

right to perform public service when their turn came, and then to have someone look to *their* good, just as they had earlier looked to his benefit when they were in office. Nowadays, however, because of the profits to be had from public funds and from office, people want to be in office continuously, as if they were sick and would be cured by being always in office. At any rate, perhaps the latter would pursue office in that way. 15

It is evident, then, that those constitutions that look to the common benefit turn out, according to what is unqualifiedly just, to be correct, whereas those which look only to the benefit of the rulers are mistaken and are deviations from the correct constitutions. For they are like rule by a master, whereas a city-state is a community of free people. 20

## Chapter 7



Now that these matters have been determined, we must next investigate how many kinds of constitutions there are and what they are,<sup>45</sup> starting first with the correct constitutions. For once they have been defined, the deviant ones will also be made evident.

Since "constitution" and "governing class" signify the same thing,<sup>46</sup> and the governing class is the authoritative element in any city-state, and the authoritative element must be either one person, or few, or many, then whenever the one, the few, or the many rule for the common benefit, these constitutions must be correct. But if they aim at the private benefit, whether of the one or the few or the MULTITUDE, they are deviations (for either the participants<sup>47</sup> should not be called citizens, or they should share in the benefits). 25 30

A monarchy that looks to the common benefit we customarily call a kingship; and rule by a few but more than one, an aristocracy (either because the best people rule, or because they rule with a view to what is best for the city-state and those who share in it). But when the multitude governs for the common benefit, it is called by the name common to all CONSTITUTIONS, namely, *politeia*. Moreover, this happens reasonably. For while it is possible for one or a few to be outstandingly virtuous, it is difficult for a larger number to be accomplished in every virtue, but it can be so in military virtue in particular. That is precisely why the class 35 40 1279<sup>b</sup>

45. See 1274<sup>b</sup>32–33 and note.

46. See 1278<sup>b</sup>11 and note.

47. Rejecting with the mss. the insertion of *mē*.

of defensive soldiers, the ones who possess the weapons, has the most authority in this constitution.<sup>48</sup>

5 Deviations from these are tyranny from kingship, oligarchy from aristocracy, and democracy from polity. For tyranny is rule by one person for the benefit of the monarch, oligarchy is for the benefit of the rich, and democracy is for the benefit of the poor. But none is for their common profit.

## Chapter 8

10 We should say a little more about what each of these constitutions is. For certain problems arise, and when one is carrying out any investigation in a philosophical manner, and not merely with a practical purpose in view, it is appropriate not to overlook or omit anything, but to make the truth  
15 about each clear.

A tyranny, as we said, exists when a monarchy rules the political community like a master; in an oligarchy those in authority in the constitution are the ones who have property. A democracy is the opposite; those who do not possess much property, and are poor, are in authority. The  
20 first problem concerns this definition. Suppose that the MAJORITY were rich and had authority in the city-state; yet there is a democracy whenever the majority has authority. Similarly, to take the opposite case, suppose the poor were fewer in number than the rich, but were stronger and had authority in the constitution; yet when a small group has authority it is said to be an oligarchy. It would seem, then, that these constitutions  
25 have not been well defined. But even if one combines being few with being rich in one case, and being a majority with being poor in the other, and describes the constitutions accordingly (oligarchy as that in which the rich are few in number and hold the offices, and democracy as that in which the poor are many and hold them), another problem arises. For  
30 what are we to call the constitutions we just described, those where the rich are a majority and the poor a minority, but each has authority in its

48. The constitution is a POLITY, which is governed by the HOPLITE class. It is the correct form of government by the many because its governing class are as virtuous as possible, since they possess military virtue, which is the one virtue that is broadly sharable. That is why Aristotle agrees that it is reasonable to call the correct form of government by the many a polity. On military virtue, see 1271<sup>a</sup>41–<sup>b</sup>2.

own constitution—if indeed there is no other constitution besides those just mentioned?<sup>49</sup>

