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St. Thomas Aquinas: *Commentary on the Politics*

Translated by

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[Note: The *Commentary on the Politics* is drawn from *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Ralph Lerner, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963, pp. 297-334.]

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Translator's Introduction

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Aquinas' commentary on the *Politics*, like his commentary on the *Ethics*, appears to have been composed between 1270 and 1272. It does not extend beyond Book III, chapter 8, and was completed by Peter of Auvergne, whose commentary follows that of Aquinas in the modern editions of the latter's works. The procedure of the commentary on the *Politics* is identical to that of the commentary on the *Ethics*. It is commonly believed that William of Moerbeke revised an earlier translation of the first three books of the *Politics* and provided the first Latin translation of the remainder of that work, *ca.* 1260. Although the division of moral philosophy into ethics, economics, and politics was already known, no use was made of any part of the *Politics* prior to that time. There is no mention of the *Politics* in the new statutes of the Arts Faculty at Paris in 1255. The canon and civil laws and such works as Cicero's *De Officiis* constituted the standard texts in the schools. As soon as it became available, the *Politics* exerted a wide influence. Lectures on the *Politics* were introduced at the Arts Faculty in Paris and then elsewhere. The same practice was soon followed by the religious orders. Besides the one by Aquinas, no fewer than six commentaries on that work, including those of Albert the Great, Peter of Auvergne (distinct from the complement to Aquinas' commentary mentioned above), Siger of Brabant, and perhaps Giles of Rome, are known to have been written before the end of the thirteenth century. (For a critical list of these commentaries, one may consult Martin Grabmann, *Die mittelalterlichen Kommentare zur Politik des Aristoteles* [Munich, 1941].) Albert's commentary was composed at approximately the same time as that of Aquinas. It is impossible to know which one came first. The influence of the *Politics* is also perceptible in numerous other works of that period, particularly those dealing with matters of ecclesiastical or imperial polity.

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The following passages are all new translations. The six lessons of Book III are here translated into English for the first time. The translation is based on the recent edition of the commentary on the *Politics* by R. Spiazzi, O.P.: S. Thomae Aquinatis, *In Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio* (Turin, 1951), pp. 1-12 and 121-40. Italic numbers in brackets in the body of the translation refer to the pagination of the Spiazzi edition. For reasons of space, the text of Aristotle, which precedes each lesson in the commentary, has been left out, as also the words of Aristotle that Aquinas repeats in the text of the commentary itself in order to identify the precise passage to which he is referring. Aquinas' Proemium discusses the nature and necessity of political philosophy. The first lesson of Book I establishes the subject of that science. The first six lessons of Book III deal with the central question of the nature of citizenship.

Proemium

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1 As the Philosopher teaches in Book II of the *Physics*, art imitates nature. ¹ The reason for this is that operations and effects stand proportionately in the same relation to one another as their principles among themselves. Now the principle of those things that come about through art is the human intellect, and the

human intellect derives according to a certain resemblance from the divine intellect, which is the principle of natural things. Hence the operations of art must imitate the operations of nature and the things that exist through art must imitate the things that are in nature. For if an instructor of some art were to produce a work of art, the disciple who receives his art from him would have to observe that work so that he himself might act in like manner. And so in the things that it makes, the human intellect, which derives the light of intelligence from the divine intellect, must be informed by the examination of the things that come about through nature so that it may operate in the same way.

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2 And that is why the Philosopher says that if art were to make the works of nature, it would operate in the same way as nature; and, conversely, if nature were to make the works of art, it would make them the same way art does. ¶2 But nature, of course, does not achieve works of art; it only prepares certain principles and in some way supplies artists with a model according to which they may operate. Art, on the other hand, can examine the works of nature and use them to perfect its own work. From this it is clear that human reason can only know the things that exist according to nature, whereas it both knows and makes the things that exist according to art. The human sciences that deal with natural things are necessarily speculative, therefore, while those that deal with things made by man are practical or operative according to the imitation of nature.

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3 Now nature in its operation proceeds from the simple to the complex, so that in the things that come about through the operation of nature, that which is most complex is perfect and whole and constitutes the end of the other things, as is apparent in the case of every whole with respect to its parts. Hence human reason also, operating from the simple to the complex, proceeds as it were from the imperfect to the perfect.

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4 Now since human reason has to order not only the things that are used by man but also men themselves, who are ruled by reason, it proceeds in either case from the simple to the complex: in the case of the things used by man when, for example, it builds a ship out of wood and a house out of wood and stones; in the case of men themselves when, for example, it orders many men so as to form a certain society. And since among these societies there are various degrees and orders, the highest is that of the city, which is ordered to the satisfaction of all the needs of human life. Hence of all the human societies this one is the most perfect. And because the things used by man are ordered to man as to their end, which is superior to the means, that whole which is the city is therefore necessarily superior to all the other wholes that may be known and constituted by human reason.

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5 From what we have said then concerning political doctrine, with which Aristotle deals in this book, four things may be gathered.

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First, the necessity of this science. For in order to arrive at the perfection of human wisdom, which is called philosophy, it is necessary to teach something about all that can be known by reason. Since then that whole which is the city is subject to a certain judgment of reason, it is necessary, so that philosophy may be complete, to institute a discipline that deals with the city; and this discipline is called politics or civil science.

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6 Secondly, we can infer the genus of this science. For since the practical sciences are distinguished from the speculative sciences in that the speculative sciences are ordered exclusively to the knowledge of the

truth, whereas the practical sciences are ordered to some work, this science must be comprised under practical philosophy, inasmuch as the city is a certain whole that human reason not only knows but also produces.

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Furthermore, since reason produces certain things [2] by way of making, in which case the operation goes out into external matter—this pertains properly to the arts that are called mechanical, such as that of the smith and the shipwright and the like—and other things by way of action, in which case the operation remains within the agent, as when one deliberates, chooses, wills, and performs other similar acts pertaining to moral science, it is obvious that political science, which is concerned with the ordering of men, is not comprised under the sciences that pertain to making or mechanical arts, but under the sciences that pertain to action, which are the moral sciences.

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7 Thirdly, we can infer the dignity and the order of political science with reference to all the other practical sciences. The city is indeed the most important of the things that can be constituted by human reason, for all the other human societies are ordered to it.

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Furthermore, all the wholes constituted by the mechanical arts out of the things that are used by men are ordered to man as to their end. If the most important science, then, is the one that deals with what is most noble and perfect, of all the practical sciences political science must necessarily be the most important and must play the role of architectonic science with reference to all the others, inasmuch as it is concerned with the highest and perfect good in human affairs. And that is why the Philosopher says at the end of Book X of the *Ethics* that the philosophy that deals with human affairs finds its perfection in politics. ¶3

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8 Fourthly, from what has already been said we can deduce the mode and the order of this science. For just as the speculative sciences, which treat of some whole, arrive at a knowledge of the whole by manifesting its properties and its principles from an examination of its parts and its principles, so too this science examines the parts and the principles of the city and gives us a knowledge of it by manifesting its parts and its properties and its operations. And because it is a practical science, it manifests in addition how each thing may be realized, as is necessary in every practical science.

Book One

Lesson I [i. 1. 1252a1-2. 1253a38]

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9 After these preliminary remarks, then, it should be noted that in this book Aristotle begins with a preamble of some kind in which he manifests the aim of this science; then he proceeds to manifest what he has proposed. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he shows the dignity of the city, with which politics is concerned, from its end; secondly, he shows the relation of the city to the other societies

which politics is concerned, from its end, secondly, he shows the relation of the city to the other societies.

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10 Concerning the first point, he intends to prove two things: first, that the city is ordered to some good as to its end; secondly, that the good to which the city is ordered is the highest human good.

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Concerning the first point, he sets down the following argument. Every society is established for the sake of some good. But every city is a society of some kind. Therefore, every city is established for the sake of some good. Since then the minor premise is evident, he proves the major as follows. All men perform everything they do for the sake of that which is seen as a good, whether it is truly good or not. But every society is established through the work of someone. Therefore, all societies seek some good, that is to say, they aim at some good as an end.

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11 Then he shows that that good to which the city is ordered is the highest among human goods by means of the following argument. If every society is ordered to a good, that society which is the highest necessarily seeks in the highest degree the good that is the highest among all human goods. For the importance of the means to an end is determined according to the importance of the ends.

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Now he makes clear which society is the highest by what he adds. A society is indeed a certain whole. But in all wholes is found an order such that that whole which includes another whole within itself is the higher; a wall, for example, is a whole, and because it is included in that whole which is the house, it is clear that the house is the higher of the two wholes; and likewise, the society that includes other societies is the higher. Now it is clear that the city includes all the other societies, for households and villages are both comprised under the city; and so political society itself is the highest society. Therefore, it seeks the highest among all human goods, for it aims at the common good, which is better and more divine than the good of one individual, as is stated in the beginning of the *Ethics*. [†4](#)

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12 Then he compares the city to the other societies, and in this connection he does three things. First, he states the false opinion of certain persons. Secondly, he shows how the falsity of the stated opinion can be made known. Thirdly, in accordance with the method indicated, he sets down the true relationship of the city to the other societies. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he states the false opinion. Secondly, he produces their reason.

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13 Concerning the first point, it should be noted that there is a twofold society that is obvious to all, namely, the city and the household. The city is governed by a twofold rule, namely, the political and the kingly. There is kingly rule when he who is set over the city has full power, whereas there is political rule when he who is set over the city exercises a power restricted by certain laws of the city. Similarly, the household has a twofold rule, namely, the domestic and the despotic. Everyone who possesses slaves is called a despot, whereas the procurator or superintendent of a family is called the domestic head. [†5](#) Hence despotic rule is that by which a master commands slaves, [7] while domestic rule is that by which one dispenses the things that pertain to the entire family, in which are contained not only slaves but many free people as well. Some persons have maintained then, but not rightly, that these two rules do not differ but are entirely the same.

