KU Leuven
Humanities and Social Sciences Group
Institute of Philosophy

KU LEUVEN
DOCTORAL SCHOOL
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

CATCHING THE WREN

ARISTOTLE ON ONE-MAN RULE

Brecht BUEKENHOUT

Supervisor:
Prof. G. Van Riel

Co-supervisor:
Prof. S. Schorn

Dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy

April 2019

What is a Wren?

Eurasian Wren
Troglodytes Troglodytes

Dutch: Winterkoninkje
French: Troglodyte Mignon
German: Zaunkönig
Italian: Scricciolo

Golden-Crested Wren
Regulus Regulus

Dutch: Goudhaantje
French: Roitelet Huppé
German: Wintergoldhähnchen
Italian: Regolo

Acknowledgements

Finishing this dissertation was like hatching an egg: I did most of the work myself, but I could not have done it without the help of others, to all of whom I am thankful. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Gerd Van Riel, and my co-supervisor, Stefan Schorn. They helped me with defining the subject matter, supplied me with relevant questions and literature, heard me out in literally all the international conferences I participated in, and made many comments and suggestions during the writing process that I sincerely benefited from. I am also grateful to the other members of my supervisory committee, Jan Opsomer and Pieter d'Hoine, not in the least for creating the ancient philosophy community, where doctoral students are given the opportunity to present their research in an informal setting. I would like to thank Carlos Steel as well, for his inspiring reading and interesting discussion of Aristotle's *Politics* in the ancient philosophical texts seminar I participated in as a bachelor student. On the exam, he asked me a question about monarchy that I could not answer, which apparently still bothered me enough a few years later to start investigating it for my doctoral dissertation.

Over the past six years, I combined this research with various teaching assignments, which I always considered as a welcome change. To this end, I would also like to thank all professors and postdocs with whom I have had the opportunity to work together: Filip Buekens, Guy Claessens, Jan Frans Lindemans, Lode Lauwaert, Lorenz Demey, Roger Vergauwen, and Tim Heysse. As a study counselor, I also collaborated closely with my colleagues from the Study Lab, Hanna Vandenbussche, Helena De Schreye, Tim Christiaens, and Tine Vandendriessche, to whom I am most grateful for the fruitful and pleasant cooperation over all these years. The same applies to the

colleagues from the student secretariat, Erwin Blendeman and Evelyn Dehertoghe. More generally, I would like to thank all staff members at the institute for their assistance, all doctoral students and postdocs who accompanied me along the road, and all philosophy, arts, and law students who came to and participated in my classes.

In addition to those I mentioned so far, I am grateful to all whom I did not necessarily work with, but who nonetheless made my time as an assistant an enjoyable era. First, I am thinking of my fellow study counselors from the Arts Faculty, where Tim and I shared an office for three years during which we had some exciting though always fireproof adventures. My colleagues from the Law Faculty come to mind as well, and especially my office mates in Brussels, who all made me feel very welcome and at home. Finally, I would like to thank my family, and my parents in particular, for their never-ending love and support. An additional token of appreciation goes to both Kevin Vanhoof and Wouter Verbeke, who patiently proofread my dissertation and corrected many mistakes in my awkward English. An anonymous reviewer who was asked to read one of my papers once described it as distracting at best and doubtfully coherent at worst. This may be true, yet a bird that not always sings in tune might still be worth watching.

Contents

Preface

This dissertation will often refer to ancient classical texts. The references to the works of Plato and Aristotle are based on the numbering of pages and columns according to the classical editions of Henricus Stephanus (Geneva, 1578) and Immanuel Bekker (Berlin, 1831) respectively. The editions used here, out of which the further division into books and chapters is adopted, are obviously more recent and may all be found in the first part of the bibliography. As a general rule, these are the editions taken up in the online Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) database, though in the case of Aristotle's *Politics* and *Rhetoric* the text is also compared with the later (and often thought better) editions of Alois Dreizehnter and Rudolf Kassel.

Some references to the works of Aristotle are not based on the Bekker numbering, since they do not form a part of the corresponding edition. This applies to the *Constitution of the Athenians*, which was only recovered at the end of the nineteenth century, and the *Protrepticus*, which was reconstructed out of text fragments in the twentieth century. References to these two works point to the text division in the editions of Hans Oppermann and Ingmar Düring. Likewise, the other fragments from and testimonies to Aristotle's lost works do not refer to Bekker's edition, but to the numbering in the (final) fragment collection of Valentin Rose.

Introduction

Whoever wants to study Aristotle's political thought should read his *Politics*. This is one of his major works, consisting of eight books, in which he examines all themes and aspects known to him regarding the character and organization of a state. Book I is a general introduction on the naturalness of the political life and deals with certain preliminary questions regarding the household. Book II is an overview of what predecessors believed or what was commonly held to be an example of an ideal state. Book III deals with Aristotle's main ideas on citizenship and rule in all the various regimes. Books IV-VI take up practical questions like how these regimes work, what the respective causes are for their destruction, and how they may be preserved. Books VII-VIII, finally, are dedicated entirely to Aristotle's own conception of the ideal state, by taking into account various ethical, geographical, and educational conditions for its fulfillment. It is probably the most thorough philosophical investigation on politics that classical antiquity has to offer.

This, however, does not mean that Aristotle was the first to think about or to develop theories on politics.[1] Many Greek poets, historiographers, and orators have engaged in political thought, but in their work these thoughts do not yet seem to have been part of a systematic reflection on politics. This systematic character may be found for the first time in Plato, who wrote three major works on politics: the *Republic*, the *Statesman*, and the *Laws*. But Plato's theories on politics still remain strongly connected with his metaphysical

[1] In ancient thought one could distinguish political thought from political theory. Political thought, on the one hand, must be regarded as a broad category that contains every thought on political praxis or institutions; political theory, on the other hand, is a more confined category that unifies such separate thoughts into a systematic whole. For this distinction, see Christopher Rowe's introduction in C.J. Rowe & M. Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 1-2.

views. In the thought of Aristotle, political thinking gained independence of metaphysics and became a separate field of reflection. Aristotle generally calls this field a 'political science' (πολιτική as such or πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη), but also indicates once, apparently as the first author in antiquity, that the problems he is dealing with are part of 'political philosophy' (φιλοσοφία πολιτική).[2] In that regard he may be considered as the father of political philosophy, for he does not only seem to have given the discipline its independent character but probably also its name. As a figurative father, however, his philosophical theories about politics nowadays may likewise come across as superannuated and old-fashioned in a twofold respect.

A first aspect in which Aristotle differs from contemporary thinking about politics is that his thought is based on a subject matter that no longer exists. The *Politics* generally focusses on the πόλις or city-state, the small-scale community form that was so typical of the archaic and classical period of Greek antiquity. Today, however, we live in nation-states, a kind of society that is often much larger and more bound to a territory as well. That Aristotle founded his political thought on the polis is obviously not odd; our word 'politics' even descends from this term. It simply was the prototypical way of organizing a state for most ancient Greeks.[3] But in his work Aristotle went a step further and

[2] For the general definition of political science, see especially Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* I.2 (1094a27) or *Rhetoric* I.4 (1359b17). As some commentators have noticed, Aristotle also uses the expression 'political philosophy' once in *Politics* III.12 (1282b23), see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch II-III* (Berlin, 1991), p. 512, or M. Curnis & P. Accattino, *Aristotele. La Politica Libro III* (Rome, 2013), p. 203. A query into the TLG database indicates that there are no older authors who use the adjective πολιτικός along with the noun φιλοσοφία, though this combination can be found afterwards in Plutarch (*Cato Minor* 4.4), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*De antiquis oratoribus* 4 and *De Thucydide* 2), or Strabo (*Geographica* I.1.18 and I.1.23). This could have been otherwise, for both lemmas were used in the classical period by various authors, as Isocrates and especially Plato. But the former did not come closer than in his *To Nicocles* (51), where he indicates that those who teach philosophy sometimes do it through political discussions. The latter came much nearer in the fifth book of his *Republic* (473d), where Socrates expresses the statement that cities will not have a rest from evil until political power and philosophy coincide. At no point, though, Plato speaks of a 'political philosophy'. It is hence reasonable to suppose that Aristotle coined the expression.

[3] One could make a typically Greek distinction between the πόλις, the political organization of Greeks, and the ἔθνος ('nation'), the political organization of non-Greeks. Although Aristotle certainly accepts this distinction in general, he was aware that it was too rigid, for there were Greeks who lived in nation-states as well as non-Greeks who lived in city-states. In *Politics* II.2 (1261a27-29) he points to the Greek Arcadians, who lived in a confederate nation, and in II.11 he discusses the constitution in the polis of the non-Greek Carthaginians.

also tried to show that the city-state as political organization was a necessary end in a natural development of communities.[4] History soon proved him wrong, for after the Macedonian conquests at the end of the classical period the city-states were taken up in broader empires, where they were subjected to the power of absolute rulers. This marked the new era of Hellenism. When these kingdoms were later defeated by the Romans, the Greek cities were integrated in an even larger empire, after which they never received their (formal) status of free and independent states again. Since Aristotle's *Politics* not only relies strongly on the city-state but also explicitly defends the polis as political standard, its point of departure is clearly outdated.[5]

A second aspect in which Aristotle differs from present-day thought is that his *Politics* propagates ideas from another world view, for many of his beliefs do not agree any more with current modern values. The polis that stands central in the *Politics* is primarily considered to be a community of citizens rather than a place where people live.[6] Again, that is not surprising, since it refers directly to the Greek word for citizen, πολίτης. Aristotle, like his contemporaries, only considered the native, free, and sometimes even wealthy men as true citizens of the polis. But Aristotle does not simply let this view run in the background of his thinking, for he explicitly takes position against all others who partially or completely fall outside the scope of the polis: he expressly defends slavery, he deliberately excludes women from political participation, he generally deems it better when certain base sociological classes cannot take up public offices, and he repeatedly comments on the non-Greeks or barbarians in a condescending way.[7] This diverges very much from contemporary values

[4] This is indicated by Aristotle in *Politics* I.2, where he describes an evolution from the household (οἶκός or οἰκία), a community focused on the daily needs, through the village (κώμη), a community that transcends the daily needs but does not yet reach independence, to the city-state. Only the last kind of community reaches this final status, which is why it is called a 'complete community' (κοινωνία τέλειος, 1252b28).

[5] This may explain why, in contrast to many other works of Aristotle, there was little to no attention devoted to the *Politics* in the commentary tradition of the Neoplatonic and Arabic philosophers, see C. Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics (Chicago, 2013), p. xxxvi.

[6] This is why a polis must be understood, and could even be translated, as a 'citizen-state', see R.K. Balot, *Greek Political Thought* (Oxford, 2006), p. 2.

[7] Aristotle defends slavery in *Politics* I.5-6 and excludes women from political participation in I.13 because their deliberative capacity is 'not sovereign' (ἄκυρον, 1260a13). Of the classes of

which are founded on the assumption that all human beings deserve both respect and equal rights. Apart from being historically outdated, the *Politics* therefore seems to express and even defend viewpoints that we nowadays obviously no longer take for granted.

This does not mean, however, that Aristotle's political philosophy would have lost all of its relevance. Although Aristotle thinks about politics from another paradigm and reaches answers that we generally disapprove of, there is still an important correspondence with how we tend to think about politics today. The city-state is a community where many persons are excluded, this much is true, but at the same time it involves various men as well. The concentration of power in the hands of one man may have been a historical starting point, but for the vast majority of poleis this could only belong to the remote past. At the end of the classical period one-man rule occurred merely at the borders of the Greek world, as on Cyprus or Sicily, or beyond, as in Macedonia or Persia. Generally speaking, many people participated in the rule of the city-state. The polis is, in that sense, both an exclusive and an inclusive community. This is why Aristotle, in agreement with Greek practice, considers the citizens of a polis as each other's peers and wants to give them all a share in ruling the city-state.[8] There are several differences with the organization of political life today, though we seem to agree with Aristotle and many ancient Greeks that the unlimited rule of one man is not normal.

On this head, Aristotle did not just blindly accept what his contemporaries thought, but seems to have based the idea on an enormous amount of fieldwork he collaborated on with the colleagues of his school, the Lyceum. The

---

the workers and laborers he indicates in III.5 (1278a15-21) and VI.4 (1319a24-30) that they lack the necessary virtue for political office. The condescending attitude towards the so-called barbarians is present throughout the *Politics*, but especially in VII.7 (1327b23-29), where Aristotle deems them either too stupid or too slavish in comparison to the Greeks. Sometimes, however, attempts are undertaken by scholars to clear Aristotle (partially) of such ancient prejudices. An original recent example with regard to slaves and women may be found in D. Keyt, *Nature and Justice* (Leuven, 2017), pp. 241-46.

[8] Aristotle points to the equality of the citizens in *Politics* III.4 (1277b7-16) and III.6 (1279a8-10), which is why they should alternate positions in the government of the city-state. This may be regarded as a general assumption in the *Politics*, see M. Schofield, 'Aristotle', in C.J. Rowe & M. Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 318.

Peripatetic philosophers made a collection of around one hundred and fifty constitutions of Greek city-states that probably contained a description of the history and the organization of offices in all these poleis. One can be reasonably sure that Aristotle used these constitutions as a foundation on which he built his political theories, just as he used his *History of Animals* as the foundation of his biological theories.[9] In one of these theories on the movement of animals, he even comes up with a comparison of biology with politics, by making a parallel between a living being and a city-state:

> ᾧ μὲν οὖν κινεῖ κινουμένῳ μορίῳ ἡ ψυχή, εἴρηται, καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίαν· ὑποληπτέον δὲ συνεστάναι τὸ ζῷον ὥσπερ πόλιν εὐνομουμένην. ἔν τε γὰρ τῇ πόλει ὅταν ἅπαξ συστῇ ἡ τάξις, οὐδὲν δεῖ κεχωρισμένου μονάρχου, ὃν δεῖ παρεῖναι παρ' ἕκαστον τῶν γινομένων, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ποιεῖ τὰ αὑτοῦ ὡς τέτακται, καὶ γίνεται τόδε μετὰ τόδε διὰ τὸ ἔθος· ἔν τε τοῖς ζῴοις τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο διὰ τὴν φύσιν γίνεται καὶ τῷ πεφυκέναι ἕκαστον οὕτω συστάντων ποιεῖν τὸ αὑτοῦ ἔργον, ὥστε μηδὲν δεῖν ἐν ἑκάστῳ εἶναι ψυχήν, ἀλλ' ἔν τινι ἀρχῇ τοῦ σώματος οὔσης τἆλλα ζῆν μὲν τῷ προσπεφυκέναι, ποιεῖν δὲ τὸ ἔργον τὸ αὑτῶν διὰ τὴν φύσιν (*Movement of Animals* 10, 703a28-b2).
>
> We have now explained what the part is which is moved when the soul originates movement, and what is the reason for this. And the animal organism must be conceived after the similitude of a well-governed city-state. When order is once established in a city there is no more need of a separate monarch to preside over each several task. The individuals each play their assigned part as it is ordered, and one thing follows another because of habit. So in animals the same thing happens because of nature, each part naturally doing its own work as nature has composed it. There is no need then of a soul in each part, but it resides in a kind of origin in the body, and the remaining parts live by being naturally connected, and play there parts because of their nature.[10]

An animal does not need its soul to preside over every little part of its body just as a well-governed city does not need a μόναρχος or single ruler to be in charge of every task in the community. Good laws and habits keep the polis on its feet, analogous to the natural constitution of a living being. This does not mean that there is no place at all for a single ruler in a city-state, but only that he cannot

[9] Just as Aristotle's biological works are full of examples that he may have taken from the *History of Animals*, his *Politics* contains an abundant number of historical references to the constitutional life in various Greek city-states. In *Nicomachean Ethics* X.9 Aristotle even indicates explicitly that his political investigation will be executed 'out of the collected constitutions' (ἐκ τῶν συνηγμένων πολιτειῶν, 1181b17).

[10] Translation, though slightly adapted, taken from A.S.L. Farquharson in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. I (Princeton, 1984).

have authority over all matters. Most Greek cities had participatory regimes and the citizens considered monarchy only as a part of their history. Due to his empirical research, carried out in the collected constitutions, Aristotle therefore considered one-man rule as something of the past.

Although this may be in agreement with Greek practice, it was not necessary for Aristotle to hold such thought. In the fourth century BCE, many intellectuals tended to break with political practice as was customary especially in Athens and dwelled upon the idea of a city-state where power effectively rested in the hands of one individual.[11] The works of Xenophon, Isocrates, and Plato display a tendency to speak highly of monarchy. One could think that this would make Aristotle the outsider in this quartet of fourth century intellectuals, in the sense that he would have devoted little to no attention to monarchy in his political thought. After all, he does not seem to believe that a single ruler should have authority over the city. Nonetheless, nothing is further from the truth for in his *Politics* he carries out an analysis of monarchy, probably the most substantial one in antiquity, in which he sometimes even speaks positively on the rule of one man. This seems odd: if Aristotle did not consider monarchy in agreement with the rule to be expected in a city-state, why would he then still analyze and even endorse one-man rule? This will be the problem that this dissertation tries to deal with.

The focus of this dissertation will be primarily philosophical, in the sense that we will try to grasp Aristotle's ideas on monarchy. There is nevertheless a historical dimension as well, for we can connect the thought of the philosopher to the actual situation he lived in. All the other fourth century intellectuals who reflected upon one-man rule were acquainted with actual monarchs: Xenophon with the Spartan king Agesilaus, Isocrates with the Cyprian monarchs, and Plato with the tyrants of Syracuse. Likewise, Aristotle had personal ties with the tyrant Hermias of Atarneus. Even more significant is that he was a lifelong

[11] For an overview of the interest in monarchy by various Greek intellectuals from the fourth century BCE, see P.A. Barceló, *Basileia, Monarchia, Tyrannis* (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 246-84, or, more concisely, N. Luraghi, 'One-Man Government', in H. Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government* (Chichester, 2013), pp. 139-44.

acquaintance of the Macedonian royal house. He hence knew the kings who would soon change the course of history and install monarchy as the new political standard within the Greek world. Thus, in comparison with his fellow intellectuals and with regard to certain actual monarchs, it seems worthwhile to investigate Aristotle's thoughts on one-man rule.

If we want to look into a subject within Aristotle's political thought, we should not limit ourselves to the *Politics* but engage in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as well. Both works together constitute his political science, with human happiness and the good life as its object. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* this is investigated on the level of the individual human being, in the *Politics* on the level of the city-state. These levels are not separable, since a good organization of the city-state depends on what could be considered to be a good life for each of the citizens. That is why the *Nicomachean Ethics* may be regarded as an introduction to the *Politics*.[12] Although Aristotle discusses many issues in this ethical treatise, such as pleasure and friendship, the central theme of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is the inquiry into the various virtues or excellences to lead a good life. The main focus here is to distinguish these from the vices that prohibit reaching this human goal. Similarly, Aristotle dwells upon many issues in his *Politics*, from urban planning to musical education, but the main focus of the work are the various regimes human beings live in.[13] Here too, one must distinguish the good regimes from the bad ones. Aristotle takes six of them into account, of which two are monarchies: kingship and tyranny. These two regimes will therefore be the subject of this dissertation.

An investigation into kingship and tyranny may seem an easy undertaking at first sight, because it concerns a manageable subject within Aristotle's political philosophy. There are nonetheless two problems. The first problem is the diffusion of information. Although only eight of the one hundred and eleven chapters that the *Politics* is traditionally subdivided in are devoted to kingship

[12] For an outline of the various themes taken up in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as introduction to the *Politics*, see R. Kraut, *Aristotle. Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 20-177.
[13] That is why at the very end of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1181b12-23) and within *Rhetoric* I.8 (1366a17-22) Aristotle designates the regime as the central theme of the *Politics*.

or tyranny, these eight chapters are scattered over the various books of the work and, in that respect, do not constitute in themselves a unified investigation of monarchy. Moreover, there are also various separate remarks on or allusions to kingship and tyranny elsewhere in the *Politics* and in other treatises. Due to this dispersion, it is not that easy to understand Aristotle's thoughts on monarchy. The second problem is the pitiful conservation of textual material. Many of the constitutions gathered by Aristotle and his colleagues probably contained a lot of information on monarchy in their historical part. It is in that respect regrettable that in the only remaining constitution, the *Constitution of the Athenians* (Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία), exactly the first part on kingship is lost.[14] Similarly, Aristotle's treatise *On Kingship* (Περὶ βασιλείας) is not preserved, although we have some text fragments that potentially originate from this work. Since the authenticity of these fragments is disputed, we must be cautious when taking them into consideration.[15]

When we look into Aristotle's political philosophy, it is immediately clear that the written presentation of his ideas does not meet the criteria of a modern scientific treatise. The *Politics* is written in a terse and unclear style, and contains certain repetitions with slight variations and strange conversions from one topic to the other, so that it is not that easy to read it as a unified treatise.[16] On the other hand, nothing prevents us from believing that it was at least Aristotle's aim to propagate his political ideas as all being part of one single theory. In that respect, we may regard the *Politics* as a work of both variety and unity.[17] This is why there is no scholarly consensus on how to read the *Politics*:

[14] We know this by the summary of the historical part in the *Constitution of the Athenians* (41.2) itself and by the so-called *Epitome of Heraclides* (Rose fr. 611), see P.J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian* Athenaion Politeia (Oxford, 1981), p. 65.

[15] All the fragments are collected in V. Rose, *Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta*, (Leipzig, 1886), although there are later editions as well, such as W.D. Ross, *Aristotelis Fragmenta Selecta* (Oxford, 1955) or O. Gigon, *Aristotelis Opera* (Berlin, 1987).

[16] Cf. R. Robinson, *Aristotle. Politics Books III and IV* (Oxford, 1995), p. viii: 'Aristotle's *Politics* is a book with great defects, which probably lose it many readers. The style is often awkward and often obscure, usually owing to excessive brevity, sometimes owing to excessive tentativeness or caution. The order of thought is annoyingly inconsequential; Aristotle announces a programme and then does not follow it, or follows it very imperfectly. Tiresome repetitions occur and the same subject is treated again.'

[17] According to Christopher Rowe, we may regard the *Politics* as an intermediate work between the *Metaphysics*, which looks like a collection of independent treatises, and the *Nicomachean*

some scholars, on the one hand, believe that it is a treatise with diverse conceptions of political thought, whereas others, on the other hand, take it to be a work that is completely coherent.[18] Nowadays, the latter opinion seems to be the dominant one. An image that may illustrate this is Fred Miller's presentation of the *Politics* as a tree trunk, with Book I as the root system, Books II-III as the trunk itself, and both Books IV-VI and VII-VIII as two separate branches of the tree.[19] One may doubt, however, that the construction of the books is as systematic as in Miller's picture, for each book contains many thoughts and ideas – the leaves – that do not necessarily agree with, or even presuppose what is said in, the other books. The *Politics* may, in that respect, better be presented as a hedge where the branches are not necessarily built on a trunk but directly rise from the ground. This does not mean that they are not connected to each other, for within a hedge the branches are strongly interwoven. Though since a hedge is often thick-leaved, it may not be that simple to determine the exact relation of the branches. The underlying structure of the hedge may be unclear at first sight, hence it is the task of the researcher to put his head behind the leaves.

When we want to look into kingship and tyranny, it seems that these two regimes may be encountered in the hedge too, though certainly in their own peculiar way. We may continue the parallel between biology and politics by noticing that the Greek words for various monarchs, that is βασιλεύς ('king') and τύραννος ('tyrant'), are also the names used by Aristotle in *History of Animals* VIII.3 for two of the smallest European bird species: king is the name given to the Eurasian wren (592b27), tyrant to the golden-crested wren

Ethics, which has the appearance of a unified treatise, see C.J. Rowe, 'Aims and Methods in Aristotle's *Politics*', *The Classical Quarterly* 27 (1977), p. 159.

[18] These two viewpoints on the *Politics* as a work with either various or only one, unified theory on politics may be found respectively in the commentaries of Eckart Schütrumpf and Peter Simpson, see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch I* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 64-65, and P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the* Politics *of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), pp. xvi-xvii. Although the latter commentary has the merit of explaining a lot of difficult passages in a coherent way, I tend to agree more with Schütrumpf.

[19] See the supplement 'Characteristics and Problems of Aristotle's *Politics*' of F.D. Miller, 'Aristotle's Political Theory', in E.N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2017), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/aristotle-politics.

(592b23).[20] These birds are often hidden in shrubs and hedges, and are hence more heard than seen. But even when they do show up in sight, they are certainly not easy to grasp, due to their tiny figure and rapid movements. This is why Aristotle himself indicates, further in his *History of Animals*, that such wrens are 'hard to catch' (δυσάλωτος, 615a17). Given the scattered position of information on monarchy and the regrettable preservation of textual material, something similar, then, may be said of the regimes of kings and tyrants. An inquiry into Aristotle's ideas on one-man rule is thus an attempt to catch the metaphorical wrens in his political theory.

Since we want to deal with a topic from Aristotle's political philosophy, it is important to state the relation with the existing literature. In the last three decades, Aristotle's political thought seems more popular than ever, and year after year scientific books and articles on the *Politics* continue to be published.[21] Most of the book-sized contributions deal with Aristotle's political philosophy in general, although many of these have a certain thematic focus as well. In this dissertation, however, I want to restrict myself to the subject of one-man rule rather than write a treatise on Aristotle's entire political thought. Whenever I feel that the issue is interesting though too far afield, I will simply refer to relevant literature in a footnote for further reading. This is not to say that I am the first one to deal with the issue of kingship or tyranny in Aristotle's political thinking. As many scholars have written contributions on the *Politics*,

[20] In antiquity various names were used to indicate these birds. Next to βασιλεύς the Eurasian or common wren (*troglodytes troglodytes*) was also called πρέσβυς ('old man') or τρωγλοδύτης ('cave dweller'). The golden-crested wren (*regulus regulus*) and fire-crested wren (*regulus ignicapilla*), or simply goldcrest and firecrest, do not seem to be distinguished yet by ancient zoologists. Next to τύραννος they were also called βασιλίσκος ('princelet'), see W.G. Arnott, *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Z* (London, 2007), pp. 20-21.

[21] The recent interest in Aristotle's political philosophy seems to have been started at the eleventh *Symposium Aristotelicum* that took place in Friedrichshafen/Bodensee in the Fall of 1987. Few years later this resulted in the conference proceeding of G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' Politik* (Göttingen, 1990), in which various seminal papers on Aristotle's *Politics* were taken up. Ever since the publication of scientific contributions did not come to a stop. Recently, two collections on the *Politics* appeared, see M. Deslauriers & P. Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Cambridge, 2013), and T. Lockwood & T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle's* Politics. *A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, 2015). Not long ago, two translators of the *Politics* also published revised editions of their translation, see C. Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics (Chicago, 2013), and C.D.C. Reeve, *Aristotle. Politics* (Indianapolis, 2017).

they have often dealt with the subject of one-man rule as well. After all, Aristotle's analysis of monarchy is significant within his political thought, for it relates to various important topics such as the rule of law, the justification of power, and the consent of the subjects. In general, it could even be argued that it relates to the notion of rule as such.[22] What seems to be a frequently occurring practice, however, is that other scholars have looked into kingship and tyranny in order to explain how these two regimes constitute fitting parts of Aristotle's overall political theory.[23] In this dissertation, on the contrary, I will try to show that monarchies are an exceptional kind of rule that must be distinguished from, rather than put on a par with, the other regimes.

This dissertation will consist of four chapters and each of these is the result of a revision of published or forthcoming material that aims to make a certain point. Although I have narratively connected these papers into what I hope to be a comprehensive whole, each chapter still stands on its own in the sense that its content functions as an argument as such rather than as a necessary step in an argumentation. This is not to mirror myself with the established scholars who collected their separate publications on ancient political philosophy into one volume.[24] Nor is it the intent to imitate my source, as students of a certain subject sometimes tend to do, and adopt an order of composition that may resemble Aristotle's preserved works. The reason that each chapter remains autonomous to a certain extent, is that I do not believe that Aristotle developed a single and unified theory on monarchy. He has many things to say on kingship and tyranny, this much is true, though he does not seem to have arranged all

[22] Interesting to note is that the ancient grammarian Julius Pollox (second century CE) writes in his *Onomasticon* (VIII.84) that ἀρχή ('rule') may also be called ἡγεμονία, προστασία, βασιλεία, δεσποτεία, δυναστεία, μοναρχία, τυραννίς, ἐπιμέλεια, or στρατηγία. Literally all these Greek concepts will play a role in Aristotle's analysis of one-man rule.

[23] For instance, kingship and tyranny are presented as fitting parts of Aristotle's political theory in the recent works of T.L. Pangle, *Aristotle's Teaching in the* Politics (Chicago, 2013), pp. 155-65 and pp. 210-17, and B. Langmeier, *Ordnung in der Polis* (München, 2018), pp. 289-316 and pp. 440-46. An interesting alternative that (only) takes kingship and its apparent problems as a starting point is D. Riesbeck, *Aristotle on Political Community* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 17-44. In its last chapter (pp. 236-87), however, David Riesbeck makes every effort to show that kingship eventually does not hold a peculiar place in Aristotle's *Politics*.

[24] Three examples of scholars who collected their papers on Aristotle's (and Plato's) political thought are M. Schofield, *Saving the City* (London, 1999); M.H. Hansen, *Reflections on Aristotle's* Politics (Copenhagen, 2013); and D. Keyt, *Nature and Justice* (Leuven, 2017).

these ideas under a systematic heading. Nonetheless, this does not mean that we cannot draw general conclusions from these ideas, for taken together they will offer us various insights. That is why the conclusion of this dissertation will be presented as a bundle of such findings.

Although the chapters may retain a certain autonomy, there is of course a logical order in which they are arranged: first the whole, then the parts. The first chapter presents monarchy as a peculiar kind of rule in Aristotle's political thought. In this chapter we will look into all the subcategories of kingship and tyranny, and distinguish these in various respects from all the other regimes in Aristotle's classical sixfold model. The second chapter deals with Aristotle's lost treatise *On Kingship* that allegedly was written to Alexander the Great and instructed him how to rule as king. In this chapter we will see how one of Aristotle's categories of kingship, the so-called absolute kingship, cannot function as a model for the Macedonian kingship; instead, not one, but many of the other categories seem fitting for Alexander's rule. The third chapter looks into all the passages on absolute kingship and tries to give a philosophical rather than historical explanation for the occurrence in Aristotle's *Politics*. In this chapter we will see how not Alexander but Plato is the point of reference Aristotle had in mind, though the latter does not seem to agree completely with his former master. The fourth chapter, finally, deals with Aristotle's idea that tyranny may be preserved in two separate ways. In this chapter we will once again make a connection with Plato by explaining how one of the ways is in accordance with Plato, whereas the other is not.