What this argument seems to make clear is that it is a coincidence that the few have authority in oligarchies and the many in democracies, a result of the fact that everywhere the rich are few and the poor many. That is why, indeed, the reasons just mentioned are not the reasons for the differences. What does distinguish democracy and oligarchy from one another is poverty and wealth: whenever some, whether a minority or a majority, rule because of their wealth, the constitution is necessarily an oligarchy, and whenever the poor rule, it is necessarily a democracy. But it turns out, as we said, that the former are in fact few and the latter many. For only a few people are rich, but all share in freedom; and these are the reasons they both dispute over the constitution.<sup>50</sup>

## Chapter 9

The first thing one must grasp, however, is what people say the defining marks of oligarchy and democracy are, and what oligarchic and democratic justice are. For [1] they all grasp justice of a sort,<sup>51</sup> but they go only to a certain point and do not discuss the whole of what is just in the most authoritative sense. For example, justice seems to be EQUALITY, and it is, but not for everyone, only *for equals*. Justice also seems to be inequality, since indeed it is, but not for everyone, only *for unequals*.<sup>52</sup> They disregard the “for whom,” however, and judge badly. The reason is that the judgment concerns themselves, and most people are pretty poor judges about what is their own.<sup>53</sup>

So since what is just is just *for certain people*, and consists in dividing things and people in the same way (as we said earlier in the *Ethics*),<sup>54</sup> they agree about what constitutes equality in the thing but disagree about it in the people. This is largely because of what was just mentioned, that they judge badly about what concerns themselves, but also

49. Presumably, the six listed in the previous chapter.

50. See 1290<sup>a</sup>30–<sup>b</sup>20.

51. As the remainder of the chapter will establish. The inserted numbers help reveal the structure of what is, even for Aristotle, a rather complexly structured argument.

52. Democrats give the first definition; oligarchs the second (1266<sup>b</sup>38–1267<sup>a</sup>2, 1267<sup>a</sup>37–41). See Introduction lxv–lxviii.

53. See 1287<sup>a</sup>41–<sup>b</sup>3.

54. NE V.3.

because, since they are both speaking up to a point about justice of a sort, they think they are speaking about what is unqualifiedly just. For one lot thinks that if they are unequal in one respect (wealth, say) they are wholly unequal, whereas the other lot thinks that if they are equal in one respect (freedom, say) they are wholly equal. But about the most authoritative considerations they do not speak.

25 For suppose people constituted a community and came together for the sake of property; then their participation in a city-state would be proportional to their property, and the oligarchic argument would as a result seem to be a powerful one. (For it is not just that someone who has contributed only one mina to a sum of one hundred minas should have equal shares in that sum, whether of the principal or of the interest, with  
30 the one who has contributed all the rest.) But suppose [2] they do not do so only for the sake of life, but rather for the sake of living well, since otherwise there could be a city-state of SLAVES or animals, whereas in fact there is not, because these share neither in HAPPINESS nor in a life guided by DELIBERATIVE CHOICE.

And suppose [3] they do not do so for the sake of an alliance to safeguard themselves from being wronged by anyone, nor [4] to facilitate exchange and mutual assistance, since otherwise the Etruscans and the Carthaginians, and all those who have treaties with one another would  
35 virtually be citizens of one city-state. To be sure, they have import agreements, treaties about refraining from injustice, and formal documents of alliance, but no offices common to all of them have been established to deal with these matters; instead each city-state has different  
40 ones. Nor are those in one city-state concerned with what sort of people the others should be, or that none of those covered by the agreements should be unjust or vicious in any way, but only that neither city-state acts unjustly toward the other. But those who are concerned with good  
1280<sup>a</sup> government give careful attention to political virtue and vice.<sup>55</sup> Hence it is quite evident that the city-state (at any rate, the one truly so called and not just for the sake of argument) must be concerned with virtue. For otherwise the community becomes an alliance that differs only in location from other alliances in which the allies live far apart, and law becomes an agreement, "a guarantor of just behavior toward one another,"  
10 as the sophist Lycophron<sup>56</sup> said, but not such as to make the citizens good and just.

