THE FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL FACT: ARISTOTLE'S PATH TO ESTABLISHING THE IMPORTANCE OF A CITY'S REGIME IN *POLITICS* III/1-9

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Summary: *1. III/1-3: Four questions pointing to the importance of a city's regime. 2. III/4-5: Limits to a regime's moral influence over individuals. 3. III/6-8: The classification of regimes: the common advantage and the character of the rulers. 4. III/9: Uncovering the correct understanding of the common advantage: the choice of rulers and the moral influence of the regime. 5. Conclusion.*

It has been argued that for Aristotle «the regime is the fundamental political phenomenon».[1] My aim in this paper is to lay out in precise detail why and how Aristotle reaches this conclusion in the course of his investigation into the regime in the first nine chapters of Book III of the *Politics*. There Aristotle shows that such routine political questions of who does, and does not, deserve to be a citizen, and who should rule, are unavoidably tied up with questions about the identity of the city, and what human type should be honored by the city. The variety of answers to these questions, provided by the various groups contending for rule (the poor, the rich, the aristocrats, etc), give rise to the various regimes. Aristotle shows that the claims to rule made by the various groups contain within them a vision of the whole over which the groups wish to rule, and a notion of the common advantage that follows from that vision. The ruling groups' conception of justice seeps into the parts of the city and integrates them in a certain way, and this integration is both psychic and structural, since the regime affects not just the external actions of the citizens, but also their inner-disposition, their soul. This comprehensive integration is

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[1] C. Lord (translation, with an Introduction, Notes and Glossary), *Aristotle: The Politics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1984, p. 21. See also L. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1953, pp. 136-137: «no law, and hence no constitution, can be the fundamental political fact […] the paramount social phenomenon, or that social phenomenon than which only the natural phenomena are more fundamental, is the regime».

what makes the regime the fundamental political fact, the key to understanding the nature of a political order. Along the way we learn about the limits to what can be achieved by a political order: to what extent can it promote virtue and achieve the common advantage?

Before proceeding with my interpretation I want to say a few words about the translation of key terms. The word I am translating as «regime» is *politeia*. Related terms are *polis* (city), *polites* (citizen), *politikos* (statesman or politician), *politeuma* (ruling body), and *politike* (political science). All translations currently in use translate *politeia* either as «regime» or as «constitution». Peter Simpson does an excellent job of justifying my preferred translation: when we speak of a constitution we mean a set of rules (written or unwritten), but *politeia* for Aristotle «signifies a body of rulers…and not a set of rules…*Politeia* is therefore closer to what we mean by the establishment than to what we mean by the constitution». The word «regime» conveys the idea of a way of life – «we speak, for instance, of athletes following a regime» – and is thus the best choice to translate *politeia*.[2] More can be said about this, and the reader can take the essay that follows as an extended argument this choice of translating *politeia* as «regime».

1. III/1-3: Four questions pointing to the importance of a city's regime

Aristotle raises a series of questions in the first three chapters of Book III – when are the actions of a city's rulers also the actions of the city? (1274 b35), who is the citizen? (1275 a1), what role does justice play when a city decides to admit new citizens? (1275 b39-1276 a2), and what determines the identity of a city over time? (1276 a17-19) – and we see that the common thread linking these questions is that they all point to the regime's crucial role in determining a city's makeup, identity and goals. Book III begins by provisionally defining the regime as «a certain arrangement (*taxis* – 1274 b38) of those who inhabit the city». From the three elements that are part of this definition (the city, its inhabitants, and the arrangement of the inhabitants), Aristotle starts by examining the city because (first) in political life there are disputes about the city – about when it acted and when it did not – and (second) the entire activity of the legislator concerns the city. The investigation of regime, therefore, is going to be guided, at least in part, by the concerns and controversies that animate political life.[3]

[2] P.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the Politics of Aristotle*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London 1998, pp. xxii-xxiv.

[3] Harry Jaffa explains the differences between the controversies in Book II and the controversies in Book III as follows: «The conflicts of opinions with which we are immediately confronted are no longer the conflicts between observers of political life, they are the con-

The city is a «composite thing», a «composite whole», which examines by looking at its parts: in particular, the part that is called «citizen». Since «citizens» are a subset of inhabitants, the other part of the city from this perspective must be «inhabitant who is not a citizen». This is the citizen's way of looking at the city – as composed of two parts, citizen and non-citizen.

Citizenship varies from regime to regime, so that «someone who is a citizen in a democracy is often not one in an oligarchy». Aristotle is looking for the «citizen simply», for a definition of citizen that will hold across the various regimes. The definition he produces holds that citizenship is essentially connected to ruling. This is a functional definition – the citizen is defined by what he does, by a characteristic activity. It says nothing about who ought to be a citizen, and doesn't link citizenship with desert. But there are times in political life, such as after a revolution, when new citizens are often admitted, and this raises the question of what standards should be used to govern this addition of new citizens. The right standard will be a just standard, one that will justify a decision to include some while excluding others.

In chapter 3 Aristotle tells us that there is a link between the question «when did the city act»? and the question «who is justly a citizen»? – without specifying exactly what this link is (1276 a6). He elaborates on the dispute mentioned at the beginning of chapter 1 by identifying the reasoning behind a democracy's claim that it doesn't have to honor an agreement made by the oligarchy or the tyranny that preceded it. Aristotle finds that «the assumption» underlying this claim is that those other regimes exist through force and do not act for the common advantage. The connection between the two questions may therefore be that new citizens are justly citizens when their joining the citizen body advances the common advantage. Aristotle merely points out that this linkage of consent, pursuit of the common advantage, and democracy that exists in the democratic mind does not always hold; consent and the common advantage are regime-independent standards that can be used not only against other regimes but also against democracy.