In its entirety, this dissertation aims to present itself more as part of the history of philosophy than of political philosophy. The first chapter may offer some insights on Aristotle's analysis of monarchy that might be interesting for political philosophers, but the rest of the dissertation does not explicitly try to show the usefulness or relevance of Aristotle's ideas for current political thinking. When comparisons are made, as with Alexander or Plato, it is only with Aristotle's contemporaries in order to understand his political thought as such, and not to appreciate or criticize it from a present-day perspective.

Nonetheless, many of Aristotle's political ideas might still be useful when one wants to reflect on politics, and this goes for his ideas on one-man rule too. Whether it concerns his depiction of the ideal variant of monarchy, his analysis of the destruction of realistic versions, or even his suggestions to improve deviant kinds, these ideas remain relevant up to a point to everyone who wants to reflect upon political theory and practice.

Chapter 1:
The Problem of Monarchy

Kingship and tyranny are the two instances of a monarchy that form a part of Aristotle's sixfold model of regimes, which is arranged by a qualitative and a quantitative criterion. If one looks closer to these two criteria and their internal logic, then one could make a distinction between monarchies and the other regimes. An investigation into some defining aspects of the various categories of kingship and tyranny seems to confirm that monarchies are indeed understood in a unique way when compared to the other regimes. A threefold inquiry into the constitutional status, the kind of rule, and the relative valuation also shows that monarchies can be set apart from the other regimes from the sixfold model. This indicates in general the problematic position of one-man rule in Aristotle's political thought.[25]

1.1 The classical model of regimes

Aristotle's political thought consists for the most part in an analysis of regimes. In his *Politics*, however, he only starts this analysis from the third book onwards, and there even only at a third stage, after having discussed citizenship and the city-state first.[26] In *Politics* III.6, he finally defines a regime: 'The regime is an arrangement of a city with respect to its offices, particularly the one that has authority over all matters' (ἔστι δὲ πολιτεία πόλεως τάξις τῶν τε ἄλλων ἀρχῶν καὶ μάλιστα τῆς κυρίας πάντων, 1278b8-10).[27] Depending on how these authoritative offices are arranged, one could speak of different regimes. Within chapter III.6, Aristotle introduces a qualitative criterion to

[25] This chapter is based on the article 'Aristotle's Peculiar Analysis of Monarchy', *History of Political Thought* 39 (2018), pp. 216-34.
[26] The third book may be regarded, as some scholars have noted long ago, as the central book of the *Politics*, see W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. II (Oxford, 1887), p. xxxi.
[27] All translations from the *Politics* are taken from C. Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics (Chicago, 2013).

distinguish regimes from each other by referring to the different kinds of rule in the household. The rule over slaves is primarily thought to be to the private advantage of the master, and only accidentally in the interest of the slaves, who are not free, whereas the rule over free subjects such as women and children is for their sake, or at least for the sake of something common to all (1278b32-40). By analogy, one could equally rule a city-state either to the private advantage of the rulers or to the common advantage of rulers and ruled. Since cities are essentially thought to consist of free men, Aristotle understands regimes where one rules with a view to the common advantage as correct, while those where rulers look only to their own advantage as errant and deviating from the correct ones (1279a17-21).

In the next chapter, *Politics* III.7, Aristotle adds another criterion, but now a quantitative one: depending on whether there are one, few, or many rulers, one could further distinguish the various regimes. In combination with the qualitative criterion from the former chapter, he then ends up with a well-known classification of six regimes, with the first of each couple as the correct and the second as the errant regime: kingship and tyranny are rule by one; aristocracy and oligarchy rule by few; polity and democracy rule by many (1279a32-b10, cf. 1289a26-30).[28] This classification occurs outside the *Politics* as well, both in *Eudemian Ethics* VII.9 (1241b27-32) and *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 (1160a31-35), with as sole differences that democracy in the former work is simply called the 'people' (δῆμος), and polity in the latter work 'timocracy', based as it is on a property qualification. The sixfold model of regimes is certainly not an invention of Aristotle himself, but has its roots in a long tradition of Greek intellectual thought.[29] Plato in particular seems to have influenced Aristotle's model, since the *Statesman* (291c-92a and 302d-03b)

[28] The Greek word πολιτεία is used by Aristotle to indicate both a regime or constitution in general, and a specific regime in particular. The latter is translated as 'polity'.

[29] See especially J. de Romilly, 'Le classement des constitutions d'Herodote à Aristote', *Revue des Études Grecques*, 72 (1959), pp. 81-99, who traces the quantitative distinction between one, few, and many rulers back to Herodotus (III.80-82), with further duplications in later authors. After Aristotle, this sixfold model was still used by others as Polybius (VI.4.5-10), who no longer calls the deviant rule by many democracy, but 'mob-rule' (ὀχλοκρατία) instead.

also contains a sixfold classification of regimes, and the fourth book of the *Laws* (715b) mentions a similar distinction between rule to the common and to the particular advantage.[30] As indicated by Mogens Herman Hansen, it is nevertheless Aristotle who often gets the credit for this model, for it is in the third book of the *Politics* that the typology received its classical formulation.[31] This model can be outlined as follows:

Diagram I:

	One ruler	**Few rulers**	**Many rulers**	
Common advantage ≈ rule over free	Kingship	Aristocracy	Polity	→ **correct**
Private advantage ≈ rule over slaves	Tyranny	Oligarchy	Democracy	→ **errant**

As such, the first two regimes from the left, kingship (βασιλεία) and tyranny (τυραννίς), seem to fit well into this model, in so far as they are considered the two instantiations of a regime with a single ruler, which is a monarchy or regime with 'one-man rule' (μοναρχία). A kingship is the correct regime with a ruler who reigns for the common advantage, whereas a tyranny is its deviant variant with rule only for the sake of the ruler, just as an aristocracy differs from an oligarchy in case of few rulers, and a polity from a democracy in case of many rulers. The most significant line of demarcation within this model therefore seems to be the horizontal line, determined by the qualitative distinction between common and private advantage.

There is, however, a notorious problem with this distinction between correct and deviant regimes, which relates to Aristotle's ideas on the city-state and especially citizenship. The distinction between 'the common advantage' (τὸ κοινὸν συμφέρον) and 'the private advantage' (τὸ ἴδιον συμφέρον) is that

[30] See F.D. Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1995), p. 153. Aristotle did not, however, entirely copy Plato, for Plato still uses the name 'democracy' twice for a regime with many rulers, while Aristotle distinguishes 'polity' from 'democracy'.
[31] See M.H. Hansen, *Reflections on Aristotle's* Politics (Copenhagen, 2013), p. 2.

rulers can rule either for the benefit of the whole community or their own, particular interest.[32] This community is the city-state, which is constituted by its citizens. Who should be considered a citizen is a question that Aristotle deals with in *Politics* III.1. A citizen does not merely seem to be someone who lives in a certain city, for otherwise slaves and foreigners could be citizens as well. Neither is a citizen, in the true sense of the word, someone who does not participate completely in the community, such as children or elderly men. What seems to be characteristic of a citizen is that he can partake in the decision-making process of a city-state by taking up public offices. That is why Aristotle concludes this chapter on citizenship with the following definition:

> τίς μὲν οὖν ἐστιν ὁ πολίτης, ἐκ τούτων φανερόν· ᾧ γὰρ ἐξουσία κοινωνεῖν ἀρχῆς βουλευτικῆς ἢ κριτικῆς, πολίτην ἤδη λέγομεν εἶναι ταύτης τῆς πόλεως, πόλιν δὲ τὸ τῶν τοιούτων πλῆθος ἱκανὸν πρὸς αὐτάρκειαν ζωῆς, ὡς ἁπλῶς εἰπεῖν (1275b17-21).
>
> Who the citizen is, then, is evident from these things. Whoever is entitled to share in an office involving deliberation or decision is, we can now say, a citizen in this city; and the city is the multitude of such persons that is adequate with a view to a self-sufficient life, to speak simply.

A citizen thus appears to be someone who can participate in the rule of the city. The problem, then, is of course that the classes of citizens and rulers (may) coincide, which has consequences for the distinction between common and private advantage. For if rulers rule to the common advantage of all citizens, but all citizens simultaneously constitute the ruling-class, then the rulers simply rule to their own advantage. If, for instance, a king is a monarch who rules for the common advantage but is simultaneously the only citizen, then he seems to

[32] That rule to the *common* advantage is for the sake of the *community* may be gathered from *Politics* III.6 (1279a17-21) or III.7 (1279a32-39). One may note that there is also a similar correspondence in Greek between τὸ κοινὸν συμφέρον and κοινωνία. There is no consensus, however, on what this common advantage exactly means: is it the advantage of all individual citizens or a special property of the community of citizens? For an overview of these positions, see F.D. Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1995), pp. 194-224, and D. Morrison, 'The Common Good', in M. Deslauriers & P. Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 182-90. I agree with Richard Kraut, who agrees with Fred Miller, that it must be something in between: the common advantage is a common good that all citizens aim for, and not another transcendent property of the city, though they cannot aim for it outside the context of the political community, see R. Kraut, *Aristotle. Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 213-14.

rule, as a tyrant, in his own interest. In other words, due to this definition of a citizen as someone who partakes in rule, the difference between common and private advantage seems to disappear.[33]

No scholar, however, ever wanted to go that far, and thus solutions were sought to save the distinction between common and private advantage. The classical solution, put forward by scholars as John Cooper and David Keyt, is that citizenship itself may be split up in various notions: a citizen in the full sense of the word is someone who can partake in the regime; in another sense, it may apply as well to those who have no right to take up public offices but whose benefit the rulers nevertheless have to take into account when they want to rule for the common advantage.[34] Another solution, put forward recently by David Riesbeck, is that not citizenship but the accessibility to public offices must be subdivided: all citizens have access to some offices, but the highest and authoritative offices remain the prerogative of the actual rulers.[35] Which solution works best is not what matters here, for what is important is that the distinction between common and private advantage can only be maintained when rulers and citizens do not completely coincide.[36] But the ratio of rulers to

[33] Scholars differ on the extent of the problem: Donald Morrison only thinks that it does not need to affect the distinction between polity and democracy, whereas Carrie-Ann Biondi Khan argued that it affects just as little the distinction between aristocracy and oligarchy, see D. Morrison, 'Aristotle's Definition of Citizenship', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 16 (1999), pp. 143-46, and C.-A. Biondi Khan, 'Aristotle, Citizenship, and the Common Advantage', *Polis* 22 (2005), pp. 16-18. Both authors nevertheless agree that the problem – if it is a problem – affects the distinction between kingship and tyranny, as was noticed already by W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. I (Oxford, 1887), pp. 228-30.

[34] See J.M. Cooper, 'Political Animals and Civic Friendship', in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' Politik* (Göttingen, 1990), pp. 228-29, and D. Keyt, 'Aristotle and Anarchism', *Reason Papers* 18 (1993), p. 140. Cooper defines these different levels of citizenship as 'narrow' and 'broad', whereas Keyt speaks of 'first-class citizens' and 'second-class citizens'. Donald Morrison slightly altered this perspective by not considering these various conceptions of citizenship, but merely various degrees of citizenship, see D. Morrison, 'Aristotle's Definition of Citizenship', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 16 (1999), pp. 156-61.

[35] See D.J. Riesbeck, *Aristotle on Political Community* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 223-28.

[36] This perspective has, to my knowledge, only been challenged in C.-A. Biondi Khan, 'Aristotle, Citizenship, and the Common Advantage', *Polis* 22 (2005), pp. 18-22, where it is argued that the distinction between common and private advantage is not in jeopardy because rule for the common advantage is not only in the interest of the citizens, who constitute the ruling class, but in the interest of the entire household. It is doubtful, however, that Aristotle advocated this view, for in the third book of his *Politics* he clearly understands the common advantage as the mere advantage of the citizens (1279a28-32 or 1283b40-84a3). Likewise, he understands the city-state only as a community of citizens (1274b41 or 1276b1-2).

citizens varies in the various regimes. In that respect, the qualitative criterion of two ways to rule depends on the quantitative criterion of the three different ruling numbers, which means that the vertical lines in Aristotle's sixfold model of regimes seem to be just as significant as the horizontal line.

As such, the two vertical lines in *Diagram I* appear to be equal, for they make up the distinction between one, few, and many rulers. It may seem tempting at first sight to think that the most significant of these two lines is the right one, in the sense that it would distinguish regimes with many and thus enough citizens as rulers from the ones where there are too little. After all, Aristotle indicates in the above cited definition of a citizen that all these citizens, as office-holders, make up the city as a multitude that is 'adequate' (ἱκανός, 1275b20) to live an independent life. Consequently, when there are too few citizens as rulers that condition does not seem to be met. We have to note, however, that the quantitative criterion in regimes with few rulers (aristocracy and oligarchy) and regimes with many rulers (polity and democracy) is a relative criterion. When there is a certain large amount of rulers in a small city-state, we could call it a regime with many rulers, though when the same amount of rulers governs a large city-state, it becomes a regime with few rulers. In other words, what we call regimes with few or many rulers simply depends on the number of citizens that constitutes the polis.

The above does not apply to regimes where there is only one ruler, for there the criterion is not relative but absolute: there *is* only one ruler who holds the (authoritative) offices. Aristotle's definition of a citizen and its further reference to an adequate multitude therefore seems to exclude monarchies.[37] This means that the vertical line on the left in *Diagram I* appears to be an important one, for it distinguishes monarchies from the other regimes. Although many scholars have written before on the place of either kingship or tyranny in the *Politics*, there does not seem to exist a systematic account of

[37] See E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch II-III* (Berlin, 1991), p. 394: 'Wenn Aristoteles von der Leistung der Vollbürgerschaft ausgeht, die aufgrund ihrer hinreichenden Zahl oder der Vollständigkeit der von ihr wahrgenommenen Funktionen […] Autarkie erfüllen kann, dann schließt dieser Ausgangspunkt monarchische Verfassungen, in denen ja im strengen Sinne der Monarch allein Bürger mit politischen Rechten ist, aus.'

Aristotle's understanding of monarchy, considered as the generic term for both kingship and tyranny.[38] It will hence be interesting to investigate the contrast between monarchies, on the one hand, and the regimes with few or many rulers, on the other hand, in order to highlight the peculiar position of one-man rule in Aristotle's analysis of regimes.

As a point of departure, we will start with an overview of all the variants of monarchy in order to show how they relate to each other, but equally, and more importantly, how they differ from the other regimes. Next, we will deal with three ways wherein monarchies indeed seem to be different in comparison with the other regimes, namely with regard to their constitutional status, their kind of rule, and their relative valuation. We will always start with the model from *Politics* III.6-7, so as to compare it with other chapters and passages from the works of Aristotle. This will lead to the result that monarchies are dealt with oddly: Aristotle does not seem to be coherent in his definitions of kingship and tyranny, which is why he not only appears to understand them as essential parts of the sixfold model, but simultaneously sets them apart from the other regimes in alternative models.

1.2 Six categories of monarchy

Although the sixfold model of regimes is not essentially his own, Aristotle may be regarded as the first who clearly divided these regimes into different categories. Just as he distinguishes different kinds of democracies, oligarchies, and aristocracies, he also made a distinction between different sorts of monarchies. In *Politics* III.14, he mentions the different kinds of kingship, in IV.10 the various types of tyranny.

[38] Kingship and tyranny are recently dealt with in V. Laurand, 'Nature de la royauté dans les *Politiques* d'Aristote', in E. Bermon e.a (eds.), *Politique d'Aristote* (Pessac, 2011), pp. 71–87 and S. Gastaldi, 'La tirannide nella *Politica* di Aristotele', in S. Gastaldi & J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran* (Sankt Augustin, 2009), pp. 139-55 respectively. The only exception I know that deals with monarchy in general is the short appendix in B. Yack, *The Problems of a Political Animal* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 85-87, where monarchies are set apart from the republican forms of political communities. Since Yack indicates that a more comprehensive account of monarchy 'would devote considerably more space' (p. 87), this chapter may be considered as an attempt that tries to meet this requirement.

In *Politics* III.14 Aristotle lists five sorts of kingships. The enumeration is clearly systematic, in so far as he begins with the variant that is closest to him in space and time, and then continues with the ones that are further away, first in space, then in time.[39] The first category of kingship (1285a2-16) is particularly seen present in Sparta, which is a kingship being especially 'based on law' (κατὰ νόμον). In such a regime, the authority of the king is limited almost exclusively to matters related to war, when the kings are on a military campaign.[40] This moderate version of a kingship is therefore regarded by Aristotle as a mere generalship for life. Whether the subjects of such a king assent to his rule is not made explicit, but since Aristotle indicates later in *Politics* V.10 (1313a5-6) that kingship is a 'voluntary sort of rule' (ἑκούσιος ἀρχή), it cannot be held otherwise. Aristotle further indicates that such kingships are either 'on the basis of family' (κατὰ γένος) – in other words, 'hereditary' – or 'elective' (αἱρεταί). Two further points seem remarkable. The first one is that Aristotle does not restrict it to a single city as such, for he presents Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek cities in the Trojan war, as a king from this first category as well.[41] The second point is that it does not need to be restricted to Greek states, for it could also suit certain non-Greek nations such as the Carthaginian or the Molossian states.[42]

The second category of kingship (1285a16-29) is exclusively, but not exhaustively, non-Greek, for it is a regime that appears among some of the barbarians. This regime is also based on law, 'hereditary' (πάτρια), and

[39] See P. Carlier, 'La notion de *pambasileia* dans la pensée politique d'Aristote', in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes* (Fribourg, 1993), p. 106.
[40] Admittedly, Aristotle indicates once that 'matters related to the gods' (τὰ πρὸς τοὺς θεούς, 1285a6) are also assigned to these kings, which means that they had a religious function as well. In general, though, Aristotle connects this kingship only to warlike activities.
[41] Aristotle cites Homer's *Iliad* (II.391-393), although not completely correct, see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch II-III* (Berlin, 1991), p. 541.
[42] Already in II.11 (1272b37-73a2), Aristotle considered the kings from the barbarian city of Carthage comparable with those from Sparta. And in V.11 (1313a23-33), he mentions the powers of the Molossian kings from Epirus, together with the ones from Sparta, as examples of a limited version of kingship. That Aristotle also takes into account non-Greek variants of kingship is apparent from the beginning of III.14 (1284b37-40), when he asks the question whether kingship is advantageous 'for the city or the territory' (καὶ πόλει καὶ χώρᾳ), with χώρα pointing to the area of a non-Greek 'nation' (ἔθνος), see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch II-III* (Berlin, 1991), p. 539.

exercised 'over willing persons' (ἑκόντων). Such a king has much more power than a general for life, for Aristotle equates it with the despotic rule of a tyrant. This regime is therefore considered to be a monarchy that has features of both kingship and tyranny, which is the reason why we will describe it here as a barbarian monarchy. Although Aristotle does not give examples of such a regime, it is clear that he considers the Persian kingship as a typical example of this monarchy over rather slavish subjects.[43]

The third category of kingship (1285a29-b3) is called an αἰσυμνητεία ('rule of an overseer'), which was later considered as the Greek equivalent of the Roman dictator.[44] Aristotle compares this αἰσυμνητεία to the barbarian monarchy, for it too is kingly in being lawful and exercised over willing persons, and tyrannical in having despotic powers. It nevertheless differs in two respects from the second category. First, it is not hereditary, but only elective, which is why Aristotle calls it an 'elective tyranny' (αἱρετὴ τυραννίς). Second, the αἰσυμνητεία apparently appeared, at least in Aristotle's technical conception of the term, only in Greek cities from the past. Aristotle probably has the archaic period in mind, for he says that Pittacus was once elected by the Mytilenaeans as such an αἰσυμνήτης.[45]

The fourth category of kingship (1285b3-19) is equally thought to be a category that does not occur any more, for Aristotle situates it in 'the times of the heroes' (τοὺς ἡρωικοὺς χρόνους), thus even further away in time than the αἰσυμνητεία. This is why it will be called a heroic kingship. Characteristic of a

[43] Aristotle indicates in III.14 (1285a19-22) that barbarians easily accept such despotic rule, because they are 'more slavish' (δουλικώτεροι) than Greeks, and *a fortiori* the barbarians from Asia, i.e. the ones ruled by the Achaemenid kings. Moreover, he speaks in III.13 of 'the Persian king' (ὁ Περσῶν βασιλεύς, 1284a41-1284b1), but often considers his rule to be tyrannical (as in 1313a37-40 or 1313b9-10), which fits the ambivalent description of this regime quite well.

[44] This comparison is made in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Antiquitates Romanae* (V.73.3). This is why αἰσυμνητεία is often translated as 'dictatorship' and αἰσυμνήτης as 'dictator', as is the case in C. Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics (Chicago, 2013), pp. 88-89, or C.D.C. Reeve, *Aristotle. Politics* (Indianapolis, 2017), pp. 75-76.

[45] Aristotle cites Alcaeus (Diehl fr. 87), who nevertheless calls Pittacus only 'tyrant'. According to some remaining fragments from a *Constitution of the Cumaeans* (Rose fr. 524), Aristotle allegedly indicated that the tyrants in Cumae – which one? – were previously called αἰσυμνῆται as well. For further discussion on the αἰσυμνητεία as a monarchic category in Aristotle's political thought, see F.E. Romer, 'The *Aisymnêteia*: A Problem in Aristotle's Historic Method', *The American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982), pp. 25-46.

heroic king is that he possessed more power than a military commander, for he was also in charge of juridical and religious matters, without going so far as to equate his power with that of a tyrant. Like the second category, the kingship is thought to be in accordance with law, exercised over willing persons, and hereditary. This last aspect is justified here by the fact that the first of these kings were considered to be the 'benefactors' (εὐεργέται) of their subjects. Although Aristotle does not give any examples here, such benefactions can point to both Greek cities and barbarian nations.[46]

After the description of the four categories, Aristotle summarizes them in brief, and then adds a fifth category of kingship (1285b29-33). The description of this kingship in III.14 is very short, for it is defined only as the rule of a person who is 'sovereign over all matters' (πάντων κύριος), later called a παμβασιλεία ('all-kingship', 1285b36). Aristotle only characterizes it as a household management for a city or for one or several nations, which indicates that it could occur in both Greek and barbarian civilizations. The shortness of its description could be explained by Aristotle already having alluded to such an absolute kingship in two passages from III.13, where he brings forward the idea of god-like individuals who deserve all authority in the city due to their preeminence in virtue. These individuals do not rule according to law, in contrast to the four other categories, 'for they themselves are law' (αὐτοὶ γάρ εἰσι νόμος, 1284a13-14), but their subjects do assent to their rule, in agreement with the other four categories, for it is only natural to obey them 'gladly' (ἀσμένως, 1284b33). As such, it seems that a king with this extraordinary character could only be chosen, but in III.17 (1288a15-19) Aristotle also takes into account that this preeminence in virtue could occur in a whole family, which would make it hereditary as well. To whom this kingship points is not clear and some suggestions were made in the past.[47] There is, however, no need

[46] In a different passage from *Politics* V.10 (1310b34-40), Aristotle gives examples of these beneficiary practices, and mentions the Athenian king Codrus, the Persian king Cyrus the Great, and the (oldest) Spartan, Macedonian, and Molossian kings.

[47] It was once suggested that Aristotle had the Persian monarchy in mind, see W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. III (Oxford, 1902), pp. 255-56. More often, scholars have linked

to presume that Aristotle thought of any living king or regime from the present or past. In that respect, the παμβασιλεία merely functions as Aristotle's ideal version of a (theoretical) kingship.[48]

In *Politics* IV.10, Aristotle lists three sorts of tyrannies. The first two categories (1295a7-17) were already discussed in III.14: the barbarian monarchy and the αἰσυμνητεία. The only difference seems to be that the barbarian monarchy is deemed to be elective here, but hereditary in III.14. It seems plausible, therefore, that Aristotle considers both options possible. The third category of tyranny (1295a17-23) is described as one that is 'particularly' (μάλιστα) held to be a tyranny, which is why we will call it a real or true tyranny. Aristotle clearly indicates that a tyrant is 'unaccountable' (ἀνυπεύθυνος), which seems to point to the fact that his power is not subjected to any higher authority, like the law.[49] The subjects of a real tyrant neither accept his rule nor would they elect such a ruler, 'for no free person would willingly tolerate this sort of rule' (οὐθεὶς γὰρ ἑκὼν ὑπομένει τῶν ἐλευθέρων τὴν τοιαύτην ἀρχήν). The fact that Aristotle speaks of free persons seems to imply that he had only Greeks in mind, for he thought that barbarians were slavish in their nature, which was the reason why they accepted barbarian monarchies. Just as with the παμβασιλεία, it is not immediately clear whether this category was hereditary, but in *Politics* V.12 (1315b11-39) Aristotle lists several tyrannical dynasties. This shows that such power was sometimes inherited. Aristotle does not give us any example of this tyranny here, but he seems to think of any typical tyrant from Greek history.[50]

---

this absolute kingship to the Macedonian royal house in general, and Alexander the Great in particular. This issue will be taken up in the second chapter.

[48] With such a concept of kingship, Aristotle not only meddles in the philosophical debate on the ideal king, brought forward by Plato, but also alludes to the pedagogic paradigms of such kings developed by Herodotus, Xenophon, and Isocrates, see C. Atack, 'Aristotle's *Pambasileia* and the Metaphysics of Monarchy', *Polis* 32 (2015), pp. 309-19.

[49] Aristotle uses the word ἀνυπεύθυνος also in his description of the power of the Cretan *kosmoi* in *Politics* II.10 (1272a36-39), where he says that it is not safe that they do not rule 'by written rules' (κατὰ γράμματα). In II.9, something similar is held against the power of the Spartan ephors, who should better rule 'in accordance with written rules and laws' (1271a30-31).

[50] The most obvious example is Periander of Corinth, who is often mentioned in the *Politics* as a vicious ruler (1284a26-33, 1311a20, or 1313a37). Other possible examples appear in *Politics* V.10 (1310b26-31), where Aristotle mentions various individuals, as Pheidon of Argos, Panaetius of Leontini, Cypselus of Corinth, Pisistratus of Athens, and Dionysius of Syracuse,

When we summarize Aristotle's categories and assess whether each category is kingly and/or tyrannical, fitting for Greeks and/or barbarians, based on law and/or with the consent of the subjects, and hereditary and/or elective, it can be represented as follows:

Diagram II:

	Kingly	Tyrannical	Greek	Barbarian	Lawful	Consent	Hereditary	Elective
1. Generalship for life	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Barbarian monarchy	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
3. *Aisymnêteia*	X	X	X		X	X		X
4. Heroic kingship	X		X	X	X	X	X	
5. Pambasileia	X		X	X		X	X	X
6. Real tyranny		X	X				X	

In reference to the other regimes, four elements are notable. First, Aristotle does not always make a clear distinction between kingship and tyranny, in so far as some monarchies have characteristics of both, which is the case for the barbarian monarchy and the αἰσυμνητεία. This agrees with the fact that there is a generic term used by Aristotle only for regimes with one ruler, whereas the regimes with few and many rulers are always subdivided into two versions. This shows that, although kingships and tyrannies can be distinguished from one another, Aristotle does not always feel the need to make the distinction explicit.[51] Second, monarchies, as regimes with one ruler, are the only regimes that occur outside a polis-context, whereas the other regimes do not transgress

who are all given the title of tyrant. As we will see in the fourth chapter, however, Pisistratus may be a dubious case, for he could also be understood as an αἰσυμνήτης.

[51] This is why Aristotle sometimes indicates, as in *Politics* IV.7 (1293a35-1293b1), that there are only five regimes: monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, aristocracy, and polity.

the typical Greek city-state.[52] Aristotle does not simply lump all the non-Greek monarchies together in the category of the barbarian monarchy, but apparently considers many monarchic categories (four out of six) suitable for barbarian nations. This indicates that Aristotle, at least for classificatory reasons, was not solely preoccupied with the Greek city-state.[53] Third, a criterion to distinguish kingship from tyranny seems to depend on the consent of the subjects, which is not the case in other regimes.[54] Although other intellectuals from the fourth century BCE sometimes maintained that kingships were lawful and tyrannies lawless, Aristotle argued that a παμβασιλεία certainly would not be subjected to the law.[55] What all kingships do seem to share is that the subjects assent to the rule of the king, but not any longer to that of a real tyrant.[56] This shows that Aristotle's definition of kingly rule also depends on the acceptance of the people who are ruled. Fourth, power in monarchies is especially inherited from family members, whereas in other regimes, offices are normally appointed by election or by lot.[57] Although various monarchies seem to be elective as well,

[52] Remarkable in this respect is Aristotle's discussion in *Politics* II.11 of the barbarian city-state of the Carthaginians, although these citizens are ruled by kings as well (1272b37-38).
[53] For Aristotle's interest in barbarian customs and societies, see especially R. Weil, *Aristote et l'Histoire* (Paris, 1960), pp. 116-21, pp. 211-28, and pp. 380-85. The assumption that the *Politics* contains a merely polis-centered perspective has been challenged by M.G. Dietz, 'Between Polis and Empire', *American Political Science Review* 106 (2012), pp. 275-93.
[54] See R. Robinson, *Aristotle. Politics Books III and IV* (Oxford, 1995), p. 22: 'Another possible way of dividing constitutions [in contrast to the difference between common and private advantage] is according to whether or not the subjects consent to the rule of the rulers. Aristotle does not use this as a general principle for dividing constitutions, although he sometimes implies that it makes the difference between kingship and tyranny.'
[55] The distinction between kingship and tyranny on the basis of their lawful/lawless character is made in Xenophon (*Memorabilia* IV.6.12) and Plato (*Statesman* 302d-e). Aristotle too follows this traditional distinction in *Rhetoric* I.8 (1365b37-1366a2), where he indicates that kingship is 'according to (some) order' (κατὰ τάξιν), whereas tyranny is 'limitless' (ἀόριστος). For these and other distinctions between kingship and tyranny in fourth century BCE thought, see P. Carlier, *La Royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre* (Strasbourg, 1984), p. 234.
[56] This is the reason, as Aristotle indicates in *Politics* V.10 (1313a8-16), why a king who no longer has the consent of his subjects must be regarded as a tyrant. The distinction between king and tyrant on the basis of the consent of the subjects will be further examined in the fourth chapter in order to understand Aristotle's analysis on the preservation of tyranny.
[57] The only exception seems to be one of the categories of oligarchy, pointed out in *Politics* IV.5, 'when son succeeds father' (ὅταν παῖς ἀντὶ πατρὸς εἰσίῃ, 1292b5). This, however, does not necessarily mean that power is hereditary, as in a monarchy. Throughout his *Politics* Aristotle at least seems to use the adjective πάτριος in the sense of 'hereditary' (1285a19, 1285a24, 1285a33, 1285b5, and 1285b9) or the related expression κατὰ γένος (1285a16, 1285b28, 1285b39, and 1313a10) only with regard to monarchies.

there is only one single category out of six where power is *not* hereditary, that is the αἰσυμνητεία.