55. See 1281<sup>a</sup>4–8, 1340<sup>b</sup>41–1341<sup>a</sup>3, and 1254<sup>b</sup>27–32 with 1334<sup>a</sup>11–40.

56. Lycophron is known only from the writings of Aristotle. He may have belonged to the school of Gorgias.

It is evident that this is right. For even if [5] one were to bring their territories together into one, so that the city-state of the Megarians was attached to that of the Corinthians by walls, it still would not be a single  
15 city-state. Nor would it be so if their citizens intermarried, even though this is one of the forms of community characteristic of city-states. Similarly, if there were some who lived separately, yet not so separately as to share nothing in common, and had laws against wronging one another in their business transactions (for example, if one were a carpenter, another  
20 a farmer, another a cobbler, another something else of that sort, and their number were ten thousand), yet they shared nothing else in common besides such things as exchange and alliance—not even in this case would there be a city-state.

What, then, is the reason for this? Surely, it is not because of the non-proximate nature of their community. For suppose they joined together while continuing to share in that way, but each nevertheless treated his  
25 own household like a city-state, and the others like a defensive alliance formed to provide aid against wrongdoers only. Even then this still would not be thought a city-state by those who make a precise study of such things, if indeed they continued to associate with one another in the same manner when together as when separated.

Evidently, then, a city-state is not [5] a sharing of a common location, and does not exist for the purpose of [4] preventing mutual wrongdoing  
30 and [3] exchanging goods. Rather, while these must be present if indeed there is to be a city-state, when all of them *are* present there is still not yet a city-state, but [2] only when households and families live well as a community whose end is a complete and self-sufficient life. But this will not be possible unless they do inhabit one and the same location and  
35 practice intermarriage. That is why marriage connections arose in city-states, as well as brotherhoods, religious sacrifices, and the LEISURED PURSUITS of living together. For things of this sort are the result of friendship, since the deliberative choice of living together constitutes friendship. The end of the city-state is living well, then, but these other things are for the sake of the end. And a city-state is the community of families and villages in a complete and self-sufficient life, which we say  
40 is living happily and NOBLY. 1281<sup>a</sup>

So political communities must be taken to exist for the sake of noble actions, and not for the sake of living together. Hence those who contribute the most to *this* sort of community have a larger share in the city-state than those who are equal or superior in freedom or family but inferior in political virtue, and those who surpass in wealth but are  
5 surpassed in virtue.

10 It is evident from what has been said, then, that [1] those who dispute about constitutions all speak about a *part* of justice.

## Chapter 10

15 There is a problem as to what part of the state is to have authority, since surely it is either the multitude, or the rich, or decent people, or the one who is best of all, or a tyrant. But all of these apparently involve difficulties. How so? If the poor, because they are the greater number, divide up the property of the rich, isn't that unjust? "No, by Zeus, it isn't, since it seemed just to those in authority." What, then, should we call extreme injustice? Again, if the majority, having seized everything, should divide up the property of the minority, they are evidently destroying the city-state. But virtue certainly does not ruin what has it, nor is justice something capable of destroying a city-state. So it is clear, then, that this law<sup>57</sup> cannot be just. Besides, everything done by a tyrant must be just as well; for he, being stronger, uses force, just as the multitude do against the rich.

25 But is it just, then, for the rich minority to rule? If they too act in the same way, plundering and confiscating the property of the multitude, and this is just, then the other case is as well. It is evident, therefore, that all these things are bad and unjust.

30 But should decent people rule and have authority over everything? In that case, everyone else must be deprived of honors by being excluded from political office. For offices are positions of honor, we say, and when the same people always rule, the rest must necessarily be deprived of honors.

But is it better that the one who is best should rule? But this is even more oligarchic, since those deprived of honors are more numerous.

35 Perhaps, however, someone might say that it is a bad thing in general for a human being to have authority and not the LAW, since he at any rate has the passions that beset the soul. But if law may be oligarchic or democratic, what difference will that make to our problems? For the things we have just described will happen just the same.