One could continue this line of questioning democratic assumptions as follows: doesn't every regime, whether or not it acts for the common advantage, at least claim to act for the common advantage? The democrats' claim that

flicts among participants, among men who differ as to how the burdens and advantages of political life should be divided and shared» (H. Jaffa, *What is Politics? An Interpretation of Aristotle's Politics* in *The Conditions of Freedom: Essays in Political Philosophy*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1975, p. 39). As for why Aristotle would want to start from the participant's perspective on political life, consider the following remark of Eugene Miller: «Perhaps an active concern with political things is a condition of their visibility, such that they disclose themselves to those who approach them in the natural attitude of the citizen, but not to the theorist» (E. Miller, *The Primary Questions of Political Inquiry*, «Review of Politics», 39 (1977), p. 300).

democracy acts for the common advantage is not inique – the partisans of the other regimes will make similar claims. The democrats might respond that such claims are insincere proclamations under which unjust regimes hide, but perhaps such claims merely reflect very different understandings of what constitutes the common advantage. A logical next step at this point in Book III might be to engage in a dialectical examination of the various conceptions of the common advantage that animate the partisans of the various regimes. This is exactly what Aristotle does – in chapter 9! Aristotle returns to examining the speeches of the actors in everyday political life at the beginning of III/9 when he examines the arguments of the oligarchs and the democrats: the discussion from the beginning of Book III to the first part of III/3 is a sort of dialectical ascent from common opinion, and this procedure is resumed at the beginning of III/9, but in – between – most of III/3 to the end of III/8 – something else takes its place.

Instead of developing the discussion along the lines of III/9 Aristotle next says: «this argument seems related to the question of the sense in which the city ought to be spoken of as the same, or as not the same but different» (1276 a17). Related how? Why does he take this turn? Aristotle has just pointed out that the common advantage can be used as a standard to judge the various regimes, and one could easily conclude from this that the common advantage of the city exists apart from any regime – on the assumption that the regime of one's city may be bad, but the people are good, because they are unaffected, and remain unaffected, by the regime. This is the attitude of the patriot, who wants to be loyal to the city regardless of its regime, because the city is more fundamental than any regime. But can we understand a city or its common advantage apart from its regime? If each regime will claim that it serves the common advantage, it will put forward its own conception of the common advantage, and will assert that its actions are meant to serve this conception of the common advantage. Each regime thus acts to serve its notion of the common advantage, and we must ask how these actions affect the city, the entity on whose behalf the regime claims to act. Is the city the passive recipient of these actions, or is it shaped and molded, and thus in part constituted, by these actions? Further, is the regime (understood as the present rulers of a city) something detached from the city, or is it a part that is more than just another part, a part that shapes and orders the other parts, and leads them in pursuit of a goal, and in doing so, makes them into a whole? I think the two questions, the question of the sameness of the city, and the question of when the city acted, are related because they point to the question: what is the precise relation between a city and its regime? Aristotle's famous answer is that when the regime changes the city also changes, because «it is looking to the regime above all that the city must be said to be the same» (1276 b10).

We should note, however, that at this stage in the text the primacy of regime in determining the identity of a city is established mostly by negation: by showing that the other ways to identify the city across time – population and location – fail to do the job. Aristotle does not say what I have said – that the regime sets a goal for the city through its understanding of the common advantage, and thus when the regime changes the goal of the city changes, and this is why the city becomes a different city in the most important respect.[4] He does, however, point to such an explanation by his example of the chorus: we say that a tragic and a comic chorus are different even when the members of the chorus are the same (1276 b5). We must conclude from Aristotle's example that people speak this way because the goal of the chorus has changed, from making us cry to making us laugh.[5]

If the regime moulds and shapes the city in such a way that it becomes the crucial factor in determining the identity of the city, then it in a way sets the horizon within which the citizens live and form their opinions about right and wrong, good and bad. What are the limits to this molding and shaping of the citizen? I believe this question is the background against which Aristotle examines the relation between the virtue of the good man and the virtue of the serious citizen in chapter 4. The examination of this relation, according to Aristotle, is «connected» with what has been said so far in Book III, and I believe the connection is that after pointing to the primacy of a city's regime in determining what the city takes as its goal and thus looks up to, Aristotle wishes to show us the limits to the regime's primacy in determining the moral and intellectual life of its citizens.

2. III/4-5: Limits to a regime's moral influence over individuals

Aristotle's examination of the relation between the virtue of the serious citizen and the virtue of the good man in III/4 has three main parts: first, he shows that the virtue of the good man and the serious citizen cannot be the

[4] Clifford Bates writes: «Although he [i.e. Aristotle] has yet to explain fully the concept of the regime, he argues that a change in the character of the persons in the *polis* will cause a change in the regime» (C. Bates, *Aristotle's Best Regime: Kingship, Democracy, and the Rule of Law*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge 2003, p. 25). In this paper I argue the opposite: a change in the regime of a city causes, in time, a change in the character of the inhabitants of the city, and so makes the city a different city.

[5] Michael Davis formulates this well: «…political life is above all a conscious choice of a way of life – a regime» (M. Davis, *The Politics of Philosophy: A Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham MD 1996, p. 60). Mary Nichols uses the nice phrase «enduring purpose»: «Identity and continuity are guaranteed by enduring purpose, and enduring purpose is supplied by the regime, which gives a city its specific character» (M. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen: A Study of Aristotle's Politics*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham MD 1992, p. 55).

same in all regimes; next, that they cannot be the same even in the best regime; and finally, that they can be the same for some citizens in some circumstances. The beginning of the chapter limits the discussion to examining «whether the virtue of the good man and the serious citizen is to be regarded as the same or as not the same» (1276 b16-18), but the results of the discussion go beyond answering this question of sameness and point to an answer to the more important question of compatibility: we can see that in some cases being a serious citizen will be incompatible with being a good man.

Aristotle's argument in the first part of the chapter is as follows: he asserts (without proving, but in accordance with ordinary understanding) that the good man is characterized by the same virtue at all times and places (and thus in every regime), whereas citizen virtue (which has as its goal the preservation of the regime of one's city) is variable because there is a variety of regimes. Spelling out this cryptic reasoning, we can say that serious citizens are characterized by different qualities (or virtues) in different regimes because the regimes have different goals; so that preserving a polity in which hoplites (and their notion of virtue) predominate requires different qualities in the citizens than preserving an oligarchy in which the rich (and their notion of virtue) predominate. Once again, Aristotle makes no mention of the goal of a regime, nor does he describe the differences among regimes as a difference of goal, but I think that this is the only way to make sense of Aristotle's argument here.

Aristotle next considers the virtue of citizens in the best regime. Here he argues that the virtue of all the citizens of the best regime cannot be the same as the virtue of the good man because citizens differ in their specific role in the regime, and so will have different virtues. The judges, customs officials, etc., do not need all of the good man's virtue for their work, so their virtue will not be the same as the good man's.