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14 Then he sets forth their reason, which is as follows. Things that differ solely by reason of larger and smaller numbers do not differ specifically, because a difference according to more and less does not diversify a species. But the rules just mentioned differ solely by reason of larger or smaller numbers; this they manifested as follows. If the society that is ruled is made up of a small number of people, as in the case of some small household, he who is set over them is called the father of the family and he possesses despotic rule. If the society is made up of a larger number of people, in such a way as to contain not only slaves but a number of free men as well, he who is set over them is called the domestic head. ¶6 And if the society is made up of a still larger number of people, for example, not only of those who belong to one household but of those who belong to one city, then the rule is said to be political or kingly.

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15 The falsity of what certain persons used to say to the effect that the household and the city differ only by reason of their magnitude and smallness, in such a way that a large household is a small city and vice versa, will become apparent from what follows. Likewise they used to assert also that political rule and kingly rule differed solely by reason of larger and smaller numbers. For, when a man himself rules absolutely and in all ways, the rule is said to be kingly. When, however, he commands in part, in accordance with the principles of a given science, that is, in accordance with the laws set down by political teaching, the rule is said to be political, as though he were in part a ruler, namely, as regards the things that come under his power, and in part a subject, namely, as regards the things in which he is subjected to the law. From all this they inferred that all the previously mentioned rules, some of which pertain to the city and others to the household, do not differ specifically.

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16 Then he shows how the falsity of this opinion can be manifested. He states that what has been said is not true, and that this will become evident to those who examine the matter according to the mode indicated, ¶7 that is, according to the art of studying such things as will be set down below. Now the mode of this art is the following. Just as, in other things, in order to arrive at a knowledge of the whole, it is necessary to divide the compound into its elements, that is, into the indivisibles, which are the smallest parts of the whole (for instance, to understand a sentence it is necessary to divide it into its letters, and to understand a natural mixed body it is necessary to divide it into its elements), in the same manner if we examine those things out of which the city is compounded, we shall be able to see better what each one of the previously mentioned rules is in itself, and how they differ from one another, and whether in each case something can be studied in an artful way. For in all things we see that if someone examines things as they arise from their principles, he will best be able to contemplate the truth in them. And just as this is true of other things, so also is it true of those things to which we are directing our attention. Now in these words of the Philosopher it should be noted that, in order to arrive at a knowledge of compounds, it is necessary to use the resolute way, namely, so that we may divide the compound into its elements. Afterwards, however, the compositive way is necessary, so that from the indivisible principles already known we may judge of the things that proceed from these principles.

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17 Then, in accordance with the mode just indicated, he sets down the true relationship of the other societies to the city; and in connection with this, he does two things. First, he treats of the other societies that are ordered to the city. Secondly, he treats of civil society. Concerning the first point, he does three things. First, he sets forth the society of one person to another person. Secondly, he sets down the domestic society, which comprises different associations of persons. Thirdly, he sets down the village society, which is made up of several groups. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he sets down two personal associations. Secondly, he compares them to each other.

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Now the first of these two personal associations that he sets down is that of male and female; and he says that, since we have to divide the city into its smallest parts, it is necessary to say that the first union is that of persons who cannot be without each other, namely, the male and the female. For this union is for the sake of generation through which are produced both males and females. From this it is clear that they cannot be without each other.

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18 He shows how this union is the first by what he adds. Here it should be noted that in man there is something that is proper to him, namely, reason, according to which it belongs to him to act from counsel and choice. There is also found in man something that is common to him and to others; such is the ability to generate. This then does not belong to him as a result of choice, that is, in so far as he has a reason that chooses; rather it belongs to him in so far as he has a reason that is common to him and to animals and even to plants. For there is in all these a natural [8] appetite to leave after them another being like themselves, so that in this manner, through generation, what cannot be preserved numerically the same is preserved according to its species.

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There is, accordingly, a natural appetite of this kind in all other natural corruptible beings. But because living beings, namely, plants and animals, have a special way of generating in that they generate from themselves, he makes special mention of plants and animals. For even in plants a masculine and a feminine power is found, but they are joined in the same individual, even though there is a greater abundance of one or the other in this or that individual, in such a way that we can imagine a plant to be at all times such as are male and female at the time of intercourse.

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19 Then he sets down the second association of persons, namely, that of ruler and subject. This association too stems from nature for the sake of preservation, for nature aims not only at generation but also at the preservation of the things generated. That among men this indeed comes about through the association of ruler and subject he shows by the fact that he who by his intellect can foresee the things that are conducive to preservation, for instance, by providing what is advantageous and repelling what is harmful, naturally commands and rules, whereas he who by reason of bodily strength is able to carry out in deed what the wise man has foreseen mentally is naturally a subject and a slave. From this it clearly appears that the same thing is profitable to both in view of their preservation, namely, that the former should rule and the latter be ruled. For he who by reason of his wisdom can foresee mentally would not be able to survive at times because of a deficiency of bodily strength if he did not have a slave to carry out his ideas, nor would he who abounds in bodily strength be able to survive if he were not ruled by the prudence of another.

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20 Then he compares the associations just mentioned to each other; first, according to the truth; secondly, he rules out an error.

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He infers then, first of all, from what has been said that there is a natural distinction between woman and slave. For a woman has a natural disposition to beget from another, but she is not robust in body, which is what is required in a slave. And so the two associations just mentioned differ from each other.

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21 Now he establishes the cause for this distinction from the fact that nature does not make things in the same way as those who manufacture Delphic knives out of brass, that is to say, out of metal, for some poor people. For among the Delphians certain knives were made that were designed to serve several

purposes, as for example, if a single knife were to be used to cut, to file, and to perform other similar duties. This was done for the benefit of the poor who could not afford several instruments. Nature, however, does not act in such a way as to order one thing to different functions; rather it assigns one thing to one function. For this reason woman is not assigned by nature to serve but to beget. Thus all things will best come about when an instrument is not used for many functions but for one only. This is to be understood, however, of cases in which an obstacle would be encountered in one or both of the two functions to which the same instrument were to be assigned, for instance, if it were often necessary to exercise both functions simultaneously. But if the different functions are exercised one after the other, the adaptation of a single instrument to several functions does not give rise to any obstacle. Hence the tongue is suited for two functions of nature, namely, taste and speech, as is said in Book II of the [treatise] *On the Parts of Animals*. ¶8 For these two functions do not coincide with each other in time.

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22 Then he rules out the contrary error. First, he states the error. Secondly, he shows the cause of the error.

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He says then, first of all, that among the barbarians, woman and slave are considered as belonging to the same order; for they use women as slaves. There can be a doubt here, however, as to who are called barbarians. Some people say that everyone is a barbarian to the man who does not understand his tongue. Hence the Apostle says, *If I know not the power of the voice, I shall be to him, to whom I speak, a barbarian, and he that speaketh, a barbarian to me* [1 Cor. 14:11]. To others it seems that those men are called barbarians who have no written language in their own vernacular. Hence Bede is said to have translated the liberal arts into the English language, lest the English be reputed barbarians. And to others it seems that the barbarians are those who are not ruled by any civil laws.

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23 And in fact all these things come close to the truth in some way; for by the name "barbarian" something foreign is understood. Now a man can be said to be foreign either absolutely or in relation to someone. He who is lacking in reason, according to which one is said to be a man, seems to be foreign to the human race absolutely speaking; and so the men who are called barbarians absolutely are the ones who are lacking in reason, either because they happen to live in an exceedingly intemperate region of the sky, so that by the very disposition of the region they are found to be dull for the most part, or else because of some evil custom prevailing in certain lands from which it comes about that men are rendered irrational and almost brutal. Now it is evident that it is from the power of reason that men are ruled by reasonable laws and that they are practiced in writing. [9] Hence barbarism is appropriately manifested by this sign, that men either do not live under laws or live under irrational ones, and likewise that among certain peoples there is no training in writing. But a man is said to be foreign in relation to someone if he cannot communicate with him. Now men are made to communicate with one another above all by means of speech; and according to this, people who cannot understand one another's speech can be called barbarians with reference to one another. The Philosopher, however, is speaking here of those who are barbarians absolutely.

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24 Then he establishes the cause of the error just mentioned. Its cause, he says, is that among barbarians there is no rule according to nature. For it was stated above that the man who commands according to nature is the one who is able to foresee mentally, whereas the slave is the one who is able to carry things out in deed. Now barbarians for the most part are found to be robust in body and deficient in mind. Hence the natural order of rule and subjection cannot exist among them. But there arises among them a certain association of female and male slave, that is to say, they commonly make use of a female slave, namely, a woman, and of a male slave. And because there is no natural rule among barbarians but only among those who abound in reason, the poets say that it is fitting that the Greeks, who were endowed with wisdom,

should rule over the barbarians, as if to say that it is the same thing by nature to be a barbarian and to be a slave. But when the converse takes place, there ensues a perversion and a lack of order in the world, according to the words of Solomon, *I have seen servants upon horses and princes walking on the ground as servants* [Eccles. 10:7].

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25 Then he treats of the domestic society, which is made up of several personal associations. In this connection he does three things. First, he shows what this society consists of. Secondly, he shows its purpose. Thirdly, he shows how those who live in this society are designated. †9

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He says then, first of all, that out of the two previously mentioned personal associations, one of which is ordered to generation and the other to preservation, the first household is constituted. For in a household there have to be a man and a woman, and a master and a slave. Now it is called the first household because there is also another personal association that is found in the household, namely, that of father and son, which arises out of the first. Hence the first two associations are primordial. To show this he adduces a saying of the poet Hesiod, who stated that a household has these three things: a master who rules, a woman, and an ox for plowing. For in a poor household the ox takes the place of a servant; man uses an ox, just as he uses a servant, to carry out some work.

