

ARISTOTLE

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*The Politics*  
and  
*The Constitution of*  
*Athens*

EDITED BY  
STEPHEN EVERSON

*University of Michigan*



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# *Politics*

B. JOWETT

## BOOK I

1 · Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for everyone always acts in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good. 5

Some people think that the qualifications of a statesman, king, householder, and master are the same, and that they differ, not in kind, but only in the number of their subjects. For example, the ruler over a few is called a master; over more, the manager of a household; over a still larger number, a statesman or king, as if there were no difference between a great household and a small state. The distinction which is made between the king and the statesman is as follows: When the government is personal, the ruler is a king; when, according to the rules of the political science, the citizens rule and are ruled in turn, then he is called a statesman. 10 15

But all this is a mistake, as will be evident to any one who considers the matter according to the method which has hitherto guided us. As in other departments of science, so in politics, the compound should always be resolved into the simple elements or least parts of the whole. We must therefore look at the elements of which the state is composed, in order that we may see in what the different kinds of rule differ from one another, and whether any scientific result can be attained about each one of them. 20

2 · He who thus considers things in their first growth and origin,

25 whether a state or anything else, will obtain the clearest view of them.  
In the first place there must be a union of those who cannot exist  
without each other; namely, of male and female, that the race may  
continue (and this is a union which is formed, not of choice, but  
because, in common with other animals and with plants, mankind  
30 have a natural desire to leave behind them an image of themselves),  
and of natural ruler and subject, that both may be preserved. For that  
which can foresee by the exercise of mind is by nature lord and  
master, and that which can with its body give effect to such foresight is  
a subject, and by nature a slave; hence master and slave have the same  
125 2<sup>b</sup> 1 interest. Now nature has distinguished between the female and slave.  
For she is not niggardly, like the smith who fashions the Delphian  
knife for many uses; she makes each thing for a single use, and every  
instrument is best made when intended for one and not for many  
5 uses. But among barbarians no distinction is made between women  
and slaves, because there is no natural ruler among them: they are a  
community of slaves, male and female. That is why the poets say, –

It is meet that Hellenes should rule over barbarians;<sup>1</sup>

as if they thought that the barbarian and the slave were by nature one.  
10 Out of these two relationships the first thing to arise is the family,  
and Hesiod is right when he says, –

First house and wife and an ox for the plough,<sup>2</sup>

for the ox is the poor man's slave. The family is the association  
established by nature for the supply of men's everyday wants, and the  
members of it are called by Charondas, 'companions of the cup-  
board', and by Epimenides the Cretan, 'companions of the manger'.  
15 But when several families are united, and the association aims at  
something more than the supply of daily needs, the first society to be  
formed is the village. And the most natural form of the village appears  
to be that of a colony from the family, composed of the children and  
grandchildren, who are said to be 'suckled with the same milk'. And  
this is the reason why Hellenic states were originally governed by  
kings; because the Hellenes were under royal rule before they came  
20 together, as the barbarians still are. Every family is ruled by the eldest,  
and therefore in the colonies of the family the kingly form of

<sup>1</sup> Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, 1400.

<sup>2</sup> Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 405.

## Book I

government prevailed because they were of the same blood. As Homer says:

Each one gives law to his children and to his wives.<sup>1</sup>

For they lived dispersedly, as was the manner in ancient times. That is why men say that the Gods have a king, because they themselves either are or were in ancient times under the rule of a king. For they imagine not only the forms of the Gods but their ways of life to be like their own.

When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life. And therefore, if the earlier forms of society are natural, so is the state, for it is the end of them, and the nature of a thing is its end. For what each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a man, a horse, or a family. Besides, the final cause and end of a thing is the best, and to be self-sufficing is the end and the best. <sup>1253<sup>1</sup></sup>

Hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity; he is like the

Tribeless, lawless, heartless one,<sup>2</sup>

whom Homer denounces – the natural outcast is forthwith a lover of war; he may be compared to an isolated piece at draughts.

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

<sup>1</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, IX 114–15.

<sup>2</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, IX 63.

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

1253<sup>b1</sup> 3 · Seeing then that the state is made up of households, before  
speaking of the state we must speak of the management of the  
household. The parts of household management correspond to the  
persons who compose the household, and a complete household  
5 consists of slaves and freemen. Now we should begin by examining  
everything in its fewest possible elements; and the first and fewest  
possible parts of a family are master and slave, husband and wife,  
father and children. We have therefore to consider what each of these  
three relations is and ought to be: – I mean the relation of master and  
servant, the marriage relation (the conjunction of man and wife has no  
10 name of its own), and thirdly, the paternal relation (this also has no  
proper name). And there is another element of a household, the so-  
called art of getting wealth, which, according to some, is identical with  
household management, according to others, a principal part of it; the  
nature of this art will also have to be considered by us.

## Book I

Let us first speak of master and slave, looking to the needs of practical life and also seeking to attain some better theory of their relation than exists at present. For some are of the opinion that the rule of a master is a science, and that the management of a household, and the mastership of slaves, and the political and royal rule, as I was saying at the outset, are all the same. Others affirm that the rule of a master over slaves is contrary to nature, and that the distinction between slave and freeman exists by convention only, and not by nature; and being an interference with nature is therefore unjust.

4 · Property is a part of the household, and the art of acquiring property is a part of the art of managing the household; for no man can live well, or indeed live at all, unless he is provided with necessities. And as in the arts which have a definite sphere the workers must have their own proper instruments for the accomplishment of their work, so it is in the management of a household. Now instruments are of various sorts; some are living, others lifeless; in the rudder, the pilot of a ship has a lifeless, in the look-out man, a living instrument; for in the arts the servant is a kind of instrument. Thus, too, a possession is an instrument for maintaining life. And so, in the arrangement of the family, a slave is a living possession, and property a number of such instruments; and the servant is himself an instrument for instruments. For if every instrument could accomplish its own work, obeying or anticipating the will of others, like the statues of Daedalus, or the tripods of Hephaestus, which, says the poet,

of their own accord entered the assembly of the Gods;<sup>1</sup>

if, in like manner, the shuttle would weave and the plectrum touch the lyre, chief workmen would not want servants, nor masters slaves. Now the instruments commonly so called are instruments of production, whilst a possession is an instrument of action. From a shuttle we get something else besides the use of it, whereas of a garment or of a bed there is only the use. Further, as production and action are different in kind, and both require instruments, the instruments which they employ must likewise differ in kind. But life is action and not production, and therefore the slave is the minister of action. Again, a possession is spoken of as a part is spoken of; for the part is not only a part of something else, but wholly belongs to it; and this is also true of

<sup>1</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, XVIII 369.



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a possession. The master is only the master of the slave; he does not belong to him, whereas the slave is not only the slave of his master, but wholly belongs to him. Hence we see what is the nature and office of a  
15 slave; he who is by nature not his own but another's man, is by nature a slave; and he may be said to be another's man who, being a slave, is also a possession. And a possession may be defined as an instrument of action, separable from the possessor.

5 But is there any one thus intended by nature to be a slave, and for whom such a condition is expedient and right, or rather is not all slavery a violation of nature?

20 There is no difficulty in answering this question, on grounds both of reason and of fact. For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.

25 And there are many kinds both of rulers and subjects (and that rule is the better which is exercised over better subjects – for example, to rule over men is better than to rule over wild beasts; for the work is better which is executed by better workmen, and where one man rules and another is ruled, they may be said to have a work); for in all things which form a composite whole and which are made up of parts,  
30 whether continuous or discrete, a distinction between the ruling and the subject element comes to light. Such a duality exists in living creatures, originating from nature as a whole; even in things which have no life there is a ruling principle, as in a musical mode. But perhaps this is matter for a more popular investigation. A living  
35 creature consists in the first place of soul and body, and of these two, the one is by nature the ruler and the other the subject. But then we must look for the intentions of nature in things which retain their nature, and not in things which are corrupted. And therefore we must  
study the man who is in the most perfect state both of body and soul, for in him we shall see the true relation of the two: although in bad or  
1254<sup>1</sup> corrupted natures the body will often appear to rule over the soul, because they are in an evil and unnatural condition. At all events we may firstly observe in living creatures both a despotic and a  
5 constitutional rule; for the soul rules the body with a despotic rule, whereas the intellect rules the appetites with a constitutional and royal rule. And it is clear that the rule of the soul over the body, and of the mind and the rational element over the passionate, is natural and

expedient; whereas the equality of the two or the rule of the inferior is always hurtful. The same holds good of animals in relation to men; for tame animals have a better nature than wild and all tame animals are better off when they are ruled by man; for then they are preserved. Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind. Where then there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals (as in the case of those whose business is to use their body, and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is, another's, and he who participates in reason enough to apprehend, but not to have, is a slave by nature. Whereas the lower animals cannot even apprehend reason,\* they obey their passions. And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life. Nature would like to distinguish between the bodies of freemen and slaves, making the one strong for servile labour, the other upright, and although useless for such services, useful for political life in the arts both of war and peace. But the opposite often happens – that some have the souls and others have the bodies of freemen. And doubtless if men differed from one another in the mere forms of their bodies as much as the statues of the Gods do from men, all would acknowledge that the inferior class should be slaves of the superior. And if this is true of the body, how much more just that a similar distinction should exist in the soul? But the beauty of the body is seen, whereas the beauty of the soul is not seen. It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right.

6 · But that those who take the opposite view have in a certain way right on their side, may be easily seen. For the words slavery and slave are used in two senses. There is a slave or slavery by convention as well as by nature. The convention is a sort of agreement – the convention by which whatever is taken in war is supposed to belong to the victors. But this right many jurists impeach, as they would an orator who brought forward an unconstitutional measure: they detest

\* Reading *λόγον*.

the notion that, because one man has the power of doing violence and  
10 is superior in brute strength, another shall be his slave and subject.  
Even among philosophers there is a difference of opinion. The origin  
of the dispute, and what makes the views invade each other's territory,  
is as follows: in some sense excellence, when furnished with means,  
15 has actually the greatest power of exercising force: and as superior  
power is only found where there is superior excellence of some kind,  
power seems to imply excellence, and the dispute to be simply one  
about justice (for it is due to one party identifying<sup>a</sup> justice with  
goodwill, while the other identifies it with the mere rule of the  
20 stronger). If these views are thus set out separately, the other views  
have no force or plausibility against the view that the superior in  
excellence ought to rule, or be master. Others, clinging, as they think,  
simply to a principle of justice (for convention is a sort of justice),  
assume that slavery in accordance with the custom of war is just, but at  
the same moment they deny this. For what if the cause of the war be  
25 unjust? And again, no one would ever say that he is a slave who is  
unworthy to be a slave. Were this the case, men of the highest rank  
would be slaves and the children of slaves if they or their parents  
chanced to have been taken captive and sold. That is why people do  
not like to call themselves slaves, but confine the term to foreigners.  
30 Yet, in using this language, they really mean the natural slave of whom  
we spoke at first; for it must be admitted that some are slaves  
everywhere, others nowhere. The same principle applies to nobility.  
People regard themselves as noble everywhere, and not only in their  
own country, but they deem foreigners noble only when at home,  
35 thereby implying that there are two sorts of nobility and freedom, the  
one absolute, the other relative. The Helen of Theodectes says:

Who would presume to call me servant who am on both sides  
sprung from the stem of the Gods?

What does this mean but that they distinguish freedom and slavery,  
1255<sup>b1</sup> noble and humble birth, by the two principles of good and evil? They  
think that as men and animals beget men and animals, so from good  
men a good man springs. Nature intends to do this often but cannot.

We see then that there is some foundation for this difference of  
5 opinion, and that all are not either slaves by nature or freemen by  
nature, and also that there is in some cases a marked distinction

<sup>a</sup>Reading τὸ . . . εἶναι δόξαν.

## *Book I*

between the two classes, rendering it expedient and right for the one to be slaves and the others to be masters: the one practising obedience, the other exercising the authority and lordship which nature intended them to have. The abuse of this authority is injurious to both: for the interests of part and whole, of body and soul, are the same, and the slave is a part of the master, a living but separated part of his bodily frame. Hence, where the relation of master and slave between them is natural they are friends and have a common interest, but where it rests merely on convention and force the reverse is true.

7 · The previous remarks are quite enough to show that the rule of a master is not constitutional rule, and that all the different kinds of rule are not, as some affirm, the same as each other. For there is one rule exercised over subjects who are by nature free, another over subjects who are by nature slaves. The rule of a household is a monarchy, for every house is under one head: whereas constitutional rule is a government of freemen and equals. The master is not called a master because he has science, but because he is of a certain character, and the same remark applies to the slave and the freeman. Still there may be a science for the master and a science for the slave. The science of the slave would be such as the man of Syracuse taught, who made money by instructing slaves in their ordinary duties. And such a knowledge may be carried further, so as to include cookery and similar menial arts. For some duties are of the more necessary, others of the more honourable sort; as the proverb says, 'slave before slave, master before master'. But all such branches of knowledge are servile. There is likewise a science of the master, which teaches the use of slaves; for the master as such is concerned, not with the acquisition, but with the use of them. Yet this science is not anything great or wonderful; for the master need only know how to order that which the slave must know how to execute. Hence those who are in a position which places them above toil have stewards who attend to their households while they occupy themselves with philosophy or with politics. But the art of acquiring slaves, I mean of justly acquiring them, differs both from the art of the master and the art of the slave, being a species of hunting or war. Enough of the distinction between master and slave.