These four elements show that monarchies are unique in comparison with the other regimes, which could indicate that they are not as integrated in the sixfold model of regimes as one would think. When we further look into three separate aspects of this model (the constitutional status, the kind of rule, and the relative valuation), then indeed monarchies occupy a peculiar position in comparison to the regimes with few or many rulers.

1.3 The constitutional status of monarchies

According to the definition from *Politics* III.6, a πολιτεία was the arrangement of authoritative offices in a city. In that respect, monarchies are regimes were this kind of power belongs to a single ruler. The generic term μοναρχία is indeed characterized by Aristotle as a πολιτεία in IV.7-8 (1293a37 and 1294a25), and at the beginning of his further subdivisions of kingships in III.14 (1284b36-37) and tyrannies in IV.10 (1295a3), he categorizes these both as 'among the regimes' (τῶν πολιτειῶν). This does not mean that every category of monarchy is considered to be a regime as well. For instance, the generalship for life does not seem to have enough authority to count as a regime, for such kings only have power in military affairs; the barbarian monarchy is never thought to occur in a city-state, which seems a necessary condition given Aristotle's definition of regime as arrangement of offices in a polis; and the αἰσυμνητεία rather seems to have been part of lawgiving activity than actual governmental rule.[58] Other categories, however, certainly do seem to be regimes. Both in *Politics* IV.13 (1297b25-26) and *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3

[58] Aristotle indicates in *Politics* III.15 (1286a2-5) and III.16 (1287a3-8) that kingship according to law, as the generalship for life, is not a πολιτεία in itself, for this kingly office can occur in any other regime that is not a kingship; this is why he does not consider the Spartan regime to be a kingship as such, but rather a mixture of democracy and aristocracy (1293b16-18). That the barbarian monarchy is not a πολιτεία is not indicated explicitly, but can be read implicitly in VII.4 (1326b3-7), where Aristotle opposes a πόλις to an ἔθνος. And Pittacus, Aristotle's example of an αἰσυμνήτης, is once called 'a craftsman of laws and not of a regime' (νόμων δημιουργὸς ἀλλ' οὐ πολιτείας, 1274b18-19).

(1113a7-9), Aristotle counts kingship among the 'ancient regimes' (ἀρχαῖαι πολιτεῖαι), clearly referring to the heroic kingship. In *Politics* III.15 (1286a5-6) he says that a kingship with authority over all matters, as the παμβασιλεία, is a πολιτεία too. And in V.12 (1315b11-12) he counts tyranny among the 'most-short lived regimes' (ὀλιγοχρονιώταται τῶν πολιτειῶν). There is thus no doubt that Aristotle understood (some) monarchies, just as the other regimes from the sixfold model, as regimes.

It must be admitted, however, that Aristotle is certainly not coherent in his consideration of counting monarchies among the regimes. In the fifth book of the *Politics*, for instance, it seems to be the rule rather than the exception to regard monarchies *not* as regimes. Within this book, he discusses the decline and preservation of all various state forms, but in doing so he makes a clear distinction between regimes (democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy, and polity) on the one hand, and monarchies (kingship and tyranny) on the other. That the latter are not seen as regimes becomes clear from both the passages where he indicates that he finishes his discussion of πολιτεῖαι (1307b24-25 and 1310a36-38), as those where he says that the decline and preservation of μοναρχίαι run in a similar fashion (1310a40-b2, 1311a22-25, 1311b36-37, and 1315b40-16a1). Although regimes and monarchies are still compared to one another, they are distinguished from each other as well.

Commentators of the *Politics* indicate that such a distinction between regimes and monarchies is not uncommon in ancient Greek thought.[59] Given Aristotle's empirical research and the fact that he deals with practical questions regarding the decline and preservation of regimes, it does not seem remarkable that Aristotle follows this tradition. What is remarkable, though, is that it deviates from the theoretical perspective of counting kingships and tyrannies as regimes too, which may be found in the works of Plato as well.[60] This shows

[59] See W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. I (Oxford, 1887), p. 521 and E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), p. 545, who refer to Xenophon (*Hellenica* VI.3.8), Isocrates (*Panegyricus* 125), and Demosthenes (*Olynthiaca* 1, 5).

[60] Plato counts kingship and tyranny among the various regimes in his *Republic* (543a-44c) and *Statesman* (302b-d). According to Jacqueline Bordes, Plato and Aristotle where two exceptions to the Greek practice to distinguish monarchies from regimes, because both philosophers

how Aristotle seems to follow two traditions: a philosophical tradition of counting monarchies among the regimes and a historical tradition of distinguishing them from one another. The fact that Aristotle breaks with the former and follows the latter tradition in the fifth book could be motivated by his practical perspective. Additionally, David Riesbeck argued recently that the distinction between monarchies and regimes seems justified in the fifth book, since Aristotle refers here to various examples from barbarian nations which certainly do not fit his idea of a regime in a polis.[61]

The incoherence, however, does not restrict itself to the fifth book of the *Politics*, nor to monarchy in general. The heroic kingship was thought to be one of the ancient regimes, but when Aristotle points to such rule in III.15 (1286b8-13) he indicates that it was only hereafter, when more men participated in power, that they 'established a regime' (πολιτείαν καθίστασαν).[62] Accordingly, in IV.13 (1297b16-18) Aristotle situates 'the first sort of regime' (ἡ πρώτη πολιτεία) *after* this kingship. The same incoherence applies to the παμβασιλεία and the real tyranny, which were monarchies with authority over all matters. In the *Politics* kingship is thought to be comparable with aristocracy in so far as both are based on virtue (1289a30-35 and 1310b31-34). In IV.7 (1293b1-7), however, Aristotle indicates that aristocracy is the only regime on the basis of virtue, thus apparently excluding the kingship of a παμβασιλεύς from being a regime. Similarly, tyranny is assimilated with both the extreme forms of democracy and oligarchy, called δημαγωγία and

considered kingship and tyranny to be part of their theoretical classifications of regimes, see J. Bordes, *Politeia dans la pensée grecque jusqu'à Aristote* (Paris, 1982), pp. 271-72.

[61] See D.J. Riesbeck, 'The Unity of Aristotle's Theory of Constitutions', *Apeiron* 49 (2016), pp. 120-1: 'Several of the historical examples that Aristotle considers [in *Politics* V.10-11] are not of kingships or tyrannies in what he would regard as political communities at all; most notably, he cites examples from the Persians and the Macedonians, both of whom he regards as living in non-political societies that he calls "nations".'

[62] This πολιτεία is often translated more specifically as 'polity', see C. Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics (Chicago, 2013), p. 91 or C.D.C. Reeve, *Aristotle. Politics* (Indianapolis, 2017), p. 78. This translation, however, does not seem correct, for such a regime deteriorated into oligarchy (1286b14-16). But in the latter, there are only few rulers, not many. It is therefore more convincing that Aristotle simply wanted to indicate that the heroic kingship was not a constitutional regime. This interpretation is also in agreement with the *Constitution of the Athenians* (41.2), where it is indicated that when king Theseus diverged slightly from kingship, Athens received 'something of a constitutional order' (τι πολιτείας τάξις).

δυναστεία respectively, in so far as all are lawless (1292b5-10, 1293a30-34, and 1298a28-33). Yet in IV.4 (1292a30-34), Aristotle indicates that these cannot be called regimes: '[F]or where the laws do not rule there is no regime' (ὅπου γὰρ μὴ νόμοι ἄρχουσιν, οὐκ ἔστι πολιτεία). Hence this denies that tyranny is a regime. Although Aristotle does not make the connection himself, it seems to apply to the παμβασιλεία as well inasmuch as it is a monarchy where the king is not bound to certain lawful rules.

The incoherence with regard to the constitutional status of monarchies suggests that they are not always considered as similar to the other regimes from the sixfold model. And indeed, as has been recognized before, there seems to be an alternative model of regimes brought forward in the fourth book of the *Politics*, where kingship and tyranny are omitted.[63] This may be deduced from an alternative definition of a regime in *Politics* IV.3:

> πολιτεία μὲν γὰρ ἡ τῶν ἀρχῶν τάξις ἐστί, ταύτην δὲ διανέμονται πάντες ἢ κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τῶν μετεχόντων ἢ κατά τιν' αὐτῶν ἰσότητα κοινήν, λέγω δ' οἷον τῶν ἀπόρων ἢ τῶν εὐπόρων ἢ κοινήν τιν' ἀμφοῖν (1290a7-11).
>
> Now a regime is the arrangement of offices, and all distribute these either on the basis of some equality common to them – I mean, [the power of] the poor or the well off, or some [equality] common to both.

A regime is still presented as an arrangement of offices, just as in the definition from III.6. The difference now lies in the fact that these offices are thought to be distributed rather than possibly in the hands of one, and divided according to a sociological criterion of wealth rather than a quantitative criterion of numbers. It seems useful to translate πολιτεία in this sense as 'constitution', for it is only here that it is *con*-stituted (as in set up *together*) by several citizens.[64]

---

[63] See especially M.H. Hansen, 'Aristotle's Alternative to the Sixfold Model of Constitutions', in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes* (Fribourg, 1993), pp. 91-101, with a later revised version of the paper in his *Reflections on Aristotle's* Politics, pp. 1-17.

[64] It is argued by John Mulhern that Aristotle used no less than four distinct senses for the word πολιτεία in the *Politics*: 'citizenship', 'citizen-body', 'constitution' as arrangement of offices, and 'regime', see J.J. Mulhern, '*Politeia* in Greek Literature, Inscriptions, and in Aristotle's *Politics*', in T. Lockwood & T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle's* Politics (Cambridge, 2015), p. 84. This distinction between 'constitution' and 'regime', however, does not correspond with mine, for I use 'regime' for the arrangement of offices, and 'constitution' only when these are also distributed among various citizens.

This definition of a constitution, however, is difficult to apply to monarchies, because kings and tyrants control all the (authoritative) offices, which means that these are principally *not* distributed, and their title depends on the willingness of the ruled, and *not* on the wealth of the rulers. All constitutions are thus regimes but not *vice versa*, for two regimes of the sixfold model no longer seem to fit the description of a constitution.

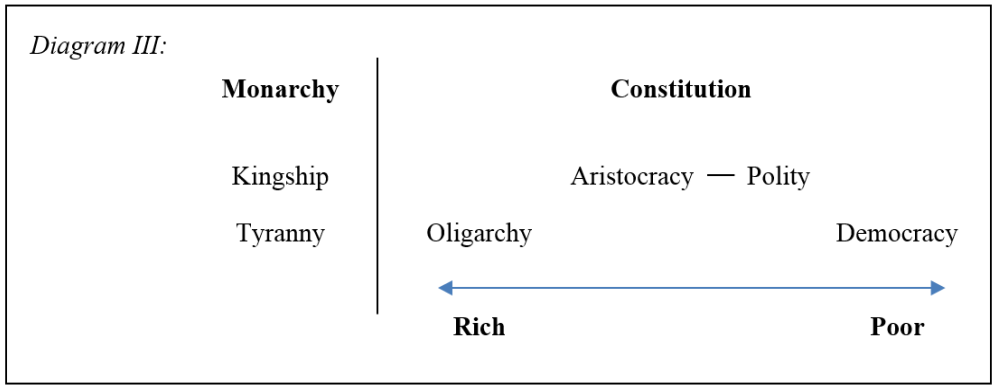
Throughout the *Politics*, it is the case that Aristotle pays attention above all to two of the most common regimes: democracy and oligarchy. Within these, power is indeed often divided according to a sociological criterion rather than a quantitative one: democracy is a regime of the poor, oligarchy of the wealthy.[65] In IV.3 (1290a23-29), just after the alternative definition of a regime as a constitution, Aristotle even indicates that one often assumes only a dichotomy between these two constitutions by considering aristocracy and polity as variants of these two. He adds, though, that it would be truer and better to consider one or two of these as 'being finely constituted' (οὔσης τῆς καλῶς συνεστηκυίας) and the others as deviations from these, 'deviations from the well-blended harmony as well as from the best regime' (τὰς μὲν τῆς εὖ κεκραμένης ἁρμονίας τὰς δὲ τῆς ἀρίστης πολιτείας). Although somewhat cryptic, this passage must point to polity and aristocracy (or a unity of both), of which democracy and oligarchy are the deviations.[66] This can be considered as anticipating the classification of constitutions from IV.11, where aristocracy

[65] In *Politics* III.8 (1279b20-1280a6) and IV.4 (1290a30-1290b3), Aristotle even compares both criteria with each other in order to determine which one is decisive. In both chapters he eventually prefers the sociological criterion of wealth.

[66] This is not an uncontroversial interpretation, for many scholars seem to think that Aristotle is referring to kingship and aristocracy as the finely constituted regime(s), see W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1902), p. 157; W.W. Fortenbaugh, 'Aristotle on Prior and Posterior, Correct and Mistaken Constitutions', in D. Keyt & F.D. Miller, (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1991), p. 234; and E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), p. 250. Although *Politics* IV.2 (1289a30-33) points in this direction, it is rather implausible in this passage. Kingship is, unlike polity, never mentioned in chapter IV.3 and even difficult to reconcile with the alternative definition of a regime as constitution. Polity, on the other hand, corresponds very well with the description 'well-blended harmony', for in IV.8 (1293b33-34), Aristotle clearly says that polity can be understood as a 'mixture' (μίξις) between oligarchy and democracy. Additionally, it could also explain why polity and aristocracy may be understood here as the same regime, for in IV.11 (1295a31-34), Aristotle indicates that a so-called aristocracy borders to a polity, 'hence we may speak of both as one' (διὸ περὶ ἀμφοῖν ὡς μιᾶς λεκτέον).

and polity are regarded on a sociological spectrum of wealth as intermediate constitution(s), where power is taken up especially by the middle class, and not, as in an oligarchy or democracy, by the rich or poor respectively. But this implies, as the following diagram shows, that monarchies such as kingship and tyranny are excluded from this model:

Diagram III:



According to the sixfold model of regimes, kingship and tyranny are deemed the two regimes with a single ruler, but the alternative model of constitutions seems to put them aside.[67] Whether these two models are compatible with each other is an interesting question, but of little importance here.[68] What is essential up to this point, is that monarchies as such seem to have an ambivalent status in Aristotle's political thought, seeing as they are at times considered as a πολιτεία, while at other times they are not.

[67] This could be explained, as I have tried to show, by Aristotle's different definitions of a regime. Another though compatible explanation is given by Herman Mogens Hansen, who argues that kingship and tyranny were left out of the new model for historical reasons, because they did not occur any longer in practice. This is why monarchies are taken up in the sixfold model, which is supposed to be theoretical and philosophical, but not in the alternative model, which seems to be empirical and historical, see M.H. Hansen, *Reflections on Aristotle's* Politics (Copenhagen, 2013) , pp. 6-7 and p. 11.

[68] See D.J. Riesbeck, 'The Unity of Aristotle's Theory of Constitutions', *Apeiron* 49 (2016), pp. 93-97, who further argues against the incompatibility of these models. Although his argumentation is convincing in many respects, his explanation with regard to monarchies seems weak, for he argues that Aristotle holds throughout the *Politics* that some monarchies are regimes and some are not (p. 121). Given the incoherence, it seems better to say that monarchies are sometimes regarded as regimes and sometimes not.

1.4 The kind of rule within monarchies

Aside from their ambivalent status, the power or 'rule' (ἀρχή) within monarchies seems to make them peculiar as well. According to the sixfold model, rule to the mere advantage of the ruler must be compared to the rule over slaves, whereas rule to the common advantage is thought to be similar to rule over women and children. This is why in *Politics* III.4 (1277a29-b16) Aristotle distinguishes despotic rule, as in rule over slaves, from political rule, as in rule over those who are similar in stock and free. Throughout the *Politics*, Aristotle mainly emphasizes this distinction between ἀρχὴ δεσποτική, or δεσποτεία, and ἀρχὴ πολιτική (1255b16-18, 1295b19-24, or 1333a3-6). As such this dichotomy can be applied to monarchies as well. The rule in a tyranny is often called despotic (1279b16-17, 1292a15-21, and 1314a6-10), and within the categories of the barbarian monarchy and the αἰσυμνητεία, despotic rule is what makes them both tyrannical (1285b2-3 and 1295a16-17). Similarly, Aristotle says that a king should be of the same 'stock' (γένος) as his subjects (1259b14-15), as political rule requires. At one point, he calls the leadership of a king explicitly 'political' (πολιτική, 1288a9).

Once again, Aristotle does not seem to be coherent in applying this dichotomy of types of rule to the various regimes. One would expect that kingship, together with aristocracy and polity, is a regime with political rule, but in fact Aristotle seems to exclude kingship from it. The opening lines of the *Politics* (1252a7-16) distinguish four types of rule (political, kingly, household, and despotic rule), and Aristotle indicates, in contrast to Plato, that these are not identical with each other.[69] Political rule is defined here as rule where one 'rules and is ruled in turn' (κατὰ μέρος ἄρχων καὶ ἀρχόμενος), whereas kingly

[69] Aristotle reacts against Plato's *Statesman* (258e-59a), although more broadly the argument may be read as well against Xenophon (*Memorabilia* III.4.12). We will come back to this difference between Plato and Aristotle in the third chapter. Interesting to note already is that Aristotle does not seem to argue in the strong sense that all these types of rule are dissimilar, but rather in weaker sense that they are not all alike, for sometimes he does make comparisons between some of them. In *Politics* I.7 (1255b20) or III.14 (1285b29-33), for instance, monarchic or kingly rule on the one hand and household rule on the other are thought to be similar, see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch I* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 179-80.

rule is permanent rule by the one in charge. In a kingship, the king still rules for the common advantage, just as in an aristocracy or polity, but there is no alternation in rule here.

Alternation, however, is thought to be characteristic of political rule, where power is distributed among equals (1255b20, 1261b2-4, and 1279a8-10). This alternation of rule is what we may find in the other regimes directed to the common advantage, that is polity and aristocracy. That a polity, if not in name then certainly in number of rulers, consists of political rule is indicated in *Politics* III.17 (1288a12-15), in so far as it contains a multitude 'capable of ruling and being ruled' (δυνάμενον ἄρχεσθαι καὶ ἄρχειν). That aristocracy equally consists of political rule is indicated in the same chapter (1288a9-12), although the alternation of power seems unnecessary with few rulers: all the offices could be distributed among them while simultaneously holding these offices permanently. Aristotle, however, does not restrict this alternation to time, as he understands it in II.2 (1261a32-37); he sometimes associates it with age as well, as in VII.14 (1332b25-33a3), in so far as younger citizens must be ruled by the older ones in order to learn how to rule when they acquire the appropriate age. We may consider this, as Malcolm Schofield did, an unusual interpretation of alternation, but it certainly suits the rule in an aristocracy.[70] Leaving aside household rule for a moment, this explains why Aristotle in the *Politics* not only highlights a general dichotomy between despotic and political rule, as said above, but sometimes also a more accurate trichotomy between despotic, political, and kingly rule (as in 1254b2-6 and 1287b37-39).[71] That way, kingship is distinguished from the other two regimes directed to the common advantage.

[70] See M. Schofield, *Saving the City* (London, 1999), p. 105: 'It is, of course, a highly Pickwickian construction of the notion of rotation of office. Aristotle has simply hijacked the idea for his own aristocratic purposes.'

[71] In the first of these two passages (1254b2-6), Aristotle argues that despotic rule is comparable to the rule of the soul over the body, while the rule of reason over desire is comparable to political or/and kingly rule. Editors from the *Politics* disagree on whether the lines read πολιτικὴν ἢ βασιλικήν (Ross) or πολιτικὴν καὶ βασιλικήν (Dreizehnter). The first reading seems more likely to me, for Aristotle indicated earlier that someone who rules over many was a πολιτικὸν ἢ βασιλικόν (1252a12).

Quite the reverse happens with respect to tyranny. One would expect that tyranny, together with oligarchy and democracy, is a regime with despotic rule, but in fact Aristotle seems to reserve, and hence restrict, the term to tyranny alone. After the description of the sixfold model Aristotle clearly says in *Politics* III.8 (1279b16-19) that tyranny is a 'despotic monarchy' (μοναρχία δεσποτική), but then continues with the thesis that the authority in an oligarchy rests in the hands of the rich, while in a democracy it rests in the hands of the poor. Thus, in general, the rule in an oligarchy and a democracy does not seem despotic.[72] On the contrary, it may be called political, just as in an aristocracy and a polity. That a democracy also consists of political rule becomes obvious in reading VI.2 (1317a40-b3), where Aristotle indicates that democracy, with freedom as its aim, consists of 'being ruled and ruling in turn' (τὸ ἐν μέρει ἄρχεσθαι καὶ ἄρχειν). Less straightforward is the case of oligarchy, but just as aristocracy could be understood as a regime with political rule, the same seems to apply to oligarchy. The difference then is that both regimes with few rulers have divergent criteria to appoint offices.

Both *Politics* IV.8 (1294a9-11) and *Nicomachean Ethics* V.3 (1131a24-29) indicate that there are various criteria to 'distribute' (νέμειν) rule, just as the definition of a regime as constitution required. These criteria are virtue, freedom, and wealth. Both chapters indicate that virtue belongs to aristocracy, freedom to democracy, and wealth to oligarchy.[73] In that sense, democracy and oligarchy seem to concur more with polity and aristocracy than with tyranny. The rule in democracy and oligarchy is not thought to be correct, because it still is primarily for the sake of the rulers, but that does not alter the fact that there is (somehow) alternation of power in these regimes, as political rule requires. Then again, tyranny seems to be distinguished from the other regimes

[72] Some radical democracies and oligarchies nevertheless seem to be despotic, as Aristotle indicates in *Politics* IV.4 (1292a15-21) and, by comparison, in IV.5-6 (1292b5-10 and 1293a30-34). These extreme variants, however, are especially similar to tyranny, which explains of course why Aristotle characterizes them as despotic.

[73] There is a fourth criterion mentioned in the *Politics*, 'good birth' (εὐγένεια, 1294a20-22), but this can be seen as combination of wealth and virtue. Polity is not connected to a separate criterion, since it is thought to be a mixture of the poor and the wealthy (1294a22-23).

directed towards the private advantage of the rulers, for it is the only one that can be characterized as non-political.[74]

With the trichotomy of three types of rule in mind, we can now turn to two chapters, *Politics* I.12 and *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10, where Aristotle makes a comparison between the different kinds of rule in the household and the city. In *Politics* I.12, Aristotle describes 'household rule' (οἰκονομική) as the covering term for three types of rule: despotic rule over slaves, 'paternal rule' (πατρική) over children and 'marital rule' (γαμική) over a wife. The rule over wife and children is different from despotic rule, because the subjects are free, 'though it is not the same manner of rule in each case, the wife being ruled in political, the children in kingly fashion' (οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἀλλὰ γυναικὸς μὲν πολιτικῶς τέκνων δὲ βασιλικῶς, 1259a40-b1). Thus, Aristotle makes a distinction between three types of rule: despotic, political, and kingly rule, of which the latter two have correspondent types in the household as marital and paternal rule respectively.

A similar but more extensive comparison between household and city is given in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 (1160b22-61a9). In accordance with *Politics* I.12, the paternal rule of a father is compared here with the rule of a king, and the despotic rule of a master (now explicitly) with the rule of a tyrant. Different from *Politics* I.12, however, is that Aristotle now says that marital rule is commensurable with the rule in an aristocracy, and not with political rule in general.[75] Additionally, he introduces a new kind of rule, namely 'fraternal rule' (ἀδελφική), which is compared here to the rule in a timocracy, that is the equivalent of a polity in the *Politics* and *Eudemian Ethics* VII.9 (1241b30-31). Thus not only marital but fraternal rule as well seems to be

[74] A remarkable exception seems to be the description of Pisistratus' rule in the *Constitution of the Athenians* (14.3 and 16.2) as 'more political than tyrannical' (πολιτικῶς μᾶλλον ἢ τυραννικῶς). The word πολιτικός, however, does not point to an alternation of rule here, but rather to the deemed 'statesmanlike' attitude of Pisistratus. We will address the rule of Pisistratus at the end of the last chapter.

[75] On the apparent difficulty that Aristotle compares marital rule with both aristocratic and political rule, see M. Deslauriers, 'Political rule over women in *Politics* I', in T. Lockwood & T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle's* Politics (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 46-63, or D.J. Riesbeck, 'Aristotle on the Politics of Marriage', *The Classical Quarterly* 65 (2015), pp. 134-52.

analogous with political rule.[76] When these kinds of household rule are thought to deviate from their natural course, Aristotle compares them to oligarchy and democracy. He does not, however, call these regimes despotic, as he does with tyranny. When we, then, take the comparison of rule in the οἶκος and πόλις into account, we may summarize as follows:

Diagram IV:

Rule in the *Oikos*	despotic	paternal	marital	fraternal
	≈	≈	≈	≈
Rule in the *Polis*	tyrannical	kingly	aristocratic oligarchic	timocratic democratic
	non-political		political	

According to the sixfold model there is a dichotomy between despotic and political rule, with the intent to distinguish private from common advantage. In a comparison between the household and the city-state, Aristotle nevertheless seems to take up a more accurate trichotomy between despotic, kingly, and political rule (as underscored in *Diagram IV*), where the latter is distinguished from the former two by its alternation of power rather than for whose sake the rule is exercised. In that respect, monarchies again seem to stand aside from the other regimes, in so far as both tyranny and kingship could be characterized by a rule that is non-political.

1.5 The relative valuation of monarchies

There is a final peculiarity with the valuation of monarchies. According to the sixfold model, the regimes which are directed to the mere advantage of the

[76] This seems to be in accordance with F.D. Miller 'The rule of reason', in M. Deslauriers & P. Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Cambridge, 2013), p. 53: 'Although Aristotle does not mention fraternal rule in *Politics* I, he creates the logical space for it when he mentions the ordinary form of political rule that is appropriate for persons who "tend by nature to be on an equal footing" (I.12, 1259b4-10).'

ruling class are 'deviations' (παρεκβάσεις) from those directed to the common advantage. This seems to be primarily a judgement of value, for the former regimes are called 'errant' (ἡμαρτημέναι) in *Politics* III.6 (1279a17-20), the latter 'correct' (ὀρθαί).[77] Kingship is therefore thought to be a correct monarchy, tyranny a wrong one, which implies that a king and a tyrant ought to differ comprehensively from each other. This becomes obvious when one compares the παμβασιλεία and the real tyranny, which are indeed described in IV.10 as each other's 'counterpart' (ἀντίστροφος, 1295a18). A king as the παμβασιλεύς is characterized by his outstanding virtue, which is the reason why he deserves absolute power that every subject would assent to, but a tyrant is a ruler with similar power that is acceptable to no one.

The most explicit passage where the moral difference between king and tyrant is indicated may be found in *Politics* V.10: 'The tyrant's goal is pleasure; the goal of a king is the noble. Hence, of the objects of aggrandizement, material goods are characteristic of tyranny, while what pertains to honor is characteristic of kingship' (ἔστι δὲ σκοπὸς τυραννικὸς μὲν τὸ ἡδύ, βασιλικὸς δὲ τὸ καλόν. διὸ καὶ τῶν πλεονεκτημάτων τὰ μὲν χρημάτα τυραννικά, τὰ δ' εἰς τιμὴν βασιλικὰ μᾶλλον, 1311a4-7). A king is therefore presented as a virtuous ruler who is directed towards what is noble and good, for it brings him honor; a tyrant is a vicious ruler who is only interested in the fulfillment of his desires, which is why he aims for the accumulation of wealth. In that respect, kingship seems to agree very well with aristocracy, and tyranny with oligarchy. It may be interesting to note that this moral difference between king and tyrant, and their respective focus on inner good and outer wealth, also seem to reflect on the appearance of the two tiny birds that carry their names: the βασιλεύς as a Eurasian wren has a sober and inconspicuous plumage, whereas the τύραννος

[77] The word 'deviant' can also have a temporal meaning, as *Politics* III.1 (1275a38-1275b3) seems to show, in so far as deviant regimes are thought to be historically posterior in reference to the correct regimes. This may be deduced as well from the historical sequence of regimes in III.15 (1286b8-22). Against this temporal interpretation argues W.W. Fortenbaugh, 'Aristotle on Prior and Posterior, Correct and Mistaken Constitutions', in D. Keyt & F.D. Miller, (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1991), pp. 226-27.

as a golden-crested wren is far more eye-catching, with his golden crest, like a magnificent crown, as the highlight of his looks.[78]

But once again, Aristotle does not seem to be completely coherent in his appreciation of kingship and depreciation of tyranny. Although Aristotle considers kingship as a correct regime, he simultaneously questions from the start of *Politics* III.14 (1284b35-40), as Mary Nichols noticed, whether it is advantageous at all.[79] This is why Aristotle does not hesitate to offer various critical arguments against kingship in *Politics* III.15-16, especially in relation to the law.[80] In III.15 Aristotle wants to evaluate kingship, and he starts his evaluation from the contrast 'whether it is more advantageous to be ruled by the best man or by the best laws' (πότερον συμφέρει μᾶλλον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀνδρὸς ἄρχεσθαι ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρίστων νόμων, 1286a8-9). Both seem to have their merits: laws are regarded as general principles that cannot be affected by human passions, but an individual human being can still make decisions in cases where laws, due to their generality, sometimes fall short (1286a14-21). Nevertheless, a regime with laws, due to its incorruptibility, seems to be chosen over one where an individual human being has all authority.[81] In addition, it is argued that various men – presuming that they are as virtuous as the individual best man – are better fitted to rule, because they too are less corruptible than a

[78] Aristotle tells us in *History of Animals* IX.11 that the βασιλεύς 'keeps out of sight and has a gentle disposition' (δραπέτης καὶ τὸ ἦθος ἀσθενής, 615a18), and he describes the remarkable crest of the τύραννος in VIII.3 as being 'of bright red gold' (φοινικοῦς, 592b24), which is why it could equally point to the fire-crested wren. Aristotle uses the word φοινικοῦς as well in *Sense and Sensibilia* 3 (440a10-12) to describe the color of the sun seen through a mist or smoke, see M.A. D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, *Aristotle. Historia Animalium* (Oxford, 1910), note 3 at 592b (no page numbers are given in this work).