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26 Then he shows to what the domestic society is ordered. Here it should be noted that every human association is an association according to certain acts. Now among human acts some are performed every day, such as eating, warming oneself at the fire, and others like these, whereas other things are not performed every day, such as buying, fighting, and others like these. Now it is natural for men to communicate among themselves by helping one another in each of these two kinds of work. Thus he says that a household is nothing other than a certain society set up according to nature for everyday life, that is, for the acts that have to be performed daily. And he goes on to show this by means of names. For a certain Charondas by name calls those who communicate in a household *homositios*, or men of one fare, because they communicate in food; and a certain other named Epimenides, a Cretan by nationality, calls them *homokapnos*, or men of one smoke, because they sit at the same fire.

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27 Then he sets down the third society, namely, the village. First, he shows of what this society is made up and what its purpose is. Secondly, he shows that it is natural.

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He says then, first of all, that the first association made up of several households is called a village; and it is called the first as distinguished from the second, which is the city. Now this society is not established for everyday life, as he says of the household; rather it is instituted for the sake of nondaily uses. For those who are fellow-villagers do not communicate with one another in the daily acts in which those who are members of one household communicate, such as eating, sitting at the fire, and things of this sort; rather they communicate with one another in certain external acts that are not performed daily.

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28 Then he shows that the village society is natural. First, he establishes his thesis by means of a reason. Secondly, by means of certain signs.

p 307

He says then first of all that the proximity of households which constitutes the village seems to be

He says then, first of all, that the proximity of households, which constitutes the village, seems to be according to nature in the highest degree. For nothing is more natural than the propagation of many from one in animals; and this brings about a proximity of households. Indeed, some people call those who have neighboring households foster brothers and children, that is, sons and children of children, that is, grandsons, so that we may understand that such a proximity of households originally springs from the fact that sons and grandsons, having multiplied, founded different households and lived close to one another. Hence, since the multiplication of offspring is natural, it follows that the village society is natural. [10]

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29 Then he manifests the same thing by means of signs. First, according to what we see among men. Secondly, according to what used to be said about the gods.

p 307

He says then, first of all, that, since the neighborhood was established as a result of the multiplication of offspring, from this it came about that at first any city was ruled by a king; and this because cities and nations are made up of people who are subject to a king. And he shows how this sign corresponds to what has already been said by what he adds, namely, that every household is ruled by some very old member, just as sons are ruled by the father of the family. Hence it comes about that the entire neighborhood too, which was formed of blood relations, was ruled on account of this kinship by someone who was first in the order of kinship, just as a city is ruled by a king. That is why Homer has said that each one lays down laws for his wife and children, like the king in a city. Now this rule passed from households and villages to cities, because different villages are like a city spread out into different parts; and thus in former times men used to dwell dispersed through villages and not gathered in one city. So it is clear then that the rule of the king over a city or a nation derived from the rule of an older member in a household or a village.

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30 Then he sets down another sign from what used to be said about the gods. He states that because of what has just been indicated, all the pagans used to say that their gods were ruled by some king and claimed that Jupiter was the king of the gods, and this because some men are still ruled by kings; but in former times almost all men were ruled by kings. This was the first rule, as will be said later. Now just as men liken the outward appearance of the gods, that is to say, their forms, to themselves, thinking the gods to be in the image of certain men, so also they liken the lives of the gods, that is to say, their behavior, to their own, thinking them to behave the way they see men behave. Aristotle is here referring, after the manner of the Platonists, to the substances separated from matter and created by only one supreme god, to whom the pagans erroneously attributed both human forms and human habits, as the Philosopher says here.

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31 After having treated of the societies ordered to the city, the Philosopher treats here of civil society itself. This treatise is divided into three parts. First, he shows what kind of society the city is. Secondly, he shows that it is natural. Thirdly, he treats of the foundation of the city.

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Concerning the first point, he shows the condition of the city with reference to three things. First, he shows of what things the city is made up. For, just as a village is made up of several households, so a city is made up of several villages. Secondly, he says that the city is a perfect society; and this he proves from the fact that, since every association among all men is ordered to something necessary for life, that society will be perfect which is ordered to this: that man have sufficiently whatever is necessary for life. Such a society is the city. For it is of the nature of the city that in it should be found all the things that are sufficient for human life; and so it is. And for this reason it is made up of several villages, in one of which the art of the smith is practiced in another the art of the weaver and so of the others. Hence it is evident that the city is a

which is practiced, in another the art of the weaver, and so of the others. Hence it is evident that the city is a perfect society. Thirdly, he shows to what the city is ordered. It is originally made for the sake of living, namely, that men might find sufficiently that from which they might be able to live; but from its existence it comes about that men not only live but that they live well, in so far as by the laws of the city the life of men is ordered to the virtues.

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32 Then he shows that civil society is natural. In this connection he does three things. First, he shows that the city is natural. Secondly, that man is by nature a political animal. Thirdly, he shows what is prior according to nature, whether it is one man, the household, or the city.

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Concerning the first point, he sets down two arguments, the first of which is as follows. The end of natural things is their nature. But the city is the end of the previously mentioned societies, which were shown to be natural. Therefore, the city is natural. Now, that nature is the end of natural things he proves by the following argument. We call the nature of each thing that which belongs to it when its generation is perfect; for example, the nature of man is that which he possesses once his generation is perfect, and the same holds for a horse and for a house, in such a way, however, that by the nature of a house is understood its form. But the disposition that a thing has by reason of its perfect generation is the end of all the things that precede its generation. Therefore, that which is the end of the natural principles from which something is generated is the nature of a thing. And thus, since the city is generated from the previously mentioned societies, which are natural, it will itself be natural.

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33 Then he sets down the second argument, which is as follows. That which is best in each thing is the end and that for the sake of which something comes about. But to have what is sufficient is best. Therefore, it has the nature of an end. And thus, since the city is a society that has of itself what is sufficient for life, it is itself the end of the previously mentioned societies. Hence it is clear [11] that this second argument is presented as a proof of the minor of the preceding one.

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34 Then he shows that man is by nature a political animal. First, he infers this from the naturalness of the city. Secondly, he proves this from man's proper operation. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he establishes his thesis. Secondly, he rules out a doubt.

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He infers then, first of all, from what has already been said that a city is made up of things that are according to nature. And since a city is nothing other than a congregation of men, it follows that man is a naturally political animal.

p 309

35 However, there could be a doubt in someone's mind concerning this, due to the fact that the things that are according to nature are found in all men. But not all men are found to be city dwellers. And so, in order to eliminate this doubt, he goes on to say that some men are not political on account of fortune, for instance, because they have been expelled from the city, or because poverty compels them to till fields or tend animals. And it is clear that this is not contrary to what has been said to the effect that man is naturally political, because other natural things too are sometimes lacking on account of fortune, for example, when someone loses a hand through amputation or when he is deprived of an eye. But if a man is such that he is not political on account of nature, either he is bad, as when this happens as a result of the corruption of human nature, or he is better than man, namely, in so far as he has a nature more perfect than that generally

round in other men, in such a way that by himself he can be self-sufficient without the company of men, as was the case with John the Baptist and Blessed Anthony the hermit.

p 310

In support of this he adduces a saying of Homer cursing someone who was not political because of depravity. For he says of him that he was without tribe because he could not be contained by the bond of friendship, and without right because he could not be contained under the yoke of the law, and vicious because he could not be contained under the rule of reason. Now he who is such by nature, being quarrelsome and living without yoke, is at the same time necessarily inclined to be avid for war, just as we see that wild fowls are rapacious.

p 310

36 Then he proves from his proper operation that man is a political animal, more so even than the bee and any gregarious animal, by the following argument. We say that nature does nothing in vain because it always works for a determinate end. Hence, if nature gives to a being something that of itself is ordered to some end, it follows that this end is given to this being by nature. For we see that, whereas certain other animals have a voice, man alone above the other animals has speech. Indeed, although certain animals produce human speech, they do not properly speak, because they do not understand what they are saying but produce such words out of a certain habit.

p 310

Now there is a difference between language and mere voice. †10 Voice is a sign of pain and pleasure and consequently of the other passions, such as anger and fear, which are all ordered to pleasure and pain, as is said in Book II of the *Ethics*. †11 Thus voice is given to the other animals, whose nature attains the level where they sense their pleasures and pains, and they signify this to one another by means of certain natural sounds of the voice, as a lion by his roar and a dog by his bark, in the place of which we use interjections.

p 310

37 Human speech, on the other hand, signifies what is useful and what is harmful. It follows from this that it signifies the just and the unjust. For justice and injustice consist in this, that some people are treated equally or unequally as regards useful and harmful things. Thus speech is proper to men, because it is proper to them, as compared to the other animals, to have a knowledge of the good and the bad, the just †12 and the unjust, and other such things that can be signified by speech.

p 310

Since language is given to man by nature, therefore, and since language is ordered to this, that men communicate with one another as regards the useful and the harmful, the just and the unjust, and other such things, it follows, from the fact that nature does nothing in vain, that men naturally communicate with one another in reference to these things. But communication in reference to these things is what makes a household and a city. Therefore, man is naturally a domestic and political animal.

p 311

38 Then he shows from what has been said that the city is by nature prior to the household and to one individual man by the following argument. The whole is necessarily prior to the part, namely, in the order of nature and perfection. This is to be understood, however, of the part of matter, not of the part of the species, as is shown in Book VII of the *Metaphysics*. †13 And he proves this as follows: if the whole man is destroyed, neither the foot nor the hand remains, except equivocally, in the manner in which a hand made out of stone can be called a hand. This because such a part is corrupted when the whole is corrupted. Now that which is corrupted does not retain its species, from which it receives its definition. Hence it is clear that the name does not retain the same meaning, and so it is predicated in an equivocal sense. That the part is

corrupted when the whole is corrupted he shows by the fact that every part is defined by its operation and by the power by which it operates. For example, the definition of a foot is that it is an organic member having the power to walk. And thus, from the fact that it no longer has this power and this operation, it is not the same according to its species but is equivocally called a foot. The same reasoning holds for other similar parts, which are called parts of matter, in whose definition the whole is included, just as circle is included in the definition of a semicircle, for [12] a semicircle is a half circle. Not so, however, with the parts of the species, which are included in the definition of the whole, as, for example, lines are included in the definition of a triangle.