8 · Let us now inquire into property generally, and into the art of

getting wealth, in accordance with our usual method, for a slave has been shown to be a part of property. The first question is whether the art of getting wealth is the same as the art of managing a household or  
5 a part of it, or instrumental to it; and if the last, whether in the way that the art of making shuttles is instrumental to the art of weaving, or in the way that the casting of bronze is instrumental to the art of the statuary, for they are not instrumental in the same way, but the one provides tools and the other material; by the material I mean the substratum out of which any work is made; thus wool is the material of  
10 the weaver, bronze of the statuary. Now it is easy to see that the art of household management is not identical with the art of getting wealth, for the one uses the material which the other provides. For the art which uses household stores can be no other than the art of household management. There is, however, a doubt whether the art of getting wealth is a part of household management or a distinct art.  
15 If the getter of wealth has to consider whence wealth and property can be procured, but there are many sorts of property and riches, then are husbandry, and the care and provision of food in general, parts of the art of household management or distinct arts? Again, there are many  
20 sorts of food, and therefore there are many kinds of lives both of animals and men; they must all have food, and the differences in their food have made differences in their ways of life. For of beasts, some are gregarious, others are solitary; they live in the way which is best  
25 adapted to sustain them, accordingly as they are carnivorous or herbivorous or omnivorous: and their habits are determined for them by nature with regard to their ease and choice of food. But the same things are not naturally pleasant to all of them; and therefore the lives of carnivorous or herbivorous animals further differ among them-  
30 selves. In the lives of men too there is a great difference. The laziest are shepherds, who lead an idle life, and get their subsistence without trouble from tame animals; their flocks having to wander from place to place in search of pasture, they are compelled to follow them,  
35 cultivating a sort of living farm. Others support themselves by hunting, which is of different kinds. Some, for example, are brigands, others, who dwell near lakes or marshes or rivers or a sea in which there are fish, are fishermen, and others live by the pursuit of birds or wild beasts. The greater number obtain a living from the cultivated  
40 fruits of the soil. Such are the modes of subsistence which prevail among those whose industry springs up of itself, and whose food is

## Book I

not acquired by exchange and retail trade – there is the shepherd, and 125  
husbandman, the brigand, the fisherman, the hunter. Some gain a  
comfortable maintenance out of two employments, eking out the  
deficiencies of one of them by another: thus the life of a shepherd may 5  
be combined with that of a brigand, the life of a farmer with that of a  
hunter. Other modes of life are similarly combined in any way which  
the needs of men may require. Property, in the sense of a bare  
livelihood, seems to be given by nature herself to all, both when they  
are first born, and when they are grown up. For some animals bring 10  
forth, together with their offspring, so much food as will last until they  
are able to supply themselves; of this the vermiparous or oviparous  
animals are an instance; and the viviparous animals have up to a  
certain time a supply of food for their young in themselves, which is  
called milk. In like manner we may infer that, after the birth of 15  
animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for  
the sake of man,<sup>a</sup> the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all, at least  
the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing  
and various instruments. Now if nature makes nothing incomplete, 20  
and nothing in vain, the inference must be that she has made all  
animals for the sake of man. And so, from one point of view, the art of  
war is a natural art of acquisition, for the art of acquisition includes  
hunting, an art which we ought to practise against wild beasts, and  
against men who, though intended by nature to be governed, will not 25  
submit; for war of such a kind is naturally just.

Of the art of acquisition then there is one kind which by nature is a  
part of the management of a household, in so far as the art of  
household management must either find ready to hand, or itself 30  
provide, such things necessary to life, and useful for the community of  
the family or state, as can be stored. They are the elements of true  
riches; for the amount of property which is needed for a good life is  
not unlimited, although Solon in one of his poems says that

No bound to riches has been fixed for man.

But there is a boundary fixed, just as there is in the other arts; for the 35  
instruments of any art are never unlimited, either in number or size,  
and riches may be defined as a number of instruments to be used in a  
household or in a state. And so we see that there is a natural art of

<sup>a</sup> Retaining ζῶσα τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

acquisition which is practised by managers of households and by statesmen, and the reason for this.

40 9 There is another variety of the art of acquisition which is  
commonly and rightly called an art of wealth-getting, and has in fact  
1257<sup>1</sup> suggested the notion that riches and property have no limit. Being  
nearly connected with the preceding, it is often identified with it. But  
though they are not very different, neither are they the same. The  
kind already described is given by nature, the other is gained by  
5 experience and art.

Let us begin our discussion of the question with the following  
considerations. Of everything which we possess there are two uses:  
both belong to the thing as such, but not in the same manner, for one  
is the proper, and the other the improper use of it. For example, a  
10 shoe is used for wear, and is used for exchange; both are uses of the  
shoe. He who gives a shoe in exchange for money or food to him who  
wants one, does indeed use the shoe as a shoe, but this is not its proper  
use, for a shoe is not made to be an object of barter. The same may be  
15 said of all possessions, for the art of exchange extends to all of them,  
and it arises at first from what is natural, from the circumstance that  
some have too little, others too much. Hence we may infer that retail  
trade is not a natural part of the art of getting wealth; had it been so,  
men would have ceased to exchange when they had enough. In the  
20 first community, indeed, which is the family, this art is obviously of no  
use, but it begins to be useful when the society increases. For the  
members of the family originally had all things in common; later,  
when the family divided into parts, the parts shared in many things,  
and different parts in different things, which they had to give in  
exchange for what they wanted, a kind of barter which is still practised  
25 among barbarous nations who exchange with one another the neces-  
saries of life and nothing more; giving and receiving wine, for  
example, in exchange for corn, and the like. This sort of barter is not  
part of the wealth-getting art and is not contrary to nature, but is  
30 needed for the satisfaction of men's natural wants. The other form of  
exchange grew, as might have been inferred, out of this one. When  
the inhabitants of one country became more dependent on those of  
another, and they imported what they needed, and exported what they  
had too much of, money necessarily came into use. For the various  
35 necessities of life are not easily carried about, and hence men agreed

## Book I

to employ in their dealing with each other something which was intrinsically useful and easily applicable to the purposes of life, for example, iron, silver, and the like. Of this the value was at first measured simply by size and weight, but in process of time they put a stamp upon it, to save the trouble of weighing and to mark the value.

When the use of coin had once been discovered, out of the barter of necessary articles arose the other art of wealth-getting, namely, retail trade; which was at first probably a simple matter, but became more complicated as soon as men learned by experience whence and by what exchanges the greatest profit might be made. Originating in the use of coin, the art of getting wealth is generally thought to be chiefly concerned with it, and to be the art which produces riches and wealth, having to consider how they may be accumulated. Indeed, riches is assumed by many to be only a quantity of coin, because the arts of getting wealth and retail trade are concerned with coin. Others maintain that coined money is a mere sham, a thing not natural, but conventional only, because, if the users substitute another commodity for it, it is worthless, and because it is not useful as a means to any of the necessities of life, and, indeed, he who is rich in coin may often be in want of necessary food. But how can that be wealth of which a man may have a great abundance and yet perish with hunger, like Midas in the fable, whose insatiable prayer turned everything that was set before him into gold?

Hence men seek after a better notion of riches and of the art of getting wealth, and they are right. For natural riches and the natural art of wealth-getting are a different thing; in their true form they are part of the management of a household; whereas retail trade is the art of producing wealth, not in every way, but by exchange. And it is thought to be concerned with coin; for coin is the unit of exchange and the limit of it. And there is no bound to the riches which spring from this art of wealth-getting. As in the art of medicine there is no limit to the pursuit of health, and as in the other arts there is no limit to the pursuit of their several ends, for they aim at accomplishing their ends to the uttermost (but of the means there is a limit, for the end is always the limit), so, too, in this art of wealth-getting there is no limit of the end, which is riches of the spurious kind, and the acquisition of wealth. But the art of wealth-getting which consists in household management, on the other hand, has a limit;<sup>a</sup> the unlimited acquisi-

<sup>a</sup> Reading  $\alpha\beta$  for  $\phi\beta$ .



tion of wealth is not its business. And, therefore, from one point of view, all riches must have a limit; nevertheless, as a matter of fact, we find the opposite to be the case; for all getters of wealth increase their  
35 hoard of coin without limit. The source of the confusion is the near connexion between the two kinds of wealth-getting; in both, the instrument is the same, although the use is different, and so they pass into one another; for each is a use of the same property, but with a difference; accumulation is the end in the one case, but there is a further end in the other. Hence some persons are led to believe that getting wealth is the object of household management, and the whole  
40 idea of their lives is that they ought either to increase their money without limit, or at any rate not to lose it. The origin of this disposition in men is that they are intent upon living only, and not upon living  
1258<sup>1</sup> well; and, as their desires are unlimited, they also desire that the means of gratifying them should be without limit. Those who do aim at a good life seek the means of obtaining bodily pleasures; and, since the enjoyment of these appears to depend on property, they are  
5 absorbed in getting wealth; and so there arises the second species of wealth-getting. For, as their enjoyment is in excess, they seek an art which produces the excess of enjoyment; and, if they are not able to supply their pleasures by the art of getting wealth, they try other  
10 causes, using in turn every faculty in a manner contrary to nature. The quality of courage, for example, is not intended to make wealth, but to inspire confidence; neither is this the aim of the general's or of the physician's art; but the one aims at victory and the other at health. Nevertheless, some men turn every quality or art into a means of getting wealth; this they conceive to be the end, and to the promotion of the end they think all things must contribute.  
15 Thus, then, we have considered the art of wealth-getting which is unnecessary, and why men want it; and also the necessary art of wealth-getting, which we have seen to be different from the other, and to be a natural part of the art of managing a household, concerned with the provision of food, not, however, like the former kind, unlimited, but having a limit.

10 · And we have found the answer to our original question,  
20 Whether the art of getting wealth is the business of the manager of a household and of the statesman or not their business? – viz. that

## Book I

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

There are two sorts of wealth-getting, as I have said; one is a part of household management, the other is retail trade: the former is necessary and honourable, while that which consists in exchange is justly censured; for it is unnatural, and a mode by which men gain from one another. The most hated sort, and with the greatest reason, is usury, which makes a gain out of money itself, and not from the natural object of it. For money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest. And this term interest, which means the birth of money from money, is applied to the breeding of money because the offspring resembles the parent. That is why of all modes of getting wealth this is the most unnatural.

11 · Enough has been said about the theory of wealth-getting; we will now proceed to the practical part. Such things may be studied by a free man, but will only be practised from necessity. The useful parts of wealth-getting are, first, the knowledge of live-stock – which are most profitable, and where, and how – as for example, what sort of horses or sheep or oxen or any other animals are most likely to give a

15 return. A man ought to know which of these pay better than others,  
and which pay best in particular places, for some do better in one  
place and some in another. Secondly, husbandry, which may be either  
20 tillage or planting, and the keeping of bees and of fish, or fowl, or of  
any animals which may be useful to man. These are the divisions of  
the true or proper art of wealth-getting and come first. Of the other,  
which consists in exchange, the first and most important division is  
commerce (of which there are three kinds – ship-owning, the  
25 conveyance of goods, exposure for sale – these again differing as they  
are safer or more profitable), the second is usury, the third, service for  
hire – of this, one kind is employed in the mechanical arts, the other is  
unskilled and bodily labour. There is still a third sort of wealth-  
getting intermediate between this and the first or natural mode which  
30 is partly natural, but is also concerned with exchange, viz. the  
industries that make their profit from the earth, and from things  
growing from the earth which, although they bear no fruit, are  
nevertheless profitable; for example, the cutting of timber and all  
mining. The art of mining itself has many branches, for there are  
various kinds of things dug out of the earth. Of the several divisions of  
wealth-getting I now speak generally; a minute consideration of them  
35 might be useful in practice, but it would be tiresome to dwell upon  
them at greater length now.

Those occupations are most truly arts in which there is the least  
element of chance; they are the meanest in which the body is most  
maltreated, the most servile in which there is the greatest use of the  
body, and the most illiberal in which there is the least need of  
excellence.

Works have been written upon these subjects by various persons;  
1250'1 for example, by Chares the Parian, and Apollodorus the Lemnian,  
who have treated of Tillage and Planting, while others have treated of  
other branches; anyone who cares for such matters may refer to their  
writings. It would be well also to collect the scattered stories of the  
5 ways in which individuals have succeeded in amassing a fortune; for  
all this is useful to persons who value the art of getting wealth. There  
is the anecdote of Thales the Milesian and his financial scheme,  
which involves a principle of universal application, but is attributed to  
him on account of his reputation for wisdom. He was reproached for  
10 his poverty, which was supposed to show that philosophy was of no  
use. According to the story, he knew by his skill in the stars while it

## Book I

was yet winter that there would be a great harvest of olives in the coming year; so, having a little money, he gave deposits for the use of all the olive-presses in Chios and Miletus, which he hired at a low price because no one bid against him. When the harvest-time came, 15 and many were wanted all at once and of a sudden, he let them out at any rate which he pleased, and made a quantity of money. Thus he showed the world that philosophers can easily be rich if they like, but that their ambition is of another sort. He is supposed to have given a striking proof of his wisdom, but, as I was saying, his scheme for 20 getting wealth is of universal application, and is nothing but the creation of a monopoly. It is an art often practised by cities when they are in want of money; they make a monopoly of provisions.

There was a man of Sicily, who, having money deposited with him, bought up all the iron from the iron mines; afterwards, when the 25 merchants from their various markets came to buy, he was the only seller, and without much increasing the price he gained 200 per cent. Which when Dionysius heard, he told him that he might take away his money, but that he must not remain in Syracuse, for he thought that 30 the man had discovered a way of making money which was injurious to his own interests. He made the same discovery as Thales; they both contrived to create a monopoly for themselves. And statesmen as well ought to know these things; for a state is often as much in want of money and of such schemes for obtaining it as a household, or even 35 more so; hence some public men devote themselves entirely to finance.

(12) Of household management we have seen that there are three parts – one is the rule of a master over slaves, which has been discussed already, another of a father, and the third of a husband. A husband and father, we saw, rules over wife and children, both free, but the rule differs, the rule over his children being a royal, over his 1259<sup>b</sup> wife a constitutional rule. For although there may be exceptions to the order of nature, the male is by nature fitter for command than the female, just as the elder and full-grown is superior to the younger and more immature. But in most constitutional states the citizens rule and 5 are ruled by turns, for the idea of a constitutional state implies that the natures of the citizens are equal, and do not differ at all. Nevertheless, when one rules and the other is ruled we endeavour to create a difference of outward forms and names and titles of respect, which

may be illustrated by the saying of Amasis about his foot-pan.<sup>1</sup> The  
10 relation of the male to the female is always of this kind. The rule of a  
father over his children is royal, for he rules by virtue both of love and  
of the respect due to age, exercising a kind of royal power. And  
therefore Homer has appropriately called Zeus 'father of Gods and  
15 men',<sup>2</sup> because he is the king of them all. For a king is the natural  
superior of his subjects, but he should be of the same kin or kind with  
them, and such is the relation of elder and younger, of father and son.

