a Father (Which is Aristocratic) and That of a Husband (Which is Constitutional) (1259a-b).

Let us discuss the second and third parts of household management: the rule of a father, and of a husband (having already discussed the rule of a master). As said, a husband rules over his wife (who is free, the rule constitutional), and a father over his children (who are free, the rule aristocratic). Although there may be exceptions to the order of nature, the male is by nature fitter for command than the female, just as the elder and full-grown is superior to the younger and more immature. But in most constitutional states the citizens rule and are ruled by turns, for the idea of a constitutional state implies that the natures of the citizens are equal, and do not differ at all. [DY OBJ: Hasn’t Aristotle just given the reason why this kind of rule does not seem to be constitutional? If he doesn’t think females are as fit to rule as males, then they are not equal, but constitutional rule implies equal parties.] Nevertheless, when one rules and the other is ruled, we endeavor to create a difference of outward forms, names, and titles of respect. The relation of the male to the female is always of this kind. The rule of a father over his children is aristocratic; he rules by virtue both of love and respect due to age, exercising a kind of aristocratic power. So Homer has appropriately called Zeus “father of Gods and men”, because he is the king of them all. A king is the natural superior of his subjects, but he should be of the same kin or kind with them, and such is the relation of elder and younger, of father and son. [DY OBJ: This is anecdotal evidence, and one could raise the case of the Venus of Willendorf, and one of the first religious cultures of which we are aware, who worshipped a Goddess and was peaceful and thriving.]

I.13 Household Management Pertains More to Men, Human Virtue, and the Virtue of Freemen; Slaves, Women, and Children Have Virtues of Characters, but Not in the Same Way as Freemen do; Slaves Have No Deliberative Faculty, Women Have it But Without Authority, and Children Have an Immature Kind of it; Men and Women do Not Have Possess Courage, Temperance, or Justice in the Same Way; the Education of Women and Children are Important (1259b-1260b).

Household management attends more to men (than to the acquisition of inanimate things), human virtue (more than to the virtue of property that we call wealth), and the virtue of freemen (more than to the virtue of slaves). Questions: Is there any virtue at all in a slave beyond those of an instrument and of a servant? Can he have the virtues of temperance, courage, justice, and the like or does he only possess bodily services? There is a
difficulty with either answer: If they have virtue, in what will they differ from freemen? [DY: Exactly! 😊] On the other hand, since they are men and share in rational principle, it seems absurd to say that they have no virtue.

Do women and children have virtues? Should a woman to be temperate and brave and just, and is a child to be called temperate, and intemperate, or not? In general, we may ask about whether the natural ruler and natural subject have the same or different virtues. If a noble nature is equally required in both, why should one of them always rule, and the other always be ruled? This is not a question of degree: the difference between ruler and subject is a difference of kind (which is never a difference of degree). Yet how strange is the supposition that the one ought, and that the other ought not, to have virtue! If the ruler is intemperate and unjust, how can he rule well? If the subject, how can he obey well? If he is licentious and cowardly, he will certainly not do what is fitting.

Thus, both the ruler and ruled must have a share of virtue, varying as natural subjects also vary among themselves. The very constitution of the soul has shown us the way: In the soul, one part (the virtue of the rational) naturally rules and the other (the irrational) is subject, and the virtue of the ruler we maintain to be different from that of the subject. The same principle applies generally: almost all things rule and are ruled according to nature. But the kind of rule differs (the freeman rules over the slave differently than the male rules over the female, or the man over the child); although the parts of the soul are present in all of them, they are present in different degrees. The slave has no deliberative faculty at all; the woman has a deliberative faculty, but it is without authority, and the child’s deliberative faculty is immature. [DY OBJ]: First, let me state that these are obviously outrageous and baseless claims (except perhaps the claim about the child). However, is Aristotle saying that since women have a deliberative faculty without authority, that every woman is incontinent (as he defines it in the Nicomachean Ethics (i.e., they know what right actions are, but they cannot do them)? Is this claim analogous to St. Augustine’s claim of a non-Christian believer cannot do a good or virtuous action? So, necessarily, everyone should partake of the virtues of character, but only in such manner and degree as is required by each for the fulfillment of his function. Hence the ruler ought to have virtue of character in perfection, for his function, taken absolutely, demands a master artificer, and reason is such an artificer; the subjects, on the other hand, require only that measure of virtue which is proper to each of them. So virtue of character belongs to all of them; but the temperance, courage, and justice of a man and a woman are not, as Socrates maintained, the same; the courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying. This holds of all other virtues. Those who say generally that virtue consists in a good disposition of the soul, or in doing rightly, or the like, only deceive themselves. Far better than such definitions is the mode of speaking of those who, like Gorgias, enumerate the virtues. All classes must be deemed to have their special attributes; EX: as Sophocles says of women, “To a woman, silence is a crowning glory”; but this is not equally the glory of man. The child is imperfect, and therefore obviously his virtue is not relative to himself alone, but to the perfect man and to his teacher, and in like manner the virtue of the slave is relative to a master. We determined that a slave is useful for the wants of life, and so he will obviously require only so much virtue as will prevent him from failing in his function through cowardice or lack of self-control. If what we are saying is true, will virtue also not be required in craftspersons (they often fail in their work through the lack of self-control too)? But there is a great difference in the two cases: The slave shares in his master’s life; the craftsperson is less closely connected with him, and only attains virtue to the extent that he becomes a slave. The vulgar sort of craftsperson has a special and separate slavery; and whereas the slave exists by nature, not so the shoemaker or other craftsperson. So the master ought to be the source of such virtue in the slave, and not a mere possessor of the art of mastership that trains the slave in his functions. Those who forbid us to converse with slaves and say that we should employ command only are mistaken: slaves stand even more in need of admonition than children.

Inasmuch as every family is a part of a state, and these relationships are the parts of a family, and the virtue of the part must have regard to the virtue of the whole, women and children must be trained by education with an eye to the constitution (if the virtues of women and children make any difference in the virtues of the state). The virtues of women and children do make a difference: children grow up to be citizens, and half the free persons in a state are women.

Now let us examine the various theories of a perfect state.
BOOK II:

II.1 We Must Examine Extant and Theoretical Constitutions to Find What is Useful and Beneficial in Them; Citizens Cannot Have Everything in Common, But Maybe Some Things, Such as in Plato’s Republic (But We Must Examine This) (1260b-1261a).

Our purpose is to consider what form of political community is best of all for those who are most able to realize their ideal of life. So we must examine constitutions, both such as actually exist in well-governed states, and any theoretical forms that are held in esteem, so that what is good and useful may be brought to light. Let no one suppose that in seeking the theoretical versions we are anxious to make a sophistical display at any cost; we only undertake this inquiry because all the extant constitutions are faulty.

We will begin with this issue: The members of a state must either have all things or nothing in common, or some things in common and some not. Having nothing in common is clearly impossible: The constitution is a community, and must at any rate have a common place (one city will be in one place, and the citizens are those who share in that one city). But should a well-ordered state have all things, as far as may be, in common, or some only and not others? The citizens might conceivably have wives and children and property in common, as the character Socrates proposes in Plato’s Republic. Which is better, our present condition, or one conforming to the law laid down in the Republic?¹

II.2 Criticisms of Plato I: (Two Criticisms) Having Women in Common is Not Well-Founded or a Good Way to Unify a State as Much as Possible; True Unity Would Destroy a State; Reciprocity is the Salvation of States; Self-Sufficiency of the State Implies Some Disunity (1261a-b).

There are many difficulties in the idea that all should have women in common: (1) The principle on which Socrates rests the necessity of such an institution evidently is not established by his arguments.

(2) As a means to the end that he ascribes to the state (that it is best for the whole state to be as unified as possible), the scheme, taken literally, is impracticable, and how we are to interpret it is nowhere precisely stated. Is it not obvious that a state may at length attain such a degree of unity as to be no longer a state? Since the nature of a state is to be a plurality, and in tending to greater unity, from being a state, it becomes a family, and from being a family, an individual; the family may be said to be more unified than the state, and the individual than the family. So we ought not to attain this greatest unity even if we could, for it would be the destruction of the state. A state is not made up only of so many men, but of different kinds of men; similars do not constitute a state. It is not like a military alliance. The usefulness of the latter depends upon its quantity even where there is no difference in quality (mutual protection is the end aimed at), just as a greater weight depresses the scale more (in like manner, a state differs from a nation, when the nation has not its population organized in villages, but lives an Arcadian sort of life); but the elements out of which a unity is to be formed differ in kind. Hence the principle of reciprocity, as I said in the Ethics, is the salvation of states. Even among freemen and equals this is a principle that must be maintained, for they cannot all rule together, but must change at the end of a year or some other period of time or in some order of succession. The result is that upon this plan they all govern; just as if shoemakers and carpenters were to exchange their occupations, and the same persons did not always continue shoemakers and carpenters. Since it is better that this should be so in politics as well, there should be continuance of the same persons in power where this is possible; if it is not possible by reason of the natural equality of the citizens, and at the same time it is just that all should share in the government (whether to govern be a good thing or a bad) – in these cases this is imitated. Thus the one party rules and the others are ruled in turn, as if they were no longer the same persons. In like manner when they hold office there is a variety in the offices held. Hence a city is not by nature unified in that sense which some persons affirm; and that what is said to be the greatest good of cities is in reality their destruction; but surely the good of things must be that which

¹ I have a full set of replies to almost all of Aristotle’s criticisms against Plato’s ideal state and his laws (that Plato lays out in the Republic and Laws) in another work, which is a manuscript I would like to publish (Plato Meets His Critics: Volume I: Aristotle). Thus, the reader will not see my objections here.
preserves them. From another point of view, this extreme unification of the state is clearly not good: A family is more self-sufficing than an individual, and a city than a family, and a city only comes into being when the community is large enough to be self-sufficing. So if self-sufficiency is desirable, the lesser degree of unity is more desirable than the greater.

II. 3 Criticisms of Plato II: (6 Criticisms) Having Great Unity does Not Follow from All Saying “Mine” and “Not Mine” (“All” is Ambiguous); It is Impracticable That Everyone Call the Same Thing Mine; What is Common to All Has the Least Care Bestowed Upon it; Everyone Will Use “Mine” of One Who is Prospering or Not; It is Better to Use “Mine” as We Currently Do; There is No Way to Prevent Someone from Discovering Their Children from Likeness to Parents (1261b-1262a).

(3) Even if it were best for the community to have the greatest degree of unity, this unity does not follow from the fact of all men saying “mine” and “not mine” at the same instant of time, which, according to Socrates, is the sign of perfect unity in a state. The word “all” is ambiguous. If “all” means that every individual says “mine” and “not mine” at the same time, then perhaps the result at which Socrates aims may be in some degree accomplished; each man will call the same person his own son and the same person his own wife, and so of his property and of all that falls to his lot. But this is not how people who had their wives and children in common would speak; they would say “all” but not “each”. In like manner their property would be described as belonging to them, not severally but collectively. There is an obvious fallacy in the term “all”: like some other words, “both”, “odd”, “even”, it is ambiguous, and even in abstract argument becomes a source of logical puzzles.

(4) That all persons call the same thing mine in the sense in which each does so may be a fine thing, but it is impracticable; or if the words are taken in the other sense, such a unity in no way conduces to harmony.

(5) That which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it. Everyone thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest; and only when he is himself concerned as an individual. EX: Everybody is more inclined to neglect something that he expects another to fulfill (in families many attendants are often less useful than a few). EX: Each citizen will have a thousand sons who will not be his sons individually, but anybody will be equally the son of anybody, and will therefore be neglected by all alike.

(6) Everyone will use the word “mine” of one who is prospering or the reverse, however small a fraction he may himself be of the whole number; the same boy will be my son, so and so’s son, the son of each of the thousand, or whatever be the number of the citizens; and even about this he will not be positive; it is impossible to know who chanced to have a child, or whether, if one came into existence, it has survived.

(7) But which is better – for each to say “mine” in this way, making a man the same relation to two thousand or ten thousand citizens, or to use the word “mine” as it is now used in states? Usually the same person is called by one man his own son whom another calls his own brother or cousin or kinsman – blood relation or connection by marriage – either of himself or of some relation of his, and yet another his clansman or tribesman; and how much better is it to be the real cousin of somebody than to be a son after Plato’s fashion!

(8) Nor is there any way of preventing brothers, children, fathers, and mothers from sometimes recognizing one another; children are born like their parents, and they will necessarily be finding indications of their relationship to one another. Geographers declare such to be the fact: in part of Upper Libya, where the women are common, the children are still assigned to their respective fathers on the ground of their likeness. Some women, like the females of other animals – EXs: mares and cows – have a strong tendency to produce offspring resembling their parents.
II.4 Criticisms of Plato III: (8 Criticisms) Assaults/Homicides Will be Equally Unholy (=Implausible) and More Likely to Occur; Plato Only Forbids Intercourse Between Heterosexual Lovers; If Intercourse is Wrong Due to the Violence of Its Pleasure, it’s Wrong Between Anyone; Husbandmen (Not Guardians) Should Have Wives in Common; Love Will be Diluted; the Transfer of Children from Class to Class Will be Difficult to Arrange; Assaults Will be More Common Among People Who Lack Strong Family Connections (1262a-b).

(9) Other difficulties: Assaults and homicides, voluntary as well as involuntary, quarrels and slanders, all of which are most unholy acts when committed against fathers and mothers and near relations, but not equally unholy when there is no relationship.

(10) They are much more likely to occur if the relationship is unknown than if it is known and, when they have occurred, the customary expiations of them can be made if the relationship is known, but not otherwise.

(11) It is strange that Socrates, after having made the children common, should only hinder lovers from carnal intercourse, but should permit love and familiarities between father and son or between brother and brother, than which nothing can be more unseemly, since even without them love of this sort is improper. [DY OBJ: Plato explicitly states in the Republic that they shall at most permit a man to express affection to a boy by patting or kissing him on the head. I don’t understand why Aristotle is charging Plato with this.]

(12) It is also strange to forbid intercourse for no other reason than the violence of the pleasure, as though the relationship of father and son or of brothers with one another made no difference.

(13) This community of wives and children seems better suited to the husbandmen than to the guardians: If they have wives and children in common, they will be bound to one another by weaker ties, as a subject class should be, and they will remain obedient and not rebel. In a word, the result of such a law would be just the opposite of that which good laws ought to have, and the intention of Socrates in making these regulations about women and children (to bind them more together) would defeat itself.

(14) Friendship is the greatest good of states and what best preserves them against revolutions; and Socrates particularly praises the unity of the state that seems and is said by him to be created by friendship. But the unity which he commends would be like that of the lovers in the Symposium, who, as Aristophanes says, desire to grow together in the excess of their affection, and from being two to become one, in which case one or both would certainly perish. Whereas in a state having women and children common, love will be diluted; and the father will certainly not say 'my son', or the son 'my father'. As a little sweet wine mingled with a great deal of water is imperceptible in the mixture, so, in this sort of community, the idea of relationship which is based upon these names will be lost; there is no reason why the so-called father should care about the son, or the son about the father, or brothers about one another. Of the two qualities that chiefly inspire regard and affection – that a thing is your own and that it is precious – neither can exist in such a state as this.

(15) The transfer of children as soon as they are born from the rank of husbandmen or of craftspersons to that of guardians, and from the rank of guardians into a lower rank, will be very difficult to arrange; the givers or transferrers cannot but know whom they are giving and transferring, and to whom.

(16) The previously mentioned assaults, unlawful loves, homicides, will happen more often among them; they will no longer call the members of the class they have left brothers, and children, and fathers, and mothers, and so will not be afraid of committing any crimes by reason of consanguinity [=relating to or denoting people descended from the same ancestor – DY].]

II.5 Criticisms of Plato IV: (22 Criticisms) Related to Property, Social Order, Submitting to Power, and the Lack of Happiness Amongst the Classes (1262b-1264b).

Next let us consider the arrangement of property: Should the citizens of the perfect state have their possessions in common or not? Even supposing that the women and children belong to individuals, according to the custom which is at present universal, may there not be an advantage in having and using possessions in common? EXs: (a) the soil may be appropriated, but the produce may be thrown for consumption into the common stock; and this is the practice of some nations. Or (b), the soil may be common, and may be cultivated in common, but the
produce divided among individuals for their private use (this form of common property exists among certain foreigners). Or (c), the soil and the produce may be alike common [Plato’s idea].

(17) It is easy when the husbandmen are not the owners, but when they till the ground for themselves, the question of ownership becomes very difficult. If they do not share equally in enjoyments and toils, those who labor much and get little will necessarily complain of those who labor little and receive or consume much.

(18) There is always a difficulty in men living together and having all human relations in common, but especially in their having common property. The partnerships of fellow travellers are an example to the point; they generally fall out over everyday matters and quarrel about any trifle that turns up. So with servants: we are most liable to take offense at those with whom we most frequently come into contact in daily life.

(19) The present arrangement, if improved as it might be by good customs and laws, would be far better, and would have the advantages of both systems. [Reasons why common property is good.] Property should be in a certain sense common, but, as a general rule, private: When everyone has a distinct interest, men will not complain of one another, and they will make more progress, because everyone will be attending to his own business. Yet by reason of goodness, and in respect of use, “Friends will have all things common” (as the proverb says). Even now, some well-ordered states have property in common to a certain extent and it may be carried further, showing that it is not impracticable. Although every man has his own property, some things he will place at the disposal of his friends, while of others he shares the use with them. EX: The Spartans use one another’s slaves, and horses, and dogs, as if they were their own; and when they lack provisions on a journey, they appropriate what they find in the fields throughout the country. Property should be private, but the use of it common; and the special business of the legislator is to create in men this benevolent disposition.

(20) How immeasurably greater is the pleasure, when a man feels a thing to be his own; surely the love of self is a feeling implanted by nature and not given in vain, although selfishness is rightly censured; but this is not the mere love of self, but the love of self in excess, like the miser’s love of money; all, or almost all, men love money and other such objects in a measure.

(21) There is the greatest pleasure in doing a kindness or service to friends or guests or companions, which can only be rendered when a man has private property. These advantages are lost by excessive unification of the state.

(22) The exhibition of two virtues is visibly annihilated in such a state: (a) temperance towards women (it is an honorable action to abstain from another’s wife for temperance sake); (b) liberality in the matter of property. No one, when men have all things in common, will any longer set an example of liberality or do any liberal action; liberality consists in the use that is made of property.

(23) Such legislation has a specious appearance of benevolence; men readily listen to it, and are easily induced to believe that in some wonderful manner everybody will become everybody’s friend – especially when someone is heard denouncing the evils now existing in states (EXs: suits about contracts, perjury convictions, flatteries of rich men and the like), which are said to arise out of the possession of private property. These evils are due not to the absence of having property in common but to wickedness.

(24) There is much more quarrelling among those who have all things in common, though there are not many of them when compared with the vast numbers who have private property.

(25) Let us now reckon the advantages that the citizens will lose: The life that they are to lead appears to be quite impracticable. The error of Socrates must be attributed to the false supposition from which he starts. There should only be unity in the family and the state in certain respects. There is a point at which a state may attain such a degree of unity as to be no longer a state, or at which, without actually ceasing to exist, it will become an inferior state, like harmony passing into unison, or rhythm that has been reduced to a single foot. The state, as said, is a plurality that should be united and made into a community by education; and it is strange that the author of a system of education that he thinks will make the state virtuous, should expect to improve his citizens by regulations of this sort, and not by philosophy or by customs and laws (e.g., in Sparta and Crete respecting common meals), whereby the legislator has made property common.

(26) We should not disregard the experience of ages; in the multitude of years these things, if they were good, would certainly not have been unknown; almost everything has been found out, although sometimes they are not put together; in other cases men do not use the knowledge that they have.
(27) Great light would be thrown on this subject if we could see such a form of government in the actual process of construction; the legislator could not form a state at all without distributing and dividing its constituents into associations for common meals, and into *phratries* [=a descent group or kinship group in some tribal societies — DY] and tribes. But all this legislation ends only in forbidding agriculture to the guardians, a prohibition that the Spartans try to enforce already.

(28) Socrates has not said (nor is it easy to decide) what in such a community will be the general form of the state. The non-guardian citizens are the majority, and about them nothing has been determined: Should husbandmen have their property in common? Or their wives and children? If, like the guardians, they are to have all things in common, in what do they differ from them, or what will they gain by submitting to their government?

(29) Upon what principle would non-guardian citizens submit to the guardians (unless they adopt the ingenious policy of the Cretans, who give their slaves the same institutions as their own, but forbid them gymnastic exercises and the possession of arms)?

(30) If the inferior classes are to be like other cities in respect of marriage and property, what will be the form of the community? Must it not contain two states in one, each hostile to the other?

(31) He makes the guardians into a mere occupying garrison, while the husbandmen and craftpersons and the rest are real citizens. But if so, the suits, quarrels, and all the evils that Socrates affirms to exist in other states, will exist equally among them.

(32) He says that, having so good an education, the citizens will not need many laws (EX: laws about the city or markets); but then he confines his education to the guardians.

(33) He makes the husbandmen owners of the property upon condition of their paying a tribute. But in that case they are likely to be much more unmanageable and conceited than the Helots [=a member of a class of serfs in ancient Sparta, intermediate in status between slaves and citizens. — DY] or slaves in general.

(34) Socrates has nowhere determined any of this (and it isn’t easy to discover this, nor is their character of small importance if the common life of the guardians is to be maintained): Whether community of wives and property be necessary for the lower equally with the higher class or not [DY: repeat of (28)]; what will be the education, form of government, laws of the lower class?

(35) If Socrates makes the women common, and retains private property, the men will see to the fields, but who will see to the house? And who will do so if the agricultural class has both their property and their wives in common?

(36) It is absurd to argue, from the analogy of animals, that men and women should follow the same pursuits; animals cannot manage a household.

(37) The government, as constituted by Socrates, contains elements of danger; he makes the same persons always rule. If this is often a cause of disturbance among the vulgar sort, how much more so will it be among high-spirited warriors? But that the persons whom he makes rulers must be the same is evident; the gold which the God mingles in the souls of men (according to Plato) is not at one time given to one, at another time to another, but always to the same: as he says, God mingles gold in some, and silver in others, from their very birth; but brass and iron in those who are meant to be craftpersons and husbandmen.

(38) He deprives the guardians even of happiness, and says that the legislator ought to make the whole state happy. The whole cannot be happy unless most, or all, or some of its parts enjoy happiness. In this respect happiness is not like the even principle in numbers, which may exist only in the whole, but in neither of the parts; not so happiness. And if the guardians are not happy, who are? Surely not the craftpersons, or the common people. The ideal state of which Socrates discourses has all these difficulties, and others quite as great.

II.6 Criticisms of Plato IV: Related to Plato’s Republic (1 Criticism) and Laws (14 Criticisms); (1264b-1266a).

The same (or nearly the same) objections apply to Plato’s later work, the Laws, so we had better examine briefly the constitution described therein.

(39) In the Republic, Socrates has definitely settled in all a few questions only (EXs: the community of women and children, the community of property, and the constitution of the state). The population is divided
into two classes—one of husbandmen, and the other of warriors; from this latter is taken a third class of counselors and rulers of the state. Socrates has not determined whether the husbandmen and craftsmen are to have a share in the government, and whether they are to carry arms and share in the military service, or not. He certainly thinks that the women ought to share in the education of the guardians, and to fight by their side. The remainder of the work is filled up with digressions foreign to the main subject, and with discussions about the education of the guardians.

(40) In the *Laws*, there is hardly anything but laws; not much is said about the constitution. He gradually brings around the more ordinary (what he intended) type of constitution to an extraordinary form. With the exception of the community of women and property, he supposes everything to be the same in both states (mentioned in the *Republic* and *Laws*); there is to be the same education; the citizens of both are to live free from servile occupations, and there are to be common meals in both. The only difference is that in the *Laws*, the common meals are extended to women, and the warriors number 5000, but in the *Republic* only 1000.

(41) The discourses of Socrates are never commonplace; they always exhibit grace, originality, and thought; but perfection in everything can hardly be expected. The number of 5000 citizens (just now mentioned) will require a territory as large as Babylon, or some other huge site, if so many persons are to be supported in idleness, together with their women and attendants, who will be a multitude many times as great. In framing an ideal we may assume what we wish, but should avoid impossibilities.

(42) The legislator ought to have his eye directed to the people and the country, but he also must not forget neighboring countries: The state has to have a political and not an isolated life. A state must have such a military force as will be serviceable against her neighbors, and not merely useful at home. A city should be formidable to enemies, whether invading or retreating.

(43) Shouldn’t the amount of property be defined in some clearer way? Socrates says that a man should have so much property as will enable him to live temperately (i.e. to live well); this is too general. Further, a man may live temperately and yet miserably.

(44) A better definition would be that a man must have so much property as will enable him to live not only temperately but liberally; if the two are parted, liberality will combine with luxury; temperance will be associated with toil. Liberality and temperance are the only eligible qualities that have to do with the use of property. A man cannot use property with mildness or courage, but may temperately and liberally; so the practice of these virtues is inseparable from property.

(45) It is absurd to equalize the property and not regulate the number of citizens; the population is to remain unlimited [*DY OBJ: Plato does not claim that the population is unlimited*], and he thinks that it will be sufficiently equalized by a certain number of marriages being unfruitful, however many are born to others, because he finds this to be the case in existing states. But greater care will be required than now; among ourselves, whatever may be the number of citizens, the property is always distributed among them, so no one is in want; but, if the property were incapable of division as in the *Laws*, the supernumeraries [*DY: i.e., the people above the population limit*], whether few or many, would get nothing.

(46) It is even more necessary to limit population than property (the limit should be fixed by calculating the chances of mortality in the children, and of sterility in married persons). The neglect of this subject (so common in existing states) is a never-failing cause of poverty among the citizens; and poverty is the parent of revolution and crime. Pheidon (the Corinthian and one of the most ancient legislators) thought that the families and the number of citizens ought to remain the same, although originally all the lots may have been of different sizes; but in the *Laws* the opposite principle is maintained.

(47) There is another omission in the *Laws*: Socrates does not tell us how the rulers differ from their subjects; he only says that they should be related as the warp and the woof, which are made out of different wools.

(48) He allows that a man’s whole property may be increased fivefold, but why should not his land also increase to a certain extent?

(49) Will the good management of a household be promoted by his arrangement of homesteads? (He assigns to each individual two homesteads in separate places, and it is difficult to live in two houses.)

(50) The whole system of government tends to be neither democracy nor oligarchy, but something in a mean between them, a polity, and is composed of the heavy-armed soldiers. If Plato intended to frame a
constitution that would suit the greatest number of states, he was very likely right, but not if he meant to say that this constitutional form came nearest to his first state; many would prefer the Spartan, or possibly some other more aristocratic government. Some say that the best constitution is a combination of all existing forms, and praise the Lacedaemonian because it is made up of oligarchy, monarchy, and democracy, the king forming the monarchy, and the council of elders the oligarchy, while the democratic element is represented by the Ephors [one of five senior Spartan magistrates = DY]; the Ephors are selected from the people. Others, however, declare the Ephorate to be a tyranny, and find the element of democracy in the common meals and in the habits of daily life.

(51) The Laws maintains that the best constitution is made up of democracy and tyranny, which are either not constitutions at all, or are the worst of all.

(52) The best constitution combines many forms because it is made up of more numerous elements. The constitution proposed in the Laws has no element of monarchy at all; it is nothing but oligarchy and democracy, leaning rather to oligarchy. This is seen in the mode of appointing magistrates; although the appointment of them by lot from among those who have been already selected combines both elements, the way in which the rich are compelled by law to attend the assembly and vote for magistrates or discharge other political duties, while the rest may do as they like. The endeavor to have the greater number of the magistrates appointed out of the richer classes and the highest officers selected from those who have the greatest incomes, both these are oligarchical features. The oligarchical principle prevails also in the choice of the council, for all are compelled to choose, but the compulsion extends only to the choice out of the first class, and of an equal number out of the second class and out of the third class, but not in this latter case to all the voters but to those from the third or fourth class; and the selection of candidates out of the fourth class is only compulsory on the first and second. Then, from the persons so chosen, he says that there ought to be an equal number of each class selected. Thus a preponderance of magistrates will be given to the better sort of people, who have the larger incomes, because some of the lower classes, not being compelled, will not vote. These considerations, and others which will be adduced when the time comes for examining similar constitutions, tend to show that states like Plato’s should not be composed of democracy and monarchy.

(53) There is also a danger in electing the magistrates out of a body who are themselves elected: If a small number choose to collude, the elections will always go as they desire. Such is the constitution that is described in the Laws.

II.7 Phaleas was the First to Argue for Equal Possessions for All Citizens; Criticism of Plato’s Laws: Children Must be Regulated Along with Property; 7 Criticisms Against Phaleas’ Constitution; Avarice is Insatiable in Most People, as Desire is Unlimited (1266a-1267b).

Other constitutions have been proposed (by private persons, philosophers, and statesmen), all of which come nearer to established or existing ones than either of Plato’s. No one else has introduced such novelties as the community of women and children, or public tables for women: other legislators begin with what is necessary. In the opinion of some, the regulation of property is the chief point of all, that being the question upon which all revolutions turn. Phaleas of Chalcidon, who was the first to affirm that the citizens of a state ought to have equal possessions, recognized this danger. He thought that in a new colony the equalization might be accomplished without difficulty, not so easily when a state was already established (the shortest way of compassing the desired end would be for the rich to give and not to receive marriage portions, and for the poor not to give but to receive them).

Plato in the Laws was of the opinion that, to a certain extent, accumulation should be allowed, forbidding, as reviewed, any citizen to possess more than five times the minimum qualification. But those who make such laws should remember what they are apt to forget: the legislator who fixes the amount of property should also fix the number of children; if the children are too many for the property, the law must be broken. Besides the violation of the law, it is a bad thing that many from being rich should become poor; men of ruined fortunes are sure to stir up revolutions. Even some of the old legislators clearly understood that the equalization of property exercises an influence on political society. Solon and others made laws prohibiting an individual from possessing as much land as he pleased; there are other laws in states that forbid the sale of property: EX:
Among the Locrians, there is a law that a man is not to sell his property unless he can prove unmistakably that some misfortune has befallen him. There have been laws that enjoin the preservation of the original lots. Such a law existed in the island of Leucas, and the abrogation of it made the constitution too democratic, for the rulers no longer had the prescribed qualification.

(1) Where there is equality of property, the amount may be either too large or too small, and the possessor may be living either in luxury or penury. So the legislator ought not only to aim at the equalization of properties, but at moderation in their amount. But if he prescribes this moderate amount equally to all, he will be no nearer the mark; it is not the possessions but the desires of mankind which must be equalized, and this is impossible, unless a sufficient education is provided by the laws. Phaleas would probably reply that this is precisely what he means, so there ought to be in states, not only equal property, but equal education. Still what would be the character of his education? (There is no use in having one and the same for all, if it is of a sort that predisposes men to avarice, or ambition, or both.)

(2) Civil troubles arise, not only out of the inequality of property, but also out of the inequality of honor, though in opposite ways. The common people quarrel about the inequality of property, the higher class about the equality of honor.

There are crimes for which the motive is want, for which Phaleas expects to find a cure in the equalization of property, which will take away from a man the temptation to be a robber, because he is hungry or cold. But (3) want is not the sole incentive to crime; men also wish to enjoy themselves and not to be in a state of desire (i.e. to cure some desire), going beyond the necessities of life, which preys upon them; indeed this is not the only reason – they may desire to enjoy pleasures unaccompanied with pain, and so they commit crimes.

What is the cure of these three disorders? Of the first, moderate possessions and occupation; of the second, habits of temperance; as to the third, if any desire pleasures that depend on themselves, they will find the satisfaction of their desires nowhere but in philosophy (for all other pleasures we are dependent on others). The greatest crimes are caused by excess and not by necessity. Men do not become tyrants in order that they may not suffer cold; and hence great is the honor bestowed, not on him who kills a thief, but on him who kills a tyrant. Thus the institutions of Phaleas avail only against petty crimes.

(4) Another objection: They are chiefly designed to promote the internal welfare of the state. But the legislator should consider also its relation to all of its neighboring nations; but Phaleas hasn’t said a word about how the government must be organized with a view to military strength.

(5) And so with property: there should not only be enough to supply the internal wants of the state, but also to meet dangers coming from without. The property of the state should not be so large that more powerful neighbors may be tempted by it, while the owners are unable to repel the invaders; nor yet so small that the state is unable to maintain a war even against states of equal power, and of the same character. Phaleas has not laid down any rule; but we should bear in mind that abundance of wealth is an advantage. The best limit will probably be, that a more powerful neighbor must have no inducement to go to war with you by reason of the excess of your wealth, but only such as he would have had if you had possessed less. EX: Eubulus, when Autophradates was going to besiege Atarneus, told him to consider how long the operation would take, and then reckon up the cost that would be incurred in the time. Autophradates desisted from the siege.

The equalization of property is one of the things that tend to prevent the citizens from quarrelling. (6) The gain in this direction is not very great. The nobles will be dissatisfied because they think themselves worthy of more than an equal share of honors; and this is often found to be a cause of sedition and revolution. Avarice of mankind is insatiable; at one time two obols was pay enough; but now, when this sum has become customary, men always want more and more without end; it is of the nature of desire to be unlimited, and most men live only for the gratification of it. The beginning of reform is not so much to equalize property as to train the nobler sort of natures not to desire more, and to prevent the lower from getting more; that is to say, they must be kept down, but not ill treated.

(7) Besides, the equalization proposed by Phaleas is imperfect; he only equalizes land, whereas a man may be rich also in slaves, and cattle, and money, and in the abundance of what are called his movables. Either all these things must be equalized, or some limit must be imposed on them, or they must all be let alone. It would appear that Phaleas is legislating for a small city only, if, as he supposes, all the craftspersons are to be public slaves and not to form a supplementary part of the body of citizens. But if there is a law that craftspersons are to be public slaves, it should only apply to those engaged on public works.
From these observations any one may judge how far Phaleas was wrong or right in his ideas.


Hippodamus of Miletus invented the art of planning cities and laid out the Piræus (a strange man, whose fondness for distinction led him into a general eccentricity of life, which made some think him affected— he would wear flowing hair and expensive ornaments; but these were worn on a cheap but warm garment both in winter and summer). Besides aspiring to be an adept in the knowledge of nature, he was the first non-statesman who made inquiries about the best form of government.

The city of Hippodamus was composed of 10,000 citizens divided into three parts— one of craftspersons, one of husbandmen, and a third of armed defenders of the state. He also divided the land into three parts: sacred (to maintain the customary worship of the gods), public (to support the warriors), and private (the property of the husbandmen). He also divided laws into only three classes, corresponding to the three subjects of lawsuits: insult, injury, and homicide. He likewise instituted a single final court of appeal, to which all causes seeming to have been improperly decided might be referred. He was further of the opinion that the decisions of the courts ought not to be given by the use of a voting pebble, but that everyone should have a tablet on which he might not only write a simple condemnation, or leave the tablet blank for a simple acquittal; but, if he partly acquitted and partly condemned, he was to distinguish accordingly. He objected that existing law obliged the judges to be guilty of perjury, whichever way they voted. He also enacted that those who discovered anything for the good of the state should be honored, and he provided that the children of citizens who died in battle should be maintained at public expense (as if such an enactment had never been heard of before, yet it actually exists at Athens and in other places). As to the magistrates, he would have them all elected by the people (the three classes); the elected were to watch over the interests of the public, of strangers, and of orphans. These are the most striking points in Hippodamus’ constitution.

1. Objection may be taken against the threefold division of the citizens. The craftspersons, and the husbandmen, and the warriors, all have a share in the government. But the husbandmen have no arms, and the craftspersons neither arms nor land, and therefore they become all but slaves of the warrior class.

2. It is impossible that they should share in all the offices: generals and guardians of the citizens, and nearly all the principal magistrates, must be taken from the class of those who carry arms. Yet, if the two other classes have no share in the government, how can they be loyal citizens? It may be said that those who have arms must necessarily be masters of both the other classes, but this is not so easily accomplished unless they are numerous; and if they are, why should the other classes share in the government at all, or have power to appoint magistrates?

3. What use are farmers to the city? Artisans there must be, for these are wanted in every city, and they can live by their craft, as elsewhere; and the husbandmen, too, if they really provided the warriors with food, might fairly have a share in the government. But in the republic of Hippodamus they are supposed to have land of their own, which they cultivate for their private benefit.

4. As to this common land out of which the soldiers are maintained, if they are themselves to be the cultivators of it, the warrior class will be identical with the husbandmen, although the legislator intended to make a distinction between them.

5. If there are to be other cultivators distinct both from the husbandmen, who have land of their own, and from the warriors, they will make a fourth class, which has no place in the state and no share in anything.

6. If the same persons are to cultivate their own lands, and those of the public as well, they will have a difficulty in supplying the quantity of produce which will maintain two households: and why, in this case, should there be any division, for they might find food themselves and give to the warriors from the same land and the same lots? There is surely a great confusion in all this.

7. The judges, when a simple issue is laid before them, should not make a distinction in their judgment, because then the judge is converted into an arbitrator. In arbitration, although the arbitrators are many, they
confer with one another about the decision; but in courts of law this is impossible, and most legislators take pains to prevent the judges from holding any communication with one another.

(8) Will there not be confusion if the judge thinks that damages should be given, but not so much as the suitor demands? EX: He asks for twenty minae, and the judge allows him ten minae (or in general the suitor asks for more and the judge allows less), while another judge allows five, another four minae. In this way they will go on splitting up the damages, and some will grant the whole and others nothing: how is the final reckoning to be taken?

(9) No one contends that he who votes for a simple acquittal or condemnation perjures himself, if the indictment has been laid in an unqualified form; and this is just, for the judge who acquits does not decide that the defendant owes nothing, but that he does not owe the twenty minae. He only is guilty of perjury if he thinks that the defendant ought not to pay twenty minae, and yet condemns him.

(10) To honor those who discover anything that is useful to the state is a proposal that has a specious sound, but cannot safely be enacted by law, for it may encourage informers, and perhaps even lead to political commotions.