## Chapter 11

As for the other cases, we may let them be the topic of a different discussion.<sup>58</sup> But the view that the multitude rather than the few best peo-

57. The law requiring wealth to be divided up.

58. See III.12-13.

ple should be in authority would seem to be held, and while it involves a problem, it perhaps also involves some truth. For the many, who are not as individuals excellent men, nevertheless can, when they have come together, be better than the few best people, not individually but collectively, just as feasts to which many contribute are better than feasts provided at one person's expense. For being many, each of them can have some part of virtue and practical wisdom, and when they come together, the multitude is just like a single human being, with many feet, hands, and senses, and so too for their character traits and wisdom. That is why the many are better judges of works of music and of the poets. For one of them judges one part, another another, and all of them the whole thing.<sup>59</sup>

10 It is in this way that excellent men differ from each of the many, just as beautiful people are said to differ from those who are not beautiful, and as things painted by craft are superior to real things: they bring together what is scattered and separate into one—although, at least if taken separately, this person's eye and some other feature of someone else will be more beautiful than the painted ones.

15 Whether this superiority of the many to the few excellent people can exist in the case of every people and every multitude is not clear. Though presumably, by Zeus, it is clear that in some of them it cannot possibly do so, since the same argument would apply to beasts. For what difference is there, practically speaking, between some people and beasts? But nothing prevents what has been said from being true of some multitude.

20 By means of these considerations, too, one might solve the problem mentioned earlier and also the related one of what the free should have authority over, that is to say, the multitude of the citizens who are not rich and have no claim whatsoever arising from virtue. For it would not be safe to have them participate in the most important offices, since, because of their lack of justice and practical wisdom, they would inevitably act unjustly in some instances and make mistakes in others. On the other hand, to give them no share and not to allow them to participate at all would be cause for alarm. For a state in which a large number of people are excluded from office and are poor must of necessity be full of enemies. The remaining alternative, then, is to have them participate in liberation and judgment, which is precisely why Solon and some other

59. A panel chosen by lot selected the three best comedies and tragedies at the annual theater festivals in Athens.

legislators arrange to have them elect and INSPECT officials, but prevent them from holding office alone.<sup>60</sup> For when they all come together their perception is adequate, and, when mixed with their betters, they benefit their states, just as a mixture of roughage and pure food-concentrate is more useful than a little of the latter by itself.<sup>61</sup> Taken individually, however, each of them is an imperfect judge.

But this organization of the constitution raises problems itself. In the first place, it might be held that the same person is able to judge whether or not someone has treated a patient correctly, and to treat patients and cure them of disease when it is present—namely, the doctor. The same would also seem to hold in other areas of experience and other crafts. Therefore, just as a doctor should be inspected by doctors, so others should also be inspected by their peers. But “doctor” applies to the ordinary practitioner of the craft, to a master craftsman, and thirdly, to someone with a general EDUCATION in the craft. For there are people of this third sort in (practically speaking) all the crafts. And we assign the task of judging to generally educated people no less than to experts.

Moreover, it might be held that election is the same way, since choosing correctly is also a task for experts: choosing a geometer is a task for expert geometers, for example, and choosing a ship’s captain is a task for expert captains. For even if some laymen are also involved in the choice of candidates in the case of some tasks and crafts, at least they do not play a larger role than the experts. According to this argument, then, the multitude should not be given authority over the election or inspection of officials.

But perhaps not all of these things are correctly stated, both because according to the earlier argument the multitude may not be too servile, since each may be a worse judge than those who know, but a better or no worse one when they all come together; and because there are some crafts in which the maker might not be either the only or the best judge—the ones where those who do not possess the craft nevertheless have knowledge of its products. For example, the maker of a house is not the only one who has some knowledge about it; the one who uses it is an even better judge (and the one who uses it is the household manager). A captain, too, judges a rudder better than a carpenter, and a guest, rather than the cook, a feast.<sup>62</sup>

60. See 1274\*15–21.

61. See GA 728\*26–30.

62. See 1277\*25–30.

This problem might be held to be adequately solved in such a way. But there is another connected with it. For it is held to be absurd for inferior people to have authority over more important matters than decent people do. But inspections and elections of officials are very important things. And in some constitutions, as we said, these are assigned to the people, since the assembly has authority over all such matters. And yet those with low property assessments and of whatever age participate in the assembly, and in deliberation and decision, whereas those with high property assessment are the treasurers and generals and hold the most important offices.