The final part of the chapter takes up the question of when some citizens in a regime can have the virtue of a good man. Once again, the work of the citizen is crucial: the serious citizen must rule to have the virtue of a good man, for Aristotle now assumes that the virtue of the good ruler and the good man are the same (1277 a20-21). We are next given a discussion of how the serious citizen can acquire the virtue of the good ruler; nothing is said about how the good man acquires the virtue of the good ruler, which consists chiefly of prudence. We must conclude that the good man is capable of acquiring on his own, without the aid of any pedagogic activity of the city, the virtue of the good ruler.[6]

[6] While no city can teach the good man prudence, I do not mean to suggest, of course, that the good man does not learn anything from the laws of his city. Every human being necessarily begins from a rootedness in the civic life of his city, and the uniqueness of the

How can a citizen acquire the virtue of a good ruler since he cannot rule all the time, but rules and is ruled in turn by his fellow citizens? Aristotle tries to resolve this problem by differentiating rule into two kinds: rule of a master, and political rule. Citizens qua citizens participate in political rule, which is rule over those who are similar in stock and free, and one learns it by being ruled, as in the military (1277 b10), where one learns to perform the tasks of the higher ranks by first having served in the lower ranks. Aristotle concludes on this basis that both the good man and the good citizen know how to rule and be ruled. But the military example is misleading here because military rule is generational, with older, more experienced officers ruling younger ones, but political rule is not like that. In the city you rule one year and are ruled the next, whereas in the military one does not go from being a general in one year to being a lieutenant the next year. Aristotle himself notes another difference between a good ruler and a citizen who is ruled: justice and moderation differ in the ruler and the ruled, and a good ruler possesses a virtue (prudence – 1277 b25) that is lacking in the ruled qua ruled (who possess right opinion instead). Since Aristotle doesn't qualify this statement by stating that this holds true only in defective regimes, we should understand him as saying that even in the best regime the ordinary citizen qua citizen will have some opinions that will not be shared by the good man/good ruler. This means that the good man/good ruler has an inner freedom, an inner independence, which frees him from relying on others, or from relying on the prevailing climate of opinion in his regime, for his views on fundamental matters. The good man can free himself from what for most people are uncritically accepted, widely prevalent and socially respectable opinions, and find on his own the truth about fundamental matters.[7]

good man stems from his rare ability to transcend the limitations of the knowledge that is imparted to him by his city's regime. The relationship between the knowledge of the good man and the knowledge promoted by his city's regime is marked both by disjuncture and by continuity. Thus I agree with Gerald Mara when he writes that even though «those who excel in the exercise of prudence may be in a position to correct, perhaps sometimes even to challenge, conventional conceptions of justice», we should note that «the need for the practically wise to be morally virtuous reveals the disjunctures as well as the continuities in the relationship between the prudent and the just, and the separability between human and political virtue» (G. Mara, *Interrogating the Identities of Excellence: Liberal Education and Democratic Culture in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, «Polity», 31 (1998), p. 316).

[7] Michael Davis seems to equate prudence with «awareness»: «It is not so much in their actions – their behavior – that good citizens must fall short of being good men but in their awareness of what they are doing» (M. Davis, *The Politics of Philosophy*, cit., p. 60), but he does not explains what this awareness consists of and how the good man acquires it. Carnes Lord writes that Aristotle's argument here «require[s] a training in prudence beyond what is available through the experience of ordinary political life» (C. Lord, *Aristotle*, in *History of Political Philosophy*, edited by L. Strauss and J. Cropsey, University of Chicago Press, Chi-

We are now in a position to address the question of sameness and compatibility I raised at the beginning of my summary comments on III/4. Since citizen virtue varies with the regime, because different regimes have different goals, in defective regimes the good man will not only not be a serious citizen, he will be a bad citizen. As Ernest Barker writes:[8]

«in a State which does not pursue a moral purpose, but has made wealth its aim and goal….to be a good citizen is simply to seek and accumulate wealth; and consequently, in such a State, the good citizen would be a bad man, and the good man a bad citizen».

Richard Kraut objects to this interpretation because according to Aristotle a good citizen has right opinion about practical matters, whereas according to Barker the good citizen of a bad regime has decidedly false opinions about practical matters.[9] Kraut proposes this alternate interpretation: «a good citizen of a democracy or an oligarchy is someone who tries to moderate the defects of such regimes. Instead of supposing that such a person pursues the democratic goal (freedom) or the oligarchic goal (wealth) single-mindedly and without limit, we should explore the idea that, on the contrary, he makes a democracy less of a pure democracy by accepting non-democratic elements into its constitution (and similarly for oligarchy)».[10] Kraut holds that his interpretation is correct because according to Aristotle a good citizen preserves his regime (III/4), and since we are told in V/9 that the way to preserve a democracy and an oligarchy is to moderate it, his suggestion is supported by Aristotle's later remarks in Books IV-VI.[11] Kraut's moderation-promoting citizen preserves his regime by improving it,[12] and a good democratic or oligarchic

cago 1987, p. 139), and so leaves open the possibility that the good man acquires prudence on his own through some sort of private education. Richard Ruderman argues that for Aristotle prudence allows one to know what is best simply as well as what is fitting for a particular regime, and thus may involve unlearning what one's culture knows in order to grasp what circumstances will allow (R. Ruderman, *Aristotle and the Recovery of Political Judgement*, «American Political Science Review», 91 (1997), p. 411), but adds that the type of prudence a ruler possesses (political prudence) is not the highest form of prudence (*ibidem*, p. 413). David Keyt argues that the virtue of a good man can be acquired through private education, and when such a man lives under a defective regime, he will lack unconditional obedience to the laws of his city, and as a consequence will at most share the actions, but not the motives, of a good citizen (D. Keyt, *The Good Man and the Upright Citizen in Aristotle's Ethics and Politics*, in *Freedom, Reason and the Polis: Essays in Ancient Greek Political Philosophy*, edited by D. Keyt and F. Miller, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, pp. 237-240).

[8] E. Barker, *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, Russell and Russell, New York 1959, p. 287.

[9] R. Kraut, *Aristotle: Political Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002, p. 369.

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 370. [11] *Ibidem*, p. 370. [12] *Ibidem*, p. 372.

citizen preserves his regime by making it more like a polity,[13] in accordance with Aristotle's suggestions in Books IV-VI.