13 Thus it is clear that household management attends more to  
men than to the acquisition of inanimate things, and to human  
excellence more than to the excellence of property which we call  
20 wealth, and to the excellence of freemen more than to the excellence  
of slaves. A question may indeed be raised, whether there is any  
excellence at all in a slave beyond those of an instrument and of a  
servant – whether he can have the excellences of temperance,  
25 courage, justice, and the like; or whether slaves possess only bodily  
services. And, whichever way we answer the question, a difficulty  
arises; for, if they have excellence, in what will they differ from  
freemen? On the other hand, since they are men and share in rational  
principle it seems absurd to say that they have no excellence. A similar  
30 question may be raised about women and children, whether they too  
have excellences; ought a woman to be temperate and brave and just,  
and is a child to be called temperate, and intemperate, or not? So in  
general we may ask about the natural ruler, and the natural subject,  
whether they have the same or different excellences. For if a noble  
35 nature is equally required in both, why should one of them always  
rule, and the other always be ruled? Nor can we say that this is a  
question of degree, for the difference between ruler and subject is a  
difference of kind, which the difference of more and less never is. Yet  
how strange is the supposition that the one ought, and that the other  
ought not, to have excellence! For if the ruler is intemperate and  
1260<sup>a</sup> 1 unjust, how can he rule well? if the subject, how can he obey well? If  
he is licentious and cowardly, he will certainly not do what is fitting. It  
is evident, therefore, that both of them must have a share of

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, II 172. Amasis, a sixth-century king of Egypt, was despised by his subjects because of his humble birth. He put up a statue of a god which they worshipped and then told them that it had been made out of a foot-bath.

<sup>2</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, I 544.

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excellence, but varying as natural subjects also vary among themselves. Here the very constitution of the soul has shown us the way; in it one part naturally rules, and the other is subject, and the excellence of the ruler we maintain to be different from that of the subject – the one being the excellence of the rational, and the other of the irrational part. Now, it is obvious that the same principle applies generally, and therefore almost all things rule and are ruled according to nature. But the kind of rule differs – the freeman rules over the slave after another manner from that in which the male rules over the female, or the man over the child; although the parts of the soul are present in all of them, they are present in different degrees. For the slave has no deliberative faculty at all; the woman has, but it is without authority, and the child has, but it is immature. So it must necessarily be supposed to be with the excellences of character also; all should partake of them, but only in such manner and degree as is required by each for the fulfilment of his function. Hence the ruler ought to have excellence of character in perfection, for his function, taken absolutely, demands a master artificer, and reason is such an artificer; the subjects, on the other hand, require only that measure of excellence which is proper to each of them. Clearly, then, excellence of character belongs to all of them; but the temperance of a man and of a woman, or the courage and justice of a man and of a woman, are not, as Socrates maintained, the same; the courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying. And this holds of all other excellences, as will be more clearly seen if we look at them in detail, for those who say generally that excellence consists in a good disposition of the soul, or in doing rightly, or the like, only deceive themselves. Far better than such definitions is the mode of speaking of those who, like Gorgias, enumerate the excellence. All classes must be deemed to have their special attributes; as the poet says of women.

Silence is a woman's glory,<sup>1</sup>

but this is not equally the glory of man. The child is imperfect, and therefore obviously his excellence is not relative to himself alone, but to the perfect man and to his teacher, and in like manner the excellence of the slave is relative to a master. Now we determined that a slave is useful for the wants of life, and therefore he will obviously

<sup>1</sup> Sophocles, *Ajax*, 293.

35 require only so much excellence as will prevent him from failing in his  
function through cowardice or lack of self-control. Someone will ask  
whether, if what we are saying is true, excellence will not be required  
also in the artisans, for they often fail in their work through the lack of  
self-control. But is there not a great difference in the two cases? For  
40 the slave shares in his master's life; the artisan is less closely  
connected with him, and only attains excellence in proportion as he  
1260<sup>b</sup> 1 becomes a slave. The meaner sort of mechanic has a special and  
separate slavery; and whereas the slave exists by nature, not so the  
shoemaker or other artisan. It is manifest, then, that the master ought  
to be the source of such excellence in the slave, and not a mere  
possessor of the art of mastership which trains the slave in his  
5 functions. That is why they are mistaken who forbid us to converse  
with slaves and say that we should employ command only, for slaves  
stand even more in need of admonition than children.

So much for this subject; the relations of husband and wife, father  
10 and child, their several excellences, what in their intercourse with one  
another is good, and what is evil, and how we may pursue the good  
and escape the evil, will have to be discussed when we speak of the  
different forms of government. For, inasmuch as every family is a part  
of a state, and these relationships are the parts of a family, and the  
excellence of the part must have regard to the excellence of the whole,  
15 women and children must be trained by education with an eye to the  
constitution, if the excellences of either of them are supposed to make  
any difference in the excellences of the state. And they must make a  
20 difference: for the children grow up to be citizens, and half the free  
persons in a state are women.

Of these matters, enough has been said; of what remains, let us  
speak at another time. Regarding, then, our present enquiry as  
complete, we will make a new beginning. And, first, let us examine the  
various theories of a perfect state.

## BOOK II

27 (1) Our purpose is to consider what form of political community is  
best of all for those who are most able to realize their ideal of life. We  
must therefore examine not only this but other constitutions, both

### Book III

denunciation for perjury. His laws are more exact and more precisely expressed than even those of our modern legislators.

(Characteristic of Phaleas is the equalization of property; of Plato, 10 the community of women, children, and property, the common meals of women, and the law about drinking, that the sober shall be masters of the feast; also the training of soldiers to acquire by practice equal skill with both hands, so that one should be as useful as the other.)

Draco has left laws, but he adapted them to a constitution which 15 already existed, and there is no peculiarity in them which is worth mentioning, except the greatness and severity of the punishments.

Pittacus, too, was only a lawgiver, and not the author of a constitution; he has a law which is peculiar to him, that, if a drunken man do something wrong, he shall be more heavily punished than if he were 20 sober; he looked not to the excuse which might be offered for the drunkard, but only to expediency, for drunken more often than sober people commit acts of violence.

Androdamas of Rhegium gave laws to the Chalcidians of Thrace. Some of them relate to homicide, and to heiresses; but there is 25 nothing distinctive in them.

And here let us conclude our inquiry into the various constitutions which either actually exist, or have been devised by theorists.

### BOOK III

1 · He who would inquire into the essence and attributes of various 32 kinds of government must first of all determine what a state is. At present this is a disputed question. Some say that the state has done a 35 certain act; others, not the state, but the oligarchy or the tyrant. And the legislator or statesman is concerned entirely with the state, a government being an arrangement of the inhabitants of a state. But a state is composite, like any other whole made up of many parts – these 40 are the citizens, who compose it. It is evident, therefore, that we must begin by asking, Who is the citizen, and what is the meaning of the term? For here again there may be a difference of opinion. He who is a citizen in a democracy will often not be a citizen in an oligarchy. Leaving out of consideration those who have been made citizens, or 5



who have obtained the name of citizen in any other accidental manner, we may say, first, that a citizen is not a citizen because he lives in a certain place, for resident aliens and slaves share in the place; nor is he a citizen who has legal rights to the extent of suing and being sued; for this right may be enjoyed under the provisions of a treaty. Resident aliens in many places do not possess even such rights completely, for they are obliged to have a patron, so that they do but imperfectly participate in the community, and we call them citizens only in a qualified sense, as we might apply the term to children who  
15 are too young to be on the register, or to old men who have been relieved from state duties. Of these we do not say quite simply that they are citizens, but add in the one case that they are not of age, and in the other, that they are past the age, or something of that sort; the precise expression is immaterial, for our meaning is clear. Similar difficulties to those which I have mentioned may be raised and answered about disfranchised citizens and about exiles. But the citizen whom we are seeking to define is a citizen in the strictest sense,  
20 against whom no such exception can be taken, and his special characteristic is that he shares in the administration of justice, and in offices. Now of offices some are discontinuous, and the same persons  
25 are not allowed to hold them twice, or can only hold them after a fixed interval; others have no limit of time – for example, the office of juryman or member of the assembly. It may, indeed, be argued that these are not magistrates at all, and that their functions give them no share in the government. But surely it is ridiculous to say that those who have the supreme power do not govern. Let us not dwell further  
30 upon this, which is a purely verbal question; what we want is a common term including both juryman and member of the assembly. Let us, for the sake of distinction, call it 'indefinite office', and we will assume that those who share in such office are citizens. This is the most comprehensive definition of a citizen, and best suits all those who are generally so called.  
35 But we must not forget that things of which the underlying principles differ in kind, one of them being first, another second, another third, have, when regarded in this relation, nothing, or hardly anything, worth mentioning in common. Now we see that governments differ in kind, and that some of them are prior and that others  
1275<sup>b</sup> are posterior; those which are faulty or perverted are necessarily posterior to those which are perfect. (What we mean by perversion

### Book III

will be hereafter explained.) The citizen then of necessity differs under each form of government; and our definition is best adapted to the citizen of a democracy; but not necessarily to other states. For in some states the people are not acknowledged, nor have they any regular assembly, but only extraordinary ones; and law-suits are distributed by sections among the magistrates. At Lacedaemon, for instance, the Ephors determine suits about contracts, which they distribute among themselves, while the elders are judges of homicide, and other causes are decided by other magistrates. A similar principle prevails at Carthage; there certain magistrates decide all causes. We may, indeed, modify our definition of the citizen so as to include these states. In them it is the holder of a definite, not an indefinite office, who is juryman and member of the assembly, and to some or all such holders of definite offices is reserved the right of deliberating or judging about some things or about all things. The conception of the citizen now begins to clear up.

He who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state is said by us to be a citizen of that state; and, speaking generally, a state is a body of citizens sufficing for the purposes of life.

2 · But in practice a citizen is defined to be one of whom both the parents are citizens (and not just one, i.e. father or mother); others insist on going further back; say to two or three or more ancestors. This is a short and practical definition; but there are some who raise the further question of how this third or fourth ancestor came to be a citizen. Gorgias of Leontini, partly because he was in a difficulty, partly in irony, said that mortars are what is made by the mortar-makers, and the citizens of Larissa are those who are made by the magistrates; for it is their trade to 'make Larissaeans'. Yet the question is really simple, for, if according to the definition just given they shared in the government, they were citizens. This is a better definition than the other. For the words, 'born of a father or mother who is a citizen', cannot possibly apply to the first inhabitants or founders of a state.

There is a greater difficulty in the case of those who have been made citizens after a revolution, as by Cleisthenes at Athens after the expulsion of the tyrants, for he enrolled in tribes many metics, both strangers and slaves. The doubt in these cases is, not who is, but

whether he who is ought to be a citizen; and there will still be a further  
1276<sup>a</sup> doubt, whether he who ought not to be a citizen, is one in fact, for  
what ought not to be is what is false. Now, there are some who hold  
office, and yet ought not to hold office, whom we described as ruling,  
but ruling unjustly. And the citizen was defined by the fact of his  
5 holding some kind of rule or office – he who holds a certain sort of  
office fulfils our definition of a citizen. It is evident, therefore, that the  
citizens about whom the doubt has arisen must be called citizens.

3 · Whether they ought to be so or not is a question which is bound  
up with the previous inquiry. For a parallel question is raised  
respecting the state, whether a certain act is or is not an act of the  
state; for example, in the transition from an oligarchy or a tyranny to a  
10 democracy. In such cases persons refuse to fulfil their contracts or  
any other obligations, on the ground that the tyrant, and not the state,  
contracted them; they argue that some constitutions are established  
by force, and not for the sake of the common good. But this would  
15 apply equally to democracies, and then the acts of the democracy will  
be neither more nor less acts of the state in question than those of an  
oligarchy or of a tyranny. This question runs up into another: – on  
what principle shall we ever say that the state is the same, or different?  
20 It would be a very superficial view which considered only the place  
and the inhabitants (for the soil and the population may be separated,  
and some of the inhabitants may live in one place and some in  
another). This, however, is not a very serious difficulty; we need only  
remark that the word 'state' is ambiguous.

25 It is further asked: When are men, living in the same place, to be  
regarded as a single city – what is the limit? Certainly not the wall of  
the city, for you might surround all Peloponnesus with a wall.  
Babylon, we may say, is like this, and every city that has the compass of  
30 a nation rather than a city; Babylon, they say, had been taken for three  
days before some part of the inhabitants became aware of the fact.  
This difficulty may, however, with advantage be deferred to another  
occasion; the statesman has to consider the size of the state, and  
whether it should consist of more than one race or not.

35 Again, shall we say that while the race of inhabitants remains the  
same, the city is also the same, although the citizens are always dying  
and being born, as we call rivers and fountains the same, although the  
40 water is always flowing away and more coming? Or shall we say that

the generations of men, like the rivers, are the same, but that the state changes? For, since the state is a partnership, and is a partnership of citizens in a constitution, when the form of the government changes, and becomes different, then it may be supposed that the state is no longer the same, just as a tragic differs from a comic chorus, although the members of both may be identical. And in this manner we speak of every union or composition of elements as different when the form of their composition alters; for example, a scale containing the same sounds is said to be different, accordingly as the Dorian or the Phrygian mode is employed. And if this is true it is evident that the sameness of the state consists chiefly in the sameness of the constitution, and it may be called or not called by the same name, whether the inhabitants are the same or entirely different. It is quite another question, whether a state ought or ought not to fulfil engagements when the form of government changes.

4 · There is a point nearly allied to the preceding: Whether the excellence of a good man and a good citizen is the same or not. But before entering on this discussion, we must certainly first obtain some general notion of the excellence of the citizen. Like the sailor, the citizen is a member of a community. Now, sailors have different functions, for one of them is a rower, another a pilot, and a third a look-out man, a fourth is described by some similar term; and while the precise definition of each individual's excellence applies exclusively to him, there is, at the same time, a common definition applicable to them all. For they have all of them a common object, which is safety in navigation. Similarly, one citizen differs from another, but the salvation of the community is the common business of them all. This community is the constitution; the excellence of the citizen must therefore be relative to the constitution of which he is a member. If, then, there are many forms of government, it is evident that there is not one single excellence of the good citizen which is perfect excellence. But we say that the good man is he who has one single excellence which is perfect excellence. Hence it is evident that the good citizen need not of necessity possess the excellence which makes a good man.

The same question may also be approached by another road, from a consideration of the best constitution. If the state cannot be entirely composed of good men, and yet each citizen is expected to do his own

State  
as  
ship  
metaphor

is a member  
of  
community  
individual

find

40 business well, and must therefore have excellence, still, inasmuch as  
 1277<sup>1</sup> all the citizens cannot be alike, the excellence of the citizen and of the  
 good man cannot coincide. All must have the excellence of the good  
 citizen – thus, and thus only, can the state be perfect; but they will not  
 have the excellence of a good man, unless we assume that in the good  
 state all the citizens must be good.