p 311

39 So it is clear then that the whole is naturally prior to the parts of matter, even though the parts are prior in the order of generation. But individual men are related to the whole city as are the parts of man to man. For, just as a hand or a foot cannot exist without a man, so too one man cannot live self-sufficiently by himself when separated from the city.

p 311

Now if it should happen that someone is unable to participate in civil society because of his depravity, he is worse than a man and is, as it were, a beast. If, on the other hand, he does not need anyone and is, as it were, self-sufficient, he is better than a man, for he is, as it were, a god. It remains true, therefore, from what has been said, that the city is by nature prior to one man.

p 311

40 Then he treats of the foundation of the city and infers from what has been said that there is in all men a certain natural impulse toward the city, as also toward the virtues. But nevertheless, just as the virtues are acquired through human exercise, as is stated in Book II of the *Ethics*, ¶14 in the same way cities are founded by human industry. Now the man who first founded a city was the cause of the greatest goods for men.

p 312

41 For man is the best of the animals if virtue, to which he has a natural inclination, is perfected in him. But if he is without law and justice, man is the worst of all the animals. This he proves as follows. Injustice is all the more cruel in proportion as it has a greater number of arms, that is, instruments for doing evil. Now prudence and virtue, which of themselves are ordered to the good, belong to man according to his nature. But when a man is evil, he makes use of these as certain arms to do evil; for example, by his shrewdness he thinks up different frauds, and through abstinence he becomes capable of bearing hunger and thirst, so that he might be more persevering in his malice, and so of the other virtues. Hence it is that a man without virtue is most vicious and savage as regards the corruption of his irascible appetite, being as he is cruel and without affection; and as regards the corruption of his concupiscible appetite, he is most evil in relation to sexual matters and greediness for food. But man is reduced to justice by means of the political order. This is clear from the fact that among the Greeks the order of political society and the judgment of justice are called by the same name, to wit, *dike*. Hence it is evident that the man who founded the city kept men from being most evil and brought them to a state of excellence in accordance with justice and the virtues.

Book Three

p 312

348 After having examined the forms of government according to the teaching of others in Book II, the Philosopher begins to treat of them according to his own opinion. This section is divided into two parts. In the first, he manifests the diversity of regimes. In the second, he teaches how to set up the best regime, in the beginning of Book VII. The first part is divided into two parts. In the first, he distinguishes the regimes. In the second, he treats of each one in particular, in Book IV. The first part is divided into two parts. In the first, he determines what pertains to the regime in general. In the second, he divides the regimes. The first part is divided into two parts. In the first, he states his intention. In the second, he carries out his proposal. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he shows that, in order to treat of regimes, one must first deal with the city. Secondly, he shows that, in order to treat of the city, one must consider what a citizen is.

p 313

349 He says then, first of all, that he who wishes to study the regime and determine what each regime is according to its proper nature, and what kind of regime it is, namely, whether it is good or bad, just or unjust, must first consider what a city is. He proves this by two reasons, the first of which is that there may be some doubt concerning this point. For some people are in doubt whether certain transactions were effected by the city when, for example, they were accomplished by a tyrant or by the rich men of the city; in which case some say that the city acted, while others say that it was not the city but the rich rulers or even the tyrant. Thus there seems to be a question whether the rich rulers alone constitute the city; and because there is a question, it must be elucidated. The second reason is that the whole aim of those who treat of regimes and legislation revolves around the city, for the regime is nothing other than the order of the inhabitants of the city.

p 313

350 Then he shows that we must treat of the citizen for two reasons, the first of which is as follows. In everything that is composed of a multiplicity of parts, one must first consider the parts. The city is a certain whole made up of citizens who are, as it were, its parts, since the city is nothing other than a certain [122] multiplicity of citizens. Hence in order to arrive at a knowledge of the city, one must consider what a citizen is. The second reason is that concerning this point, too, there happens to be a difficulty; for not everyone is in agreement as to what a citizen is. Sometimes a common man, who is a citizen in a popular regime, where the people govern, is not reckoned a citizen under a rule of the few, where the rich govern, because it is often such that the people have no role to play in it. Hence it is evident that there is a controversy concerning the citizen, who is a citizen, and who should be called a citizen.

p 313

351 Then he carries out his aim. This section is divided into two parts. In the first, he shows what a citizen is. In the second, he shows what virtue makes a good citizen. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he determines what a citizen is. Secondly, he raises certain difficulties in this connection. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he shows what a citizen is according to virtue. Secondly, he rules out a certain false notion. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he sets down certain ways according to which some people are citizens in a qualified sense but not absolutely. Secondly, he shows what a citizen is absolutely speaking.

p 313

352 He says then, first of all, that for the present we must exclude those who are called citizens in a certain

way, that is to say, metaphorically or by comparison, for these are not really citizens.

p 314

The first way is by residence. People are not said to be truly citizens by the fact that they reside in a city, for foreigners and slaves reside in a city and yet they are not citizens absolutely speaking.

p 314

The second way is that some people may be called citizens because they are subject to the jurisdiction of the city. Thus they share in the justice of the city in that at times they obtain a favorable verdict and at other times they are judged, that is to say, condemned. But this is also true of people who are bound by contracts and who are not citizens of the same city. In certain cities, however, foreigners do not share perfectly in this justice, like the citizens, but must present a sponsor, that is to say, someone who vouches for their obedience to the law, if they wish to litigate. Hence it is clear that outsiders share imperfectly in the interchange of justice and so, in this respect, they are not citizens absolutely speaking but can be called citizens in a qualified sense.

p 314

Likewise also, in a third sense, we call children citizens, even though they have not yet been enlisted among the ranks of the citizens, and we call old men citizens, even though they have already been dropped from the rolls since they can no longer discharge the functions of citizens. We do not refer to either group as citizens absolutely speaking but only with some qualification: to the children as imperfect citizens, and to old men as people who have gone beyond the limit required by the condition of citizens. Or if some other such qualification is added, it makes no difference, for what we are trying to say is obvious: we are now asking what a citizen is absolutely and without any qualification that would be needed in order to set forth correctly the meaning of the word "citizen."

p 314

There is a fourth way, in which we encounter the same difficulty and the same solution, and that concerns fugitives and disreputable persons, who are citizens in a qualified sense but not absolutely.

p 314

353 Then he shows what a citizen is absolutely speaking; and in this connection he does three things. First, he sets down a certain definition of the citizen. Secondly, he shows that this definition is not common to any regime. Thirdly, he shows how it may be amended so that it will become common.

p 314

He says then, first of all, that there is no better way of defining the citizen absolutely speaking than by the fact that he shares in the administration of justice in the city, so that he has the power to judge in certain matters and possesses some authority in the affairs of the city.

p 314

We must bear in mind, however, that there are two kinds of rules. Some rules are limited to a definite period of time. Thus in certain cities the same man is not allowed to hold the same office twice, or else he may hold it for a limited time, exercising a certain office for one year, for example, after which he may not be appointed to the same office for another three or four years. The other rule is that which is not limited to a certain period of time but can be exercised by one man for any length of time, as, for example, that of the praetor, who has the authority to judge certain cases, and that of the speaker, who has the authority to express his opinion in the public assembly. It may happen, however, that some such judges or speakers are not called rulers and, for this reason, it may be argued that they do not have any authority by which they

may judge or address the assembly. But this is irrelevant, for the difficulty is one of words only. We do not find any name common to the judge and to the member of the assembly. Let us then give their office a name and call it "indeterminate office." Thus we assert that the men who share in this rule are citizens. This seems to be a better definition of the citizen absolutely speaking.

p 315

354 Then he shows that this definition of the citizen is not common to all regimes. He says that it must be made clear that in all matters where individual subjects differ [123] according to species and where one of them is first by nature, another second, and so on, either nothing is common to them absolutely, in so far as they are such, as in the case of equivocal names, or else there is something common, but only faintly and obscurely, that is to say, in some small measure. Now regimes, as we shall see later, differ according to species. Some of them are prior and others posterior; for those that are ordered according to right reason take precedence over the others, while those that are corrupt and violate the right order of the regime are by nature posterior to noncorrupt regimes, just as in any genus the perfect is by nature prior to the corrupt. Just how some regimes are perversions of the right order will become clear later on.

p 315

Hence the notion of citizen must necessarily vary with different regimes. For that reason, the definition of the citizen given above applies above all to the popular state, in which anyone among the people has the authority to judge in certain matters and to address the assembly. In other regimes, however, it sometimes happens that any citizen has this authority, but this is not necessarily so, for in some of them the people do not have any authority, nor is the assembly of the people taken into account but only others who have been especially summoned and these alone, divided into groups, judge certain cases. In Sparta, for example, the ephors judge the cases that arise among fellow-citizens and others pass sentence on other matters, and different groups judge different cases. The elders rule on homicide and other magistrates used to rule on other matters. This is also the case among the Carthaginians, for all matters are judged by certain magistrates and so the common citizens have no part in the judgment. Hence in such regimes the notion of citizen proposed above does not apply.

p 316

355 Then he amends the aforesaid definition of the citizen. He says that this definition can be rectified so as to become common, for in regimes other than the popular state the member of the assembly and the praetor do not hold office for an indeterminate period; †15 rather, these two functions pertain only to those who hold office for a determinate period; for it belongs to some of them or even to all of them to judge and to deliberate either in some matters or in all matters.

p 316

From this one can see clearly what a citizen is. He is not the one who participates in the administration of justice or in the assembly but the one upon whom the deliberative or judicial function can be conferred. For those who cannot be appointed to such offices seem to have no share in the government and hence do not appear to be citizens.

p 316

Finally, he infers from this that a city is nothing other than a large number of persons such as these, who are called citizens, [associated] in such a way that they can live self-sufficiently in an absolute sense. For a city is a self-sufficient society, as was said in Book I. †16

p 316

356 Then he rejects a certain definition of the citizen that has some currency. He says that some people, in accordance with their custom, define the citizen as he who is born of parents both of whom are citizens,

and not one only, whether it be the father or the mother. Others further require that, in order to be a citizen, one trace his ancestry back to the second or third generation and even beyond. If a citizen is so defined politically, that is to say, in accordance with the custom of certain cities, and summarily, and prior to any proper investigation, there arises a problem as to how this third or fourth ancestor was a citizen. For, according to this definition, one will not be able to call him a citizen unless his ancestry, too, is traced back to a citizen of the third or fourth generation, and so we would have an infinite regress. But this is impossible because a regime does not regress to infinity. Hence it is obvious that we must arrive at such citizens who were not born of citizens.

p 316

In this connection, he reports a saying of Gorgias, a Sicilian of Leontini, who said something regarding the aforesaid definition, either because he was not sure of the truth or because he was speaking ironically, namely, that just as mortars are things that are made by craftsmen who are mortar-makers, so Larissaeans are persons who are made, that is to say, begotten, by other Larissaeans, who are makers of Larissaeans. But this statement is naive and senseless, for if some people share in the regime according to the definition that we have given, we have to say that they are citizens even if they were not born of citizens. Otherwise, this definition that they give could not be applied to the first men who built or settled the city and who were clearly not born of citizens of that city. Hence it would follow that neither they nor, consequently, their descendants were citizens, which is absurd.