I think Barker is closer to the truth than Kraut. First, Aristotle does not say that a good citizen has right opinion; he only says that «the ruled» have right opinion, while the good ruler has prudence. Second, I will argue that both Barker and Kraut mistakenly think that Aristotle sees the serious (*spoudaios*) citizen and the good (*agathon*) citizen as one and the same. Aristotle uses the term «serious citizen» throughout III/4, but when speaking of the two kinds of rule (despotic and political) in the third part of III/4, he twice uses the term «good citizen». Michael Rabieh notes this discrepancy in his dissertation:[14] «Aristotle here [1277 a33-b7] speaks for the first time not of the serious but of the good citizen, whose identity seems independent of the regime. Is he in-between the good man and the serious citizen»? (emphasis in the original). I think the best way to interpret the text here is to see the good citizen as the good man, because he is independent of the regime in the same way the good man is -- in his thoughts, in his inner freedom from the opinions the regime seeks to inculcate in its citizens. This is why the good citizen is able to do what Kraut would have him do: try to improve and preserve his regime by moderating it. The serious citizen, however, cannot do this, because he accepts as true what the regime tells him about fundamental matters – he has right opinion, not prudence. By right opinion here Aristotle doesn't mean opinion that is necessarily in conformity with the truth (as Kraut would have it), but opinion that is in conformity with a regime's understanding of right. In a correct regime right opinion is closer to the truth than in a defective regime, but it is still opinion (as opposed to knowledge), something the citizen gets secondhand (from others), not something that he figures out by himself.

To use a concrete example of how this might play out in practice, if I am correct this would mean that a man like Churchill would be a good citizen but not a serious citizen. Churchill, the savior of democracy, was not just a good citizen, but perhaps the greatest British citizen ever, despite having reservations about the democratic dogma of equality, and its consequence – universal suffrage. As John Lukacs[15] notes in his book, Churchill in 1930, in his Romanes lecture «questioned the principle and practice of universal suffrage…About universal suffrage he wrote in 1932: «why at this moment we should force upon the untutored races in India that very system, the inconveniences of which are now felt even in the most highly developed nations, the United States, Ger-

[13] *Ibidem*, p. 375.

[14] M. RABIEH, *The Republican Challenge to Liberalism in Aristotle's Political Thought*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, Toronto 1996, p. 57.

[15] J. LUKACS, *Churchill: Visionary, Statesman, Historian*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2002, p. 137.

many, France and in England itself?"» Yet during the war «he who had questioned universal suffrage (as late as 1935 he thought that perhaps it ought to be either limited, or doubled to heads of households) became the champion of and world spokesman for parliamentary democracy».[16] Lukacs sees this as Churchill changing his mind, but I think he just made the prudent decision to stress the superiority of the imperfect (democracy) over the evil (national socialism) and rally support to his side – and embolden those who fought for his cause. After all, Churchill is famous for once having said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others. This sort of qualified endorsement of democracy would hardly be forthcoming from Aristotle's serious citizen, but his (and Kraut's?) good citizen would say such a thing. Some might say that Churchill was a remnant from an old aristocratic past, an old plant somehow thriving in the new democratic soil, with its strength to fight tyranny and its aristocratic disdain for democracy, but I don't think that he was ultimately the product of any regime, democracy or aristocracy, but a prudent man able to think for himself.

In conclusion, when a good man has acquired, on his own, the capacity to exercise prudence, and when this man then gets the opportunity to rule in his regime, only then can we say that the virtue of the good man and the virtue of the good citizen are the same. Thus it is incorrect to assert, as Susan Collins does, that in III/4 «the virtue of a good human being – of a good man in the strong sense – is defined in terms of ruling».[17] We must distinguish between the *acquisition* of the high form of prudence possessed by the good man and the occasion of its *exercise/manifestation*: the good man *acquires* prudence through his own efforts in private life and then is able to *display* this prudence in political life when circumstances bring him to power. In the case of Churchill and Charles de Gaulle, their superior prudence was already visible in their voluminous pre-World War II writings, i.e. *before* they acquired rule in Britain and France (as has been shown in the case of de Gaulle by Daniel Mahoney and Pierre Manent).[18] Even the best regime may try to inculcate «noble lies» (as in the *Republic*) or half-truths in its citizens, and the good man and the good citizen will be free from any inner acceptance of such opinions. The serious citizen, who doesn't truly think for himself about justice, but accepts what his regime tells him about it, cannot have the same virtue as the good man.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 138.

[17] S. Collins, *Aristotle and the Rediscovery of Citizenship*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2006, p. 130.

[18] D. Mahoney, *De Gaulle: Statesmanship, Grandeur and Modern Democracy*, Prager, Westport 1996, and P. Manent, *De Gaulle as Hero*, in *Modern Liberty and Its Discontents*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham MD 1998.

In chapter 5 Aristotle shows us that one must choose between making vulgar persons (those who do the works of necessity for the community) citizens and thereby reducing our understanding of citizen virtue (for such persons are lacking in leisure and so cannot develop the capacity to rule and be ruled), or not making them citizens and leaving them in an awkward undefined situation, for they are not foreigners or resident aliens either. The general point is that «this is true: not all those are to be regarded as citizens without whom there would not be a city» (1278 a2), and while the exclusion of children is unproblematic, the exclusion of adult males may carry grave political consequences. Aristotle points out in this chapter that a conflict exists between two desirable goals: focusing on the cultivation of citizen virtue by excluding the vulgar may harm civic peace, while securing civic peace by including them will retard efforts to promote citizen virtue.

Let us pause at this point to sum up the first five chapters. In chapters 1-3 we see that the city and the citizen cannot be understood apart from the regime of the city. In the case of citizenship, who is (and is not) a citizen is determined by the regime (chapter 2): «there can be no citizen *qua* citizen prior to the regime of which that citizen is a part».[19] Similarly, when we seek to determine what constitutes the identity of the city across time, the regime emerges as the most important consideration, ahead of such physical characteristics of the city as its territory and population (chapter 3). Aristotle maintains a certain reticence about why this is the case, but his choice of examples is suggestive: he uses the example of the chorus (in both chapters 3 and 4), and compares the regime to a ship (the ship of state metaphor—in chapter 4). A ship has a destination and a plan that lays out how to get there; a chorus has as its goal certain emotions it wants to arouse in its audience, and chooses its words and tunes with a view to achieving that goal; similarly, we can say, a regime sets a goal for the city through its choice of criteria to determine citizenship and through its understanding of the common advantage, and in pursuing this goal it gives the city its political-moral identity, an identity that endures over time as long as the regime endures. The goal of all regimes is similar in the abstract but different in specifics or content: all regimes aim to achieve the good society (or, to use a more Greek term, the good city), where the good citizen is also a good man, but each regime has a different understanding of what constitutes a good city or a good man. It is in promoting this understanding of the good city and the good man that the regime exerts a shaping influence on the characters of its citizens, and Aristotle gives us some idea of the limits of this influence in chapter 4. The chapter focuses tightly on the most important claim a regime can make: to what extent is it true in any regime (and perhaps