(11) It has been doubted whether it is or is not expedient to make any changes in the laws of a country, even if another law is better. If all changes are inexpedient, we can hardly assent to Hippodamus’ proposal: Under pretense of doing a public service, a man may introduce measures that are really destructive to the laws or to the constitution. But there is a difference of opinion, and it may sometimes seem desirable to make changes. Such changes in the other arts and sciences have certainly been beneficial; EXs: medicine, gymnastics, and every other art and craft have departed from traditional usage; if politics is an art, change must be necessary in this as in any other art. Improvement has occurred because old customs are exceedingly simple and barbarous. The ancient Hellenes went about armed and bought their brides from each other. The remains of ancient laws that have come down to us are quite absurd; EX: at Cumae there is a law about murder, to the effect that if the accuser produces a certain number of witnesses from among his own kinsmen, the accused shall be held guilty. Men in general desire the good, and not merely what their fathers had. But the primeval inhabitants, whether they were born of the earth or were the survivors of some destruction, may be supposed to have been no better than ordinary or even foolish people among ourselves (such is certainly the tradition concerning the earth-born men); and it would be ridiculous to rest contented with their notions. Even when laws have been written down, they ought not always to remain unaltered. As in other sciences, so in politics, it is impossible that all things should be precisely set down in writing; enactments must be universal, but actions are concerned with particulars. Hence we infer that sometimes and in certain cases laws should be changed; but when we look at the matter from another point of view, great caution would seem to be required. [DY: Aristotle now flips the argument and/or asks questions] The habit of lightly changing the laws is an evil, and, when the advantage is small, some errors both of lawgivers and rulers had better be left; the citizen will not gain so much by making the change as he will lose by the habit of disobedience. The analogy of the arts is false; a change in a law is a very different thing from a change in an art. The law has no power to command obedience except that of habit, which can only be given by time, so a readiness to change from old to new laws enfeebles the power of the law. Even if the laws should be changed, are they all to be changed, and in every state, and by anybody who likes, or only by certain persons? These are very important questions; and therefore we had better reserve the discussion of them to a more suitable occasion.

II.9 18 Criticisms of the Spartan (Lacedaemonian) Constitution (1269a-1271b).

In the governments of Lacedaemon [Sparta] and Crete, and indeed in all governments, two points have to be considered: (a) whether any particular law is good or bad, when compared with the perfect state; (b) whether it is consistent with the idea/character that the lawgiver has set before his citizens.

(1) That in a well-ordered state the citizens should have leisure and not have to provide for their daily wants is generally acknowledged, but there is a difficulty in seeing how this leisure is to be attained. The Thessalian Penestae have often risen against their masters, and the Helots in like manner against the Lacedaemonians, for whose misfortunes they are always lying in wait. But nothing of this kind has as yet
happened to the Cretans (the neighboring cities, even when at war with one another, never form an alliance with rebellious serfs, rebellions not being for their interest, since they themselves have a dependent population).

(2) The license of the Lacedaemonian women defeats the intention of the Spartan constitution, and is adverse to the happiness of the state. A husband and a wife being each a part of every family, the state may be considered as about equally divided into men and women; so, in those states in which the condition of the women is bad, half the city may be regarded as having no laws. This has actually happened at Sparta: The legislator wanted to make the whole state hardy, and he has carried out his intention in the case of the men, but he has neglected the women, who live in every sort of intemperance and luxury. The consequence is that in such a state wealth is too highly valued, especially if the citizens fall under the dominion of their wives, after the manner of most warlike races, except the Celts and a few others who openly approve of male homosexuality. The old mythologizer (Homer and/or Hesiod) would seem to have been right in uniting Ares and Aphrodite: all warlike races are prone to the love either of men or of women. The Spartans exemplified this in the days of their greatness; their women managed many things. But it is the same whether women rule, or the rulers are ruled by women.

(3) Even in regard to boldness, which is of no use in daily life, and is needed only in war, the influence of the Lacedaemonian women has been most mischievous. EX: In the Theban invasion, unlike the women in other cities, they were utterly useless and caused more confusion than the enemy. This license of the Lacedaemonian women existed from the earliest times, and was only what might be expected. During the wars of the Lacedaemonians, the men were long away from home, and, on the return of peace, they gave themselves into the legislator’s hands, already prepared by the discipline of a soldier’s life (in which there are many elements of virtue), to receive his enactments. When Lycurgus wanted to bring the women under his laws, they resisted, and he gave up the attempt. The disorder of the women, as said, not only gives an air of indecorum to the constitution considered in itself, but tends in a measure to foster avarice.

(4) The mention of avarice naturally suggests a criticism on the inequality of property. While some of the Spartan citizens have quite small properties, others have very large ones: hence the land has passed into the hands of a few. And this is due also to faulty laws; although the legislator rightly holds up to shame the sale or purchase of an inheritance, he allows anybody who likes to give or bequeath it. Yet both practices lead to the same result. Women hold nearly two-fifths of the whole country; this is owing to the number of heiresses and large dowries. It would have been better to give no dowries at all (or at least small or moderate ones). As the law now stands, a man may bestow his heiress on any one whom he pleases, and, if he dies intestate, the privilege of giving her away descends to his heir. Hence, although the country is able to maintain 1500 cavalry and 30,000 hoplites, the whole number of Spartan citizens fell below 1000. The result proves the faulty nature of their laws respecting property; the city sank under a single defeat; the want of men was their ruin. Apparently, in the days of their ancient kings, they were in the habit of giving the rights of citizenship to strangers, and therefore, in spite of their long wars, they experienced no lack of population; indeed, at one time Sparta is said to have numbered not less than 10,000 citizens. Whether this statement is true or not, it would certainly have been better to have maintained their numbers by the equalization of property.

(5) The law that relates to the procreation of children is adverse to the correction of this inequality. The legislator, wanting to have as many Spartans as he could, encouraged the citizens to have large families. Spartan law said that the father of three sons shall be exempt from military service, and he who has four from all the burdens of the state. Yet if there were many children, the land being distributed as it is, many of them must necessarily fall into poverty.

(6) The Lacedaemonian constitution is defective also in respect of the Ephorate. This magistracy has authority in the highest matters, but the Ephors are chosen from the whole people, and so the office is apt to fall into the hands of very poor men, who, being badly off, are open to bribes. Even recently, some Ephors were bribed and did their best to ruin the state.

(7) So great and tyrannical is their power, that even the kings have been compelled to court them, so that, in this way as well, together with the royal office the whole constitution has deteriorated, and from being an aristocracy has turned into a democracy. The Ephorate certainly does keep the state together; the people are contented when they have a share in the highest office, and the result, whether due to the legislator or to chance, has been advantageous. If a constitution is to be permanent, all the parts of the state must wish that it
should exist and these arrangements be maintained. This is the case at Sparta, where the kings desire its permanence because they have due honor in their own persons; the nobles because they are represented in the council of elders (the office of elder is a reward of virtue); and the people, because all are eligible for the Ephorate.

(8) The election of Ephors out of the whole people is perfectly right, but ought not to be carried on in the present fashion, which is too childish.

(9) They have the decision of great causes, although they are quite ordinary men, and therefore they should not determine them merely on their own judgment, but according to written rules, and to the laws.

(10) Their way of life, too, is not in accordance with the spirit of the constitution – they have too much license; whereas, in the case of the other citizens, the excess of strictness is so intolerable that they run away from the law into the secret indulgence of sensual pleasures.

(11) The council of elders has at least four defects. The elders are good men and well trained in manly virtue, so there is an advantage to the state in having them. But (a) that judges of important causes should hold office for life is a disputable thing, for the mind grows old as well as the body. (b) When men have been educated in such a manner that even the legislator himself cannot trust them, there is real danger. (c) Many of the elders are well known to have taken bribes and to have been guilty of partiality in public affairs; so they ought not to be non-accountable; yet at Sparta they are so. (d) All magistracies are accountable to the Ephors. But this prerogative is too great for them, and the control should be exercised in some other manner.

(12) The mode in which the Spartans elect their elders is childish; it is improper that the person to be elected should canvass for the office; the worthiest should be appointed, whether he chooses or not. Here the legislator clearly indicates the same intention that appears in other parts of his constitution; he would have his citizens ambitious, and he has reckoned upon this quality in the election of the elders; no one would ask to be elected if he were not. Yet ambition and avarice, almost more than any other passions, are the motives of voluntary injustices.

(13) Kings should be chosen (not as they are now) with regard to their personal life and conduct. The legislator himself obviously did not suppose that he could make them really good men; at least he shows a great distrust of their virtue. For this reason the Spartans used to join enemies with them in the same embassy, and the quarrels between the kings were held to preserve the state.

(14) The first introducer of the common meals (“phiditia”) did not regulate them well. The entertainment ought to have been provided at public cost, as in Crete; among the Lacedaemonians everyone is expected to contribute to entertainment, and some of them are too poor to afford the expense; thus the intention of the legislator is frustrated. The common meals were meant to be a democratic institution, but the existing manner of regulating them is the reverse of democratic. The very poor can scarcely take part in them, and (according to ancient custom) those who cannot contribute are not allowed to retain their rights of citizenship.

(15) The law about the Spartan admirals is justly censured; it is a source of dissension, for the kings are perpetual generals, and this office of admiral is but the setting up of another king.

(16) Plato’s charge in the Laws against the legislator’s intention is likewise justified: the whole constitution has regard to one part of virtue only – the virtue of the soldier, which gives victory in war. So long as they were at war, their power was preserved, but when they had attained empire they fell; they knew nothing of the arts of peace, and have never engaged in any employment higher than war.

(17) There is another equally great error: Although they truly think that the goods for which men contend are to be acquired by virtue rather than by vice, they err in supposing that these goods are to be preferred to the virtue that gains them.

(18) The revenues of the state are ill managed; there is no money in the treasury, although they are obliged to carry on great wars, and they are unwilling to pay taxes. The greater part of the land being in the hands of Spartans, they do not look closely into one another’s contributions. The legislator has produced a detrimental result: he has made his city poor, and his citizens greedy.

Enough respecting the Spartan constitution, of which these are the principal defects.
II.10 Details of the Cretan Constitution and Institutions (Very Similar to the Spartans'); Cretans Manage Common Meals Better than the Spartans; 5 Criticisms of Crete’s Constitution (1271b-1272b).

The Cretan constitution nearly resembles the Spartan, and in some few points is quite as good; but for the most part less perfect in form. The older constitutions are generally less elaborate than the later, and the Lacedaemonian is, in a very great measure, a copy of the Cretan (according to tradition, Lycurgus went abroad and spent most of his time in Crete). The two countries are nearly connected; the Lycians are a colony of the Lacedaemonians, and the colonists, when they came to Crete, adopted the constitution that they found existing among the inhabitants. Even to this day the Perioeci are governed by the original laws that Minos enacted. The island seems to be intended by nature for dominion in Hellas, and to be well situated.

The Cretan institutions resemble the Lacedaemonian: (a) The Helots are the husbandmen of the Spartans, the Perioeci of the Cretans; (b) both Cretans and Lacedaemonians have common meals, which were anciently called by the Lacedaemonians not “phiditia” but “andria”; and the Cretans have the same word, the use of which proves that the common meals originally came from Crete. (c) The two constitutions are similar: the office of the Ephors is the same as that of the Cretan Cosmi, the only difference being that whereas the Ephors are five, the Cosmi are ten in number. (d) The elders, too, answer to the elders in Crete, who are termed by the Cretans the council. And the kingly office once existed in Crete, but was abolished, and the Cosmi have now the duty of leading them in war. All classes share in the ecclesia, but it can only ratify the decrees of the elders and the Cosmi.

The common meals of Crete are certainly better managed than the Lacedaemonian; in Lacedaemon everyone pays so much per head (or, if he fails, as said, the law forbids him to exercise the rights of citizenship). In Crete (a) they are of a more popular character: of all the fruits of the earth the cattle raised on the public lands, and of the tribute which is paid by the Perioeci, one portion is assigned to the gods and to the service of the state, and another to the common meals, so that men, women, and children are all supported out of a common stock, and the companionship of men with one another.

Criticisms: (1) The Cosmi are even a worse institution than the Ephors, of which they have all the evils without the good. Like the Ephors, they are any chance persons, but in Crete this is not counterbalanced by a corresponding political advantage. At Sparta everyone is eligible, and the body of the people, having a share in the highest office, want the constitution to be permanent. But in Crete the Cosmi are elected out of certain families, and not out of the whole people, and the elders out of those who have been Cosmi.

(2) The same criticism may be made about the Cretan (that were already made about the Lacedaemonian) affairs: (a) Their unaccountability and life tenure is too great a privilege; (b) their arbitrary power of acting upon their own judgment, and dispensing with written law, is dangerous. (c) A bad institution is one (as here) wherein the people are not discontented at being excluded from it. (d) There is no profit to be made out of the office as out of the Ephorate, since, unlike the Ephors, the Cosmi, being in an island, are removed from temptation.

(3) The remedy by which they correct the evil of this institution is an extraordinary one, suited rather to a dynasty than to a constitutional state. (a) The Cosmi are often expelled by a conspiracy of their own colleagues, or of private individuals; and they are allowed also to resign before their term of office has expired. These matters are better regulated by law than by the will of man, which is a very unsafe rule. (b) Worst of all is the suspension of the office of Cosmi, a device to which the nobles often have recourse when they will not submit to justice. Thus, the Cretan government, although possessing some of the characteristics of a constitutional state, is really a dynasty.

(4) The nobles have a habit of setting up a chief; they get together a party among the common people and their own friends and then quarrel and fight with one another. What is this but the temporary destruction of the state and dissolution of society? A city is in a dangerous condition when those who are willing are also able to attack her. But, as said, the island of Crete is saved by her situation; distance has the same effect as the prohibition of strangers. This is why the Perioeci are contented in Crete, whereas the Helots are perpetually revolting.
(5) The Cretans have no foreign dominions and, when lately foreign invaders found their way into the island, the weakness of the Cretan constitution was revealed. Enough of the government of Crete.

II.11 The Carthaginians’ Constitution (and Its Institutions) is Virtuous, and Greatly Resembles the Spartan Ones; 4 Criticisms and Some Advantages Thereof (1272b-1273b).

The Carthaginians seem to have an virtuous form of government, which differs from every other state in some ways, but is very like the Lacedaemonian. (Indeed, the Lacedaemonian, the Cretan, and the Carthaginian nearly resemble one another, and are very different from any others.) Many of the Carthaginian institutions are virtuous: (a) the common people remains loyal to the constitution; (b) the Carthaginians have never had any real rebellion; and (c) they have never been under the rule of a tyrant.

The Carthaginian constitution resembles the Lacedaemonian as follows: (a) The common tables of the clubs answer to the Spartan phiditia, and their magistry of the 104 to the Ephors; but, whereas the Ephors are any chance persons, the magistrates of the Carthaginians are elected according to merit – this is an improvement. (b) They have their kings and their council of elders, who correspond to the kings and elders of Sparta. (Their kings, unlike the Spartan, are not always of the same family, nor that an ordinary one, but if there is some distinguished family they are selected out of it and not appointed by seniority – this is far better. Such officers have great power, and therefore, if they are persons of little worth, do a great deal of harm, and they have already done hurt at Lacedaemon.)

**Criticisms:** Most of the defects or deviations from the perfect state, for which the Carthaginian constitution would be censured, apply equally to all the forms of government that we have mentioned.

1. Of the deflections from aristocracy and constitutional government, some incline more to democracy and some to oligarchy. The kings and elders, if unanimous, may determine whether they will or will not bring a matter before the people, but when they are not unanimous, the people decide on such matters as well. And whatever the kings and elders bring before the people is not only heard but also determined by them, and anyone who likes may oppose it; this is not permitted in Sparta and Crete.

2. Oligarchical features: (a) the magistracies of five who have under them many important matters should be co-opted; (b) they should choose the supreme council of 100, and should hold office longer than other magistrates (they are virtually rulers both before and after they hold office). Aristocratic features: (a) the magistrates are without salary and are not elected by lot; (b) the practice of having all suits tried by the magistrates, and not some by one class and some by another (as at Lacedaemon). The Carthaginian constitution deviates from aristocracy and inclines to oligarchy, chiefly on a point where popular opinion is on their side. Men in general think that magistrates should be chosen not only for their merit, but for their wealth: a man, they say, who is poor cannot rule well – he has not the leisure. So if election of magistrates for their wealth be characteristic of oligarchy, and election for merit of aristocracy, the Carthaginians have a third form: they choose their magistrates, and particularly the highest (their kings and generals) with an eye both to merit and to wealth.

3. In thus deviating from aristocracy, the legislator has committed an error. Nothing is more absolutely necessary and primary than to provide that the highest class (when both in and out of office) should have leisure and not disgrace themselves in any way. Even if you must have regard to wealth, in order to secure leisure, it is surely a bad thing that the greatest offices, such as those of kings and generals, should be bought. The law that allows this abuse makes wealth of more account than virtue, and the whole state becomes avaricious. Whenever the chiefs of the state deem anything honorable, the other citizens are sure to follow their example; and, where virtue has not the first place, there aristocracy cannot be firmly established. Those who have purchased their places in office will be in the habit of repaying themselves; and it is absurd to suppose that a poor and honest man will be wanting to make gains, and that a lower stamp of man who has incurred a great expense will not. Thus, they should rule who are able to rule best. Even if the legislator does not care to protect the good from poverty, he should at any rate secure leisure for them when in office.

4. It is a bad principle that the same person should hold many offices (a favorite practice among the Carthaginians); one business is better done by one man. [DY: Aristotle’s endorsement of division of labor; EX: The legislator should not appoint the same person to be a flute-player and a shoemaker. Hence, where the state
is large, it is more in accordance with constitutional and democratic principles that the offices of state should be distributed among many persons. As said, this arrangement is fairer to all, and any action familiarized by repetition is better and sooner performed. We have a proof in military and naval matters; the duties of command and of obedience in both these services extend to all.

**Advantages:** The government of the Carthaginians is oligarchical, but they successfully escape the evils of oligarchy by being wealthy, sending out one portion of the people after another to the cities. This is their panacea and the means by which they give stability to the state. This is the result of chance but it is the legislator who should be able to provide against revolution. As things are, if any misfortune occurred, and the bulk of the subjects revolted, there would be no way of restoring peace by legal methods.

Such is the character of the Lacedaemonian, Cretan, and Carthaginian constitutions, which are justly celebrated.

**II.12 Solon was Not as Great a Legislator/Constitutionalist as Some Suppose; Pericles Created Paid Juries; Zaleucus Gave Laws to the Locrians; Philolaus Created Procreation and Adoption Laws; Charondas Had Laws Regarding False Witnesses and Perjury; Phaleas Equalized Property; Plato’s Unique Laws: Women, Children, and Property in Common, Common Meals with Women, the Sober will Run the Feast, and Soldiers Should be Ambidextrous; Draco Had Severe Punishments; Pitticus Punished a Drunk Harmful Man More than a Sober Man (1273b-1274b).**

Let us now discuss other individuals related to governments, constitutions, and laws.

**Solon** (who made laws and framed constitutions) is thought by some to have been a good legislator: He put an end to the exclusiveness of the oligarchy, emancipated the people, established the ancient Athenian democracy, and harmonized the different elements of the state. According to their view, the council of Areopagus was an oligarchical element, the elected magistracy, aristocratic, and the courts of law, democratic. But the truth is that the council and the elected magistracy existed before Solon’s time, and were retained by him, but that he formed the courts of law out of all the citizens, thus creating the democracy, which is the very reason why he is sometimes blamed: In giving the supreme power to the law courts, which are elected by lot, he is thought to have destroyed the non-democratic element. When the law courts grew powerful, to please the people who were now playing the tyrant, the old constitution was changed into the existing democracy.

**Ephialtes** and **Pericles** curtailed the power of the Areopagus: Pericles instituted the payment of the juries, and thus every demagogue in turn increased the power of the democracy until it became what we now see. But all this seems to be the result of circumstances, and not to have been intended by Solon. The people, having been instrumental in gaining the empire of the sea in the Persian War, began to get a notion of it, and followed worthless demagogues, whom the better class opposed. Solon only gave Athenians that power of electing to offices and calling to account the magistrates that was absolutely necessary; without it they would have been in a state of slavery and enmity to the government. All the magistrates he appointed from the notables and the men of wealth (EXs: from the pentacosiomedimni, the zeugitae, or from the knights; the fourth class was laborers who had no share in any magistracy).

**Zaleucus** gave laws to the Epizephyrian Locrians, and **Charondas**, who legislated for his own city of Catana, and for the other Chalcidian cities in Italy and Sicily.

**Philolaus** (the Corinthian) gave laws to the Thebans regarding the procreation of children, which they call the “Laws of Adoption”. These laws were peculiar to him, and were intended to preserve the number of the lots.

**Charondas** created laws for suits against false witnesses. He is the first who instituted denunciation for perjury. His laws are more exact and more precisely expressed than even those of our modern legislators.

**Characteristic of Phaleas** is the equalization of property; of **Plato**, the community of women, children, and property, the common meals of women, and the law about drinking, that the sober shall be masters of the feast; also the training of soldiers to acquire by practice equal skill with both hands, so that one should be as useful as the other.
Draco has left laws, adapting them to a constitution that already existed; the only peculiarity in them that is worth mentioning is the greatness and severity of the punishments.

Pittacus (only a lawgiver) has a peculiar law: if a drunken man do something wrong, he shall be more heavily punished than if he were sober; he looked not to the excuse which might be offered for the drunkard, but only to expediency, for drunken more often than sober people commit acts of violence.

Androdamas of Rhégium gave laws (related to homicide and heiresses, but nothing peculiar) to the Chalcidians of Thrace.

Thus we conclude our inquiry into the various constitutions that either actually exist, or have been devised by theorists.

BOOK III:

III.1 What is a State? What is a Citizen? A Citizen Shares in the Administration of Justice and in Offices; Indefinite Offices (Jurymen and Assemblymen); Citizens Differ Under Each Government; a State is Body of Citizens Sufficing for the Purposes of Life (1274b-1275b).

To inquire into the essence and attributes of various kinds of government, we must first of all determine what a state is. Some say that the state has done a certain act; others, not the state, but the oligarchy or the tyrant. The legislator or statesman is concerned entirely with the state, a government being an arrangement of the inhabitants of a state. But a state is composite, made up of many parts – the citizens. So we must begin by asking, who and what is the citizen? He who is a citizen in a democracy will often not be a citizen in an oligarchy. A citizen is not a citizen because he lives in a certain place, since resident aliens and slaves share in the place; nor is he a citizen who has legal rights to sue and be sued; this right may be enjoyed under the provisions of a treaty. Resident aliens in many places do not possess even such rights completely, for they are obliged to have a patron, so they participate in the community imperfectly, and we call them citizens only in a qualified sense, as we might apply the term to children who are too young to be on the register, or to old men who have been relieved from state duties. There are similar difficulties with disfranchised citizens and exiles. The special characteristic of the citizen in the strictest sense, against whom no such exception can be taken, is that he shares in the administration of justice, and in offices. Some offices are discontinuous (i.e., the same persons are not allowed to hold them twice, or can only hold them after a fixed interval); others have no limit of time (e.g., the office of jurymen or member of the assembly). These are arguably not magistrates at all, and their functions give them no share in the government. But surely it is ridiculous to say that those who have the supreme power do not govern. Moving on, we want a common term including both juryman and member of the assembly: “indefinite office”, and we will assume that those who share in such office are citizens. This is the most comprehensive definition of a citizen, and best suits all those who are generally so called.

Governments differ in kind, and that some of them are prior and that others are posterior; those that are faulty or perverted are necessarily posterior to those that are perfect. The citizen then of necessity differs under each form of government; and our definition is best adapted to the citizen of a democracy; but not necessarily to other states. In some states the people are not acknowledged, nor have they any regular assembly, but only extraordinary ones; and lawsuits are distributed among the magistrates’ sections. EXs: The Lacedaemonian Ephors determine suits about contracts, which they distribute among themselves, while the elders are judges of homicide, and other magistrates decide other causes. A similar principle prevails at Carthage (certain magistrates decide all causes). We may modify our definition of the citizen so as to include these states. In them it is the holder of a definite, not an indefinite office, who is jurymen and member of the assembly, and definite office holders have the right of deliberating or judging about some or all things.

A citizen of a state is he who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state; and, generally, a state is a body of citizens sufficing for the purposes of life.
III.2 Some Citizens Must be Born of Both Citizen Parents; It Goes Back Generations with Other States; Citizens Due to Revolutions are Citizens (1275b-1276a).

In practice, a citizen is defined to be one of whom both the parents are citizens (and not just one, i.e. father or mother); others insist on going back two or three (or more) ancestors. Some even ask how this third of fourth ancestor came to be a citizen. The question is really simple: if according to the definition just given they shared in the government, they were citizens. For, “born of a father or mother who is a citizen”, cannot possibly apply to the first inhabitants or founders of a state.

Those who have been made citizens after a revolution [e.g., by Cleisthenes at Athens after the expulsion of the tyrants – he enrolled in tribes many metics [DY: resident aliens, such as Aristotle was of Athens, since he was really a citizen of Macedonia], both strangers and slaves] present a greater difficulty. The doubt in these cases is not who is but who ought to be a citizen; a further doubt is whether he who ought not to be a citizen, is one in fact, for what ought not to be is what is false. Some citizens hold office, but ought not to; these rule, but rule unjustly. And the citizen was defined by the fact of his holding some kind of rule or office – he who holds a certain sort of office fulfills our definition of a citizen. So the citizens about whom the doubt has arisen must be called citizens.

III.3 (When) Can States Act? When is a State the Same or Different? What is the Limit of a City in Which a Man Can be a Citizen? Is a State the Same When it has the Same Race of Citizens as They Are Born and Die? The Sameness of a States Consists Chiefly in the Sameness of the Constitution; Should a State Fulfill Its Engagements When the Form of Government Changes? (1276a-b).

Another question is whether a certain act is or is not an act of the state; EX: in the transition from an oligarchy or a tyranny to a democracy. In such cases, persons refuse to fulfill their contracts or any other obligations, on the ground that the tyrant and not the state, contracted them [DY: EX: Socrates when the Thirty Tyrants commanded him to get Leon of Salmis, in the Apology]; they argue that some constitutions are established by force, and not for the sake of the common good. But this would apply equally to democracies, and then the acts of the democracy will be neither more nor less acts of the state in question than those of an oligarchy or of a tyranny.

Next question: on what principle shall we ever say that the state is the same, or different? A very superficial view would consider only the place and the inhabitants (the soil and the population may be separated, and some of the inhabitants may live in one place and some in another). We can fix this simple difficulty by remarking that the word “state” is ambiguous.

When are men, living in the same place, to be regarded as a single city – what is the limit? Certainly not the wall of the city, for you might surround all Peloponnesus with a wall. Babylon is like this because they say it had been taken for three days before some part of the inhabitants became aware of the fact.

Shall we say that while the race of inhabitants remains the same, the city is also the same, although the citizens are always dying and being born, as we call rivers and fountains the same, although the water is always flowing away and more coming? Or shall we say that the generations of men, like the rivers, are the same, but that the state changes? Since the state is a partnership, and is a partnership of citizens in a constitution, when the form of the government changes, and becomes different, then it may be supposed that the state is no longer the same, just as a tragic differs from a comic chorus, although the members of both may be identical. In this manner, every union or composition of elements is different when the form of their composition alters; EX: a scale containing the same sounds is said to be different, accordingly as the Dorian or the Phrygian mode is employed. If this is true, then the sameness of the state consists chiefly in the sameness of the constitution, and it may or may not be called by the same name, whether the inhabitants are the same or entirely different.

Yet another question: whether a state ought or ought not to fulfill engagements when the form of government changes.
III.4 Is the Virtue of a Good Man and a Good Citizen the Same? One Citizen Differs from Another, but Their Common Business is the Salvation of the Community; the Virtue of the Good Citizen and the Good Man are Not Identical; the Good Ruler is a Good/Wise Man, but the Citizen Need Not be; the Good Citizen Must Know How to Govern and Obey as a Free Man; the Good Ruler has Practical Wisdom, but the Other Virtues Can Belong Equally to Ruler and Subjects (1276b-1277b).

Is the virtue of a good man and a good citizen the same? First we must examine the virtue of the citizen. Like the sailor, the citizen is a member of a community. Sailors have different functions, rower, pilot, and look out (the precise definition of each individual's virtue applies exclusively to him, but there is also a common definition of them all: they have a common object: safety in navigation. Similarly, one citizen differs from another, but the salvation of the community is the common business of them all. This community is the constitution; the virtue of the citizen must therefore be relative to the constitution of which he is a member. Since there are many forms of government, it is evident that there is not one single virtue of the good citizen that is perfect virtue. But the good man is he who has one single virtue that is perfect virtue. Hence the good citizen need not of necessity possess the virtue that makes a good man.

The same question may also be approached from considering the best constitution. If the state cannot be entirely composed of good men, and yet each citizen is expected to do his own business well, and must therefore have virtue, still, inasmuch as all the citizens cannot be alike, the virtue of the citizen and of the good man cannot coincide. All must have the virtue of the good citizen – thus, and thus only, can the state be perfect; but they will not have the virtue of a good man, unless we assume that in the good state all the citizens must be good.

The state, as composed of unlike parts, may be compared to the living being: as the first elements into which a living being is resolved are soul and body, as soul is made up of rational principle and appetite, the family of husband and wife, property of master and slave, so of all these, as well as other dissimilar elements, the state is composed; and therefore the virtue of all the citizens cannot possibly be the same, any more than the virtue of the leader of a chorus is the same as that of the performer who stands by his side. Thus, the two kinds of virtue cannot be absolutely the same.

Will there then be no case in which the virtue of the good citizen and good man coincide? To this we answer that the good ruler is a good and wise man, but the citizen need not be wise. Some say that even the education of the ruler should be of a special kind; are not the children of kings instructed in riding and military exercises? As Euripides says, “No subtle arts for me, but what the state requires.” As though there were a special education needed for a ruler. If the virtue of a good ruler is the same as that of a good man, and we assume further that the subject is a citizen as well as the ruler, the virtue of the good citizen and the good man cannot be absolutely the same, although in some cases they may; the virtue of a ruler differs from that of a citizen. EX: Jason said “he felt hungry when he was not a tyrant” (i.e. he could not endure to live in a private station). But, on the other hand, it may be argued that men are praised for knowing both how to rule and how to obey, and a citizen of virtue is able to do both well. If we suppose the virtue of a good man to be that which rules, and the virtue of the citizen to include ruling and obeying, it cannot be said that they are equally worthy of praise. Since it is sometimes thought that the ruler and the ruled must learn different things, but that the citizen must know and share in them both, the inference is obvious; there is the rule of a master (concerned with menial offices – the master need not know how to perform these, but may employ others in the execution of them): the power actually to do menial duties would be degrading. Menial duties vary much in character and are executed by various classes of slaves (e.g., as handicraftsmen, who, as their name signifies, live by manual labor). Hence in ancient times, and among some nations, the working classes had no share in the government – a privilege that they only acquired under extreme democracy. Certainly the good man and the statesman and the good citizen ought not to learn the crafts of inferiors except for their own occasional use; if they habitually practice them, there will cease to be a distinction between master and slave.

There is a rule of another kind, which is exercised over freemen and equals by birth – a constitutional rule, which the ruler must learn by obeying, as he would learn the duties of a general of cavalry by being under his orders (and so on). It has been well said that he who has never learned to obey cannot be a good commander. The virtue of the two is not the same, but the good citizen ought to be capable of both; he should
know how to govern like a freeman, and how to obey like a freeman – these are the virtues of a citizen. Although the temperance and justice of a ruler are distinct from those of a subject, the virtue of a good man will include both; the virtue of the good man who is free and also a subject, e.g. his justice, will not be one but will comprise distinct kinds, the one qualifying him to rule, the other to obey, and differing as the temperance and courage of men and women differ. A man would be thought a coward if he had no more courage than a courageous woman, and a woman would be thought loquacious if she imposed no more restraint on her conversation than the good man; and indeed their part in the management of the household is different, (the duty of the one is to acquire, and of the other to preserve). Practical wisdom is the only virtue peculiar to the ruler: it would seem that all other virtues must equally belong to ruler and subject. The virtue of the subject is certainly not wisdom, but only true opinion; he may be compared to the maker of the flute, while his master is like the flute-player or user of the flute.

III.5 A Craftsperson is Not a Citizen in the Best State, but if He is a Citizen, He Must be Free From Necessary Services; Resident Aliens (Metics) and Foreigners are Not Citizens; Children are Not Citizens Equally with Full Grown Adults; Craftspersons and Laborers are Sometimes Citizens; Some States Admit Aliens or Illegitimate Children Due to Lack of Population; a Citizen in the Full Sense Shares in the Honors of the State; in Some State, the Good Man and Citizen Can be the Same (1277b-1278b).

One more question about the citizen: Is he only a true citizen who has a share of office, or is the craftsperson to be included? If they who hold no office are to be deemed citizens, not every citizen can have this virtue; this man is a citizen. And if none of the lower class is a citizen, in which part of the state are they to be placed? (They are not resident aliens or foreigners.) May we not reply: there is no more absurdity in excluding craftpersons than in excluding slaves and freedmen from any of the above-mentioned classes? It must be admitted that we cannot consider all those to be citizens who are necessary to the existence of the state: EX: Children are not citizens equally with grown-up men, who are citizens absolutely, but children, not being grown up, are only citizens on a certain assumption. In ancient times, and among some nations, the craftsperson class was slaves or foreigners, and so the majority of them are so now. The best form of state will not admit them to citizenship; but if they are admitted, then our definition of the virtue of a citizen will not apply to every citizen, nor to every free man as such, but only to those who are freed from necessary services. The necessary people are either slaves who minister to the wants of individuals, or craftpersons and laborers who are the servants of the community.

Since there are many forms of government there must be many varieties of citizens, and especially of citizens who are subjects; so under some governments the craftsperson and the laborer will be citizens, but not in others (e.g., in aristocracies, if there are any, in which honors are given according to virtue and merit, but no man can practice virtue who is living the life of a craftsperson or laborer). In oligarchies the qualification for office is high, and so no laborer can ever be a citizen; but a craftperson may, for an actual majority of them are rich. At Thebes there was a law that no man could hold office who had not retired from business for ten years. In many states the law goes to the length of admitting aliens; in some democracies a man is a citizen though his mother only be a citizen; and a similar principle is applied to illegitimate children among many. Nevertheless they make such people citizens because of the dearth of legitimate citizens; so when the number of citizens increases, first the children of a male or a female slave are excluded; then those whose mothers only are citizens; and at last the right of citizenship is confined to those whose fathers and mothers are both citizens.

So there are different kinds of citizens; and he is a citizen in the fullest sense who shares in the honors of the state. He who is excluded from the honors of the state is no better than an alien. But when this exclusion is concealed, then its object is to deceive their fellow inhabitants.

Re: The question whether the virtue of the good man is the same as that of the good citizen: In some states the good man and the good citizen are the same, and in others different. When they are the same it is not every citizen who is a good man, but only the statesman and those who have or may have, alone or in conjunction with others, the conduct of public affairs.
III.6 A Constitution is the Arrangement of Magistracies in a State (Especially the Highest of All); the Chief End of the State and Individual is to Live Together and by Common Interest Attain Well Being; Review of the Master Rule, Household Management; Citizens in an “Equality” State Hold Office by Turns; True Forms of Government Regard the Common Interest, Constituted in Accord with Strict Principles of Justice (the State is a Community of Free Men); All Defective/Perverted Government Forms Regard Only the Interest of the Ruler (1278b-1279a).

What are the many forms of government or many, how many are there, and what are the differences between them?

A constitution is the arrangement of magistracies in a state, especially of the highest of all. The government is everywhere sovereign in the state, and the constitution is in fact the government. EX: In democracies the people are supreme, but in oligarchies, the few; so these two constitutions also are different; and so on.

First, what is the purpose of a state, and how many forms of rule there are that regulate human society? As said, man is by nature a political animal. So men, even when they do not require one another’s help, desire to live together; they are also brought together by their common interests insofar as they each attain to any measure of well being. This is certainly the chief end, both of individuals and of states. Mankind meets together and maintains the political community also for the sake of mere life (in which there is possibly some noble element so long as the evils of existence do not greatly overbalance the good). We all see that men cling to life even at the cost of enduring great misfortune, seeming to find in life a natural sweetness and happiness.

We have already distinguished the various kinds of rule: The rule of a master, although the slave by nature and the master by nature have in reality the same interests, is nevertheless exercised primarily with a view to the interest of the master, but accidentally considers the slave, since, if the slave perish, the rule of the master perishes with him. The government of a wife, children, and household (household management), is exercised firstly for the good of the governed or for the common good of both parties, but essentially for the good of the governed, as we see to be the case in medicine, gymnastic, and the arts in general, which are only accidentally concerned with the good of the artists themselves. EXs: There is no reason why the trainer may not sometimes practice gymnastics, and the helmsman is always one of the crew. The trainer or the helmsman considers the good of those committed to his care. But, when he is one of the persons taken care of, he accidently participates in the advantage, for the helmsman is also a sailor, and the trainer becomes one of those in training. So in politics: when the state is framed upon the principle of equality and likeness, the citizens think that they ought to hold office by turns. Formerly, as is natural, everyone would take his turn of service; and then again, somebody else would look after his interest, just as he, while in office, had looked after theirs. But nowadays, for the sake of the advantage that is to be gained from the public revenues and from office, men want to be always in office. One might imagine that the rulers, being sickly, were only kept in health while they continued in office; in that case they would be hunting for places. The conclusion is evident: True forms of governments have a regard to the common interest, constituted in accordance with strict principles of justice; those which regard only the interest of the rulers are all defective and perverted forms; they are despotic, whereas a state is a community of freemen.

III.7 “Constitution” and “Government” Mean the Same Thing; True Forms of Government (That Regard the Common Interest): One Ruler is a King; Few Rulers is an Aristocracy; and Many Rulers is a Constitutional Government; Perversions of Government (That Regard Their Own Interests): One Ruler is a Tyrant; Few Rulers is an Oligarchy; and Many Rulers is a Democracy (1279a-b).