Lesson II [iii. 2. 1275b34-3. 1276b16]

p 317

357 After having determined what a citizen is absolutely speaking, the Philosopher here points out certain difficulties concerning what has been said and treats of them. He lists four difficulties that follow upon one another.

p 317

The first difficulty has to do with those who, after a change of regime, are received as members of the political community. This, for example, is what a certain wise man by the name of Cleisthenes did in Athens after the expulsion of the tyrants. He added to the associations of the city many foreigners and even a certain number of alien slaves, so that, as a result of the increase in population, the rich would not be able to oppress the people tyrannically. By way of solving this difficulty, he says that there is no question whether these men are citizens or not, since, from the very fact that they were made citizens, they are citizens. But there is a question whether this was done justly or unjustly; and what the Philosopher seems to be driving at is that those who are instated by the person who overthrows the regime are citizens.

p 317

358 Then he raises a second difficulty: one could question whether he who is not in justice a citizen is a citizen, as if in this matter "unjust" meant the same thing as "false." For it is obvious that a false citizen is not a citizen. To this he answers that, since some people are held to be rulers notwithstanding the fact that they rule unjustly, for the same reason those who are citizens unjustly are to be called citizens, because one is called a citizen as a result of his having some share in the government, as was said earlier.

p 317

359 Then he states the third difficulty. He says that the question whether one is or is not in justice a citizen

is bound up with a previous difficulty raised at the beginning of this third book. When complete changes of regimes occur in a city, one usually asks: When is that which is done an act of the city and when is it not? For example, it sometimes happens that the regime of a city changes from a tyranny or from a rule of the rich to a popular rule, and then the people, assuming control of the government, do not wish to honor the agreements that were made either by the tyrant or by the rich who once ruled. They claim that if some things were given to the tyrant or to the rich men of the city, the city did not receive them; and so it is in many such cases, for in certain regimes, the men in power obtain certain things from others, not for the common benefit of the city, but for their private advantage. And he solves this difficulty [by saying] that, if the city remains the same once a complete change in regime has occurred, just as that which is done by the popular state is an act of the city, so, too, is that which is done when a few or a tyrant are in power. For just as the power in the city was then held by the tyrant or by the rich, so also in a popular state it is held by the people.

p 318

360 Then he states the fourth difficulty. First, he states this difficulty in general, and he says that, in order to solve the third difficulty, the proper way to speak is to ask how one should say that a city is or is not the same. Secondly, he divides the aforesaid difficulty into two parts. He says that this question on the surface appears to refer to two things, namely, the territory of the city and the men who reside in the city. For it sometimes happens that men are separated from the territory in different ways, as, for example, when all the citizens are expelled from the city and some are led away to one place and others to another. Hence, if other residents are brought in to replace them, a question may arise whether the city is or is not the same. But this difficulty is really less serious, that is to say, easier to answer. For the term "city" has many meanings. In one sense, it refers to the territory of the city, and in this sense the city is the same. In another sense, it refers to the people of the city, and in this sense it is not the same.

p 318

361 But then there remains another difficulty, [126] for if the same men always reside in the same place, there can be a doubt as to when the city is, or is not, one.

p 318

First, he eliminates one notion of unity. He asserts that it cannot be said that the men residing in a city preserve the identity of the city because they live within the same walls. For one whole region, for example, the Peloponnesus, could happen to be encircled by one wall and yet not constitute the same city. Such was the case with Babylon or with any other very large city that comprises one nation rather than one city. Indeed, it is said of Babylon that when one part of the city was captured, the other part did not hear about it until three days later because of the length of the walls.

p 318

362 And he remarks parenthetically that this question, namely, whether it is advantageous to have a city of that size, will have to be considered elsewhere, that is, in Book VII. For it pertains to the statesman to know how large a city should be and whether it should include men of one nation or of several. The size of the city should indeed be such that the region may be sufficiently productive and that it may be possible to repel external [†17](#) enemies. It should also preferably be made up of a single nation in view of the fact that the men of the same nation possess the same way of life and the same customs, which foster friendship among the citizens because of their resemblance. Accordingly, the cities that were constituted out of different nations were ruined on account of the dissensions that arose in them due to the diversity of manners, for one part used to ally itself with [external] enemies out of hatred for the other part.

p 319

363 Then he investigates another notion of unity, namely, whether, when men remain in the same place, the

city must be said to be the same because its inhabitants belong to the same race; for even though they are not the same numerically, one generation is succeeded by another. Just as we say that springs or rivers are the same because of the steady flow of waters, even though one part runs off and another part runs in, so we say that a city is the same, even though some men die and others are born, so long as the same race of men endures.

p 319

364 Then, by solving this difficulty, he reveals the true nature of the unity of the city. He says that, because of the aforesaid succession of men belonging to the same race, a multitude of men can be called the same in a sense; a city, however, cannot be called the same if the political order [or regime] is changed. For, since the association of citizens, which we call a regime, pertains to the nature of the city, it is evident that, if the regime is changed, the city does not remain the same. We see, for example, among those who sing in choruses, that the chorus is not the same if at one time it is a comic chorus, that is to say, if it sings comic songs about the deeds of lowly persons, and if at another time it is a tragic chorus, that is to say, if it sings tragic songs about the exploits of princes. So, too, we see in all other things that consist in a certain composition or association that, whenever there is a different species of composition, the identity is destroyed, just as, for example, a harmony is not the same if at one time it is Dorian, that is to say, if it is a harmony of the seventh or eighth tone, and at another time Phrygian, that is to say, if it is a harmony of the third or fourth tone.

p 319

Since, then, this is the case with all such things, it is evident that a city must be said to be the same with respect to the order of the regime, in such a way that, if the order of the regime is changed, though the territory and the men remain unchanged, the city is not the same, even if materially it is the same. A city changed in this manner may be called by the same name or by another name, whether the men be the same or different; but if it retains the same name, the name will be used equivocally. Now whether, due to the fact that the city does not remain the same once a complete change of regime has taken place, it is just or not that the agreements contracted by the previous regime be honored, is another matter, which will be discussed later.

Lesson III [iii. 4. 1276b7-1277b33]

p 320

365 After having shown what a citizen is and solved certain difficulties, the Philosopher here inquires into the virtue that characterizes the citizen. This section is divided into two parts. In the first, he shows that the virtue of the citizen is not the same absolutely as that of the good man. In the second, he raises certain difficulties in this connection. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he shows that the virtue of the dedicated citizen is not the same absolutely as that of the good man. Secondly, he shows that the virtue of a certain citizen is the same as that of the good man. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he states his intention; for, after what has been said, we must now consider whether or not we should assert that the virtue [of the good citizen] is the same as that of the good man. This is to ask whether the same thing prompts us to call someone a good man and a good citizen; for virtue is that which makes the person who possesses it good. Now, in order to investigate this question properly, we must first show what the virtue of the citizen is in some sort of outline and likeness.

p 320

366 Secondly, he shows that the virtue of the good citizen is not the same as that of the good man for three reasons.

p 320

In the first of these, he begins by proposing a comparison to illustrate what the virtue of the good citizen is. He says that, just as the word "sailor" signifies something common to many persons, so, too, does the word "citizen." And he explains how the word "sailor" is common to many men. Many men who differ in power, that is to say, by their art and by their function, are called sailors: one of them is a rower, who propels the ship by means of oars; another is a pilot, who steers the ship by means of the rudder; another a look-out or guardian of the prow, which is the forepart of the ship; and others have other names and functions. Now it is obvious that each one of these men has something that belongs to him [129] by reason of his proper competence and something that belongs to him by reason of a common competence. It pertains to the competence of each one individually to understand and look after his own function diligently, steering, for example, in the case of the pilot, and the same for the others. The common competence, on the other hand, is one that belongs to all, for the work of all of them is directed toward one end, namely, safe navigation; for it is to this end that the aim and desire of any sailor is directed and that the common competence of sailors, which is the competence of the sailor as sailor, is ordered. In the same way also, since there are different citizens having dissimilar functions and dissimilar positions by means of which they exercise their proper operations in the city, the common work of all is the safety of the community; and this community consists in the order of the regime. Hence it is clear that the virtue of the citizen as citizen is considered in relation to the regime, so that the good citizen is the man who works well to preserve the regime.