[19] J. Frank, *Citizens, Slaves, and Foreigners: Aristotle on Human Nature*, «American Political Science Review», 98 (2004), p. 93.

especially in the best regime) that a good citizen will also be a good man? Aristotle's main point is that the chief virtue of the good man is prudence, while a citizen who is not a ruler has only true opinion, so that the good man, through the use of his own rational powers, possesses the inner independence and freedom that comes from finding the truth on one's own, without the assistance of one's city. If it is the case that the truth about fundamental political matters is something that one can only acquire on one's own, through the use of one's own heart and mind, and that it is therefore not something that someone else can give to you – like a physical good – then those citizens in any regime who are good men become so in large part through their own efforts, even if the regime of their city gives them some assistance in the effort to become good men.

Given the broad limitations seen in chapters 4 and 5, more specific questions arise: do regimes serve other human needs other than the desire for excellence and virtue? How do we rank regimes in terms of better and worse? What is the common advantage that regimes claim to serve? The rest of Book III takes up such questions.

3. III/6-8: The classification of regimes: the common advantage and the character of the rulers

Aristotle proceeds in III/6-8 to provide a more comprehensive discussion of the ends of political life (ends other than the production of good men), a discussion of the kinds of rule, and, based on these two discussions, a schema for classifying regimes with which he immediately finds fault.

The three ends of political life mentioned in III/6 are (1) a human desire to live together «even when they need no help from each other» (i.e. independent of any calculation of benefit or gain),[20] (2) the common advantage, and (3) life itself (1278 b20-25). The three ends are separated by Aristotle in speech, but in everyday life there is of-course no such neat separation. I want to suggest here that for the citizens of a city, the third end (mere life, or survival), is not just bare physical survival but the survival of a way of life, because the matter (the inhabitants of the city) and the form (the regime, the way of life) are always co-present. As long as a city remains a city (i.e. it is not destroyed), it will always have a form, and its survival will be the survival of a way of life. Even this seemingly low goal of political life points beyond mere physical survival.

There follows the discussion of mastery, domestic rule, and political rule (1278 b33-1279 a16). In these cases Aristotle speaks of ruling with a view to

[20] L. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, cit., p. 129: «[man's] sociality does not proceed.. from a calculation of the pleasures which he expects from association, but he derives pleasure from association because he is by nature social».

benefiting the ruler (mastery and corrupt political rulers), or with a view to benefiting the ruled (domestic rule, and political rule in earlier times), but no mention is made of the common advantage, which is nonetheless used in the very next sentence (1279 a17) to distinguish between correct and deviant regimes. What are we to make of this? Michael Rabieh argues that by discussing the three kinds of rule together Aristotle is suggesting that a real common advantage is not possible in political rule just as it is not possible in mastery and domestic rule. He writes:

«A failure to show a political common advantage worth serving seems to leave us with a choice between Thrasymachus' and Socrates' positions: sensible human beings ought either to rule for their own sake or to treat ruling as a burden to avoid. Chapter 6's treatment of political rule *implicitly points to the latter position.* The fact that hard on its heels follows a vigorous invocation of the common advantage and a famous classification of regimes based on that advantage *may hide* its similarity to Socrates' analysis, *but that similarity remains discernible*….He presents human beings living according to nature as seeking to rule in turn because they wish to have someone else look after their good. This implies that in ruling they neglect their own good or at least a weighty portion of it…Now they do benefit from their rule since they inhabit the city they serve…[but] they benefit as citizens, not rulers, just as pilots benefit from ruling as sailors, not pilots…If rulers benefit from rule as citizens rather than as rulers, they thus *benefit most when they are not burdened by ruling*… Chapter 6's discussion of advantages for rulers and ruled thus seems to try to steer a middle course between Thrasymachus and Socrates, *but it fails to do so*…. The common advantage … then, seems common *only to the ruled*».[21]

Rabieh may be correct in his reading of Aristotle, but I will offer a somewhat different interpretation of the text. First of all, the juxtaposition of mastery and domestic rule with political rule is odd, given the differences between the first two forms of rule and the last one. Who the ruled are in each of these three cases differs greatly, for political rule involves ruling one's peers, while natural slaves have only limited virtue, and rule over children is concerned with developing in them habits which will make them capable of acquiring virtue. The goals of the three kinds of rule also differ: meeting life's necessities (mastery) and preparing children for a virtuous life (domestic rule), versus a much more complex and heterogeneous set of goals in political rule. As Aristotle explains in the *Ethics* (VIII/9), the political community aims «not at some advantage close at hand, but at advantage for the whole of life». These differences in the type of people one rules over and the goals of rule makes political rule differs in kind from the other two types of rule (the city is more than a large household), and much greater virtue is required in political rule

[21] M. Rabieh, *The Republican Challenge to Liberalism in Aristotle's Political Thought*, cit., pp. 86-87, p. 89 (emphasis added).

than in other kinds of rule, as Aristotle repeatedly points out (*Politics* I/1, I/7, VII/14: «rule over free persons is nobler and accompanied to a greater extent by virtue than ruling in the spirit of a master»). This opportunity to exercise virtue on a grand scale is not available in private life; as Aristotle approvingly quotes a saying of Bias, «ruling will reveal the man» (*Ethics* V/1, 1130a1). Rabieh keeps insisting that rulers should benefit from their rule as rulers, and not as citizens, and I would say that this is it: rule over a city provides rulers a unique opportunity to see for themselves, and show others, what they are capable of: «ruling will reveal the man». According to Aristotle «when [the regime] is established in accordance with equality and similarity among the citizens, they claim to merit ruling in turn. Previously, as accords with nature, they claimed to merit doing public service by turns and having someone look to their good, just as when ruling previously they looked to his advantage» (1279 a8). A claim to merit (*axia*) rule is used twice here, and when you claim to merit rule you are acting as if rule is a privilege, an honor, in exchange for which you will serve the community which gives you this honor.