[79] See M.P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen* (Totowa, 1992), p. 73.

[80] These two chapters could be considered as duplications, for many of the arguments expressed in III.15 may be found as well, though slightly altered, in III.16, see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch II-III* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 559-61. According to Peter Simpson there is nevertheless a difference: III.15 is directed against Plato's ideal king from the *Statesman*, and III.16 against Aristotle's own conception of the παμβασιλεία, see P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the* Politics *of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), p. 187.

[81] This was already indicated in *Politics* III.11 (1282b1-6) where Aristotle equally argued that laws should be authoritative rather than men. Richard Mulgan also points to a similar but often overlooked plea for the rule of law in *Rhetoric* I.1 (1354a31-b11), see R.G. Mulgan, 'Aristotle and Absolute Rule', *Antichthon* 8 (1974), p. 23.

single person. That is why aristocracy is indicated to be 'more choiceworthy' (αἱρετώτερον) than kingship (1286b3-7).[82]

In III.16 (1287a16-21) Aristotle equally expresses a preference for both the rule of law as well as the reign of many rulers by combining both thoughts: he understands the principle of ruling and being ruled in turn, the defining characteristic of political rule, now as a kind of law in itself. The rulers, then, function only as guardians and servants of the law. This evaluation of kingship seems to lead Aristotle to the general conclusion that it is a regime with many defects. This is most obvious when he recapitulates all the arguments in his conclusion at the beginning of III.17:

> ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων γε φανερόν, ὡς ἐν μὲν τοῖς ὁμοίοις καὶ ἴσοις οὔτε συμφέρον ἐστὶν οὔτε δίκαιον ἕνα κύριον εἶναι πάντων οὔτε μὴ νόμων ὄντων, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ὡς ὄντα νόμον, οὔτε νόμων ὄντων οὔτε ἀγαθὸν ἀγαθῶν οὔτε μὴ ἀγαθῶν μὴ ἀγαθόν, οὐδ' ἂν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἀμείνων ᾖ, εἰ μὴ τρόπον τινά (1287b41-88a5).
>
> From what has been said, at any rate, it is evident that among similar and equal persons it is neither advantageous nor just for one person to have authority over all matters, regardless of whether there are laws or not and he acts as law himself, whether he and they are good or not, and even whether he is better in respect to virtue – unless it is in a certain manner.

In a city-state where citizens are thought to be similar and equal, it is not the case that a king should have all authority, not even when he is more virtuous than everyone else. The only imaginable exception is when this virtue appears in a certain manner, with which Aristotle seems to point to the rule of an *extremely* virtuous individual that may rule as absolute king. In general, though, kingship does not seem correct any longer.

On the other hand, tyranny is not always presented as an errant monarchy. Although Aristotle considers tyranny as a deviant regime, he equally discusses

[82] Something similar, but less outspoken, is indicated in *Politics* III.10 (1281a28-34), where Aristotle evaluates the rule of the 'respectable' (ἐπιεικεῖς) and 'one who is most excellent of all' (εἷς τὸν σπουδαιότατον), pointing to aristocracy and kingship respectively. Although the rule of aristocrats is criticized, for it prevents many persons to take up public offices, the rule of a king is thought to be worse, for in that case even more men are kept from participating in politics. In this chapter, kingship is therefore less choiceworthy than aristocracy with respect to the ruled, and not, as in III.15, with respect to the rulers.

the measures to preserve tyranny in the fifth book of his *Politics*. This is not striking as such, for looking into the internal dynamics of tyranny does not make it good. Besides, he looks into the measures to preserve democracy and oligarchy as well. With regard to tyranny, however, Aristotle does not list one set of measures to maintain tyranny, as he does with the other regimes, but clearly divides them into two separate sets. In *Politics* V.11, the chapter where he elaborates on the means to preserve tyranny, he differentiates between two modes: a traditional way and a new one (discussed respectively in 1313a34-14a31 and 1314a31-15b10).[83] This new mode is characterized as the opposite of the traditional mode in so far as a tyrant should not act as a typically vicious and unscrupulous ruler, but as a monarch with the appearance of a king, in order to make his rule longer lasting. The general idea seems to be that the tyrant should (try to) present himself as someone who is worthy of such permanent and unrestricted rule, that is a παμβασιλεύς.[84] But by doing so, the tyranny also seems to have become better. This is why Aristotle concludes *Politics* V.11 in strikingly positive terms:

> ἐκ γὰρ τούτων ἀναγκαῖον οὐ μόνον τὴν ἀρχὴν εἶναι καλλίω καὶ ζηλωτοτέραν τῷ βελτιόνων ἄρχειν καὶ μὴ τεταπεινωμένων μηδὲ μισούμενον καὶ φοβούμενον διατελεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν εἶναι πολυχρονιωτέραν, ἔτι δ' αὐτὸν διακεῖσθαι κατὰ τὸ ἦθος ἤτοι καλῶς πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἢ ἡμίχρηστον ὄντα καὶ μὴ πονηρὸν ἀλλ' ἡμιπόνηρον (1315b4-10).
>
> As a result of these things, not only will his rule necessary be nobler and more enviable by the fact that he rules over persons who are better and have not been humbled and does so without being hated and feared, but his rule will also be longer lasting; further, in terms of character he will either be in a state that is fine in relation to virtue or he will be half-decent – not vicious but half-vicious.

[83] For a full discussion of both modes, see P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the* Politics *of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), pp. 411-15, or D. Keyt, *Aristotle. Politics Books V and VI* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 168-81. These two modes will be discussed and compared more thoroughly in the fourth chapter on the preservation of tyranny.

[84] Aristotle argues that he should appear to his subjects as a good king and 'household manager' (οἰκόνομος, 1314b7 and 1315b1) and that he should make a show of taking measures 'for the sake of management of the city' (τῆς οἰκονομίας ἕνεκα, 1314b15). This reminds us of the definition of absolute kingship in III.14 (1285b31-33) as οἰκονομία, see S. Gastaldi, 'La tirannide nella *Politica* di Aristotele', in S. Gastaldi & J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran* (Sankt Augustin, 2009), pp. 150-51.

It is true that Aristotle does not consider tyranny to be good in an absolute sense, but only relative to the measures tyrants traditionally took to stay in power.[85] He nevertheless seems to evaluate such rule here primarily in terms of the quality of the tyrant's rule and only secondary in terms of duration. What seems to be at stake is thus that this tyranny has become a better kind of rule and the tyrant a better man. In that respect, tyranny does not seem to be an (entirely) errant regime any longer.

This gives rise to the question how Aristotle would evaluate kingship and tyranny in reference to the other regimes. In both *Politics* IV.2 (1289a26-b5) and *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 (1160a35-b22) Aristotle presents kingship as the best and tyranny as the worst of all regimes from the sixfold model, with aristocracy as second best, oligarchy as second worst, and polity/timocracy and democracy as least good and bad respectively. Once again, Aristotle follows Plato, who used a similar classification.[86] Kingship is considered to be best, for it is 'first and most divine' (πρώτη καὶ θειοτάτη, 1289a40), recalling the god-like status of the παμβασιλεία. Tyranny, as its deviation, is thought to be worst. As such, this hierarchy seems to affirm that kingship is one of the correct regimes and tyranny one of the errant, but the extreme positions on the scale nevertheless allow us to put them apart from the other regimes. It seems evident that such a scale of all regimes is set up with regard to justice, and this may be connected with the laws of each regime.[87] That is why in *Politics* III.11 Aristotle indicates the following:

> ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ ὁμοίως ταῖς πολιτείαις ἀνάγκη καὶ τοὺς νόμους φαύλους ἢ σπουδαίους εἶναι καὶ δικαίους ἢ ἀδίκους. πλὴν τοῦτό γε φανερόν, ὅτι δεῖ πρὸς τὴν πολιτείαν κεῖσθαι τοὺς νόμους. ἀλλὰ μὴν εἰ τοῦτο, δῆλον ὅτι τοὺς μὲν κατὰ τὰς ὀρθὰς πολιτείας ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι δικαίους, τοὺς δὲ κατὰ τὰς παρεκβεβηκυίας οὐ δικαίους (1282b8-13).

[85] In fact, the only occurrence known to me in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* where tyranny is considered to be 'good' (ἀγαθός) in an absolute sense is in *Magna Moralia* II.3 (1199b1-4). It is doubtful, however, that the latter work was really written by Aristotle.

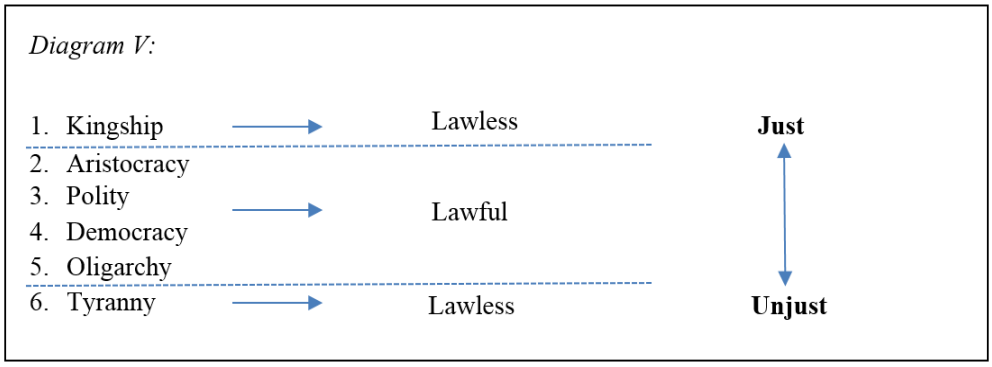
[86] Plato's classification of regimes appears in *Republic* VIII (543a-45c), with a description of the decline of regimes, and in his *Statesman* (302d-03b). In the *Republic*, democracy is still presented as worse than oligarchy, but this order is reversed in the *Statesman.*

[87] Aristotle understands justice in *Nicomachean Ethics* V.2 in two ways: in general, with regard to the laws, and in particular, with regard to (a certain principle of) equality, see S. Broadie & C.J. Rowe, *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 2002), p. 335.

> Laws are necessarily poor or excellent and just or unjust in a manner similar to the regimes to which they belong: if nothing else, it is evident that laws should be enacted with a view to the regime. But if this is the case, it is clear that those enacted in accordance with the correct regimes are necessarily just, and those in accordance with the deviant ones, not just.

In the eyes of Aristotle, it would only be 'just' (δίκαιος, 1288a18) to transcend this and accept the lawless rule of an absolute king when he is outstanding in virtue. In normal circumstances, however, it is just that laws are authoritative and rulers should function as their guardians and servants, as would be the case in the other regimes. Even in deviant regimes as democracy or oligarchy Aristotle recognizes that laws should be sovereign.[88] If someone does not submit himself to the authority of the law and he does not have the outstanding excellence to justify this, Aristotle clearly indicates twice in *Nicomachean Ethics* V.6 (1134a35-b8) that this ruler would become a tyrant. This ratio of regimes, therefore, can be presented as follows:

Diagram V:



The sixfold model of regimes prescribes that kingship is one of the correct and tyranny one of the errant regimes, but this new scale of regimes seems to present kingship and tyranny again as standing apart from the other regimes.

[88] This is the most obvious in the fifth book of the *Politics*, where Aristotle discusses the means to preserve constitutions and monarchies. In the chapters V.8-9 on the preservation of the constitutions (aristocracy, polity, oligarchy, and democracy) Aristotle repeats time after time that the most important measure is that the laws should be respected (1307b30-32, 1308b31-33, and 1309b14-18), thus also 'the democratic laws' (οἱ νόμοι δημοτικοί, 1310a17) in a democracy and the 'oligarchic ones' (ὀλιγαρχικοί, 1310a18) in an oligarchy.

The former is thought to be an ideal that does not correspond to normal (human) circumstances, the latter, as the counterpart of the ideal, the worst possible deviation. These two regimes can nevertheless be thought of together in so far as each of them is lawless in its nature.

At this stage it seems useful to resume what we have dealt with so far by noticing two points. The first point is that the three aspects in which monarchies seem to differ from the other regimes of the sixfold model are separate yet connected points. Aristotle does not consider monarchies to be constitutions, for in these regimes power is distributed among various individuals. These individuals constitute the ruling class of the city-state, which is why their rule should be political. The main characteristic of the latter is that the rulers should not hold offices permanently, but rather in turn. In other words, the rulers should know how to rule as well as to be ruled. This is not the case in monarchies, where power is not only undistributed but also permanently in the hands of one. What seems to be characteristic of monarchies as well is that they do not subject themselves to a higher power like the law, but rule according to their own wish. In constitutions with political rule, there is always the rule of law, for the principle of ruling and being ruled is also understood as a lawful regulation. These aspects in which monarchies differ from the other regimes thus show how kingship and tyranny may be considered as a considerable problem within Aristotle's political thought.

The second point is that both the model itself and the three aspects that indicated the difference could be connected to the thought of Plato. Aristotle's former master too developed a classification with six regimes. But he does not, as Aristotle does, consider kingship and tyranny together as non-constitutional regimes.[89] Neither does he seem to believe that the various kinds of rule really differ from each other. When it comes to the evaluation of all the regimes, however, he also ranks kingship at the top and tyranny at the bottom of the

[89] This does not mean that Plato always considers every kind of rule as a πολιτεία. In *Laws* VIII (832b-c), for instance, he indicates that democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny are not regimes but only factions. Aristotle similarly seems to deny the constitutional status of these deviant regimes in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 (1160a31-36).

hierarchy. It seems, therefore, that an explanation for the problem of monarchy in Aristotle's political thought probably must be sought in the relation with Plato's views. However, as the next chapter will reveal, an explanation for at least some of these peculiarities has often been sought, not in the philosophical relation to Plato, but in the historical relation to Alexander the Great. We therefore have to look first into Aristotle's relation with and opinion on the Macedonian monarchy.

Chapter 2:
The Treatise *On Kingship*

An interesting testimony to shed light on Aristotle's relation with Alexander the Great is a fragment from the lost work On Kingship*, in which he apparently encouraged the Macedonian king to be or become a benefactor. In his extant works, Aristotle understands this principle of beneficence as a constitutive characteristic of kingship, though he does not seem to believe that anyone is entitled to this kind of power. This leads to the result that Aristotle's supposed advice from* On Kingship *corresponds in a certain sense, but not completely, to his own theoretical views. Without leaving the level of conjecture, this could support the perspective that the treatise was more likely to be a (public) letter than a dialogue, and that its aim and content were rhetorical rather than strictly philosophical. That does not bring us any further in solving the problem of monarchy, though it could show how Aristotle's subcategories of monarchy constitute a refined model to look into the reality.*[90]

2.1 Historical relations with Macedonian kings

One of the most famous moments in antiquity where theory and practice might have intermingled is in the relationship between Aristotle and Alexander the Great. After Aristotle had left Plato's Academy but before founding his own school, he was appointed to be the teacher of Alexander, a task that he performed for several years, beginning around 343 BCE. This connection between the philosopher and the statesman was certainly not an accident of history, since there seem to have been strong ties between Aristotle's family

[90] This chapter is based on the book chapter 'Aristotle's *On Kingship* and Euergetism', in G. Roskam & S. Schorn (eds.), *Concepts of Ideal Rulership from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2018), pp. 91-121. The last section resumes the conclusions from my master's thesis on Aristotle's perception of Macedonian monarchy (Leuven, 2012).

and the Macedonian royal house. Aristotle was supposed to be an acquaintance of King Philip II and his general Antipater; his father Nicomachus seems to have been the court doctor and friend of king Amyntas III, and his nephew Callisthenes accompanied Alexander during the latter's Asian campaign.[91] Although doubt has been raised about the extent to which Aristotle actually tutored Alexander or whether he even served as the prince's main preceptor, no one seems to deny that the philosopher was indeed involved in the education of the future conqueror.[92] Hence both individuals must have known each other, and it is almost certain that their relation was a personal one. This could be inferred from the fact that Aristotle supposedly wrote letters to Alexander, of which various fragments remain.[93] A special case is the *Letter of Aristotle to Alexander* that survived in an Arabic translation, but ample doubt has been raised by various scholars that it is authentic.[94]

In Aristotle's extant works, nothing is mentioned explicitly of Alexander, which makes it difficult to elucidate their relation on the basis of firsthand material. But in the ancient catalogues with book titles of Aristotle's works, there is a reference to an interesting work entitled *On Kingship* (Περὶ

[91] See especially Diogenes Laertius' *Vitae Philosophorum* (V.1-5). Other biographies of Aristotle's life are collected in I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Stockholm, 1957). For a discussion on Aristotle's relationship with Macedonia, see P. Scholz, *Der Philosoph und die Politik* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 153-65, or C. Natali, *Aristotle. His Life and School* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 42-52.

[92] For Aristotle as tutor of Alexander, see Plutarch's *Alexander* (7-8). Doubt about Aristotle as the (main) tutor of Alexander has been raised by A.-H. Chroust, *Aristotle. New Light on His Life and on Some of His Lost Works*, vol. I (London, 1973), pp. 125-32.

[93] Aristotle's letter fragments to Alexander the Great are collected as Rose fr. 656-662. For a recent (short) discussion of these fragments, see M. Hose, *Aristoteles. Die historischen Fragmente* (Berlin, 2002), pp. 287-90. An overview of the scholarly opinion on the authenticity may be found in C. Natali, *Aristotle. His Life and School* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 122-24.

[94] This Arabic *Letter of Aristotle to Alexander* is published, with a French translation and commentary, in J. Bielawski & M. Plezia (eds.), *Lettre d'Aristote à Alexandre sur la politique envers les cités* (Wroclaw, 1970). Although Plezia's commentary argues in favor of the authenticity, more convincing arguments were brought forward by Pierre Carlier and Raymond Weil that it is a forgery from the Roman period, see P. Carlier, 'Étude sur la prétendue *lettre* d'Aristote à Alexandre', *Ktèma* 5 (1980), pp. 277-88, and R. Weil, 'Sur la 'lettre d'Aristote à Alexandre'', in J. Wiesner (ed.), *Aristoteles. Werk und Wirkung*, vol. I (Berlin, 1985), pp. 485-98. Recently, Simon Swain concurred with the latter view in his discussion of the letter and provided a first English translation, see S. Swain, *Themistius, Julian, and Greek Political Theory under Rome* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 108-22 and pp. 182-207.

βασιλείας).[95] In the fourth century BCE, and certainly during the subsequent Hellenistic period, treatises bearing this title were written by Greek intellectuals to monarchs in order to ameliorate, eulogize, or simply justify their rule.[96] Although the treatise itself has not survived, several sources indicate that Aristotle wrote such a work to Alexander, most likely, as many scholars seem to believe, before or shortly after Alexander's accession to the throne (336 BCE).[97] Nothing more is known with certainty on the exact form and content of this treatise. Luckily, there is at least one fragment, although strictly speaking it is a testimony, which gives us a further hint:

> ἵνα δὲ καὶ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εὐεργετήσῃ, γράφει τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ βιβλίον περὶ βασιλείας, διδάσκων ὅπως βασιλευτέον. ὅπερ οὕτως ἔδρασεν εἰς τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου ψυχὴν ὡς λέγειν ὅτε μὴ ὠφέλησέ τινα 'σήμερον οὐκ ἐβασίλευσα· οὐδένα γὰρ εὖ ἐποίησα' (*Vita Marciana* 94-96, ed. Gigon = Rose fr. 646).
>
> And in order to confer a benefit on all mankind, he [sc. Aristotle] wrote a book to Alexander *On Kingship*, instructing him on how to rule as king. This made such an impression on the soul of Alexander that when he was not of service to anyone, he said: 'Today I was no king, for I did good to no one'.[98]

This passage derives from the so-called *Vita Marciana*, one of the anonymous Neoplatonic biographies on Aristotle's life.[99] The cited passage in itself is interesting, since it is unique in pointing to a particular feature of Aristotle's

[95] See the catalogues of Diogenes Laertius (nr. 18) or Hesychius (nr. 16), collected in I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Stockholm, 1957), p. 42 and p. 83.
[96] For an overview of other treatises bearing such a (sub)title, see O. Gigon, *Aristotelis Opera* (Berlin, 1987), p. 301. On the occurrence of the *On Kingship* treatises, see F.W. Walbank, 'Monarchies and monarchic ideas', in F.W. Walbank & A.E. Astin (eds.), *The Hellenistic World to the Coming of the Romans*, (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 75-81; O. Murray, 'Philosophy and Monarchy in the Hellenistic World', in T. Rajak e.a. (eds.), *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers* (Berkeley, 2007), pp. 17-21; or M. Haake, 'Writing Down the King' in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Splendors and Miseries of Ruling Alone* (Stuttgart, 2013), pp. 165-206.
[97] See A.-H. Chroust, *Aristotle. New Light on His Life and on Some of His Lost Works*, vol. II (London, 1973), p. 222; R. Laurenti, *Aristotele. I frammenti dei dialoghi*, vol. II (Napoli, 1987), pp. 882-83; and P. Scholz, *Der Philosoph und die Politik* (Stuttgart, 1998), p. 160.
[98] Translation, though slightly altered and completed, taken from Jonathan Barnes and Gavin Lawrence in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. II (Princeton, 1984). Other translations of Aristotle's fragments (Rose fr. 658 and 659) are taken from this work as well.
[99] The *Vita Marciana* used to be considered as an epitome of the lost biography from a certain Ptolemy, see I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Stockholm, 1957), pp. 469-76. On the basis of a new Arabic manuscript, however, one was able to demonstrate that the Neoplatonic biographies (*Vita Marciana*, *Vita Vulgata*, and *Vita Latina*) cannot be deemed as mere summaries of Ptolemy's work, see G. Mager, 'Aristoteles-Viten und -Schriftenkataloge', *Studi Classici e Orientali* 61 (2015), pp. 117-18.

On Kingship, namely that a king should be or become a benefactor. Although the sentence ἵνα δὲ καὶ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εὐεργετήσῃ refers primarily to Aristotle as a philosopher who tried to benefit everyone by writing on how a king should rule, it is reasonable to accept that the idea of benefiting all mankind is transferrable to Alexander, who should have acted accordingly. This is also suggested by the following apothegm of Alexander. It seems, thus, that the intent of the work, and therefore in all likelihood also its message, was that a king should be a benefactor to all of his subjects. One might wonder what the historical reliability of such a remark is.

If we want to investigate the worth and authenticity of such a small utterance, then of course we must swiftly abandon hope of reaching certainty. Unless there appears to be a trustworthy and authoritative source, which unambiguously confirms or contradicts the above statement from the *Vita Marciana*, only conditional conclusions can be reached with regard to this message on, what one might call, euergetism.

One reason for taking the remark on euergetism to be untrustworthy is the consideration that the relation between Aristotle and Alexander was greatly exaggerated over time.[100] Plutarch seems to be especially guilty of this when he says that Aristotle at that time was already a very famous philosopher and that Alexander received influential insights from his ethical and political doctrines.[101] The passage from the *Vita Marciana* does something similar, in so far as it also recognizes the supposed transmission of insights from one party to the other. Alexander is said to have adopted the Aristotelian thesis in its entirety, but it has long been recognized that the conqueror in the end did *not*

[100] Early sources on Alexander's education as Onesicritus (FGrHist 134) and Marsyas of Pella (FGrHist 135) do not mention Aristotle as a tutor of Alexander. This suggests that later biographers overemphasized the relation between Aristotle and Alexander, probably in an attempt to establish the strongest possible connection between the philosopher and statesman, see P. Scholz, *Der Philosoph und die Politik* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 159-60, and C. Natali, *Aristotle*. *His Life and School* (Princeton, 2013), p. 43 and p. 163 n. 84.

[101] See Plutarch's *Alexander* (7.2-3): μετεπέμψατο τῶν φιλοσόφων τὸν ἐνδοξότατον καὶ λογιώτατον Ἀριστοτέλην (…) ἔοικε δ' Ἀλέξανδρος οὐ μόνον τὸν ἠθικὸν καὶ πολιτικὸν παραλαβεῖν λόγον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἀπορρήτων καὶ βαθυτέρων διδασκαλιῶν, ἃς οἱ ἄνδρες ἰδίως ἀκροατικὰς καὶ ἐποπτικὰς προσαγορεύοντες οὐκ ἐξέφερον εἰς πολλούς μετασχεῖν. At the time Aristotle was tutoring Alexander (*c.* 343-340 BCE), the philosopher was not yet the authority that he later became, and the prince was too young to receive such a philosophical education.

act as his tutor advised him.[102] It seems safe to say, therefore, that such a strong influence was invented or at least overstated by later authors, such as the author of the *Vita Marciana*. It is in any case remarkable that Alexander's answer shows strong similarities with that of the Roman Emperor Titus when he reflected on the fact that he did not benefit anybody on a certain day.[103] This correspondence with other sources seems to indicate that the anonymous author, at least for Alexander's answer, rather relied on a traditional example. Given these features, it becomes difficult to trust the message from the *Vita Marciana* as historically accurate.

In contrast with this is the fact that during the Hellenistic period the principle of benefaction certainly was a constitutive part of kingly rule. This can be inferred from both literary and epigraphical sources.[104] Polybius, for instance, in blaming the wrongful behavior of King Philip V, says that a king, as opposed to a tyrant, should rule willing subjects by doing good to everyone.[105] Another example, an inscription from the citizens of Iasos in honor of King Antiochus III, connects kingship with beneficence towards (all) human beings.[106] Such examples demonstrate that euergetism was associated with kingship both by various persons (intellectuals and common citizens) and within different dynasties (the Antigonids and the Seleucids). It seems to have played an important role for the self-understanding of these kings too, especially within the dynasty of the Ptolemies where two of the kings (the third

[102] This is indicated in the passages from Plutarch and Strabo, collected as Rose fr. 658, discussed later in this chapter, see also V. Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 85-92, and A.-H. Chroust, *Aristotle. New Light on His Life and on Some of His Lost Works*, vol. II (London, 1973), pp. 222-23.

[103] See Suetonius' *Titus* (8.1): *atque etiam recordatus quondam super cenam, quod nihil cuiquam toto die praestitisset, memorabilem illam meritoque laudatam uocem edidit:* '*amici, diem perdidi*'; Themistius' *Oratio* XIII (174c): Τίτου μὲν γὰρ δὴ ὁ λόγος οὗτος ἀοίδιμος, ὅτι τήμερον οὐκ ἐβασίλευσα· οὐδένα γὰρ τήμερον εὖ ἐποίησα.

[104] For euergetism as a constitutive part of kingly rule in Hellenistic times, see especially P. Gauthier, *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs* (Athens, 1985), pp. 39-53, and K. Bringmann, 'The King as Benefactor', in A. Bulloch e.a. (eds.), *Images and Ideologies* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 8-25. Both examples below are taken up in these works as well.

[105] See Polybius' *Histories* (V.11.6): βασιλέως δὲ τὸ πάντας εὖ ποιοῦντα, διὰ τὴν εὐεργεσίαν καὶ φιλανθρωπίαν ἀγαπώμενον, ἑκόντων ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ προστατεῖν.

[106] *ASAA* 45-46 (1967-68), 447, 46-47: τὸ βασιλεύειν νενομικότος πρὸς εὐεργεσία[ν] […]σθαι ἀνθρώπων (or: πάντων ἀνθρώπων), see Y. Garlan, 'Decret d'Iasos en l'honneur d'Antiochos III', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 13 (1974), pp. 197-98.

and the eighth) carried the epithet Εὐεργέτης ('benefactor') as a personal title. It is evident, therefore, that the idea of euergetism likewise must have been adopted in the treatises directed towards the Hellenistic kings.[107] One might expect the same of Alexander's (self-)perception and Aristotle's treatise for two reasons. First, as the kings in these Diadoch dynasties may be regarded as the successors of Alexander, it seems likely that the Macedonian king understood himself in a similar way.[108] Second, it was customary already in the fourth century BCE to connect the idea of a good king with the idea of being a benefactor, shown for instance in the advice from Isocrates to Philip II, Alexander's father.[109] Although it might be the case that Alexander's answer in the passage from the *Vita Marciana* was based on a historical fiction, what we know from pedagogical customs and treatises in the (late) Classical and Hellenistic age suggests that Aristotle certainly must have tried to convince Alexander that he should become or remain a benefactor.

With regard to Aristotle's *On Kingship*, we do not have any evidence outside the *Vita Marciana*, but the words εὐεργεσία and εὐεργετεῖν or εὖ ποιεῖν appear relatively often in his philosophical works, especially within the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which shows that euergetism was not unimportant, let alone unfamiliar to Aristotle. If we look to his *Politics*, we see that he uses it almost exclusively in connection with kingship.[110] It is striking that half of the

[107] See F.W. Walbank, 'Monarchies and monarchic ideas', in F.W. Walbank & A.E. Astin (eds.), *The Hellenistic World to the Coming of the Romans* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 82, and O. Murray, 'Philosophy and Monarchy in the Hellenistic World', in T. Rajak e.a. (eds.), *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers* (Berkeley, 2007), p. 24.

[108] A similar, but more cautious, conclusion is taken up in H. Flashar e.a., *Aristoteles. Fragmente zu Philosophie, Rhetorik, Poetik, Dichtung* (Berlin, 2006), p. 225: 'Die durch diesen Begriff ausgedrückte Politik der Ptolemaeer begreift sich in der Tradition Alexanders, so dass das hier angeführte Dictum in diesem historischen Kontext zumindest möglich ist'.