p 321

Now there are several species of regimes, as we shall see later and as is evident to some extent from what we have already said; and men are well ordered to different regimes by means of different virtues. For a popular state is preserved in one way and a rule of the few or a tyranny in another. Hence it is evident that there does not exist a perfect virtue according to which a citizen [that is, as citizen] could be called good absolutely; but a man is called virtuous by reason of a single perfect virtue, namely, prudence, upon which all the moral virtues depend. It happens, therefore, that someone is a good citizen although he does not possess the virtue by which one is a good man; and this is the case in regimes other than the best regime.

p 321

367 Then he states the second reason. He says that by inquiring and raising objections, we can in another way reach the same conclusion even concerning the best regime, namely, that the virtue of the good citizen and that of the good man are not the same. For it is impossible, however good the regime may be, that all the citizens be virtuous; nevertheless, each one must perform his work pertaining to the city well, and this is accomplished by means of the virtue of the citizen as citizen. I say, therefore, that all the citizens cannot be alike in the sense that they would all perform the same work. From this it follows that the virtue of the good man and that of the good citizen are not identical. This consequence he manifests as follows. In the best regime, every citizen must possess the virtue of the good citizen, for in this manner the city will be most perfect. But it is impossible that all possess the virtue of the good man, because all the men in a city are not virtuous, as we have said.

p 321

368 Then he states the third reason. He says that every city is made up of heterogeneous elements, like an animal. An animal is indeed composed forthwith of heterogeneous elements, namely, soul and body; and likewise, the human soul is made up of heterogeneous parts, namely, a rational power and an appetitive power. The domestic society, in turn, is composed of heterogeneous parts, namely, man and woman, and [the art of] acquisition also requires a master and a slave. Now the city is made up of all these different

parts and of many others. But we said in BOOK I that the virtue of the ruler is not the same as that of the subject, either in the soul or in other things. †18 Hence it remains that the virtue of all the citizens is not one and the same, just as we see that in a chorus the virtue of the leader, that is, the one who directs the chorus, is not the same as that of the man who is next to him or his assistant. But it is obvious that the virtue of the good man is one and the same. It remains, therefore, that the virtue of the good citizen is not the same as that of the good man.

p 322

369 Then he shows that the virtue of one particular citizen is the same as that of the good man; and in this connection he does three things. First, he shows what he proposes. Secondly, he draws the conclusion arrived at in what has already been said. Thirdly, he raises a certain difficulty concerning what has already been said and resolves it.

p 322

He says then, first of all, that one will perhaps be able to say that the same virtue as that of the good man is required of a certain citizen in order that he may be good. For a man is not said to be a good ruler unless he is good as a result of his possessing the moral virtues and unless he is prudent. For it is said in Book VI of the *Ethics* that government is a certain part of prudence. †19 Hence the statesman, that is to say, the head of the regime, must be prudent and, consequently, he must be a good man.

p 322

370 Then from this he infers that the virtue of the good citizen is not the same absolutely as that of the good man. In order to prove this, he first adduces the statement made by some people to the effect that the training by which the ruler is to be educated to virtue is other than that of the citizen, as is clear from the fact that the sons of rulers are instructed in the science of horsemanship and warfare. Hence Euripides also, speaking in the person of a ruler, said, "It is not for me to know beautiful and profound things," namely, those things that are the concern of the philosopher, "but what is necessary to rule a city." This he said to indicate that there is a certain training proper to the ruler.

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From this he infers that, if the training and virtue of the good ruler are the same as that of the good man, and if not every citizen is a ruler—for there are also citizens who are subjects—it follows that the virtue of the citizen is not the same absolutely as that of the good man, unless perhaps it be that of a certain citizen, namely, the one who can be a ruler. This is so because the virtue of the ruler is not the same as that of the citizen. That is why Jason said that he used to grieve when he was not a tyrant, as if he did not know how to live as a private person. [130]

p 322

371 Then he raises a difficulty concerning what has been said. In this connection he does two things. First, he raises an objection against what has been said. Secondly, he resolves it.

p 322

He says then, first of all, that sometimes a citizen is praised because of the fact that he is able to rule and obey well. If, therefore, the virtue of the good man is the same as that of the good ruler, and if the virtue of the good citizen is ordered to both of these things, namely, to rule and to obey, it follows that both things, namely, to be a good citizen and a good man, are not praiseworthy in the same way, but that it is much better to be a good citizen.

p 323

372 Then he resolves the aforesaid difficulty. First, he shows how the training of the ruler is the same as

that of the subject and how it is not. Secondly, he shows how both ruler and subject possess the same virtue.

p 323

Concerning the first point, he does three things. First, he states his intention. He says that, because, as we have already said, both of these statements seem at times to hold, namely, that the ruler must not receive the same training as the subject and, again, that the good citizen should know both how to rule and how to obey, we must consider how each one is true from what follows.

p 323

373 Secondly, he sets down one type of rule in which one of the statements made, namely, that the training of the ruler is other than that of the subject, is verified. He says that there is a certain rule that is despotic, in which case the ruler is the master of the subjects. Such a ruler does not have to know how to do the things that pertain to the services necessary for life; rather, he should know how to make use of them. The other element, namely, to be able to serve in the things that pertain to the ministerial actions, appears to be of a servile rather than princely or despotic nature.

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Now there are different kinds of slaves according to the different operations of servants. Among them, one role is played by those who work with their hands, as do craftsmen, cooks, and the like. These men live from the works of their hands, as their name indicates; and among such men must be reckoned the menial craftsmen, that is to say, those who by the work of their art dirty their bodies, as was said in Book I. [20](#) Because the operations of these craftsmen are not those of a ruler but are rather of a servile nature, formerly, among certain peoples, craftsmen did not have any share in the government of the city. This, I say, was the case before the advent of an extreme form of popular rule, that is to say, before the lowliest among the people were invested with power in the cities.

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So it is clear, then, that neither the good statesman, or ruler of the city, nor even the good citizen should learn to perform works of subjects such as these, except occasionally because of some advantage to himself, and not because in these matters he should serve others; for then, if the masters were to exercise these servile functions, the distinction between master and slave would be obliterated.

p 323

374 Thirdly, he sets down another type of rule, in which the second statement, namely, that ruler and subject should learn the same things, is verified. He says that there is a certain rule according to which one rules, not as a master over slaves, but over free men and equals. This is political rule, according to which now some people and now others are called upon to rule in the cities. A ruler such as this one must learn how to rule while he is still a subject, just as one learns how to command cavalrymen by having been a subject among cavalrymen, and how to be a general by having served under a general, and having been in charge of a particular unit, for example, a company or a cohort, and having laid ambushes at the general's orders. For a man learns to exercise a high office both by obedience and by training in lower offices. In this respect the proverb is right in stating that he who has not served under a ruler cannot rule well.

p 324

375 Then he shows how the virtue of the ruler is the same as that of other men and how it differs from it. He says that even in this type of rule the virtue of the ruler is other than that of the subject; the fact remains, however, that the man who is a good citizen absolutely should know both how to rule and how to be subject to a rule, not indeed to a despotic rule, which is that of slaves, but to a political rule, which is that of free men. This is the virtue of the citizen, namely, that he be well disposed toward one and the other. Good

THESE MEN. THIS IS THE VIRTUE OF THE CITIZEN, NAMELY, THAT HE BE WELL DISPOSED TOWARD ONE AND THE OTHER. GOOD men, absolutely speaking, know both how to rule well and how to obey well. Thus the virtue of the good citizen, in so far as he is able to rule, is the same as that of the good man; but in so far as he is a subject, the virtue of the ruler and of the good man is other than that of the good citizen. For example, the temperance and justice of the ruler and the temperance and justice of the subjects are of a different species. For the subject who is free and good does not possess only one virtue, for example, justice; rather, his justice belongs to two species, according to one of which he can rule well and according to the other of which he can obey well. Such is also the case with the other virtues.

p 324

376 And he illustrates this by means of an example. The temperance and fortitude of a man and of a woman are different. A man is reputed timid if he is not more courageous than a courageous woman; and a woman, for whom silence is becoming, is reputed loquacious if she is as voluble as a good man. This is so because even in the management of the household, some things pertain to the man and other things to the woman; for it is the proper concern of the man to acquire riches and the proper concern of the woman to preserve them.

p 324

The same obtains in the city with regard to ruler and subject. For the virtue of the ruler is properly prudence, which directs and governs. The other moral virtues, whose nature it is to be governed and to obey, are [131] common to both subjects and rulers. Nevertheless, subjects share in prudence to the extent to which they have true opinion concerning things to be done, by which they can govern themselves in their own acts in accordance with the government of the ruler. And he cites the example of the flute-maker, who is related to the flute-player, who uses the flutes, in the same way as the subject to the ruler; for he works well in making flutes if his opinion is regulated in accordance with the orders of the flute-player. The case is the same in the city with reference to subject and ruler. Now he is speaking here of the virtue of the subject, not in so far as he is a good man, who as such must have prudence; rather, he is speaking of him in so far as he is a good subject, for this requires only that he have true opinion regarding the things that are demanded of him.

p 325

377 Finally, in an epilogue, he concludes from what has been said that it is obvious whether or not the virtue of the good man is the same as that of the good citizen, and, further, how it is the same and how it differs: it is the same in so far as he is able to rule well, and different in so far as he is able to obey well.