I have suggested that rulers benefit from ruling because first, ruling will reveal the man, and second, because rulers are honored by the community. Rabieh, it seems to me, is led to deny the existence of a political common advantage encompassing rulers and ruled because he believes, as he suggests throughout his dissertation, that the philosophic life is superior to the political life. Thus he suggests that honor is not a genuine advantage, not a sufficient compensation for political rule.[22] Now it may be that a man like Socrates can actualize all the powers of his soul without ruling, and that he prefers being honored by men like Plato and Xenophon to being honored by the Athenian demos. But this by itself does not show that a political common advantage does not exist, or that a striving for a common advantage by those who are not Socrates is futile. I think Aristotle juxtaposes political rule, domestic rule, and mastery, to make us think about how they are different, not to suggest that they all lack a common advantage, and to make us think about how and under what circumstances the common advantage includes both rulers and the ruled.

For reasons similar to Rabieh's, Susan Collins suggests that the common advantage in the «full sense» is not possible, because for there to be «no opposition between the common advantage …..and the advantage of the good ruler» we must show that «good action in behalf of the city is the best action of a human being».[23] But why is it necessary for ruling to be «the best action» of a human being in order for it to be advantageous to rulers? The position of Rabieh and Collins requires an overly narrow understanding of «advanta-

[22] *Ibidem*, p. 89, note 8.

[23] S. Collins, *Aristotle and the Rediscovery of Citizenship*, cit., pp. 130-131.

geous», for even a philosopher can engage in political activity for practical and patriotic reasons, reasons which can fall within a broad understanding of «advantage». Maimonides exercised authority (as *Nagid*) within the Jewish community in Egypt while continuing to be a philosopher, and Alexander Kojeve served in a high position in the French Ministry of Economic Affairs without ceasing to be a philosopher. Their experience of high political office may have aided their philosophizing. Nor should we forget philosophers like Xenophon, Cicero, Thomas More and Francis Bacon: Xenophon was the leader of an army in central Asia (as recounted in his *Anabasis*), Cicero had a distinguished career as a Roman senator, and More and Bacon occupied high office (both served as Lord Chancellor) in the British government of their time. I am arguing for a position which occupies a middle ground between the 20th century's two greatest interpreters of Aristotle: Martin Heidegger and Leo Strauss, one of whom (Heidegger) tied philosophy too much to practice and philosophy, while the other (Strauss) seemed to separate practice, patriotism and philosophy overmuch. Since this is a very complex topic that cannot be treated within the confines of this essay, I refer readers to David O'Connor's provocative essay on this topic.[24]

Our perplexity about the common advantage and its place in Aristotle's political thought increases when in the next two chapters the correct and deviant regimes are named and defined. The initial stress on the number of the rulers (one, few or many) and on their goal (defined here as one of two alternatives: the common advantage or the private advantage of the rulers) gradually gives way to a stress on the character of the rulers. This can be seen in Aristotle's definition of the second of the three correct regimes (aristocracy): the first reason given for why this regime is correct is that a group with a certain character (in this case, «the best persons») rules (1279 a35). The character of the rulers in the third correct regime (polity) is also stressed: the ruling multitude in this regime is characterized by their proficiency in a type of virtue, by their proficiency in military virtue (1279 a39-1279 b4).[25] Similarly, oligarchy

[24] D.K. O'Connor, *Leo Strauss's Aristotle and Martin Heidegger's Politics*, in *Aristotle and Modern Politics*, edited by A. Tessitore, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN 2002.

[25] Polity is a complicated case, and I shall not deal with its complexities here since the focus of my paper is the concept of regime in general, and not any particular regime. Described in terms of the warrior class in Book III, polity in Book IV is presented as a kind of mixed regime, a mixture of democracy and oligarchy. Carnes Lord notes that Aristotle may justly be considered the originator of the notion of the mixed regime, and his description of polity in Book IV as a mixture of oligarchy and democracy is «intended to modify the initial account of Book III where polity is presented simply as the correct or public-spirited form of democracy» (C. Lord, *Aristotle*, cit., p. 144). For accounts of the complexity of polity see Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen*, cit., pp. 63-64, M. Davis, *The Politics of Philosophy*, cit., pp. 52-53, and Carrie-Ann Biondi, *Aristotle on the Mixed Constitution and Its Relevance*

is the regime where those with property have control, and democracy is the regime where the poor have control. Aristotle explicitly says that these definitions would hold even if it somehow happened that the poor were a minority and the rich were a majority, thus making it clear that the number of rulers in these regimes is not crucial to understanding them; the character of the rulers is what counts. Why this stress on character? Could it be because Aristotle regards an examination of the character of the rulers as the key to understanding the common advantage?[26] His definition of regimes did seem to assume that the two classes – the rich and the poor – always rule with a view to their own private advantage when they are in control in the city, and conversely, that «the best» will rule for the common advantage when they are in control. But as the claims to rule made by the rich and the poor (presented at the end of III/8 – 1280 a4-6) show, they would dispute Aristotle's assertion that they form deviant regimes because they seek a private advantage. These two groups, along with the other groups mentioned in III/6-8 (the best, and those possessing military virtue) co-exist in the same city as contenders for rule, and put forward arguments to support their claims to rule. All these claims to rule contain within them an unstated understanding of the ends of the city, and a notion of the common advantage that follows from that understanding. Since all the groups claim they are striving for the same thing – a common advantage that is fair to everyone in the city – only a dialectical examination of these dueling claims will show us where they agree, where they disagree, and what they point to. By beginning from what people say and proceeding from there, this approach has the potential to reach conclusions about the common advantage that the various groups will accept, even if the conclusions differ from their initial positions.

So Aristotle returns to his dialectical examination of the opinions of the protagonists in political life, an approach that he had abandoned midway through III/3, after pointing out that if we adopt a democratic suggestion and take the

for American Political Thought, in *Freedom, Reason and the Polis*. Patrick Coby gives us a list of Aristotle's various definitions of polity (P. Coby, *Aristotle's Three Cities and the Problem of Faction*, «Journal of Politics», 50 (1988), p. 906).