So how many forms of government there are, and what are they? What are the true forms? (When these are determined, the perversions of them will at once be apparent.) The words constitution and government have the same meaning, and the government, which is the supreme authority in states, must be in the hands of one, or of a few, or of the many. So the true forms of government are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest; but governments which rule with a view to the private interest, whether of the one, or of the few, or of the many, are perversions. The members of a state, if they are truly citizens, ought to participate in its advantages. Governments wherein one ruler and regards the common interest is kingship;
when a few rule, it is called aristocracy (either because the rulers are the best men, or because they have at heart the best interests of the state and of the citizens). When the many administer the state for the common interest, the government is called by the generic name – a constitution [DY: This is called a “polity” elsewhere by Aristotle]. (One man or a few may excel in virtue; but as the number increases it becomes more difficult for them to attain perfection in every kind of virtue, though they may in military virtue, for this is found in the masses. Hence in a constitutional government the fighting-men have the supreme power, and those who possess arms are the citizens.)

The perversions thereof are as follows: of kingship, tyranny; of aristocracy, oligarchy; of constitutional government, democracy. Tyranny is a kind of monarchy that has in view the interest of the monarch only; oligarchy has in view the interest of the wealthy; democracy, of the needy: none of them the common good of all.

III.8 Problems with the Distinctions Just Made: e.g., What if the Many is Rich in a Democracy? What if the Few are Poor in an Oligarchy? The Real Difference Between Oligarchy and Democracy is Wealth (Wealthy Rule in Oligarchy) and Poverty (Poor Rule in Democracy) (1279b-1280a).

But there are difficulties about these forms of government, and it will therefore be necessary to state a little more at length the nature of each of them. Tyranny, as I was saying, is monarchy exercising the rule of a master over the political society; oligarchy is when men of property have the government in their hands; democracy, the opposite, when the indigent, and not the men of property, are the rulers. Here arises the first of our difficulties, and it relates to the distinction just drawn. Democracy is said to be the government of the many. But what if the many are men of property and have the power in their hands? In like manner oligarchy is said to be the government of the few; but what if the poor are fewer than the rich, and have the power in their hands because they are stronger? In these cases the distinction that we have drawn between these different forms of government would no longer hold good.

Even if an oligarchy is that in which the few and the wealthy, and a democracy is where the many and the poor are the rulers – there will still be a difficulty. If the only forms of government are the ones already mentioned, how shall we describe those other governments in which the rich are the more numerous and the poor the fewer, and both govern in their respective states?

Thus, whether in oligarchies or in democracies, the number of the governing body, whether the greater number, as in a democracy, or the smaller number, as in an oligarchy, is an accident due to the fact that the rich everywhere are few, and the poor numerous. But if so, there is a misapprehension: The real difference between democracy and oligarchy is poverty and wealth. Wherever men rule by reason of their wealth, whether they are few or many, that is an oligarchy, and where the poor rule, that is a democracy. (In fact the rich are few and the poor many; few are well to do, whereas freedom is enjoyed by all, and wealth and freedom are the grounds on which the two parties claim power in the state.)

III.9 Common Definitions of Oligarchy, Democracy, and Their Respective Definitions of Justice; Justice is Equality Only for Equals, but Inequality Only for Inequals; a State Exists Only for the Sake of the Good Life; It does Not Exist for the Sake of Alliance, Security from Injustice, or Mutual Exchange/Intercourse; Those Who Take Care for Good Government Consider Political Virtue and Defect; the Means to a Good Life Via the State are Family Connections, Brotherhood, Common Sacrifices and Amusements; the State is a Union of Families and Villages in a Perfect, Self-Sufficing, Happy, Honorable Life; All Partisans of Different Government Forms Only Speak of a Part of Justice (1280a-1281a).

Let us consider the common definitions of oligarchy and democracy, and oligarchical and democratic justice. All men cling to justice of some kind, but their conceptions are imperfect and they do not express the whole idea. EX: they think justice is equality (and it is) – not, however, for all, but only for equals. They think inequality is justice (and it is); inequality is not justice for all, but only for unequals. When the persons are omitted, then men judge erroneously, because they are passing judgment on themselves, and most people are bad judges in their own case. Whereas justice implies a relation to persons as well as to things, and a just
distribution (as said in the *Ethics*), implies the same ratio between the persons and between the things, they agree about the equality of the things, but dispute about the equality of the persons, chiefly (as said) because they are bad judges in their own affairs; and secondly, because both the parties to the argument are speaking of a limited and partial justice, but imagine themselves to be speaking of absolute justice. For the one party, if they are unequal in one respect (e.g., wealth), consider themselves to be unequal in all; and the other party, if they are equal in one respect (e.g., free birth), consider themselves to be equal in all. But they leave out the capital point. If men met and associated out of regard to wealth only, their share in the state would be proportioned to their property, and the oligarchical doctrine would then seem to carry the day. It would not be just that he who paid one mina should have the same share of a hundred minae, whether of the principal or of the profits, as he who paid the remaining ninety-nine. But a state exists for the sake of a good life, and not for the sake of life only; if life only were the object, slaves and brute animals might form a state, but they cannot, for they have no share in happiness or in a life based on choice. Nor does a state exist for the sake of alliance and security from injustice, nor yet for the sake of exchange and mutual intercourse; then the Tyrrenians and the Carthaginians, and all who have commercial treaties with one another, would be the citizens of one state. True, they have agreements about imports, and engagements that they will do no wrong to one another, and written articles of alliance. But there are no magistracies common to the contracting parties; different states have each their own magistracies. Nor does one state take care that the citizens of the other are such as they ought to be, nor see that those who come under the terms of the treaty do no wrong or wickedness at all, but only that they do no injustice to one another. Those who care for good government take into consideration political virtue and defect. Moreover, virtue must be the care of a state which is truly so called, and not merely enjoys the name; without this end the community becomes a mere alliance which differs only in place from alliances of which the members live apart; and law is only a convention (“a surety to one another of justice”, as the sophist Lycophron says), and has no real power to make the citizens good and just.

This is obvious; suppose distinct places, such as Corinth and Megara, to be brought together so that their walls touched, still they would not be one city, not even if the citizens had the right to intermarry, which is one of the rights peculiarly characteristic of states. If men dwelt at a distance from one another, but not so far off as to have no intercourse, and there were laws among them that they should not wrong each other in their exchanges, neither would this be a state. Suppose that one man is a carpenter, another a farmer, another a shoemaker, and so on, and that their number is ten thousand: nevertheless, if they have nothing in common but exchange, alliance, and the like, that would not constitute a state. Why? Surely not because they are at a distance from one another; even supposing that such a community were to meet in one place, but that each man had a house of his own, which was in a manner his state, and that they made alliance with one another, but only against evil-doers; still an accurate thinker would not deem this to be a state, if their intercourse with one another was of the same character after as before their union. So a state is not a mere society, having a common place, established for the prevention of mutual crime and for the sake of exchange. These are conditions without which a state cannot exist; but all of them together do not constitute a state, which is a community of families and aggregations of families in well being, for the sake of a perfect and self-sufficing life. Such a community can only be established among those who live in the same place and intermarry. Hence by friendship, there arise in cities family connections, brotherhoods, common sacrifices, and amusements that draw men together (to choose to live together is friendship). The end of the state is the good life, and these are the means towards it. The state is the union of families and villages in a perfect, self-sufficing, happy, honorable life.

Thus, political society exists for the sake of noble actions, and not of living together. So they who contribute most to such a society have a greater share in it than those who have the same or a greater freedom or nobility of birth but are inferior to them in political virtue; or than those who exceed them in wealth but are surpassed by them in virtue.

So, all the partisans of different forms of government speak of a part of justice only.
### III.10 Every Alternative (Rule by Many, Wealthy, Good, One Best Man, or Tyrant) has Disagreeable Consequences; the Law of Confiscation (of Property) Cannot be Just (1281a).

What is to be the supreme power in the state: The many? The wealthy? The good? The one best man? Or a tyrant? Any of these alternatives seems to involve disagreeable consequences. EX: Isn’t it unjust if the poor divide the property of the rich among themselves, because the poor are more in number? “No (my opponents will reply): the supreme authority justly willed it.” But if this is not extreme injustice, what is? When the majority divide anew the property of the minority, is it not evident, if this goes on, that they will ruin the state? Yet surely, virtue is not the ruin of those who possess it, nor is justice destructive of a state; so this law of confiscation clearly cannot be just. If it were, all the acts of a tyrant must of necessity be just; he only coerces other men by superior power, just as the multitude coerce the rich. But is it just then that the few and the wealthy should be the rulers? What if they, in like manner, rob and plunder the people – is this just? If so, the other case will likewise be just. But there can be no doubt that all these things are wrong and unjust.

Ought the good to rule and have supreme power? In that case everybody else, being excluded from power, will be dishonored. The offices of a state are posts of honor; and if one set of men always hold them, the rest must be deprived of them. So should the one best man rule? That is still more oligarchical, for the number of those who are dishonored is thereby increased. Someone may say that it is bad in any case for a man, subject as he is to all the accidents of human passion, to have the supreme power, rather than the law. Democratic or oligarchical law will have the same bad consequences.

### III.11 Rule by Many Might be Best Because Many Together May be Better than the Few Good; 4 Difficulties for Democracy (and Some Replies Thereto); the Goodness/Badness/Justice /Injustice of Laws Necessarily Varies with the Constitution (1281a-1282b).

The principle that the multitude ought to be in power rather than the few best might seem to be solved, to contain some difficulty, and perhaps even truth. When the many (of whom each individual is not a good man) meet together may be better than the few good, regarded collectively, just as a feast to which many contribute is better than a dinner provided out of a single purse. Each individual among the many has a share of virtue and practical wisdom, and when they meet together, just as they become in a manner one man, who has many feet, and hands, and senses, so too with regard to their character and thought. Hence the many are better judges than a single man of music and poetry; some understand one part, and some another, and among them they understand the whole. There is a similar combination of qualities in good men, who differ from any individual of the many, as the beautiful are said to differ from those who are not beautiful, and works of art from realities, because in them the scattered elements are combined, although, if taken separately, the eye of one person or some other feature in another person would be fairer than in the picture.

Whether this principle can apply to every democracy, and to all bodies of men, is not clear. Rather, in some cases it is impossible to apply; the argument would equally hold about brutes; and wherein, it will be asked, do some men differ from brutes? [DY: This could be an allusion to Plato’s claim in *Republic* IX that, in a democracy, people will think animals are just as equal as humans.] REP: There may be bodies of men about whom our statement is nevertheless true. And if so, the difficulty which has been already raised, and also another which is akin to it – viz. what power should be assigned to the mass of freemen and citizens, who are not rich and have no personal merit – are both solved. There is still a danger in allowing them to share the great offices of state, for their folly will lead them into error, and their dishonesty into crime. But the danger in not letting them share therein is that the state will necessarily be full of enemies. The only way of escape is to assign to them some deliberative and judicial functions. Hence Solon and certain other legislators give them the power of electing to offices, and of calling the magistrates to account, but they do not allow them to hold office singly. When they meet together their perceptions are quite good enough, and combined with the better class they are useful to the state (just as impure food when mixed with what is pure sometimes makes the entire mass more wholesome than a small quantity of the pure would be), but each individual, left to himself, forms an imperfect judgment.

On the other hand, the popular form of government involves certain difficulties. First, he who can judge of the healing of a sick man would be one who could himself heal his disease, and make him whole – that
is, in other words, the physician; and so in all professions and arts. As, then, the physician ought to be called
to account by physicians, so ought men in general to be called to account by their peers. But physicians are of
three kinds: (a) the ordinary practitioner, (b) the master physician, and (c) the man educated in the art: in all arts
there is such a class; and we attribute the power of judging to them quite as much as to professors of the art.

[DY OBJ: I believe Aristotle is trying to use Socrates’ “only trust the experts” argument, but I don’t understand
the threefold division of physicians.] Second, does not the same principle apply to elections? A right election
can only be made by those who have knowledge; EXs: those who know geometry will choose a geometrician
rightly, and those who know how to steer, a pilot; and, even if there be some occupations and arts in which
private persons share in the ability to choose, they certainly cannot choose better than those who know.
Analogously, neither the election of magistrates, nor the calling of them to account, should be entrusted to the
many. REP: These objections are to a great extent met by our old answer, that if the people are not utterly
degraded, although individually they may be worse judges than those who have special knowledge, as a body
they are as good or better. Third, there are some arts whose products are not judged of solely, or best, by the
artists themselves, namely those arts whose products are recognized even by those who do not possess the art;
EX: the knowledge of the house is not limited to the builder only; the user (aka the master) of the house will
actually be a better judge than the builder, just as the pilot will judge better of a rudder than the carpenter, and
the guest will judge better of a feast than the cook [DY: The user/maker distinction, found in Plato’s Republic].

OBJ: I don’t understand how democratic citizens are not the users of their elections or state; in other words, I
don’t understand how this is a good [OBJ] against democracy.

This difficulty seems now to be sufficiently answered, but there is another akin to it. Fourth: That
inferior persons should have authority in greater matters than the good would appear to be a strange thing, yet
the election and calling to account of the magistrates is the greatest of all. (These are functions that in some
states are assigned to the people, for the assembly is supreme in all such matters.) REP: Yet persons of any age,
and having but a small property qualification, sit in the assembly and deliberate and judge, although for the
great officers of state, such as treasurers and generals, a high qualification is required. This difficulty may be
solved in the same manner as the preceding, and the present practice of democracies may be really defensible:
The power does not reside in the jurymen, or counselor, or member of the assembly, but in the court, and the
council, and the assembly, of which the aforesaid individuals – counselor, assemblyman, jurymen – are only
parts or members. Thus the many may claim to have a higher authority than the few; the people, and the
council, and the courts consist of many persons, and their property collectively is greater than the property of
one or of a few individuals holding great offices.

The discussion of the first question shows clearly that laws, when good, should be supreme; and that the
magistrate(s) should regulate those matters only on which the laws are unable to speak with precision owing to
the difficulty of any general principle embracing all particulars. But we haven’t clearly explained what good laws
are; the old difficulty remains. The goodness or badness, justice or injustice, of laws varies of necessity with the
constitutions of states. But the laws must be adapted to the constitutions; if so, true forms of government will of
necessity have just laws, and perverted forms of government will have unjust laws.

III.12 The Good of Political Science is Justice and the Common Interest; State Offices Ought to
be Unequally Distributed According to Superior Virtue; the Inequalities of Being Wellborn,
Freeborn, or Rich are Good Reasons to Claim Office (Others are Not); Wealth, Freedom,
Justice, and Valor are Necessary Elements of the State (1282b-1283a).

In all sciences and arts the end is a good, and the greatest good and in the highest degree a good in the most
authoritative of all – this is the political science of which the good is justice or the common interest. All men
think justice to be a sort of equality; and to a certain extent they agree with what we have said in our
philosophical works about ethics. They say that what is just is just for someone and that it should be equal for
equals. But there still remains a question: equality or inequality of what? Here is a difficulty that calls for
political speculation. Some will probably say that state offices ought to be unequally distributed according to
superior virtue, in whatever respect, of the citizen, although there is no other difference between him and the
rest of the community; those who differ in any one respect have different rights and claims. REP: If this is true,
the complexion or height of a man, or any other advantage, will be a reason for his obtaining a greater share of political rights. The error here lies upon the surface, and may be illustrated from the other arts and sciences. When a number of flute-players are equal in their art, there is no reason why those of them who are better born should have better flutes given to them; they will not play any better on the flute, and the superior instrument should be reserved for him who is the superior artist. If there were a superior flute-player who was far inferior in birth and beauty, although either of these may be a greater good than the art of flute-playing and may excel flute-playing in a greater ratio than he excels the others in his art, still he ought to have the best flutes given to him. Moreover, upon this principle any good may be compared with any other. If a given height may be measured against wealth and freedom, height in general may be so measured. Thus if A excels in height more than B in virtue, even if virtue in general excels height still more, all goods will be comparable; if a certain amount is better than some other, it is clear that some other will be equal. But since no such comparison can be made, there is good reason why in politics men do not ground their claim to office on every sort of inequality. If some be slow, and others swift, there is no reason why the one should have little and the others much; it is in gymnastic contests that such virtue is rewarded. Whereas the rival claims of candidates for office can only be based on the possession of elements that enter into the composition of a state. So the well-born, or free-born, or rich, may with good reason claim office; holders of offices must be freemen and tax-payers: a state can be no more composed entirely of poor men than entirely of slaves. If wealth and freedom are necessary elements, justice and valor are equally so; without wealth and freedom a state cannot exist at all, without justice and valor it cannot exist well.

III.13 Education and Virtue Have Superior Claims to the Good Life; the Rich, Free, and Wellborn Claim Office, but are Not Worthy; the Virtuous is Worthy Because Justice is a Social Virtue and Implies All Others; Objections Against Most Claims to Office; the Truly Virtuous Man is Fit to Rule, is Like a God Among Men, a Law Unto Himself, and Should be King for Life; All Governments Try to Cut Off (Some Unjustly) the Principal Non-Ruling Men in a State (1283a-1284b).

If the existence of the state is alone to be considered, then it would seem that all (or at least some) of these claims are just; but, if we take into account a good life, then, as said, education and virtue have superior claims. As, however, those who are equal in one thing ought not to have an equal share in all (nor those unequal in one thing to have an unequal share in all), all forms of government that rest on either of these principles are perversions. All men have a claim in a certain sense, as admitted, but not all have an absolute claim. The rich claim because they have a greater share in the land, and land is the common element of the state; also they are generally more trustworthy in contracts. The free claim under the same title as the wellborn; for they are nearly akin. The wellborn (a) are citizens in a truer sense than the lowborn, (b) good birth is always valued in a man’s own home; and (c) those who are sprung from better ancestors are likely to be better men (good birth is virtue of race). Virtue may be truly said to have a claim: justice is a social virtue and implies all others. The many may urge their claim against the few; when taken collectively, and compared with the few, they are stronger, richer, and better. But, what if the good, rich, wellborn, and other classes who make up a state, are all living together in the same city, will there, or will there not, be any doubt who shall rule? – No doubt at all in determining who ought to rule in each of the above-mentioned forms of government. States are characterized by differences in their governing bodies – one of them has a government of the rich, another of the good, and so on. But a difficulty arises when all these elements coexist. How are we to decide? Suppose the good to be very few in number: may we consider their numbers in relation to their duties, and ask whether they are enough to administer the state, or so many as will make up a state? Objections may be urged against all the aspirants to political power. Those who found their claims on wealth or family might be thought to have no basis of justice; on this principle, if any one person were richer than all the rest, it is clear that he ought to be ruler of them. Likewise, a man of good birth ought to have the superiority over all those who claim on the ground that they are freeborn. In an aristocracy a like difficulty occurs about virtue: if one citizen is better than the other members of the government, however good they may be, he too, upon the same principle of justice, should rule over them.
If the people are to be supreme because they are stronger than the few, then if one man, or more than one, but not a majority, is stronger than the many, they ought to rule, and not the many.

Thus, none of the principles on which men claim to rule and to hold all other men in subjection to them is right. To those who claim to be masters of the government on the ground of their virtue or their wealth, the many might fairly answer that they themselves (collectively) are often better and richer than the few. Some persons doubt whether the legislator who desires to make the most just laws ought to legislate with a view to the good of the better or of the many, when the case that we have mentioned occurs. What is right must be construed as equally right, and what is equally right is to be considered with reference to the advantage of the state, and the common good of the citizens. A citizen is one who shares in governing and being governed. He differs under different forms of government, but in the best state he is one who is able and chooses to be governed and to govern with a view to the life of virtue.

If, however, there be some one person (or more than one, although not enough to make up the full complement of a state) whose virtue is so pre-eminent that the virtue or the political capacity of all the rest admit of no comparison with his (or theirs), he (or they) can be no longer regarded as part of a state; justice will not be done to the superior, if he is reckoned only as the equal of those who are so far inferior to him in virtue and in political capacity. Such a man may truly be deemed a God among men. Hence legislation is necessarily concerned only with those who are equal in birth and in capacity; for men of pre-eminent virtue there is no law—they are themselves a law. Anyone would be ridiculous who attempted to make laws for them; they would probably retort what, in the fable of Antisthenes, the lions said to the hares, when in the council of the beasts the latter began haranguing and claiming equality for all. For this reason democratic states have instituted ostracism; equality is above all things their aim, and so they ostracized and banished from the city for a time those who seemed to predominate too much through their wealth, or the number of their friends, or through any other political influence. Another EX, involving tyranny: Periander, when the herald was sent to ask counsel of him, said nothing, but only cut off the tallest ears of corn till he had brought the field to a level. The herald did not know the meaning of the action, but came and reported what he had seen to Thrasybulus, who understood that he was to cut off the principal men in the state; and this is a policy not only expedient for tyrants/tyrannies, but equally necessary in oligarchies and democracies. (Ostracism is a measure of the same kind, which acts by disabling and banishing the most prominent citizens.) Great powers do the same to whole cities and nations (EXs: Athenians and the Persian king).

The problem is a universal one, and equally concerns all forms of government, true as well as false: Although perverted forms with a view to their own interests may adopt this policy, those which seek the common interest do so likewise. The same thing may be observed in the arts and sciences; EXs: the painter will not allow the figure to have a foot that, however beautiful, is not in proportion, nor will the ship-builder allow the stern or any other part of the vessel to be unduly large, any more than the chorus-master will allow anyone who sings louder or better than all the rest to sing in the choir. Even monarchs may practice compulsion and still live in harmony with their cities, if their own government is for the interest of the state. Hence where there is an acknowledged superiority the argument in favor of ostracism is based upon a kind of political justice. It would certainly be better that the legislator should from the first so order his state as to have no need of such a remedy. But if the need arises, the next best thing is that he should endeavor to correct the evil by this or some similar measure. The principle, however, has not been fairly applied in states; instead of looking to the good of their own constitution, they have used ostracism for factious purposes. It is true that under perverted forms of government, and from their special point of view, such a measure is just and expedient, but it is also clear that it is not absolutely just. In the perfect state there would be great doubts about the use of it, not when applied to excess in strength, wealth, popularity, or the like, but when used against someone who is pre-eminent in virtue—what is to be done with him? People will not say that such a man is to be expelled and exiled; on the other hand, he ought not to be a subject—that would be as if mankind should claim to rule over Zeus, dividing his offices among them. The only alternative is that all should happily obey such a ruler, according to what seems to be the order of nature, and that men like him should be kings in their state for life.
III.14 Five Kinds of Kingship: (1) Generalship for Life (Lacedaemonian); (2) Legal/Hereditary/Foreign Monarchy that Resembles Tyranny (Subjects are Essentially Slaves); (3) Legal/Not Hereditary Elective Tyranny; (4) Legal/Hereditary Monarchy of Heroic Times Exercised Over Willing Subjects; (5) Household Management Kingship (1284b-1285b).

Let us consider kingship (one of the true forms of government). Should a state or country (in order to be well governed) be under the rule of a king or under some other form of government? May monarchy, although good for some, be bad for others? First, is there one species of kingship or many? There are many, and the manner of government is not the same in all of them.

The first form of kingship is a generalship for life; some such kingships are hereditary and others are elective. Best EX of legal kingships is the Lacedaemonian; but there the royal power is not absolute, except when the kings go on an expedition, and then they take the command. Matters of religion are likewise committed to them. The kingly office is in truth a kind of generalship, sovereign and perpetual. The king has not the power of life and death, except in certain cases (e.g., in ancient times, he had it when upon a campaign, by right of force). EX: Homer states that Agamemnon puts up with it when he is attacked in the assembly, but when the army goes out to battle he has the power even of life and death (“When I find a man skulking apart from the battle, nothing shall save him from the dogs and vultures, for in my hands is death”).

Another monarchy (legal and hereditary, and not uncommon among foreigners) nearly resembles tyranny. Foreigners, being more servile in character than Hellenes, and Asiatics than Europeans, do not rebel against a despotic government. Such kingships have the nature of tyrannies because the people are by nature slaves; but there is no danger of their being overthrown, for they are hereditary and legal. Thus, the kingly guards are citizens while the tyrant’s guards are mercenaries. Kings rule according to law over voluntary subjects (and are guarded by their fellow-citizens), but tyrants over involuntary (and are guarded against them).

The third form of monarchy existed in ancient Hellas, called an Aesymmetia. This is an elective tyranny, which, like foreign monarchy, is legal but not hereditary. Sometimes the office was held for life, sometimes for a term of years, or until certain duties had been performed. EX: the Mytilenaeans once elected Pittacus leader against the exiles, who were headed by Antimenides and Alcaeus the poet. Alcaeus himself shows in one of his banquet odes that they chose Pittacus tyrant, for he reproaches his fellow-citizens for “having made the low-born Pittacus tyrant of the spiritless and ill-fated city, with one voice shouting his praises”.

These forms of government have always had the character of tyrannies, because they possess despotic power; but inasmuch as they are elective and acquiesced in by their subjects, they are kingly.

The fourth species of monarchy from heroic times (hereditary and legal) was exercised over willing subjects. The first chiefs were benefactors of the people in arts or arms; they either gathered them into a community, or procured land for them; and thus they became kings of voluntary subjects, and their descendants inherited their power. They took the command in war and presided over the sacrifices, except those that required a priest. They also decided lawsuits either with or without an oath; and when they swore, the form of the oath was the stretching out of their scepter. In ancient times their power extended continuously to all things in city and country and across the border; but at a later date they relinquished several of these privileges, and others the people took from them, until in some states nothing was left to them but the sacrifices; and where they retained more of the reality they had only the right of leadership in war beyond the border.

Review of the four kinds of kingship: (1) The Lacedaemonian generalship, hereditary and perpetual; (2) The kingly power of the Aesymmete, an elective tyranny; (3) Kingship of foreigners, a hereditary despotic but legal government; and (4) The monarchy of the heroic ages, exercised over voluntary subjects, but limited to certain functions (the king was a general and a judge, and had the control of religion).

There is a fifth form of kingly rule in which one man has the disposal of all, just as each nation or each state has the disposal of public matters; this form is household management. As household management is the kingly rule of a house, so kingly rule is the household management of a city, or of a nation, or of many nations.
Questions Concerning Absolute Kingship; a Government that Acts According to Written Laws is Not the Best; When the Law Cannot Determine a Point Well, Assemblies are the Best, Most Incorruptible Way to Decide the Matter; the Rule of Many Good Men is Aristocracy, and is Better Than Kingship, Provided an Equal Number of Good Men can be Found; Aristotle’s Account of the Devolution from Kingship to Democracy; It is Best that Kings Hand Power to Children, and for Them to Have and Use Force to Coerce the Stubborn (1285b-1287a).

Let us consider two kingships: (a) the Lacedaemonian and (b) absolute kingship. (Most of the others lie in a region between them, having less power than the last, and more than the first.) Two questions: first, is it advantageous to the state that there should be a perpetual general, and if so, should the office be confined to one family, or open to the citizens in turn? Secondly, is it well that a single man should have the supreme power in all things? The first question falls under the head of laws rather than of constitutions; perpetual generalship might equally exist under any form of government, so this matter may be dismissed for the present. The absolute kingship is a sort of constitution; let us run over the difficulties involved in it. First, is it more advantageous to be ruled by the best man or by the best laws?

The advocates of kingship maintain that the laws speak only in general terms, and cannot provide for circumstances; and that for any science to abide by written rules is absurd. In Egypt the physician is allowed to alter his treatment after the fourth day, but if sooner, he takes the risk. Hence a government that acts according to written laws is plainly not the best. Yet surely the ruler cannot dispense with the general principle that exists in law; and that is a better ruler that is free from passion than that in which it is innate. Whereas the law is passionless, passion must always sway the heart of man. REP: Yes, but on the other hand an individual will be better able to deliberate in particular cases.

So the best man must legislate and pass laws (having no authority when they miss the mark, and retaining their authority when they hit it). But when the law cannot determine a point at all, or not well, should the one best man or should all decide? According to our present practice assemblies meet, sit in judgment, deliberate, and decide, and their judgments all relate to individual cases. Now any member of the assembly, taken separately, is certainly inferior to the wise man. But the state is made up of many individuals. And as a feast to which all the guests contribute is better than a banquet furnished by a single man, so a multitude is a better judge of many things than any individual.

The many are more incorruptible than the few; they are like the greater quantity of water that is less easily corrupted than a little. The individual is liable to be overcome by anger or by some other passion, and then his judgment is necessarily perverted; but it is hardly to be supposed that a great number of persons would succumb to passion and go wrong at the same moment. Let us assume that they are the freemen, and that they never act in violation of the law, but fill up the gaps that the law is obliged to leave. Or, if such virtue is scarcely attainable by the multitude, we need only suppose that the majority are good men and good citizens, and ask which will be the more incorruptible, the one good ruler, or the many who are all good? Will not the many? But, you will say, there may be factions among them, whereas the one man is not divided against himself. To which we may answer that their character is as good as his. If we call the rule of many men, who are all of them good, aristocracy, and the rule of one man kingship, then aristocracy will be better for states than kingship, whether the government is supported by force or not, provided only that a number of men equal in virtue can be found.

The first governments were kingships, probably for this reason, because of old, when cities were small, men of eminent virtue were few. Further, they were made kings because they were benefactors, and good men can only bestow benefits. But when many persons equal in merit arose, no longer enduring the pre-eminence of one, they desired to have a commonwealth, and set up a constitution. The ruling class soon deteriorated and enriched themselves out of the public treasury; riches became the path to honor, and so oligarchies naturally grew up. These passed into tyrannies and tyrannies into democracies; love of gain in the ruling classes was always tending to diminish their number, and so to strengthen the masses, who in the end set upon their masters and established democracies. Since cities have increased in size, no other form of government appears to be any longer even easy to establish.
Suppose kingly power is the best thing for states; how about the family of the king? Are his children to succeed him? If they are no better than anybody else, that will be mischievous. To demand that the king not hand on his power to his children is hardly to be expected, and is too much to ask of human nature. What about his force; should a king have guards about him by whose aid he may be able to coerce the stubborn or unmanageable? If not, how will he administer his kingdom? Even if he is the lawful sovereign who does nothing arbitrarily or contrary to law, still he must have some force wherewith to maintain the law. In the case of a limited monarchy there is not much difficulty in answering this question; the king must have such force as will be more than a match for one or more individuals, but not so great as that of the people.

III.16 Tyranny (the “King” Who Acts Solely According to His Will) Over Equals is Quite Contrary to Nature; the Rule of Law (Akin to Rule by God and Reason) is Preferable to That of Any Individual (Akin to Rule by Part Beast); the Law is a Kind of Mean; Customary Laws Have the Most Weight than Written Law or a Man, Though a Man May Rule More Safely Than a Written Law; Kings Must Appoint Others to Aid in Ruling (1287a-b).

Let us discuss the king who acts solely according to his own will. This so-called kingship according to law, as said, is not a form of government; under all governments (e.g., in a democracy or aristocracy), there may be a general holding office for life, and one person is often made supreme over the administration of a state. (A magistracy of this kind exists at Epidamnus, and also at Opus.) Absolute monarchy, or the arbitrary rule of a sovereign over all the citizens, in a city which consists of equals, is thought by some to be quite contrary to nature; it is argued that those who are by nature equals must have the same natural right and worth, and that for unequal to have an equal share, or for equals to have an unequal share, in the offices of state, is as bad as for different bodily constitutions to have the same food and clothing. Hence it is just that among equals everyone be ruled as well as rule, and so all should have their turn. We thus arrive at law; an order of succession implies law. The rule of the law, it is argued, is preferable to that of any individual. Even if it were better for certain individuals to govern, they should be made only guardians and ministers of the law. There must be magistrates; but then men say that to give authority to any one man when all are equal is unjust. There may indeed be cases that the law seems unable to determine, but such cases a man could not determine either. But the law trains officers for this express purpose, and appoints them to determine matters that are left undecided by it, to the best of their judgment. Further, it permits them to make any amendment of the existing laws which experience suggests. So he who bids the law rule may be deemed to bid God and Reason alone rule, but he who bids man rule adds an element of the beast; desire is a wild beast, and passion perverts the minds of rulers, even when they are the best of men. The law is reason unaffected by desire. We are told that a patient should call in a physician; he will not get better if he is doctored out of a book. But the parallel of the arts is clearly not in po. For instance, when they are sick, call in other physicians, and training in league with his enemies to destroy him for a bribe, he would rather have recourse to the book. But certainly whereas magistrates do many things from spite and partiality. The physician does nothing contrary to rule from motives of friendship; he only cures a patient and takes a fee; he will not get better if he is doctored out of a book. But the parallel of the arts is clearly not in po. Wherein the arts, when they are the best of men bids man rule adds an element of the beast; desire is a wild beast, and passion perverts the minds of rulers, even when they are the best of men. The law is reason unaffected by desire. We are told that a patient should call in a physician; he will not get better if he is doctored out of a book. But the parallel of the arts is clearly not in po. For instance, when they are sick, call in other physicians, and training in league with his enemies to destroy him for a bribe, he would rather have recourse to the book. But certainly whereas magistrates do many things from spite and partiality. The physician does nothing contrary to rule from motives of friendship; he only cures a patient and takes a fee; he will not get better if he is doctored out of a book. But the parallel of the arts is clearly not in po.

It is by no means easy for one man to superintend many things; he will have to appoint a number of subordinates, and what difference does it make whether these subordinates always existed or were appointed by him because he needed them? If, as I said before, the good man has a right to rule because he is better, still two good men are better than one. Even now there are magistrates (e.g., judges), who have authority to decide some matters that the law is unable to determine, since no one doubts that the law would command and decide in the best manner whatever it could. But some things can, and other things cannot, be comprehended under the law; hence the vexed question whether the best law or the best man should rule. Matters of detail, about which men deliberate, cannot be included in legislation. Nor does anyone deny that the decision of such matters must be left to man, but it is argued that there should be many judges, and not one only. Every ruler who has been
trained by the law judges well; and it would surely seem strange that a person should see better with two eyes, or hear better with two ears, or act better with two hands or feet, than many with many; indeed, it is already the practice of kings to make to themselves many eyes and ears and hands and feet (by making colleagues of those who are the friends of themselves and their governments). They must be friends of the monarch and of his government; if not his friends, they will not do what he wants; but friendship implies likeness and equality; so if he thinks that his friends ought to rule, he must think that those who are equal to himself and like himself ought to rule equally with himself. These are the principal controversies relating to monarchy.

III.17 There is Naturally Justice and an Advantage to Each True Form of Government, but Neither for the Perverted Forms; Those Naturally Capable of Producing Political Virtue are Fit for Kingly Rule; Those Who Willingly/Freely Submit to be Ruled by Virtuous Men are Fit for Aristocratic Rule; the Warlike are Fit for Constitutional Rule (1287b-1288a).

There is by nature both a justice and an advantage appropriate to the rule of a master, another to kingly rule, another to constitutional rule; but there is none naturally appropriate to tyranny, or to any other perverted form of government; these come into being contrary to nature. Where men are alike and equal, it is neither expedient nor just that one man should be lord of all, whether there are laws, or whether there are no laws, but he himself is in the place of law. Neither should a good man be lord over good men, nor a bad man over bad; nor, even if he excels in virtue, should he have a right to rule (except in a particular case, as I hinted, and to which I will once more recur). First, what natures are suited for government by a king, an aristocracy, and a constitutional government?

People naturally capable of producing a race superior in the virtue needed for political rule are fitted for kingly government; a people submitting to be ruled as freemen by men whose virtue renders them capable of political command are adapted for an aristocracy; and people who are naturally warlike are suited for constitutional freedom. In aristocracy, the multitude is capable of being ruled by men whose virtue is appropriate to political command; in constitutional government, the multitude is able to rule and to obey in turn by a law that gives office to the well to do according to merit. But when a whole family, or some individual, happens to be so pre-eminent in virtue as to surpass all others, then it is just that they should be the royal family and supreme over all, or that this one citizen should be king. As said, to give them authority is not only agreeable to that notion of justice which the founders of all states, whether aristocratic, or oligarchical, or again democratic, are accustomed to put forward (these all recognize the claim of superiority, although not the same superiority), but accords with the principle already laid down. It would not be right to kill, ostracize, or exile such a person, or require that he should take his turn in being governed. The whole is naturally superior to the part, and he who has this pre-eminence is in the relation of a whole to a part. If so, the only alternative is that he should have the supreme power, and that mankind should obey him, not in turn, but always.

III.18 Summary of the Three True Forms of Government; the Virtue of the Good Man is Identical to the Virtue of the Citizen of the Perfect State (1288a-b).

So there are three true forms of government are three, and that the best must be that which is administered by the best, and in which there is one man, or a whole family, or many persons, excelling all the others together in virtue, and both rulers and subjects are fitted, the one to rule, the others to be ruled, in such a manner as to attain the most desirable life. We showed that the virtue of the good man is necessarily the same as the virtue of the citizen of the perfect state. Clearly then in the same manner, and by the same means through which a man becomes truly good, he will frame a state that is to be ruled by an aristocracy or by a king, and the same education and the same habits will be found to make a good man and a man fit to be a statesman or king.

Let us proceed to speak of the perfect state, and describe how it comes into being and is established.
IV.1 Government is the Subject of a Single Science That Studies the Best Government Simpliciter and the Best Government Attainable in the Circumstances; We Should Also Know the Defects of Governments and How to Remedy Them; the Laws Should be Framed to the Constitution and Not Vice-Versa; Laws are the Rules According to Which Magistrates Should Administer the State and Punish Offenders (1288b-1289a).

In all arts and sciences that embrace the whole of any subject, and do not come into being in a fragmentary way, it is the province of a single art or science to consider all that appertains to a single subject. EXs: the art of gymnastics considers not only the suitableness of different modes of training to different bodies, but what sort is the best (the best must suit that which is by nature best and best furnished with the means of life), and also what common form of training is adapted to the great majority of men. And if a man does not desire the best habit of body, or the greatest skill in gymnastics, which might be attained by him, still the trainer or the teacher of gymnastics should be able to impart any lower degree of either. The same principle equally holds in medicine and shipbuilding, and the making of clothes, and in the arts generally.