5 Again, the state, as composed of unlikes, may be compared to the  
 living being: as the first elements into which a living being is resolved  
 are soul and body, as soul is made up of rational principle and  
 appetite, the family of husband and wife, property of master and slave,  
 so of all these, as well as other dissimilar elements, the state is  
 10 composed; and therefore the excellence of all the citizens cannot  
 possibly be the same, any more than the excellence of the leader of a  
 chorus is the same as that of the performer who stands by his side. I  
 have said enough to show why the two kinds of excellence cannot be  
 absolutely the same.

But will there then be no case in which the excellence of the good  
 citizen and the excellence of the good man coincide? To this we  
 15 answer that the good ruler is a good and wise man, but the citizen need  
 not be wise. And some persons say that even the education of the ruler  
 should be of a special kind; for are not the children of kings instructed  
 in riding and military exercises? As Euripides says:

No subtle arts for me, but what the state requires.<sup>1</sup>

20 As though there were a special education needed for a ruler. If the  
 excellence of a good ruler is the same as that of a good man, and we  
 assume further that the subject is a citizen as well as the ruler, the  
 excellence of the good citizen and the excellence of the good man  
 cannot be absolutely the same, although in some cases they may; for  
 the excellence of a ruler differs from that of a citizen. It was the sense  
 of this difference which made Jason say that 'he felt hungry when he  
 25 was not a tyrant', meaning that he could not endure to live in a private  
 station. But, on the other hand, it may be argued that men are praised  
 for knowing both how to rule and how to obey, and he is said to be a  
 citizen of excellence who is able to do both well. Now if we suppose  
 the excellence of a good man to be that which rules, and the  
 excellence of the citizen to include ruling and obeying, it cannot be

<sup>1</sup> Fragment from the lost play, *Aeolus*.

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said that they are equally worthy of praise. Since, then, it is sometimes  
thought that the ruler and the ruled must learn different things and 30  
not the same, but that the citizen must know and share in them both,  
the inference is obvious. There is, indeed, the rule of a master, which  
is concerned with menial offices – the master need not know how to  
perform these, but may employ others in the execution of them: the 35  
other would be degrading; and by the other I mean the power actually  
to do menial duties, which vary much in character and are executed by  
various classes of slaves, such, for example, as handicraftsmen, who,  
as their name signifies, live by the labour of their hands – under these 1277<sup>b1</sup>  
the mechanic is included. Hence in ancient times, and among some  
nations, the working classes had no share in the government – a  
privilege which they only acquired under extreme democracy.  
Certainly the good man and the statesman and the good citizen ought 5  
not to learn the crafts of inferiors except for their own occasional use;  
if they habitually practise them, there will cease to be a distinction  
between master and slave.

But there is a rule of another kind, which is exercised over freemen  
and equals by birth – a constitutional rule, which the ruler must learn  
by obeying, as he would learn the duties of a general of cavalry by 10  
being under the orders of a general of cavalry, or the duties of a  
general of infantry by being under the orders of a general of infantry,  
and by having had the command of a regiment and of a company. It  
has been well said that he who has never learned to obey cannot be a  
good commander. The excellence of the two is not the same, but the  
good citizen ought to be capable of both; he should know how to  
govern like a freeman, and how to obey like a freeman – these are the 15  
excellences of a citizen. And, although the temperance and justice of  
a ruler are distinct from those of a subject, the excellence of a good  
man will include both; for the excellence of the good man who is free  
and also a subject, e.g. his justice, will not be one but will comprise 20  
distinct kinds, the one qualifying him to rule, the other to obey, and  
differing as the temperance and courage of men and women differ.  
For a man would be thought a coward if he had no more courage than  
a courageous woman, and a woman would be thought loquacious if  
she imposed no more restraint on her conversation than the good  
man; and indeed their part in the management of the household is  
different, for the duty of the one is to acquire, and of the other to 25  
preserve. Practical wisdom is the only excellence peculiar to the ruler:

*Excellence of a  
Ruler  
as a  
Freeman*

*And it is true that the good man has the practical knowledge of the*  
*(but, the good man has the practical*  
*Play II. (1)*  
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*old man's view*  
*knowledge of the*  
*opinion.*  
30 it would seem that all other excellences must equally belong to ruler and subject. The excellence of the subject is certainly not wisdom, but only true opinion; he may be compared to the maker of the flute, while his master is like the flute-player or user of the flute.

From these considerations may be gathered the answer to the question, whether the excellence of the good man is the same as that of the good citizen, or different, and how far the same, and how far different. J

*Handwritten: 1278<sup>a</sup> 1*  
5 There still remains one more question about the citizen: Is he only a true citizen who has a share of office, or is the mechanic to be included? If they who hold no office are to be deemed citizens, not every citizen can have this excellence; for this man is a citizen. And if none of the lower class are citizens, in which part of the state are they to be placed? For they are not resident aliens, and they are not foreigners. May we not reply, that as far as this objection goes there is no more absurdity in excluding them than in excluding slaves and freedmen from any of the above-mentioned classes? It must be admitted that we cannot consider all those to be citizens who are necessary to the existence of the state; for example, children are not citizens equally with grown-up men, who are citizens absolutely, but children, not being grown up, are only citizens on a certain assumption. In ancient times, and among some nations, the artisan class were slaves or foreigners, and therefore the majority of them are so now. The best form of state will not admit them to citizenship; but if they are admitted, then our definition of the excellence of a citizen will not apply to every citizen, nor to every free man as such, but only to those who are freed from necessary services. The necessary people are either slaves who minister to the wants of individuals, or mechanics and labourers who are the servants of the community. These reflections carried a little further will explain their position; and indeed what has been said already is of itself, when understood, explanation enough.

15 Since there are many forms of government there must be many varieties of citizens, and especially of citizens who are subjects; so that under some governments the mechanic and the labourer will be citizens, but not in others, as, for example, in so-called aristocracies,  
20 if there are any, in which honours are given according to excellence

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and merit; for no man can practise excellence who is living the life of a mechanic or labourer. In oligarchies the qualification for office is high, and therefore no labourer can ever be a citizen; but a mechanic may, for an actual majority of them are rich. At Thebes there was a law that no man could hold office who had not retired from business for ten years. But in many states the law goes to the length of admitting aliens; for in some democracies a man is a citizen though his mother only be a citizen; and a similar principle is applied to illegitimate children among many. Nevertheless they make such people citizens because of the dearth of legitimate citizens (for they introduce this sort of legislation owing to lack of population); so when the number of citizens increases, first the children of a male or a female slave are excluded; then those whose mothers only are citizens; and at last the right of citizenship is confined to those whose fathers and mothers are both citizens.

Hence, as is evident, there are different kinds of citizens; and he is a citizen in the fullest sense who shares in the honours of the state. Compare Homer's words 'like some dishonoured stranger';<sup>1</sup> he who is excluded from the honours of the state is no better than an alien. But when this exclusion is concealed, then its object is to deceive their fellow inhabitants.

As to the question whether the excellence of the good man is the same as that of the good citizen, the considerations already adduced prove that in some states the good man and the good citizen are the same, and in others different. When they are the same it is not every citizen who is a good man, but only the statesman and those who have or may have, alone or in conjunction with others, the conduct of public affairs.

6 · Having determined these questions, we have next to consider whether there is only one form of government or many, and if many, what they are, and how many, and what are the differences between them.

A constitution is the arrangement of magistracies in a state, especially of the highest of all. The government is everywhere sovereign in the state, and the constitution is in fact the government.

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, ix 648.



For example, in democracies the people are supreme, but in oligarchies, the few; and, therefore, we say that these two constitutions also  
15 are different: and so in other cases.

First, let us consider what is the purpose of a state, and how many forms of rule there are by which human society is regulated. We have already said, in the first part of this treatise, when discussing household management and the rule of a master, that man is by  
20 nature a political animal. And therefore, men, even when they do not require one another's help, desire to live together; not but that they are also brought together by their common interests in so far as they each attain to any measure of well-being. This is certainly the chief end, both of individuals and of states. And mankind meet together  
25 and maintain the political community also for the sake of mere life (in which there is possibly some noble element so long as the evils of existence do not greatly overbalance the good). And we all see that men cling to life even at the cost of enduring great misfortune,  
30 seeming to find in life a natural sweetness and happiness.

There is no difficulty in distinguishing the various kinds of rule; they have been often defined already in our popular discussions. The rule of a master, although the slave by nature and the master by nature have in reality the same interests, is nevertheless exercised primarily  
35 with a view to the interest of the master, but accidentally considers the slave, since, if the slave perish, the rule of the master perishes with him. On the other hand, the government of a wife and children and of a household, which we have called household management, is exercised in the first instance for the good of the governed or for the  
40 common good of both parties, but essentially for the good of the governed, as we see to be the case in medicine, gymnastic, and the arts  
1279<sup>a</sup> in general, which are only accidentally concerned with the good of the artists themselves. For there is no reason why the trainer may not sometimes practise gymnastics, and the helmsman is always one of  
5 the crew. The trainer or the helmsman considers the good of those committed to his care. But, when he is one of the persons taken care of, he accidentally participates in the advantage, for the helmsman is also a sailor, and the trainer becomes one of those in training. And so in politics: when the state is framed upon the principle of equality and  
10 likeness, the citizens think that they ought to hold office by turns. Formerly, as is natural, everyone would take his turn of service; and then again, somebody else would look after his interest, just as he,

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while in office, had looked after theirs. But nowadays, for the sake of the advantage which is to be gained from the public revenues and from office, men want to be always in office. One might imagine that the rulers, being sickly, were only kept in health while they continued in office; in that case we may be sure that they would be hunting after places. The conclusion is evident: that governments which have a regard to the common interest are constituted in accordance with strict principles of justice, and are therefore true forms; but those which regard only the interest of the rulers are all defective and 20 perverted forms, for they are despotic, whereas a state is a community of freemen.

7 · Having determined these points, we have next to consider how many forms of government there are, and what they are; and in the first place what are the true forms, for when they are determined the perversions of them will at once be apparent. The words constitution and government have the same meaning, and the government, which is the supreme authority in states, must be in the hands of one, or of a few, or of the many. The true forms of government, therefore, are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest; but governments which rule with a view to the private interest, whether of the one, or of the few, or of the many, are perversions. For the members of a state, if they are truly citizens, ought to participate in its advantages. Of forms of government in which one rules, we call that which regards the common interest, kingship; that in which more than one, but not many, rule, aristocracy; and it is so called, either because the rulers are the best men, or because they have at heart the best interests of the state and of the citizens. But when the many administer the state for the common interest, the government is called by the generic name – a constitution. And there is a reason for this use of language. One man or a few may excel in excellence; but as the number increases it becomes more 40 difficult for them to attain perfection in every kind of excellence, 1279<sup>b</sup>1 though they may in military excellence, for this is found in the masses. Hence in a constitutional government the fighting-men have the supreme power, and those who possess arms are the citizens.

Of the above-mentioned forms, the perversions are as follows: – of kingship, tyranny; of aristocracy, oligarchy; of constitutional government, democracy. For tyranny is a kind of monarchy which has in view 5

the interest of the monarch only; oligarchy has in view the interest of the wealthy; democracy, of the needy: none of them the common  
10 good of all.

8 But there are difficulties about these forms of government, and it will therefore be necessary to state a little more at length the nature of each of them. For he who would make a philosophical study of the various sciences, and is not only concerned with practice, ought not to  
15 overlook or omit anything, but to set forth the truth in every particular. Tyranny, as I was saying, is monarchy exercising the rule of a master over the political society; oligarchy is when men of property have the government in their hands; democracy, the opposite, when the indigent, and not the men of property, are the  
20 rulers. And here arises the first of our difficulties, and it relates to the distinction just drawn. For democracy is said to be the government of the many. But what if the many are men of property and have the power in their hands? In like manner oligarchy is said to be the government of the few; but what if the poor are fewer than the rich,  
25 and have the power in their hands because they are stronger? In these cases the distinction which we have drawn between these different forms of government would no longer hold good.

Suppose, once more, that we add wealth to the few and poverty to the many, and name the governments accordingly – an oligarchy is said to be that in which the few and the wealthy, and a democracy that  
30 in which the many and the poor are the rulers – there will still be a difficulty. For, if the only forms of government are the ones already mentioned, how shall we describe those other governments also just mentioned by us, in which the rich are the more numerous and the poor are the fewer, and both govern in their respective states?

35 The argument seems to show that, whether in oligarchies or in democracies, the number of the governing body, whether the greater number, as in a democracy, or the smaller number, as in an oligarchy, is an accident due to the fact that the rich everywhere are few, and the poor numerous. But if so, there is a misapprehension of the causes of  
40 the difference between them. For the real difference between democracy and oligarchy is poverty and wealth. Wherever men rule by reason of their wealth, whether they be few or many, that is an oligarchy, and where the poor rule, that is a democracy. But in fact the  
1280\*1 rich are few and the poor many; for few are well-to-do, whereas

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freedom is enjoyed by all, and wealth and freedom are the grounds on which the two parties claim power in the state. 5

9 Let us begin by considering the common definitions of oligarchy and democracy, and what is oligarchical and democratic justice. For all men cling to justice of some kind, but their conceptions are imperfect and they do not express the whole idea. For example, justice is thought by them to be, and is, equality — not, however, for all, but only for equals. And inequality is thought to be, and is, justice; neither is this for all, but only for unequals. When the persons are omitted, then men judge erroneously. The reason is that they are passing judgement on themselves, and most people are bad judges in their own case. And whereas justice implies a relation to persons as well as to things, and a just distribution, as I have already said in the *Ethics*,<sup>1</sup> implies the same ratio between the persons and between the things, they agree about the equality of the things, but dispute about the equality of the persons, chiefly for the reason which I have just given — because they are bad judges in their own affairs; and secondly, because both the parties to the argument are speaking of a limited and partial justice, but imagine themselves to be speaking of absolute justice. For the one party, if they are unequal in one respect, for example wealth, consider themselves to be unequal in all; and the other party, if they are equal in one respect, for example free birth, consider themselves to be equal in all. But they leave out the capital point. For if men met and associated out of regard to wealth only, their share in the state would be proportioned to their property, and the oligarchical doctrine would then seem to carry the day. It would not be just that he who paid one mina should have the same share of a hundred minae, whether of the principal or of the profits, as he who paid the remaining ninety-nine. But a state exists for the sake of a good life, and not for the sake of life only: if life only were the object, slaves and brute animals might form a state, but they cannot, for they have no share in happiness or in a life based on choice. Nor does a state exist for the sake of alliance and security from injustice, nor yet for the sake of exchange and mutual intercourse; for then the Tyrrhenians and the Carthaginians, and all who have commercial treaties with one another, would be the citizens of one state. True,

justice

30  
Slaves have no right to happiness  
★

<sup>1</sup> NE, v 3.