[26] Robert Bartlett argues that the closing remarks on democracy and oligarchy in III/8 shows Aristotle altering «one of the two axes on which [his classification of regimes]… depends, namely the number of the governing body», and this should make us wonder «whether the other, far more important axis of Aristotle's schema [the common advantage] also requires clarification» (R. Bartlett, *The Idea of Enlightenment: A Post-Mortem Study*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2001, p. 151). I am arguing that Aristotle moves from using two criteria to classify regimes to a single criteria: the character of the rulers. Clifford Bates comes close to adopting a position similar to mine when he writes: «the regimes will not be defined by which element is benefited, but rather by which element rules» (C. Bates, *Aristotle's Best Regime*, cit., p. 80).

common advantage as our standard, and then find that a democratic regime fails to live up to this standard, its actions would then be as illegitimate as that of the oligarchy and tyranny the democrats condemn. In the non-dialectical interlude that followed (most of III/3 to the end of III/8) we saw why the regime should be the most important factor in determining the identity of the city over time, how a regime is limited in its desire to make all the citizens of its city into good men, and what the various ends of political life are; and we received a preliminary ranking of the different regimes that the various groups contending for rule in a city can form. The common advantage has emerged as a standard for judging regimes, and we now return to dialectics in an attempt to better understand just what the common advantage is and what it entails.

4. III/9: Uncovering the correct understanding of the common advantage: the choice of rulers and the moral influence of the regime

Aristotle's critical examination of the oligarchic and democratic claims to rule in III/9 reveals that they fail to understand the highest part of the common advantage. Their claims to rule suffer from «a dual partiality»[27]: they are bad judges in their own cases, and they mistake their grasp of a part of justice for the whole of justice. Oligarchs and democrats view the city as existing primarily for defense of the citizens against external enemies and for commerce, and Aristotle carefully lays out the implications of this view. This view of the ends of the city turns the city into an alliance (*summakia* – 1280 b9) that differs from other alliances only in location (i.e. it destroys all substantive differences between different cities), and turns the law into a compact (*suntheke* – 1280 b10) to avoid injustice among the citizens, leaving out any concern with making the citizens just and good. This means that the citizens of a city only want their fellow citizens to avoid injustice in their external actions, but are not concerned with their inner disposition, with their character. In opposition to this way of looking at the city, Aristotle puts forward the correct conception of city and law: those citizens who are concerned about good laws (*eunomia* – 1280 b6) give careful attention to virtue and vice, and that city which is truly a city (i.e. a city in the full sense of the term «city») will make virtue its care. The law is related to virtue as means to end, since the goal of the law is to develop good character in the citizens. The city, therefore, is concerned with ordering the souls of its citizens, with creating that order in the souls of its citizens which will make them good and just men. This means that «oligarchs

[27] The phrase is Jill Frank's: J. Frank, *A Democracy of Distinction: Aristotle and the Work of Politics*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2005, p. 104.

and democrats ...have a partial grasp of the end of the city», and so their regimes are deviant, «not so much because they *pursue something bad* as because they *pursue the good partially or incompletely*».[28] I think we can complete Simpson's observation by concluding that oligarchies and democracies are therefore deviant, not because they consciously pursue a private advantage, but because they pursue a mistaken or false notion of the common advantage.

We must avoid thinking of this as a lofty conception of politics as it should be, rather than as it is. Aristotle had said that two things were missing to convert an alliance of two cities into one combined city: common offices (i.e. each city has its own generals and its own courts), and a concern in each city for the character of the citizens in the other city (1280 a40-b5), and I think there is a clear connection between these two things. The first seems to lead directly to the second, for public officials have to be selected in each city, which means that some criteria have to be established for their selection, and the public declaration of these criteria is bound to have some effect on the character of the citizens. For the public declaration of the criteria for choosing public officials is at the same time a public declaration of what is admirable in human beings, of what is worthy of public honor – so that the choice of virtue or wealth as the criteria for choosing public officials amounts to a public declaration that men who embody this criteria should be looked up to by the other citizens. «Every human being and every society is what it is by virtue of the highest to which it looks up».[29] Thus every city does affect the character of its citizens, it does affect the order of their souls, by showing them what they should look up to. The criteria for choosing public officials vary from city to city according to the regime – oligarchies favor wealth, aristocracies favor virtue, and polities favor courage[30] and the other qualities associated with the warrior class. Thus how a city affects the souls of its citizens depends on its regime, and this is what makes the regime the fundamental political fact in Aristotle's political science.

To put this is slightly different terms, the common advantage can be said to have two different parts – a noncontroversial part that consists of public safety and civic peace, and an inherently controversial part that concerns the character and composition of the citizen body. Such routine questions of who does, and does not, deserve to be a citizen, and who should rule, are unavoidably tied up with questions about the identity of the city, and what human type, or which human qualities, should be honored by the city. The variety of answers

[28] P.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the Politics of Aristotle*, cit., p. 164 (emphasis added).

[29] L. Strauss, *City and Man*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1964, p. 153.

[30] I am referring to the simplified version of polity presented in Book III. On the complexity of polity see note 25 above.

to these questions, based on the various conceptions of the common advantage, give rise to the various regimes. In III/9 Aristotle found the answers to these questions embedded in the oligarchic and democratic claims to rule, and his dialectical examination of these claims led him, as we have seen, to the conclusion that the laws of a city should take the promotion of virtue as their goal. The considerations Aristotle used to reach this conclusion are in conformity with ordinary moral opinion: ordinary moral opinion agrees with Aristotle that orthodoxy (right opinion) is the firmest basis of orthopraxy (right action). Thus concern with avoiding unjust acts by citizens inevitably leads to concern with making the citizens good and just. To choose to make this our goal in political life is to choose «a life lived according to deliberate choice» (*prohairesis* – 1280 a34).

Living with a concern for virtue is «living well», so the end of the city is «living well» (*euzen*) and the city properly understood is a «community in living well of both households and tribes for the sake of a complete and self-sufficient life» (1280 b33-34). We note that the parts of the city mentioned here (households and families) are not the only part of the city mentioned in Book III chapter 1 (the citizen). Is the family more important in shaping individuals than the regime? John Finnis' answer would appear to be «yes»: he has argued that political society and the political common good should be seen as only a necessary means to achieving basic human goods within families; citizens should conceive of their political society as existing to assist and promote family life.[31] In response to Finnis, Michael Pakaluk points out that Finnis' argument presumes «that what a family is, is well defined, prior to, or apart from, the enactments or law …[of a political community,] as though the relationship between families and the state were analogous to that between autonomous states and a federal government».[32] My argument about the importance of a city's regime in this paper should lead us to see that not only do the laws of a political community shape the families that exist in that community, but also that the extent and character of this shaping is decisively affected by the regime. Thus the American family is very different from the Saudi Arabian family: polygamy is prohibited in America, and the male members (especially fathers) of families have much greater authority in Saudi Arabia than in America (specially over the female members – adult, single Saudi women cannot travel abroad without the permission of their fathers). In the course of American history we can see a greater and greater penetration of the principle of

[31] J. Finnis, *Public Good: the Specifically Political Common Good in Aquinas*, in *Natural Law and Moral Inquiry: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Politics in the Work of Germain Grisez*, edited by Robert P. George, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC 1998.