Government is also the subject of a single science, which has to consider what government is best and of what sort it must be, to be most in accordance with our aspirations, if there were no external impediment, and also what kind of government is adapted to particular states. The best is often unattainable, so the true legislator and statesman ought to be acquainted, not only with that which is best in the abstract, but also with that which is best relatively to circumstances. So we must know: How may a state (that doesn’t have the best constitution or conditions necessary for the best, nor being the best under the circumstances, but of an inferior type) be constituted under any given conditions, how is it originally formed and, when formed, how may it be longest preserved?

We also ought to know the form of government that is best suited to states in general: political writers, although they have virtuous ideas, are often unpractical. We should consider, not only what form of government is best, but also what is possible and what is easily attainable by all. There are some who would have none but the most perfect (for which many natural advantages are required). Yet others speak of a more attainable form, and, although they reject the constitution under which they are living, they extol some one in particular, for example the Lacedaemonian. Any change of government which has to be introduced should be one which men, starting from their existing constitutions, will be both willing and able to adopt, since there is quite as much trouble in the reformation of an old constitution as in the establishment of a new one, just as to unlearn is as hard as to learn. So, in addition to the qualifications of the statesman already mentioned, he should be able to find remedies for the defects of existing constitutions, as said. He cannot do this unless he knows how many forms of government there are (e.g., there is more than one kind of democracy and oligarchy). In order to avoid such mistakes, we must ascertain what differences there are in the constitutions of states, and in how many ways they are combined. The same political insight will enable a man to know which laws are the best, and which are suited to different constitutions; the laws are, and ought to be, framed with a view to the constitution, and not the constitution to the laws. A constitution is the organization of offices in a state, and determines what is to be the governing body, and what is the end of each community. Laws are not to be confounded with the principles of the constitution; they are the rules according to which the magistrates should administer the state, and proceed against offenders. So we must know the varieties, and the number of varieties, of each form of government, if only with a view to making laws. The same laws cannot be equally suited to all oligarchies or democracies, since there is certainly more than one form both of democracy and of oligarchy.

IV.2 Tyranny is the Worst Government, Oligarchy is Only a Little Better, and Democracy is the Most Tolerable of Perverted Governments; Plato: When All Constitutions are Good, Democracy is the Worst, but the Best When All are Bad; Aristotle: All Perverted Types are Defective; Questions for Future Sections (1289a-b).

[Review: We’ve divided governments into three true forms: kingly rule, aristocracy, and constitutional government, and three corresponding perversions – tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. Of kingly rule and of aristocracy we have already spoken: the inquiry into the perfect state is the same thing as the discussion of the two forms thus named, since both imply a principle of virtue provided with external means. We have already
determined in what aristocracy and kingly rule differ from one another, and when the latter should be
established. We have yet to describe the so-called constitutional government (which bears the common name of
all constitutions), tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy.

Tyranny is the worst of the three perversions; the perversion of the first and most divine government is
necessarily the worst. Just as kingship must exist by virtue of some great personal superiority in the king, so
tyranny (the worst of governments) is necessarily the farthest removed from a well-constituted form; oligarchy
is little better, for it is a long way from aristocracy, and democracy is the most tolerable of the three.

Plato has already made these distinctions [DY: at Statesman 302e-303b], but his point of view is not the
same as mine. His principle: When all the constitutions are good (the oligarchy and the rest being virtuous),
democracy is the worst, but the best when all are bad. We maintain that they are in any case defective: one
oligarchy is not to be accounted better than another, but only less bad.

Thus, how many varieties of democratic and oligarchic constitutions are there? What constitution is the
most generally acceptable, and what is preferable in the next degree after the perfect state? Is there another
form that is aristocratic and well constituted, and at the same time adapted to states in general? Of the other
forms of government, to what people is each suited? (Democracy may meet the needs of some better than
oligarchy, and conversely.) Next, we have to consider in what manner a man ought to proceed who desires to
establish some form of democracy or of oligarchy; and lastly, let us ascertain the modes of ruin and preservation
both of constitutions generally and of each separately, and to what causes they are to be attributed.

IV.3 There are Many Forms of Government Due to the State’s Many Elements (Families, Rich,
Poor, Middle Income/Property Citizens); There are Differences in Rank and Merit Amongst
Citizens; People Generally Think There are Two Forms of Government: Oligarchy and
Democracy; Our Divisions Are Correct (1289b-1290a).
The reason why there are many forms of government is that every state contains many elements. First, all states
are made up of families, and in the multitude of citizens there must be some rich and some poor, and some in a
middle condition; the rich possess heavy armor, and the poor not. Of the common people, some are farmers,
and some traders, and some craftspersons. There are also differences of wealth and property among the rich –
EX: in the number of horses that they keep, for they cannot afford to keep them unless they are rich. So in old
times the cities with strong cavalries were oligarchies, and they used cavalry in wars against their neighbors (e.g.
Eretrians, Chalcidians, Magnesians, and of other peoples in Asia). There are also differences of rank and merit,
and other elements of aristocracy (enumerated as the essentials of a state). Of these elements, sometimes all, the
lesser, or the greater number, have a share in the government. So there must be many forms of government,
differing in kind, since the parts of which they are composed differ from each other in kind. A constitution is an
organization of offices, which all the citizens distribute among themselves, according to the power that different
classes possess (e.g. the rich or the poor), or according to some principle of equality that includes both. There
must therefore be as many forms of government as there are modes of arranging the offices, according to the
superiorities and the differences of the parts of the state.

There are generally thought to be two principal forms: democracy and oligarchy. For aristocracy is
considered to be a kind of oligarchy, as being the rule of a few, and the so-called constitutional government to
be really a democracy. (Similarly of musical modes there are said to be two kinds, the Dorian and the Phrygian;
the other arrangements of the scale are comprehended under one or other of these two. About forms of
government this is a very favorite notion.) The better and more exact way is to distinguish, as I have, the one or
two which are true forms, and to regard the others as perversions, whether of the most perfectly attuned or of
the best form of government: the more taut and more overpowering are oligarchical, and the more relaxed and
gentler are democratic.
IV.4 Democracy is When the Free, Poor, and Majority Govern; Oligarchy is When the Rich, Noble, and Few Govern; States have 10 Elements (Farmers, Craftpersons, Traders, Laborers, Military, the Wealthy, Public Servants/Administrators, Judges, and Statesmen); 5 Forms of Democracy (Based on Equality, Property, No Disqualification, Citizenship, and the Multitude, Respectively); the Last Form of Democracy is Not Technically a Constitution (1290a-1292a).

Democracy is not simply that form of government in which the greater number are sovereign. In oligarchies, and indeed in every government, the majority rules. And oligarchy is not that form of government in which a few are sovereign. Suppose a city’s population is 1300: 1000 are rich, and do not allow the remaining 300 poor (but free, and in all other respects their equals) a share of the government; no one will say that this is a democracy. Likewise, no one would ever call a government, where the poor were few and mastered the rich majority (whom have no share of office), an oligarchy. So democracy is the form of government in which the free are rulers, and oligarchy in which the rich (it is only an accident that the free are the many and the rich are the few). Otherwise a government, in which the offices were given according to stature (e.g., Ethiopia) or beauty, would be an oligarchy; the number of tall or good-looking men is small. Yet oligarchy and democracy are not sufficiently distinguished merely by these two characteristics of wealth and freedom: The government is not a democracy in which the freemen, being few in number, rule over the many who are not free (e.g., Apollonia and Thera, wherein the few nobles/earliest settlers held office). It is also not a democracy when the rich have the government because they exceed in number (e.g. Colophon, where the bulk of the inhabitants were possessed of large property before the Lydian War). Democracy is when the free, poor, and majority govern, and an oligarchy when the rich, noble, and few govern.

Why are there more government forms than those already mentioned, and what they are, and whence they arise, I will now proceed to consider (on the principle that every state consists, not of one, but of many parts). States are composed of ten elements:

One element is farmers (the food-producing class); second, craftpersons who practice the arts without which a city cannot exist (some are absolutely necessary, others contribute to luxury or to the grace of life). Third is traders (those who are engaged in buying and selling, in commerce or retail trade). Fourth is laborers. The military make up the fifth class, and they are as necessary as any of the others, if the country is not to be the slave of every invader. For how can a state that has any title to the name be of a slavish nature? The state is independent and self-sufficing, but a slave is the reverse of independent.

This subject, though ingeniously, has not been satisfactorily treated in the Republic. Socrates says a state is made up of four sorts of people who are absolutely necessary: weavers, farmers, shoemakers, and builders; afterwards, finding that they are not enough, he adds a smith, a herdsman (to look after the necessary animals), a merchant, and then a retail trader. All these together form the complement of the first state, as if a state were established merely to supply the necessaries of life, rather than for the sake of the good, or stood equally in need of shoemakers and of farmers. But he does not admit into the state a military class until the country has increased in size, and is beginning to encroach on its neighbor’s land, whereupon they go to war. Even amongst his four initial citizens (or whatever be the number of those whom he associates in the state), there must be some one who will dispense justice and determine what is just. As the soul may be said to be more truly part of an animal than the body, so the higher parts of states, that is to say, the warrior class, the class engaged in the administration of justice, and that engaged in deliberation, which is the special business of political understanding – these are more essential to the state than the parts which minister to the necessaries of life. Whether their several functions are the functions of different citizens, or of the same (it may be that the same persons are both soldiers and farmers) is immaterial to the argument. The higher and lower elements are to be equally considered parts of the state, and so the military element must be included.

Seventh is the wealthy who minister to the state with their property. Eighth is public servants and administrators; the state cannot exist without rulers (some of whom must be able to take office and to serve the state, either always or in turn). There only remains the class of those who deliberate and who judge between disputants; we were just now distinguishing them. If the presence of all these elements, and their fair and equitable organization, is necessary to states, then there must also be statesmen.
Different functions appear to be often combined in the same individual; EXs: the soldier may also be a farmer, or a craftsman; or, again the counselor a judge. All claim to possess political ability, and think that they are quite competent to fill most offices. But the same persons cannot be rich and poor at the same time. So the rich and the poor are especially regarded as parts of a state. (Because the rich are generally few in number, while the poor are many, they appear to be antagonistic, and as the one or the other prevails they form the government. Hence arises the common opinion that there are two kinds of government – democracy and oligarchy.)

Let me now show the different forms both of democracy and oligarchy. Both in the common people and in the noble, various classes are included; of the common people, one class are farmers, another craftspeople; another traders, who are employed in buying and selling; the sea-faring, whether engaged in war or in trade, as ferrymen or as fishermen. Add day laborers, and those who, owing to their needy circumstances, have no leisure, or those who are not of free birth on both sides; and there may be other classes as well. The nobles may be divided according to their wealth, birth, virtue, education, and similar differences.

The first form of democracy is based strictly on equality. In such a democracy, the law says that it is just for the poor to have no more advantage than the rich, and neither should be masters, but both equal. If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost. Since the people are the majority, and the opinion of the majority is decisive, such a government must necessarily be a democracy.

Second form of democracy: The magistrates are elected according to a certain property qualification, but a low one; he who has the required amount of property has a share in the government, but he who loses his property loses his rights.

Third form of democracy: All the citizens who are under no disqualification share in the government, but still the law is supreme.

Fourth form of democracy: Every citizen is admitted to the government, and the law is supreme as before.

Fifth form of democracy: The multitude (not the law) has the supreme power and surpsede the law by their decrees (in other respects it is the same). This is a state of affairs brought about by the demagogues. In legal democracies, the best citizens hold the first place, and there are no demagogues; but where the laws are not supreme, demagogues spring up. The people become a monarch, and are many in one; and the many have the power in their hand, not as individuals, but collectively. Homer: “it is not good to have a rule of many”, but whether he means this corporate rule, or the rule of many individuals, is uncertain. This [fifth] sort of democracy, now a monarchy, and no longer under the control of law, seeks to exercise monarchical sway, and grows into a despot; the flatterer is held in honor [DY: Cf. Plato’s description of the ruler saying what the people want to hear in a democracy in Republic VII]; this sort of democracy is to other democracies what tyranny is to other forms of monarchy. The spirit of both is the same, and they alike exercise a despotic rule over the better citizens. The decrees of the one correspond to the edicts of the tyrant; and the demagogue is to the one what the flatterer is to the other. Both have great power – the flatterer with the tyrant, the demagogue with democracies of the kind that we are describing. The demagogues make the decrees of the people override the laws, by referring all things to the popular assembly. So they grow great, because the people have all things in their hands, and they hold in their hands the votes of the people, who obey them.

Those who have any complaint to bring against the magistrates say, “let the people be judges”; the people are happy to accept the invitation; and so the authority of every office is undermined. Such a democracy is arguably not a constitution at all; where the laws have no authority, there is no constitution. The law ought to be supreme over all, and magistrates should judge of particulars, which is a constitution. So if democracy were a real form of government, the sort of system in which all things are regulated by decrees is clearly not even a democracy in the true sense of the word (since decrees relate only to particulars).

IV.5 Five Forms of Oligarchy (Based on Property, High Qualification with Co-Optation, Heredity, and Dynasty) (1292a-b).

There are different kinds of oligarchies: First kind of oligarchy: where the property qualification for office is such that the poor, although they form the majority, have no share in the government, yet he who acquires a qualification may obtain a share.
Second kind of oligarchy: When there is a high qualification for office, and the vacancies in the governing body are filled by co-optation [⇒ appointing membership of a committee or other body by invitation of the existing members – DY]. If the election is made out of all the qualified persons, a constitution of this kind inclines to an aristocracy, if out of a privileged class, to an oligarchy.

Third kind of oligarchy: Hereditary (When the son succeeds the father).

Fourth kind of oligarchy: Hereditary, in which the magistrates are supreme and not the law. Among oligarchies this is what tyranny is among monarchies, and the last-mentioned form of democracy among democracies; and in fact this sort of oligarchy receives the name of a dynasty.

These are the different sorts of oligarchies and democracies. Note that in many states the constitution (established by law, although not democratic, owing to the education and habits of the people) may be administered democratically, and conversely in other states the established constitution may incline to democracy, but may be administered in an oligarchical spirit. This most often happens after a revolution: governments do not change at once; at first the dominant party are content with encroaching a little upon their opponents. The laws that existed previously continue in force, but the authors of the revolution have the power in their hands.

IV.6 Four (Not Five) Kinds of Democracy (Repeated); Four Kinds of Oligarchy (Repeated) (1292b-1293a).

Thus, there are these many democracies and oligarchies, since it is necessary that either all the classes whom we mentioned must share in the government, or some only and not others. When the class of farmers and those of moderate fortunes have the supreme power, the government is administered according to law. The citizens compelled to live by their labor have no leisure; so they set up the authority of the law, and attend assemblies only when necessary. They all obtain a share in the government when they have acquired the qualification that is fixed by the law; hence all who have acquired the property qualification are admitted to a share in the constitution. The absolute exclusion of any class would be oligarchical; but leisure cannot be provided for them unless there are revenues to support them. This is one sort of democracy its causes.

A second kind is based on the distinction that naturally comes next in order; in this, everyone to whose birth there is no objection is eligible, but actually shares in the government only if he can find leisure. Hence in such a democracy the supreme power is vested in the laws, because the state has no means of paying the citizens.

A third kind is when all freemen have a right to share in the government, but do not actually share, for the reason which has been already given; so that in this form again the law must rule.

A fourth kind of democracy is that which comes latest in the history of states. When cities have far outgrown their original size, and their revenues have increased, all the citizens have a place in the government, through the great preponderance of the multitude; and they all, including the poor who receive pay, and therefore have leisure to exercise their rights, share in the administration. Indeed, when they are paid, the common people have the most leisure, for they are not hindered by the care of their property, which often fetters the rich, who are thereby prevented from taking part in the assembly or in the courts, and so the state is governed by the poor, who are a majority, and not by the laws. These are the kinds of democracy, and they grow out of these necessary causes. [DY OBJ: Aristotle neither lists all five of the types of democracy he lists above, nor does he say anything about leisure in the first five types, which is the defining characteristic of his second kind here. This is pretty confusing.]

One form of oligarchies is that in which the majority of the citizens have some property, but not very much, and it allows anyone who obtains the required amount the right of sharing in the government. Since the sharers in the government are numerous here, the law must govern, and not individuals. In proportion as they are further removed from a monarchical form of government, and in respect of property have neither so much as to be able to live without attending to business, nor so little as to need state support, they must admit the rule of law and not claim to rule themselves.

But if the men of property in the state are fewer than in the former case, and own more property, there arises a second form of oligarchy. For the stronger they are, the more power they claim, and having this object
in view, they themselves select those of the other classes who are to be admitted to the government; but, not being as yet strong enough to rule without the law, they make the law represent their wishes.

When this power is intensified by a further diminution of their numbers and increase of their property, there arises a third and further stage of oligarchy, in which the governing class keep the offices in their own hands, and the law ordains that the son shall succeed the father.

When the rulers have great wealth and numerous friends, this sort of family despotism approaches a monarchy: individuals rule and not the law. This is the fourth sort of oligarchy, and is analogous to the last sort of democracy. [DY: This set of oligarchic kinds seems consistent and explains the previous list of kinds]

IV.7 Four Kinds of Aristocracy (1293a-b).

We still need to cover aristocracy (the fourth recognized kind), and a fifth, with the generic name of constitutional government [DY: “polity”]; this is not common, and so has not been noticed by writers who attempt to enumerate the different kinds of government; like Plato, they recognize four only. The term “aristocracy” is rightly applied to the form of government already described; an aristocracy is a government formed of the best men absolutely (not good relatively to some hypothesis). In the perfect state the good man is absolutely the same as the good citizen; whereas in other states the good citizen is only good relatively to his own form of government. But some states differ from oligarchies and constitutional government; these are aristocracies, and in them magistrates are certainly chosen both according to their wealth and merit. In states that do not make virtue the aim of the community, men of merit and reputation for virtue may be found. And so where a government has regard to wealth, virtue, and the populace (e.g. Carthage), that is aristocracy [DY: Second kind of aristocracy]; and also where it has regard only to virtue and the populace (e.g. Lacedaemon), and the two principles of democracy and virtue temper each other [DY: Third kind of aristocracy]. There are these two forms of aristocracy in addition to the first and perfect state, and there is a third [DY: Fourth? kind of aristocracy] form: The constitutions that incline more than the so-called constitutional government towards oligarchy.

IV.8 Polity is a Fusion of Oligarchy and Democracy, Leaning Toward the Latter; Two Parts of Good Government: Obedience to the Law, and Good Laws; Polity Fuses the Freedom of the Poor and Wealthy; Aristocracy Fuses Freedom, Wealth, and Virtue (1293b-1294a).

We still need to discuss polity [constitutional government] and tyranny. I put them in this order, not because a polity or constitutional government is to be regarded as a perversion any more than the above-mentioned aristocracies. They all fall short of the most perfect form of government, and so they are reckoned among perversions, and the really perverted forms are perversions of these, as said. (Last of all I will speak of tyranny, which I place last in the series because I am inquiring into the constitutions of states, and this is the very reverse of a constitution.)

The nature of constitutional government will be clearer now that oligarchy and democracy have been defined. Polity or constitutional government may be described generally as a fusion of oligarchy and democracy; “polity” usually applies to those forms of government which incline towards democracy, and “aristocracy” applies to those which incline towards oligarchy, because birth and education are commonly the accompaniments of wealth. Moreover, the rich already possess the external advantages the want of which is a temptation to crime, and hence they are called noblemen and gentlemen. And inasmuch as aristocracy seeks to give predominance to the best of the citizens, people say also of oligarchies that they are composed of noblemen and gentlemen. It is impossible that the state that is governed by the worst citizens should be well governed, and equally impossible that the state that is ill governed should be governed by the best. Good laws, however, if they are not obeyed, do not constitute good government. Hence there are two parts of good government; one is the actual obedience of citizens to the laws, the other part is the goodness of the laws that they obey (they may obey bad laws as well as good). And there may be a further subdivision; they may obey either the best laws that are attainable to them, or the best absolutely.
The distribution of offices according to virtue is a special characteristic of aristocracy, for the principle of an aristocracy is virtue, as wealth is of an oligarchy, and freedom of a democracy. In all of them there of course exists the right of the majority, and whatever seems good to the majority of those who share in the government has authority, whether in an oligarchy, an aristocracy or a democracy. Polity exists in most states: The fusion goes no further than the attempt to unite the freedom of the poor and the wealth of the rich, who commonly take the place of the noble. As there are three grounds on which men claim an equal share in the government, freedom, wealth, and virtue, (the fourth, what is called good birth, is the result of the two last, being only ancient wealth and virtue), it is clear that the admixture of the rich and poor, is to be called a polity or constitutional government; and the union of the freedom, wealth, and virtue is to be called aristocracy, and more than any other form of government, except the true and ideal, has a right to this name.

IV.9 The Origin of Polity; Three Modes of Polity’s Fusion of Oligarchy and Democracy; the Spartan Constitution has Democratic and Oligarchic Characteristics; a Well Attuned Polity Appears to Have Both (But Really Neither) Characteristics, Relies on Itself and a General Willingness of All State Classes to Maintain the Constitution (1294a-1295a).

How, by the side of oligarchy and democracy, does the so-called polity or constitutional government spring up, and how should it be organized? To answer this, we must ascertain oligarchy and democracy’s different characteristics, take a portion from each, and fit the two together. There are three modes in which fusions of government may be effected:

1. First mode: We must combine the laws made by both governments, say concerning the administration of justice. In oligarchies they impose a fine on the rich if they do not serve as judges, and to the poor they give no pay; but in democracies they give pay to the poor and do not fine the rich. The union of these two modes is a common or middle term between them, and is therefore characteristic of a constitutional government, for it is a combination of both. This is one mode of uniting the two elements. [DY: I don’t understand what the middle position is: If the one fines the rich and doesn’t pay the poor, and the other doesn’t fine the rich and does pay the poor, what is the middle position? Paying the rich and fining the poor? Perhaps Aristotle explains this elsewhere?]

2. Second mode: A mean may be taken between the enactments of the two; thus democracies require no property qualification, or only a small one, from members of the assembly, oligarchies a high one; here neither of these is the common term, but a mean between them.

3. Third mode: Something is borrowed from the oligarchical and something from the democratic principle. EX: The appointment of magistrates by lot is thought to be democratic, and the election of them oligarchical; democratic again when there is no property qualification, oligarchical when there is. In the aristocratic or constitutional state, one element will be taken from each – from oligarchy the principle of electing to offices, from democracy the disregard of qualification. Such are the various modes of combination.

There is a true union of oligarchy and democracy when the same state may be termed either a democracy or an oligarchy; those who use both names evidently feel that the fusion is complete. Such a fusion there is also in the mean (both extremes appear in it). EX: The Lacedaemonian constitution is often described as a democracy, because it has many democratic features: (i) The youth receive a democratic education. The sons of the poor are brought up with the sons of the rich, who are educated in such a manner as to make it possible for the sons of the poor to be educated like them. (ii) A similar equality prevails when the citizens are grown up and the same rule is observed (there is no distinction between the rich and poor). In like manner they all have the same food at their public tables, and the rich wear only such clothing as any poor man can afford. (iii) The people elect to one of the two greatest offices of state, and in the other they share (they elect the Senators and share in the Ephorality). By others the Spartan constitution is said to be an oligarchy, because it has many oligarchical characteristics: (a) all offices are filled by election and none by lot; (b) the power of inflicting death or banishment rests with a few persons is another; and there are others. In a well attuned polity, there should appear to be both elements and yet neither; the government should rely on itself (not on foreign aid), and on itself not through the good will of a majority (they might be equally well-disposed when there is a vicious form of government), but through the general willingness of all classes in the state to maintain the constitution.
IV.10 Three Forms of Tyranny: (1) Non-Greek-Elected Monarchs with Despotic Power; (2) Ancient Greek-Elected Monarchs (Aesymnetes) with Despotic Power; (3) Arbitrary Power of an Individual, Responsible to No One, Governing with a View to His Advantage, Against Their Will (1295a).

Let us discuss the nature of tyranny, since even tyranny is reckoned by us to be a form of government (although there is not much to be said about it).

We have already spoke of two forms of tyranny, which are both according to law, and so easily pass into royalty: (1) Elected monarchs (among non-Greeks) who exercise a despotic power; (2) Despotic rulers were elected in ancient Greece, called Aesymnetes. These monarchies differ from one another, and are kingly (as said), insofar as the monarch rules according to law over willing subjects; but they are tyrannical insofar as he is despotic and rules according to his own fancy. There is also a third kind of tyranny: The most typical form, and the counterpart of the perfect monarchy. This tyranny is just that arbitrary power of an individual which is responsible to no one, and governs all alike, whether equals or betters, with a view to its own advantage, not to that of its subjects, and therefore against their will. No freeman willingly endures such a government.

IV.11 The Best Constitution Attainable; Three State Classes: Rich, Poor, and Middle Class; the Rich Become Violent Criminals, the Poor Become Petty Rascals; the Middle Class is Least Likely to Shrink from Rule, Composed of Equals, is a Mean Between the Rich and Poor, does Not Covet Other’s Goods; the Best Political Community is the Middle Class, so States with a Large Middle Class are the Best; Why Most Governments are Democratic or Oligarchic (1295a-1296b).

Let us inquire about the best constitution for most states, and the best life for most men, neither assuming a standard of virtue which is above ordinary persons, nor an education which is exceptionally favored by nature and circumstances, nor yet an ideal state which is an aspiration only, but having regard to the life in which the majority are able to share, and to the form of government which states in general can attain. As to those aristocracies we just mentioned, they either lie beyond the possibilities of the greater number of states, or they approximate polity, and so need no separate discussion. The same conclusion follows respecting all these forms and rests upon the same grounds. If what was said in the Ethics is true, that the happy life is the life according to virtue lived without impediment, and that virtue is a mean, then the life that is in a mean, and in a mean attainable by everyone, must be the best. And the same principles of virtue and badness are characteristic of cities and of constitutions; the constitution is the “life” of the city.

In all states there are three elements: one class is very rich, another very poor, and a third in a mean. It is admitted that moderation and the mean are best, and therefore it will clearly be best to possess the gifts of fortune in moderation; in that condition of life men are most ready to follow rational principle. He who greatly excels in beauty, strength, birth, or wealth, or on the other hand who is very poor, or very weak, or of very low status, finds it difficult to follow rational principle. Of these two the one sort grow into violent and great criminals, the others into rogues and petty rascals. And two sorts of offenses correspond to them, the one committed from violence, the other from roguery [the middle class is least likely to shrink from rule, or to be over-ambitious for it], both of which are injuries to the state. Those who have too much of the goods of fortune, strength, wealth, friends, and the like, are neither willing nor able to submit to authority. The evil begins at home; when they are boys, by reason of the luxury in which they are brought up, they never learn, even at school, the habit of obedience. On the other hand, the very poor, who are in the opposite extreme, are too degraded. So that the one class cannot obey, and can only rule despocratically; the other knows not how to command and must be ruled like slaves. Thus arises a city, not of freemen, but of masters and slaves, the one despising, the other envying; and nothing can be more fatal to friendship and good fellowship in states than this: good fellowship springs from friendship; when men are at enmity with one another, they would rather not even share the same path. But a city ought to be composed, as far as possible, of equals and similars; and these are generally the middle classes. Wherefore the city that is composed of middle-class citizens is necessarily best...
constituted in respect of the elements of which we say the fabric of the state naturally consists. This is the class of citizens which is most secure in a state, for they do not, like the poor, covet other men's goods; nor do others covet theirs, as the poor covet the goods of the rich; and as they neither plot against others, nor are themselves plotted against, they pass through life safely. So Phocylides prayed wisely: “Many things are best in the mean; I desire to be of a middle condition in my city.”

Thus the best political community is formed by citizens of the middle class, and that those states are likely to be well-administered in which the middle class is large, and stronger if possible than both the other classes, or at any rate than either singly; the addition of the middle class turns the scale, and prevents either of the extremes from being dominant. Great then is the good fortune of a state in which the citizens have a moderate and sufficient property; where some possess much, and the others nothing, there may arise an extreme democracy, or a pure oligarchy; or a tyranny may grow out of either extreme — either out of the most rampant democracy, or out of an oligarchy; but it is not so likely to arise out of the middle constitutions and those akin to them. I will explain the reason for this hereafter, when I speak of the revolutions of states. The mean condition of states is clearly best, for no other is free from faction; and where the middle class is large, there are least likely to be factions and dissensions. Similarly, large states are less liable to faction than small ones, because in them the middle class is large; whereas in small states it is easy to divide all the citizens into two classes who are either rich or poor, and to leave nothing in the middle. And democracies are safer and more permanent than oligarchies, because they have a middle class that is more numerous and has a greater share in the government; for when there is no middle class, and the poor are excessive in number, troubles arise, and the state soon comes to an end. A proof of the superiority of the middle class is that the best legislators have been of a middle condition: EXs: Solon (as his own verses testify); Lycurgus (he was not a king); Charondas, and almost all legislators.

Thus, most governments are either democratic or oligarchical because: (1) the middle class is seldom numerous in them, and whichever party, whether the rich or the common people, transgresses the mean and predominates, draws the constitution its own way, and thus arises either oligarchy or democracy. (2) The poor and the rich quarrel with one another, and whichever side gets the better, instead of establishing a just or popular government, regards political supremacy as the prize of victory, and the one party sets up a democracy and the other an oligarchy. (3) Both the parties which had the supremacy in Greece looked only to the interest of their own form of government, and established in states, the one, democracies, and the other, oligarchies; they thought of their own advantage, and of the advantage of the other states not at all. For these reasons the middle form of government has rarely, if ever, existed, and among a very few only. One man alone of all who ever ruled in Greece [DY: We don’t know who this is.] was induced to give this middle constitution to states. It has now become a habit among the citizens of states not even to care about equality; all men are seeking for dominion, or, if conquered, are willing to submit.

What then is the best form of government, and what makes it the best, is evident; and of other constitutions, since we say that there are many kinds of democracy and many of oligarchy, it is not difficult to see which has the first and which the second or any other place in the order of virtue, now that we have determined which is the best. (That which is nearest to the best must of necessity be better, and that which is further from the mean worse, if we are judging absolutely and not relatively to given conditions: I say “relatively to given conditions”, since a particular government may be preferable, but another form may be better for some people.)

IV.12 Every City is Composed of Quality (Freedom, Wealth, Education, Good Birth) and Quantity (Superiority of Numbers); When the Poor are Numerous, Democracy Occurs; When Quality Flourishes, Oligarchy Occurs; the Legislator Should Always Include the Middle Class in the Government; the More Perfect the Mixture of State Elements, the More Lasting the Constitution (1296b-1297a).

We have now to consider what and what kind of government is suitable to what and what kind of men. I assume, as a general principle common to all governments, that the portion of the state that desires the permanence of the constitution ought to be stronger than that which desires the reverse. Every city is composed
of quality (freedom, wealth, education, good birth) and quantity (superiority of numbers). Quality may exist in one of the classes that make up the state, and quantity in the other. EX: the meanly-born may be more in number than the well-born, or the poor than the rich, yet they may not so much exceed in quantity as they fall short in quality; so there must be a comparison of quantity and quality. Where the number of the poor exceeds a given proportion, there will naturally be a democracy, varying in form with the sort of people who compose it in each case. EX: If the farmers exceed in number, the first form of democracy will then arise; if the craftspersons and laboring class, the last; and so with the intermediate forms. Where the rich and the nobles exceed in quality more than they fall short in quantity, there oligarchy arises, similarly assuming various forms according to the kind of superiority possessed by the oligarchs.

The legislator should always include the middle class in his government, whether his laws are oligarchical or democratic. The government can only ever be stable where the middle class exceeds one or both of the others, and in that case there will be no fear that the rich will unite with the poor against the rulers. Neither of them will ever be willing to serve the other, and if they look for some form of government more suitable to both, they will find none better than this (since the rich and the poor will never consent to rule in turn, because they mistrust one another). The arbiter is always the one most trusted, and he who is in the middle is an arbiter. The more perfect the admixture of the political elements, the more lasting will be the constitution. Many even of those who desire to form aristocratic governments make a mistake, not only in giving too much power to the rich, but in attempting to cheat the people. There comes a time when out of a false good there arises a true evil, since the encroachments of the rich are more destructive to the constitution than those of the people.

IV.13 Oligarchies Deceive the People with Five Devices, Relating to the (1) Assembly, (2) Magistracies, (3) Courts of Law, (4) Use of Arms, and (5) Gymnastic Exercises; Democracies Pay the Poor for Assembly and Court Attendance, and do Not Fine the Rich for Non-Attendance; Best Practice: Poor Should be Paid and Rich Should be Fined; Why Polities Have Hitherto Been Called Democracies (1297a-b).

Oligarchies deceive the people with five devices, relating to the (1) assembly, (2) magistracies, (3) courts of law, (4) use of arms, and (5) gymnastic exercises. Assemblies are open to all, but either the rich only are fined for non-attendance, or a much larger fine is inflicted upon them. Magistrates who are qualified by property cannot decline office upon oath, but the poor may. In courts only the rich are fined if they do not serve (the poor are let off with impunity); or a larger fine is inflicted on the rich, and a smaller one on the poor (e.g., in Charondas’ laws). (In some states all citizens who have registered themselves are allowed to attend the assembly and to try causes; but if after registration they do not attend either in the assembly or at the courts, heavy fines are imposed upon them. The intention is that through fear of the fines they may avoid registering themselves, and then they cannot sit in the courts or in the assembly.) Concerning the possession of arms, and gymnastic exercises, they legislate in a similar spirit: The poor are not obliged to have arms, but the rich are fined for not having them; and in like manner no penalty is inflicted on the poor for non-attendance at the gymnasion, and so, having nothing to fear, they do not attend, whereas the rich are liable to a fine, and so they take care to attend.

In democracies they have counter-devices: (1) They pay the poor for attending the assemblies and the law-courts, and they inflict no penalty on the rich for non-attendance. The best practice: the poor should be paid to attend, and the rich fined if they do not attend, for then all will take part; if there is no such combination, power will be in the hands of one party only. The government should be confined to those who carry arms. As to the property qualification, no absolute rule can be laid down, but we must see what is the highest qualification sufficiently comprehensive to secure that the number of those who have the rights of citizens exceeds the number of those excluded. Even if they have no share in office, the poor, provided only that they are not outraged or deprived of their property, will be quiet enough.

To secure gentle treatment for the poor is not an easy thing, since a ruling class is not always humane. In time of war the poor are apt to hesitate unless they are fed; when fed, they are willing enough to fight. In some states the government is vested, not only in those who are actually serving, but also in those who have served (EX: among the Malians, the governing body consisted of the latter, while the magistrates were chosen from
those actually on service). The earliest Greek government, after the overthrow of the kingly power, grew up out of the warrior class, and was originally taken from the knights (strength and superiority in war at that time depended on cavalry; indeed, without discipline, infantry are useless, and in ancient times there was no military knowledge or tactics, and therefore the strength of armies lay in their cavalry). But when cities increased and the heavy-armed grew in strength, more had a share in the government; this is why polities have been hitherto called democracies. Ancient constitutions, as might be expected, were oligarchical and kingly; their population being small they had no considerable middle class; the people were weak in numbers and organization, and were therefore more content to be governed.

IV.14 The Deliberative Element of the Constitution is the Supreme Element; It has Authority in Matters of War and Peace, Alliances, Passes Laws, Inflicts Death, Exile, Confiscation, Elects Magistrates and Audits Their Accounts; These Powers are Assigned Either (1) All to All, (2) All to Some, or (3) Some to All, and Some to Some; There are Varieties Within Each of These; Advice for the Most Prevalent and Extreme Form of Democracy (1297b-1299a).

Let us now examine particular constitutions. All constitutions have three elements, that the good lawgiver must regard: (1) Deliberation about public affairs, (2) Magistracies (what they should be, over what they should exercise authority, and what should be the mode of electing to them), and (3) Judicial power. When they are well ordered, the constitution is well ordered, and as they differ from one another, constitutions differ.

(1) The deliberative element has authority in matters of war and peace, in making and unmaking alliances; it passes laws, inflicts death, exile, confiscation, elects magistrates and audits their accounts. These powers must be assigned either (1.1) all to all the citizens or (1.2) all to some of them (e.g., to one or more magistracies, or different causes to different magistracies), or (1.3) some to all, and some to some.

(1.1) That everyone should decide all things is characteristic of democracy; this is the sort of equality that the people desire. But there are various ways in which all may share in the government; (1.1.1) they may deliberate, not all in one body, but by turns (e.g. in the constitution of Telecles the Milesian). There are other constitutions in which the boards of magistrates meet and deliberate, but come into office by turns, and are elected out of the tribes and the very smallest divisions of the state, until every one has obtained office in his turn. The citizens, on the other hand, are assembled only for the purposes of legislation, and to consult about the constitution, and to hear the edicts of the magistrates. (1.1.2) In another variety of democracy the citizens form one assembly, but meet only to elect magistrates, to pass laws, to advise about war and peace, and to make inspections. Other matters are referred severally to special magistrates, who are elected by vote or by lot out of all the citizens. Or (1.1.3) the citizens meet about election to offices and about inspections, and deliberate concerning war or alliances while other matters are administered by the magistrates (as far as is possible, elected by vote). I am speaking of those magistracies in which special knowledge is required. (1.1.4) A fourth form of democracy is when all the citizens meet to deliberate about everything, and the magistrates decide nothing, but only make the preliminary inquiries; and that is the way in which the last form of democracy, corresponding, as we maintain, to the close family oligarchy and to tyranny, is at present administered. All these modes are democratic.

(1.2) That some should deliberate about all is oligarchical. Again this has many forms: (1.2.1) When the deliberative class is elected out of those who have a moderate qualification are numerous and they respect and obey the prohibitions of the law without altering it, and anyone who has the required qualification shares in the government, then, just because of this moderation, the oligarchy inclines towards polity. But (1.2.2) when only selected individuals and not the whole people share in the deliberations of the state, then (although, as in the former case, they observe the law), the government is a pure oligarchy. Or (1.2.3) when those who have the power of deliberation are self-elected, and son succeeds father, and they and not the laws are supreme – the government is of necessity oligarchical.