[109] See Isocrates' *Philippus* (116): Καὶ μὴ θαυμάσῃς εἰ διὰ παντός σε τοῦ λόγου πειρῶμαι προτρέπειν ἐπί τε τὰς εὐεργεσίας τὰς τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ πραότητα καὶ φιλανθρωπίαν. One might further think of contemporaries as Xenophon, Plato, or Xenocrates, see R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, suppl. I (Paris, 2003), p. 461.

[110] A textual search of εὐεργ- within the TLG database yields six instances in the *Politics* (III.14, 1285b6; III.15, 1286b10; V.10, 1310b34/35/36; and VII.7, 1328a13). Only the last one is not explicitly connected with kingship. The benefactions spoken of in that sentence are nevertheless seen as carried out by people called μεγαλόψυχοι, and these persons may be regarded as kings as well, as will be shown in the next section. The expression εὖ ποιεῖν appears only once in *Politics* III.4 (1276b39), but does not refer to benefactions here.

instances of εὐεργ- within this work appear in one single passage in V.10 where he also, and even uniquely, mentions the Macedonian kings:

> καθάπερ οὖν εἴπομεν, ἡ βασιλεία τέτακται κατὰ τὴν ἀριστοκρατίαν. κατ' ἀξίαν γάρ ἐστιν ἢ κατ' ἰδίαν ἀρετὴν ἢ κατὰ γένους ἢ κατ' εὐεργεσίας ἢ κατὰ ταῦτά τε καὶ δύναμιν. ἅπαντες γὰρ εὐεργετήσαντες ἢ δυνάμενοι τὰς πόλεις ἢ τὰ ἔθνη εὐεργετεῖν ἐτύγχανον τῆς τιμῆς ταύτης, οἱ μὲν κατὰ πόλεμον κωλύσαντες δουλεύειν, ὥσπερ Κόδρος, οἱ δ' ἐλευθερώσαντες, ὥσπερ Κῦρος, ἢ κτίσαντες ἢ κτησάμενοι χώραν, ὥσπερ οἱ Λακεδαιμονίων βασιλεῖς καὶ Μακεδόνων καὶ Μολοττῶν (1310b31-40).
>
> Now as we said, kingship is an arrangement that accords with aristocracy. For it accords with merit, whether based on individual virtue, virtue of family, benefactions, or these things together with capacity. For all those who obtained this prerogative had benefited or were capable of benefiting their cities or nations. Some kept them from being enslaved in war, such as Codrus; others, such as Cyrus, liberated them, or founded a city or acquired territory, such as the kings of the Spartans, Macedonians, and Molossians.

This shows that Aristotle too made an explicit connection between euergetism and the Macedonian kingship, which brings it into line with the passage from the *Vita Marciana*. This can be argued from the other direction as well: it is notable that the word βασιλευτέον in the *Vita Marciana* seems to be a *hapax legomenon* in Greek, with an equivalent βασιλευτόν ('suited for kingly rule') used in antiquity only by Aristotle.[111] It is reasonable, therefore, that Aristotle, just as contemporary intellectuals like Isocrates, wrote to Alexander on euergetism. To understand what he might have written, we could consult his ethical and political theories, in order to see how Aristotle thought about kingship and euergetism. Naturally, this does not imply that he must proclaim exactly the same views in *On Kingship*. What appears to be a plausible assumption, though, is that his own ideas must have served somehow as a starting point for a treatise to instruct the king.

We will start our argumentation by looking into the relation between kingship and euergetism in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*. This will show that Aristotle indeed believed that kingship and euergetism were

[111] The adjective βασιλευτός is used twice by Aristotle in *Politics* III.17 (1288a7-8). The TLG database indicates that is was used later only by ecclesiastics and historians as Theophylactus (11th-12th century), Nicetas Choniates (12th-13th century), and Ephraem (13th-14th century).

closely connected, but especially in the heroic kingship, a category from the past. Next, we will look for a more suitable category to apply to Alexander. Scholars have often pointed to Aristotle's absolute kingship as possible reference to Alexander, but that assumption will be refuted here. This will show that it would not have been easy for Aristotle to instruct a living king to become a benefactor. That is why, subsequently, we will argue that the treatise *On Kingship* probably was a rhetorical rather than philosophical treatise. However, that does not mean that it could not be connected with Aristotle's own theoretical views, for the generalship for life and the barbarian monarchy seem to have been two categories that Aristotle could have used to urge Alexander to euergetism. On this basis, finally, two conclusions could be drawn. This analysis, on the one hand, will show that Aristotle's categories of monarchy constitute a sophisticated classification to look into the various kinds and degrees of one-man rule in reality. The three connected problems with regard to monarchy that were taken up in the first chapter, on the other hand, could not be resolved by making references to the historical reality, but ask for a specific philosophical explanation.

2.2 Views on kingship and euergetism

The concept of euergetism appears most frequently in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle's ethical theory is widely known as a virtue ethics wherein the good is considered to be a practical attitude towards a mean that lies between two vices: an ἔλλειψις ('defect') and an ὑπερβολή ('excess').[112] To reach the goal of leading a good life, then, is not just a matter of insight or knowing what something is, but of action or knowing how something can be done. In this respect, it is not remarkable that the concept of benefaction occurs within Aristotle's ethical thought. But in connection with euergetism, it is not a matter of simply doing something good, but always with regard to someone else. Not

[112] This can be inferred from Aristotle's famous definition of ἀρετή in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.6 (1106b36-07a3) as ἕξις προαιρετική, ἐν μεσότητι οὖσα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὡρισμένῃ λόγῳ καὶ ᾧ ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὁρίσειεν. μεσότης δὲ δύο κακιῶν, τῆς μὲν καθ' ὑπερβολὴν τῆς δὲ κατ' ἔλλειψιν.

only the action itself must be good, but also one party for whom it is good. Hence this implies a difference between two parties: the benefactor and the beneficiary or beneficiaries. In *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.7 (1168a9-27) Aristotle deals with both parties. Although the good deed seems especially in the interest of the benefited, Aristotle speaks with more regard of the benefactor, because the latter is directed to what is καλόν ('noble') rather than συμφέρον or χρήσιμον ('useful'), as in the case of the benefited. Being a benefactor is considered better than being benefited, because it is more pleasant, longer lasting, and requires an active input. According to Aristotle, therefore, there is something worthy in being a benefactor.

Without going into detail, there are two points in Aristotle's ethical theory where euergetism seems to play an important role, and these two respectively reflect the side of the benefactor as such and his relation to the benefited. The first one is the virtue of μεγαλοψυχία ('magnanimity' or 'pride'), which is the attitude of having high ambitions in accordance with merit. According to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.3 (1123b1-4 and 17-21), a person with such a greatness of soul is directed to the highest of the external goods, which is thought to be τιμή ('honor').[113] Such honor could be reached by doing good to others. The reason why a magnanimous person, then, especially wants to confer benefits but is not keen on receiving them, is due to the fact that the former is a sign of superiority, the latter of inferiority (1124b9-10). Someone who is proud or noble-minded does good to others for it demonstrates his greatness towards people who are considered lesser.

This brings us to the second point wherein euergetism is important, namely Aristotle's theory of φιλία ('friendship'). In *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.7 (1158b11-14) Aristotle differentiates between friendships or, generally speaking, affectionate relationships where everyone is thought to be equal, on the one hand, and those where the ὑπεροχή ('superiority') of one party is

[113] This is why in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle defines μεγαλοψυχία as ἀρετὴ μεγάλων ποιητικὴ εὐεργετημάτων (1366b17) and τιμή as σημεῖον εὐεργετικῆς εὐδοξίας (1361a27-28). It is interesting to note already that the first definition occurs within the chapter on epideictic rhetoric (I.9), the second within the chapters on deliberative rhetoric (I.4-8). This shows how the remark from the *Vita Marciana* as such could equally fit both genres.

implied. A good person needs friends to benefit, for it is peculiar to a friend to do good rather than to receive benefactions, and more noble to benefit friends rather than strangers.[114] In a relationship between equals, this requires a reciprocity of benefactions, whereas in a relationship between superiors and inferiors, the superior will act as εὐεργέτης, by conferring benefits without receiving them back. This brings us to a passage in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.11 where Aristotle applies these ideas on kingship:

> Καθ' ἑκάστην δὲ τῶν πολιτειῶν φιλία φαίνεται, ἐφ' ὅσον καὶ τὸ δίκαιον, βασιλεῖ μὲν πρὸς τοὺς βασιλευομένους ἐν ὑπεροχῇ εὐεργεσίας· εὖ γὰρ ποιεῖ τοὺς βασιλευομένους, εἴπερ ἀγαθὸς ὢν ἐπιμελεῖται αὐτῶν, ἵν' εὖ πράττωσιν, ὥσπερ νομεὺς προβάτων· ὅθεν καὶ Ὅμηρος τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονα ποιμένα λαῶν εἶπεν. τοιαύτη δὲ καὶ ἡ πατρική, διαφέρει δὲ τῷ μεγέθει τῶν εὐεργετημάτων· αἴτιος γὰρ τοῦ εἶναι, δοκοῦντος μεγίστου, καὶ τροφῆς καὶ παιδείας. καὶ τοῖς προγόνοις δὲ ταῦτα προσνέμεται· φύσει τε ἀρχικὸν πατὴρ υἱῶν καὶ πρόγονοι ἐκγόνων καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλευομένων. ἐν ὑπεροχῇ δὲ αἱ φιλίαι αὗται, διὸ καὶ τιμῶνται οἱ γονεῖς. καὶ τὸ δίκαιον δὴ ἐν τούτοις οὐ ταὐτὸ ἀλλὰ τὸ κατ' ἀξίαν· οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ἡ φιλία (1161a10-22).
>
> Each of the regimes may be seen to involve friendship just in so far as it involves justice. The friendship between a king and his subjects depends on an excess of benefits conferred; for he confers benefits on his subjects if being a good man he cares for them with a view to their well-being, as a shepherd does for his sheep (whence Homer called Agamemnon 'shepherd of the peoples'). Such too is the friendship of a father, though his exceeds the other in the greatness of the benefits conferred; for he is responsible for the existence of his children, which is thought the greatest good, and for their nurture and upbringing. These things are ascribed to ancestors as well. Further, by nature a father tends to rule over his sons, ancestors over descendants, a king over his subjects. These friendships imply superiority of one party over the other, which is why parents are honored. The justice therefore that exists between persons so related is not the same but proportioned to merit; for that is true of the friendship as well.[115]

This passage illustrates that the above from Aristotle's ethical theory on euergetism is applicable to the relation between a king and his subjects, just as it is applicable to the relation between a father and his children, which reminds us of the parallel between kingly and paternal rule. The idea here is that there

[114] See Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.9 (1169b10-13): εἴ τε φίλου μᾶλλόν ἐστι τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν, καὶ ἔστι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸ εὐεργετεῖν, κάλλιον δ' εὖ ποιεῖν φίλους ὀθνείων, τῶν εὖ πεισομένων δεήσεται ὁ σπουδαῖος.

[115] All translations from the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Rhetoric* are taken from J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. II (Princeton, 1984).

is a natural superiority of one party over the other, but at the same time an affectionate attitude towards the inferiors. A king will make decisions and act to the advantage of his subjects, which are his benefits to them. This is why he is (or should be) honored by them, peculiar to the motives of a magnanimous person. Thus, in general we could say that the idea of benefaction fits with kingship, in the sense that within Aristotle's ethical theory the concept of kingship simply seems to imply euergetism. Hence on this basis, as scholars recognized before, it is acceptable to suppose that Aristotle wrote to Alexander in *On Kingship* to act as a benefactor.[116]

When one takes a look at Aristotle's political theory, the quantity of information on kingship and euergetism is reversed: the *Politics* has far less to say on euergetism as such than the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but far more on kingship and its concrete connection with euergetism. In *Politics* III.14, the chapter that dealt with all the categories of kingship, Aristotle connects kingship explicitly with euergetism in the exposition of the fourth category, which we called the heroic kingship:

> τέταρτον δ' εἶδος μοναρχίας βασιλικῆς αἱ κατὰ τοὺς ἡρωικοὺς χρόνους ἑκούσιαί τε καὶ πάτριαι γιγνόμεναι κατὰ νόμον. διὰ γὰρ τὸ τοὺς πρώτους γενέσθαι τοῦ πλήθους εὐεργέτας κατὰ τέχνας ἢ πόλεμον ἢ διὰ τὸ συναγαγεῖν ἢ πορίσαι χώραν, ἐγίγνοντο βασιλεῖς ἑκόντων καὶ τοῖς παραλαμβάνουσι πάτριοι. κύριοι δ' ἦσαν τῆς τε κατὰ πόλεμον ἡγεμονίας καὶ τῶν θυσιῶν, ὅσαι μὴ ἱερατικαί, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις τὰς δίκας ἔκρινον (1285b3-11).
>
> But there is another kind of kingly monarchy, those belonging to the times of the heroes, which were willing, hereditary, and arose in accordance with law. For because the first kings had been benefactors of the multitude in connection with the arts or with war or by bringing them together [in a city] or providing them land, these came to be kings over willing persons, and their descendants took over from them. They had authority regarding leadership in war and those sacrifices that did not require priests; in addition to this, they were judges in legal cases.

Aristotle says that this kingship derives its legitimacy from benefactions with regard to the king's expertise or warlike activities, either in founding cities or providing land. This corresponds neatly with the previously cited passage from

[116] See R. Laurenti, *Aristotele. I frammenti dei dialoghi*, vol. II (Napoli, 1987), pp. 884-85, and P. Scholz, *Der Philosoph und die Politik* (Stuttgart, 1998), p. 161.

Politics V.10, where Aristotle mentions these benefactions, conferred by Athenian (Codrus), Persian (Cyrus), Spartan, Macedonian, and Molossian kings. Aristotle thus regards these kings of Greek or barbarian origin as heroic kings, and understands the benefactions to their subjects as related to their personal excellence or ability in defending or acquiring a territory. The example of the Macedonian kings here probably refers to the establishment of the Argead or Temenid dynasty.[117] It is, therefore, possible that Aristotle considered Alexander to be such a heroic king, because the category clearly fits his ideas on euergetism, and later *On Kingship* fragments also seem to point to a similar type of kingship.[118]

The problem with this heroic kingship, however, is that it is both thought to be and described as a kingship from the past.[119] Aristotle argues in the next chapter of his *Politics*, in a passage where he again connects past kingships with euergetism, that the individual virtue of subjects increased in the course of time, and that the populations of communities grew larger, which is why other men became entitled to a share of power.[120] No one, in other words, seems to be virtuous enough to rule all by himself, as kings from the far past did. This is why Aristotle indicates in *Politics* III.14 that such a heroic kingship evolved to either a merely religious office, as in Athens, or remained a kingship, but only as a military command, as was the case in Sparta (1285b13-19).[121] In that

[117] The story may be found in Herodotus's *Histories* (VIII.137-139), see W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1902), p. 420, or E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), p. 551. The name 'Argead' refers to the supposed Greek origin of the kings from Argos, while the name 'Temenid' was used because of the presumed decent of the hero Temenus.

[118] A similarity could be found in one of the *On Kingship* fragments in Stobaeus' *Anthologium* (IV.7.61) on the threefold power (military, religious, and juridical) of the king, see F.W. Walbank, 'Monarchies and monarchic ideas', in F.W. Walbank & A.E. Astin (eds.), *The Hellenistic World to the Coming of the Romans* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 79.

[119] Notice the past tenses ἐγίγνοντο (1285b8) and ἦσαν (1285b9), and compare them with the present tenses within the descriptions of the first two types of kingships in *Politics* III.14.

[120] See Aristotle's *Politics* III.15 (1286b8-13): καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' ἴσως ἐβασιλεύοντο πρότερον, ὅτι σπάνιον ἦν εὑρεῖν ἄνδρας πολὺ διαφέροντας κατ' ἀρετήν, ἄλλως τε καὶ τότε μικρὰς οἰκοῦντας πόλεις. ἔτι δ' ἀπ' εὐεργεσίας καθίστασαν τοὺς βασιλεῖς, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἔργον τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν. ἐπεὶ δὲ συνέβαινε γίγνεσθαι πολλοὺς ὁμοίους πρὸς ἀρετήν, οὐκέτι ὑπέμενον ἀλλ' ἐζήτουν κοινόν τι καὶ πολιτείαν καθίστασαν.

[121] It must be said that Aristotle does not mention Athens or Sparta explicitly. That both cities fit the respective descriptions can nevertheless be inferred from Aristotle's *Constitution of the*

respect, it becomes difficult to connect the rule of Alexander with the category of the heroic kingship, since Aristotle seems to be of the opinion that this kind of kingship does not occur any longer.

We should look therefore to the remaining categories from *Politics* III.14 and consider the possibility of connecting them with euergetism. Three possibilities remain: the generalship for life, the barbarian monarchy, and the absolute kingship.[122] The first category was the most moderate version and may be considered as a typically, though not exclusively, Greek variant, like the Spartan kingship. The second was a more powerful kingship that appeared in some of the barbarian nations and consisted of a despotic rule. The third was called a παμβασιλεία, which was an unlimited or absolute kind of rule, similar to that found in a household.

Although none of these categories are connected explicitly with well-doing, as was the case with the heroic kingship, it is not that difficult to read this connection implicitly. After all, as we have seen in the first chapter, Aristotle argued in *Politics* III.7 (1279a32-b10) that kingship, as every correct regime, must be directed towards τὸ κοινὸν συμφέρον ('the common advantage'), rather than towards the mere advantage of the ruler(s). In *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 (1160b2-6) he even leaves out the king's own advantage and calls it τὸ τῶν ἀρχομένων ('the advantage of the ruled'). This seems to presume that a king acts in the interest of his subjects and thus tries to benefit them, since συμφέρον is the term that Aristotle also uses to indicate the position of the benefited. Moreover, as we have also seen in the first chapter, Aristotle indicated that a king, in contrast to a tyrant, looks to what is noble rather than pleasant, and aims for honor rather than money.[123] The words καλόν and τιμή are clearly reminiscent of Aristotle's terminology on well-doing. It

Athenians (57) on the ἄρχων βασιλεύς, and the earlier definition of the Spartan kingship in *Politics* III.14 (1285a3-8).

[122] These are the first, second, and fifth category of kingship in *Politics* III.14. The third category, the αἰσυμνητεία, is an elective tyranny from the past, and does not need to be taken into account here, for it does not resemble the Macedonian monarchy in any respect.

[123] See, again, Aristotle's *Politics* V.10 (1311a4-7): ἔστι δὲ σκοπὸς τυραννικὸς μὲν τὸ ἡδύ, βασιλικὸς δὲ τὸ καλόν. διὸ καὶ τῶν πλεονεκτημάτων τὰ μὲν χρημάτα τυραννικά, τὰ δ' εἰς τιμὴν βασιλικὰ μᾶλλον.

may be true that this is not applicable to the barbarian monarchy, which was understood as a semi-tyrannical regime with despotic rule. But the two other categories, the generalship for life and the παμβασιλεία, were only variants of kingship, so they could also imply euergetism.

2.3 The absolute kingship versus Alexander

With regard to Alexander, scholars have often shown a tendency to look only to the absolute kingship. As such, this is not remarkable, since Aristotle especially considers the παμβασιλεία as a true kingship and only bothers to investigate that category on its merits and problems in *Politics* III.15-16. It is particularly in a passage from *Politics* III.13, prior to his discussion of kingship, that Aristotle describes rule in a way that many scholars have been tempted to see as a reference to Alexander:

> Εἰ δέ τίς ἔστιν εἷς τοσοῦτον διαφέρων κατ' ἀρετῆς ὑπερβολὴν ἢ πλείους μὲν ἑνός, μὴ μέντοι δυνατοὶ πλήρωμα παρασχέσθαι πόλεως, ὥστε μὴ συμβλητὴν εἶναι τὴν τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετὴν πάντων μηδὲ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῶν τὴν πολιτικὴν πρὸς τὴν ἐκείνων, εἰ πλείους, εἰ δ' εἷς, τὴν ἐκείνου μόνον, οὐκέτι θετέον τούτους μέρος πόλεως· ἀδικήσονται γὰρ ἀξιούμενοι τῶν ἴσων ἄνισοι τοσοῦτον κατ' ἀρετὴν ὄντες καὶ τὴν πολιτικὴν δύναμιν· ὥσπερ γὰρ θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις εἰκὸς εἶναι τὸν τοιοῦτον. ὅθεν δῆλον, ὅτι καὶ τὴν νομοθεσίαν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι περὶ τοὺς ἴσους καὶ τῷ γένει καὶ τῇ δυνάμει, κατὰ δὲ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστι νόμος. αὐτοὶ γάρ εἰσι νόμος (1284a3-14).
>
> If there is one person so outstanding by his excess of virtue – or a number of persons, though not enough to provide a full complement for the city – that the virtue of all the others and their political capacity is not commensurable with their own (if there are a number) or his alone (if there is one), such persons can no longer be regarded as a part of the city. For they will be done injustice if it is claimed they merit equal things in spite of being so unequal in virtue and political capacity; for such a person would likely be like a god among human beings. From this it is clear that legislation must necessarily have to do with those who are equal both in family and capacity, and that for the other sort of person there is no law – they themselves are law.

A well-known but equally controversial interpretation is the one from Hans Kelsen, who believed that passages like these indicated that Aristotle was an unequivocal adherent of hereditary kingship in general, and Macedonian

monarchy in particular.[124] It is true that Aristotle did not merely consider the possibility of a single person with such an outstanding excellence, but multiple persons as well. Since he considers the possibility of a 'whole family' (γένος ὅλον, 1288a15) elsewhere, it seems applicable to the situation of a royal dynasty. Are the Macedonian kings then these absolute rulers? The only argument in favor is the positive remark on the Macedonian kings in the passage from *Politics* V.10, cited above: in addition to individual virtue, Aristotle here mentions virtue 'of family' (κατὰ γένους, 1310b33) as well, and next to virtue as such, he also mentions a required 'capacity' (δύναμις, 1310b34) to do things. This brings it in line with the passage from *Politics* III.13, in so far as multiple rulers (of a family) are considered with both virtue and a political capacity. But if we look to the 'preeminence' (ὑπερβολή, 1284a4) required for absolute rule, of which there is no trace in the passage from V.10, we clearly see a difference between the absolute and the heroic kingship. We have to suppose that Aristotle believed that the excellence of the Macedonian kings increased in reference to their founding fathers, which will be a major problem of Kelsen's interpretation.

Although the reference to the Macedonian kings as founding fathers in *Politics* V.10 is certainly positive – they are considered benefactors – this is not the case for other references. Further in V.10, Aristotle discusses one by one the causes for revolt in monarchies, and provides an impressive list of examples of both kings and tyrants who fell victim to an assault. Among them, he mentions no less than three Macedonian kings: Archelaus (1311b8-20 and 30-34), Amyntas II (1311b3-4),[125] and even his contemporary Philip II (1311b1-3). At first sight, Aristotle is not expressing a clear appreciation or criticism in any of these remarks, but merely seems to describe some facts.[126]

[124] See H. Kelsen, 'The Philosophy of Aristotle and the Hellenic-Macedonian Policy', *International Journal of Ethics* 48 (1937), pp. 31-32.
[125] As such, it is not clear whether this Macedonian king is Amyntas II or III, but the subsequent reference to Archelaus' son Amyntas (1311b14) makes the former more likely, see E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), pp. 558-59.
[126] According to Peter Scholz, this becomes evident when one compares Aristotle's dry description of the assault on Archelaus in the *Politics* with Plato's harsh condemnation of this king in the *Gorgias* (471a-d), see P. Scholz, *Der Philosoph und die Politik* (Stuttgart, 1998), p.

Nevertheless, he also points to the 'arrogance' (ὕβρις, 1311a33 or 1311b19) or 'disgraceful behavior' (αἰσχύνη, 1311b7-8) of these monarchs, which led to the attacks on their lives. These are stories of scandal, from passive negligence to active abuse, which caused the attacks against the monarchs.[127] In that sense, Aristotle holds them responsible for their own ruin. Although he describes the assaults in neutral terms, the evaluation of these more recent Macedonian kings is negative now. Aristotle clearly does not consider them as benefactors any more, for they did not benefit their subjects but rather disgraced (some of) them. Kelsen hence cannot have been right that the passage from III.13 points to the Macedonian monarchy in general.

Since there is no reference to Alexander the Great in Aristotle's extant works, we cannot compare it to the passage from *Politics* III.13, which is why it is not impossible to read the passage as an allusion to that particular king. This could fit both the divine recognition and the striving for omnipotence that Alexander seemingly sought himself towards the end of his life.[128] An argument from W.W. Tarn in favor of the assimilation is that Aristotle begins and ends the passage in the plural, while he skips in the middle to the singular.[129] He deduces therefrom that Aristotle must have had someone particular in mind, and that this someone could not be anyone else than Alexander. Although there is no need for such a conclusion since the concept of outstanding excellence was traditionally displayed by *a* divine character in

169. The same applies to Aristotle's short description of the murder of Philip, which is only presented as the personal revenge of Pausanias, as by Diodorus (XVI.93-94), and not, as by Plutarch (*Alexander* 10), as a conspiracy of Alexander and his mother Olympias against the king. For both theories, see I. Worthington, *Philip II of Macedonia* (New Haven, 2008), pp. 182-86. These are probably not the only examples that Aristotle knew, because Macedonian kings often fell victim to conspiracies and assaults. For an overview, see E.N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus* (Princeton, 1990), p. 240.

[127] Ernest Barker even considered these examples so outrageous that he did not incorporate them in his translation of the *Politics* but banned them to a footnote, see E. Barker, *The Politics of Aristotle* (Oxford, 1946), p. 238 and pp. 242-43.

[128] For Alexander's desire for deification, see especially the three collected papers in I. Worthington, *Alexander the Great* (London, 2003), pp. 236-72.

[129] See W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 366-67: '[F]or the phrase 'god among men', Aristotle makes a sudden change from the plural to the singular, as though he were not calling the few 'gods among men', and then returns to the plural again; this must mean something, and as Aristotle could so easily have written τοὺς τοιούτους for τὸν τοιοῦτον had he wished, it is fair to suppose that he did not wish.'

reference to *multiple* human beings, many scholars nevertheless followed Tarn in the belief that the so-called god among men points to Alexander.[130] Since Aristotle never indicates that this is a kingship from the past, the παμβασιλεία could in that respect have been the kingship that Aristotle had in mind when he thought of Alexander's rule. Certain later *On Kingship* fragments also show similarities with Aristotle's presentation.[131]

Nevertheless, a closer comparison between the absolute kingship and Alexander shows that it is unlikely that Aristotle saw the Macedonian king as a παμβασιλεύς. In general, we have no reason to believe that the παμβασιλεία was a historical rather than philosophical category of kingship. When Aristotle anticipates on the rule of an absolute king in the passage from *Politics* III.13, he only uses it as an argument in a philosophical discussion on the best regime. And when Aristotle introduces the category in III.14, he does so *after* the summary of the four historical kingships, thus implying that the παμβασιλεία differs from these.[132] The divine character of the absolute king also suggests

[130] Aristotle's mentioning of a θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις (1284a10-11) reminds the exact similar (Isocrates, *Evagoras* 72) or like phrases (Plato, *Statesman* 303b) in the works of older contemporaries, but can eventually be traced back to Homer (*Iliad* XXIV.258). For more references, see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch II-III* (Berlin, 1991), p. 527. In recent scholarship, therefore, one is often more careful in just presenting it as a suggestion that the passage from III.13 refers to Alexander, see C.H. Kahn, 'The Normative Structure of Aristotle's "Politics"', in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' Politik* (Göttingen, 1990), p. 380; P. Carlier, 'La notion de *pambasileia* dans la pensée politique d'Aristote', in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes* (Fribourg, 1993), pp. 116-7; and P.A. Barceló, *Basileia, Monarchia, Tyrannis* (Stuttgart 1993), p. 259. The identification is nevertheless a recurrent theme and still appears in recent publications as W.S. Greenwalt, 'Argead Dunasteia during the Reigns of Philip II and Alexander III', in E.D. Carney & D. Ogden (eds.), *Philip II and Alexander the Great* (New York, 2010), pp. 158-60, and M.G. Dietz, 'Between Polis and Empire', *American Political Science Review* 106 (2012) pp. 281-83.

[131] In Stobaeus' *Anthologium* (IV.7.61, line 38), there is not only an exact correspondence in portrayal of the king as θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις, but he is also depicted as νόμος ἔμψυχος ('animate law'). This fits Aristotle's description in *Politics* III.13 (1284a13-14) of the godlike ruler as being a law himself, and reminds us of his description of the judge in *Nicomachean Ethics* V.4 (1132a21-22) as δίκαιον ἔμψυχον ('animate justice'), see E. Goodenough, 'The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship', *Yale Classical Studies* 1 (1928), p. 63.

[132] A curious argument developed by Brendan Nagle is that the definition of the absolute kingship at the end of *Politics* III.14 differs from the theoretical allusions to such rule elsewhere, which would imply that Aristotle had two different conceptions of the παμβασιλεία: a theoretical and a historical one, see D.B. Nagle, 'Alexander and Aristotle's *Pambasileus*', *L'Antiquité Classique* 69 (2000), pp. 121-24. Nagle believes that the definition of the absolute kingship in III.14 was a historical category that referred to Alexander's reign, for it is defined as a 'household management for a city and one or more nations' (πόλεως καὶ ἔθνους ἑνὸς ἢ πλειόνων οἰκονομία, 1285b32-33), whereas all the other (theoretical) allusions to such rule are

that it is an ideal rather than the description of an actual ruler.[133] But even if Aristotle had an individual in mind, it is not at all likely that it was Alexander for three reasons. First, Alexander does not seem to have reached the appropriate age. Second, his character does not correspond with Aristotle's picture of the παμβασιλεύς. Third, a divine nature does not agree very well with the theory that a king should benefit his subjects.