But one can, in fact, also solve this problem in the same way. For perhaps these things are also correctly organized. For it is neither the individual juror, nor the individual councilor, nor the individual assemblyman who is ruling, but the court, the council, and the people, whereas each of the individuals mentioned is only a part of these. (By “part” I mean the councilor, the assemblyman, and the juror.) Hence it is just for the multitude to have authority over the more important matters. For the people, the council, and the court consist of many individuals, and their collective property assessment is greater than the assessment of those who, whether individually or in small groups, hold the important offices. So much for how these matters should be determined.

As to the first problem we mentioned,<sup>63</sup> it makes nothing else so evident as that the laws, when correctly established, should be in authority, and that the ruler, whether one or many, should have authority over only those matters on which the LAWS cannot pronounce with precision, because it is not easy to make universal declarations about everything.

It is not yet clear, however, what correctly established laws should be like, and the problem stated earlier remains to be solved.<sup>64</sup> For the laws must necessarily be bad or good, and just or unjust, at the same time and in the same way as the constitutions. Still, at least it is evident that the laws must be established to suit the constitution. But if this is so, it is clear that laws that accord with the correct constitutions must be just, and those that accord with the deviant constitutions not just.

## Chapter 12

Since in every science and craft the end is a good, the greatest and best good is the end of the science or craft that has the most authority of all

63. The one raised at 1281\*11 of who should have authority in the city-state.

64. See 1281\*34–39.

== STOP

ners and others fast, this is no reason for the latter to have more and the former less: it is in athletic competitions that such a difference wins honor. The dispute must be based on the things from which a city-state is constituted. Hence the well-born, the free, and the rich reasonably lay claim to office. For there must be both free people and those with assessed property, since a city-state cannot consist entirely of poor people, any more than of slaves. But if these things are needed in a city-state, so too, it is clear, are justice and political<sup>67</sup> virtue, since a city-state cannot be managed without these. Rather, without the former a city-state cannot exist, and without the latter it cannot be well managed.

### Chapter 13

As regards the existence of a city-state, all, or at any rate some, of these would seem to have a correct claim in the dispute. But as regards the good life, education and virtue would seem to have the most just claim of all in the dispute, as was also said earlier.<sup>68</sup> But since those equal in one thing only should not have equality in everything, nor inequality if they are unequal in only one thing, all constitutions of this sort must be deviant.

We said before<sup>69</sup> that all dispute somewhat justly, but that not all do so in an unqualifiedly just way. The rich have a claim due to the fact that they own a larger share of the land, and the land is something common, and that, in addition, they are usually more trustworthy where treaties<sup>70</sup> are concerned. The FREE and the well-born have closely related claims, for those who are better born are more properly citizens than those of ignoble birth, and good birth is honored at home by everyone. Besides, they have a claim because better people are likely to come from better people, since good birth is virtue of family.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, then, we shall say that virtue has a just claim in the dispute, since justice, we say, is a communal virtue, which all the other virtues necessarily accompany.<sup>72</sup> But the majority too have a just claim against the minority, since they are

67. Reading *politikēs* with Ross, Schütrumpf, and some mss. Alternatively (Dreizehnter and some mss.): "military (*polemikēs*)."

68. At 1281<sup>a</sup>1–8.

69. At 1280<sup>a</sup>7–25.

70. *sumbolaia*: or contracts.

71. A slightly different definition is given at 1294<sup>a</sup>21.

72. Because justice is complete virtue in relation to another person (*NE* 1129<sup>b</sup>25–1130<sup>a</sup>5).

stronger, richer, and better, when taken as the majority in relation to the minority.