(1.3) Where particular persons have authority in particular matters (EX: when the whole people decide about peace and war and hold inspections, but the magistrates regulate everything else, and they are elected by vote or by lot), the government is an aristocracy or a polity. If some questions are decided by magistrates elected by vote, and others by magistrates elected by lot, either absolutely or out of select candidates, or elected partly
by vote, partly by lot—these practices are partly characteristic of an aristocratic government, and partly of a pure polity.

These are the various forms of the deliberative body; they correspond to the various forms of government. And the government of each state is administered according to one or other of the principles that have been laid down.

In the most prevalent and extreme form of democracy, where the people are supreme even over the laws, in the interest of better deliberation, it is better to adopt the custom of oligarchies respecting courts of law. In oligarchies the rich who are wanted to be judges are compelled to attend under pain of a fine, whereas in democracies the poor are paid to attend. This practice of oligarchies should be adopted by democracies in their public assembles, for they will advise better if they all deliberate together, the people with the notables and the notables with the people. It is also a good plan that those who deliberate should be elected by vote or by lot in equal numbers out of the different classes; and that if the people greatly exceed in number those who have political training, pay should not be given to all, but only to as many as would balance the number of the notables, or that the number in excess should be eliminated by lot. In oligarchies either certain persons should be co-opted from the mass, or a class of officers (Probuli or guardians of the law) should be appointed such as exist in some states; and the citizens should occupy themselves exclusively with matters on which they have previously deliberated; in that way the people will have a share in the deliberations of the state, but will not be able to disturb the principles of the constitution. In oligarchies either the people ought to accept the measures of the government, or not to pass anything contrary to them; or, if all are allowed to share in counsel, the decision should rest with the magistrates. The opposite of what is done in polities should be the rule in oligarchies; the veto of the majority should be final, their assent not final, but the proposal should be referred back to the magistrates. (In polities they take the contrary course; the few have the negative, not the affirmative power; the affirmation of everything rests with the multitude.)

These, then, are our conclusions respecting the deliberative, that is, the supreme element in states.

IV.15 Distribution of Offices; Offices are Assigned Duties to Deliberate, Judge, and Command; How Many Magistracies are Necessary; Appointments of Offices (Who, from Whom, and How); Different Magistracies Correspond to Different Governments (1299a-1300b).

Next we will consider the distribution of offices, about which many questions arise: What shall their number be? Over what shall they preside, and what shall be their duration? Re: the appointment to offices: From whom are they to be chosen, by whom, and how? We should first be in a position to say what are the possible varieties of them, and then we may proceed to determine which are suited to different forms of government.

What are to be included under the term “offices”? That is a difficult question. A political community requires many officers; and not every one who is chosen by vote or by lot is to be regarded as a ruler. Priests must be distinguished from political officers; masters of choruses and heralds, even ambassadors, are elected by vote. Some duties of superintendence again are political, extending either to all the citizens in a single sphere of action, like the office of the general who superintends them when they are in the field, or to a section of them only, like the inspectorships of women or youth. Other offices are concerned with household management (e.g., corn measurers who exist in many states and are elected officers). There are also menial offices that the rich have executed by their slaves.

Speaking generally, offices are those to which the duties are assigned of deliberating about certain measures, of judging, and (especially) commanding; to command is the especial duty of a magistrate. But the question is only important in theory (no one has ever brought into court the meaning of the word).

What kinds of offices, and how many, are necessary to the existence of a state, and which, if not necessary, yet conduce to its well being, are much more important considerations, affecting all constitutions, but more especially small states. In great states it is possible, and indeed necessary, that every office should have a special function; where the citizens are numerous, many may hold office. So it happens that some offices a man holds a second time only after a long interval, and others he holds once only; and certainly every work is better done which receives the sole and not the divided attention of the worker. In small states it is necessary to combine many offices in a few hands, since the small number of citizens does not admit of many holding office –
for who will there be to succeed them? Sometimes small states at times require the same offices and laws as large ones; the difference is that the one want them often, the others only after long intervals. Hence there is no reason why the care of many offices should not be imposed on the same person, for they will not interfere with each other. When the population is small, offices should be made like spit-lamps (= a military tool which could be used either as a roasting spit or a lamp holder – DY, from Reeve’s translation of the Politics, p. 129, note 94).

We must first ascertain how many magistrates are necessary in every state, and also how many are not exactly necessary, but are nevertheless useful, and then there will be no difficulty in seeing what offices can be combined in one. We should also know over which matters several local tribunals are to have jurisdiction, and in which cases authority should be centralized: EX: Should one person keep order in the market and another in some other place, or should the same person be responsible everywhere? Should offices be divided according to the subjects with which they deal, or according to the persons with whom they deal: I mean to say, should one person see to good order in general, or one look after the boys, another after the women, and so on? Under different constitutions, should the magistrates be the same or different? EX: In democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy, monarchy, should there be the same magistrates, although they are elected not out of equal or similar classes of citizens, but differently under different constitutions – EX: in aristocracies they are chosen from the educated, in oligarchies from the wealthy, and in democracies from the free – or are there certain differences in the offices answering to them as well, and may the same be suitable to some, but different offices to others? For in some states it may be convenient that the same office should have a more extensive, in other states a narrower sphere.

Special offices are peculiar to certain forms of government – EX: Probuli (some body of men whose duty is to prepare measures for the people in order that they may not be diverted from their business) is not a democratic office, but a council is democratic. The Probuli must always be few, and are therefore an oligarchical element. But when both institutions exist in a state, the Probuli is a check on the council. Even the power of the council disappears when democracy has taken that extreme form in which the people themselves are always meeting and deliberating about everything. This is the case when assembly members receive abundant pay: they have nothing to do and are always holding assemblies and deciding everything for themselves. A magistracy that controls the boys or the women, or any similar office, is suited to an aristocracy rather than to a democracy; for how can the magistrates prevent the wives of the poor from going out of doors? Neither is it an oligarchical office; the wives of the oligarchs are too grand.

Re: Appointments to offices: The varieties depend on three terms: First, (2.1)2 who appoints? Secondly, (2.2) from whom? And thirdly, (2.3) how? Each of these three admits of two varieties. Either (2.1.1) all the citizens, or (2.1.2) only some, appoint. The magistrates are chosen either (2.2.1) out of all or (2.2.2) out of people distinguished either by a property qualification, or by birth, or virtue, or for some special reason (e.g., at Megara only those were eligible who had returned from exile and fought together against the democracy). They may be appointed either (2.3.1) by vote or (2.3.2) by lot. Again, these several varieties may be coupled, I mean that (2.1.3) all may select for some offices and some for others, (2.2.3) some offices may be selected for from all and others for some, and (2.3.3) some may be selected for by lot and others by election.

Each variety of these terms admits of four modes: Either (a) all may appoint from all by vote, or (b) all from all by lot, or (c) all from some by vote, or (d) all from some by lot. If it is only some who appoint, they may do so from all by vote or from all by lot or from some by vote or from some by lot. If from all, either by sections, (EXs: by tribes, wards, and phratries), until all the citizens have been gone through; or the citizens may be in all cases eligible indiscriminately; or sometimes in one way, sometimes in the other – I mean, from all by vote in some cases, by lot in others. Thus the modes that arise, apart from the two couplings, number twelve. Of these systems two are popular, that all should appoint from all by vote or by lot – or by both, some of the offices by lot, others by vote. That all should not appoint at once, but should appoint from all or from some either by lot or by vote or both, or appoint to some offices from all and to others from some (‘by both’ meaning to some offices by lot, to others by vote), is characteristic of a polity. [And that some should appoint from all, to some offices by vote, to others by lot or by both – some by lot, others by vote – is oligarchical; and it is more oligarchical to appoint by both. And to appoint to some offices from all, to others from some, is characteristic of

2 This is numbered “(2.1)” from the division created by Aristotle in IV.14, above, about the magistracies.
a polity with a leaning towards aristocracy – or to appoint some by vote, others by lot.] That some should appoint from some is oligarchical – even that some should appoint from some by lot (and if this does not actually occur, it is nonetheless oligarchical in character), or that some should appoint from some by both. That some should appoint from all, and that sometimes all should appoint from some, by vote, is aristocratic.

The different modes of constituting magistrates correspond to different forms of government: – which are proper to which, or how they ought to be established, will be evident when we determine the nature of their powers (powers a magistrate exercises over the revenue or in defense of the country); there are various kinds of power: EX: the power of the general is not the same as that which regulates contracts in the market.

**IV.16** There are 8 Kinds of Court (Audits/Inspections, Ordinary Offenses Against the State, Treason, Penalty Disputes, Important Civil Cases, Homicide, For Foreigners, and Small Suits); If Judges are Taken from All the Citizens, the Constitution is Democratic; If from Some, Oligarchic; If Some from All Classes, and Some from Few Classes, then Aristocratic or Polity-Like (1300b-1301a).

Let us consider the judicial part of government: We shall divide it on the same principle. Varieties of courts depend on three points: (1) the persons from whom they are appointed, (2) the matters with which they are concerned, and (3) the manner of their appointment. Are the judges taken from all, or from some only? How many kinds of law-courts are there? Are the judges chosen by vote or by lot?

There are eight kinds of courts: Courts for (1) Audits or inspections; (2) Ordinary offenses against the state; (3) Treason against the constitution; (4) Disputes respecting penalties, whether raised by magistrates or by private persons; (5) More important civil cases; (6) Homicide cases, which are of various kinds, (a) premeditated, (b) involuntary, and (c) cases in which the guilt is confessed but the justice is disputed; and (d) a court in which murderers who have fled from justice are tried after their return (e.g., the Court of Phreatto is said to be at Athens). But cases of this sort rarely happen at all even in large cities. The different kinds of homicide may be tried either by the same or by different courts. (7) Foreigners: Two subdivisions: (7.1) for the settlement of their disputes with one another, and (7.2) for the settlement of disputes between them and the citizens. And (8) Small suits about sums of a drachma up to five drachmas, or a little more, which do not require many judges.

Let me now speak of political cases, which, when mismanaged, create division and disturbances in constitutions. (3.1)² If all the citizens judge, in all the different cases that I have distinguished, they may be (3.1.1) appointed by vote or (3.1.2) by lot, or (3.1.3) sometimes by lot and sometimes by vote. Or (3.1.4) when a single class of causes is tried, the judges who decide them may be appointed, some by vote, and some by lot. (3.2) There will be likewise four modes, if they are elected from a part only; (3.2.1) they may be appointed from some by vote and judge in all causes; or (3.2.2) they may be appointed from some by lot and judge in all causes; or (3.2.3) they may be elected in some cases by vote, and in some cases taken by lot, or (3.2.4) some courts, even when judging the same causes, may be composed of members some appointed by vote and some by lot. These modes, then, as was said, answer to those previously mentioned.

Once more, the modes of appointment may be combined; some may be chosen out of the whole people, others out of some, some out of both; EX: The same tribunal may be composed of some who were elected out of all, and of others who were elected out of some, either by vote or by lot or by both.

These kinds of courts are related to different constitutions: (3.1) That in which the judges are taken from all the citizens, and in which all causes are tried, is democratic; (3.2) That which is composed of a few only who try all causes, oligarchical; (3.3) That in which some courts are taken from all classes, and some from certain classes only, is aristocratic and polity-like.

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3 This is numbered “(3.1)” from the division created by Aristotle in IV.14, above, about the divisions of the judiciary.
V.1 The Causes of Revolutions in States; Why Democracy and Oligarchy Arise and Have Imperfect Standards of Justice; Two Sorts of Government Change: Changing the Constitution-Forms and Changing Administration While Keeping the Constitution; There is Numerical and Proportional Equality; Why Democracy and Oligarchy are the Two Principal Forms of Government; Democracy is Safer/Less Liable to Revolution Than Oligarchy; Government Run by Middle Class is More Democratic and Safest (1301a-1302a).

Next we examine the causes of revolution in states, how many, and of what nature they are; what modes of destruction apply to particular states, and out of what, and into what they mostly change; also, what are the modes of preservation in states generally, or in a particular state, and by what means each state may be best preserved.

First, we must assume as our starting-point that there has always been an acknowledgement of justice and proportionate equality in the many forms of government (although mankind fails in attaining them, as explained). EX: Democracy arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects; because men are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal. Oligarchy is based on the notion that those who are unequal in one respect are in all respects unequal; being unequal, that is, in property, they suppose themselves to be unequal absolutely. The democrats think that as they are equal they ought to be equal in all things; while the oligarchs, under the idea that they are unequal, claim too much, which is one form of inequality. These forms of government have a kind of justice, but, tried by an absolute standard, they are faulty; and so both parties, whenever their share in the government does not accord with their preconceived ideas, stir up revolution. Those who excel in virtue have the best right of all to rebel (they alone can with reason be deemed absolutely unequal), but then they are of all men the least inclined to do so. There is also a superiority that is claimed by men of rank; they are thought noble because they spring from wealthy and virtuous ancestors.

Thus are opened the very springs and fountains of revolution; hence arise two sorts of changes in governments; one changing the constitution from an existing form into some other (e.g., from democracy into oligarchy, vice versa, or from either of them into polity or aristocracy, and conversely); the other not affecting the constitution, when, without disturbing whatever form of government, they try to get the administration into their own hands. There is a question of degree; EXs: an oligarchy may become more or less oligarchical, and a democracy more or less democratic; and in like manner the characteristics of the other forms of government may be more or less strictly maintained. Or the revolution may be directed against a portion of the constitution only (say the establishment or overthrow of a particular office): EX: at Sparta, Lysander attempted to overthrow the monarchy, and king Pausanias, the overseership. Everywhere inequality is a cause of revolution, but an inequality in which there is no proportion; EX: A perpetual monarchy among equals; and always it is the desire for equality that rises in rebellion.

Equality is of two kinds: numerical (sameness or equality in number or size) and proportional (equality of ratios). (EX: The excess of three over two is numerically equal to the excess of two over one; whereas four exceeds two in the same ratio in which two exceeds one, for two is the same part of four that one is of two, namely, the half.) As said, men agree that justice in the abstract is proportion, but they differ in that some think that if they are equal in any respect they are equal absolutely, others that if they are unequal in any respect they should be unequal in all. Hence there are two principal forms of government, democracy and oligarchy: good birth and virtue are rare, but wealth and numbers are more common. In what city shall we find a hundred persons of good birth and of virtue? Whereas the rich everywhere abound. That a state should be ordered, simply and wholly, according to either kind of equality, is not a good thing; the proof is the fact that such forms of government never last. They are originally based on a mistake, and, as they begin badly, cannot fail to end badly. Thus, both kinds of equality should be employed; numerical in some cases, and proportionate in others.

Still democracy appears to be safer and less liable to revolution than oligarchy: In oligarchies there is the double danger of the oligarchs falling out among themselves and also with the people; but in democracies there is only the danger of a quarrel with the oligarchs. No dissension worth mentioning arises among the people themselves. Lastly, a government that is composed of the middle class more nearly approximates to democracy than to oligarchy, and is the safest of the imperfect forms of government.

There are three beginnings and causes of dissensions and political revolutions that affect constitutions generally: (1) The state of mind thereof, (2) The motives thereof, and (3) The causes of political disturbances and quarrels.

(1) States of mind: The universal/chief cause of this revolutionary feeling (as mentioned) is the desire for equality, when men think that they are equal to others who have more than themselves; or the desire for inequality and superiority, when conceiving themselves to be superior they think that they have not more but the same or less than their inferiors (pretensions that may or may not be just). Inferiors revolt in order that they may be equal, and equals that they may be superior.

(2) The motives for making them are the desire for gain and honor, or fear of dishonor and loss (they want to divert punishment or dishonor from themselves or their friends).

(3) The causes and reasons of revolutions can be seen as seven, or more than seven: (i) desire for gain and honor, (ii) fear of dishonor and loss (i) and (ii) are passengers and are excited against one another by the love of gain and honor — not, as I have just supposed, in order to obtain them for themselves, but at seeing others (justly or unjustly) monopolizing them. Other causes are (iii) arrogance, (iv) fear, (v) excessive predominance, (vi) contempt, (vii) disproportionate increase in some part of the state; causes of another sort are (viii) election intrigues, (ix) carelessness, (x) neglect about trifles, and (xi) dissimilarity of elements. We will discuss these in turn.


Arrogance and avarice create revolutions as follows: When the magistrates are arrogant and grasping, they conspire against one another and the constitution from which they derive their power, making their gains either at the individuals or public’s expense. Honor exerts its influence and causes revolution as follows: Dishonored men see others obtaining honors rise in rebellion; the honor or dishonor when undeserved is unjust; and just when awarded according to merit. Superiority causes revolution when one or more persons have a power that is too much for the state and the power of the government (out of this there tends to arise a monarchy, or a family oligarchy).

Fear causes revolution as follows: Either men have committed wrong, and are afraid of punishment, or they are expecting to suffer wrong and are desirous of anticipating their enemy. EX: at Rhodes the notables conspired against the people through fear of the suits brought against them. Contempt causes insurrection and revolution in oligarchies (when those who have no share in the state are the majority, they revolt, because they think that they are the stronger) or democracies (the rich despise the disorder andarchy of the state). EXs: Thebes: after the battle of Oenophyta, the bad administration ruined its democracy; Megara: democracy fell due to a defeat occasioned by disorder and anarchy; Syracuse: its democracy aroused contempt before tyranny arose.

Political revolutions also spring from a disproportionate increase in any part of the state. EX: The number of poor in democracies and polities. This disproportion may happen by accident, or when one is compelled to admit some serfs to citizenship, or the notables were reduced in number. When the rich grow numerous or properties increase, the form of government changes into an oligarchy or a government of families. Forms of government also change without revolution, owing to election contests (e.g. Heraea) or carelessness.

The revolution may be facilitated by the slightness of the change (a great change may sometimes slip into the constitution through neglect of a small matter). EX: at Ambracia the qualification for office, small at first, was eventually reduced to nothing.

Dissimilarity of elements cause of revolution: EX: difference of races that do not at once acquire a common spirit; a state is not the growth of a day, any more than it grows out of a multitude brought together by
accident. Hence the reception of strangers in colonies, either at the time of their foundation or afterwards, has generally produced revolution.

In oligarchies the masses make revolution under the idea that they are unjustly treated, because, as said, they are equals, and have not an equal share, and in democracies the notables revolt, because they are not equals, and yet have only an equal share.

When the country is not naturally adapted to preserve the unity of the state, it can cause of revolution. EXs: the Chytians at Clazomenae did not agree with the people of the island; and the people of Colophon quarreled with the Notians. Just as in war the impediment of a ditch, however small, may break a regiment, so every cause of difference makes a breach in a city. The greatest opposition is confessedly that of virtue and badness; next comes that of wealth and poverty; and there are other antagonistic elements, greater or less (one is difference of place).

V.4 Factions Arise From Small Issues but Not Over Them; Revolutions Might Happen Because Magistrates Become Too Powerful, or When There is No Middle Class; Revolutions are Caused by Force (Before or After the Revolution) or Fraud (1303b-1304b).

Factions arise from small issues, but not over them. Even trifles are most important when they concern the rulers, as was the case of old at Syracuse; the Syracusan constitution was once changed by a love-querrel of two young men, who were in the government. The story is that while one of them was away from home his beloved was gained over by his companion, and he to revenge himself seduced the other’s wife. They then drew the members of the ruling class into their quarrel and so split all the people into portions. We learn from this story that we should be on our guard against the beginnings of such evils, and should put an end to the quarrels of chiefs and mighty men. In general, when the notables quarrel, the whole city is involved (e.g. in Hestiaea after the Persian War).

Governments also change into oligarchy, democracy, or polity because the magistrates, or some other section of the state, increase in power or renown. EX: At Athens the reputation gained by the court of the Areopagus, in the Persian War, seemed to tighten the reins of government.

Revolutions also break out when opposite parties, e.g. the rich and the people, are equally balanced, and there is little or no middle class; if either party were manifestly superior, the other would not risk an attack upon them. Thus, those who are eminent in virtue usually do not stir up insurrections, being always a minority. These are the beginnings and causes of the disturbances and revolutions to which every form of government is liable.

Revolutions are effected in two ways, by force and by fraud. Force may be applied when revolting or afterwards. Fraud is of two kinds: sometimes the citizens are deceived into acquiescing in a change of government, and afterwards they are held in subjection against their will. EX: The Four Hundred, who deceived the people by telling them that the king would provide money for war against the Lacedaemonians, and, having cheated the people, still endeavored to retain the government. In other cases the people are persuaded at first, and afterwards, by a repetition of the persuasion, their goodwill and allegiance are retained.

V.5 Two Principal Causes of Revolution in Democracies: Intemperance of Demagogues that Causes the Rich to Combine or Stirs the Public Against the Rulers; Most Ancient Tyrants Were Demagogues, When Tyrannies Were More Common (1304b-1305a).

What are the principal causes of revolutions in democracies?

Revolutions in democracies are generally caused by the intemperance of demagogues, who either (1) in their private capacity lay information against rich men until they compel them to combine (a common danger unites even the bitterest enemies), or (2) coming forward in public stir up the people against them. EX: At Cos the democracy was overthrown because wicked demagogues arose, and the notables combined. Sometimes the demagogues, in order to curry favor with the people, wrong the notables and so force them to combine – either they make a division of their property, or diminish their incomes by the imposition of public services, and sometimes they bring accusations against the rich so that they may have their wealth to confiscate.

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4 This is Reeve’s translation of this line.
In ancient times, the demagogue was also a general, and then democracies changed into tyrannies. Most of the ancient tyrants were originally demagogues. They are not so now, but they were then; and the reason is that they were generals and not orators, for oratory had not yet come into fashion. Whereas in our day, when the art of rhetoric has made such progress, the orators lead the people, but their ignorance of military matters prevents them from usurping power. Tyrannies were more common formerly than now; when cities were not large, the people dwelt in the fields, busy at their work; and their chiefs, if they possessed any military talent, seized the opportunity, and winning the confidence of the masses by professing their hatred of the wealthy, they succeeded in obtaining the tyranny. EX: Dionysius was thought worthy of the tyranny because he denounced Daphnaeus and the rich; his enmity to the notables won for him the confidence of the people. Changes also take place from the ancient to the latest form of democracy; where there is a popular election of the magistrates and no property qualification, the aspirants for office get hold of the people, and contrive at last even to set them above the laws. (A more or less complete cure for this is for the separate tribes – not the whole people – to elect the magistrates.)

V.6 Two General Causes of Revolutions in Oligarchies: Oppressing the People or Excluded Rich People; 6 Causes of Internal Revolutions in Oligarchies (Personal Oligarch Rivalry, Oligarchs Waste Private Property, When Another Oligarchy is Created Within the Current One, In War (Hiring Mercenaries) or Peace (Handing Power Over to an Army), Oligarch Marriages or Lawsuits, and Excessive Despotism) (1305a-1306b).

There are two patent causes of revolutions in oligarchies: (1) When the oligarchs oppress the people; then anybody is good enough to be their champion, especially if he be himself a member of the oligarchy (e.g., Lygdamis at Naxos, who afterwards came to be tyrant). But revolutions that commence outside the governing class may be further subdivided. (2) Sometimes, when the government is very exclusive, persons of the wealthy class who are excluded cause the revolution. EXs: At Massalia the oligarchy became more like a constitutional government, but at Isthros ended in a democracy, and at Heraclea was enlarged to 600.

(2) Internal causes of revolutions in oligarchies: (2.1) The personal rivalry of the oligarchs, which leads them to play the demagogue. The oligarchical demagogue is of two sorts: either (2.1.1) he practices upon the oligarchs themselves [although the oligarchy are quite a small number, there may be a demagogue among them (e.g., Athens’ Charicles’ party won power by courting the Thirty); or (2.1.2) the oligarchs may play the demagogue with the people. EX: Larissa, where the guardians of the citizens endeavored to gain over the people because the people elected the guardians. Such is the fate of all oligarchies with elected magistrates: they may be required to have a high qualification, or to be members of a political club. Or, where the law-courts are composed of persons outside the government, the oligarchs flatter the people in order to obtain a decision in their own favor, and so they change the constitution; EX: at Heraclea in Pontus. Or (2.1.3) oligarchies change whenever any attempt is made to narrow them; then those who desire equal rights are compelled to call in the people.

(2.2) When the oligarchs waste their private property by extravagant living; then they want to innovate, and either try to make themselves tyrants, or install someone else in the tyranny (e.g., as Hipparinus did Dionysius at Syracuse). Sometimes a party among the oligarchs tries directly to create a political change; sometimes they rob the treasury, and then either the thieves or (as at Apollonia in Pontus), those who resist them in their thieving quarrel with the rulers. An oligarchy which is at unity with itself is not easily destroyed from within; EX: at Pharsalus (although the rulers are few in number, they govern a large city, because they have a good understanding among themselves).

(2.3) Oligarchies are overthrown when another oligarchy is created within the original one (i.e., when the whole governing body is small and yet they do not all share in the highest offices). EX: at Elis the governing body was a small senate; and very few ever found their way into it, because the senators were only ninety in number, and were elected for life and out of certain families in a manner similar to the Lacedaemonian elders.

(2.4) Oligarchy is liable to revolutions alike in war and in peace; (2.4.1) in war because, not being able to trust the people, the oligarchs are compelled to hire mercenaries, and the general who is in command of them often ends in becoming a tyrant (as Timophanes did at Corinth); or if there are more generals than one they...
make themselves into a junta. Sometimes the oligarchs, fearing this danger, give the people a share in the government because their services are necessary to them. (2.4.2) In time of peace, from mutual distrust, the two parties hand over the defense of the state to the army and to an arbiter between the two factions, who often ends the master of both. EX: at Larissa when Simos the Aleuad had the government.

(2.5) Revolutions also arise out of marriages or lawsuits that lead to the overthrow of one party among the oligarchs by another. EX: Diagoras in Eretria.

(2.6) Many oligarchies have been destroyed by some members of the ruling class taking offense at their excessive despotism; EX: the oligarchy at Cnidus and at Chios.

Changes of polities and oligarchies that limit the office of counselor, judge, or other magistrate to persons having a certain money qualification, often occur by accident. The qualification may have been originally fixed according to the circumstances of the time, in such a manner as to include in an oligarchy a few only, or in a polity the middle class. But after a time of prosperity, whether arising from peace or some other good fortune, the same property becomes many times as valuable, and then everybody participates in every office; this happens sometimes gradually and insensibly, or quickly. These are the causes of changes and revolutions in oligarchies.

Obviously both of democracies and oligarchies sometimes change into another variety of the same class (from being regulated by law into those which are arbitrary, and conversely).

V.7 Four General Causes of Revolution in Aristocracies (When Few Share State Honors, Deviation From Justice or Constitution Itself, When Notables “Grasp” Too Much, or by Gradually/Imperceptibly Ceding More and More Power); the Only Stable Principle of Government is Equality According to Merit, and For Every Man to Enjoy His Own (1306b-1307b).

(1) Revolutions are caused in aristocracies when a few only share in the honors of the state (which has been already shown to affect oligarchies); an aristocracy is a sort of oligarchy, and, like an oligarchy, is the government of a few, although few not for the same reason; hence the two are often confused. (1.1) Revolutions will be most likely to happen, and must happen, (1.1.1) when the mass of the people are of the high-spirited kind, and have a notion that they are as good as their rulers. EX: at Lacedaemon the so-called Partheniae, who were the sons of the Spartan peers, attempted a revolution, and, being detected, were sent away to colonize Tarentum. (1.1.2) Revolutions occur when great men who are at least of equal virtue are denied honors by those higher in office (as Lysander was by the kings of Sparta); or (1.1.3) when a brave man is excluded from the honors of the state (like Cinadon, who conspired against the Spartans in the reign of Agesilaus); or (1.2) when some are very poor and others very rich, a state of society which is most often the result of war (as at Lacedaemon in the days of the Messenian War). (1.3) Revolutions arise when an individual who is great, and might be greater, wants to rule alone (as, at Lacedaemon, Pausanias, who was general in the Persian War).

(2) Politics (the ill-mingling of the two elements democracy) and aristocracies (deviation from democracy, oligarchy, and virtue, especially the first two) are commonly overthrown owing to some deviation from justice in the constitution itself. To combine democracy, oligarchy, and virtue is the endeavor of polities; and most aristocracies have a like aim, but differ from polities in the mode of combination. Those that incline more to oligarchy are called aristocracies, and those that incline to democracy polities. So the latter are the safer of the two; the greater the number, the greater the strength, and when men are equal they are contented. But the rich, if the constitution gives them power, are apt to be arrogant and avaricious; and, in general, whichever way the constitution inclines, in that direction it changes as either party gains strength, a constitutional government becoming a democracy, an aristocracy an oligarchy. But an aristocracy may change into democracy, when the poor (under the idea that they are being wronged) force the constitution to take an opposite form. In like manner polities change into oligarchies. The only stable principle of government is equality according to merit, and for every man to enjoy his own. (EX: Thurii: The high qualification for office was reduced, and the magistrates increased in number. The notables had previously acquired the whole of the land contrary to law; for the government tended to oligarchy, and they were able to encroach. But the people, trained by war, soon got the better of the oligarchs’ guards, until those who had too much gave up their land.]
(3) Since all aristocratic governments incline to oligarchy, the notables are apt to be grasping (EX: at Lacedaemon, where property tends to pass into few hands, the notables can do too much as they like, and are allowed to marry whom they please. The city of Locri was ruined by a marriage connection with Dionysius, but such a thing could never have happened in a democracy, or in a well-balanced aristocracy).

(4) In aristocracies, above all, revolutions are gradual and imperceptible. The citizens begin by giving up some part of the constitution, and so with greater ease the government change something else which is a little more important, until they have undermined the whole fabric of the state. (EX: At Thurii there was a law that generals should only be re-elected after an interval of five years, and some young men who were popular with the soldiers of the guard for their military prowess, despising the magistrates and thinking that they would easily gain their purpose, wanted to abolish this law and allow their generals to hold perpetual commands; they well knew that the people would be glad enough to elect them. Whereupon the magistrates who had charge of these matters, and who are called counselors, at first determined to resist, but they afterwards consented, thinking that, if only this one law was changed, no further inroad would be made on the constitution. But other changes soon followed which they in vain attempted to oppose; and the state passed into the hands of the revolutionists, who established a dynastic oligarchy.)

All constitutions are overthrown either from within or from without; the latter, when there is some government close at hand having an opposite interest, or at a distance, but powerful. EXs: the Athenians put down the oligarchies; the Lacedaemonians the democracies.

These are the chief causes of revolutions and dissensions in states.

V.8 Ten Ways to Preserve Constitutions (1307b-1309a).

How can we preserve constitutions in general, and in particular cases? (1) First, if we know the causes that destroy constitutions, we also know the causes that preserve them; opposites produce opposites, and destruction is the opposite of preservation. In all well-balanced governments there is nothing that should be more jealously maintained than the spirit of obedience to law, more especially in small matters; transgression creeps in unperceived and at last ruins the state, just as the constant recurrence of small expenses in time eats up a fortune. The expense does not take place all at once, and therefore is not observed; the mind is deceived, as in the fallacy: “if each part is small, then the whole is small”. This is true in one way, but false in another: the whole is not small, although it is made up of small parts.

(2) They should not rely upon the political devices already mentioned, invented only to deceive the people; they are proved by experience to be useless.

(3) Oligarchies as well as aristocracies may last, not from any inherent stability in such forms of government, but because the rulers are on good terms both with the disenfranchised and with the governing classes, not maltreating any who are excluded from the government, but introducing into it the leading spirits among them. They should never wrong the ambitious in a matter of honor, or the common people in a matter of money; and they should treat one another and their fellow-citizens in a spirit of equality. The equality that the friends of democracy seek to establish for the multitude is just and expedient among equals. Hence, if the governing class is numerous, many democratic institutions are useful; EX: the restriction of the tenure of offices to six months, so that all those who are of equal rank may share in them. Indeed, a group of equals is a kind of democracy, so demagogues are very likely to arise among them, as said. The short tenure of office prevents oligarchies and aristocracies from falling into the hands of families; it is not easy for a person to do any great harm when his tenure of office is short, whereas long possession begets tyranny in oligarchies and democracies. The aspirants to tyranny are either the principal men of the state, who in democracies are demagogues and in oligarchies members of ruling houses, or those who hold great offices, and have a long tenure of them.

(4) Constitutions are preserved when their destroyers are at a distance, and sometimes also because they are near, for the fear of them makes the government keep in hand the constitution. Wherefore the ruler who has a care of the constitution should invent terrors, and bring distant dangers near, in order that the citizens may be on their guard, and, like sentinels in a night watch, never relax their attention.
(5) He should try via the laws to control the contentions and quarrels of the notables, and to prevent those who have not hitherto taken part in them from catching the spirit of contention. No ordinary man can discern the beginning of evil, but only the true statesman.

(6) As to the change produced in oligarchies and polities by property assessments, when this arises while the assessments remain the same but money becomes more plentiful, it is beneficial to discover what the total communal assessment is compared with past years. If the total is many times greater or many times less than when the ratings were fixed by the constitution, there should be power given by law to raise or lower the assessment, as appropriate. Where this is not done a polity passes into an oligarchy, and an oligarchy is narrowed to a rule of families; or in the opposite case polity becomes democracy, and oligarchy either polity or democracy.

(7) It is a principle common to democracy, oligarchy, and every other form of government not to allow the disproportionate increase of any citizen, but to give moderate honor for a long time rather than great honor for a short time. Men are easily spoilt; not everyone can bear prosperity. If this rule is not observed, at any rate the honors that are given all at once should be taken away by degrees and not all at once. The laws should certainly provide against anyone having too much power (derived from friends or money); if he has, he should be ostracized.

(8) Since innovations creep in through the private life of individuals also, there ought to be a magistracy which will have an eye to those whose life is not in harmony with the government, whether oligarchy or democracy or any other. Similarly, an increase of prosperity in any part of the state should be carefully watched. The proper remedy for this evil is always to give the management of affairs and offices of state to opposite elements; such opposites are the good and the many, or the rich and the poor. Or combine the poor and the rich in one body, or increase the middle class: thus an end will be put to the revolutions that arise from inequality.

(9) Above all every state should be administered and regulated by law that its magistrates cannot possibly make money. In oligarchies special precautions should be used against this evil. The people do not take any great offense at being kept out of the government – indeed they are rather pleased at having leisure for their private business – what irritates them is to think that their rulers are stealing the public money; then they are doubly annoyed: they lose both honor and profit. If office brought no profit, only then could democracy and aristocracy be combined; both notables and people might have their wishes gratified. All would be able to hold office, which is the aim of democracy, and the notables would be magistrates, which is the aim of aristocracy. This may be accomplished when there is no possibility of making money out of the offices; the poor will not want to have them when there is nothing to be gained from them – they would rather be attending to their own concerns; and the rich, who do not want money from the public treasury, will be able to take them; so the poor will keep to their work and grow rich, and the notables will not be governed by the lower class. In order to avoid embezzlement of the public money, the transfer of the revenue should be made by a general assembly. The law should give honors to magistrates who have the reputation of ruling without gain.

(10) In democracies, the rich should be spared; their property and incomes should not be divided but protected – in some states, these are taken from them imperceptibly. It is a good thing to prevent the wealthy citizens, even if they are willing, from undertaking expensive and useless public services, such as the giving of choruses, torch-races, and the like. But in an oligarchy, great care should be taken of the poor, and lucrative offices should go to them; if any of the wealthy classes insult them, the offender should be punished more severely than if he had wronged one of his own class. Provision should be made that estates pass by inheritance and not by gift, and no person should have more than one inheritance; in this way properties will be equalized, and more of the poor rise to wealth. It is also expedient in democracies and oligarchies to assign to those who have less of a share in the government (i.e. to the rich in a democracy and to the poor in an oligarchy) an equality or preference in all but the principal offices of state. The latter should be entrusted chiefly or only to members of the governing class.
V.9 The Highest Officers Need Loyalty to the Constitution, Greatest Administrative Capacity, and the Justice/Virtue Specific to the Government-Form; We Should Choose Generals Based on Experience v. Virtue, and Officers of Trust/Stewardship on Virtue v. Experience; the Great Preserving Principle of Constitutions is that the Loyal Citizens Should be Stronger than the Disloyal; an Error that is Common to Democracy and Oligarchy; the Most Important Feature of Preserving Constitutions is Adapting Education to the Government-Form; Two Characteristic Principles of Democracy: Majority Rule and Freedom (1309a-1310a).

There are three necessary qualifications for the highest officers: (1) loyalty to the established constitution; (2) the greatest administrative capacity; and (3) virtue and justice of the kind proper to each form of government; if justice differs in all governments, the quality of justice must also differ. But there may be a doubt when all these qualities do not meet in the same person; EX: suppose a good general is a bad man and not a friend to the constitution, and another man is loyal and just, whom should we choose? In making the election ought we not to consider which qualities are common, and which are rare? Thus in the choice of a general, we should regard his experience rather than his virtue (few have military experience, but many have virtue). In any office of trust or stewardship: more virtue than ordinary is required (and almost all men have the necessary knowledge).

What does a man want with virtue if he has political ability and is loyal, since these two qualities alone will make him do what is for the public interest? But can’t men have both of them and yet lack self-control? If, knowing, loving, but not always attending to their own interests, may they not be equally negligent of the interests of the public?

Speaking generally, whatever legal enactments are held to be for the interest of various constitutions, all these preserve them. The great preserving principle is the one often mentioned – to have a care that the loyal citizens should be stronger than the disloyal. Neither should we forget the mean, which at the present day is lost sight of in perverted forms of government; many practices which appear to be democratic are the ruin of democracies, and many which appear to be oligarchical are the ruin of oligarchies. Those who think that all virtue is to be found in their own party principles push matters to extremes; they do not consider that disproportion destroys a state. Oligarchy or democracy, although a departure from the most perfect form, may yet be a good enough government, but if any one attempts to push the principles of either to an extreme, he will begin by spoiling the government and end by having none at all. So the legislator/statesman ought to know what democratic measures save and what destroy a democracy, and what oligarchical measures save or destroy an oligarchy. Neither the one nor the other can (continue to) exist unless both rich and poor are included in it. If equality of property is introduced, the state must of necessity take another form; when laws carried to excess in one or other element ruin the state, the constitution is ruined.