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they have agreements about imports, and engagements that they will  
40 do no wrong to one another, and written articles of alliance. But there  
1280<sup>b1</sup> are no magistracies common to the contracting parties; different  
states have each their own magistracies. Nor does one state take care  
that the citizens of the other are such as they ought to be, nor see that  
those who come under the terms of the treaty do no wrong or  
wickedness at all, but only that they do no injustice to one another.

5 Whereas, those who care for good government take into considera-  
tion political excellence and defect. Whence it may be further  
inferred that excellence must be the care of a state which is truly so  
called, and not merely enjoys the name: for without this end the  
10 community becomes a mere alliance which differs only in place from  
alliances of which the members live apart; and law is only a conven-  
tion, 'a surety to one another of justice', as the sophist Lycophron  
says, and has no real power to make the citizens good and just.

This is obvious; for suppose distinct places, such as Corinth and  
15 Megara, to be brought together so that their walls touched, still they  
would not be one city, not even if the citizens had the right to  
intermarry, which is one of the rights peculiarly characteristic of  
states. Again, if men dwelt at a distance from one another, but not so  
far off as to have no intercourse, and there were laws among them that  
20 they should not wrong each other in their exchanges, neither would  
this be a state. Let us suppose that one man is a carpenter, another a  
farmer, another a shoemaker, and so on, and that their number is ten  
thousand: nevertheless if they have nothing in common but exchange,  
alliance, and the like, that would not constitute a state. Why is this?  
25 Surely not because they are at a distance from one another; for even  
supposing that such a community were to meet in one place, but that  
each man had a house of his own, which was in a manner his state, and  
that they made alliance with one another, but only against evil-doers;  
still an accurate thinker would not deem this to be a state, if their  
intercourse with one another was of the same character after as before  
30 their union. It is clear then that a state is not a mere society, having a  
common place, established for the prevention of mutual crime and for  
the sake of exchange. These are conditions without which a state  
cannot exist; but all of them together do not constitute a state, which is  
a community of families and aggregations of families in well-being,  
35 for the sake of a perfect and self-sufficing life. Such a community can  
only be established among those who live in the same place and

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intermarry. Hence there arise in cities family connexions, brotherhoods, common sacrifices, amusements which draw men together. But these are created by friendship, for to choose to live together is friendship. The end of the state is the good life, and these are the means towards it. And the state is the union of families and villages in a perfect and self-sufficing life, by which we mean a happy and honourable life.

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

From what has been said it will be clearly seen that all the partisans of different forms of government speak of a part of justice only.

10 · There is also a doubt as to what is to be the supreme power in the state: – Is it the multitude? Or the wealthy? Or the good? Or the one best man? Or a tyrant? Any of these alternatives seems to involve disagreeable consequences. If the poor, for example, because they are more in number, divide among themselves the property of the rich – is not this unjust? No, by heaven (will be the reply), for the supreme authority justly willed it. But if this is not extreme injustice, what is? Again, when in the first division all has been taken, and the majority divide anew the property of the minority, is it not evident, if this goes on, that they will ruin the state? Yet surely, excellence is not the ruin of those who possess it, nor is justice destructive of a state; and therefore this law of confiscation clearly cannot be just. If it were, all the acts of a tyrant must of necessity be just; for he only coerces other men by superior power, just as the multitude coerce the rich. But is it just then that the few and the wealthy should be the rulers? And what if they, in like manner, rob and plunder the people – is this just? If so, the other case will likewise be just. But there can be no doubt that all these things are wrong and unjust.

Then ought the good to rule and have supreme power? But in that case everybody else, being excluded from power, will be dishonoured. For the offices of a state are posts of honour; and if one set of men always hold them, the rest must be deprived of them. Then will it be well that the one best man should rule? That is still more oligarchical,

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- for the number of those who are dishonoured is thereby increased.
- 35 Someone may say that it is bad in any case for a man, subject as he is to all the accidents of human passion, to have the supreme power, rather than the law. But what if the law itself be democratic or oligarchical, how will that help us out of our difficulties? Not at all; the same consequences will follow.

11 Most of these questions may be reserved for another occasion.

- 40 The principle that the multitude ought to be in power rather than the few best might seem to be solved and to contain some difficulty and perhaps even truth.<sup>a</sup> For the many, of whom each individual is not a good man, when they meet together may be better than the few good, if regarded not individually but collectively, just as a feast to which many contribute is better than a dinner provided out of a single purse. For each individual among the many has a share of excellence and
- 5 practical wisdom, and when they meet together, just as they become in a manner one man, who has many feet, and hands, and senses, so too with regard to their character and thought. Hence the many are better judges than a single man of music and poetry; for some understand one part, and some another, and among them they understand the whole. There is a similar combination of qualities in
- 10 good men, who differ from any individual of the many, as the beautiful are said to differ from those who are not beautiful, and works of art from realities, because in them the scattered elements are combined, although, if taken separately, the eye of one person or some other feature in another person would be fairer than in the
- 5 picture. Whether this principle can apply to every democracy, and to all bodies of men, is not clear. Or rather, by heaven, in some cases it is impossible to apply; for the argument would equally hold about
- 20 brutes; and wherein, it will be asked, do some men differ from brutes? But there may be bodies of men about whom our statement is nevertheless true. And if so, the difficulty which has been already raised, and also another which is akin to it – viz. what power should be
- 25 assigned to the mass of freemen and citizens, who are not rich and have no personal merit – are both solved. There is still a danger in allowing them to share the great offices of state, for their folly will lead them into error, and their dishonesty into crime. But there is a danger

<sup>a</sup> The text of this sentence is corrupt.

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also in not letting them share, for a state in which many poor men are excluded from office will necessarily be full of enemies. The only way of escape is to assign to them some deliberative and judicial functions. For this reason Solon and certain other legislators give them the power of electing to offices, and of calling the magistrates to account, but they do not allow them to hold office singly.<sup>1</sup> When they meet together their perceptions are quite good enough, and combined with the better class they are useful to the state (just as impure food when mixed with what is pure sometimes makes the entire mass more wholesome than a small quantity of the pure would be), but each individual, left to himself, forms an imperfect judgement. On the other hand the popular form of government involves certain difficulties. In the first place, it might be objected that he who can judge of the healing of a sick man would be one who could himself heal his disease, and make him whole – that is, in other words, the physician; and so in all professions and arts. As, then, the physician ought to be called to account by physicians, so ought men in general to be called to account by their peers. But physicians are of three kinds: – there is the ordinary practitioner, and there is the master physician, and thirdly the man educated in the art: in all arts there is such a class; and we attribute the power of judging to them quite as much as to professors of the art. Secondly, does not the same principle apply to elections? For a right election can only be made by those who have knowledge; those who know geometry, for example, will choose a geometrician rightly, and those who know how to steer, a pilot; and, even if there be some occupations and arts in which private persons share in the ability to choose, they certainly cannot choose better than those who know. So that, according to this argument, neither the election of magistrates, nor the calling of them to account, should be entrusted to the many. Yet possibly these objections are to a great extent met by our old answer, that if the people are not utterly degraded, although individually they may be worse judges than those who have special knowledge, as a body they are as good or better. Moreover, there are some arts whose products are not judged of solely, or best, by the artists themselves, namely those arts whose products are recognized even by those who do not possess the art; for example, the knowledge of the house is not limited to the builder only;

<sup>1</sup> Solon's laws are described in II 12.



the master of the house  
will actually judge better  
than the cook.

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the user, or, in other words, the master, of the house will actually be a better judge than the builder, just as the pilot will judge better of a rudder than the carpenter, and the guest will judge better of a feast than the cook.

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

The discussion of the first question shows nothing so clearly as that laws, when good, should be supreme; and that the magistrate or magistrates should regulate those matters only on which the laws are unable to speak with precision owing to the difficulty of any general principle embracing all particulars. But what are good laws has not yet been clearly explained; the old difficulty remains. The goodness or badness, justice or injustice, of laws varies of necessity with the constitutions of states. This, however, is clear, that the laws must be adapted to the constitutions. But, if so, true forms of government will of necessity have just laws, and perverted forms of government will have unjust laws.

12 · In all sciences and arts the end is a good, and the greatest good and in the highest degree a good in the most authoritative of all – this is the political science of which the good is justice, in other words, the

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common interest. All men think justice to be a sort of equality; and to a certain extent they agree with what we have said in our philosophical works about ethics.<sup>1</sup> For they say that what is just is just *for* someone and that it should be equal for equals. But there still remains a question: equality or inequality of what? Here is a difficulty which calls for political speculation. For very likely some persons will say that offices of state ought to be unequally distributed according to superior excellence, in whatever respect, of the citizen, although there is no other difference between him and the rest of the community; for those who differ in any one respect have different rights and claims. But, surely, if this is true, the complexion or height of a man, or any other advantage, will be a reason for his obtaining a greater share of political rights. The error here lies upon the surface, and may be illustrated from the other arts and sciences. When a number of flute-players are equal in their art, there is no reason why those of them who are better born should have better flutes given to them; for they will not play any better on the flute, and the superior instrument should be reserved for him who is the superior artist. If what I am saying is still obscure, it will be made clearer as we proceed. For if there were a superior flute-player who was far inferior in birth and beauty, although either of these may be a greater good than the art of flute-playing and may excel flute-playing in a greater ratio than he excels the others in his art, still he ought to have the best flutes given to him, unless the advantages of wealth and birth contribute to excellence in flute-playing, which they do not. Moreover, upon this principle any good may be compared with any other. For if a given height<sup>a</sup> may be measured against wealth and against freedom, height in general may be so measured. Thus if A excels in height more than B in excellence, even if excellence in general excels height still more, all goods will be comparable; for if a certain amount is better than some other, it is clear that some other will be equal. But since no such comparison can be made, it is evident that there is good reason why in politics men do not ground their claim to office on every sort of inequality. For if some be slow, and others swift, that is no reason why the one should have little and the others much; it is in gymnastic

<sup>1</sup> NE, v 3.

<sup>a</sup> Omitting συμβάλλοιτο

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15 contests that such excellence is rewarded. Whereas the rival claims of candidates for office can only be based on the possession of elements which enter into the composition of a state. And therefore the well-born, or free-born, or rich, may with good reason claim office; for holders of offices must be freemen and tax-payers: a state can be no more composed entirely of poor men than entirely of slaves. But if  
20 wealth and freedom are necessary elements, justice and valour are equally so; for without the former qualities a state cannot exist at all, without the latter not well.

13 If the existence of the state is alone to be considered, then it would seem that all, or some at least, of these claims are just; but, if we  
25 take into account a good life, then, as I have already said, education and excellence have superior claims. As, however, those who are equal in one thing ought not to have an equal share in all, nor those who are unequal in one thing to have an unequal share in all, it is certain that all forms of government which rest on either of these  
30 principles are perversions. All men have a claim in a certain sense, as I have already admitted, but not all have an absolute claim. The rich claim because they have a greater share in the land, and land is the common element of the state; also they are generally more trustworthy in contracts. The free claim under the same title as the well-born; for they are nearly akin. For the well-born are citizens in a truer  
35 sense than the low-born, and good birth is always valued in a man's own home. Another reason is, that those who are sprung from better ancestors are likely to be better men, for good birth is excellence of race. Excellence, too, may be truly said to have a claim, for justice has been acknowledged by us to be a social excellence, and it implies all  
40 others. Again, the many may urge their claim against the few; for, when taken collectively, and compared with the few, they are stronger and richer and better. But, what if the good, the rich, the well-born,  
1283<sup>b1</sup> and the other classes who make up a state, are all living together in the same city, will there, or will there not, be any doubt who shall rule? –  
5 No doubt at all in determining who ought to rule in each of the above-mentioned forms of government. For states are characterized by differences in their governing bodies – one of them has a government of the rich, another of the good, and so on. But a difficulty arises when all these elements coexist. How are we to decide? Suppose the good to  
10 be very few in number: may we consider their numbers in relation to

### Book III

their duties, and ask whether they are enough to administer the state, or so many as will make up a state? Objections may be urged against all the aspirants to political power. For those who found their claims on wealth or family might be thought to have no basis of justice; on this principle, if any one person were richer than all the rest, it is clear that he ought to be ruler of them. In like manner he who is very distinguished by his birth ought to have the superiority over all those who claim on the ground that they are free-born. In an aristocracy a like difficulty occurs about excellence; for if one citizen is better than the other members of the government, however good they may be, he too, upon the same principle of justice, should rule over them. And if the people are to be supreme because they are stronger than the few, then if one man, or more than one, but not a majority, is stronger than the many, they ought to rule, and not the many.

All these considerations appear to show that none of the principles on which men claim to rule and to hold all other men in subjection to them are right. To those who claim to be masters of the government on the ground of their excellence or their wealth, the many might fairly answer that they themselves are often better and richer than the few. — I do not say individually, but collectively. And another problem which is sometimes put forward may be met in a similar manner. Some persons doubt whether the legislator who desires to make the justest laws ought to legislate with a view to the good of the better or of the many, when the case which we have mentioned occurs. Now what is right must be construed as equally right, and what is equally right is to be considered with reference to the advantage of the state, and the common good of the citizens. And a citizen is one who shares in governing and being governed. He differs under different forms of government, but in the best state he is one who is able and chooses to be governed and to govern with a view to the life of excellence.