[32] M. Pakaluk, *Is The Common Good of Political Society Limited and Instrumental*? «Review of Metaphysics», 55 (2001), pp. 61-62.

the American liberal democratic regime (equality) into family life: Thomas Jefferson's legislation against primogeniture, the striking down of state laws against inter-racial marriage as contrary to fundamental American principles, and contemporary arguments for same-sex marriage that are grounded in the principle of political equality.

Since aristocrats make virtue their highest concern, they would seem to have the strongest claim to rule. The question of who should rule is not so easily resolved, however, since the goals of the city include stability and security, and not just virtue; so Aristotle in III/10-11 looks at the contribution other groups can make to the city, and especially at the many (III/11), since by virtue of their numbers they are essential to defending the city against foreigners, and can cause a great deal of trouble if they are dissatisfied with existing political arrangements. These multiple goals of the city – citizen virtue, stability, and security – must be met simultaneously, and depending on the situation, one of these goals will become more pressing than the others (so that security becomes paramount in wartime). Since there is no formulaic way to balance these goals, a prudent statesman is needed to find the right balance between these often competing goals in different situations, and to give different groups more or less of a say in running the city as the situation requires.[33]

5. Conclusion

Aristotle's investigation into the regime in the first nine chapters of Book III of the *Politics* is conducted from three different points of view: first (chapters 1-3), from the point of view of the thoughtful political man, who, like Tocqueville, seeks not to see differently but to see farther than the various actors in political life; second (chapters 4-8), from the point of view of an evaluator of the possibilities of political life, using two standards (prudence [chapters 4-5], and the political form of the human good, the common advantage [chapters 6-8]); and third, from the point of view of an umpire (chapter 9), who tries to mediate between the partisans of the various regimes, promoting moderation by showing each group the flaws in its claims to rule.

Our examination of the first part of Book III (chapters 1-3) revealed the primacy of the regime in determining the moral and intellectual life of its citizens. After having shown how the regime of a city sets the horizon within

[33] S. Salkever, *Finding the Mean*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1990, pp. 84-85. Another way of stating the need to simultaneously pursue the diverse goals of political life is formulated by Susan Collins: «The partial justice of each claim is connected with the fact that the city is a composite whole in more than one way. For it is a compound not only of associations, but also of the elements that contribute to its very existence, including free persons, the wealthy, and the military» (S. Collins, *Aristotle and the Rediscovery of Citizenship*, cit., p. 136).

which the citizens live and form their opinions about right and wrong, good and bad, Aristotle turns in the next five chapters (chapters 4-8) to an evaluation of this enormous character-shaping power that regimes' possess. Aristotle shows us in chapters 4 and 5 that if the most admirable human beings are characterized by their possession of a kind of prudence that enables them to discern on their own the truth about fundamental human matters, then no regime can impart such knowledge to its citizens; this knowledge must be acquired privately. A standard different from this high form of prudence emerges in chapters 6-8 to judge regimes: the common advantage. Since all regimes claim to pursue the common advantage, Aristotle turns to a dialectical examination of the various opinions about justice and the ends of the city in chapter 9, and reveals how and why the citizens of a city are molded in manifold ways by that city's regime.

Finally, I will end by using the terminology of the four causes in Aristotle's *Physics* (the material, efficient, final and formal causes) to explain the importance of regime in Aristotle's political science: the efficient, final and formal causes of organized political life are the regime, while the material causes are the location of a city, and the human beings who live in the city. The regime is the efficient cause in the sense that the ruling body (the *politeuma*) acts with a view to preserving their way of life, and it is the final cause in the sense that it is the end or purpose of organized political life. The final cause, as David Bolotin explains, «is the end or purpose for which something comes into being or for which it exists. Thus health, for instance, can be a cause of walking by being the purpose for the sake of which someone might take walks».[34] Similarly, the regime is the final cause because as a way of life it is the goal or purpose of organized political life. It is the formal cause because it organizes the parts of the city with a view to achieving the way of life it takes as its goal.

The various functions of the regime should be ranked in order of importance if we are to appreciate its true import. Since the regime orders (*taxis*) a city with a view to something – with a view to its end, determining the identity of the city (i.e. giving the city its end) is the most valuable role of the regime, because its other functions (organizing the city, and acting to preserve its end, its way of life) necessarily follow from this one and presuppose it. How a regime defines the controversial part of the common advantage (its view of virtue, or the highest human type) will affect how it pursues the other, non-controversial parts of the common advantage (public safety and civic peace). The final cause (the end or goal of the regime), determines how the regime performs its other functions – organizing the city (formal cause) and acting to preserve its way of life (efficient cause). Thus for national socialist Germany (1933-45) the ruthless warrior was the highest human type, and it sought secu-

[34] D. Bolotin, *An Approach To Aristotle's Physics*, suny Press, Albany 1998, p. 35.

rity for its citizens through the military domination of Europe, while liberal democratic Germany (post-World War II Germany) has renounced war and conquest and seeks security for its citizens through membership in multilateral institutions such as NATO and the European Union. This goal setting function is its most important role, because, as we have seen, it affects the souls of the citizens of the city. The order (*taxis*) created by a regime is both psychic and structural, since the regime affects not just the external actions of the citizens, but also their inner-dispositions, their souls.

ABSTRACT: *Aristotle shows that routine political questions about citizenship and rule are unavoidably tied up with questions about the city's identity, and the human type honored by the city. Opposing answers to these questions give rise to the various regimes; these answers contain within them a vision of the ends of the city, and a notion of the common advantage that follows from that vision. A regime's conception of justice seeps into the parts of the city and integrates them in a way that is both psychic and structural, affecting both the external actions and the inner-disposition of the citizens. While establishing that this comprehensive integration is what makes the regime the fundamental political fact, the key to understanding the nature of a political order, we learn about the limits of political life, through understanding its capacity to promote human virtue and achieve the common advantage.*

KEYWORDS: *Aristotle, citizenship, political philosophy.*