There is an error common both to oligarchies and to democracies: – in democracies the demagogues, when the multitude are above the law, are always cutting the city in two by quarrels with the rich, whereas they should always profess to be maintaining their cause; just as in oligarchies the oligarchs should profess to maintain the cause of the people, and should take oaths the opposite of those which they now take. (There are cities in which they swear – “I will be an enemy to the people, and will devise all the harm against them that I can”; but they ought to declare – “I will do no wrong to the people.”)

The feature that most contributes to the permanence of constitutions is the adaptation of education to the form of government, and yet in our own day this principle is universally neglected. The best laws, though sanctioned by every citizen of the state, will be of no avail unless the young are trained by habit and education in the spirit of the constitution, if the laws are democratic, democratically, or if oligarchical, oligarchically. There may be lack of self-discipline in states as well as in individuals. To have been educated in the spirit of the constitution is not to perform the actions in which oligarchs or democrats delight, but those by which the existence of an oligarchy or of a democracy is made possible. Whereas among ourselves the sons of the ruling class in an oligarchy live in luxury, but the sons of the poor are hardened by exercise and toil, and hence they are both more inclined and better able to make a revolution. And in democracies of the more extreme type there has arisen a false idea of freedom that is contradictory to the true interests of the state. Two characteristic principles of democracy: majority rule and freedom. Men think that what is just is equal; and that equality is the supremacy of the popular will; and that freedom means doing what one likes. In such democracies everyone
lives as he pleases, or “according to his fancy” (Euripides). But this is wrong; men should not think it slavery to live according to the rule of the constitution; it is their salvation.

I have now discussed generally the cause of the revolution and destruction of states, and the means of their preservation and continuance.

V.10 The Causes of Monarchy’s Destruction and Preservation; Notables Appoint a King Because He or His Family Excels in Virtue; a King is a Protector of the Rich Against Unjust Treatment and of the People Against Insult and Oppression; Tyranny has All the Vices of Democracy and Oligarchy; Monarchies Change When Subjects Attack the Sovereign Out of Fear, Contempt, or Perceived Injustice (E.g., Insult or Confiscation of Property); Tyrannies are Destroyed from Within and Without; Kingships are Generally Destroyed from Within (from Family Quarrel or the King’s Extending His Authority Beyond the Law) (1310a-1313a).

Let us discuss the causes of monarchy’s destruction and preservation. What I have said already about forms of polity applies almost equally to kingship and to tyrannical rule. Kingship rule is of the nature of an aristocracy, and a tyranny is a compound of oligarchy and democracy in their most extreme forms; so tyranny is most injurious to its subjects, being made up of two evil forms of government, and having the perversions and errors of both. These two forms of monarchy are contrary in their very origin. Notables appoint a king (against the people) out of their own number, because either he himself or his family excel in virtue and virtuous actions; whereas a tyrant is chosen from the people to be their protector against the notables, and in order to prevent them from being injured. Historically, almost all tyrants have been demagogues who gained the favor of the people by their accusation of the notables. At any rate this was the manner in which the tyrannies arose in the days when cities had increased in power. Other older tyrannies originated in the ambition of kings wanting to overstep the limits of their hereditary power and become desots. Other tyrannies grew out of the class that were chosen to be chief magistrates; in ancient times the people gave the magistrates a long tenure. Others arose out of the custom that oligarchies had of making some individual supreme over the highest offices. In any of these ways an ambitious man had no difficulty, if he desired, in creating a tyranny, since he had the power in his hands already, either as king or as one of the officers of state.

So, monarchy ranks with aristocracy, for it is based upon merit, whether of the individual or of his family, or on benefits conferred, or on these claims with power added to them. All who have obtained this honor have benefitted, or had in their power to benefit, states and nations; some (Codrus) have prevented the state from being enslaved in war; others (Cyrus) have given their country freedom, or have settled or gained a territory (the Lacedaemonian, Macedonian, and Molossian kings). A king is to be a protector of the rich against unjust treatment, of the people against insult and oppression. Whereas a tyrant, as has often been repeated, has no regard to any public interest, except as conducive to his private ends; his aim is pleasure, the aim of a king, honor. So they differ also in their excesses; the tyrant accumulates riches, the king seeks what brings honor. The guards of a king are citizens, but of a tyrant mercenaries.

Tyranny clearly has all the vices both of democracy and oligarchy. In oligarchy and tyranny, the end is wealth (only by wealth can the tyrant maintain his guard and his luxury). Both mistrust the people, and so deprive them of their arms. Both agree too in injuring the people and driving them out of the city and dispersing them. From democracy tyrants have borrowed the art of making war upon the notables and destroying them secretly or openly, or of exiling them because they are rivals and stand in the way of their power; and also because plots against them are contrived by men of this class, who either want to rule or to escape subjection. As said, the beginnings of change are the same in monarchies as in forms of polity: subjects attack their sovereigns out of fear or contempt, or because they have been unjustly treated by them. The most common form of injustice is insult; another is confiscation of property.

The ends sought by conspiracies against monarchies, whether tyrannies or royalties, are the same as the ends sought by conspiracies against other forms of government. Monarchs have great wealth and honor, which are objects of desire to all mankind. The attacks are made sometimes against their lives (where the sense of insult is the motive), sometimes against the office. Any sort of insult (and there are many) may stir up anger, and when men are angry, they commonly act out of revenge, and not from ambition.
Many, enraged by blows inflicted on the person which they deemed an insult, have either killed or attempted to kill officers of state and royal princes by whom they have been injured.

Fear is another motive that, as said, has caused conspiracies as well in monarchies as in more popular forms of government.

Another motive is contempt, as in the case of Sardanapalus, whom someone saw carding wool with his women, if the storytellers say truly. Even the friends of a tyrant will sometimes attack him out of contempt; the confidence that he reposes in them breeds contempt, and they think that they will not be found out. The expectation of success is likewise a sort of contempt; the assailants are ready to strike, and think nothing of the danger, because they seem to have the power in their hands. Thus generals of armies attack monarchs.

Bold natures, placed by their sovereigns in a high military position, are most likely to make the attempt in the expectation of success; courage is emboldened by power, and the union of the two inspires them with the hope of an easy victory.

Attempts of which the motive is ambition arise in a different way besides in those already mentioned: There are men who will risk their lives in the hope that, by the extraordinary action of killing a tyrant, simply seek to be famous and notable in the world; they wish to acquire, not a kingdom, but a name. But these men are rare; he who would kill a tyrant must be prepared to lose his life if he fails.

Tyrannies, like all other governments, are destroyed by some opposite and more powerful form of government from outside them. Democracy is antagonistic to tyranny, because they are nearly akin, for the extreme form of democracy is tyranny; and royalty and aristocracy are both alike opposed to tyranny, because they are constitutions of a different type. (EX: the Lacedaemonians put down most of the tyrannies, and so did the Syracusans during the time when they were well governed.)

Tyrannies are destroyed from within, when the reigning family is divided among itself, as that of Dionysius (Dion, his own relative, attacked and expelled him with the assistance of the people; he afterwards perished himself).

There are two chief motives that induce men to attack tyrannies — hatred (inevitable) and contempt (a frequent cause). Most of those who acquired power have retained it, but those who have inherited it have lost it, almost at once; living in luxurious ease, they have become contemptible, and offer many opportunities to their assailants. Anger must also be included under hatred, and produces the same effects. It is often even more ready to strike — the angry are more impetuous in making an attack, for they do not follow rational principle. And men are very apt to give way to their passions when they are insulted. Hatred is more reasonable, for anger is accompanied by pain, which is an impediment to reason, whereas hatred is painless.

All the causes mentioned that destroy the most unmixed form of oligarchy, and the extreme form of democracy, may be assumed to affect tyranny; indeed the extreme forms of both are only tyrannies distributed among several persons. Kingly rule is little affected by external causes, and so is lasting; it is generally destroyed from within in two ways: (a) when the members of the royal family quarrel among themselves, or (b) the kings attempt to administer the state too much like a tyranny, and to extend their authority contrary to the law. Kingships do not now tend to come into existence; where such forms of government arise, they are rather tyrannical monarchies. The rule of a king is over voluntary subjects, and he is supreme in all important matters; but in our own day men are more upon an equality, and no one is so immeasurably superior to others as to represent adequately the greatness and dignity of the office. Hence mankind will not, willingly, endure it, and anyone who obtains power by force or fraud is at once thought to be a tyrant. In hereditary monarchies a further cause of destruction is the fact that kings often fall into contempt, and, although possessing not tyrannical power, but only royal dignity, are apt to outrage others. Their overthrow is then readily effected; there is an end to the king when his subjects do not want to have him, but the tyrant lasts, whether they like him or not.

The destruction of monarchies is to be attributed to these and the like causes.
V.11 The More Restricted a Monarchy’s Power, the Longer Lasting It is; Two Major Ways to
Preserve Tyrannies [The Traditional Way (13 Sub-Types) and Methods that Come From What
Destroys Monarchies (8 Sub-Types)]; the 3 Marks of a Tyrant; Summary of What a Tyrant
Should do to Preserve His Power and Why it Will Preserve It (1313a-1315b).

Monarchies are generally preserved by the limitation of its powers. The more restricted the functions of kings, the longer their power will last unimpaired; then they are more moderate and not so despotic in their ways; and they are less envied by their subjects (EX: the Molossians).

Tyrannies are preserved in two quite opposite ways: [A] The old traditional method in which most tyrants administer their government. There are the already-mentioned prescriptions for the preservation of a tyranny (insofar as this is possible): (1) The tyrant should lop off those who are too high; he must put to death men of spirit; (2) he must not allow common meals, clubs, education, and the like; (3) he must be upon his guard against anything which is likely to inspire either courage or confidence among his subjects; (4) he must prohibit schools or other meetings for discussion, and he must take every means to prevent people from knowing one another (acquaintance begets mutual confidence). (5) He must compel all persons staying in the city to appear in public and live at his gates; then he will know what they are doing; if they are always kept under, they will learn to be humble. (6) In short, he should practice these and the like Persian and barbaric arts, which all have the same object. (7) A tyrant should also endeavor to know what each of his subjects says or does, and should employ spies (like the “female detectives” at Syracuse, and the eavesdroppers whom Hiero was in the habit of sending to any place of resort or meeting); the fear of informers prevents people from speaking their minds, and if they do, they are more easily found out. (8) The tyrant should sow quarrels among the citizens; friends should be embroiled with friends, the people with the notables, and the rich with one another. (9) He should impoverish his subjects; he thus provides against the maintenance of a guard by the citizens, and prevent the people from conspiring by keeping them hard at work (EX: the Pyramids of Egypt and the building of the temple of Olympian Zeus by the Peisistratidae – all these works were alike intended to occupy the people and keep them poor). (10) He should multiply taxes (EX: Dionysius at Syracuse, who contrived that within five years his subjects should bring into the treasury their whole property). (11) He should make war in order that his subjects may have something to do and be always in want of a leader. The characteristic of a tyrant is to distrust his friends (whereas kingships are preserved by his friends), because he knows that all men want to overthrow him, and they above all have the power to do so.

The practices of the last and worst form of democracy are all found in tyrannies: (12) The power given to women in their families in the hope that they will inform against their husbands; (13) the license that is allowed to slaves in order that they may betray their masters; slaves and women do not conspire against tyrants; and they are of course friendly to tyrannies and also to democracies, since under them they have a good time. The people too would fain be a monarch, and so the people and the tyrant hold the flatterer in honor; in democracies he is the demagogue; and the tyrant also has those who associate with him in a humble spirit, which is a work of flattery.

So tyrants are always fond of bad men, because they love to be flattered, but no man who has the spirit of a freeman in him will lower himself by flattery; good men love others, or at any rate do not flatter them. Moreover, the bad are useful for bad purposes; ‘nail knocks out nail’, as the proverb says. A tyrant characteristically dislikes everyone who has dignity or independence; he wants to be alone in his glory, but anyone who claims a like dignity or asserts his independence encroaches upon his prerogative, and is hated by him as an enemy to his power. A tyrant also likes foreigners better than citizens, and lives with them and invites them to his table; the one are enemies, but the others enter into no rivalry with him.

Such are the marks of the tyrant and the arts by which he preserves his power; there is no wickedness too great for him. All that we have said may be summed up under three heads, which answer to the three aims of the tyrant. These are, (a) the humiliation of his subjects, for he knows that a mean-spirited man will not conspire against anybody; (b) the creation of mistrust among them; a tyrant is not overthrown until men begin to have confidence in one another; and this is the reason why tyrants are at war with the good; they are under the idea that their power is endangered by them, not only because they will not be ruled despotically, but also because they are loyal to one another, and to other men, and do not inform against one another or against other men; and (c) the tyrant desires that his subjects shall be incapable of action, for no one attempts what is impossible,
and they will not attempt to overthrow a tyranny if they are powerless. To these three heads one or other of
the tyrant’s policies all his ideas may be referred.

[B] There is another method by which tyrannies are preserved that proceeds upon an almost opposite
principle of action. The nature of this latter method may be gathered from a comparison of the causes that
destroy kingdoms, as one mode of destroying kingly power is to make the office of king more tyrannical, so the
salvation of a tyranny is to make it more kinglike. But the tyrant must be careful to keep power enough to rule
over his subjects, whether they like him or not, for once he gives this up he gives up his tyranny. But though
power must be retained as the foundation, in all else the tyrant should act or appear to act in the character of a
king.

First, he should pretend concern for the public revenues, and not waste money in making presents of a
sort at which the common people get excited when they see their hard-won earnings snatched from them and
lavished on courtesans, foreigners, and artists. (a) He should give an account of what he receives and of what he
spends (practiced by some tyrants); then he will seem to be a steward of the public rather than a tyrant; nor need
he fear that, while he is the lord of the city, he will ever be in want of money. Such a policy is much more
advantageous for the tyrant when he goes from home, than to leave behind him a hoard; then the garrison who
remain in the city will be less likely to attack his power; and a tyrant, when he is absent from home, has more
reason to fear the guardians of his treasure than the citizens, for the one accompany him, but the others remain
behind. (b) He should be seen to collect taxes and to require public services only for state purposes, and so as to
form a fund in case of war, and generally he ought to make himself the guardian and treasurer of them, as if
they belonged, not to him, but to the public.

Second, he should appear, not harsh, but dignified, and when men meet him they should look upon him
with reverence, and not with fear. Yet it is hard for him to be respected if he inspires no respect, and so
whatever virtues he may neglect, at least he should maintain the character of a great soldier, and produce the
impression that he is one.

Third, neither he nor any of his associates should ever assault the young of either sex who are his
subjects, and the women of his family should observe a like self-control towards other women; the arrogance of
women has ruined many tyrannies. In the indulgence of pleasures he should be the opposite of our modern
 tyrants, who not only begin at dawn and pass whole days in sensuality, but want other men to see them, so that
they may admire their happy and blessed lot. In these things a tyrant should if possible be moderate, or at any
rate should not parade his vices to the world; a drunken and drowsy tyrant is soon despised and attacked; not so
he who is temperate and wide awake.

Fourth, his conduct should be the very reverse of nearly everything which has been said before about
 tyrants. He ought to adorn and improve his city, as though he were not a tyrant, but the guardian of the state.

Fifth, he should appear to be particularly earnest in the service of the gods; if men think that a ruler is
religious and has a reverence for the gods, they are less afraid of suffering injustice at his hands, and they are less
disposed to conspire against him, because they believe him to have the very gods fighting on his side. At the
same time his religion must not be thought foolish.

Sixth, he should honor men of merit, and make them think that they would not be held in more honor
by the citizens if they had a free government. The honor he should distribute himself, but officers and courts of
law should inflict the punishment. It is a precaution that is taken by all monarchs not to make one person great;
but if one, then two or more should be raised, that they may keep an eye one another. And if anyone is to be
deprived of his power, let it be diminished gradually, not taken from him all at once.

Seventh, the tyrant should abstain from all outrage, in particular from personal violence and from
wanton conduct towards the young. He should be especially careful of his behavior to men who are lovers of
honour; as the lovers of money are offended when their property is touched, so are the lovers of honor and the
good when their honor is affected. So a tyrant ought either not to commit such acts at all; or he should be
thought only to employ fatherly correction, and not to trample upon others — and his acquaintance with youth
should be supposed to arise from desire, and not from the arrogance of power, and in general he should
compensate the appearance of dishonor by the increase of honor. Of those who attempt assassination they are
the most dangerous, and require to be most carefully watched, who do not care to survive, if they effect their
purpose. So special precaution should be taken about any who think that either they or those for whom they
care have been insulted; when men are led away by passion to assault others they are beside themselves. As Heraclitus says, “It is difficult to fight against anger; for a man will buy revenge with his soul.”

Lastly, whereas states consist of two classes (poor men and rich), the tyrant should lead both to imagine that they are preserved and prevented from harming one another by his rule, and whichever of the two is stronger he should attach to his government; having this advantage, he has no need either to emancipate slaves or to disarm the citizens; either party added to the force which he already has, will make him stronger than his assailants.

Thus, the general policy of the tyrant should be obvious. He ought to show himself to his subjects in the light, not of a tyrant, but of a steward and a king. He should not appropriate what is theirs, but should be their guardian; he should be moderate, not extravagant in his way of life; he should win the notables by companionship, and the multitude by flattery. Then his rule will of necessity be nobler and happier, because he will rule over better men whose spirits are not crushed, and who do not hate and fear him. His power too will be more lasting. His disposition will be virtuous, or at least half virtuous; and he will not be wicked, but half wicked only.

V.12 Oligarchies and Tyrannies are the Most Short-Lived Governments; 9 Criticisms of Plato V: Republic (The Way in Which He Treats Revolutions) (1315b-1316b).

No forms of government are so short-lived as oligarchy and tyranny. The longest lasting tyranny went for 100 years (EX: Orthagoras and his sons at Sicyon): They treated their subjects with moderation and care, and to a great extent observed the laws. [Aristotle mentions other, shorter-lasting tyrannies.]

I have now gone through almost all the causes by which constitutional governments and monarchies are either destroyed or preserved.

In the Republic of Plato, Socrates treats of revolutions, but not well: (1) He mentions no cause of change that peculiarly affects the first or perfect state. He only says that the cause is that nothing is abiding, but all things change in a certain cycle; and that the origin of the change consists in those numbers “of which 4 and 3, married with 5, furnish two harmonies” (he means when the number of this figure becomes solid).

(2) He conceives that nature at certain times produces bad men who will not submit to education; he may very likely be not far wrong, since there may well be some men who cannot be educated and made virtuous. But why is such a cause of change peculiar to his ideal state, and not rather common to all states, or indeed, to everything that comes into being at all?

(3) Is it by the agency of time, which, as he declares, makes all things change, that things that did not begin together, change together? EX: If something has come into being the day before the completion of the cycle, will it change with things that came into being before?

(4) Why should the perfect state change into the Spartan (timocracy)? Governments more often take an opposite form than one akin to them. The same remark is applicable to the other changes; he says that timocracy changes into an oligarchy, and this into a democracy, and this again into a tyranny. But the contrary happens quite as often; a democracy is even more likely to change into an oligarchy than into a monarchy.

(5) He never says whether tyranny is, or is not, liable to revolutions, and if it is, what is the cause of them, or into what form it changes. The reason is that he could not very well have told: there is no rule; according to him, it should revert to the first and best, and then there would be a complete cycle. But in point of fact a tyranny often changes into a tyranny (EX: at Sicyon the tyranny of Myron changed into that of Cleisthenes); into oligarchy (as the tyranny of Antíleon did at Chalcis); into democracy (from Gelo at Syracuse); and into aristocracy (as at Carthage).

(6) Often an oligarchy changes into a tyranny (EX: most of the ancient oligarchies in Sicily, the oligarchy at Leontini changed into the tyranny of Panatéius; the same thing has happened in many other states).

(7) It is absurd to suppose that the state changes into oligarchy merely because the ruling class is lovers and makers of money, and not because the very rich think it unfair that the very poor should have an equal share in the government as they do. In many oligarchies, there are laws against making money in trade. But at Carthage, which is a democracy, there is no such prohibition; and yet to this day the Carthaginians have never had a revolution.
It is absurd for him to say that an oligarchy is two cities, one of the rich, and the other of the poor. Is not this just as true in the Spartan constitution, or whenever all do not possess equal property, or all are not equally good men? Nobody need be any poorer than he was before, and yet the oligarchy may change all the same into a democracy, if the poor form the majority; and a democracy may change into an oligarchy, if the wealthy class are stronger than the people, and the one are energetic, the other indifferent. Although the causes of the change are very numerous, he mentions only one, which is, that the citizens become poor through dissipation and debt, as though he thought that all, or the majority of them, were originally rich. This is not true: though it is true that when any of the leaders lose their property they are ripe for revolution; but, when anybody else does, it is no great matter, and an oligarchy does not even then more often pass into a democracy than into any other form of government. Again, if men are deprived of the honors of state, and are wronged, and insulted, they make revolutions, and change forms of government, even although they have not wasted their substance because they might do what they like – of which extravagance he declares excessive freedom to be the cause.

Finally, although there are many forms of oligarchies and democracies, Socrates speaks of their revolutions as though there were only one form of either of them.

**BOOK VI:**

**VI.1 Let Us Assign to All Government-Forms Modes that are Proper/Advantageous to Each, and Discuss Their Combinations, and How They are to be Established; We Will Begin with Democracy, Which Differ Due to Differences of Population and Other Properties (1316b-1317a).**

There are many kinds of all government forms; we will now assign to them severally the modes of organization that are proper and advantageous to each, adding what remains to be said about them. We also ought to consider the various combinations of these modes themselves; such combinations make constitutions overlap one another, so that aristocracies have an oligarchical character, and polities incline to democracies. Eks: When the deliberative part of the government and the election of officers is constituted oligarchically, and the law-courts aristocratically, or when the courts and the deliberative part of the state are oligarchical, and the election of offices aristocratic, or when in any other way there is a want of harmony in the composition of a state. Lastly, we must not only show which of these governments is the best for each state, but also briefly proceed to consider how these and other forms of government are to be established.

First, let us speak of democracy, which will also bring to light the opposite form of government commonly called oligarchy. We need to ascertain all the elements and characteristics of democracy, since from the combinations of these the varieties of democratic government arise. There are several democracies, differing due to two causes: One has been mentioned: differences of population; the popular element may consist of farmers, or of craftspersons, or of laborers, and if the first of these is added to the second, or the third to the two others, not only does the democracy become better or worse, but its very nature is changed. The second cause: Various properties and characteristics of democracy, when variously combined, make a difference. For one democracy will have less and another will have more, and another will have all of these characteristics. There is an advantage in knowing them all, whether a man wishes to establish some new form of democracy, or only to remodel an existing one. (It is a mistake, as said, for state founders to try to bring together all the elements that accord with the ideas of the several constitutions.) We will now set forth the principles, characteristics, and aims of such states.
VI.2 Liberty is the Basis of Democracy and has Two Principles: For All to Rule and be Ruled in Turn, and That Man Should Live as He Likes; 10 Characteristics of Democracy; Democratic Justice is That All Should Count Equally (1317a-1318a).

The basis of a democratic state is liberty; this they affirm to be the great end of every democracy. One principle of liberty is for all to rule and be ruled in turn, and indeed democratic justice is the application of numerical not proportionate equality; thus, the majority must be supreme, and whatever the majority approve must be the end and the just. Every citizen, it is said, must have equality, and so in a democracy the poor have more power than the rich, because there are more of them, and the will of the majority is supreme. This, then, is one note of liberty that all democrats affirm to be the principle of their state. The second mark of liberty is that a man should live as he likes, since not to live as a man likes is the mark of a slave. From this has arisen the claim of men to be ruled by none, if possible, or, if this is impossible, to rule and be ruled in turns; and so it contributes to the freedom based upon equality.

The characteristics of democracy are as follows: (1) the election of officers by all out of all; (2) all should rule over each, and each in his turn over all; (3) the appointment to all offices, or to all but those which require experience and skill, should be made by lot; (4) no property qualification should be required for offices, or only a very low one; (5) a man should not hold the same office twice, or (6) not often, or in the case of few except military offices; (7) brief tenure of all offices, or of as many as possible; (8) all men should sit in judgment, or that judges selected out of all should judge; in all matters, or in most and in the greatest and most important — such as the scrutiny of accounts, the constitution, and private contracts; that the assembly should be supreme over all causes, or at any rate over the most important, and the magistrates over none or only over a very few. Of all magistracies, a council is the most democratic when there is not the means of paying all the citizens, but when they are paid even this is robbed of its power; for the people then draw all cases to themselves, as I said in the previous discussion. (9) Payment for services: assembly, law-courts, magistrates, everybody receives pay, when it is to be had; or when it is not to be had for all, then it is given to the law-courts and to the stated assemblies, to the council and to the magistrates, or at least to any of them who are compelled to have their meals together. [And whereas oligarchy is characterized by birth, wealth, and education, the marks of democracy appear to be the opposite of these — low birth, poverty, mean employment.] (10) No magistracy is perpetual, but if any such have survived some ancient change in the constitution it should be stripped of its power, and the holders should be elected by lot and no longer by vote.

These are the points common to all democracies; but democracy and rule by the people in their truest form are based upon the recognized principle of democratic justice, that all should count equally; equality implies that the poor should have no more share in the government than the rich, and should not be the only rulers, but that all should rule equally according to their numbers. And in this way men think that they will secure equality and freedom in their state.

VI.3 How is Democratic Equality to be Obtained? Oligarchic Justice; Oligarchs and Democrats Agree in a Way that Majority Rules; the Weaker are Always Asking for Equality and Justice, for Which the Stronger do Not Care (1318a-b).

How is this democratic equality to be obtained? [Are we to assign to a thousand poor men the property qualifications of five hundred rich men? And shall we give the thousand a power equal to that of the five hundred? Or, if this is not to be the mode, ought we, still retaining the same ratio, to take equal numbers from each and give them the control of the elections and of the courts? – Which, according to the democratic notion, is the more just form of the constitution – this or one based on numbers only?] Democrats say that justice is that to which the majority agree, oligarchs that to which the wealthier class agree; in their opinion the decision should be given according to the amount of property. In both principles there is some inequality and injustice. If justice is the will of the few, any person who has more wealth than all the rest of the rich put together, ought, upon the oligarchical principle, to have the sole power – but this would be tyranny; or if justice is the will of the majority, as said, they will unjustly confiscate the property of the wealthy minority.

To find a principle of equality in which they both agree we must inquire into their respective ideas of justice. Oligarchs and democrats agree in saying that whatever is decided by the majority of the citizens is to be...
deemed law. Granted, but not without some reserve; since there are two classes out of which a state is composed – the poor and the rich – that is to be deemed law, on which both or the greater part of both agree; and if they disagree, that which is approved by the greater number, and by those who have the higher qualification. EX: Suppose that there are ten rich and twenty poor, and some measure is approved by six of the rich and is disapproved by fifteen of the poor, and the remaining four of the rich join with the party of the poor, and the remaining five of the poor with that of the rich; in such a case the will of those whose qualifications, when both sides are added up, are the greatest, should prevail. If they turn out to be equal, we can choose by lot, or some similar expedient. But, though it may be difficult in theory to know what is just and equal, the practical difficulty of inducing those to forbear who can, if they like, encroach, is far greater, for the weaker are always asking for equality and justice, but the stronger care for none of these things.

VI.4 The Best/Oldest Form of Democracy is When Most are Husbandmen; Next Best is When Most are Shepherds; Next When Most are Craftspersons, Traders, or Laborers; Worst is When Illegitimate People are Made Citizens (1318b-1319b).

Of the four kinds of democracy, as said, the best is that which comes first and is also the oldest (according to the natural classification of their inhabitants). The best material of democracy is an agricultural population; there is no difficulty in forming a democracy where the mass of the people lives by agriculture or tending of cattle. Being poor, they have no leisure, and therefore do not often attend the assembly, and having the necessaries of life they are always at work, and do not covet the property of others. Indeed, they find their employment pleasanter than the cares of government or office where no great gains can be made out of them, for the many are more desirous of gain than of honor. EX: even ancient tyrannies were patiently endured by them, as they still endure oligarchies, if they are allowed to work and are not deprived of their property; for some of them grow quickly rich and the others are well enough off. And they have the power of electing the magistrates and calling them to account; their ambition, if they have any, is thus satisfied; and in some democracies, although they do not all share in the appointment of offices, except through representatives elected in turn out of the whole people, as at Mantinea – yet, if they have the power of deliberating, the many are contented.

Hence it is both expedient and customary in this first type of democracy that all should elect to offices, and conduct inspections, and sit in the law-courts, but that the great offices should be filled up by election and from persons having a qualification; the greater requiring a greater qualification, or, if there are no offices for which a qualification is required, then those who are marked out by special ability should be appointed. Under such a form of government the citizens are sure to be governed well (the offices will always be held by the best persons; the people are willing enough to elect them and are not jealous of the good). The good and the notables will then be satisfied, for they will not be governed by men who are their inferiors, and the persons elected will rule justly, because others will call them to account. Every man should be responsible to others, nor should anyone be allowed to do just as he pleases; for where absolute freedom is allowed there is nothing to restrain the evil which is inherent in every man. But the principle of responsibility secures that which is the greatest good in states; the right persons rule and are prevented from doing wrong, and the people have their due.

This is the best kind of democracy because the people are drawn from a certain class. Some of the ancient laws of most states were useful with a view to making the people husbandmen. They provided either that no one should possess more than a certain quantity of land, or that, if he did, the land should not be within a certain distance from the town or the acropolis. Formerly in many states there was a law forbidding anyone to sell his original allotment of land.

Next best to an agricultural, and in many respects similar, are a pastoral people, who live by their flocks; they are the best trained of any for war, robust in body and able to camp out. The people of whom other democracies consist are far inferior to them, for their life is inferior; there is no room for virtue in any of their employments, whether they are craftspersons, traders, or laborers. Besides, people of this class can readily come to the assembly, because they are continually moving about in the city and in the agora; whereas farmers are scattered over the country and do not meet or feel the same need of assembling together. Where the territory also happens to extend to a distance from the city, there is no difficulty in making a virtuous democracy or polity; the people are compelled to settle in the country, and even if there is a town population the assembly ought not to meet, in democracies, when the
country people cannot come. We have thus explained how the first and best form of democracy should be constituted; it is clear that the other or inferior sorts will deviate in a regular order, and the population that is excluded will at each stage be of a lower kind.

The last form of democracy, in which all share alike, is one that cannot be borne by all states, and will not last long unless well regulated by laws and customs. In order to constitute such a democracy and strengthen the people, the leaders have been in the habit of including as many as they can, and making citizens not only of those who are legitimate, but even of the illegitimate, and of those who have only one parent a citizen, whether father or mother; nothing of this sort comes amiss to such a democracy. This is the way in which demagogues proceed. Whereas the right thing would be to make no more additions when the number of the commonalty exceeds that of the notables and of the middle class and not to go beyond this. When in excess of this point, the constitution becomes disorderly, and the notables grow excited and impatient of the democracy, as in the insurrection at Cyrene; no notice is taken of a little evil, but when it increases it strikes the eye.

Measures like those that Cleisthenes passed when he wanted to increase the power of the democracy at Athens, or such as were taken by the founders of popular government at Cyrene, are useful in the extreme form of democracy. Fresh tribes and brotherhoods should be established; the private rites of families should be restricted and converted into public ones; in short, every contrivance should be adopted which will mingle the citizens with one another and get rid of old connections. All the measures that are taken by tyrants appear to be democratic; EX: the license permitted to slaves (which may be to a certain extent advantageous), women, children, and everybody, to live as he likes. Such a government will have many supporters, for most persons would rather live in a disorderly than in a sober manner.

VI.5 Preserving a Democracy: Guard Against Destructive Elements, Condemned Property Should Not Become the State’s, Have Few State Trials and Fine Frivolous Lawsuit Makers, Have Good Policies Whether There are Revenues for Assembly or Not, and Ensure that the Poor do Not Become too Poor (1319b-1320b).

A far greater difficulty than establishing a democracy is the preservation of it. The legislator should therefore endeavor to have a firm foundation according to the principles already laid down concerning the preservation and destruction of states; (1) he should guard against the destructive elements, and should make (written or unwritten) laws that will contain all the preservatives of states. The truly democratic or oligarchical measure is that which will make them last longest. The demagogues of our own day often get property confiscated in the law-courts in order to please the people. Hence (2) those who have the welfare of the state at heart should counteract them, and make a law that the property of the condemned shall not be public and go into the treasury but be sacred. Thus offenders will still be as afraid, for they will be punished all the same, and the people, having nothing to gain, will not be so ready to condemn the accused. (3) Care should also be taken that state trials are as few as possible, and heavy penalties should be inflicted on those who bring groundless accusations; it is the practice to indict, not members of the popular party, but the notables, although the citizens ought to be all attached to the constitution as well, or at any rate should not regard their rulers as enemies. Since in the last form of democracy the citizens are very numerous, and can hardly be made to assemble unless they are paid, and to pay them when there are no revenues presses hardly upon the notables (the money must be obtained by property taxes, confiscations, and corrupt practices of the courts, things which have overthrown many democracies); (4.1) where there are no revenues, the government should hold few assemblies, and the law-courts should consist of many persons, but sit for a few days only. This system has two advantages: first, the rich do not fear the expense, even though they are unpaid themselves when the poor are paid; and second, cases are better tried, for wealthy persons, although they do not like to be long absent from their own affairs, do not mind going for a few days to the law-courts. (4.2) Where there are revenues, the demagogues should not be allowed after their manner to distribute the surplus; the poor are always receiving and wanting more and more, for such help is like water poured into a leaky cask. (5) Yet the true friend of the people should see that they are not too poor, for extreme poverty lowers the character of the democracy; so measures should be taken which will give them lasting prosperity; and as this is equally the interest of all classes, the proceeds of the public revenues should be accumulated and distributed among its poor, if possible, in such quantities as may
enable them to purchase a little farm, or, at any rate, make a beginning in trade or farming. If this benevolence cannot be extended to all, money should be distributed in turn according to tribes or other divisions, and in the meantime the rich should pay the fee for the attendance of the poor at the necessary assemblies; and should in return be excused from useless public services (EX: the Carthaginians retain the affections of the poor by sending some of them into their dependent towns, where they grow rich).

Enough has been said of the manner in which democracies ought to be constituted.

VI.6 What Constitutes Oligarchy? There Ought to be Two Standards of Property Assessment (High, for Superior Offices, and Low, for Humbler, Indispensable Ones); Whoever Meets the Assessment Should be a Citizen; Good Order Preserves an Oligarchy (1320b-1321a).

What should be the constitution of oligarchies? We have only to reason from opposites and compare each form of oligarchy with the corresponding form of democracy.

The first and best balanced of oligarchies is akin to a polity. There ought to be two standards of property assessment; the one high, the other low -- the lower qualifying for the humbler yet indispensable offices and the higher for the superior ones. He who acquires the prescribed assessment should have the rights of citizenship. The number of those admitted should be such as will make the entire governing body stronger than those who are excluded, and the new citizen should be always taken out of the better class of the people. The principle, narrowed a little, gives another form of oligarchy; until at length we reach the most cliquish and tyrannical of them all, answering to the extreme democracy, which, being the worst, requires vigilance in proportion to its badness. As healthy bodies and ships well-provided with sailors may undergo many mishaps and survive them, and as sickly constitutions and rotten ill-manned ships are ruined by the very least mistake, so do the worst forms of government require the greatest care. The large citizen populations of democracies generally preserve them (number is to democracy in the place of justice based on merit); whereas the preservation of an oligarchy clearly depends on an opposite principle (good order).

VI.7 Four Kinds of Commoners (Farmers, Craftspersons, Traders and Laborers) and Military Forces (Calvary, Heavy Infantry, Light Infantry, and Navy); a Strong Calvary Implies a Strong Oligarchy; a Second Form of Oligarchy is Due to a Strong Heavy Infantry; the Strong Light Infantry and Naval Elements are Democratic; the Oligarch Should Yield a Share of the Government to the People; Highest Magistracies Should Have Expensive Duties Attached and Offer Magnificent Sacrifices or Erect Some Public Edifice (1321a-b).

As there are four chief divisions of the common people (farmers, craftspersons, traders, and laborers); so there are four kinds of military forces (calvary, heavy infantry, light infantry, and the navy). When the country is adapted for cavalry, then a strong oligarchy is likely to be established. The security of the inhabitants depends upon a force of this sort, and only rich men can afford to keep horses. The second form of oligarchy prevails when the country is adapted to heavy infantry; this service is better suited to the rich than to the poor.

But the light infantry and the naval element are wholly democratic; and if the two parties quarrel, the light infantry and navy overturn the oligarchy in the struggle. A remedy for this state of things may be found in the practice of generals who combine a proper contingent of light infantry with cavalry and heavy-armed. This is how the poor get the better of the rich in civil contests; being lightly armed, they fight with advantage against cavalry and heavy infantry. An oligarchy that raises such a force out of the lower classes raises a power against itself. So, since the ages of the citizens vary and some are older and some younger, the fathers should have their own sons, while they are still young, taught the agile movements of light-armed troops; and these, when they have been taken out of the ranks of the youth, should become light-armed warriors in reality.

The oligarchy should also yield a share in the government to the people [either, as said, (a) to those who have a property assessment; (b) to those who have abstained for a certain number of years from mean employments (Thebes); or (c) to men of merit who are selected for their worthiness, whether previously citizens or not (Massalia)].
The magistracies of the highest rank, which ought to be in the hands of the governing body, should have expensive duties attached to them, and then the people will not desire them and will take no offense at the privileges of their rulers when they see that they pay a heavy fine for their dignity. It is fitting also that the magistrates on entering office should offer magnificent sacrifices or erect some public edifice, and then the people who participate in the entertainments, and see the city decorated with votive offerings and buildings, will not desire an alteration in the government, and the notables will have memorials of their munificence. (This is exactly the opposite of our modern oligarchs, who are as covetous of gain as they are of honor; oligarchies like theirs may be well described as petty democracies.) This is the manner in which democracies and oligarchies should be organized.