If, however, there be some one person, or more than one, although not enough to make up the full complement of a state, whose excellence is so pre-eminent that the excellence or the political capacity of all the rest admit of no comparison with his or theirs, he or they can be no longer regarded as part of a state; for justice will not be done to the superior, if he is reckoned only as the equal of those who are so far inferior to him in excellence and in political capacity. Such a man may truly be deemed a God among men. Hence we see that legislation is necessarily concerned only with those who are equal in

birth and in capacity; and that for men of pre-eminent excellence there is no law – they are themselves a law. Anyone would be  
15 ridiculous who attempted to make laws for them; they would probably retort what, in the fable of Antisthenes, the lions said to the hares, when in the council of the beasts the latter began haranguing and claiming equality for all. And for this reason democratic states have  
20 instituted ostracism; equality is above all things their aim, and therefore they ostracized and banished from the city for a time those who seemed to predominate too much through their wealth, or the number of their friends, or through any other political influence. Mythology tells us that the Argonauts left Heracles behind for a  
25 similar reason; the ship Argo would not take him because she feared that he would have been too much for the rest of the crew. That is why those who denounce tyranny and blame the counsel which Periander gave to Thrasylbulus cannot be held altogether just in their censure. The story is that Periander, when the herald was sent to ask counsel of  
30 him, said nothing, but only cut off the tallest ears of corn till he had brought the field to a level. The herald did not know the meaning of the action, but came and reported what he had seen to Thrasylbulus, who understood that he was to cut off the principal men in the state; and this is a policy not only expedient for tyrants or in practice  
35 confined to them, but equally necessary in oligarchies and democracies. Ostracism is a measure of the same kind, which acts by disabling and banishing the most prominent citizens. Great powers do the same to whole cities and nations, as the Athenians did to the Samians,  
40 Chians, and Lesbians; no sooner had they obtained a firm grasp of the empire, than they humbled their allies contrary to treaty; and the  
1284<sup>b</sup> Persian king has repeatedly crushed the Medes, Babylonians, and other nations, when their spirit has been stirred by the recollection of their former greatness.

The problem is a universal one, and equally concerns all forms of government, true as well as false; for, although perverted forms with a  
5 view to their own interests may adopt this policy, those which seek the common interest do so likewise. The same thing may be observed in the arts and sciences; for the painter will not allow the figure to have a  
10 foot which, however beautiful, is not in proportion, nor will the ship-builder allow the stern or any other part of the vessel to be unduly large, any more than the chorus-master will allow anyone who sings louder or better than all the rest to sing in the choir. Monarchs, too,

### Book III

may practise compulsion and still live in harmony with their cities, if their own government is for the interest of the state. Hence where there is an acknowledged superiority the argument in favour of ostracism is based upon a kind of political justice. It would certainly be better that the legislator should from the first so order his state as to have no need of such a remedy. But if the need arises, the next best thing is that he should endeavour to correct the evil by this or some similar measure. The principle, however, has not been fairly applied in states; for, instead of looking to the good of their own constitution, they have used ostracism for factious purposes. It is true that under perverted forms of government, and from their special point of view, such a measure is just and expedient, but it is also clear that it is not absolutely just. In the perfect state there would be great doubts about the use of it, not when applied to excess in strength, wealth, popularity, or the like, but when used against someone who is pre-eminent in excellence – what is to be done with him? People will not say that such a man is to be expelled and exiled; on the other hand, he ought not to be a subject – that would be as if mankind should claim to rule over Zeus, dividing his offices among them. The only alternative is that all should happily obey such a ruler, according to what seems to be the order of nature, and that men like him should be kings in their state for life.

14 · The preceding discussion, by a natural transition, leads to the consideration of kingship, which we say is one of the true forms of government. Let us see whether in order to be well governed a state or country should be under the rule of a king or under some other form of government; and whether monarchy, although good for some, may not be bad for others. But first we must determine whether there is one species of kingship or many. It is easy to see that there are many, and that the manner of government is not the same in all of them.

Of kingships according to law, the Lacedaemonian is thought to be the best example; but there the royal power is not absolute, except when the kings go on an expedition, and then they take the command. Matters of religion are likewise committed to them. The kingly office is in truth a kind of generalship, sovereign and perpetual. The king has not the power of life and death, except in certain cases, as for instance, in ancient times, he had it when upon a campaign, by right of force. This custom is described in Homer. For Agamemnon puts up

with it when he is attacked in the assembly, but when the army goes out to battle he has the power even of life and death. Does he not say: 'When I find a man skulking apart from the battle, nothing shall save him from the dogs and vultures, for in my hands is death'?<sup>1</sup>

15 This, then, is one form of kingship – a generalship for life; and of such kingships some are hereditary and others elective.

There is another sort of monarchy not uncommon among foreigners, which nearly resembles tyranny. But this is both legal and  
20 hereditary. For foreigners, being more servile in character than Hellenes, and Asiatics than Europeans, do not rebel against a despotic government. Such kingships have the nature of tyrannies because the people are by nature slaves; but there is no danger of their being overthrown, for they are hereditary and legal. For the same  
25 reason, their guards are such as a king and not such as a tyrant would employ, that is to say, they are composed of citizens, whereas the guards of tyrants are mercenaries. For kings rule according to law over voluntary subjects, but tyrants over involuntary; and the one are guarded by their fellow-citizens, the others are guarded against them.

30 These are two forms of monarchy, and there was a third which existed in ancient Hellas, called an Aesymnetia. This may be defined generally as an elective tyranny, which, like foreign monarchy, is legal, but differs from it in not being hereditary. Sometimes the office was held for life, sometimes for a term of years, or until certain duties had  
35 been performed. For example, the Mytilenaeans once elected Pittacus leader against the exiles, who were headed by Antimenides and Alcaeus the poet. And Alcaeus himself shows in one of his banquet odes that they chose Pittacus tyrant, for he reproaches his fellow-citizens for 'having made the low-born Pittacus tyrant of the spiritless  
1285<sup>b</sup>1 and ill-fated city, with one voice shouting his praises'.

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

There is a fourth species of kingly monarchy – that of the heroic  
5 times – which was hereditary and legal, and was exercised over willing subjects. For the first chiefs were benefactors of the people in arts or arms; they either gathered them into a community, or procured land for them; and thus they became kings of voluntary subjects, and their  
10 power was inherited by their descendants. They took the command in

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, II 391–3.

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war and presided over the sacrifices except those which required a priest. They also decided law-suits either with or without an oath; and when they swore, the form of the oath was the stretching out of their sceptre. In ancient times their power extended continuously to all things in city and country and across the border; but at a later date 15 they relinquished several of these privileges, and others the people took from them, until in some states nothing was left to them but the sacrifices; and where they retained more of the reality they had only the right of leadership in war beyond the border.

These, then, are the four kinds of kingship. First the monarchy of 20 the heroic ages; this was exercised over voluntary subjects, but limited to certain functions; the king was a general and a judge, and had the control of religion. The second is that of foreigners, which is an hereditary despotic government in accordance with law. A third is the 25 power of the so-called Aesymnete; this is an elective tyranny. The fourth is the Lacedaemonian, which is in fact a generalship, hereditary and perpetual. These four forms differ from one another in the manner which I have described.

There is a fifth form of kingly rule in which one man has the disposal of all, just as each nation of each state has the disposal of 30 public matters; this form corresponds to the control of a household. For as household management is the kingly rule of a house, so kingly rule is the household management of a city, or of a nation, or of many nations.

15 · Of these forms we need only consider two, the Lacedaemonian and the absolute royalty; for most of the others lie in a region between 35 them, having less power than the last, and more than the first. Thus the inquiry is reduced to two points: first, is it advantageous to the state that there should be a perpetual general, and if so, should the office be confined to one family, or open to the citizens in turn? Secondly, is it well that a single man should have the supreme power 1286<sup>a</sup>1 in all things? The first question falls under the head of laws rather than of constitutions; for perpetual generalship might equally exist under any form of government, so that this matter may be dismissed 5 for the present. The other kind of kingship is a sort of constitution; this we have now to consider, and to run over the difficulties involved in it. We will begin by inquiring whether it is more advantageous to be ruled by the best man or by the best laws.

The advocates of kingship maintain that the laws speak only in 10



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

The best man, then, must legislate, and laws must be passed, but these laws will have no authority when they miss the mark, though in all other cases retaining their authority. But when the law cannot determine a point at all, or not well, should the one best man or should all decide? According to our present practice assemblies meet, sit in judgement, deliberate, and decide, and their judgements all relate to individual cases. Now any member of the assembly, taken separately, is certainly inferior to the wise man. But the state is made up of many individuals. And as a feast to which all the guests contribute is better than a banquet furnished by a single man, so a multitude is a better judge of many things than any individual.

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

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The first governments were kingships, probably for this reason because of old, when cities were small, men of eminent excellence were few. Further, they were made kings because they were benefactors, and benefits can only be bestowed by good men. But when many persons equal in merit arose, no longer enduring the pre-eminence of one, they desired to have a commonwealth, and set up a constitution. The ruling class soon deteriorated and enriched themselves out of the public treasury; riches became the path to honour, and so oligarchies naturally grew up. These passed into tyrannies and tyrannies into democracies; for love of gain in the ruling classes was always tending to diminish their number, and so to strengthen the masses who in the end set upon their masters and established democracies. Since cities have increased in size, no other form of government appears to be any longer even easy to establish.

Even supposing the principle to be maintained that kingly power is the best thing for states, how about the family of the king? Are his children to succeed him? If they are no better than anybody else, that will be mischievous. But perhaps the king, though he might, will not hand on his power to his children? That, however, is hardly to be expected, and is too much to ask of human nature. There is also a difficulty about the force which he is to employ; should a king have guards about him by whose aid he may be able to coerce the refractory? If not, how will he administer his kingdom? Even if he is the lawful sovereign who does nothing arbitrarily or contrary to law, still he must have some force wherewith to maintain the law. In the case of a limited monarchy there is not much difficulty in answering this question; the king must have such force as will be more than a match for one or more individuals, but not so great as that of the people. The ancients observed this principle when they gave guards to anyone whom they appointed Aesymnete or tyrant. Thus, when Dionysius asked the Syracusans to allow him guards, somebody advised that they should give him only such a number.

16 · At this place in the discussion there impends the inquiry respecting the king who acts solely according to his own will; he has now to be considered. The so-called kingship according to law, as I have already remarked, is not a form of government, for under all governments, as, for example, in a democracy or aristocracy, there may be a general holding office for life, and one person is often made

supreme over the administration of a state. A magistracy of this kind exists at Epidamnus, and also at Opus, but in the latter city has a more limited power. Now, absolute monarchy, or the arbitrary rule of a  
10 sovereign over all the citizens, in a city which consists of equals, is thought by some to be quite contrary to nature; it is argued that those who are by nature equals must have the same natural right and worth, and that for unequals to have an equal share, or for equals to have an unequal share, in the offices of state, is as bad as for different bodily  
15 constitutions to have the same food and clothing. That is why it is thought to be just that among equals everyone be ruled as well as rule, and therefore that all should have their turn. We thus arrive at law; for an order of succession implies law. And the rule of the law, it is  
20 argued, is preferable to that of any individual. On the same principle, even if it be better for certain individuals to govern, they should be made only guardians and ministers of the law. For magistrates there must be – this is admitted; but then men say that to give authority to any one man when all are equal is unjust. There may indeed be cases  
25 which the law seems unable to determine, but such cases a man could not determine either. But the law trains officers for this express purpose, and appoints them to determine matters which are left undecided by it, to the best of their judgement. Further, it permits them to make any amendment of the existing laws which experience suggests. Therefore he who bids the law rule may be deemed to bid  
30 God and Reason alone rule, but he who bids man rule adds an element of the beast; for desire is a wild beast, and passion perverts the minds of rulers, even when they are the best of men. The law is reason unaffected by desire. We are told that a patient should call in a physician; he will not get better if he is doctored out of a book. But the  
35 parallel of the arts is clearly not in point; for the physician does nothing contrary to rule from motives of friendship; he only cures a patient and takes a fee; whereas magistrates do many things from spite and partiality. And, indeed, if a man suspected the physician of being in league with his enemies to destroy him for a bribe, he would  
40 rather have recourse to the book. But certainly physicians, when they are sick, call in other physicians, and training-masters, when they are in training, other training-masters, as if they could not judge truly about their own case and might be influenced by their feelings. Hence it is evident that in seeking for justice men seek for the mean, for the  
5 law is the mean. Again, customary laws have more weight, and relate

### Book III

to more important matters, than written laws, and a man may be a safer ruler than the written law, but not safer than the customary law.

Again, it is by no means easy for one man to superintend many things; he will have to appoint a number of subordinates, and what difference does it make whether these subordinates always existed or were appointed by him because he needed them? If, as I said before, the good man has a right to rule because he is better, still two good men are better than one: this is the old saying.

two going together,<sup>1</sup>

and the prayer of Agamemnon,

would that I had ten such counsellors!<sup>2</sup>

15

And even now there are magistrates, for example judges, who have authority to decide some matters which the law is unable to determine, since no one doubts that the law would command and decide in the best manner whatever it could. But some things can, and other things cannot, be comprehended under the law, and this is the origin of the vexed question whether the best law or the best man should rule. For matters of detail about which men deliberate cannot be included in legislation. Nor does anyone deny that the decision of such matters must be left to man, but it is argued that there should be many judges, and not one only. For every ruler who has been trained by the law judges well; and it would surely seem strange that a person should see better with two eyes, or hear better with two ears, or act better with two hands or feet, than many with many; indeed, it is already the practice of kings to make to themselves many eyes and ears and hands and feet. For they make colleagues of those who are the friends of themselves and their governments. They must be friends of the monarch and of his government; if not his friends, they will not do what he wants; but friendship implies likeness and equality; and, therefore, if he thinks that his friends ought to rule, he must think that those who are equal to himself and like himself ought to rule equally with himself. These are the principal controversies relating to monarchy.

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17 · But may not all this be true in some cases and not in others? for

<sup>1</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, x 224.

<sup>2</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, ii 372.

there is by nature both a justice and an advantage appropriate to the rule of a master, another to kingly rule, another to constitutional rule; 40 but there is none naturally appropriate to tyranny, or to any other perverted form of government; for these come into being contrary to 1288<sup>2</sup> 1 nature. Now, to judge at least from what has been said, it is manifest that, where men are alike and equal, it is neither expedient nor just that one man should be lord of all, whether there are laws, or whether there are no laws, but he himself is in the place of law. Neither should a good man be lord over good men, nor a bad man over bad; nor, even 5 if he excels in excellence, should he have a right to rule, unless in a particular case, at which I have already hinted, and to which I will once more recur. But first of all, I must determine what natures are suited for government by a king, and what for an aristocracy, and what for a constitutional government.