The first argument is that the age of Alexander does not correspond with the image that Aristotle has of a good king. Aristotle certainly seems to have an old man in mind, after the analogy of a father that is much older than his children. This is why Aristotle indicates in *Politics* I.12 that kingly rule is not only characterized by affection for his subjects, but by 'seniority' (πρεσβεία, 1259b12) as well. Similarly, Aristotle says in his *History of Animals* IX.11 that the Eurasian wren was known under two exchangeable nicknames: 'old man and king' (πρέσβυς καὶ βασιλεύς, 615a19). At the beginning of his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1095a2-13) Aristotle also indicates that he does not consider his lectures on politics useful for younger men, because they lack experience and are too much preoccupied with their emotions. Since Alexander died at the age of 33, he could never have been regarded an old man. His eternal youthfulness hence does not agree with the seniority that Aristotle assumes of a king as a necessary condition. Since Aristotle explicitly indicates in *Politics* III.13 that an absolute ruler needs both preeminent virtue and political capacity, it seems safe to say that Aristotle believed that Alexander did not have these characteristics on the basis of his age.

---

restricted to the city-state. The latter assumption is incorrect, however, for Aristotle also points in VII.14 (1332b23-27) to the rule of certain Indian kings on the basis of a testimony from Scylax of Caryanda, a reference that Aristotle himself found hard to believe.

[133] This does not exclude, as Richard Mulgan has noted, that this ideal could yet have been used to evaluate and assess existing rulers as Alexander, see R.G. Mulgan, 'Aristotle and Absolute Rule', *Antichthon* 8 (1974), p. 28: '[I]t is hard to think that when writing of absolute rule he [sc. Aristotle] did not have Alexander partly in mind. If he did think of Alexander, it is not necessary to believe that he thought of him as a godlike ruler. It is more likely that the theory of absolute rule would prompt the question: Is Alexander sufficiently godlike to be a candidate for justifiable absolute rule? To this question, the answer was probably "No, he is not". The theory of absolute rule would thus provide a standard for judging and rejecting the claims of actual rulers to rule absolutely.'

The second argument is that, if his age was not a problem, his character certainly was, for an absolute king should be truly virtuous. An argument given by Aristotle himself in *Politics* III.15 (1286a33-35) against the rule of an absolute king is that human passions like ὀργή ('anger') can corrupt a ruler's judgment. And in III.16 (1287a31-32), he argues more generally that θυμός ('passion') could distort rulers, even the best of men. Although he does not connect this explicitly with Alexander, it is significant that according to other authors it is exactly this temper that Alexander was known for.[134] Although less trustworthy, there is even an epistolary fragment that Aristotle was concerned with trying to diminish Alexander's anger:

> Ἀλέξανδρον Ἀριστοτέλης ὀργιζόμενον πραῦναι βουλόμενος καὶ παῦσαι χαλεπαίνοντα πολλοῖς ταυτὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν γέγραφεν· 'ὁ θυμὸς καὶ ἡ ὀργὴ οὐ πρὸς ἥσσους ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς κρείττονας γίνεται· σοὶ δὲ οὐδεὶς ἴσος' (Aelian, *Varia Historia* XII.54 = Rose fr. 659).
>
> Aristotle, wishing to pacify Alexander's rage and to put a stop to his anger with so many people, wrote to him as follows: 'Passion and rage are directed not against lesser men but against greater; and you have no equal'.

This fragment only corresponds superficially with Aristotle's own definition of anger in the *Rhetoric*.[135] Yet it indicates that Aristotle is also supposed to have recognized Alexander's anger, which would again exclude the latter from being an absolute king in the former's eyes.

The third argument is that even when Aristotle completely recognized Alexander, despite his age and character, as a god-like king, it would be odd

---

[134] See Seneca's *Dialogues* (5.17): *Haec barbaris regibus feritas in ira fuit, quos nulla eruditio, nullus litterarum cultus imbuerat. Dabo tibi ex Aristotelis sinu regem Alexandrum, qui Clitum carissimum sibi et una educatum inter epulas transfodit manu quidem sua, parum adulantem et pigre ex Macedone ac libero in Persicam servitutem transeuntem*; Plutarch's *Alexander* (51.3): τοῦ δὲ Κλείτου μὴ εἴκοντος, ἀλλὰ εἰς μέσον ἃ βούλεται λέγειν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον κελεύοντος, ἢ μὴ καλεῖν ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἄνδρας ἐλευθέρους καὶ παρρησίαν ἔχοντας, ἀλλὰ μετὰ βαρβάρων ζῆν καὶ ἀνδραπόδων, οἳ τὴν Περσικὴν ζώνην καὶ τὸν διάλευκον αὐτοῦ χιτῶνα προσκυνήσουσιν, οὐκέτι φέρων τὴν ὀργὴν Ἀλέξανδρος μήλων παρακειμένων ἐνὶ βαλὼν ἔπαισεν αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ ἐγχειρίδιον ἐζήτει.

[135] According to M. Hose, *Aristoteles. Die historischen Fragmente* (Berlin, 2002), p. 288, this advice to Alexander corresponds quite well with Aristotle's definition of anger in *Rhetoric* II.2 (1379b11-13): ὑπόκειται γὰρ ἡ ὀργὴ τῆς ὀλιγωρίας πρὸς τοὺς μὴ προσήκοντας, προσήκει δὲ τοῖς ἥττοσι μὴ ὀλιγωρεῖν. It must be noted that in the advice, Aristotle supposedly said that you cannot be angry at lesser people, whereas the definition in the *Rhetoric* still endorses this. Since anger is caused by the contempt of lesser persons, it remains possible to be angry at them.

that he believed at the same time that the king could do good to his subjects. Although Aristotle's general terminology on kingship indeed points to euergetism, as was argued above, a closer reading nevertheless shows that it might become difficult to apply it to the *divine* character of the absolute king. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.7, he clearly indicates that when the difference in excellence (or other things) is *too* great, there is hardly room for φιλία among people. Aristotle mentions kings and their subjects, though he simultaneously adds that he does not know up to what point friendship could remain, for there can be friendship between superiors and inferiors, as indicated above. What he does know, however, is that when there is a too great disparity, as between god and man, then it certainly is no longer possible.[136] But as we have already seen, the friendship between a king and his subjects was constitutive for the benefactions of the former towards the latter.

One might conclude, therefore, that Alexander's age and character not only differ factually from Aristotle's god-like king, it seems necessarily so in order to receive instructions with regard to euergetism. This allows us to say, in accordance with other scholars, that within Aristotle's political theory Alexander can hardly be identified with the concept of the παμβασιλεύς.[137] This does not come as a surprise if one reads Aristotle's conclusion in *Politics* V.10 regarding kingship in his own days: '*no one* is so immeasurably superior to others as to represent adequately the greatness and dignity of the office' (μηδένα διαφέροντα τοσοῦτον ὥστε ἀπαρτίζειν πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα τῆς ἀρχῆς, 1313a7-8). This is why the remaining two kingships, the generalship for life and the barbarian monarchy, are either strongly reduced versions of

[136] See Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.7 (1158b35-59a5): δῆλον δ', ἂν πολὺ διάστημα γένηται ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας ἢ εὐπορίας ἤ τινος ἄλλου· οὐ γὰρ ἔτι φίλοι εἰσὶν ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἀξιοῦσιν. ἐμφανέστατον δὲ τοῦτ' ἐπὶ τῶν θεῶν· πλεῖστον γὰρ οὗτοι πᾶσι τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ὑπερέχουσιν. δῆλον δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν βασιλέων· οὐδὲ γὰρ τούτοις ἀξιοῦσιν εἶναι φίλοι οἱ πολὺ καταδεέστεροι, οὐδὲ τοῖς ἀρίστοις ἢ σοφωτάτοις οἱ μηδενὸς ἄξιοι. ἀκριβὴς μὲν οὖν ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις οὐκ ἔστιν ὁρισμός, ἕως τίνος οἱ φίλοι· πολλῶν γὰρ ἀφαιρουμένων ἔτι μένει, πολὺ δὲ χωρισθέντος, οἷον τοῦ θεοῦ, οὐκέτι. In *Eudemian Ethics* VII.10 (1242b27-30), however, Aristotle defends the reverse position and recognizes that a god indeed could be a benefactor.

[137] See V. Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 71-85; R. Weil, *Aristote et l'Histoire* (Paris, 1960), pp. 184-85; and E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch II-III* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 527-30.

kingship or variants of one-man rule over non-Greeks. It is not necessary, however, to go into these two categories right now. At this point, it suffices to say that if Alexander was not an heroic or absolute king, it is not obvious why Aristotle would prompt Alexander to euergetism.

2.4 Consequences for *On Kingship*

What can be inferred from the above with regard to both the form and content of *On Kingship*? If we begin with the form of the treatise, then the passage from the *Vita Marciana* only indicates that it was a βιβλίον. That it consisted of only *one* book and was thus a short work becomes evident from a similar passage from the *Vita Vulgata*, another Neoplatonic biography on Aristotle's life.[138] In the book catalogues of Aristotle's works, it is indicated as well that Περὶ βασιλείας only consisted of one (ᾱ) book.

Some scholars in the past have argued that it probably was a dialogue.[139] One of the arguments is that the title Περὶ βασιλείας appears among similar 'Περὶ …' titles in the book catalogues, and we know from the remaining fragments of some of these, such as Aristotle's work *On Good Birth* (Περὶ εὐγενείας), that they were indeed dialogues.[140] It is, however, not necessary for *On Kingship* to be a dialogue simply because some other treatises with similar titles were.[141] Although one can surely address a king by means of a dialogue, as Dio Chrysostom did in some of his works *On Kingship*, the fragments from the treatises *On Kingship* of the later pseudo-Pythagorean authors do not reveal a dialogic structure, nor does this form seem to have been a frequent feature of

[138] See the *Vita Vulgata* (22), collected in I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Stockholm, 1957), p. 135 = Rose fr. 646: τῷ δ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ καὶ περὶ βασιλείας ἔγραψεν ἐν ἑνὶ μονοβίβλῳ, παιδεύων αὐτὸν ὅπως δεῖ βασιλεύειν.
[139] See O. Gigon, *Aristotelis Opera* (Berlin, 1987), p. 301.
[140] The fragments from Περὶ εὐγενείας which reveal the dialogue structure, come from Stobaeus' *Anthologium* (IV.29.24-25) = Rose fr. 91-92. For comments, see H. Flashar e.a., *Aristoteles. Fragmente zu Philosophie, Rhetorik, Poetik, Dichtung* (Berlin, 2006), pp. 214-17.
[141] Ingmar Düring, for instance, does not call the first book titles 'dialogues', but rather 'the works most widely known to the general public in Hellenistic times', see I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Stockholm, 1957), p. 68 and p. 90.

such works.[142] More important is the argument that the chapters in the *Politics* where Aristotle discusses kingship (III.14-17) constitute a clear, delineated unit, both starting and ending with the words 'περὶ βασιλείας' (1284b36 and 1288a30), which makes it a plausible assumption that Aristotle integrated (parts of) an earlier dialogue on kingship in the *Politics*.[143] This seems tempting, since within chapters III.15-16 Aristotle presents a dialectical discussion on the advantage of kingship with both arguments pro and contra, which might give the impression that it derives originally from a dialogue. If we accept, however, that *On Kingship* was written to Alexander, the work is unlikely to have been a dialogue for these chapters on kingship in the *Politics* offer a philosophical analysis of the phenomenon. Both the technical vocabulary and the arguments against kingship in these chapters make it highly implausible that the same content was offered in a treatise to a living king such as Alexander.[144] It cannot be ruled out that Aristotle wrote a philosophical dialogue on kingship of which *Politics* III.14-17 reveals traces, but such a work can hardly have been written to Alexander.[145]

If we look to the division that was made in late antiquity, we can see that the works of Aristotle were divided into three categories. A passage from Philoponus indicates that the treatise *On Kingship* was placed not within the

---

[142] For the fragments of Diotogenes, Sthenidas, and Ecphantus, see Stobaeus' *Anthologium* (IV.7.61-66). For discussion on the authenticity and influence on Hellenistic monarchy, see especially E. Goodenough, 'The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship', *Yale Classical Studies* 1 (1928), pp. 55-102. More caution with regard to the authenticity is taken up in F.W. Walbank, 'Monarchies and monarchic ideas', in F.W. Walbank & A.E. Astin (eds.), *The Hellenistic World to the Coming of the Romans*, (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 78-79, and O. Murray, 'Philosophy and Monarchy in the Hellenistic World', in T. Rajak e.a. (eds.), *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers* (Berkeley, 2007), pp. 20-21.

[143] That Aristotle had dealt with kingship before could be inferred from the methodological remark at the beginning of *Politics* III.15 (1286a5-7): ὁ δὲ λοιπὸς τρόπος τῆς βασιλείας πολιτείας εἶδός ἐστιν, ὥστε περὶ τούτου δεῖ θεωρῆσαι καὶ τὰς ἀπορίας ἐπιδραμεῖν τὰς ἐνούσας. According to Raymond Weil this could point to Aristotle's *On Kingship*, see R. Weil, *Aristote et l'Histoire* (Paris, 1960), pp. 158-59: 'Le verbe ἐπιδραμεῖν est remarquable, parce qu'il exprime l'idée d'une exposé rapide et sommaire, sinon d'un résumé, en tous cas d'un schéma. (…) S'il se contente ici d'un survol rapide, c'est que l'analyse détaillée a déjà été faite, et cela ne peut être que dans le *Sur la royauté*.'

[144] See also O. Murray, 'Περὶ Βασιλείας', (Oxford, 1971), p. 75: 'The *Politics* is "esoteric", too difficult for the ordinary king in the street. Under the guise of accepting the theory of the perfect king, it offers the most devastating critique of actual kingship.'

[145] A candidate seems to be the lost work *On the Statesman* (Περὶ πολιτικοῦ), see H. Flashar e.a., *Aristoteles. Fragmente zu Philosophie, Rhetorik, Poetik, Dichtung* (Berlin, 2006), p. 205.

universal or general treatises, containing Aristotle's philosophical works (both his dialogues and esoteric writings), nor in the middle ones, containing his historical works or research compendia, but in the category of the so-called special ones, such as the letters:

> Φέρε τοίνυν καὶ τὴν διαίρεσιν τῶν Ἀριστοτελικῶν συγγραμμάτων ποιησώμεθα. τῶν Ἀριστοτελικῶν συγγραμμάτων τὰ μέν ἐστι μερικά, ὡς αἱ ἐπιστολαί, τὰ δὲ καθόλου, οἷον ἡ Φυσική, ἡ Περὶ ψυχῆς καὶ τὰ λοιπά, τὰ δὲ μεταξύ, ὡς αἱ Πολιτεῖαι καὶ αἱ Περὶ ζῴων ἱστορίαι. (…) Μερικὰ μὲν οὖν ἐστιν ὅσα πρός τινα ἰδίως γέγραπται, ὡς αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ ἢ ὅσα ἐρωτηθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνος περί τε βασιλείας καὶ ὅπως δεῖ τὰς ἀποικίας ποιεῖσθαι γεγράφηκε (*Commentary on Aristotle's* Categories, p. 3 ed. Busse [CAG XIII.1]).
>
> Let us now also make the distinction between the Aristotelian writings. Of the Aristotelian writings, there are first the special ones, like the letters, second the universal ones, as the *Physic(s)*, or *On the Soul* and the others, and third those in the middle, like the *Constitutions* and the *Histories of Animals.* (…) Special writings are those that were written for some individual, like the letters or those treatises requested by Alexander of Macedonia on kingship and how one ought to make colonies.

Firstly, this passage suggests that if a treatise like *On Kingship* did not itself take the form of a letter, it was sufficiently similar to be categorized with them.[146] Thus, it is safe to say that Aristotle's *On Kingship* probably resembled the rhetorical orations of Isocrates (*Euagoras* or *Ad Nicoclem*) more than the philosophical dialogues of Plato (*Statesman*). But secondly, this also suggests that the treatise *On Kingship* was not a purely philosophical work, but rather a rhetorical treatise of what one might call applied philosophy.

This brings us to the content of the treatise. If Aristotle wrote it to Alexander to instruct him how to rule as king in order to make him a benefactor, the treatise seems indeed rhetorical. After all, Aristotle's categories of kingship which qualify for such a message do not seem to fit Alexander: the historical category of the heroic kingship belongs to the past and the philosophical

[146] See O. Murray, 'Περὶ Βασιλείας', (Oxford, 1971), p. 65. According to Hellmut Flashar, the text from Philoponus probably does not point to *On Kingship*, but to another epistle to Alexander on kingship, see H. Flashar e.a., *Aristoteles. Fragmente zu Philosophie, Rhetorik, Poetik, Dichtung* (Berlin, 2006), p. 224. It is not unlikely that both are nevertheless the same, for the other treatise mentioned in this passage corresponds to Aristotle's lost work *Alexander or on the Colonists* (Ἀλέξανδρος ἢ ὑπὲρ ἀποίκων), and this work is mentioned together with *On Kingship* in the book catalogue of Diogenes Laertius (V.22).

category of the absolute kingship is an ideal that does not seem obtainable for human beings. What could he have intended, then, with kingship and the idea of euergetism in writing to Alexander?

Since Aristotle wrote an important treatise on rhetoric himself, we could try to understand his *On Kingship* from his own views. The first question to answer is: in what rhetorical genre would the treatise belong? In *Rhetoric* I.3, Aristotle differentiates between three different genres: the συμβουλευτικόν ('deliberative'), the δικανικόν ('forensic') and the ἐπιδεικτικόν ('epideictic'). The second does not qualify for *On Kingship*, but with the deliberative and the epideictic genre we have two viable candidates because Aristotle determines each genre with a characteristic that seems to fit the treatise (1358b8-13 and 20-29). If we look to the action that is undertaken, *On Kingship* belongs to the deliberative genre, for it seems to be a προτροπή ('exhortation') rather than an ἔπαινος ('panegyric'), since the treatise wants to instruct more than praise the king. But with regard to its purpose, the treatise belongs to the epideictic genre, since it seems to be directed more to something that is καλόν rather than συμφέρον, as the intent of the work was to make Alexander a benefactor of his subjects. As such, it is not remarkable that both genres qualify for the treatise *On Kingship*, because Aristotle indicates that both belong to a common type: if you have to persuade someone, you will give him advice on what you take to be laudatory and *vice versa*.[147]

As Aristotle seems to have urged Alexander to become a benefactor to all of his subjects, we could now ask what the intent of such a message would be within a rhetorical treatise. As far as I can see, there is only one sentence within Aristotle's extant works, in *Rhetoric* I.9, where Aristotle says what it means 'to do good to everyone'. It appears in a passage where he, in a semi-sophistical way, describes how one could praise or blame someone by attributing qualities to him that he does not possess:

[147] See *Rhetoric* I.9 (1367b36-68a1): ἔχει δὲ κοινὸν εἶδος ὁ ἔπαινος καὶ αἱ συμβουλαί· ἃ γὰρ ἐν τῷ συμβουλεύειν ὑπόθοιο ἄν, ταῦτα μετατεθέντα τῇ λέξει ἐγκώμια γίγνεται.

> καὶ τοὺς ἐν ταῖς ὑπερβολαῖς ὡς ἐν ταῖς ἀρεταῖς ὄντας, οἷον τὸν θρασὺν ἀνδρεῖον καὶ τὸν ἄσωτον ἐλευθέριον· δόξει τε γὰρ τοῖς πολλοῖς, καὶ ἅμα παραλογιστικὸν ἐκ τῆς αἰτίας· εἰ γὰρ οὗ μὴ ἀνάγκη κινδυνευτικός, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἂν δόξειεν ὅπου καλόν, καὶ εἰ προετικὸς τοῖς τυχοῦσι, καὶ τοῖς φίλοις· ὑπερβολὴ γὰρ ἀρετῆς τὸ πάντας εὖ ποιεῖν (1367b1-7).
>
> Those who run to extremes will be said to possess the corresponding good qualities; rashness will be called courage, and extravagance generosity. That will be what most people think; and at the same time this method enables an advocate to draw a misleading inference from the motive, arguing that if a man runs into danger needlessly, much more will he do so in a noble cause; and if a man is open-handed to anyone and everyone, he will be so to his friends also, since it is the extreme form of goodness to be good to everybody.

Since τὸ πάντας εὖ ποιεῖν corresponds quite well with the intent of *On Kingship*, at least according to the passage from the *Vita Marciana*, we should look to what ὑπερβολὴ ἀρετῆς means. There seem to be two possibilities. In accordance with the *Politics*, it could mean 'preeminence of virtue', which is the virtue of an absolute king.[148] But then Aristotle's *On Kingship* must be an encomium, in the sense that it would be a laudatory oration on Alexander and his abilities to do good to everyone. It was already argued, however, that the identification of the absolute kingship with Alexander is very difficult, which makes it altogether unlikely that Aristotle would have gone so far in praising him this way. Encomiastic elements may always have been included in treatises *On Kingship*, intended to conciliate the addressee, though they cannot have functioned as the essence of Aristotle's work for it would literally go against his own conclusion that the kings in his days no longer possess the greatness and dignity of the royal office.

A better interpretation therefore seems to render ὑπερβολὴ ἀρετῆς, in accordance with the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as 'excess of virtue'. This is no longer a virtue, but simply too much virtue.[149] This interpretation may seem odd at first sight, because it would be a peculiar condition for doing good to everyone. Nonetheless, it is not inconsistent with what has been laid out above.

[148] The preeminence of virtue of the absolute king is indicated as ὑπερβολή in *Politics* III.13 (1284a4) or VII.14 (1332b19). A comparison of all the passages where Aristotle speaks of such a preeminence is given in the third chapter.

[149] The excess of virtue is called ὑπερβολή throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics*, see for instance in II.6 (1107a19-21), V.10 (1134a8-11), or VII.14 (1154a15-21).

In addition, it fits the passage from the *Rhetoric* well, in the sense that Aristotle argues here that in a rhetorical speech, one could present such an excess as the virtue itself and (falsely) argue that what can be done on the basis of such an excess *a fortiori* will be done on the basis of the virtue itself. If that is true, then Aristotle's *On Kingship* seems to be an exhortation, in the sense that it would contain deliberate advice to Alexander on how to rule as king. If an oration on kingship from Isocrates is the model to keep in mind, then it is likely that Aristotle's *On Kingship* resembles the *Ad Nicoclem* more than the *Euagoras*, because the former contained concrete advice to Nicocles, the latter mere praise for his father Euagoras.

One might be tempted to think that Aristotle could have used the category of absolute kingship to give this advice to Alexander. He could have portrayed the ideal of a παμβασιλεύς to Alexander, not to achieve it – that would be impossible – but to prompt him to that goal as much as possible. The problem with this assumption is that Aristotle then would have presented a version of kingship that is not only inapplicable to the rule of Alexander, but dangerous as well. If a young monarch with a passionate character is urged to rule without laws restricting his power, he will not remain a king, but probably become a tyrant. In *Politics* V.10, Aristotle indicates that kingship is destroyed when kings try to rule as tyrants 'when they claim to merit authority over more matters and contrary to the law' (ὅταν εἶναι κύριοι πλειόνων ἀξιῶσι καὶ παρὰ τὸν νόμον, 1313a2-3). We therefore better look for categories of kingship κατὰ νόμον to understand Aristotle's advice.[150]

2.5 The advice on how to rule as king

If the message from *On Kingship* was that a king should do good to all, as the passage from the *Vita Marciana* indicates, then three hypotheses are acceptable. First, the treatise was a letter rather than a dialogue. Second, its

[150] Interesting to note is that the Arabic *Letter of Aristotle to Alexander*, although probably a forgery, also urges Alexander to subject himself to the law, see P. Carlier, 'Étude sur la prétendue *lettre* d'Aristote à Alexandre', *Ktèma* 5 (1980), p. 283.

content was a rhetorical application of certain ideas rather than a strictly philosophical work. Third, it was συμβουλευτικόν rather than ἐπιδεικτικόν. The question that needs to be addressed, finally, is whether or not this corresponds with other passages that are considered to be possible testimonies for Aristotle's *On Kingship*. It is particularly interesting to consider whether they reveal something more than the above analysis on Aristotle's odd advice to do good to everyone, since he himself considers this to be an excess of virtue. Two passages need to be taken into consideration.[151]

The first passage comes from one of Cicero's letters to Atticus, wherein he mentions a work from Aristotle to Alexander the Great. The passage is not a fragment of *On Kingship*, but a testimony:

> συμβουλευτικὸν *saepe conor, nihil reperio. et quidem mecum habeo et* Ἀριστοτέλους *et* Θεοπόμπου πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον. *sed quid simile? illi et quae ipsis honesta essent scribebant et grata Alexandro. ecquid tu eius modi reperis*? (*Letters to Atticus*, XII.40.2)
>
> I often try a letter of advice; I find nothing to say. I have, indeed, with me the books both of Aristotle and of Theopompus addressed to Alexander. But what resemblance is there? They wrote what was both honorable to them and pleasing to Alexander; do you find anything of that sort here?[152]

Although Cicero does not indicate that the work πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον that he had with him was Aristotle's *On Kingship*, it is a plausible assumption for two reasons. The first is that Cicero calls it συμβουλευτικόν, which is in agreement with our understanding of *On Kingship* as a rhetorical piece of advice.[153] The second is that the words *honestus* and *gratus* are reminiscent of Aristotle's terminology on euergetism, for these words seem to cover the aim of the benefactor (τιμή) and what is hoped to be received from the benefited

[151] There is a third passage that can be left aside here, see Themistius' *Oratio* VIII.107d = Rose fr. 647. The text only indicates the difference between Plato and Aristotle on the question whether a king should be a philosopher or not, and will be discussed in the next chapter. Although many other scholars follow Valentin Rose in considering it to be a fragment of *On Kingship*, I follow Olof Gigon, who classifies this fragment among the works 'Fragmente ohne Buchangabe' (fr. 982), see O. Gigon, *Aristotelis Opera* (Berlin, 1987), p. 834.

[152] Translation, though slightly adapted, taken from D. Ross, *Select Fragments* (Oxford, 1967).

[153] See also O. Murray, 'Περὶ Βασιλείας', (Oxford, 1971), pp. 63-64, and R. Laurenti, *Aristotele. I frammenti dei dialoghi*, vol. II (Napoli, 1987), pp. 883-84. In another passage from one of his *Letters to Atticus* (XIII.28.2) Cicero also calls these treatises to Alexander *suasiones*.

(χάρις).[154] This varies slightly from the interpretation to urge Alexander to do good to everyone, for Cicero clearly indicates that Aristotle is the one to whom this was honorable, not Alexander. This implies that Aristotle is the benefactor and Alexander the beneficiary.

One can argue, however, that this statement does not need to be in conflict with the *Vita Marciana*, since the few sentences on Aristotle's *On Kingship* are embedded in a larger sequence of benefits that Aristotle allegedly conferred towards men and cities.[155] As indicated in the first section, the phrase ἵνα δὲ καὶ πάντας ἀνθρώπους εὐεργετήσῃ in our passage from the *Vita Marciana* must be read primarily as the aim of Aristotle himself. Additionally, the passage from Philoponus indicates that *On Kingship* was a treatise that was requested (ἐρωτηθείς), which certainly makes it plausible that Alexander was thankful for receiving it. This nevertheless leads to the same result as our point of departure, because it is then hoped that Alexander will heed the advice and apply it in practice, whereby he would become a benefactor to everyone.[156] The passage from Cicero's letter to Atticus thus seems to be in accordance with our interpretation of Aristotle's *On Kingship*.

The second passage comes from Plutarch's work on Alexander's fortune and virtue, with advice from Aristotle to Alexander on how to behave to his subjects. The passage could be a testimony or a fragment, depending on how literally the advice is represented. Although it is often considered to derive from one of Aristotle's letters or another lost treatise,[157] it seems plausible that such advice occurred in *On Kingship* as well:

---

[154] The word *gratus* may also be translated as 'thankful' or 'grateful'. That benefactors hope to receive χάρις ('thankfulness') from the benefited is indicated in *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.7 (1167b23-24): τοὺς εὐεργετήσαντας βούλεσθαι εἶναι τοὺς παθόντας ὡς κομιουμένους τὰς χάριτας. Examples of how to honor a benefactor are given in *Rhetoric* I.5 (1361a34-37).

[155] See the *Vita Marciana* (73-102 ed. Gigon). Aristotle allegedly benefited the people from Stagira, Eressus and Athens with his letters to the Macedonian kings. For the tradition on the reestablishment of Stagira, see the texts collected in I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Stockholm, 1957), pp. 290-94.

[156] This is suggested as well in the other passage from the *Letters to Atticus* (XIII.28.2), where Cicero says that eloquent and learned men encouraged Alexander 'to honor' (*ad decus*), which was the aim of the benefactor.

[157] In accordance with Rose are J. Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. II (Princeton, 1984), p. 2460, and M. Hose, *Aristoteles. Die historischen Fragmente* (Berlin, 2002), p. 117, who classify the passage among the letter fragments. In W.D. Ross, *Aristotle. Select Fragments*

> οὐ γὰρ ὡς Ἀριστοτέλης συνεβούλευεν αὐτῷ, τοῖς μὲν Ἕλλησιν ἡγεμονικῶς, τοῖς δὲ βαρβάροις δεσποτικῶς χρώμενος καὶ τῶν μὲν ὡς φίλων καὶ οἰκείων ἐπιμελούμενος, τοῖς δὲ ὡς ζῴοις ἢ φυτοῖς προσφερόμενος, πολεμοποιῶν φυγῶν ἐνέπλησε καὶ στάσεων ὑπούλων τὴν ἡγεμονίαν (Plutarch, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* 329B = Rose fr. 658).
>
> He [sc. Alexander] did not do as Aristotle advised – act towards Greeks as their leader, towards foreigners as their master, treating the former as friends and kinsmen and the latter as animals or plants – and so filled his reign with many wars and banishments and festering factions.

Since Plutarch explicitly uses the word συνεβούλευεν, it could be that such advice was taken up in *On Kingship*. Moreover, the description of taking care of the Greeks as friends and kinsmen (ὡς φίλων καὶ οἰκείων ἐπιμελούμενος) corresponds very well with Aristotle's own thoughts on kingship and euergetism as presented within the passage from *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.11. He argued there that the friendship between a king and his subjects was based on benefits, and these benefits were conferred because a king cares for his subjects. It is of course remarkable that Aristotle here only seems to say that Alexander should benefit the Greeks, and not, as the passage from the *Vita Marciana* indicates, all men.