Next, we'll discuss the right distribution of offices, their number, their nature, their duties (some of which we have already spoken). No state can exist without the necessary offices, and no state can be well administered without having the offices that tend to preserve harmony and good order.

Necessary offices: (1) Care of the market; a magistrate should be appointed to inspect contracts and to maintain order. In every state there must inevitably be buyers and sellers who will supply one another’s wants; this is the readiest way to make a state self-sufficient and so fulfill the purpose for which men come together into one state.

(2) The office of City-warden (of a similar kind to (1)): the supervision and embellishment of public and private buildings, the maintaining and repairing of houses and roads, the prevention of disputes about boundaries, and other concerns of a like nature. This office has various departments, which, in more populous towns, are shared among different persons, one, for example, taking charge of the walls, another of the fountains, a third of harbors.

(3) Wardens of the country, or Inspectors of the woods: Similar to (2), magistrates, having to do with the same matters outside the walls and in the country.

(4) Receivers of taxes: the revenue that is distributed among the various departments.

(5) Recorders or Sacred Recorders, Presidents, and the like: Registers all private contracts, and decisions of the courts, all public indictments, and also all preliminary proceedings. This office is sometimes subdivided, but in some places a single officer is responsible for all these matters.

The following duties are the most necessary and also the most difficult: (6) The execution of punishments, or the exaction of fines from those who are posted up according to the registers; and also the custody of prisoners. The difficulty of this office arises out of the odium that is attached to it; no one will undertake it unless great profits are to be made, and anyone who does is loath to execute the law. Still the office is necessary; judicial decisions are useless if they take no effect; and if society cannot exist without them, neither can it exist without the execution of them. It is so unpopular, that it should not be entrusted to one person, but divided among several taken from different courts. Similarly, an effort should be made to distribute among different persons the writing up of those who are on the register of public debtors. For penalties are more likely to be exacted when less odium attaches to the exaction of them; but a double odium is incurred when the judges who have passed also execute the sentence, and if they are always the executioners, they will be the enemies of all. In many places, one magistracy executes the sentence, and another has the custody of the prisoners (EX: “the Eleven” at Athens). It is well to separate off the jailorship also, and try by some device to render the office less unpopular. It is quite as necessary as that of the executioners; but good men do all they can to avoid it, and worthless persons cannot safely be trusted with it; they themselves require a guard, and are not fit to guard others. So there ought not to be a single or permanent officer set apart for this duty; it should be entrusted to the
young, wherever they are organized into a band or guard, and different magistrates acting in turn should take charge of it.

There are the indispensable officers, and should be ranked first—next in order follow others, equally necessary, but of higher rank, and requiring great experience and trustworthiness: (7) The offices to which are committed the guard of the city, and other military functions. Not only in time of war but of peace their duty will be to defend the walls and gates, and to muster and marshal the citizens. In some states there are many such offices; in others there are a few only, while small states are content with one; these officers are called generals or commanders. If a state has cavalry or light-armed troops or archers or a naval force, it will sometimes happen that each of these departments has separate officers, who are called admirals, or generals of cavalry or of light-armed troops. There are subordinate officers called naval captains, and captains of light-armed troops and of horse, having others under them—all these are included in the department of war. Thus much of military command.

Since some of these offices handle the public money, (8) there must of necessity be another office that examines and audits them, and has no other functions (Inspectors, Auditors, Accountants, Advocates).

(9) Preliminary Counselors or Counselor: There is another office that is supreme over them, dealing with rates and taxes, (or presides over the assembly in a democracy). There must be a body that convenes the supreme authority in the state. These are the chief political offices.

(10) Priesthood, Superintendents of Public Worship, Guardians of Shrines, Treasurers of the Sacred Revenues: concerned with the maintenance of religion; priests and guardians see to the preservation and repair of the temples of the gods and to other matters of religion. One office of this sort may be enough in small places, but in larger ones there are a great many. Nearly connected with these there are also the officers appointed for the performance of the public sacrifices, except any which the law assigns to the priests; such sacrifices derive their dignity from the public hearth of the city. They are sometimes called Archons, Kings, or Presidents.

These, then, are the necessary offices, which may be summed up as follows: offices concerned with matters of religion, war, revenue and expenditure, the market, the city, the harbors, the country; the courts of law, the records of contracts, execution of sentences, custody of prisoners, audits and inspections and accounts of magistrates; lastly, there are those which preside over the public deliberations of the state. There are likewise magistracies characteristic of states which are peaceful and prosperous, and at the same time have a regard to good order: such as (11) the offices of guardians of women, (12) guardians of the laws, (13) guardians of children, and (14) directors of gymnastics; (15) superintendents of gymnastic and Dionysiac contests, and of other similar spectacles. Some of these are clearly not democratic offices; EX: the guardianships of women and children—the poor, not having any slaves, must employ both their women and children as servants.

There are three offices according to whose directions the highest magistrates are chosen in certain states (16) guardians of the law, (17) preliminary counselors, and (18) counselors. Of these, the guardians of the law are an aristocratic, the preliminary counselors an oligarchical, the council a democratic, institution. This is an outline of the different kinds of offices.

BOOK VII:

VII.1 The Most Choiceworthy Life; the Happy Man Must Have 3 Classes of Goods: External, Bodily, and Those of the Soul; Objections to the View that One May Have a Moderate Amount of Virtue, but Limitless Wealth, Property, Power, Reputation, etc.; Wise Men Should Choose External and Bodily Goods for the Sake of the Soul; Man (Like God) is Only Happy to the Extent That He is Virtuous and Wise; Good Fortune Comes by Chance and of Themselves, but No One is Just or Temperate by Accident; the Courage, Justice, and Wisdom of a State Have the Same Form and Nature as Those in an Individual (1323a-1324a).

To duly inquire about the best form of a state, one ought first to determine which is the most eligible life; in the natural order of things, those men may be expected to lead the best life who are governed in the best manner of
which their circumstances admit. So we ought first to ascertain the most generally choiceworthy life, and then whether the same life is best for the state and for individuals.

Assuming that enough has been already said [in my other, unfound, work] concerning the best life, we will now only repeat what is contained in them. Certainly no one will dispute the propriety of that partition of goods which separates them into three classes (external goods, goods of the body, and goods of the soul), or deny that the happy man must have all three. No one would maintain that he is happy who has not in him a particle of courage, temperance, justice, or practical wisdom, who is afraid of every insect which flutters past him, and will commit any crime, however great, in order to gratify his lust for meat or drink, who will sacrifice his dearest friend for the sake of half a farthing, and is as feeble and false in mind as a child or a madman. These propositions are almost universally acknowledged as soon as they are uttered, but men differ about the degree or relative superiority of this or that good. Some think that a very moderate amount of virtue is enough, but set no limit to their desires for wealth, property, power, reputation, and the like.

To them we reply with facts, which easily prove that (1) mankind does not acquire or preserve the virtues by the help of external goods, but external goods by the help of the virtues, and (2) happiness (consisting in pleasure, virtue, or both) is more often found with the most highly cultivated minds and characters, who have only a moderate share of external goods, than among those who possess excess external goods but are deficient in higher qualities; this is in accordance with experience and reason. Whereas external goods have a limit, like any other instrument, and all things useful are useful for a purpose, and where there is too much of them they must either do harm, or at any rate be of no use, to their possessors, every good of the soul, the greater it is, is also of greater use, if “useful” and “noble” is appropriate to such subjects.

The best state of one thing in relation to another corresponds in degree of virtue to the interval between the natures of which we say that these very states are states: so that, if the soul is more noble than our possessions or our bodies, both absolutely and in relation to us, it must be admitted that the best state of either has a similar ratio to the other. It is for the sake of the soul that external and bodily goods are desirable at all, and all wise men ought to choose them for the sake of the soul, and not the soul for the sake of them.

Each person has just so much of happiness as he has of virtue and wisdom, and of virtuous and wise action. God is a witness to us of this truth: God is happy and blessed, not by reason of any external good, but in Himself and by reason of His own nature. Herein of necessity lies the difference between good fortune and happiness: external goods come of themselves, and chance is the author of them, but no one is just or temperate by or through chance. In like manner, and by a similar train of argument, the happy state may be shown to be that which is best and acts rightly; and it cannot act rightly without doing right actions, and neither individual nor state can do right actions without virtue and wisdom. Thus the courage, justice, and wisdom of a state have the same form and nature as the qualities that give the individual who possesses them the name of just, wise or temperate.

Let us assume then that the best (most choiceworthy) life, both for individuals and states, is the life of virtue, when virtue has external goods enough for the performance of good actions.

VII.2 The Happiness of the Individual is the Same as the State; the Best Government-Form is the One in Which Any Citizen Can Act Best and Live Happily; the Wise Man/State will Regulate His/Its Life to the Best End; Different Views on Happy or Unjust Government; it is Strange that a Statesman Should Spend His Life Trying to Practice Despotic Rule; a City Can be Happy in Isolation; Military Pursuits, Though Honorable, are a Means, Not the Supreme End of All Things (1324a-1325a).

No one denies that the happiness of the individual is the same as that of the state: Those who hold that the well-being of the individual consists in his wealth, also think that riches make the happiness of the whole state; those who value the tyrant life most highly deem that city the happiest which rules over the greatest number; they who approve an individual for his virtue say that the more virtuous a city is, the happier it is. Two questions: (1) Which is the more desirable life, that of a citizen who is a member of a state, or that of an alien who has no political ties? (2) Which is the best form of constitution or the best condition of a state, either on the supposition that political privileges are desirable for all, or for a majority only? We will focus on the second question.
That form of government is best in which every man, whoever he is, can act best and live happily. The proponents of the life of virtue raise a question: Is the statesman’s life (of business and politics) more desirable than the philosopher’s (the contemplative life, wholly independent of external goods – maintained by some to be the only one worthy of a philosopher). These are the lives most preferred by those who have been most keen in the pursuit of virtue (now and in the past). This is an important question: The wise man, like the wise state, will necessarily regulate his life according to the best end. Some think that while a despotic rule over others is the greatest injustice, to exercise a statesman’s rule over them, even though not unjust, is a great impediment to a man’s individual well-being.

Others take an opposite view: the true life of man is the practical and political, and every virtue admits of being practiced, quite as much by statesmen and rulers as by private individuals. Others opine that arbitrary and tyrannical rule alone makes for happiness.

In some states the entire aim of the laws and constitution is to give men despotic power over their neighbors. So, although in most cities the laws may be said generally to be in a chaotic state, still, if they aim at anything, they aim at the maintenance of power (EXs: in Lacedaemon and Crete, the system of education and the greater part of the laws are framed with a view to war). In all nations that are able to gratify their ambition military power is held in esteem (EXs: the Scythians, Persians, Thracians, and Celts). Some laws even tend to stimulate the warlike virtues (as at Carthage, where we are told that men obtain the honor of wearing as many armlets as they have served campaigns).

To a reflecting mind it must appear very strange that the statesman should be always considering how he can dominate and tyrannize over others, whether they are willing or not. How can that which is not even lawful be the business of the statesman or the legislator? It certainly is unlawful to rule without regard to justice, for there may be might where there is no right. The other arts and sciences offer no parallel; a physician is not expected to persuade or coerce his patients, nor a pilot the passengers in his ship. But most men appear to think that despotic government is statesmanship, and what men affirm to be unjust and inexpedient in their own case they are not ashamed of practicing towards others; they demand just rule for themselves, but where other men are concerned they care nothing about it. Such behavior is irrational; unless the one party is, and the other is not, born to serve, in which case men have a right to command, not indeed all their fellows, but only those who are intended to be subjects; just as we ought not to hunt men for food or sacrifice, but only edible wild animals.

There may be a city happy in isolation, which we will assume to be well governed (it is quite possible that a city thus isolated might be well-administered and have good laws); but such a city would not be constituted with any view to war or the conquest of enemies – that sort of thing must be excluded.

Clearly, military pursuits (though generally to be deemed honorable) are not the supreme end of all things, but only means. The good lawgiver should inquire how states and races of men and communities may participate in a good life, and in the happiness which is attainable by them. His enactments will not be always the same; and where there are neighbors he will have to see what sort of studies should be practiced in relation to their several characters, or how the measures appropriate in relation to each are to be adopted.

VII.3 The Life of a Freeman v. a Statesman, Being the Best Life; Supreme Power is Not the Best of All Things; We Ought to Follow/Obey the One Who is Virtuous and Does Good Actions; Happiness is Acting Well, so an Active Life is Best for the State and Individual; the Directing Mind Most Truly Acts; the Same Life is Best for the Individual, State, and Humans in General (1325a-b).

Let us now address those who agree that the life of virtue is the most desirable, but differ about the manner of practicing it. Some renounce political power, and think that the freeman’s life is best; but others think the statesman’s life is best. The argument for the statesman’s life is that he who does nothing cannot do well, and that acting well is identical with happiness. To both we say: “you are partly right and partly wrong.” The first group is right in affirming that the life of the freeman is better than the life of the despot; there is nothing noble in having the use of a slave, insofar as he is a slave; or in issuing commands about necessary things. But it is an error to suppose that every sort of rule is despotic like that of a master over slaves, for there is as great a difference between rule over freemen and rule over slaves as there is between slavery by nature and freedom by
nature, about which I have said enough. It is equally a mistake to place inactivity above action, for happiness is activity, and the actions of the just and wise are the realization of much that is noble.

Someone, accepting these premises, may still maintain that supreme power is the best of all things, because its possessors are able to perform the greatest number of noble actions. If so, the man who is able to rule, instead of giving up anything to his neighbor, ought rather to take away his power; and the father should care nothing for his son, nor the son for his father, nor friend for friend; they should not bestow a thought on one another in comparison with this higher object, for the best is the most desirable and “acting well” is the best. There might be some truth in such a view if we assume that robbers and plunderers attain the chief good. But this can never be; their hypothesis is false. The actions of a ruler cannot really be honorable, unless he is as much superior to other men as a man is to a woman, or a father to his children, or a master to his slaves. So he who violates the law can never recover by any success, however great, what he has already lost in departing from virtue. Among equals, the honorable and the just consist in ruling and being ruled in turns, as is just and equal. But that the unequal should be given to equals, and the unlike to those who are like, is contrary to nature, and nothing which is contrary to nature is good. So if there is anyone superior in virtue and in the power of performing the best actions, he is the man we ought to follow and obey, but he must have the capacity for action as well as virtue.

If happiness is assumed to be acting well, the active life will be the best, both for every city collectively, and for individuals. Not that a life of action must necessarily have relation to others, as some persons think, nor are those ideas only to be regarded as practical that are pursued for the sake of practical results, but much more the thoughts and contemplations that are independent and complete in themselves; since acting well, and so a certain kind of action, is an end, and even in the case of external actions, the directing mind is most truly said to act. It is also not necessary that states that are cut off from others and choose to live alone should be inactive; there are many ways in which the sections of a state act upon one another. (The same thing is equally true of every individual.) If this were otherwise, the gods and the universe, which have no external actions over and above their own energies, would be far from perfection. Hence the same life is best for each individual, and for states and for mankind collectively.

VII.4 Conditions of the Ideal/Perfect State; Material Necessary for the Statesman: Population; Only Essential Members of a State Matter as to the Size of the State; There Should be a Limit to the Population, Since That Implies Beauty and Order; the State’s Size Should be Enough to be Self-Sufficient, Provide a Good Communal Life, Taken at a Single View (but Not Too Large) (1325b-1326b).

Now let us discuss the conditions of the ideal or perfect state; the perfect state cannot exist without a due supply of the means of life. So we must presuppose many purely imaginary conditions, but nothing impossible. Aristotle, I believe, is not being consistent, given that he criticized Plato’s ideal state based on the idea that it was impracticable. There will be a certain number of citizens, a country in which to place them, and the like. As the weaver or shipbuilder or any other craftsperson must have the material proper for his work (and in proportion as this is better prepared, so will the result of his art be nobler), so the statesman or legislator must also have the materials suited to him.

First required materials for the statesman: Population. He will consider what the number and character of the citizens should be, and then the size and character of the country. Most persons think that a state in order to be happy ought to be large; but even if they are right, they have no idea what is a large and what a small state. They judge of the size of the city by the number of the inhabitants; whereas they ought to regard, not their number, but their power. A city too, like an individual, has a work to do; and that city that is best adapted to the fulfillment of its work is to be deemed greatest.

Even if we reckon greatness by numbers, we ought not to include everybody, for there must always be in cities a multitude of slaves and resident aliens and foreigners; but we should include those only who are members of the state, and who form an essential part of it. The number of essential members is a proof of the greatness of a city; but a city that produces numerous craftspersons and comparatively few soldiers cannot be great, for a great city is not the same as a populous one.
Moreover, experience shows that a very populous city can rarely, if ever, be well governed; since all

cities that have a reputation for good government have a limit of population. And by reason, the same result

follows: Law is order, and good law is good order; but a very great multitude cannot be orderly; to introduce

order into the unlimited is the work of a divine power – of such a power as holds together the universe. Beauty

is realized in number and magnitude, and the state that combines magnitude with good order must necessarily be

the most beautiful. To the size of states there is a limit, as there is to other things, plants, animals, implements;

none of these retain their natural power when they are too large or too small, but they either wholly lose their

nature, or are spoiled. A state when composed of too few is not, as a state ought to be, self-sufficient; when of too

many, though self-sufficient in all mere necessaries, as a nation may be, it is not a state, being almost incapable

of having a constitution. Who can be the general of such a vast multitude, or who the herald, unless he have a

very powerful voice?

So a state only begins to exist when it has attained a population sufficient for a good life in the political

community; it may indeed, if it somewhat exceeds this number, be a greater state. But, as said, there must be a

limit. What the limit should be will be easily ascertained by experience. Both governors and governed have

duties to perform; the special functions of a governor are to command and to judge. But if the citizens of a state

are to judge and to distribute offices according to merit, then they must know each other’s characters; where

they do not possess this knowledge, both the election to offices and the decision of lawsuits will go wrong. When

the population is very large, they are manifestly settled at haphazard, which clearly ought not to be. Besides, in

an over-populous state foreigners and resident aliens will readily acquire the rights of citizens, for who will find

them out? Clearly then the best limit of the population of a state is the largest number which suffices for the

purposes of life, and can be taken in at a single view. So much for the size of a state.

VII.5 The Best Territory for the State is Self-Sufficient, Allows Citizens to Live Temperately

and Liberally; is Difficult for the Enemy to Access, but Easy of Egress to the Citizens, Taken in

at a Single View, Well-Situated Both to Sea and Land, a Convenient Center for the Whole

country’s Protection, and Suitable for Receiving the Fruits of the Soil and Bringing in Timber

and Other Products (1326b-1327a).

Much the same principle will apply to the territory of the state: the best territory is most self-sufficient (it can

produce everything necessary to have all things and to want nothing is sufficiency); In size and extent it should

be such as may enable the inhabitants to live at once temperately and liberally in the enjoyment of leisure.

Whether we are right or wrong in laying down this limit we will inquire more precisely hereafter, when we have

occasion to consider what is the right use of property and wealth – a matter which is much disputed, because

men are inclined to rush into one of two extremes, some into meanness, others into luxury.

The general character of the territory should be difficult of access to the enemy, and easy of egress to the

inhabitants. Further, we require that the land as well as the inhabitants of whom we were just now speaking

should be taken in at a single view, for a country that is easily seen can be easily protected. As to the position

of the city, if we could have what we wish, it should be well situated in regard both to sea and land. Two principles:

(1) it should be a convenient center for the protection of the whole country; (2) it should be suitable for receiving

the fruits of the soil, and for the bringing in of timber and any other easily transportable products.

VII.6 Access to the Sea is Beneficial to a Well-Ordered State, Due to Safety, Provision of

Necessaries, Import and Export (Trade) Capabilities, and Ability to Assist One’s Allies; the

Proper Size of the Navy is Relative to the State’s Character (1327a-b).

FAQ: Is access with the sea beneficial to a well-ordered state? It is argued that the introduction of strangers

brought up under other laws, and the increase of population, will be adverse to good order; the increase arises

from their using the sea and having a crowd of merchants coming and going, and is inimical to good
government. Apart from these considerations, it would be undoubtedly better, both with a view to safety and to

the provision of necessaries, that the city and territory should be connected with the sea; the defenders of a

country, if they are to maintain themselves against an enemy, should be easily relieved both by land and by sea;
even if they are not able to attack by sea and land at once, they will have less difficulty in doing mischief to their assailants on one element, if they themselves can use both. Moreover, it is necessary that they should import from abroad what is not found in their own country, and that they should export what they have in excess; a city ought to be a market, not indeed for others, but for herself.

Those who make themselves a market for the world only do so for the sake of revenue, and if a state ought not to desire profit of this kind it ought not to have such an emporium. Today, countries and cities very conveniently place dockyards and harbors outside the city, but not too far off; and they are kept in dependence by walls and similar fortifications. Cities thus situated manifestly reap the benefit of trade with their ports; and any harm may be easily guarded against by the laws, which will pronounce and determine who may access one another, and who may not.

The possession of a moderate naval force is doubtless advantageous to a city; the city should be formidable not only to its own citizens but to some of its neighbors, or, if necessary, able to assist them by sea as well as by land. The proper number or magnitude of this naval force is relative to the character of the state; for if her function is to take a leading part in politics, her naval power should be commensurate with the scale of her enterprises. The population of the state need not be much increased, since there is no necessity that the sailors should be citizens: the marines who have the control and command will be freemen, and belong also to the infantry; and wherever there is a dense population of country people and farmers, there will always be more than enough sailors. (EX: Heraclea, although small in comparison with many others, can man a considerable fleet.) Such are our conclusions respecting the territory of the state, its harbors, its towns, its relations to the sea, and its maritime power.

VII.7 The Characters of Europeans (High-Spirit, Low Intelligence), Asians (Low Spirit, High Intelligence), and Greeks (High-Spirit and Intelligence); Greece Could Rule the World if They Could Form One State; Best Citizens are Intelligent and Courageous; Passion is Commanding and Invincible; Guardian Should Not be Hateful to All Enemies, But Only When Excited Against Evil-Doers (1327b-1328a).

Let us discuss what the character of the citizens should be. Those who live in a cold climate and in Europe are full of spirit, but wanting in intelligence and skill; so they retain comparative freedom, but have no political organization, and are incapable of ruling over others. The natives of Asia are intelligent and inventive, but they are wanting in spirit, and so they are always in a state of subjection and slavery. But the Hellenic race, situated between them, is intermediate in character, being high-spirited and also intelligent. So Greece remains free, and is the best governed of any nation, and, if it could be formed into one state, would be able to rule the world. There are also similar differences in the different tribes of Greece; some of them are of a one-sided nature, and are intelligent or courageous only, while in others there is a happy combination of both qualities. The legislator will most easily lead to virtue those who are intelligent and courageous. Some (wrongly – see below) say guardians should be friendly towards those whom they know, fierce towards those whom they do not know. Passion is the quality of the soul which begets friendship and enables us to love; notably our spirit is more stirred against our friends and acquaintances than against strangers, when we think that we are despised by the former (EX: Archilochus, complaining of his friends, very naturally addresses his spirit in these words, “For surely thou are plagued on account of friends”).

The power of command and love of freedom are in all men based upon this quality: passion is commanding and invincible. The guardians should not be fierce towards those whom they do not know, for we ought not to be out of temper with anyone; and a lofty spirit is not fierce by nature, but only when excited against evil-doers. And this, as said, is a feeling which men show most strongly towards their friends if they think they have received a wrong at their hands: as indeed is reasonable; besides the actual injury, they seem to be deprived of a benefit by those who owe them one.
VII.8 States Require Property but it is Not Part of the State; Various Qualities of Men Produce Various Forms of States/Governments; Functions of a State: Food, Crafts, Arms, Revenue, Religion, and Judicial Power (1328a-b).

As in other natural compounds the conditions of a composite whole are not necessarily organic parts of it, so in a state not everything is a part that is a necessary condition. The members of an association have necessarily some one thing the same and common to all, in which they share equally or unequally (EXs: food, land, or any other thing). Where there are two things of which one exists for the sake of the other, they have nothing in common except that the one receives what the other produces. (EX: the relation in which workmen and tools stand to their work: the house and the builder have nothing in common, but the art of the builder is for the sake of the house. So states require property, but property, even though living beings are included in it, is no part of a state; a state is a community of equals, aiming at the best life possible. Whereas happiness is the highest good, being a realization and perfect practice of virtue, which some can attain, while others have little or none of it, the various qualities of men are clearly the reason why there are various kinds of states and government; different men seek after happiness in different ways and by different means, and so make for themselves different modes of life and forms of government. We must see also how many things are indispensable to the existence of a state, for what we call the parts of a state will be found among the indispensable things. Let us then enumerate the functions of a state, and we shall easily elicit what we want.

First, there must be food; second, crafts (life requires many instruments); third, there must be arms, for the members of a community have need of them, and in their own hands, too, in order to maintain authority both against disobedient subjects and against external assailants; fourth, there must be a certain amount of revenue, for internal needs, and for war; fifth, or rather first, there must be a care of religion, (i.e., worship); sixth, and most necessary of all, there must be a power of deciding what is for the public interest, and what is just in men’s dealings with one another.

These are necessary state services. A state is not a mere aggregate of persons, but a union of persons sufficing for the purposes of life; if any of these things is wanting, it is impossible that the community can be absolutely self-sufficient. So a state must fulfill these functions. There must be farmers to procure food, and craftpersons, and a warlike and a wealthy class, and priests, and judges to decide what is necessary and expedient.

VII.9 In the Best State, No Citizen is to be a Craftsperson, Tradesman, or Farmer (These are Necessary to the State but Not Part of the State, and These Lives are Not Virtuous); Warriors and Counselors are Parts of the State, and the Same Person Should be a Warrior When Young, and a Counselor When Old; the Ruling Class Should be Property-Owners; Craftspersons Have No Share in the State (They do Not Produce Virtue), Nor do Farmers (Who Will be Slaves or Non-Greeks); Priests Should be Chosen from Old Warriors and Counselors (1328b-1329a).

Let us now consider whether all ought to share in every sort of occupation. Shall every man be at once farmer, craftsperson, counselor, judge, or shall we suppose the several occupations just mentioned assigned to different persons? Or shall some employments be assigned to individuals and others common to all?

Since we are now speaking of the best form of government, i.e. that under which the state will be most happy (and happiness, as has been already said, cannot exist without virtue), it clearly follows that in the state which is best governed and possesses men who are just absolutely, and not merely relatively to the principle of the constitution, the citizens must not lead the life of craftpersons or tradesmen, for such a life is ignoble and inimical to virtue. Neither must they be farmers, since leisure is necessary both for the development of virtue and the performance of political duties.

In a state, there are classes of warriors and counselors (who advise about the expedient and determine matters of law), and these are especially essential parts of a state. Should these two classes be distinguished, or are both functions to be assigned to the same persons? Both functions will in one way belong to the same, in another, to different persons. To different persons insofar as these employments are suited to different primes of life, for the one requires wisdom and the other strength. But to the same persons, since it is an impossible thing that those who are able to use or to resist force should be willing to remain always in subjection (and those who carry arms can always determine the fate of the constitution). So both functions should be entrusted by the ideal
constitution to the same persons, not, however, at the same time, but in the order prescribed by nature, which has given to young men strength and to older men wisdom. Such a distribution of duties will be expedient and also just, and is founded upon a principle of conformity to merit.

The ruling class should be the owners of property, for they are citizens, and the citizens of a state should be in good circumstances; whereas craftspersons or any other class which is not a producer of virtue have no share in the state. This follows from our first principle: happiness cannot exist without virtue, and a city is not to be termed happy in regard to a portion of the citizens, but in regard to them all. Clearly property should be in the citizens’ hands, since the farmers will of necessity be slaves or non-Greek country people.

The manner in which the priests’ office is to be regulated is obvious. No farmer or craftperson should be appointed to it; the gods should receive honor from the citizens only. Since warriors and counselors are citizens, worship of the gods should be duly performed, and a rest should be provided for those who from age have given up active life, we should assign duties of the priesthood to the old men of these two classes.

Thus farmers, craftspersons, and laborers of all kinds are necessary to the existence of states, but the parts of the state are the warriors and counselors.

VII.10 A Well-Ordered City Should Have Common Meals; There Should be Public Funding of Common Meals and Religious Worship; Land Should be Divided into Public (for Service to the Gods and Common Meals) and Private (Some Near the Border and Some Near the City); Farmers Should Ideally be Slaves, but Next Best Non-Greek Country People (1329a-1330a).

It is no new or recent discovery of political philosophers that the state ought to be divided into classes, and that the warriors should be separated from the farmers. We should therefore make the best use of what has been already discovered, and try to supply defects.

Let me now discuss the distribution of the land, and the character of the agricultural class; I do not think that property ought to be common, as some maintain, but only that by friendly consent there should be a common use of it; and that no citizen should be in want of subsistence.

A well-ordered city should have common meals; and meals ought to be open to all the citizens. Yet it is not easy for the poor to contribute the requisite sum out of their private means, and to provide also for their household. The expense of religious worship should likewise be a public charge. The land must therefore be divided into public and private parts, and each part should be subdivided, part of the public land being appropriated to the service of the gods, and the other part used to defray the cost of the common meals; part of the private land should be near the border, and part near the city, so that, each citizen have two lots and land in both places; there is justice and fairness in such a division and it tends to inspire unanimity among the people in their border wars. Where there is not this arrangement, some of them are too ready to come to blows with their neighbors, while others are so cautious that they quite lose the sense of honor. So there is a law in some places that forbids those who dwell near the border to take part in public deliberations about wars with neighbors, due to a conflict of interest. Thus, the land should be divided in the manner described. The very best thing of all would be that the farmers should be slaves taken from among men who are not all of the same race and not spirited, for if they have no spirit they will be better suited for their work, and there will be no danger of their making a revolution. The next best thing would be that they should be non-Greek country people, and of a like inferior nature; some of them should be the slaves of individuals, and employed on the private estates of men of property, the remainder should be the property of the state and employed on the common land. I will hereafter explain what is the proper treatment of slaves, and why it is expedient that liberty should be always held out to them as the reward of their services.

VII.11 The Place of the City Should be Fortunate in Health, Be Convenient for Political Administration and War, and Have an Abundance of Pure Water, Fortifications, Private Houses Arranged Irregularly, and Strong, Ornamental, and Useful Walls (1330a-1331a).

(We have already said that the city should be open to the land and to the sea, and to the whole country as far as possible.) In respect of the place itself, its situation should be fortunate in four things: First, health – this is a
necessity: cities which lie towards the east, and are blown upon by winds coming from the east, are the healthiest; next in healthiness are those which are sheltered from the north wind, for they have a milder winter. The site of the city should likewise be convenient for political administration and war (i.e., easy egress to the citizens, but inaccessible and difficult of capture to enemies). There should be a natural abundance of springs and fountains in the town, or, if there is a deficiency of them, great reservoirs may be established for the collection of rainwater (that will not fail when the inhabitants are cut off from the country by war). Special care should be taken of the health of the inhabitants, which will depend primarily on the healthiness of the locality and of the quarter to which they are exposed, and secondarily, on the use of pure water (which is by no means a secondary consideration). We use the elements water and air most (and most often) for the support of the body and they contribute most to health. So, in all wise states, if there is a want of pure water, or a good supply thereof, the drinking water ought to be separated from non-drinking water.

As to fortifications, what is suitable to different forms of government varies: an acropolis is suited to an oligarchy or a monarchy, but a plain to a democracy; neither to an aristocracy, but rather a number of strong places.

The arrangement of private houses is considered to be more agreeable and generally more convenient if the streets are regularly laid out, but for security in war the antiquated mode of building, which made it difficult for strangers to get out of a town and for assailants to find their way in, is preferable. A city should therefore adopt both plans of building: it is possible to arrange the houses irregularly. The whole town should not be laid out in straight lines, but only certain quarters and regions; thus security and beauty will be combined.

As to walls, the strongest wall will be the truest soldierly precaution, more especially now that missiles and siege engines have been brought to such perfection. To have no walls would be as foolish as to choose a site for a town in an exposed country, and to level the heights; or as if an individual were to leave his house unwalled, lest the inmates should become cowards. Moreover, those who have their cities surrounded by walls may either take advantage of them or not, but cities which are unwalled have no choice.

Not only should cities have walls, but we should make them ornamental, as well as useful for warlike purposes, and adapted to resist modern inventions. As the assailants of a city do all they can to gain an advantage, so the defenders should make use of any means of defense that have been already discovered, and should devise and invent others, for when men are well prepared, no enemy even thinks of attacking them.

VII.12 The Best State Should have Common Tables in the Guardhouses, and Elsewhere for the Magistrates (by the Trade Agora), Priests (by the Temples); There Should be Two Agoras (One for Gymnastic Exercises for Elders and Leisure, the Other for Trade, Imports and Exports); Country Magistrates Should Have Guardhouses and Common Tables; Temples Should be Scattered Throughout the Country, Dedicated to Gods or Heroes (1331a-b).

As the walls are to be divided by guardhouses and towers built at suitable intervals, and the body of citizens must be distributed at common tables, we should establish some of the common tables in the guardhouses. These might be arranged as has been suggested; while the principal common tables of the magistrates will occupy a suitable place, and there also will be the buildings appropriated to religious worship except in the case of those rites which the law or the Pythian oracle has restricted to a special locality. The site should be a spot seen far and wide, which gives due elevation to virtue and towers over the neighborhood. Below this spot should be established an agora; from this all trade should be excluded, and no craftsman, farmer, or any such person allowed to enter, unless he be summoned by the magistrates. It would be pleasing if the elder men performed gymnastic exercises there. In this noble practice different ages should be separated, and some of the magistrates should stay with the boys, while the grown-up men remain with the magistrates; the presence of the magistrates is the best mode of inspiring true modesty and ingenuous fear. There should also be a traders’ agora, distinct and apart from the other, in a situation which is convenient for the reception of goods both by sea and land.

We should provide the priests public tables near the temples. The magistrates who deal with contracts, indictments, summonses, and the like, and those who have the care of the agora and of the city respectively, ought to be established near an agora and some public place of meeting; the neighborhood of the traders’ agora
will be a suitable spot; the upper agora we devote to the life of leisure, the other is intended for the necessities of trade.

The country magistrates (“Inspectors of Forests” or “Wardens of the Country”) must also have guard houses and common tables while they are on duty; temples should also be scattered throughout the country, dedicated some to gods and some to heroes.

(The difficulty is not in imagining the details of the best state, but in carrying them out; the execution of them will depend upon fortune. Therefore let us say no more about these matters for the present.)

VII.13 Well-Being Consists in Two Things: The Choice of a Right End/Aim of Action, and Discovering Which Actions Contribute to it; Some Can Attain Happiness, Others Cannot Due to Accident, Natural Defect, or Lack of External Goods; Happiness is the Absolute Realization and Perfect Exercise of Virtue; Only a Wealthy, Healthy Man Can Attain Happiness; the Best City Will Have to be Blessed with Goods by Fortune; Its Virtue and Goodness are a Matter of Knowledge and Choice; a City is Only Virtuous with Virtuous Citizens; Nature, Habit, and Reason Make Man Virtuous (1331b-1332b).

Out of what (and what sort of) elements should the happy and well-governed state be composed? There are two things in which all well-being consists: (1) the choice of a right end and aim of action, and (2) the discovery of the actions which contribute towards it; the means and the end may agree or disagree. Sometimes the right end is set before men, but in practice they fail to attain it; in other cases they are successful in all the contributory factors, but they propose to themselves a bad end; and sometimes they fail in both. (EX: medicine; physicians do not always understand the nature of health, and also the means that they use may not effect the desired end.) In all arts and sciences both the end and the means should be equally within our control.

Some have the power of attaining the happiness and well-being which all men manifestly desire; to others, from some accident or defect of nature, the attainment of them is not granted; a good life requires a supply of external goods, in a less degree when men are in a good state, in a greater degree when they are in a lower state. Others possess the conditions of happiness, but go utterly wrong from the first in the pursuit of it. Since our object is to discover the best form of government (under which a city will be best governed), and since the city is best governed that has the greatest opportunity of obtaining happiness, we must clearly ascertain the nature of happiness.

As said in the Ethics, happiness is the realization and perfect exercise of virtue, and this not conditional, but absolute. (“Conditional” is that which is indispensable, and “absolute” is that which is good in itself.) EX: just actions; just punishments and chastisements do indeed spring from a good principle, but they are good only because we cannot do without them – it would be better that neither individuals nor states should need anything of the sort – but actions which aim at honor and advantage are absolutely the best. The conditional action is only the choice of a lesser evil; whereas these are the foundation and creation of good. A good man may make the best even of poverty and disease, and the other ills of life; but he can only attain happiness under the opposite conditions [DY: Note that this directly conflicts with what Plato says in the Republic] (as also determined in the Ethics: the good man is he for whom, because he is virtuous, the things that are absolutely good are good; his use of these goods must be virtuous and in the absolute sense good). This makes men think that external goods are the cause of happiness (but we might as well say that a brilliant performance on the lyre was to be attributed to the instrument and not to the skill of the performer).

Thus, some things the legislator must find ready to his hand in a state, others he must provide. So we can only say: May our state be constituted in such a manner as to be blessed with the goods of which fortune disposes (we acknowledge her power); whereas virtue and goodness in the state are not a matter of chance but the result of knowledge and choice. A city can be virtuous only when the citizens are virtuous, and in our state all the citizens share in the government; let us then inquire how a man becomes virtuous. (Even if we could

5 Plato: “This, then, must be our conviction about the just man, that whether he fall into poverty or disease or any other supposed evil, for him all these things will finally prove good, both in life and in death. For by the gods assuredly that man will never be neglected who is willing and eager to be righteous, and by the practice of virtue to be likened unto God so far as that is possible for man.” (Republic X 613a-b)
suppose the citizen body to be virtuous, without each of them being so, yet the latter would be better, for in the virtue of each the virtue of all is involved.)