A people who are by nature capable of producing a race superior in the excellence needed for political rule are fitted for kingly govern- 10 ment; and a people submitting to be ruled as freemen by men whose excellence renders them capable of political command are adapted for an aristocracy: while the people who are suited for constitutional freedom are those among whom there naturally exists a warlike multitude. In the former case the multitude is capable of being ruled by men whose excellence is appropriate to political command; in the latter case the multitude is able to rule and to obey in turn by a law 15 which gives office to the well-to-do according to their desert. But when a whole family, or some individual, happens to be so pre-eminent in excellence as to surpass all others, then it is just that they should be the royal family and supreme over all, or that this one 20 citizen should be king. For, as I said before, to give them authority is not only agreeable to that notion of justice which the founders of all states, whether aristocratic, or oligarchical, or again democratic, are accustomed to put forward (for these all recognize the claim of superiority, although not the same superiority), but accords with the principle already laid down. For surely it would not be right to kill, or 25 ostracize, or exile such a person, or require that he should take his turn in being governed. The whole is naturally superior to the part, and he who has this pre-eminence is in the relation of a whole to a part. But if so, the only alternative is that he should have the supreme power, and that mankind should obey him, not in turn, but always. 30 These are the conclusions at which we arrive respecting kingship and

## Book IV

its various forms, and this is the answer to the question, whether it is or is not advantageous to states, and to which, and how.

18 · We maintain that the true forms of government are three, and that the best must be that which is administered by the best, and in which there is one man, or a whole family, or many persons, excelling 35 all the others together in excellence, and both rulers and subjects are fitted, the one to rule, the others to be ruled, in such a manner as to attain the most desirable life. We showed at the commencement of our inquiry that the excellence of the good man is necessarily the same as the excellence of the citizen of the perfect state. Clearly then 40 in the same manner, and by the same means through which a man becomes truly good, he will frame a state that is to be ruled by an aristocracy or by a king, and the same education and the same habits 1288<sup>b</sup> 1 will be found to make a good man and a man fit to be a statesman or king.

Having arrived at these conclusions, we must proceed to speak of the perfect state, and describe how it comes into being and is established.

So if we are to inquire in the appropriate way about it, we must. . . . 5

## BOOK IV

1 · In all arts and sciences which embrace the whole of any subject, 10 and do not come into being in a fragmentary way, it is the province of a single art or science to consider all that appertains to a single subject. For example, the art of gymnastics considers not only the suitability of different modes of training to different bodies, but what sort is the best (for the best must suit that which is by nature best and best 15 furnished with the means of life), and also what common form of training is adapted to the great majority of men. And if a man does not desire the best habit of body, or the greatest skill in gymnastics, which might be attained by him, still the trainer or the teacher of gymnastics should be able to impart any lower degree of either. The same 20 principle equally holds in medicine and ship-building, and the making of clothes, and in the arts generally.

Hence it is obvious that government too is the subject of a single

BOOK VI

1 · We have now considered the varieties of the deliberative or 30  
supreme power in states, and the various arrangements of law-courts  
and state offices, and which of them are adapted to different forms of  
governments. We have also spoken of the destruction and preserva-  
tion of constitutions, how and from what causes they arise. 35

Of democracy and all other forms of government there are many  
kinds; and it will be well to assign to them severally the modes of  
organization which are proper and advantageous to each, adding what  
remains to be said about them. Moreover, we ought to consider the 40  
various combinations of these modes themselves; for such combina- 1317<sup>1</sup>  
tions make constitutions overlap one another, so that aristocracies  
have an oligarchical character, and constitutional governments  
incline to democracies.

When I speak of the combinations which remain to be considered,  
and thus far have not been considered by us, I mean such as these: –  
when the deliberative part of the government and the election of 5  
officers is constituted oligarchically, and the law-courts aristocrati-  
cally, or when the courts and the deliberative part of the state are  
oligarchical, and the election of offices aristocratic, or when in any  
other way there is a want of harmony in the composition of a state.

I have shown already what forms of democracy are suited to 10  
particular cities, and what forms of oligarchy to particular peoples,  
and to whom each of the other forms of government is suited.  
Further, we must not only show which of these governments is the  
best for each state, but also briefly proceed to consider how these and  
other forms of government are to be established. 15

First of all let us speak of democracy, which will also bring to light  
the opposite form of government commonly called oligarchy. For the  
purposes of this inquiry we need to ascertain all the elements and  
characteristics of democracy, since from the combinations of these  
the varieties of democratic government arise. There are several of 20  
these differing from each other, and the difference is due to two  
causes. One has been already mentioned – differences of population;  
for the popular element may consist of farmers, or of artisans, or of 25  
labourers, and if the first of these is added to the second, or the third  
to the two others, not only does the democracy become better or

worse, but its very nature is changed. A second cause remains to be  
30 mentioned: the various properties and characteristics of democracy,  
when variously combined, make a difference. For one democracy will  
have less and another will have more, and another will have all of  
these characteristics. There is an advantage in knowing them all,  
35 only to remodel an existing one. Founders of states try to bring  
together all the elements which accord with the ideas of the several  
constitutions; but this is a mistake of theirs, as I have already  
remarked when speaking of the destruction and preservation of  
states. We will now set forth the principles, characteristics, and aims  
of such states.

40 2 · The basis of a democratic state is liberty; which, according to the  
common opinion of men, can only be enjoyed in such a state – this  
1317<sup>b</sup>1 they affirm to be the great end of every democracy. One principle of  
liberty is for all to rule and be ruled in turn, and indeed democratic  
justice is the application of numerical not proportionate equality;  
5 whence it follows that the majority must be supreme, and that  
whatever the majority approve must be the end and the just. Every  
citizen, it is said, must have equality, and therefore in a democracy the  
poor have more power than the rich, because there are more of them,  
10 and the will of the majority is supreme. This, then, is one note of  
liberty which all democrats affirm to be the principle of their state.  
Another is that a man should live as he likes. This, they say, is the  
mark of liberty, since, on the other hand, not to live as a man likes is  
the mark of a slave. This is the second characteristic of democracy,  
15 whence has arisen the claim of men to be ruled by none, if possible,  
or, if this is impossible, to rule and be ruled in turns; and so it  
contributes to the freedom based upon equality.

Such being our foundation and such the principle from which we  
start, the characteristics of democracy are as follows: – the election of  
officers by all out of all; and that all should rule over each, and each in  
20 his turn over all; that the appointment to all offices, or to all but those  
which require experience and skill, should be made by lot; that no  
property qualification should be required for offices, or only a very  
low one; that a man should not hold the same office twice, or not  
often, or in the case of few except military offices; that the tenure of all  
25 offices, or of as many as possible, should be brief; that all men should



sit in judgement, or that judges selected out of all should judge, in all matters, or in most and in the greatest and most important – such as the scrutiny of accounts, the constitution, and private contracts; that the assembly should be supreme over all causes, or at any rate over the most important, and the magistrates over none or only over a very few. 30  
Of all magistracies, a council is the most democratic when there is not the means of paying all the citizens, but when they are paid even this is robbed of its power; for the people then draw all cases to themselves, as I said in the previous discussion. The next characteristic of 35 democracy is payment for services; assembly, law-courts, magistrates, everybody receives pay, when it is to be had; or when it is not to be had for all, then it is given to the law-courts and to the stated assemblies, to the council and to the magistrates, or at least to any of them who are compelled to have their meals together. [And whereas oligarchy is characterized by birth, wealth, and education, the marks of democracy appear to be the opposite of these – low birth, poverty, 40 mean employment.]<sup>4</sup> Another characteristic is that no magistracy is perpetual, but if any such have survived some ancient change in the constitution it should be stripped of its power, and the holders should be elected by lot and no longer by vote. These are the points common to all democracies; but democracy and demos in their truest form are based upon the recognized principle of democratic justice, that all 5 should count equally; for equality implies that the poor should have no more share in the government than the rich, and should not be the only rulers, but that all should rule equally according to their numbers. And in this way men think that they will secure equality and freedom in their state. 10

3 · Next comes the question, how is this equality to be obtained? Are we to assign to a thousand poor men the property qualifications of five hundred rich men? and shall we give the thousand a power equal to that of the five hundred? or, if this is not to be the mode, ought we, still 15 retaining the same ratio, to take equal numbers from each and give them the control of the elections and of the courts? – Which, according to the democratic notion, is the juster form of the constitution – this or one based on numbers only? Democrats say that justice is that to which the majority agree, oligarchs that to which the 20

<sup>4</sup> Excised by Dreizehnter.

wealthier class agree; in their opinion the decision should be given according to the amount of property. In both principles there is some inequality and injustice. For if justice is the will of the few, any one person who has more wealth than all the rest of the rich put together, ought, upon the oligarchical principle, to have the sole power – but  
25 before saying,<sup>1</sup> they will unjustly confiscate the property of the wealthy minority. To find a principle of equality in which they both agree we must inquire into their respective ideas of justice.

Now they agree in saying that whatever is decided by the majority of  
30 the citizens is to be deemed law. Granted, but not without some reserve; since there are two classes out of which a state is composed – the poor and the rich – that is to be deemed law, on which both or the greater part of both agree; and if they disagree, that which is approved by the greater number, and by those who have the higher qualification. For example, suppose that there are ten rich and twenty poor,  
35 and some measure is approved by six of the rich and is disapproved by fifteen of the poor, and the remaining four of the rich join with the party of the poor, and the remaining five of the poor with that of the rich; in such a case the will of those whose qualifications, when both sides are added up, are the greatest, should prevail. If they turn out to  
40 be equal, there is no greater difficulty than at present, when, if the  
1318<sup>b</sup> assembly or the courts are divided, recourse is had to the lot, or to some similar expedient. But, although it may be difficult in theory to know what is just and equal, the practical difficulty of inducing those to forbear who can, if they like, encroach, is far greater, for the weaker  
5 are always asking for equality and justice, but the stronger care for none of these things.

4 · Of the four kinds of democracy, as was said in the previous discussion, the best is that which comes first in order; it is also the oldest of them all. I am speaking of them according to the natural classification of their inhabitants. For the best material of democracy  
10 is an agricultural population; there is no difficulty in forming a democracy where the mass of the people live by agriculture or tending of cattle. Being poor, they have no leisure, and therefore do not often attend the assembly, and having the necessities of life they are always

<sup>1</sup> III 10.

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at work and do not covet the property of others. Indeed, they find their  
employment pleasanter than the cares of government or office where 15  
no great gains can be made out of them, for the many are more  
desirous of gain than of honour. A proof is that even the ancient  
tyrannies were patiently endured by them, as they still endure  
oligarchies, if they are allowed to work and are not deprived of their 20  
property; for some of them grow quickly rich and the others are well  
enough off. Moreover, they have the power of electing the magistrates  
and calling them to account; their ambition, if they have any, is thus  
satisfied; and in some democracies, although they do not all share in  
the appointment of offices, except through representatives elected in  
turn out of the whole people, as at Mantinea – yet, if they have the 25  
power of deliberating, the many are contented. Even this form of  
government may be regarded as a democracy, and was such at  
Mantinea. Hence it is both expedient and customary in the afore-  
mentioned type of democracy that all should elect to offices, and  
conduct scrutinies, and sit in the law-courts, but that the great offices  
should be filled up by election and from persons having a qualifica-  
tion; the greater requiring a greater qualification, or, if there are no 30  
offices for which a qualification is required, then those who are  
marked out by special ability should be appointed. Under such a form  
of government the citizens are sure to be governed well (for the offices  
will always be held by the best persons; the people are willing enough  
to elect them and are not jealous of the good). The good and the 35  
notables will then be satisfied, for they will not be governed by men  
who are their inferiors, and the persons elected will rule justly,  
because others will call them to account. Every man should be  
responsible to others, nor should anyone be allowed to do just as he  
pleases; for where absolute freedom is allowed there is nothing to 40  
restrain the evil which is inherent in every man. But the principle of  
responsibility secures that which is the greatest good in states; the  
right persons rule and are prevented from doing wrong, and the  
people have their due. It is evident that this is the best kind of 45  
democracy – and why? because the people are drawn from a certain  
class. Some of the ancient laws of most states were useful with a view  
to making the people husbandmen. They provided either that no one  
should possess more than a certain quantity of land, or that, if he did,  
the land should not be within a certain distance from the town or the  
acropolis. Formerly in many states there was a law forbidding anyone 50  
1319<sup>a</sup> 1

to sell his original allotment of land. There is a similar law attributed to Oxyllus, which is to the effect that there should be a certain portion of every man's land on which he could not borrow money. A useful corrective to the evil of which I am speaking would be the law of the  
 15 Aphytaeans, who, although they are numerous, and do not possess much land, are all of them farmers. For their properties are reckoned in the census, not entire, but only in such small portions that even the poor may have more than the amount required.

Next best to an agricultural, and in many respects similar, are a  
 20 pastoral people, who live by their flocks; they are the best trained of any for war, robust in body and able to camp out. The people of whom  
 25 other democracies consist are far inferior to them, for their life is inferior; there is no room for excellence in any of their employments, whether they be artisans or traders or labourers. Besides, people of  
 30 this class can readily come to the assembly, because they are continually moving about in the city and in the agora; whereas farmers are scattered over the country and do not meet or feel the same need of assembling together. Where the territory also happens to extend to a distance from the city, there is no difficulty in making an excellent  
 35 democracy or constitutional government; for the people are compelled to settle in the country, and even if there is a town population the assembly ought not to meet, in democracies, when the country people cannot come. We have thus explained how the first and best  
 40 form of democracy should be constituted; it is clear that the other or inferior sorts will deviate in a regular order, and the population which  
 1319<sup>b</sup> is excluded will at each stage be of a lower kind.

The last form of democracy, that in which all share alike, is one which cannot be borne by all states, and will not last long unless well regulated by laws and customs. The more general causes which tend  
 5 to destroy this or other kinds of government have been pretty fully considered. In order to constitute such a democracy and strengthen the people, the leaders have been in the habit of including as many as they can, and making citizens not only of those who are legitimate, but even of the illegitimate, and of those who have only one parent a  
 10 citizen, whether father or mother; for nothing of this sort comes amiss to such a democracy. This is the way in which demagogues proceed. Whereas the right thing would be to make no more additions when the number of the commonalty exceeds that of the notables and of the middle class and not to go beyond this. When in excess of this point,

the constitution becomes disorderly, and the notables grow excited 15 and impatient of the democracy, as in the insurrection at Cyrene; for no notice is taken of a little evil, but when it increases it strikes the eye. Measures like those which Cleisthenes passed when he wanted to 20 increase the power of the democracy at Athens, or such as were taken by the founders of popular government at Cyrene, are useful in the extreme form of democracy. Fresh tribes and brotherhoods should be established; the private rites of families should be restricted and converted into public ones; in short, every contrivance should be 25 adopted which will mingle the citizens with one another and get rid of old connexions. Again, the measures which are taken by tyrants appear all of them to be democratic; such, for instance, as the licence permitted to slaves (which may be to a certain extent advantageous) and also to women and children, and the allowing everybody to live as 30 he likes. Such a government will have many supporters, for most persons would rather live in a disorderly than in a sober manner.