If we take the advice from the *Vita Marciana* into account and read it the way the passage from *Rhetoric* I.9 prescribes as ὑπερβολὴ ἀρετῆς, then it is clear that if it is an excess of virtue to do good to everyone, it is virtuous to benefit those who truly deserve it. From Aristotle's *Politics*, it is not too difficult to read this as an argument to benefit the Greeks, who were thought to be better than the barbarians.[158] Thus, in a context where a sovereign rules, or will rule, both, as was the case in the Macedonian empire, you could advise the (future) king to benefit everyone, although this would require an excess of

(Oxford, 1967), p. 67, and R. Laurenti, *Aristotele. I frammenti dei dialoghi*, vol. II (Napoli, 1987), pp. 912-13, it is assigned to the lost work *Alexander or on the Colonists*.

[158] This becomes explicit in *Politics* VII.7 (1327b18-33), where Aristotle describes how the Greeks are both full of spirit and intelligent, whereas the barbarians from Europe and Asia lack such characteristics. In III.14 (1285a19-22) he also indicates that barbarians in general are more slavish than Greeks (and the Asian barbarians more than the European), which is why they accept the despotic regime of a barbarian monarch, as explained in the first chapter.

virtue, in order to make sure that he benefits those who qualify for it most. But what would it mean to benefit them?

We can return now to the distinction made earlier between the different types of kingship in *Politics* III.14, with an emphasis on the remaining categories, because these two are exactly the categories that illustrate the difference between the rule for Greeks and the rule for barbarians. Aristotle considers the generalship for life the most moderate form of kingship, for it is merely a military leadership, whereas the barbarian monarchs are thought to be similar to tyrants with a δεσποτικὴ ἀρχή ('despotic power', 1285a22). Later in the *Politics*, Aristotle points out a principle for the preservation of an existing kingship: make it *more* moderate, in order that the king becomes *less* despotic.[159] One can only think, then, of the generalship for life, such as the kingship from Sparta, and not of the barbarian monarchy. This suggests that Aristotle thought a real king could still benefit his subjects in the present, though not by doing something, but rather by refraining from something: to act only as a leader in war, and *not* as a master. That Aristotle understood this as a benefaction could be inferred from the fact that the benefactions of the heroic kings from the past were war-related as well. Whether Aristotle himself believed that Alexander was such a moderate king is not very likely, but, on the basis of this viewpoint in the *Politics*, it seems at least plausible that he urged Alexander to act as one.

A problem, however, is that the passage from Plutarch seems to be particularly against the barbarians, in saying that they need to be treated as animals or plants, whereas our reading of the exhortation to do good to everyone, seems particularly or even only in the interest of the Greeks. The side effect of the advice to benefit everyone is that barbarians will be treated in a similar way as Greeks, which clashes with Aristotle's supposed thesis, as presented in this passage, that it is necessary to treat Greeks and barbarians

[159] See Aristotle's *Politics* V.11 (1313a18-23): σῴζονται δὲ δηλονότι ὡς ἁπλῶς μὲν εἰπεῖν ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων, ὡς δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον τῷ τὰς μὲν βασιλείας ἄγειν ἐπὶ τὸ μετριώτερον. ὅσῳ γὰρ ἂν ἐλαττόνων ὦσι κύριοι, πλείω χρόνον ἀναγκαῖον μένειν πᾶσαν τὴν ἀρχήν· αὐτοί τε γὰρ ἧττον γίγνονται δεσποτικοὶ καὶ τοῖς ἤθεσιν ἴσοι μᾶλλον, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχομένων φθονοῦνται ἧττον.

differently.[160] This can be backed up with the utterance in *Politics* VII.2 that some people must indeed be ruled despotically, 'so that if matters stand in this manner, one should not try to exercise mastery over all things but only over those that are to be mastered' (ὥστε εἴπερ ἔχει τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον, οὐ δεῖ πάντων πειρᾶσθαι δεσπόζειν, ἀλλὰ τῶν δεσποστῶν, 1324b38-40). The difference between those who should not and those who should be ruled despotically is compared next with the (un)acceptability of hunting men and animals respectively. In that sense, barbarians are compared with wild animals, which brings it in line with Plutarch's statement.[161] Then, however, it seems difficult to reconcile it with the *Vita Marciana*.

This apparent difficulty can nevertheless be solved by making a final comparison with one of Isocrates' treatises. At the end of his *Philippus*, he summarizes what he has said in the discourse, in order that king Philip II could see the main points of his counsel:

> φημὶ γὰρ χρῆναί σε τοὺς μὲν Ἕλληνας εὐεργετεῖν, Μακεδόνων δὲ βασιλεύειν, τῶν δὲ βαρβάρων ὡς πλείστων ἄρχειν. ἢν γὰρ ταῦτα πράττῃς, ἅπαντές σοι χάριν ἕξουσιν, οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες ὑπὲρ ὧν εὖ πάσχουσι, Μακεδόνες δ' ἢν βασιλικῶς ἀλλὰ μὴ τυραννικῶς αὐτῶν ἐπιστατῇς, τὸ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων γένος, ἢν διὰ σὲ βαρβαρικῆς δεσποτείας ἀπαλλαγέντες Ἑλληνικῆς ἐπιμελείας τύχωσι (*Philippus* 154).
>
> I assert that it is incumbent upon you to work for the good of the Hellenes, to reign as king over the Macedonians, and to extend your power over the greatest possible number of the barbarians. For if you do these things, all men will be grateful to you: the Hellenes for your kindness to them; the Macedonians if you reign over them, not like a tyrant, but like a king; and the rest of the nations, if by your hands they are delivered from barbaric despotism and are brought under the protection of Hellas.[162]

[160] See E. Badian, 'Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind', *Historia* 7 (1958), pp. 440-44; R.G. Mulgan, 'Aristotle and Absolute Rule', *Antichthon* 8 (1974), p. 26; and D.B. Nagle, 'Alexander and Aristotle's *Pambasileus*', *L'Antiquité Classique* 69 (2000), p. 130.

[161] This does not mean that Aristotle would have gone so far as to compare barbarians even with plants. In this respect, I agree with E. Badian, 'Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind', *Historia* 7 (1958), p. 443 n. 80, that ἢ φυτοῖς must have been a rhetorical addition from Plutarch himself. In an alternative testimony from Strabo (1.4.9 [66C] = Rose fr. 658), only men are mentioned 'who advised Alexander to treat the Greeks as friends, but barbarians as enemies' (τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ παραινοῦντας τοῖς μὲν Ἕλλησιν ὡς φίλοις χρῆσθαι τοῖς δὲ βαρβάροις ὡς πολεμίοις).

[162] Translation taken from G. Norlin, *Isocrates*, vol. I (London, 1966).

Isocrates also focusses on the fact that Philip should *benefit* the Greeks (εὐεργετεῖν), whereas he should only *be king* of the Macedonians (βασιλεύειν) or simply *rule* the other barbarians (ἄρχειν). Nevertheless, all men will be grateful (ἅπαντες χάριν ἕξουσιν), even the barbarians, since they are not ruled by a tyrant and freed from barbaric despotism. Thus, even Isocrates, who equally stresses the difference between Greeks and barbarians, indicates that Philip must act in a way that is good to all of them, although the principle of well-doing as such is only applied explicitly to the Greeks. Similarly, Aristotle believed that most barbarians, due to their slavish nature, (should) accept a different kind of rule than Greeks. If our above understanding of *On Kingship* is correct, it seems that this passage from Isocrates to Philip could equally have been written by Aristotle to Alexander.

2.6 Recapitulation and preview

The above analysis on the lost treatise *On Kingship* is merely conditional, but it can nevertheless tell us something on both the various categories and the problems of monarchy that we dealt with in the previous chapter. With regard to the categories, not one but many categories of monarchy seem useful to explain how Aristotle thought about Macedonian monarchy, which shows how sophisticated his subdivision of various kingships actually was. Contrary to what many scholars believe, however, the absolute kingship does not seem to have played any role here for it is a philosophical rather than historical category. This is a good thing too, for when it *would* be a historical category that pointed to Alexander's rule, it would create a grave defect in trying to explain the problems of monarchy in Aristotle's political thought. Let us deal with these two points successively.

Aristotle's only reference to the Macedonian kings appears in the passage from *Politics* V.10, where he mentions them together with the Athenian Codrus, the Persian Cyrus, and both the Spartan and Molossian kings. As we have seen, Aristotle points here to the benefactions of all these kings, which is why they all may be regarded as heroic kings. It is evident, then, that Aristotle

considered the early Macedonian kings as heroic kings.[163] The heroic kingship, however, was a category from the past that evolved into either a religious magistracy as in Athens, which no longer was a true kingship, or a lifelong generalship as in Sparta, which was another category of kingship. This is in accordance with *Politics* V.11 (1313a18-33), where Aristotle explains how a kingship can be preserved by making it more moderate in reducing the authority. Remarkable is that he not only illustrates this idea with the Spartan kingship, a dual monarchy that was checked in the course of time by the ephors, but with the one from the Molossians as well.[164] Hence the Athenian kingship of Codrus is thought to have disappeared in the course of time and only remained a title for a religious magistracy, whereas the Spartan and the Molossian kingship evolved from the heroic kingship to the less powerful generalship for life. Noteworthy is that two of the five examples from the cited passage in V.10, then, are still left uncategorized in their present form: the Persian and the Macedonian monarchy.

As we mentioned in the first chapter, the barbarian monarchy was a category in Aristotle's analysis of monarchy that suits the Persian monarchy very well. Hence he must have believed that the kingship from Cyrus evolved into the barbarian monarchy. Is it possible that a similar evolution may be said of the Macedonian monarchy, as was once suggested by N.G.L. Hammond?[165] As such, Aristotle certainly classifies the Macedonians among the barbarians, for he refers in a passage on warlike nations in *Politics* VII.2 (1324b15-17) to an ancient Macedonian law. Within this passage, examples of both Greeks and non-Greeks are given, though the Macedonians are clearly mentioned in the last group, together with the Scythians, Persians, Thracians, Celts, Carthaginians, and Iberians. Although non-Greeks could equally be put into the

[163] This could even be backed up historically, see M.B. Hatzopoulos, *Macedonian Institutions under the Kings*, vol. I (Athens, 1996), p. 423: 'The distribution of the royal Macedonian documents according to their subject matter cannot fail to bring to mind Aristotle's definition of the "heroic" king as commander, judge and high priest.'
[164] Aristotle probably had the magistracies of the so-called προστάτης and δαμιοργοί in mind, who limited the powers of the king, see N.G.L. Hammond, *Epirus* (Oxford, 1967), p. 527.
[165] See N.G.L. Hammond, *The Macedonian State* (Oxford, 1989), p. 21.

category of the generalship for life, as we said in the first chapter of the Carthaginians or the Molossians, the powers of the Macedonian king were certainly not limited to a military command, and therefore correspond better with the authority of a barbarian monarchy.[166] It must be admitted that Aristotle never calls the rule of Macedonian kings despotic, but he does not hesitate to mention three of them (Archelaus, Amyntas, and Philip) in V.10 (1311a36-b34) among tyrannical persons (Periander) or dynasties (the Pisistratides or the Penthilids). In that respect, Aristotle could consider the more recent Macedonian kings as barbarian monarchs who did not make their rule more moderate, like the Spartan or Molossian kings.

If one would compare the Macedonian with the Persian monarchy, there is another argument to understand the former as an example of the barbarian monarchy. Scholars suppose that in the course of time the Macedonian kings imitated the Persian monarchy to some extent, especially with regard to their 'bodyguard' (σωματοφυλακία).[167] It is remarkable that, while explaining the category of the barbarian monarchy, Aristotle mentions in III.14 that these kings are guarded by their own subjects rather than, like tyrants, by foreign mercenaries (1285a24-27). We know that the guards of the Macedonian kings were indeed Macedonians themselves.[168] This feature of a barbarian monarchy thus fits the Macedonian kingship very well.

---

[166] There is controversy in the literature on the extent of the powers of the Macedonian kings. A good overview of the two positions is given in C.J. King, 'Macedonian Kingship and other Political Institutions', in J. Roisman & I. Worthington, *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 374-75. It seems safe to say that the Macedonian kings had the highest authority with regard to the natural resources in the country, its foreign politics, the high command of the army, the law-cases, and the rituals and festivals, see E. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 237-38.

[167] On the institution of the σωματοφυλακία and its various components, see W. Heckel, '*Somatophylakia*', *Phoenix* 40 (1986), pp. 279-94. Altough various stadia could be distinguished, the influence of the Persian court on Macedonia in general is supposed to have started during the reign of Alexander I, who was a an ally of the Achaemenid king during the Persian wars, see M.J. Olbrycht, 'Macedonia and Persia', in J. Roisman & I. Worthington, *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, (Oxford, 2010), pp. 344-45.

[168] This can be deduced from the names of these bodyguards given in Arrian (VI.28.4), see C.J. King, 'Macedonian Kingship and other Political Institutions', in J. Roisman & I. Worthington, *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia* (Oxford, 2010), p. 381.

There seems to be a possible counterargument to the identification of the Macedonian kingship with Aristotle's barbarian monarchy. According to William Greenwalt, it is impossible that Aristotle considered the Macedonian monarchy as barbarian, for the Argead dynasty was traditionally thought to be of Greek descent.[169] One has to be careful with such arguments, however, since the Greek origin of the Macedonian royal family was probably not taken for granted by everyone.[170] But even if Aristotle accepted it, there is no problem, for the category of the barbarian monarchy only supposes the non-Greek nature of the ruled, and not (necessarily) of the rulers. In *Politics* I.2 Aristotle indicates, in agreement with certain poets, that 'it is fitting for Greeks to rule barbarians' (βαρβάρων δ' Ἕλληνας ἄρχειν εἰκός, 1252b8).[171] That this rule is still a kingship is indicated a little later, for 'cities were at first under kings, and nations even now' (τὸ πρῶτον ἐβασιλεύοντο αἱ πόλεις, καὶ νῦν ἔτι τὰ ἔθνη, 1252b19-20). Hence, the assumption that the Argead royal house ruled the Macedonians as powerful kings is unproblematic, which is why Aristotle probably understood it as a barbarian monarchy.

It did become a problem, however, when the Macedonian kings expanded their rule to the Greek cities. According to Aristotle, it is neither advantageous nor just that a powerful king rules Greeks the same way as non-Greeks. This would be the reason why he may have urged Alexander in *On Kingship* to act like a general for the Greeks in the war against the barbarians, but not as a master in their homeland politics. Aside from the euergetism doctrine from the *Vita Marciana*, there are two more reasons to believe that Aristotle used the

[169] See W.S. Greenwalt, 'Argead Dunasteia during the Reigns of Philip II and Alexander III', in E.D. Carney & D. Ogden (eds.), *Philip II and Alexander the Great* (New York, 2010), p. 158. The Macedonian kings were supposed to descend from the Greek hero Temenus of Argos. Hence Herodotus (V.20.4) describes king Amyntas I as a 'Greek man ruling Macedonians' (ἀνὴρ Ἕλλην Μακεδόνων ὕπαρχος) and Isocrates (*Philippus* 108) indicates that Philip II is one of the only Greeks not ruling his own race.

[170] This may be taken from the comparison between Macedonians and Greeks in J. Engels, 'Macedonians and Greeks', in J. Roisman & I. Worthington (eds.), *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia* (Oxford, 2010), p. 90: 'The simple fact that several Macedonian kings even during the late fifth and fourth centuries so strongly stressed the Greekness of their ancestors and their royal house suggests that there were still many Greeks who rejected accepting the Macedonian royal family as Greeks, not least the Macedonian *ethnos*.'

[171] Aristotle quotes Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1400-1401), see C. Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics (Chicago, 2013), p. 2.

category of the generalship for life for Alexander as well. First, he explicitly indicates in *Politics* III.14 that such a kingship not only occurs in cities as such, but may also be understood as the leadership of a military alliance, indicated by the example of Agamemnon as leader of the Greek coalition during the Trojan wars (1285a10-14). The installed Corinthian League of Philip II and Alexander the Great may therefore be understood as a generalship for life.[172] Second, Aristotle uses phrases like 'leader in matters related to war' (ἡγεμὼν τῶν πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον, 1285a5-6) and 'generalship of plenipotentiaries' (στρατηγία τις αὐτοκρατόρων, 1285a7-8) to define this category, which corresponds very well to the ancient titles of Philip and Alexander as rulers of Greeks.[173] If so, this supports our understanding of Aristotle's supposed advice to Alexander in *On Kingship*.

In concluding the first point, there are thus no less than three categories of kingship from Aristotle's analysis on monarchy that may help to explain what he thought about the Macedonian monarchy: initially it may be regarded as a heroic kingship that benefited the subjects by providing them land. But since the powers of the Macedonian kings do not seem to have decreased, as was the case with the Spartan or Molossian kingship, they should be understood, like the Persian kings, as barbarian monarchs. Once these barbarian monarchs expanded their rule to the Greek world it was expected, or at least hoped for, that they would act differently and only present themselves as the leaders of the Greek coalition they created. That is a remarkable conclusion, for Aristotle then relates to Alexander's rule in the opposite direction of what many scholars seem to have believed: he does not consider it an absolute kingship of a god-

[172] The only reference to the Corinthian League in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* seems to occur in *Rhetoric* II.23 (1399b11-13): καὶ ὅτι τὸ διδόναι γῆν καὶ ὕδωρ δουλεύειν ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ μετέχειν τῆς κοινῆς εἰρήνης ποιεῖν τὸ προσταττόμενον. Aristotle here thus indicates a difference between the common way ('to give earth and water') to enslave oneself to the Persians, as indicated in Herodotus (IV.126-127, V.17-18, or V.73), and the mere obedience that is required in the Corinthian League of the Macedonians.

[173] This may be found in Diodorus (XVI.1.89-91 or XVII.4.9) and Arrian (I.1.2 or VII.9.5), who use titles as ἡγεμών or στρατηγὸς αὐτοκράτωρ for Philip and Alexander, see W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle* (Oxford, 1902), p. 260.

like ruler that should receive only praise, but a monarchy that, on the contrary, should be made as moderate as possible.

That fact that the παμβασιλεία does not seem to have anything to do with historical rulers like Alexander is, from a philosophical point of view, a good thing too. If it had to be interpreted as a reference or allusion to a living king like Alexander, it could create a problem for Aristotle's political theory: some of the views taken up in his *Politics* then do not necessarily express what Aristotle believes as a philosopher. Since he considers kingship as a correct but outdated regime, he could have introduced the category of absolute kingship in his analysis of monarchy to please, or at least not offend, his Macedonian acquaintances. A suggestion in that direction is given by Jeff Miller, who argued that the close ties with the Macedonian royal house and the effect it had on Aristotle's life certainly must have had an influence on the way Aristotle presents his ideas on monarchy in the *Politics*.[174] If that would be the case, however, the *Politics* becomes a treatise that, at least in part, corresponds with *On Kingship*, in so far as it contains passages that must be understood as rhetorical rather than philosophical utterances.

The problem with the assumption that certain key ideas from the *Politics* would merely refer to historical rulers is that they no longer seem to be part of Aristotle's political theory, for they are prompted by an extra-philosophical motivation. That does not mean that this *could not* have been the case, which was the reason why we investigated the possible identification of Alexander with Aristotle's absolute king in this chapter. But if it turned out to be so, then the mere idea of a παμβασιλεία would not be philosophically interesting any more. For this reason, Charles Kahn seems right in rejecting a biographical

[174] See J. Miller, 'Aristotle's Paradox of Monarchy and the Biographical Tradition', *History of Political Thought* 19 (1998), pp. 515-16. Miller bases this thought on the belief that Aristotle was somehow involved in the politics of the Macedonians, because he left Athens more than once when there was an anti-Macedonian uprising, and only came back when the Macedonians secured their power over the city, see also A.-H. Chroust, *Aristotle. New Light on His Life and on Some of His Lost Works*, vol. I (London, 1973), pp. 155-76. Both Miller and Chroust, however, seem to go too far in their conclusions, for it could be that Aristotle only acted this way out of caution for his own well-being.

explanation for certain divergent ideas in Aristotle's political thought.[175] Although it is not *a priori* excluded that Aristotle was led by personal motivations when he wrote down his ideas, such an explanation would have the undesirable consequence of making these ideas philosophically insignificant. What could have been an interesting conclusion for a historian, would be a disappointment for a philosopher.

If we want to take the problems with regard to monarchy seriously and look for a meaningful explanation, we have to consider them as philosophically relevant ideas in the *Politics*. Without losing sight of the fact that kingship and tyranny take up a peculiar position in Aristotle's political thought, we have to come up with an explanation why these regimes are relevant to discuss in the passages where they are brought forward while simultaneously being different from a political standard, with a distribution of power, an alternation of rule, and a subjection to the laws. Since this seems especially applicable to the categories of absolute kingship and true tyranny, we have to look into their significance for Aristotle's political thought.

[175] See C.H. Kahn, 'The Normative Structure of Aristotle's "Politics"', in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' Politik* (Göttingen, 1990), p. 375: 'Our problem arises from unclarity and apparent inconsistency within Aristotle's theory. A *philosophical* explanation must take these rough spots as evidence for conflicting theoretical tendencies or independent lines of thought that have not been brought into harmony with one another. The biographical hypothesis does not solve this problem but makes it disappear: it undermines the philosophical claims of the doctrines in question by treating them only as rhetorical disguise.'

Chapter 3:
The Exception of Kingship

The absolute kingship can be read as a notorious exception to Aristotle's political paradigm, where alternation of rule and subjection to the laws are the basic principles. Since this idea of permanent and unrestricted rule appears in five different passages from the Politics*, it must bear some philosophical importance. The extensive similarities with Plato's picture of an ideal regime suggest that Aristotle's absolute kingship has to be understood against the background of his former master's views. At first sight, it may appear as if Aristotle argues against Plato that the ideal ruler as absolute king is not a philosopher any more. Although true, this seems to be too farfetched to be Aristotle's point. Rather, with these five passages, Aristotle appears to indicate that such a kingly regime is not primarily better than, but different from a political one, in which respect he seems to contrast with Plato.*[176]

3.1 The paradox of kingship in the *Politics*

Aristotle does not only distinguish the six regimes in *Politics* III.6-7 in general, but likewise investigates them in particular. Kingship is the first regime that is dealt with in the *Politics* and the only one that is looked into in the third book, in III.14-17. One may expect that the intermediate chapters between the distinction of regimes and the investigation into kingship serve as a bridge to go from the one topic to the other. That is partially correct, for it is within these chapters that Aristotle broaches an important subject in the *Politics*: the question of a just allocation of political power.[177] This means that Aristotle

[176] This chapter is based on the article 'Kingly versus Political Rule in Aristotle's *Politics*', *Apeiron* 49 (2016), pp. 515-37.

[177] This is indicated in *Politics* III.12, where Aristotle defines the political good as 'justice' (τὸ δίκαιον, 1282b17). That this notion is a central theme in Aristotle's *Politics* is argued in the introductory book chapter of P.L.P. Simpson, 'Aristotle', in H. Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government* (Chichester, 2013), pp. 105-18. That is why especially the virtue

looks to and assesses the various claims to rule, but these claims naturally depend on the different regimes where they are brought forward. It therefore makes sense that Aristotle uses the justification of power as the steppingstone to look into the various regimes. What is remarkable, though, is that his argumentation does not smoothly lead to his inquiry into kingship. On the contrary, it is only by suddenly using one-man rule as a counterargument that the conceptual space is created to discuss it. The bridge thus shows a gap at the end, with a sudden slide to kingship.

Aristotle starts his investigation into a just allocation of power in *Politics* III.9 with regard to the different conceptions of justice in a democracy and an oligarchy: in a democracy one tends to understand free birth as the standard, in an oligarchy a certain amount of wealth (1280a16-25). At the end of the chapter he adds the aristocratic conception of virtue that he deems higher than free birth or wealth, for the former contributes more to the goal of the community, which is living a good and independent life. That is why Aristotle believes that the virtuous should also have a greater share in the political life than the mere free or wealthy (1280b40-81a10). This may be regarded as the core of what scholars call Aristotle's theory of distributive justice: the degree of political participation in the city-state should be proportional to the degree of personal excellence of the citizens.[178] That does not mean, however, that Aristotle deems virtue the only relevant claim to rule. In III.10 he even points to a certain disadvantage of mere rule by 'the respectable' (οἱ ἐπιεικεῖς, 1281a28), by which is meant the aristocratic men that may be considered virtuous, for then all the other citizens would be denied the honor of political participation; if only one man as 'the most excellent' (ὁ σπουδαιότατος, 1281a33) of all would rule, the situation would even be worse. That is why Aristotle also famously

of 'justice' (δικαιοσύνη), dealt with in the fifth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is so important to Aristotle's political philosophy, see R. Kraut, *Aristotle. Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 98-177.

[178] A good overview of this theory, but with a lot of logical formulas, is D. Keyt, 'Aristotle's Theory of Distributive Justice', in D. Keyt & F.D. Miller (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1991), pp. 238-78.

argues in III.11 for at least a certain degree of political participation of many men, for each of them may individually not be very good, but taken together as a collective they may be regarded better than the individually virtuous men (1281a42-b7 or 1282a33-41). Aristotle's argumentation is thus moving away from one-man rule, rather than towards it.

In *Politics* III.12, Aristotle recapitulates that a claim to political participation should contribute to the good life in the community, which is why complexion or height should not be taken into account. He now indicates that free birth and a certain amount of wealth are necessary conditions for the existence of a city-state, while true justice and political virtue are necessary conditions for its good organization (1283a17-22).[179] That is why Aristotle continues in III.13 with an investigation of all these claims on their merits and problems. One particular problem with regard to the theory of distributive justice is that when 'one person' (τις εἷς, 1283b17 and b21) would be richer, better born, or even more virtuous than anyone else, it would seem justified to give him all power. But this is something that Aristotle clearly deems undesirable, which is why he continues with this general judgement: 'All of these things seem to make it evident, then, that none of the defining principles on the basis of which they claim they merit rule, and all the others merit being ruled by them, is correct' (πάντα δὴ ταῦτ' ἔοικε φανερὸν ποιεῖν ὅτι τούτων τῶν ὅρων οὐδεὶς ὀρθός ἐστι, καθ' ὃν ἀξιοῦσιν αὐτοὶ μὲν ἄρχειν τοὺς δ' ἄλλους ὑπὸ σφῶν ἄρχεσθαι πάντας, 1283b27-30). Hence, one-man rule is brought forward here, but serves only as an argument to the absurd that carries each criterion to the extreme. In other words, there does not seem to be a single situation where the permanent rule of one man seems completely justified, irrespective of the criterion that is used in the regime to allocate political power.

This does not come as a surprise when we take into account certain central ideas from Aristotle's *Politics* regarding the rule in the city-state. As we saw in

[179] There is controversy whether line 1283a20 reads πολιτικὴ ἀρετή ('political virtue') or πολεμικὴ ἀρετή ('military virtue'); Ross' edition of the *Politics* opts for the first reading, Dreizenther's for the second. Since there is no other reference to military activities in III.12, I agree with the more general interpretation of political virtue as is taken up in the translation of C.D.C. Reeve, *Aristotle. Politics* (Indianapolis, 2017), p. 70.

the first chapter, Aristotle believes that the citizens should rule the city-state in a political manner. First, they should be citizens, because a citizen was thought to be someone who has the right to participate in the deliberative and decisive offices of the polis (1275a22-23 and b17-21). According to Aristotle, only free and adult males (with citizen parents) qualify for citizenship, which means that all slaves, women, and children are excluded from it. Second, because the citizens constitute the polis as a political community, the rule in this community should be 'political rule' (πολιτικὴ ἀρχή), which was defined as the authority over free and equal or similar persons (1277b7-9). This rule, thus, can be considered as power of peers, distinct from the despotic rule of a master over his slaves, who are not free, and the household rule of a man over his wife and children, who are free but not equal to their husband and father.[180] As a consequence, the citizens of a political community should be able to rule their fellow citizens as well as to be ruled by them. This is indicated throughout the *Politics* as the ability in both ruling and being ruled. Who these citizens are and what is meant with their political rule depends on the constitution they live in and the adopted criterion to allocate political power.

In spite of the differences between the various constitutions, Aristotle yet has a general idea of political rule, in accordance with fourth century Greek practice, that covers two main features, namely (1) that power must be shared among the citizens and (2) that laws should be sovereign over them. The first point can be inferred from the fact that the political community, whatever the criterion for citizenship, consists of equal and similar persons, wherefore the political offices are not to be held permanently by the same men, but by each 'in turn' (κατὰ μέρος or ἐν μέρει, 1261b3-4, 1279a10-11, 1297a4, 1325b8 and

[180] In *Politics* I.13 (1260a9-14), Aristotle indicates why slaves, women, and children cannot partake in political power: slaves are lacking the deliberative capacity necessary in the political decision-making process, whereas women and children do have it, but respectively in a non-authoritative and incomplete way. This is why, according to III.6 (1278b32-79a2), slaves should be ruled despotically, that is primarily in the advantage of the master, and women and children in the way of household management, that is in their own or at least a common advantage. For these and further differences between rulers and ruled, see F.D. Miller, 'The Rule of Reason', in M. Deslauriers & P. Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 38-66.

1332b26). Similarly, and especially in the intermediate chapters just taken into consideration, we see how Aristotle sometimes automatically uses the verb 'to distribute' (νεμεῖν or διανεμεῖν, 1281a15, a18, or 1282b24) when he talks about the allocation of offices, which recalls the alternative definition of a regime as constitution given in the first chapter. The second point is the case because the rulers should not have the highest authority, since they could be subject to their passions, as is indicated in III.10 (1281a34-36). That is why general and incorruptible principles such as laws must rule sovereignly; the citizens should only take independent decisions when the laws, as general principles, fall short, as indicated in III.11 (1282b1-6). The main idea in Aristotle's *Politics* concerning the rule in a political community is thus that the power of the citizens in the polis is limited, because it is not permanently in the same hands and subjected to the laws. It is remarkable, then, that Aristotle in *Politics* III.13 suddenly mentions a notorious exception:

P1 Εἰ δέ τίς ἔστιν εἷς τοσοῦτον διαφέρων κατ' ἀρετῆς ὑπερβολὴν ἢ πλείους μὲν ἑνός, μὴ μέντοι δυνατοὶ πλήρωμα παρασχέσθαι πόλεως, ὥστε μὴ συμβλητὴν εἶναι τὴν τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετὴν πάντων μηδὲ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῶν τὴν πολιτικὴν πρὸς τὴν ἐκείνων, εἰ πλείους, εἰ δ' εἷς, τὴν ἐκείνου μόνον, οὐκέτι θετέον τούτους μέρος πόλεως· ἀδικήσονται γὰρ ἀξιούμενοι τῶν ἴσων ἄνισοι τοσοῦτον κατ' ἀρετὴν ὄντες καὶ τὴν πολιτικὴν δύναμιν· ὥσπερ γὰρ θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις εἰκὸς εἶναι τὸν τοιοῦτον. ὅθεν δῆλον, ὅτι καὶ τὴν νομοθεσίαν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι περὶ τοὺς ἴσους καὶ τῷ γένει καὶ τῇ δυνάμει, κατὰ δὲ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστι νόμος· αὐτοὶ γάρ εἰσι νόμος (1284a3-14).