1283<sup>b</sup> If they were all present in a single city-state, therefore (I mean, for example, the good, the rich, the well-born, and a political multitude in addition), will there be a dispute as to who should rule or not? Within each of the constitutions we have mentioned, to be sure, the decision as to who should rule is indisputable, since these differ from one another because of what is in authority; for example, because in one the rich are in authority, in another the excellent men, and each of the others differs the same way. But be that as it may, we are investigating how the matter is to be determined when all these are present simultaneously. Suppose, 5 for example, that those who possess virtue are extremely few in number, how should the matter be settled? Should their fewness be considered in relation to the task? To whether they are able to manage the city-state? Or to whether there are enough of them to constitute a city-state by themselves?

15 But there is a problem that faces all who dispute over political office. Those who claim that they deserve to rule because of their wealth could be held to have no justice to their claim at all, and similarly those claiming to do so because of their family. For it is clear that if someone is richer again than everyone else, then, on the basis of the same justice, this one person will have to rule them all. Similarly, it is clear that someone who is outstanding when it comes to good birth should rule those who dispute on the basis of freedom. Perhaps the same thing will also 20 occur in the case of virtue where aristocracies are concerned. For if one man were better than the others in the governing class, even though they were excellent men, then, on the basis of the same justice, this man should be in authority. So if the majority too should be in authority because they are superior to the few, then, if one person, or more than one 25 but fewer than the many, were superior to the others, these should be in authority rather than the multitude. All this seems to make it evident, then, that none of the definitions on the basis of which people claim that they themselves deserve to rule, whereas everyone else deserves to be ruled by them, is correct. For the multitude would have an argument of some justice even against those who claim that they deserve to have authority over the governing class because of their virtue, and similarly 30 against those who base their claim on wealth. For nothing prevents the multitude from being sometimes better and richer than the few, not as individuals but collectively.

35 Hence the problem that some people raise and investigate can also be

dealt with in this way. For they raise the problem of whether a legislator who wishes to establish the most correct laws should legislate for the benefit of the better citizens or that of the majority, when the case just mentioned occurs. But what is correct must be taken to mean what is equitable; and what is equitable in relation to the benefit of the entire 40 city-state, and the common benefit of the citizens. And a citizen generally speaking is someone who participates in ruling and in being ruled, although in each constitution he is someone different. It is in the best 1284<sup>a</sup> one, however, that he is the one who has the power and who deliberately chooses to be ruled and to rule with an eye to the virtuous life. But if there is one person or more than one (though not enough to make up a complete city-state) who is so outstanding by reason of his superior 5 virtue that neither the virtue nor the political power of all the others is commensurable with his (if there is only one) or theirs (if there are a number of them), then such men can no longer be regarded as part of the city-state. For they would be treated unjustly if they were thought to merit equal shares, when they are so unequal in virtue and political 10 power. For anyone of that sort would reasonably be regarded as a god among human beings. Hence it is clear that legislation too must be concerned with those who are equals both in birth and in power, and that for the other sort there is no law, since they themselves are law. For, indeed, anyone who attempted to legislate for them would be ridiculous, since they would presumably respond in the way Antisthenes tells us the lions 15 did when the hares acted like popular leaders and demanded equality for everyone.<sup>73</sup>

That is why, indeed, democratically governed city-states introduce ostracism. For of all city-states these are held to pursue equality most, and so they ostracize those held to be outstandingly powerful (whether 20 because of their wealth, their many friends, or any other source of political power), banishing them from the city-state for fixed periods of time.<sup>74</sup> The story goes, too, that the Argonauts left Heracles behind for this sort of reason: the Argo refused to carry him with the other sailors on the grounds that his weight greatly exceeded theirs.<sup>75</sup> That is also 25

73. The lions' reply was: "Where are your claws and teeth?" See Aesop, *Fables* 241. Antisthenes was a follower of Socrates and a founder of the school of philosophers known as the Cynics.

74. Ostracism, or banishment without loss of property or citizenship for ten (later five) years, was introduced into Athens by Cleisthenes. See *Ath.* XXII.