Lesson IV [iii. 5. 1276b34-1278b6]

p 325

378 After having shown what the virtue of the dedicated citizen is and whether it is the same as that of the good man, the Philosopher raises a certain difficulty concerning the things that have already been treated. In this connection, he does three things. First, he raises the difficulty. Secondly, he resolves it. Thirdly, he clarifies the solution.

p 325

He says then, first of all, that there still remains a certain difficulty concerning the citizen, namely, whether only he who can share in the government of the city is a citizen or whether menial craftsmen, who have no share in the government, should also be ranked among the citizens. And he objects to both parts. For if laborers, who have nothing to do with the city, are called citizens, it will follow that the virtue that we said is that of the good citizen, namely, that he be able to rule and to obey well, does not apply to every citizen

is that of the good citizen, namely, that he be able to rule and to obey well, does not apply to every citizen, because this man is ranked among the citizens despite the fact that he is not able to rule. If we say that no one of this sort is a citizen, there still remains a question, namely, in what category should laborers be placed. We cannot call them aliens, as if they came from elsewhere to reside in the city; nor can we call them strangers, like travelers who come to the city on business and not to stay; for these craftsmen make their home in the city, and were born there, and do not come from elsewhere.

p 326

379 He resolves this difficulty and says that for this last reason there is a question as to the category in which craftsmen should be placed, but the fact that they are not citizens does not pose a problem. They are men who are not citizens and yet are neither aliens nor strangers, as is clearly the case with slaves and freedmen, who have been restored from servitude to freedom. For it is true that not all who are necessary for the perfection of the city and without whom the city cannot exist are citizens, since we see that not only slaves but even sons are not perfect citizens, as are men. Men are citizens absolutely, capable as they are of discharging the functions of citizens; but sons are citizens by supposition, that is to say, with some diminishing qualification, for they are imperfect citizens. And just as slaves and children are really citizens in some way but not perfectly, so also are craftsmen. Hence in ancient times menial craftsmen and even strangers were slaves in certain cities, just as many are such even now.

p 326

380 Then he clarifies this solution, for even in the best disposed city workers could not be citizens. And if we say that a worker is a citizen in some way, then we have to say that the virtue of the citizen, which we have defined as consisting in the ability to rule and to obey well, is not that of the citizen, notwithstanding the fact that the word "citizen" is used in any way whatever. Rather, in order that this virtue may apply to them, it is necessary not only that they be free but also that they be discharged, that is to say, released from the tasks necessary for life. For if those who are assigned to such necessary tasks serve one man only, they are doing what is properly the work of slaves; for slaves used to perform such services for their masters. If, on the other hand, they perform these services for anyone indiscriminately, they are doing the work of laborers and mean persons who serve anyone for money.

p 326

381 Then he clarifies the proposed solution. And concerning this, he does three things. First, he shows how one is a citizen differently under different regimes. Secondly, he shows that he who can share in the government is most of all a citizen under any regime. Thirdly, he gathers together in an epilogue all that has been said about the virtue of the citizen.

p 326

He says then, first of all, that the truth concerning the things that have been said will become evident from a brief consideration of what follows. For if one understands perfectly what will be said, what has already been said will become obvious to him. Since there are many regimes differing in species, and since one speaks of a citizen in relation to a regime, as we have said, there must also necessarily be several species of citizens. This difference is best seen with reference to the subjects among the citizens, who are diversely related to the rulers under different regimes. Now those who are set over the others are the rulers under any regime. Hence, because of the diversity of regimes and consequently of citizens, it is necessary that under a certain regime, namely, the popular state, in which only freedom is sought, laborers be citizens; for, since they are free, they will have the possibility of being promoted to the government. Under other regimes, however, this is impossible, as is especially the case in the rule of the best, where honors are granted to those who are worthy of them by reason of their virtue. Those who live the life of laborers cannot, as rulers, provide the city with the things that pertain to virtue since they are not practiced in such things. But not even in the rule of the few are laborers capable of being citizens because in regimes of this sort some men are called upon to rule by reason of previous long-standing honors and riches. Hence it cannot easily

happen that laborers are elevated to positions of honor, since throughout their whole lives they can scarcely gather enough [134] to become rich. But craftsmen under such regimes can be citizens and rulers because many craftsmen become rich quickly and so, by reason of their riches, can be called upon to govern in a rule of the few, when, abstaining from the practice of their art for a certain period of time after they have become rich, they have led honorable lives. Hence among the Thebans there was a statute enabling a man who had abstained from the affairs of the market place for ten years to participate in virtue, namely, ruling virtue.

p 327

381a But even though strangers, aliens, and lowly persons cannot be citizens in the sense that they are able to rule in cities that are well established, nevertheless, in many regimes, namely, in many popular regimes, the law stipulating that strangers and aliens are not citizens is relaxed; for in certain cities he who is born of a citizen mother is considered a citizen, even if his father is an alien or a stranger. There is likewise also in many places a law to the effect that illegitimate children are citizens; but they do this on account of the scarcity of good citizens and the smallness of the population. Suffering from a deficiency of numbers, in which the power of the popular state consists, they make use of such laws so as first to choose as citizens those who were born of a male or female slave, provided one of the parents is a freeman. Then, as the population increases, they exclude all the sons of slaves but regard as citizens those whose mothers are citizens but whose fathers are aliens. Finally, they come to a point where they consider as citizens those who were born of parents both of whom are freemen and citizens. So it is evident then that there are different species of citizens according to the difference of regimes.

p 327

382 Then he shows who is most of all a citizen. He says that in any regime he who shares in the honors of the city is most of all said to be a citizen. Hence Homer says poetically of someone that he arose, that is, to speak, after the others as one unhonored, [†21](#) that is, as an alien who was not a citizen. But this notion of citizen is hidden; men are indeed misled due to the fact that they live together and therefore think that all those who reside together in the city are citizens. This is not proper, however, because he who does not share in the honors of the city is like an alien in the city.

p 328

383 Then in an epilogue he gathers together what has been said. He says that, concerning the question whether the virtue of the good man is the same as that of the dedicated citizen, we have shown that in a certain city, namely, that of the best, in which the ruling offices are granted according to the virtue which is that of the good man, the good man and the good citizen are identical, while in other cities, namely, in corrupt regimes, in which ruling offices are not distributed according to virtue, the good citizen is not the same as the good man. Furthermore, the one who is identical to the good man is not any citizen whatever but the ruler of the city and the master of those things that pertain to the care of the community, or the man who is capable of becoming such, either alone or with others. For we have said above that the virtue of the ruler is the same as that of the good man. Hence, if by citizen we mean he who is or is capable of being a ruler, his virtue is the same as that of the good man. But if by citizen we mean an imperfect citizen, who cannot become a ruler, then the virtue of the good citizen will not be the same as that of the good man, as is clear from what we have said.

Lesson V [iii. 6. 1278b7-1279a22]

p 328

384 After having treated of the citizen, from the knowledge of whom we can discover what the city is, the Philosopher seeks next to divide the regime into its species. This section is divided into three parts. In the first, he distinguishes the regimes. In the second, he shows what is just in each regime. In the third, he shows which regime is preferable. Concerning the first point, he does three things. First, he states his intention. Secondly, he shows what a regime is. Thirdly, he divides the regimes.

p 328

He says then, first of all, that, now that these things have been determined, it remains to consider whether there is only one regime or whether there are several and, if several, how many there are, and what they are, and how they differ from one another.

p 329

385 Then he shows what a commonwealth is. He says that a commonwealth is nothing other than the disposition of a city with respect to all the rules that are found in it but principally with respect to the highest rule, which governs all the others. This is so because the imposition of order in a city resides entirely with the person who rules over the city; and such an imposition of order is the commonwealth itself. Hence the commonwealth consists principally in the order of the highest rule, according to the diversity of which commonwealths are diversified. Thus in a popular state the people rule and in a state of the few a few rich men. From this stems the diversity of these regimes. We must speak in the same way about the other regimes.

p 329

386 Then he distinguishes the regimes. First, he states how just regimes are distinguished from unjust regimes, and secondly, how true regimes are distinguished among themselves. Concerning the first point, he does three things. First, he shows to what the city is ordered. Secondly, he shows how the rules are distinguished from one another. Thirdly, he infers the difference between just and unjust regimes. Concerning the first point, he does two things. First, he states his intention. Secondly, he begins to carry out his proposal.

p 329

He says then, first of all, that, since we must distinguish the regimes from one another, we should begin by premising two things, the first being the reason for which the city was founded, and the second, the fact that there are differences of rules dealing with all the things that pertain to the community of life. For from these two things we shall be able to see the difference between just and unjust regimes.

p 329

387 Then he shows what the end of the city or of the regime is. He says that it was stated in Book I, in [137] which the question of domestic and despotic rule was treated, that man is by nature a political animal and, therefore, that men desire to live with one another and not be alone. ^{†22} Even if one man did not have need of another for anything in order to lead a political life, there is nevertheless a great common benefit in the sharing of social life, and this with reference to two things. First, it is indeed so with reference to living well, to which each man contributes his share. For example, in any society we see that one person serves the society by performing one function, another by performing another function, and in this manner all live well together. This, then, namely, to live well, is above all else the end of the city or of the regime, both collectively with reference to all and severally with reference to each individual. Secondly, the common life is beneficial even for mere existence, since among those who share a common life one comes to the aid of another to sustain his life and preserve him against the dangers that threaten it. For this reason men come together and maintain a political association, for even mere living considered in itself without the things that are conducive to living well is a good and desirable thing, unless perhaps a man suffers some exceedingly

grave and cruel evils in his life. This is clear from the fact that, even if they bear many evils, men nevertheless persevere in their will to live and are attracted to the desire of life by a certain natural sweetness, as if life possessed in itself a certain solace and natural sweetness.

p 330

388 Then he distinguishes the species of rule, first in domestic matters, and secondly in political matters. He says that it is easy to distinguish the modes of rule that are said to exist, because he himself has made mention of them in other treatises that were not primarily concerned with them, as in Book VIII of the *Ethics* [†23](#) and above in Book II.

p 330

In domestic affairs there is a twofold rule. One is the same as that of master over slave and is called domination. Although, according to the truth of the matter, the same thing benefits the man who is by nature a slave and the man who is by nature a master, namely, that the former be ruled by the latter, the fact remains that the master rules the slave for the benefit of the master and not for the benefit of the slave, except perhaps incidentally, in so far as when the slave dies the dominion ceases to exist. The other rule is that over free men, like that over sons, wife, and the entire family, and it is called domestic rule. What is sought in this rule is the benefit of the subjects or even the benefit common to both, but essentially and primarily the benefit of the subjects, as we see in the other arts, such as the art of medicine, which seeks principally the benefit of those who are healed, and the art of gymnastics, which seeks principally the benefit of those who exercise. Incidentally, however, it happens that the benefit redounds to those who possess the art. For he who exercises boys is also at the same time exercising himself; he, too, is sometimes among the number of those who exercise, just as the pilot is one of the crew who sail a ship. Accordingly, the exerciser of boys and the pilot of a ship consider per se the benefit of the subjects. But because they themselves are among the number of those who exercise or sail, they both share incidentally in the common benefit that they procure. In like manner, the father shares in the benefit of the household that he procures.