5 · The mere establishment of a democracy is not the only or principal business of the legislator, or of those who wish to create 35 such a state, for any state, however badly constituted, may last one, two, or three days; a far greater difficulty is the preservation of it. The legislator should therefore endeavour to have a firm foundation according to the principles already laid down concerning the preservation and destruction of states; he should guard against the destructive elements, and should make laws, whether written or 40 unwritten, which will contain all the preservatives of states. He must 1320<sup>a</sup> not think the truly democratic or oligarchical measure to be that which will give the greatest amount of democracy or oligarchy, but that which will make them last longest. The demagogues of our own day often get property confiscated in the law-courts in order to please 5 the people. Hence those who have the welfare of the state at heart should counteract them, and make a law that the property of the condemned should not be public and go into the treasury but be sacred. Thus offenders will be as much afraid, for they will be punished all the same, and the people, having nothing to gain, will not 10 be so ready to condemn the accused. Care should also be taken that state trials are as few as possible, and heavy penalties should be inflicted on those who bring groundless accusations; for it is the practice to indict, not members of the popular party, but the notables,

15 although the citizens ought to be all attached to the constitution as well, or at any rate should not regard their rulers as enemies.

Now, since in the last form of democracy the citizens are very numerous, and can hardly be made to assemble unless they are paid, and to pay them when there are no revenues presses hardly upon the  
20 notables (for the money must be obtained by a property-tax and confiscations and corrupt practices of the courts, things which have before now overthrown many democracies); where, I say, there are no revenues, the government should hold few assemblies, and the law-courts should consist of many persons, but sit for a few days only. This system has two advantages: first, the rich do not fear the  
25 expense, even though they are unpaid themselves when the poor are paid; and secondly, cases are better tried, for wealthy persons, although they do not like to be long absent from their own affairs, do not mind going for a few days to the law-courts. Where there are  
30 revenues the demagogues should not be allowed after their manner to distribute the surplus; the poor are always receiving and always wanting more and more, for such help is like water poured into a leaky cask. Yet the true friend of the people should see that they are not too poor, for extreme poverty lowers the character of the democracy;  
35 measures therefore should be taken which will give them lasting prosperity; and as this is equally the interest of all classes, the proceeds of the public revenues should be accumulated and distributed among its poor, if possible, in such quantities as may enable them to purchase a little farm, or, at any rate, make a beginning in  
1320<sup>b1</sup> trade or farming. And if this benevolence cannot be extended to all, money should be distributed in turn according to tribes or other divisions, and in the meantime the rich should pay the fee for the attendance of the poor at the necessary assemblies; and should in return be excused from useless public services. By administering the  
5 state in this spirit the Carthaginians retain the affections of the people; their policy is from time to time to send some of them into their dependent towns, where they grow rich. It is also worthy of a generous and sensible nobility to divide the poor amongst them, and give them the means of going to work. The example of the people of  
10 Tarentum is also well deserving of imitation, for, by sharing the use of their own property with the poor, they gain their good will. Moreover, they divide all their offices into two classes, some of them being elected by vote, the others by lot; the latter, so that the people may

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participate in them, and the former, so that the state may be better administered. A like result may be gained by dividing the same offices, so as to have two classes of magistrates, one chosen by vote, 15 the other by lot.

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

6 · From these considerations there will be no difficulty in seeing what should be the constitution of oligarchies. We have only to reason from opposites and compare each form of oligarchy with the cor- 20 responding form of democracy.

The first and best balanced of oligarchies is akin to a constitutional government. In this there ought to be two standards of qualification; the one high, the other low – the lower qualifying for the humbler yet indispensable offices and the higher for the superior ones. He who 25 acquires the prescribed qualification should have the rights of citizenship. The number of those admitted should be such as will make the entire governing body stronger than those who are excluded, and the new citizen should be always taken out of the better class of the people. The principle, narrowed a little, gives another 30 form of oligarchy; until at length we reach the most cliquish and tyrannical of them all, answering to the extreme democracy, which, being the worst, requires vigilance in proportion to its badness. For as healthy bodies and ships well provided with sailors may undergo many mishaps and survive them, whereas sickly constitutions and 35 rotten ill-manned ships are ruined by the very least mistake, so do the worst forms of government require the greatest care. The populousness of democracies generally preserves them (for number is to 1321<sup>1</sup> democracy in the place of justice based on merit); whereas the preservation of an oligarchy clearly depends on an opposite principle, viz. good order.

7 · As there are four chief divisions of the common people, farmers, 5 artisans, traders, labourers; so also there are four kinds of military forces – the cavalry, the heavy infantry, the light-armed troops, the navy. When the country is adapted for cavalry, then a strong oligarchy is likely to be established. For the security of the inhabitants depends 10 upon a force of this sort, and only rich men can afford to keep horses. The second form of oligarchy prevails when the country is adapted to

heavy infantry; for this service is better suited to the rich than to the poor. But the light-armed and the naval element are wholly  
15 democratic; and nowadays, where they are numerous, if the two parties quarrel, the oligarchy are often worsted by them in the struggle. A remedy for this state of things may be found in the practice of generals who combine a proper contingent of light-armed troops with cavalry and heavy-armed. And this is the way in which the poor  
20 get the better of the rich in civil contests; being lightly armed, they fight with advantage against cavalry and heavy infantry. An oligarchy which raises such a force out of the lower classes raises a power against itself. And therefore, since the ages of the citizens vary and some are older and some younger, the fathers should have their own sons, while they are still young, taught the agile movements of light-  
25 armed troops; and these, when they have been taken out of the ranks of the youth, should become light-armed warriors in reality. The oligarchy should also yield a share in the government to the people, either, as I said before, to those who have a property qualification, or, as in the case of Thebes, to those who have abstained for a certain  
30 number of years from mean employments, or, as at Massalia, to men of merit who are selected for their worthiness, whether previously citizens or not. The magistracies of the highest rank, which ought to be in the hands of the governing body, should have expensive duties attached to them, and then the people will not desire them and will take no offence at the privileges of their rulers when they see that they  
35 pay a heavy fine for their dignity. It is fitting also that the magistrates on entering office should offer magnificent sacrifices or erect some public edifice, and then the people who participate in the entertainments, and see the city decorated with votive offerings and buildings, will not desire an alteration in the government, and the notables will  
40 have memorials of their munificence. This, however, is anything but the fashion of our modern oligarchs, who are as covetous of gain as  
1321<sup>b</sup> they are of honour; oligarchies like theirs may be well described as petty democracies. Enough of the manner in which democracies and oligarchies should be organized.

8 · Next in order follows the right distribution of offices, their  
5 number, their nature, their duties, of which indeed we have already spoken. No state can exist not having the necessary offices, and no state can be well administered not having the offices which tend to

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preserve harmony and good order. In small states, as we have already remarked, there must not be many of them, but in larger states there must be a larger number, and we should carefully consider which offices may properly be united and which separated.

First among necessary offices is that which has the care of the market; a magistrate should be appointed to inspect contracts and to maintain order. For in every state there must inevitably be buyers and sellers who will supply one another's wants; this is the readiest way to make a state self-sufficient and so fulfil the purpose for which men come together into one state. A second office of a similar kind undertakes the supervision and embellishment of public and private buildings, the maintaining and repairing of houses and roads, the prevention of disputes about boundaries, and other concerns of a like nature. This is commonly called the office of City-warden, and has various departments, which, in more populous towns, are shared among different persons, one, for example, taking charge of the walls, another of the fountains, a third of harbours. There is another equally necessary office, and of a similar kind, having to do with the same matters outside the walls and in the country – the magistrates who hold this office are called Wardens of the country, or Inspectors of the woods. Besides these three there is a fourth office of receivers of taxes, who have under their charge the revenue which is distributed among the various departments; these are called Receivers or Treasurers. Another officer registers all private contracts, and decisions of the courts, all public indictments, and also all preliminary proceedings. This office again is sometimes subdivided; but in some places a single officer is responsible for all these matters. These officers are called Recorders or Sacred Recorders, Presidents, and the like.

Next to these comes an office of which the duties are the most necessary and also the most difficult, viz. that to which is committed the execution of punishments, or the exaction of fines from those who are posted up according to the registers; and also the custody of prisoners. The difficulty of this office arises out of the odium which is attached to it; no one will undertake it unless great profits are to be made, and anyone who does is loath to execute the law. Still the office is necessary; for judicial decisions are useless if they take no effect; and if society cannot exist without them, neither can it exist without the execution of them. It is an office which, being so unpopular,



should not be entrusted to one person, but divided among several taken from different courts. In like manner an effort should be made  
10 to distribute among different persons the writing up of those who are on the register of public debtors. Some sentences should be executed by the magistrates also, and in particular penalties due to the outgoing magistrates should be exacted by the incoming ones; and as regards those due to magistrates already in office, when one court has given judgement, another should exact the penalty; for example, the wardens of the city should exact the fines imposed by the wardens of the agora, and others again should exact the fines imposed by them.  
15 For penalties are more likely to be exacted when less odium attaches to the exaction of them; but a double odium is incurred when the judges who have passed also execute the sentence, and if they are always the executioners, they will be the enemies of all.

In many places, while one magistracy executes the sentence,  
20 another has the custody of the prisoners, as, for example, 'the Eleven' at Athens. It is well to separate off the jailorship also, and try by some device to render the office less unpopular. For it is quite as necessary as that of the executioners; but good men do all they can to avoid it, and worthless persons cannot safely be trusted with it; for they  
25 themselves require a guard, and are not fit to guard others. There ought not therefore to be a single or permanent officer set apart for this duty; but it should be entrusted to the young, wherever they are organized into a band or guard, and different magistrates acting in turn should take charge of it.

30 These are the indispensable officers, and should be ranked first – next in order follow others, equally necessary, but of higher rank, and requiring great experience and trustworthiness. Such are the offices to which are committed the guard of the city, and other military  
35 functions. Not only in time of war but of peace their duty will be to defend the walls and gates, and to muster and marshal the citizens. In some states there are many such offices; in others there are a few only, while small states are content with one; these officers are called  
1322<sup>b</sup> 1 generals or commanders. Again, if a state has cavalry or light-armed troops or archers or a naval force, it will sometimes happen that each of these departments has separate officers who are called admirals, or generals of cavalry or of light-armed troops. And there are subordinate officers called naval captains, and captains of light-armed troops

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and of horse, having others under them – all these are included in the 5  
department of war. Thus much of military command.

But since some, not to say all, of these offices handle the public  
money, there must of necessity be another office which examines and  
audits them, and has no other functions. Such officers are called by 10  
various names – Scrutineers, Auditors, Accountants, Controllers.  
Besides all these offices there is another which is supreme over them;  
for the same office often deals with rates and taxes, or presides, in a  
democracy, over the assembly. For there must be a body which 15  
convenes the supreme authority in the state. In some places they are  
called ‘probuli’, because they hold previous deliberations, but in a  
democracy more commonly ‘councillors’. These are the chief politi-  
cal offices.

Another set of officers is concerned with the maintenance of  
religion; priests and guardians see to the preservation and repair of  
the temples of the gods and to other matters of religion. One office of 20  
this sort may be enough in small places, but in larger ones there are a  
great many besides the priesthood; for example superintendents of  
public worship, guardians of shrines, treasurers of the sacred 25  
revenues. Nearly connected with these there are also the officers  
appointed for the performance of the public sacrifices, except any  
which the law assigns to the priests; such sacrifices derive their  
dignity from the public hearth of the city. They are sometimes called  
archons, sometimes kings, and sometimes prytanies.

These, then, are the necessary offices, which may be summed up as 30  
follows: offices concerned with matters of religion, with war, with the  
revenue and expenditure, with the market, with the city, with the  
harbours, with the country; also with the courts of law, with the  
records of contracts, with execution of sentences, with custody of 35  
prisoners, with audits and scrutinies and accounts of magistrates;  
lastly, there are those which preside over the public deliberations of  
the state. There are likewise magistracies characteristic of states  
which are peaceful and prosperous, and at the same time have a  
regard to good order: such as the offices of guardians of women,  
guardians of the laws, guardians of children, and directors of  
gymnastics; also superintendents of gymnastic and Dionysiac con- 1323\*1  
tests, and of other similar spectacles. Some of these are clearly not  
democratic offices; for example, the guardianships of women and

5 children – the poor, not having any slaves, must employ both their women and children as servants.

Once more: there are three offices according to whose directions the highest magistrates are chosen in certain states – guardians of the law, probuli, councillors – of these, the guardians of the law are an aristocratic, the probuli an oligarchical, the council a democratic,  
10 institution. Enough, in outline, of the different kinds of offices.

## BOOK VII

1 · He who would duly inquire about the best form of a state ought  
15 first to determine which is the most eligible life; while this remains uncertain the best form of the state must also be uncertain; for, in the natural order of things, those men may be expected to lead the best life who are governed in the best manner of which their circumstances admit. We ought therefore to ascertain, first of all, which is  
20 the most generally eligible life, and then whether the same life is or is not best for the state and for individuals.

Assuming that enough has been already said in discussions outside the school concerning the best life, we will now only repeat what is contained in them. Certainly no one will dispute the propriety of that  
25 partition of goods which separates them into three classes, viz. external goods, goods of the body, and goods of the soul, or deny that the happy man must have all three. For no one would maintain that he is happy who has not in him a particle of courage or temperance or justice or practical wisdom, who is afraid of every insect which flutters  
30 past him, and will commit any crime, however great, in order to gratify his lust for meat or drink, who will sacrifice his dearest friend for the sake of half a farthing, and is as feeble and false in mind as a child or a madman. These propositions are almost universally acknowledged as  
35 soon as they are uttered, but men differ about the degree or relative superiority of this or that good. Some think that a very moderate amount of excellence is enough, but set no limit to their desires for wealth, property, power, reputation, and the like. To them we shall reply by an appeal to facts, which easily prove that mankind does not  
40 acquire or preserve the excellences by the help of external goods, but  
1323<sup>b</sup> 1 external goods by the help of the excellences, and that happiness,