Three things make men good and virtuous: nature, habit, and reason. First, everyone must be born a man and not some other animal; second, he must have a certain character, both of body and soul. Some qualities are useless to have at birth (they are altered by habit); some gifts of nature are made good or bad by habit. (Animals lead a life of nature for the most part, although some are influenced by habit as well.) Man has reason, in addition, and man only. So nature, habit, reason must be in harmony with one another; they do not always agree: men do many things against habit and nature, if reason persuades them that they ought. The legislator can mold an intelligent, courageous person; all else is the work of education; we learn some things by habit and some by instruction.

VII.14 Best State: Rulers and Ruled Should Take Turns Ruling and Being Ruled; Rulers and Ruled are the Same and Different; Two Parts (Rational and Irrational) of the Soul; Business Should Be Done for the Sake of Leisure, War for Peace, and Useful/Necessary Things for Honor; Criticism of Modern Greek States, Including Sparta; a Statesman Should Not Train Citizens to Conquer/Obtain Dominion Over Neighboring States; Men Should Not Study War to Enslave Undeserving People; Military Pursuits Should be Done for the Sake of Leisure and Peace (1332b-1334a).

Should rulers and subjects interchange or be permanent? The education of the citizens will necessarily vary with the answer given to this question. If some men excelled others in the same degree in which gods and heroes excel humans (having a great bodily and mental advantage), so the superiority of the rulers was undisputed and patent to their subjects, it would clearly be better that once for all the one class should rule and the others serve. Since this is unattainable, and kings have no marked superiority over their subjects (as Scylax affirms to be found among the Indians), it is obviously necessary on many grounds that all the citizens alike should take their turn of ruling and being ruled. Equality consists in the same treatment of similar persons, and no government can stand which is not founded upon justice. If the government is unjust everyone in the country unites with the governed in the desire to have a revolution, and it’s impossible that the members of the government can be so numerous as to be stronger than all their enemies put together. Yet that governors should be better than their subjects is undeniable. How all this is to be effected, and in what way they will respectively share in the government, the legislator has to consider. Nature herself has provided the distinction when she made a difference between old and young within the same species, of whom she fitted the one to rule and the other to be governed when he is young; nor does he think himself better than his governors, especially if he will enjoy the same privilege when he reaches the required age.

Thus, from one point of view, rulers and ruled are identical, and from another different. So their education must be the same and also different. A good commander must first of all learn to obey. As said, there is one rule that is for the sake of the rulers (despotic) and another rule for the sake of the ruled (a free government). Some commands differ not in the thing commanded, but in the intention with which they are imposed. That is why many apparently menial offices are an honor to the free youth by whom they are performed; actions do not differ as honorable or dishonorable in themselves, so much as in the end and intention of them. Since we say that the virtue of the citizen and ruler is the same as that of the good man, and that the same person must first be a subject and then a ruler, the legislator has to see that they become good men, and by what means this may be accomplished, and what is the end of the perfect life.

The soul of man is divided into two parts, one of which has a rational principle in itself, and the other (irrational) is able to obey such a principle. In the world both of nature and of art the inferior always exists for the sake of the superior, and the superior is that which has a rational principle. The rational principle is divided into two kinds (practical and speculative). The whole of life is divided into two parts, business and leisure, war and peace, and of actions some aim at what is necessary and useful, and some at what is honorable: There must be business for the sake of leisure, war for the sake of peace, things useful and necessary for the sake of things honorable.
All these points the statesman should keep in view when he frames his laws; he should consider the parts of the soul and their functions, and above all the better and the end; he should also remember the diversities of human lives and actions. Men must be able to engage in business and go to war, but leisure and peace are better; they must do what is necessary and indeed what is useful, but what is honorable is better. On such principles children should be trained.

Whereas even the Greeks of the present day who are reputed to be best governed, and the legislators who gave them their constitutions, do not appear to have framed their governments with a regard to the best end, or to have given them laws and education with a view to all the virtues, but in a vulgar spirit have fallen back on those which promised to be more useful and profitable. Many modern writers similarly commend the Lacedaemonian constitution, and praise the legislator for making conquest and war his sole aim, a doctrine that may be refuted by argument and has long ago been refuted by facts. Most men desire empire in the hope of accumulating the goods of fortune; and on this ground Thibron and all those who have written about the Lacedaemonian constitution have praised their legislator, because the Lacedaemonians, by being trained to meet dangers, gained great power. But surely they are not a happy people now that their empire has passed away, nor was their legislator right. How ridiculous is the result, if, while they are continuing in the observance of his laws and no one interferes with them, they have lost the better part of life! These writers further err about the sort of government that the legislator should approve, for the government of freemen is nobler and implies more virtue than despotic government. Neither is a city to be deemed happy or a legislator to be praised because he trains his citizens to conquer and obtain dominion over their neighbors, for there is great harm in this. On a similar principle any citizen who could, should obviously try to obtain the power in his own state.

No such principle (and no law having this object) is statesmanlike, useful, or right. The same things are best both for individuals and for states, and these are the things that the legislator ought to implant in the minds of his citizens. Neither should men study war with a view to the enslavement of those who do not deserve to be enslaved; first, they should provide against their own enslavement; second, obtain empire for the good of the governed (not for the sake of exercising a general despotism); third, they should seek to be masters only over those who deserve to be slaves. Facts, as well as arguments, prove that the legislator should direct all his military and other measures to the provision of leisure and the establishment of peace. Most of these military states are safe only while they are at war, but fall when they have acquired their empire; like unused iron they lose their edge in time of peace.

VII.15 The Virtues of Leisure Should Exist in the Best Man and Constitution; Many Necessaries of Life Must be Supplied Before We can Have Leisure; Courage and Endurance are Required for Business; Philosophy is Required for Leisure, and Temperance and Justice for Both; Those Who Possess Everything (Isles of Blessed?) Especially Need Philosophy, Justice, and Temperance; Nature Strives for Reason/Mind in Man, so We have to Train the Citizens Thusly; the Care of the Body is for Sake of the Soul, and That of Appetite for the Sake of Reason (1334a-b).

Since the end of individuals and of states is the same, the end of the best man and of the best constitution must also be the same; so the virtues of leisure ought to exist in the best man and constitution; peace, as often repeated, is the end of war, and leisure of toil. Leisure and cultivation may be promoted not only by those virtues that are practiced in leisure, but also by some virtues useful to business. Many necessaries of life have to be supplied before we can have leisure. So a city must be temperate and brave, and able to endure: as the proverb truly says, “There is no leisure for slaves,” and those who cannot face danger like men are the slaves of any invader. Courage and endurance are required for business and philosophy for leisure, temperance and justice for both, and more especially in times of peace and leisure, for war compels men to be just and temperate, whereas the enjoyment of good fortune and the leisure that comes with peace tend to make them insolent. Those then who seem to be the best-off and possess every good, have special need of justice and temperance; EX: those who allegedly dwell in the Islands of the Blest, above all, will need philosophy, temperance, and justice, and all the more the more leisure they have, living in the midst of abundance. There is
no difficulty in seeing why the good/happy state ought to have these virtues. If it is disgraceful in men not to be able to use the goods of life, it is peculiarly disgraceful not to be able to use them in time of leisure – to show virtuous qualities in action and war, and when they have peace and leisure to be no better than slaves. Thus, we should not practice virtue in the Spartan way: While agreeing with other men in their conception of the highest goods, they differ from the rest of mankind in thinking that they are to be obtained by the practice of a single virtue. We must now consider how and by what means virtue is to be attained.

Let us consider whether the training of early life is to be that of reason or habit (for these two must accord, and when so, form the best of harmonies). Reason may be mistaken and fail in attaining the highest ideal of life, and there may be a like influence of habit.

First, as in all other things, birth implies a starting point, and there are starting points whose end is relative to a further end. In men reason and mind are the end towards which nature strives, so that the birth and training in custom of the citizens ought to be ordered with a view to them. Second, as soul and body are two, there are two parts of the soul (rational and irrational), and two corresponding states – reason and appetite. As the body is prior in order of generation to the soul, so the irrational is prior to the rational. Proof: anger, wishing, and desire are innate, but reason and understanding develop as they grow older. Thus, the care of the body ought to precede that of the soul, and the training of the appetitive part should follow: our care of appetite must be for the sake of the reason, and of the body for the sake of the soul.

VII.16 Three Things for the Legislator to Consider the Proper Age of Marriage, and Who are Fit to do so; Women Should Marry at 18 and Men at 37, in Winter; Procreators Should be in Shape, but not Athletes; Pregnant Women Should Exercise But Keep Quiet; No Deformed Child Shall Live; If There is a Law Limiting Number of Children and One Violates That, the Fetus Should be Aborted; Men Should Beget Children Until They Are 50; Adultery is Disgraceful (1334b-1336a).

Since the legislator should begin by considering how the bodies of the children whom he is rearing may be as good as possible, his first care will be about marriage – at what age should his citizens marry, and who are fit to marry? First, he ought to consider the persons and their lifespan, that their procreative life may terminate at the same period, and that they may not differ in their bodily powers, as will be the case if the man is still able to beget children while the woman is unable to bear them, or the woman able to bear while the man is unable to beget (since from these causes arise quarrels and differences between married persons).

Second, he must consider the time at which the children will succeed to their parents; there ought not to be too great an interval of age (then the parents will be too old to derive any pleasure from their affection, or to be of any use to them). Nor ought they to be too near in age; to youthful marriages there are many objections – the children will be lacking in respect for the parents, who will seem to be their contemporaries, and disputes will arise in the management of the household.

Third, the legislator must mold to his will the bodies of newly born children.

Almost all these objects may be secured by attention to one point: Since the time of generation is commonly limited within the age of seventy years in the case of a man, and of fifty in the case of a woman, the commencement of sexual union should be so timed that they reach their decline simultaneously. (1) The union of male and female when too young is bad for the procreation of children; in all other animals the offspring of the young are small and ill-developed, and with a tendency to produce female children; so in man, as is proved by the fact that in those cities in which men and women are accustomed to marry young, the people are small and weak; (2) in childbirth younger women suffer more, and more of them die. (3) It conduces to temperance not to marry too soon; women who marry early are apt to be wanton; (4) in men, the bodily frame is stunted if they marry while the seed is growing (there is a time when the growth of the seed, also, ceases, or continues to but a slight extent). Women should marry when they are about eighteen years of age, and men at thirty-seven; then they are in the prime of life, and the decline in the powers of both will coincide. Further, the children, if their birth takes place soon, as may reasonably be expected, will succeed in the beginning of their prime, when the fathers are already in the decline of life, and have nearly reached their term of seventy.
Thus much of the age proper for marriage: the season of the year should also be considered; according to our present custom, people generally and rightly limit marriage to the season of winter. The parents themselves should also study the precepts of physicians and natural philosophers about generation: the physicians give good advice about the favorable conditions of the body, and the natural philosophers about the winds (they prefer the north to the south).

We will make some general comments about the constitution in the parent is most advantageous to the offspring. The constitution of an athlete is not suited to the life of a citizen, or to health, or to the procreation of children, any more than the person overly reliant on medicine or in an exhausted constitution, but one that is in a mean between them. A man’s constitution should be inured to labor, but not to labor which is excessive or of one sort only, such as is practiced by athletes; he should be capable of all the actions of a freeman. (These remarks apply equally to both parents.

Pregnant women should take care of themselves; they should exercise and have a nourishing diet. The legislator will easily handle their exercise by requiring that they shall take a walk daily to some temple, where they can worship the gods who preside over birth. Their minds, however, unlike their bodies, they ought to keep quiet (since the offspring derive their natures from their mothers as plants do from the earth).

As to the exposure and rearing of children, let there be a law that no deformed child shall live. As to an excess in the number of children, if the established customs of the state forbid the exposure of any children who are born, let a limit be set to the number of children a couple may have; and if couples have children in excess, let abortion be procured before sense and life have begun; what may or may not be lawfully done in these cases depends on the question of life and sensation.

How long shall they continue to beget and bear offspring for the state? Men who are too old, like men who are too young, produce children who are defective in body and mind; the children of very old men are weakly. The limit should be the age that is the prime of their intelligence, and in most persons, this is about fifty; at four or five years later, they should cease from having families; and from that time forward only cohabit with one another for the sake of health, or for some similar reason.

Let adultery be held disgraceful, in general, for any man or woman to be found in anyway unfaithful when they are married, and called husband and wife. If adultery occurs during the time of bearing children, let the guilty person be punished with a loss of privileges in proportion to the offense.

VII.17 We Should Rear Children to be Strong Via Movement and Play; We Should Acclimate Children to the Cold (Helpful in War); No Study or Labor Until the Age of 5; Education Directors Should Tell Appropriate Stories (for What the Child Will do in the State Later); Plato is Wrong (Laws) about Checking Loud Crying of Children; Children Must Live at Home Till 7 and Should be Protected from Hearing Indecent Speech (Anywhere, Including on Stage) or Seeing Indecent Pictures (on Stage); Children Should Not be Allowed to Attend Comedies Till They are of Age; Two Periods of Education: 7 to Puberty, and Puberty to 21; Crafts/Education Seek to Fill up the Deficiencies of Nature (1336a-1337a).

After the children have been born, the manner of rearing them may be supposed to have a great effect on their bodily strength. In animals, and those nations who desire to create the military habit, that the food that has most milk in it is best suited to human beings; but the less wine the better, if they would escape diseases. All the motions to which children can be subjected at their early age are very useful. But in order to preserve their tender limbs from distortion, some nations have had recourse to mechanical appliances that straighten their bodies. To accustom children to the cold from their earliest years is also a virtuous practice, which greatly conduces to health, and hardens them for military service. (EX: Many non-Greeks have a custom of plunging their children at birth into a cold stream; the Celts clothe them in a light wrapper only.) Human nature should be early habituated to endure all that by habit it can be made to endure; but the process must be gradual. Children, from their natural warmth, may be easily trained to bear cold. Such care should attend them in the first stage of life.

The next period lasts to the age of five, during which no demand should be made upon the child for study or labor, lest its growth be impeded; and there should be sufficient motion (via play that is not vulgar,
tiring, or undisciplined) to prevent the limbs from being inactive. Education Directors should be careful what tales or stories the children hear, for all such things are designed to prepare the way for the business of later life, and should be for the most part imitations of the occupations which they will hereafter pursue in earnest. Those are wrong who in their Laws attempt to check the loud crying and screaming of children, for these contribute towards their growth, and, in a manner, exercise their bodies. Straining the voice has a strengthening effect similar to that produced by the retention of the breath in violent exertions.

Education Directors (as opposed to slaves) should directly bring up the children as much as possible. Until they are seven years old they must live at home; so, even at this early age, it is to be expected that they should acquire a taint of servility from what they hear and see. Indeed, there is nothing that the legislator should be more careful to drive away than indecency of speech; the light utterance of shameful words leads soon to shameful actions. The young especially should never be allowed to repeat or hear anything of the sort. A freemen who is found saying or doing what is forbidden, if he be too young as yet to have the privilege of reclining at the public tables, should be disgraced and beaten, and an elder person degraded as his slavish conduct deserves.

Since we do not allow improper language, clearly we should also banish pictures or speeches from the stage that are indecent. Let the rulers take care that there be no image or picture representing unseemly actions, except in the temples of those gods at whose festivals the law permits even ribaldry, and whom the law also permits to be worshipped by persons of mature age on behalf of themselves, their children, and their wives. The legislator should not allow youth to be spectators of iambi or of comedy until they are of an age to sit at the public tables and to drink strong wine; by that time education will have inoculated them against the evil influences of such representations.

Theophrastus, the tragic actor, was quite right in saying that he would not allow any other actor, not even if he were quite second-rate, to enter before himself, because the spectators grew fond of the voices which they first heard. The same principle applies universally to association with things as well as with persons, for we always like best whatever comes first. So youth should be kept strangers to all that is bad, and especially to things that suggest vice or hate.

When the five years have passed away, during the two following years they must look on at the pursuits that they are hereafter to learn. There are two periods of education: from seven to the age of puberty, and onwards to the age of twenty-one. The poets who divide ages by sevens are in the main right; but we should observe the divisions actually made by nature; the deficiencies of nature are what craft and education seek to fill up.

Let us inquire (1) if any regulations are to be laid down about children; (2) whether the care of them should be the concern of the state or of private individuals (our current common custom); and (3) what these regulations should be.

BOOK VIII:

VIII.1 Education is Important and Should be Molded to Suit the Form of Government; Just as in Any Capacities and Crafts, Virtue Requires Training and Habituation; Education in the Best State Should be the Same for All and Public; Each Citizen Belongs to and is Part of the State, and the Care of Each Part is Inseparable From the Care of the Whole (1337a).

No one will doubt that the legislator should direct his attention above all to the education of youth; the neglect of education does harm to the constitution. The citizen should be molded to suit the form of government under which he lives. Each government has a peculiar character which originally formed and which continues to preserve it. The character of democracy creates democracy, and the character of oligarchy creates oligarchy; and always the better the character, the better the government.

For the exercise of any capacity or craft, a previous training and habituation are required; and so for virtue. Since the whole city has one end, it is manifest that education should be one and the same for all, and
public (not private, as at present, when everyone looks after his own children separately, and gives them separate instruction of the sort which he thinks best); the training in things which are of common interest should be the same for all. And we must not suppose that any one of the citizens belongs to himself, for they all belong to the state, and are each of them a part of the state, and the care of each part is inseparable from the care of the whole. The Lacedaemonians should be praised especially for this (they take the greatest pains about their children, and make education the business of the state).

VIII.2 Questions About Education; Children Should Only Learn What Will be Useful to Them Without Making Them Craftsmen; Any Occupation, Craft, or Science Which Makes the Freeman’s Body, Soul or Mind Less Fit for Virtue is Mechanical; the Purpose of Learning Something Determines Whether it is Fit for a Freeman or Slave (1337a-b).

Education should be regulated by law and should be an affair of state; but what should be the character of this public education, and how young persons should be educated? Men disagree about the things to be taught, whether we look to virtue or the best life. Should education be more concerned with intellectual or with moral virtue? The existing practice is perplexing; no one knows on what principle we should proceed – should the useful in life, virtue, or higher knowledge, be the aim of our training (all three opinions have been entertained)? There are also disagreements about the means: different persons, starting with different ideas about the nature of virtue, naturally disagree about the practice of it. Children definitely should be taught those useful things which are really necessary, but not all useful things; occupations are divided into liberal and illiberal; and to young children should be imparted only such kinds of knowledge as will be useful to them without making craftpersons of them. Any occupation, craft, or science, which makes the body, soul or mind of the freeman less fit for the practice or exercise of virtue, is mechanical; wherefore we call those crafts mechanical which tend to deform the body, and likewise all paid employments, for they absorb and degrade the mind. There are also some liberal arts quite proper for a freeman to acquire, but only in a certain degree: if he attends to them too closely, in order to attain perfection in them, the same harmful effects will follow. The object also which a man sets before him makes a great difference; if he does or learns anything for his own sake or for the sake of his friends, or with a view to virtue, the action will be of a freeman; but if done for the sake of others, the very same action will be thought menial and servile. The received subjects of instruction, as said, are partly of a freeman and partly of an enslaved character.

VIII.3 Four Branches of Education: Reading/Writing, Gymnastics, Music, and Drawing; the First Principle of All Action is Leisure but Playing is Not the End of Life; Leisure Gives Pleasure, Happiness, and Enjoyment of Life; Music is Taught Not for Necessity or Utility, but Intellectual Enjoyment in Leisure; Drawing Should be Taught Because it can Help One Appreciate the Beauty of the Human Form; Boys’ Bodies Need to be Trained Before Their Minds, so They Should be Taught Gymnastics First (1337b-1338b).

There are four customary branches of education: (1) reading and writing, (2) gymnastics, (3) music, and (4) drawing. Of these, reading, writing, and drawing are regarded as useful for the purposes of life in a variety of ways, and gymnastic exercises are thought to infuse courage. A doubt may be raised concerning music: Most men cultivate it for the sake of pleasure, but originally it was included in education, because nature herself, as has been often said, requires that we should be able, not only to work well, but to use leisure well – and the first principle of all action is leisure.

Both are required, but leisure is better than occupation and is its end; so we must ask: What ought we to do when at leisure? Clearly we ought not to be playing, for then play would be the end of life. But if this is inconceivable, and play is needed more amid serious occupations than at other times (he who is hard at work has need of relaxation, and play gives relaxation, whereas occupation is always accompanied with exertion and effort), we should introduce amusements only at suitable times, and they should be our medicines, for the emotion which they create in the soul is a relaxation, and from the pleasure we obtain rest.
Leisure itself gives pleasure, happiness, and enjoyment of life, which are experienced, not by the busy man, but by those who have leisure. The occupied person has in view some end that he has not attained; but happiness is an end, since all men deem it to be accompanied with pleasure and not with pain. This pleasure, however, is regarded differently by different persons, and varies according to the habit of individuals; the pleasure of the best man is the best, and springs from the noblest sources. So there are branches of learning and education which we must study merely with a view to leisure spent in intellectual activity, and these are to be valued for their own sake; whereas those kinds of knowledge which are useful in business are to be deemed necessary, and exist for the sake of other things.

So our fathers admitted music into education, not on the ground either of its necessity or utility, for it is not necessary, nor indeed useful in the same manner as reading and writing (useful in money-making, household management, gaining knowledge, and in political life), nor like drawing (useful for a more correct judgment of the works of artists), nor again like gymnastic (that gives health and strength); for none of these is to be gained from music. So the use of music is for intellectual enjoyment in leisure; this is the reason for its introduction, since it is one of the ways in which it is thought that a freeman should pass his leisure.

So there is a sort of education in which parents should train their sons, not as being useful or necessary, but because it is liberal or noble. Thus, music is one of the received and traditional branches of education.

Children should be instructed in some useful things (EXs: reading and writing) not only for their usefulness, but also because many other sorts of knowledge are acquired through them. Similarly, they may be taught drawing (not to prevent their making mistakes in purchases, or being taken advantage of in buying or selling articles), perhaps because it makes them judges of the beauty of the human form. To be always seeking after the useful does not become free and exalted souls.

In education, practice must be used before theory, and the body be trained before the mind; so boys should be handed over to the trainer, who creates in them the proper habit of body, and to the gymnastics trainer, who teaches them their exercises.

VIII.4 Focusing Education on Athletics Injures Children’s Bodies and Stunts Their Growth; Spartans Brutalize Their Children By Laborious Exercises Designed to Make Them Courageous (=Wrong Motive); the Proper Motive is What is Noble; Devoting Children to Gymnastics Make Them Like a Craftsperson (Good Only for One Thing); Excessive Early Gymnastics is Bad, Damaging the Body; When Boyhood is Over, 3 Years Should be Spent on Other Studies, Then Hard Exercise/Strict Diet Afterwards; Men Should Not Work Out Their Minds and Bodies at the Same Time (1338b-1339a).

Of those states which in our own day seem to take the greatest care of children, some aim at producing in them an athletic habit, but they only injure their bodies and stunt their growth. Although the Lacedaemonians have not fallen into this mistake, yet they brutalize their children by laborious exercises that they think will make them courageous. But in truth, as we have often repeated, education should not be exclusively, or principally, directed to this end. (Even if the Lacedaemonians are right about their end, they do not attain it. When they alone were assiduous in their laborious drill, were superior to others, but now they are beaten both in war and gymnastics. Their ancient superiority did not depend on the mode of training their youth, but only on the circumstance that they trained them when their only rivals did not.)

We may infer that what is noble, not what is brutal, should have the first place; no wolf or other wild animal will face a really noble danger; such dangers are for the brave man. Parents who devote their children to gymnastics while they neglect their necessary education, in reality make them craftspersons; they make them useful to the art of statesmanship in one quality only, and even in this the argument proves them to be inferior to others.

Gymnastics should be employed in education, and for children they should be of a lighter kind, avoiding severe diet or painful toil, lest the growth of the body be impaired. The evil of excessive training in early years is strikingly proved by the example of the Olympic victors; not more than two or three of them have gained a prize both as boys and as men; their early training and severe gymnastic exercises exhausted their constitutions. When boyhood is over, three years should be spent in other studies; the period of life that follows may then be
devoted to hard exercise and strict diet. Men ought not to labor at the same time with their minds and with their bodies; the two kinds of labor are opposed to one another; the labor of the body impedes the mind, and the labor of the mind the body.

VIII.5 Further Questions About Music; Youth Should Not be Instructed in Amusement Because Learning Involves Pain; We do Not Have to Learn to Play Music Ourselves to Get its Benefits; Music Produces Education, Amusement, and Intellectual Enjoyment, is One of the Most Pleasant Things, and Makes Men’s Hearts Glad; Music Alleviates Past Toil But Provides Recreation; Imitations/Music Cause Men’s Souls to Change and Feel Emotions; Musical Modes Have Different Effects: Sad and Grave (Mixolydian), Moderate, Settled Temper (Dorian), and Enthusiasm (Phrygian); Rhythm is Similar; Music Can Form One’s Character, so the Youth Should be Taught Music (1339a-1340b).

Let us return to music: It is not easy to determine the nature of music, or why anyone should have knowledge of it. Shall we say, (1) for the sake of amusement and relaxation, like sleep or drinking, which are not good in themselves, but are pleasant and “put an end to care,” as Euripides says? (Some add dancing.) Or (2) music conduces to virtue, on the ground that it can form our minds and habituate us to true pleasures as our bodies are made by gymnastic to be of a certain character? Or (3) it contributes to the enjoyment of leisure and mental cultivation?

Obviously youths are not to be instructed with a view to their amusement: learning is no amusement, but is accompanied with pain. And intellectual enjoyment is not suitable to boys of that age (it is the end, and that which is imperfect cannot attain the end). Perhaps boys learn music for the sake of the amusement that they will have when they are grown up. If so, why should they learn themselves, and not, like the Persian and Median kings, enjoy the pleasure and instruction that is derived from hearing others? (Surely persons who have made music the business and profession of their lives will be better performers than those who practice only long enough to learn). If they must learn music, on the same principle they should learn cookery, which is absurd. Even granting that music may form the character, the objection still holds: why should we learn ourselves? Why cannot we attain true pleasure and form a correct judgment from hearing others, as the Lacedaemonians do? (Without learning music, they can nevertheless correctly judge good and bad melodies.)

Re: learning music ourselves: In the poets, Zeus does not himself sing or play on the lyre, and we call professional performers craftsmen; no freeman would play or sing unless he were intoxicated or in jest.

The first question is whether music is or is not to be a part of education. Music produces education, amusement, and intellectual enjoyment. Amusement is for the sake of relaxation, and relaxation is of necessity sweet (it is the remedy of pain caused by toil); intellectual enjoyment is universally acknowledged to contain an element not only of the noble but of the pleasant (as happiness is made up of both). All men agree that music is one of the pleasantest things, whether with or without song; as Musaeus says, “Song is to mortals of all things the sweetest.” Hence with good reason music is introduced into social gatherings and entertainments, because it makes the hearts of men glad.

So on this ground alone, we may assume that the young ought to be trained in it. Innocent pleasures are not only in harmony with the end of life, but they also provide relaxation. Whereas men rarely attain the end, but often rest by the way and amuse themselves, not only with a view to a further end, but also for the pleasure’s sake, it may be well to let them find refreshment in music at times. Sometimes men make amusement the end, for the end probably contains some element of pleasure, though not any ordinary pleasure; but they mistake the lower for the higher, and in seeking for the one find the other, since every pleasure has a likeness to the end of action. The end is not desirable for the sake of any future good, nor do the pleasures that we have described exist for the sake of any future good but of the past (i.e., they are the alleviation of past toils and pains).

This is why men seek happiness from these pleasures. But music is pursued, not only as an alleviation of past toil, but also as providing recreation. And who can say whether, having this use, it may not also have a nobler one? In addition to this common pleasure, felt and shared in by all (the pleasure given by music is natural, and so adapted to all ages and characters), may it not have also some influence over the character and the soul? It must have such an influence if and since characters are affected by it (this is proved in many ways,
and not least by the power that the songs of Olympus exercise; beyond question they inspire enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is an emotion of the character of the soul.

Besides, when men hear imitations, even apart from the rhythms and tunes themselves, their feelings move in sympathy. Since then music is a pleasure, and virtue consists in rejoicing and loving and hating rightly, there is clearly nothing that we are so much concerned to acquire and to cultivate as the power of forming right judgments, and of taking delight in good dispositions and noble actions. Rhythm and melody supply imitations of anger, gentleness, courage, and temperance, and so on, and of all the qualities contrary to these, all of which hardly fall short of the actual affections: in listening to such strains our souls undergo a change. The habit of feeling pleasure or pain at mere representations is not far removed from the same feeling about realities: EX: if anyone delights in the sight of a statue for its beauty only, it necessarily follows that the sight of the original will be pleasant to him. [DY: Does this conflict with Aristotle’s view of catharsis in the Poetics?]

The objects of no other sense, such as taste or touch, have any resemblance to moral qualities; in visible objects there is only a little, for there are figures which are of a moral character, but only to a slight extent, and all do not participate in the feeling about them. Figures and colors are not imitations, but signs of character or indications that the body gives of states of feeling. The connection of them with morals is slight, but young men should be taught to look the works of any other painter or sculptor who expresses character.

Even in mere melodies, there is an imitation of character: The musical modes differ essentially from one another, and those who hear them are differently affected by each. Some modes make men sad and grave (Mixolydian), the relaxed modes enfeeble the mind, others produce a moderate and settled temper (Dorian); and the Phrygian inspires enthusiasm. The whole subject has been well treated by philosophical writers on this branch of education, and they confirm their arguments by facts. The same principles apply to rhythms; some have a character of rest, others of motion (of which there are vulgar and nobler movements).

Thus, music has a power of forming the character, and should therefore be introduced into the education of the young. The study is suited to the stage of youth: for young persons will not, if they can help, endure anything which is not sweetened by pleasure, and music has a natural sweetness. (There seems to be in us a sort of affinity to musical modes and rhythms, which makes some philosophers say that the soul is a harmony, others, that it possesses harmony.)

**VIII.6 Children Should (Contra VIII.5) Learn How to Perform Music Early, so They Can be Good Judges Thereof; Music Education Should Not Impede the Business of Elder Years, Nor Degrade the Body When Young or Old; Children Should Perform Above the Level of Common Music, but Below the Level of Professional Musicians Who Enter Contests; the Flute and Various Harps Should Not be Taught in Music Education; Why the Ancients Used the Flute in Music Ed at One Point But Now Reject It; Paid Performers are Vulgarized, as are the Listeners, Depending on the Music and Player’s Intent (1340b-1341b).**

We return to the question of whether children should be themselves taught to sing and play. Clearly (1) there is a considerable difference made in the character by the actual practice of the art. (2) It is difficult, if not impossible, for those who do not perform to be good judges of the performance of others. Besides, (3) children should have something to do; EX: the rattle of Archytas, which people give to their children in order to amuse them and prevent them from breaking anything in the house, was a capital invention, for a young thing cannot be quiet. The rattle is a toy suited to the infant mind, and education is a rattle or toy for children of a larger growth. Thus, they should be taught music in such a way as to become not only critics but performers.

Judges must also be performers, so they should begin to practice early, although when they are older they may be spared the execution; they must have learned to appreciate what is good and to delight in it, thanks to the knowledge that they acquired in their youth. As to the vulgarizing effect that music is supposed to exercise [DY: that is, the argument that music is mechanical – see VIII.2 above], we first need to consider: To what extent freemen who are being trained to political virtue should pursue the art, what melodies and what rhythms they should be allowed to use, and what instruments should be employed in teaching them to play; even the instrument makes a difference. The answer to the objection turns upon these distinctions, because it is quite possible that certain methods of teaching and learning music do really have a degrading effect. The learning of
music ought not to impede the business of riper years, or to degrade the body or render it unfit for civil or military training, whether for bodily exercises at the time or for later studies.

The right measure will be attained if students of music stop short of the arts that are practiced in professional contests, and do not seek to acquire those fantastic marvels of execution that are now the fashion in such contests, and from these have passed into education. Let the young practice even such music as we have prescribed, only until they are able to feel delight in noble melodies and rhythms, and not merely in that common part of music in which every slave or child and even some animals find pleasure.

What instruments should be used: The flute, or any other instrument which requires great skill, such as the harp, ought not to be admitted into education, but only such as will make men intelligent students of music or of the other parts of education. Besides, the flute is not an instrument that is expressive of character; it is too exciting. The proper time for using the flute is when the performance aims not at instruction, but at the relief of the passions. A further objection: the impediment that the flute presents to the use of the voice detracts from its educational value.

So the ancients were right in forbidding the flute to youths and freemen, although they had once allowed it. When their wealth gave them a greater inclination to leisure, and they had loftier notions of virtue, being also elated with their success (both before and after the Persian War), with more zeal than discernment they pursued every kind of knowledge, and so they introduced the flute into education. In Lacedaemon there was even a patron of the theater who led the chorus with a flute, and at Athens the instrument became so popular that most freemen could play upon it. Later experience enabled men to judge what was or was not really conducive to virtue, and they rejected both the flute and several other old-fashioned instruments, such as the Lydian harp, the many-stringed lyre, the "heptagon," "trigona," "sambuca," [DY: These are all different forms of harps] and the like – these are intended only to give pleasure to the hearer, and require extraordinary skill of hand. There is also the ancient myth that tells how Athena invented the flute and then threw it away. It was not a bad idea of theirs that the Goddess disliked the instrument because it made the face ugly; but with still more reason may we say that she rejected it because the acquirement of flute-playing contributes nothing to the mind, since to Athena we ascribe both knowledge and art.

Thus, we reject the professional instruments and also the professional mode of education in music (professional = that which is adopted in contests), because that performer practices the art, not for the sake of his own improvement, but to give vulgar pleasure to his hearers. So the execution of such music is not the part of a freeman but of a paid performer, and the result is that the performers are vulgarized: the end at which they aim is bad. The vulgarity of the spectator tends to lower the character of the music and thus of the performers; they look to him – he makes them what they are, and fashions even their bodies by the movements that he expects them to exhibit.

VIII.7 Rhythms and Modes in Music Education; Music Should be Studied for 5 Benefits: Education, Purgation, Intellectual Enjoyment, Relaxation, and Recreation After Exertion; We Must Use All Modes for Different Reasons; the Dorian (Gravest, Manliest) Mode is Good for Educating the Youth; There Should be Vulgar Music for Craftsperson, Laborers, etc.; Two Criticisms of Plato’s View of Music; Older Musicians Should Play Gentler Modes but Know Others as Well (1341b-1342b).

Lastly, let us consider rhythms and modes, and their use in education. Shall we use them all or make a distinction? Shall the same distinction be made for those who practice music with a view to education, or shall it be some other? We see that music is produced by melody and rhythm, and we ought to know what influence these have respectively on education, and whether we should prefer virtue in melody or virtue in rhythm. (But as the subject has been very well treated by many musicians of the present day, and also by philosophers who have had considerable experience in musical education, to these we would refer the more exact student of the subject; we shall only speak of it now after the manner of the legislator, stating the general principles.)

We accept the division of melodies proposed by certain philosophers into melodies of character, melodies of action, and passionate or inspiring melodies, each having, as they say, a mode corresponding to it. But we add that music should be studied, not for the sake of one, but of many benefits: (1) education; (2)
purgation (used here without explanation, but when hereafter we speak of poetry [DY: Probably a reference to Poetics 1449b26-28, but perhaps to a lost work, according to Reeve, p. 240n4]), we will treat the subject with more precision; (3) intellectual enjoyment; (4) relaxation, and (5) recreation after exertion. Thus, we must employ all the modes, but not in the same manner. In education the modes most expressive of character are to be preferred, but in listening to the performances, we may admit the modes of action and passion also. Feelings such as pity, fear, or enthusiasm exist very strongly in some souls, and have more or less influence over all. Some persons fall into a religious frenzy, and we see them restored as a result of the sacred melodies – when they have used the melodies that excite the soul to mystic frenzy – as though they had found healing and purgation. Those who are influenced by pity or fear, and every emotional nature, must have a like experience, and others insofar as each is susceptible to such emotions, and all are in a manner purged and their souls lightened and delighted. The melodies that purge the passions likewise give an innocent pleasure to mankind.

Such are the modes and the melodies in which theater musicians should be invited to compete. But since the spectators are of two kinds (free and educated, and the vulgar crowd composed of craftpersons, laborers, and the like), there ought to be contests and exhibitions instituted for the relaxation of the second class also. The music will correspond to their minds; as their minds are perverted from the natural state, so there are perverted modes and highly-strung and unnaturally colored melodies. A man receives pleasure from what is natural to him, and so professional musicians may be allowed to practice this lower sort of music before an audience of a lower type.

But, for the purposes of education, as said, those modes and melodies should be employed which are expressive of character (e.g., Dorian); though we may include any others that are approved by philosophers who have had a musical education. Socrates in the Republic is wrong in retaining only the Phrygian mode along with the Dorian, and the more so because he rejects the flute: the Phrygian is to the modes what the flute is to musical instruments – both of them are exciting and emotional. Poetry proves this, for Bacchic frenzy and all similar emotions are most suitably expressed by the flute, and are better set to the Phrygian than to any other mode. EX: The dithyramb is acknowledged to be Phrygian, for which the connoisseurs of music offer many proofs (Philoxenus, found it impossible to compose his Mysians as a dithyramb in the Dorian mode, and fell back by into the more appropriate Phrygian). All men agree that the Dorian music is the gravest and manliest. Whereas we say that the extremes should be avoided and the mean followed, and whereas the Dorian is a mean between the other modes, our youth should be taught the Dorian music.

Two principles have to be kept in view: what is possible, and what is becoming. At these every man ought to aim. But even these are relative to age; the old, who have lost their powers, cannot very well sing the high-strung modes, and nature herself seems to suggest that their songs should be of the more relaxed kind. Thus, the musicians also justly blame Socrates, for rejecting the relaxed modes in education under the idea that they are intoxicating, not in the ordinary sense of intoxication (wine rather tends to excite men), but because they have no strength in them. So, when men begin to grow old, they ought to practice the gentler modes and melodies as well as the others, and any mode (as the Lydian above all others appears to be) that is suited to children of tender age, and possesses the elements of order and education. Thus, education should be based upon three principles – the mean, the possible, and the becoming.