p 330

389 Then, in accordance with what was said, he distinguishes the political rules. He says that, since the rule over free men is primarily for the benefit of the subjects, it is therefore considered fitting that citizens particularly be governed according to political rules when they have been established in conformity with the equality and similarity of the citizens. For then it seems fitting that some persons should rule for one period of time and others for another period. It would be otherwise, however, if some of the citizens greatly surpassed others in goodness. For then it would be fitting for them to rule all of the time, as will be said below.

p 331

Concerning this question of fittingness, however, the judgment of men differs according to different times. For in the beginning, those who ruled by serving others thought it fitting, as indeed it was, that they themselves should serve others for a time by seeking their benefit and that in turn someone else should rule for a time and seek their benefit, just as they themselves had previously sought the good of others. Afterwards, however, because of the benefits accruing from the common goods that rulers usurp for themselves and also from the very right of sovereignty, men wish to rule always, as if to rule were to be healthy and not to rule to be sick. Thus men seem to desire rulership as the sick desire health.

p 331

390 Then from what has been said he infers the distinction between just and unjust regimes. For, since it is true that the rule of free men should be for the benefit of the subjects, it is evident that any regime in which the ruler seeks the common benefit is a just regime according to absolute justice, while any regime in which the sole benefit of the ruler is sought is an unjust regime, and a corruption of some part of the just regime.

the sole benefit of the ruler is sought is an unjust regime and a corruption of some sort of the just regime. For in such cases that which is simply just does not exist but only that which is just in a relative sense, as will be said later. For they rule by dominating the city and make use of the citizens as slaves, that is to say, for their own benefit. This is contrary to justice, because a city is an association of free men and a slave is not a citizen, as was said earlier.

Lesson VI [iii. 7. 1279a23-8. 1280a7]

p 331

391 After having distinguished just regimes from unjust ones, the Philosopher here seeks to distinguish both groups among themselves. In this connection he does two things. First, he states his aim. Secondly, he carries out his proposal. He says then, first of all, that, now that these things have been determined, we must next treat of the number and nature of the regimes in the following order: first, we shall consider the just regimes and, secondly, the unjust regimes.

p 331

392 Then he distinguishes the regimes, and in this connection he does three things. First, he shows on what basis the distinction of the regimes is to be made. Secondly, he distinguishes the regimes. Thirdly, he raises an objection against what has been said.

p 332

He says then, first of all, that a regime is nothing other than the order of the rulers in the city; and indeed regimes must be distinguished according to the difference of rulers. In a city, either one, or a few, or the many rule; and any one of these three cases can come about in two ways: one, when they rule for the common benefit, and in this case we shall have just regimes; the other, when they rule for the private benefit of those who are in power, whether that be one man, or a few, or many, and in this case we have perversions of regimes; for we have to say either that the subjects are not citizens or that in some things they share in the benefit of the city.

p 332

393 Then he distinguishes both groups of regimes by their proper names. First, he distinguishes the just regimes and, secondly, the corrupt regimes.

p 332

He says then, first of all, that if there is a rule of one man, it is usually called kingly rule if it seeks the common benefit. The regime in which only a few, but more than one, rule for the sake of the common good is called the state of the best, either because the best, that is to say, the virtuous, rule or because such a regime is ordered to the greatest good of the city and all the citizens. And when the multitude rules and seeks the common benefit, the regime is called a commonwealth (*respublica*), which is a name common to all the regimes. And it is not without reason that this regime should chance to be called by this name; for it easily happens that in a city one or a few men are found who greatly surpass the others in virtue, but it is extremely difficult to find many who arrive at the perfection of virtue. This rather happens above all with reference to military virtue, namely, that many should excel in it. Hence in this regime, military men and men who possess arms are the ones who rule.

p 332

394 Then he distinguishes the corruptions of these regimes by name. He says that the perversions of the aforesaid regimes are the following: tyranny is a perversion of kingship, the rule of the few a perversion of the rule of the best, and the popular state a perversion of the commonwealth. From this he concludes that tyranny is the rule of one man seeking his own benefit; the rule of the few, that which seeks the benefit of the rich; and a popular state, that which seeks the benefit of the poor. None of these seeks the common benefit.

p 332

395 Then he raises an objection to what has been said; and in this connection he does three things. First, he states his aim and repeats what has been said. Secondly, he raises a difficulty. Thirdly, he proposes the solution.

p 332

He says then, first of all, that we must stand at a slightly greater distance and discuss what each one of the previously mentioned regimes is, since it presents certain difficulties. He who philosophizes in any art and considers the truth, as it were, not only looks to what is useful for action; he should not look down on or pass over anything but rather set out the truth in each instance. Now we said that a tyranny is a certain monarchy that exercises its domination over the political community because it makes use of citizens as slaves. A rule of the few exists when the regime is dominated by those who abound in riches. And a popular state exists when the regime is dominated, not by those who have an abundance of riches, but rather by the poor.

p 333

396 Then he raises the difficulty. First, he states the difficulty. Secondly, he eliminates a certain answer.

p 333

He says then, first of all, that the first difficulty concerns the definition of popular rule and of the rule of the few. Let us suppose, then, that in a certain city the rich outnumber the poor and that the rich are the masters of the city. It seems, according to this, that there exists here a rule of the many. Likewise, if it should happen, on the other hand, that the poor are fewer but better and stronger and dominate the city, it will follow, according to this, that there exists here a rule of the few. It does not seem, therefore, that we defined the regimes properly when [140] we said that the state of the many consists in the domination of the poor and the state of the few in the domination of the rich.

p 333

397 Then he eliminates an answer. Someone could indeed say that, in the definition of the rule of the few, fewness should be added to riches, and, in the definition of the rule of the many, multitude should be added to poverty, in such a way that the rule of the few is that in which a few rich men govern, and the rule of the many that in which many poor men govern. But this, in turn, poses another problem. For, if the regimes have been adequately divided, so that there is no other regime besides the ones mentioned, it will be impossible to say under which regime the two aforesaid regimes, the ones in which either many rich men or a few poor men rule, are comprised.

p 333

398 Then from what has been premised he infers the solution of the difficulty. He says that the nature of the difficulty just mentioned seems to indicate that the fact that there are many rulers is related only incidentally to the rule of the few, since everywhere one finds that the poor outnumber the rich; and, accordingly, these things are named as they are found to exist for the most part. But that which is incidental does not constitute a specific difference and, hence, the rules of the few are not distinguished, essentially speaking, from the rule of the many on the basis of large and small numbers. Rather, that by which they

differ essentially is poverty and riches. For the nature of the rule that is ordered to opulence is other than that of the rule that is ordered to freedom, which constitutes the end of the rule of the many. And hence, wherever some rule for the sake of riches, whether they be more numerous or less numerous, there we necessarily have a state of the few; and wherever the poor rule, there we necessarily have a rule of the many. It is incidental, however, that the latter be numerous and the former few. For those who abound in riches are few, but all share in freedom; and for this reason these two elements fight with each other. The few wish to be set over the others on account of their excess of riches, and the many wish to prevail over the few, being as it were their equals on account of freedom.

[Here ends Aquinas' commentary on the *Politics* of Aristotle.]

Footnotes

p 334

[†1.](#) Aristotle *Physics* ii. 2. 194a21.

p 334

[†2.](#) *Ibid.* ii. 8. 199a13.

p 334

[†3.](#) Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* x. 9. 1181b14.

p 334

[†4.](#) *Ibid.* i. 1. 1094b9.

p 334

[†5.](#) The expression "domestic head" is used here to render the Latin *oekonomus* (*oikonomos*, steward or administrator of the household), for which there seems to be no exact equivalent in the English language.

p 334

[†6.](#) See the preceding note.

p 334

[†7.](#) The printed text reads: *secundum hanc doctrinam* (according to this doctrine), for which we have substituted: *secundum subjectam methodum* or *secundum modum assignatum* (according to the mode [or method] indicated). The correction appears necessitated by the Latin text of Aristotle and the Thomistic context, as well as by the general meaning of the passage.

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[†8.](#) Aristotle *De Partibus Animalium* ii. 17. 660a15 ff.; cf. iv. 6. 683a20 ff., and *De Anima* ii. 8. 420b17.

p 334

†9. The reading *dominantur* (rule), which occurs in the printed text, has been changed to *nominantur* (are called), in accordance with the obvious meaning of the sentence.

p 334

†10. The distinction between sound, voice, and speech is discussed at greater length by Aristotle in *De Anima* ii. 8. 419b3 ff.

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†11. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* ii. 5. 1105b23

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†12. Reading *iusti* instead of *ita*, as the context demands.

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†13. Aristotle *Metaphysics* vii. 10. 1035b3 ff.

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†14. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* ii. 1103a14 ff.

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†15. Reading *indeterminatus* instead of *determinatus*, as is clearly required by the Latin version of Aristotle and the context.

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†16. Aristotle *Politics* i. 2. 1252b27 ff.

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†17. The printed text reads *insanos*, which hardly seems appropriate in this context.

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†18. Aristotle *Politics* i. 13. 1259b33 ff.

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†19. Cf. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* vi. 8. 1141b23.

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†20. Cf. Aristotle *Politics* i. 5. 1254b25.

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†21. Cf. Homer *Iliad* ix. 648; xvi. 59.

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†22. Cf. Aristotle *Politics* i. 2. 1252a26 ff., i. 3. 1253b1 ff., and *passim*.

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†23. Cf. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* viii. 10. 1160a31 ff.