75. Athena had built a board into the Argo that enabled it to speak.

why those who criticize tyranny or the advice that Periander gave Thrasybulus should not be considered to be unqualifiedly correct in their censure. For they say that Periander said nothing to the messenger who had been sent to him for advice, but leveled a cornfield by cutting  
30 off the outstandingly tall ears. When the messenger, who did not know why Periander did this, reported what had happened, Thrasybulus understood that he was to get rid of the outstanding men.<sup>76</sup>

This advice is not beneficial only to tyrants, however, nor are tyrants the only ones who follow it. The same situation holds too in oligarchies  
35 and democracies. For ostracism has the same sort of effect as cutting down the outstanding people or sending them into exile. But those in control of power treat city-states and nations in the same way. For example, as soon as Athens had a firm grip on its imperial rule, it humbled  
40 Samos, Chios, and Lesbos,<sup>77</sup> in violation of the treaties it had with them; and the king of the Persians often cut the Medes and Babylonians down to size, as well as any others who had grown presumptuous because they  
1284<sup>b</sup> had once ruled empires of their own.

The problem is a general one that concerns all constitutions, even the correct ones. For though the deviant constitutions use such methods  
5 with an eye to the private benefit, the position is the same with those that aim at the common good. But this is also clear in the case of the other crafts and sciences. For no painter would allow an animal to have a disproportionately large foot, not even if it were an outstandingly beautiful one, nor would a shipbuilder allow this in the case of the stern or  
10 any of the other parts of the ship, nor will a chorus master tolerate a member of the chorus who has a louder and more beautiful voice than the entire chorus. So, from this point of view, there is nothing to prevent monarchs from being in harmony with the city-state they rule when they resort to this sort of practice, provided their rule benefits their  
15 city-states. Where acknowledged sorts of superiority are concerned, then, there is some political justice to the argument in favor of ostracism.

It would be better, certainly, if the legislator established the constitution in the beginning so that it had no need for such a remedy. But the next best thing is to try to fix the constitution, should the need arise,

76. Periander was tyrant of Corinth (625–585). Thrasybulus was tyrant of Miletus. The full story is told by Herodotus V.92, who reverses the roles of Periander and Thrasybulus.

77. The most powerful city-states in the Athenian alliance.

with a corrective of this sort. This is not what actually tended to happen in city-states, however. For they did not look to the benefit of their own  
20 constitutions, but used ostracism for purposes of faction. It is evident, then, that in each of the deviant constitutions ostracism is privately advantageous and just, but it is perhaps also evident that it is not unqualifiedly just.

In the case of the best constitution, however, there is a considerable  
25 problem, not about superiority in other goods, such as power or wealth or having many friends, but when there happens to be someone who is superior in virtue. For surely people would not say that such a person should be expelled or banished, but neither would they say that they should rule over him. For that would be like claiming that they deserved  
30 to rule over Zeus, dividing the offices.<sup>78</sup> The remaining possibility—and it seems to be the natural one—is for everyone to obey such a person gladly, so that those like him will be permanent kings in their city-states.

## Chapter 14

→ STOP

After the matters just discussed, it may perhaps be well to change to an  
35 investigation of kingship, since we say that it is one of the correct constitutions. What we have to investigate is whether or not it is beneficial for a city-state or territory which is to be well managed to be under a kingship, or under some other constitution instead, or whether it is beneficial for some but not for others. But first it must be determined whether  
40 there is one single type of kingship or several different varieties.

In fact this is easy to see—that kingship includes several types, and that the manner of rule is not the same in all of them. For kingship in the Spartan constitution, which is held to be the clearest example of kingships based on law, does not have authority over everything, but when the king leaves the country, he does have leadership in military affairs. Moreover, matters relating to the gods are assigned to the kings.  
1285<sup>a</sup> [1] This type of kingship, then, is a sort of permanent autocratic generalship. For the king does not have the power of life and death, except when exercising a certain sort of kingship,<sup>79</sup> similar to that exercised in ancient times on military expeditions, on the basis of the law of force.<sup>80</sup> Homer provides a clear example. Agamemnon put up with being abused  
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78. So that he ruled and was ruled in turn.

79. Reading *en tini basileia(i)* with the mss.

80. It permitted summary execution without trial.