If there is one person so outstanding by his excess of virtue – or a number of persons, though not enough to provide a full complement for the city – that the virtue of all the others and their political capacity is not commensurable with their own (if there are a number) or his alone (if there is one), such persons can no longer be regarded as a part of the city. For they will be done injustice if it is claimed they merit equal things in spite of being so unequal in virtue and political capacity; for such a person would likely be like a god among human beings. From this it is clear that legislation must necessarily have to do with those who are equal both in stock and capacity, and that for the other sort of person there is no law – they themselves are law.

This passage was already quoted in the second chapter with regard to the rule of Alexander the Great. Since Alexander does not seem to correspond very well with Aristotle's god-like ruler, we should look for another explanation why Aristotle all of a sudden argues *against* political rule. After all, he mentions

one or few rulers that earn all power in the community permanently and stand above all law. Although multiple rulers are considered as well, we will see later that this situation is applicable only to kingship. It is not remarkable, then, that this kingly rule can be presented as a paradox and hence a problem in the *Politics*, for it seems to be in conflict with one of its general doctrines.[181] Since the biographical explanation that pointed to the Macedonian royal house was discarded, we should look for a philosophical explanation that explains why this idea appears here. We will look, therefore, for an explanation that elucidates the concept from within rather than from without Aristotle's philosophy, without losing sight of the strong connection with Plato's ideas. But so far, no one seems to read Aristotle's idea of a god-like ruler entirely in reference to his distinction of the different types of rule. If one does so, as I will read it, it can be understood as the illustration of an important claim in the *Politics*, by which Aristotle dissociates himself from Plato.

For a start, it is significant to highlight the fact that Aristotle does not seem to mention this idea of the god-like ruler only once, but in several passages, five in sum. We will, then, first, demonstrate how these passages all refer to the same idea, which indicates that it must bear some importance in the *Politics.* We will argue next that Aristotle is dealing with an issue taken up by Plato on the best or ideal state, but also indicate that his answer must differ in a considerable way from his master's in order to remain important. In that respect, the analysis of Paul Vander Waerdt will serve as a methodological example. His analysis, however, seems to fall short as a sufficient explanation, because it does not seem to fit the text entirely. Hence, we will propose an alternative which indicates that Aristotle's point here is not that the rule of a god-like individual is *better than*, but *different from* political rule. Although

[181] See the general discussion of this issue ('The Kingship Problem') in R. Mayhew, 'Rulers and Ruled', in G. Anagnostopoulos (ed.), *A Companion to Aristotle* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 535-38. A more thorough analysis is given in W.R. Newell, 'Superlative Virtue', *The Western Political Quarterly* 40 (1987), pp. 159-78; P. Carlier, 'La notion de *pambasileia* dans la pensée politique d'Aristote', in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes* (Fribourg, 1993), pp. 103-18; and S. Gastaldi, 'Il re "signore di tutto"', in S. Gastaldi & J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran,* (Sankt Augustin, 2009), pp. 33-52.

such an explanation does not seem to be free from difficulties either, I believe it serves as the best solution to clarify the role of the respective passages in the *Politics* on the god-like ruler.

3.2 Five passages on absolute kingship

Aristotle does not only mention the idea of a permanent ruler in the passage from *Politics* III.13 (= **P1**), cited above, but once more in the same chapter (= **P2**), and further in III.17 (= **P3**), VII.3 (= **P4**), and VII.14 (= **P5**). It is important to look first to all these passages from the third and seventh book, not only to examine whether they all express the same idea, but also to understand the idea(s) more fully. I will argue that these five passages do express the same idea, by taking the first passage as a starting point, with which the other passages will be compared and assimilated one after another.

P2 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρίστης πολιτείας ἔχει πολλὴν ἀπορίαν, οὐ κατὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθῶν τὴν ὑπεροχήν, οἷον ἰσχύος καὶ πλούτου καὶ πολυφιλίας, ἀλλὰ ἄν τις γένηται διαφέρων κατ' ἀρετήν, τί χρὴ ποιεῖν; οὐ γὰρ δὴ φαῖεν ἂν δεῖν ἐκβάλλειν καὶ μεθιστάναι τὸν τοιοῦτον· ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' ἄρχειν γε τοῦ τοιούτου· παραπλήσιον γὰρ κἂν εἰ τοῦ Διὸς ἄρχειν ἀξιοῖεν μερίζοντες τὰς ἀρχάς. λείπεται τοίνυν, ὅπερ ἔοικε πεφυκέναι, πείθεσθαι τῷ τοιούτῳ πάντας ἀσμένως, ὥστε βασιλεῖς εἶναι τοὺς τοιούτους ἀιδίους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν (1284b25-34).

In the case of the best regime, however, there is considerable question as to what ought to be done if there happens to be someone who is outstanding not on the basis of preeminence in the other goods such as strength, wealth, or abundance of friends, but on the basis of virtue. For surely no one would assert that such a person should be expelled and banished. But neither would they assert that there should be rule over such a person: this is almost as if they should claim to merit ruling over Zeus by splitting the offices. What remains – and it seems the natural course – is for everyone to obey such a person gladly, so that persons of this sort will be permanent kings in their cities.

P3 ὅταν οὖν ἢ γένος ὅλον ἢ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἕνα τινὰ συμβῇ διαφέροντα γενέσθαι κατ' ἀρετὴν τοσοῦτον, ὥσθ' ὑπερέχειν τὴν ἐκείνου τῆς τῶν ἄλλων πάντων, τότε δίκαιον τὸ γένος εἶναι τοῦτο βασιλικὸν καὶ κύριον πάντων καὶ βασιλέα τὸν ἕνα τοῦτον. […] οὐ γὰρ πέφυκε τὸ μέρος ὑπερέχειν τοῦ παντός, τῷ δὲ τὴν τηλικαύτην ὑπερβολὴν ἔχοντι τοῦτο συμβέβηκεν. ὥστε λείπεται μόνον τὸ πείθεσθαι τῷ τοιούτῳ καὶ κύριον εἶναι μὴ κατὰ μέρος τοῦτον ἀλλ' ἁπλῶς (1288a15-29).

Now when it happens that a whole family, or even some one person among the rest, is so outstanding in virtue that this virtue is more preeminent than that of all

the rest, it is just in that case that the family be a kingly one and have authority over all matters, or that this one person be a king. […] It does not accord with nature for the part to be preeminent over the whole, but this is the result in the case of someone having such superiority. So all that remains is for a person of this sort to be obeyed, and to have authority simply and not by turns.

P4 διὸ κἂν ἄλλος τις ᾖ κρείττων κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ κατὰ δύναμιν τὴν πρακτικὴν τῶν ἀρίστων, τούτῳ καλὸν ἀκολουθεῖν καὶ τούτῳ πείθεσθαι δίκαιον. δεῖ δ' οὐ μόνον ἀρετὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ δύναμιν ὑπάρχειν, καθ' ἣν ἔσται πρακτικός (1325b10-14).

Hence when another person is superior on the basis of virtue and of the capacity that acts to achieve the best things, it is noble to follow this person and just to obey him. Not only virtue should belong to him but also capacity, on the basis of which he will act.

P5 εἰ μὲν τοίνυν εἴησαν τοσοῦτον διαφέροντες ἄτεροι τῶν ἄλλων, ὅσον τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἥρωας ἡγούμεθα τῶν ἀνθρώπων διαφέρειν, εὐθὺς πρῶτον κατὰ τὸ σῶμα πολλὴν ἔχοντες ὑπερβολήν, εἶτα κατὰ τὴν ψυχήν, ὥστε ἀναμφισβήτητον εἶναι καὶ φανερὰν τὴν ὑπεροχὴν τοῖς ἀρχομένοις τὴν τῶν ἀρχόντων, δῆλον ὅτι βέλτιον ἀεὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς τοὺς μὲν ἄρχειν τοὺς δ' ἄρχεσθαι καθάπαξ (1332b16-23).

Now if the ones were as different from the others as we believe gods and heroes differ from human beings – much exceeding them in the first place in body, and then in soul, so that the preeminence of the rulers is indisputable and evident to the ruled – it is clear that it would always be better for the same persons to rule and the same to be ruled once and for all.

Let us start with the two passages from III.13, which will henceforth be referred to as **P1** and **P2**. In this chapter, Aristotle deals with the various claims to rule a city-state. As we saw, the main argument here is that none of the claims to exclude a multitude from political power, such as wealth, being high-born, or virtue, is completely justified because the rule of many men may be considered better than the rule of a small group or a single individual. This does not hold, however, when a god-like ruler would appear because his virtue and capacity are 'not comparable' (μὴ συμβλητή) with the abilities of all the others, as **P1** indicates.[182] This is why, as Aristotle enunciates, ostracism is used as an

[182] There is controversy on what exactly 'not comparable' means. Some scholars understand it in a distributive sense as incomparable to all the other citizens combined, whereas others believe that it must be read collectively as incomparable to the other citizens in kind. This issue is taken up by R.G. Mulgan, 'A Note on Aristotle's Absolute Ruler', *Phronesis* 19 (1974), pp. 66-69, who endorses the second claim. Mulgan correctly points to the technical meaning of συμβλητός in Aristotle's thought, although he does not provide us with text references. David Keyt helpfully points to *Topics* I.15 (107b13-18) or *Physics* VII.4 (248b7-10), where Aristotle indicates that two musical notes are comparable in sharpness, whereas a musical note and a

advantageous and even just means to make sure that no one claims permanent authority over others, except again when this person would be preeminent in virtue, which is the reason to bring up **P2** as the conclusion of the chapter. Aristotle thus makes a twofold but connected point on one and the same idea. This can be inferred from the fact that in both cases he considers such rule as an instance of the 'best regime' (ἀρίστη πολιτεία, 1284a1-2 and b25) and compares the ruler fitted for it with a divine figure (a θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις in 1284a10-11 and Zeus in 1284b31).

On two points, though, there seems to be at least an apparent difference between the two passages, namely with regard to the nature and the quantity of these rulers. First, more abilities for god-like rule are required in **P1** (both ἀρετή and πολιτικὴ δύναμις) than in **P2** (only ἀρετή). This is not really a difference, however, since the political capacity mentioned in **P1** must be understood as the intellectual ability to deliberate, called 'prudence' (φρόνησις).[183] Since, according to *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.13 (1144b30-32), moral virtue implies prudence, it does not appear necessary to mention it every time, as seems already the case once in **P1**, where Aristotle merely mentions virtue (1284a4). Moreover, prudence is, as indicated in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13 (1103a3-7), thought to be a specific intellectual *virtue*, and thus a virtue as well. Prudence may therefore be considered as a necessary part of the outstanding virtue of the god-like ruler.[184] Second, Aristotle mentions in **P2** only the case of one god-like ruler, while in **P1** he does not rule out the possibility of several such

pen or a taste of wine are not. Keyt also notices correctly that incommensurability does not exclude *all* comparisons, for an absolute ruler is still believed to be superior to his subjects. The god-like ruler is thus incomparable, for he belongs to a different but higher standard than his subjects, see D. Keyt, 'Aristotle's Theory of Distributive Justice', in D. Keyt & F.D. Miller (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1991), p. 275.

[183] In *Politics* III.4 (1277a15), Aristotle clearly indicates that the excellent ruler is 'good and prudent' (ἀγαθὸς καὶ φρόνιμος), referring to both his moral and intellectual excellence. That prudence is a 'political capacity' is clear from the sixth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where both prudence and the political domain are equated (1141b23-24) and prudence is thought to be a capacity (1143a25-29). That this 'political capacity' is prudence is also argued in W.R. Newell, 'Superlative Virtue', *The Western Political Quarterly* 40 (1987), p. 165.

[184] A more thorough discussion on the nature of this political capacity is given in C.A. Bates, *Aristotle's "Best Regime"* (Baton Rouge, 2003), pp. 199-205. Bates, however, rejects the claim that this capacity is prudence, although he recognizes that even the god-like ruler must possess it, and points to a vaguer notion of a 'natural quality' to rule.

individuals. Nonetheless, in **P1** the tendency to apply the idea to one ruler is already detectable, since Aristotle only uses the singular τὸν τοιοῦτον in 1284a11. We do not have to follow Tarn's view that Aristotle must have had a particular king in mind, as was indicated in the second chapter, but neither can we reject such a claim on the basis that Aristotle is apparently thinking of the regimes of both kingship *and* aristocracy.[185] Aristotle understands aristocracy, as we saw in the first chapter, as a regime with political rule, but this is not the kind of rule used by god-like rulers. It therefore makes sense that Aristotle only calls these rulers 'kings' (βασιλεῖς, 1284b33) in **P2** and elsewhere, and never aristocrats. There is thus no doubt that the two passages from III.13 express the same idea on a god-like kingship.

The third passage appears a few chapters later in the third book, in III.17. At first sight, there hence seems to be a gap between **P3** and the first two passages. The passages from III.13 are nevertheless used as an introduction to Aristotle's discussion on kingship in *Politics* III.14-17 and especially his evaluation herein of the παμβασιλεία, which was the kingship of a permanent ruler that is sovereign over all (1285b29-30) and acts according to his own will (1287a8-10). Aristotle discusses this regime at length and only seems to consider it justified in the case of a divine ruler with the abilities of a god-like king.[186] As we saw in the first and second chapter, Aristotle generally believes that kingship is not advantageous nor justified any longer for Greeks, except unless in the theoretical case of one or more god-like rulers, which is exactly what he is saying in **P3**. Not only is he making an explicit reference to the former two passages (to **P1** in 1288a19 and to **P2** in 1288a24), he is also using the same vocabulary both to describe the preeminent and thus different nature of the god-like king in reference to his subjects (ὑπερβολή or ὑπεροχή and

[185] As is argued in V. Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 74-76.

[186] The relation between the god-like kingship and the παμβασιλεία is thus, strictly speaking, that the former implies the latter, but not *vice versa*. To earn the name 'all-kingship' truly, however, a permanent ruler who is not subjected to the laws must already be divine. Similar notions as παμβασιλεύς ('absolute king') or παμβασίλεια ('absolute queenship') also seem to have that divine connotation in Alcaeus (Diehl fr. 2) and Aristophanes (*Clouds*, 357), see P. Carlier, 'La notion de *pambasileia* dans la pensée politique d'Aristote', in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes* (Fribourg, 1993), p. 108.

διαφέρων κατ' ἀρετήν in 1284a4, 1284b27-28, and 1288a16-17) and to indicate how the latter should act when such a person would appear (πείθεσθαι τῷ τοιούτῳ in 1284b32 and 1288a28-29).

What is new in **P3**, though, is that Aristotle speaks of an individual or a 'whole family' (γένος ὅλον) and thus connects the outstanding superiority required for kingship with kinship.[187] This could mean either that this family is a reference to the various rulers from **P1**, or that it merely points to the heredity of the kingship: in the first sense the family may be understood horizontally as the rule of brothers, in the second sense vertically as the rule that passes from father to son. Although the first possibility seems to have the advantage that it does not create a difference between the various individuals from **P1** and the family from **P3**, the second possibility has the benefit that it fits Aristotle's general definition of kingship better as the correct rule of (only) one man. Although both interpretations do not seem to be mutually exclusive, as a father could transfer his rule to various sons, the second seems to be the right one. After all, heredity is, as we discussed in the first chapter, particularly characteristic of one-man rule, for Aristotle often points in his *Politics* to the relation between family and kingship.[188] This does not mean that the various individuals from **P1** cannot be called kings, since Aristotle sometimes uses this word in the plural as well for multiple but permanent rulers within the same state.[189] It is thus abundantly clear, and no one seems to doubt that, that all the three passages from the third book refer to the same idea.

[187] This corresponds to what he says in III.13 (1383a36-37), where he mentions the argument that it would be likely that better men descend from better parents, since 'noble birth' (εὐγένεια) is the 'virtue of a family' (ἀρετὴ γένους). Something similar can be found in a fragment (Rose fr. 92) from Aristotle's lost treatise *On Noble Birth*. In *Politics* III.15 (1286b22-27) and *Rhetoric* II.15 (1390b21-31), he nevertheless criticizes such a view.

[188] In *Politics* III.14 (1285a16) and V.10 (1313a10) Aristotle uses the expression 'based on family' (κατὰ γένος) to indicate hereditary kingship. Earlier in V.10 (1310b9-12 and 1310b31-34) he also mentioned that kingship is based on the preeminence in virtue of an individual or a family, referring thus to the same two possibilities as in **P3**.

[189] This is the case in *Politics* II.9 (1271a18-26) and II.11 (1272b37-41), where he mentions the kings of Sparta and Carthage, see also D. Keyt, 'Aristotle's Theory of Distributive Justice', in D. Keyt & F.D. Miller (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1991), p. 274. Interesting to note is that Aristotle in his *History of Animals* also calls the leaders in a bee-hive 'kings' (βασιλεῖς, 553b6, 623b34, 624a26, 625b6, and 629a25).

This could become a problem when one looks at the fourth passage, the one from VII.3, since now there are not only three chapters between this one and the former ones but three whole books. The problem could disappear if one would insert Books VII-VIII of the *Politics* between Book III and IV, as various scholars thought necessary.[190] Though regardless of the right or most adequate order of the books from the *Politics*, it seems clear that at least thematically speaking, there is no difference between the passages from the third and the seventh book, in so far as both are embedded in the question concerning the best regime, and not, as books IV-VI, dealing with practical questions concerning the decline or preservation of regimes. Nevertheless, one could argue, as Eckart Schütrumpf does, for a difference between the three passages from the third book and **P4**, because Aristotle mentions that the individual in the latter passage is only 'superior' (κρείττων, 1325b10) and thus not so *outstandingly* superior that his virtue and political capacity would be incomparable with the abilities of others.[191] The problem with such an interpretation is that it loses sight of two correspondences with the former three passages. First, the same two abilities, virtue and capacity, are expected again from the ruler in **P4** as from the god-like king in **P1** (1284a6-7 and a10).[192] Second, and more importantly, it is mentioned here that it would be just to 'obey him' (τούτῳ πείθεσθαι), as was also the case in **P2** (1284b32) and **P3**

[190] See especially the commentary of W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1887-1902). For a more recent plea for such an adjustment to the manuscript tradition, see P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the* Politics *of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), pp. xvi-xx. The two main arguments, as Simpson indicates, are philological rather than doctrinal: first, at the end of Book III Aristotle announces an investigation into the best regime, but this investigation is only taken up in Books VII-VIII. Second, in certain passages of Book IV (as 1290a1-3 or 1293b1-7) Aristotle indicates that he already dealt with the best regime. However, a strong counterargument against this reordering is the final passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1181b15-23), which describes the traditional order of the books.

[191] See E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles*. *Politik Buch VII-VIII* (Berlin, 2005), p. 279.

[192] Admittedly, in **P4** (1325b11) Aristotle does not speak of a 'political capacity', but of a 'practical capacity' (δύναμις πρακτική) to achieve the best things. That the latter nonetheless may be seen as a reference to φρόνησις is made clear in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1140b20-21 or 1141b21), where the practical character of prudence is emphasized. Another interpretation to this capacity is given by Richard Kraut, who believes that it is just a practical capacity for accomplishments, as Aristotle understands it in *Politics* V.9 (1309a33-39), see R. Kraut, *Aristotle. Politics Books VII and VIII* (Oxford, 1997), p. 73.

(1288a28-29). Since Aristotle does not tell us elsewhere that one has to obey an individual that is only superior, it seems that **P4** is far more likely to be an expression of the same idea as in the former passages from the third book. Although Aristotle does not mention it explicitly, the ὑπερβολή or ὑπεροχή of the ruler's virtue seems implied here as well.

A similar difference between the passages from the third book and the last passage, the one from VII.14, may be detected but now with a result that would be the reverse. For instance, Richard Kraut argues that **P5** differs from the passages from the third book, since the former is 'beyond utopia' in so far as the subjects of the rulers herein are all thought to be well-educated and virtuous men, whereas the ones in the third book are not necessarily so.[193] This would imply that the virtue of the kings in **P5** must be even higher than the already preeminent virtue mentioned in **P1**. In a way, this is plausible, since **P5** also mentions a bodily superiority (1332b18-19) that is not present in the other passages. Nevertheless, the preeminence of soul, with which virtue is meant, seems more important and thus more constitutive for god-like kingship.[194] It is true, as Richard Mulgan argued, that the required virtue for absolute rule is relative to the virtue of his subjects.[195] It is unlikely, however, that Aristotle used the idea on permanent rule in **P5** in a different way than in the former passages, since both the reference to the divine (or even mere heroic) character of these rulers and the vocabulary used to describe it in this passage (διαφέροντες or διαφέρειν, and ὑπερβολή or ὑπεροχή) do not suggest any difference with the already outstanding men from the other passages. Therefore, we may conclude that all five passages wherein Aristotle describes a ruler who is truly superior to his subjects, are expressions of the same idea: a

[193] See R. Kraut, *Aristotle. Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2002), p. 421.
[194] Compare it with *Politics* I.5 (1254b34-55a1), where Aristotle mentions something similar, but emphasizes more clearly the psychological superiority. In III.12 (1282b23-30) he even criticizes the division of power on the basis of physical features as complexion or height.
[195] See R.G. Mulgan, 'Aristotle and Absolute Rule', *Antichthon* 8 (1974), p. 25. Mulgan points to the fact that Aristotle puts more emphasis on relative rather than intrinsic qualities of the absolute ruler. If the subjects of a king would be less virtuous, the king himself will need a lesser degree of virtue and political capacity to legitimize his rule over them.

god-like king so outstanding in virtue, both morally and intellectually, that he should rule permanently and unrestricted by law.

3.3 Similarities with Plato's ideas on kingship

As the idea of a god-like king seems to be an important point in Aristotle's *Politics*, at least important enough to mention it in five different passages, this calls for an explanation.[196] Such an explanation has to fulfil two requirements: (1) it should elucidate the importance of the idea of a god-like king by clarifying *why* Aristotle uses it, (2) without losing sight of the fact that it remains an exception to the more general doctrine of ruling and being ruled in turn. In other words, it should contain a justification for the passages on god-like kingship that seems at first sight lacking in the *Politics*. Of course, one could argue with David Keyt that the references to the absolute kingship are to be understood as a part of Aristotle's theory of distributive justice.[197] As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, Aristotle deals with the thought that power must be distributed rightly among the citizens in the chapters that precede *Politics* III.13. In normal circumstances, this means that citizens deserve a fair share in power according to their merit and abilities, which supposes that they can be compared with each other within a certain scale. When, however, the situation would occur, as in the case of the 'god among human beings' from **P1**, that someone's excellence is that great that he is no longer comparable to the others, then the principle of distributive justice instructs that all power must

[196] In looking for an explanation, we cannot accept the solution that all these passages merely contain an argument to the absurd, because that would annihilate the importance of the idea, see also P. Carlier, 'La notion de *pambasileia* dans la pensée politique d'Aristote', in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes* (Fribourg, 1993), p. 116. Such an interpretation is given, for instance, by Mary Nichols, who considers the outstanding virtue of the god-like king a contradiction in terms, because Aristotle argues in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that virtue lies in the mean and considers ὑπερβολή there as an 'excess' rather than a 'superiority', see M.P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen* (Totowa, 1992), p. 170. One could easily reject this claim by pointing to the fact, as we have already done in the second chapter, that Aristotle gives different interpretations to the word ὑπερβολή. That this word is not always used with regard to virtue in a negative sense is also indicated in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.1 (1145a15-27).

[197] See D. Keyt, 'Aristotle's Theory of Distributive Justice', in D. Keyt & F.D. Miller (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1991), pp. 239-40 and pp. 270-76.

be concentrated in the hands of this divine individual. The passages on the god-like king ought to be taken, then, as an exceptional or merely theoretical application of the theory of distributive justice.[198] The problem with such an argument is that it only justifies the idea of god-like kingship in the *Politics*, but fails to explain its importance.

A solution could consist in the fact that we should not consider the *Politics* as a monologue that stands on its own, but as a dialogue that in many respects is indebted to Plato, whose thought is indeed often taken up or refuted.[199] This could explain the importance of the passages on the god-like king, since the interaction with the thought of his former master can serve as a reason why Aristotle puts so much emphasis on the matter. At first sight, this could fit the developmental thesis of Werner Jaeger, who famously argued that Aristotle's preserved works give testimony of an evolution from Platonism to empiricism. Although Jaeger especially built his thesis around Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, he applied it to the *Politics* as well: he believed that Books II, III, VII, and VIII were early, utopian books written in a Platonic spirit, whereas Books IV-VI are late, empirical books based on reality – influenced by the Peripatetic collection of constitutions – and concerned only with practical questions.[200] Since the passages on the god-like kingship from Book III and VII only appear in what Jaeger believed to be utopian books, they could be explained as expressions of

[198] That Aristotle does not seem to believe that such a ruler could occur in reality can be inferred from **P3** in III.17, for he indicates that 'it does not accord with nature for the part to be preeminent over the whole' (οὐ γὰρ πέφυκε τὸ μέρος ὑπερέχειν τοῦ παντός, 1288a26-27) or the sentence following **P5** in VII.14, claiming that it is 'not easy to assume' (οὐ ῥᾴδιον λαβεῖν, 1332b23) such superiority in an individual. This corresponds, as was indicated in the second chapter, with the repeated thesis in the *Politics* (1252b19-20, 1286b8-10, and 1313a3-5) that kingship in general, at least for Greeks, is a regime from the past.

[199] Cf. C.J. Rowe, 'Aristotelian Constitutions', in C.J. Rowe & M. Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 368: '[T]he very development of individual arguments, and of treatment of particular topics, often resembles a conversation with Plato as a silent partner. This is nowhere more true than in the case of the topic of constitutions.'

[200] Jaeger already argued in his *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Metaphysik des Aristoteles* (Berlin, 1912), pp. 151-56, that the *Politics* was not a unified treatise, but developed these developmental ideas more fully in his *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung* (Berlin, 1923), pp. 271-308. I will further refer to the revised edition in English, see W. Jaeger, *Aristotle. Fundamentals of the History of his Development* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 259-92, with pp. 268-70 as key pages.

faithful Platonism. The contrast between Platonism and empiricism could also be made clear if one would compare Aristotle's understanding of kingship at the beginning of *Politics* III.15 (1285b33-86a9) and V.11 (1313a18-33): in the first passage, Aristotle eventually shows a mere interest in the absolute kingship when he wants to *evaluate* kingship, whereas in the last passage he only takes a moderate kingship as the Spartan generalship into account when looking into the means to *preserve* kingship.[201]

A shortcoming of the developmental thesis, however, is that it only seems to have explanatory power when the utopian and empirical perspectives on politics are truly incompatible. As scholars after Jaeger have indicated, this is not the case, for in *Politics* IV.1 (1288b21-37) Aristotle explains how it is the task of one and the same science to look at the best regime as such as well as at the best possible option in given circumstances or even the mere preservation of an actual regime.[202] Although this does not refute Jaeger's thesis as such, it takes away the necessity that Aristotle must have changed his mind over the years, which is why most scholars not engage any longer in developmental assumptions with regard to the *Politics*.[203] There is yet a greater defect to the developmental thesis: it assumes that Aristotle was heavily influenced by Plato in some books, but elaborated his own thought in others. One could doubt, however, that the distinction between utopian and empirical perspective is as rigid as Jaeger presents it, for not only are there empirical views in the so-called utopian books, but also utopian views in the so-called empirical books.[204]

---

[201] This contrast is recognized as well in D. Keyt, *Aristotle. Politics Books V and VI* (Oxford, 1999), p. 169: 'It [sc. the short passage on the preservation of kingship in *Politics* V.11] does not cohere well with Aristotle's conception of kingship. Aristotle thinks that kingship is justified only when the virtue of the king is superior to that of his subjects. […] Does Aristotle think, then, that absolute kingship is bound to be shortlived?'

[202] Such a critique against Jaeger is given in C.J. Rowe, 'Aims and Methods in Aristotle's *Politics*', *The Classical Quarterly* 27 (1977), pp. 163-66, and P. Pellegrin, 'La "Politique" d'Aristote', *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* 177 (1987), pp. 133-35.

[203] Exceptions who still endorse Jaeger's claims with regard to the *Politics*, though in an adapted version, are J.M. Rist, *The Mind of Aristotle* (Toronto, 1989), pp. 135-64, and E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch I* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 39-67.

[204] In his discussion of kingship in *Politics* III.14, for example, Aristotle also offers a historical overview of all the categories of kingship, which seems to correspond more to an empirical perspective. Similarly, in the second book Aristotle not only deals with Plato's views from the *Republic* and the *Laws*, but from II.7 onwards also with thinkers that developed a political

Moreover, it is wrong to associate Plato only with a utopian perspective.[205] It must be admitted that this is indeed the way that Aristotle presents Plato's political thought, even in the chapter that deals with Plato's *Laws*.[206] It is yet remarkable that the empirical view on the preservation of kingship in *Politics* V.11 shows a strong similarity with a passage from the third book of Plato's *Laws* (691d-92b): Plato offers the same realistic perspective (more moderation for longer duration) and the same historical example (the evolution in the Spartan constitution).[207] This shows that, rather than looking at *where* Aristotle differs from Plato – in what passages from what books – as the developmental thesis seems to impose, we should be more inclined to look into *how* Aristotle differs from Plato, if they differ at all.

To start with, it is interesting to note that there is indeed a correspondence between the idea of permanent rule in Aristotle's *Politics* and certain passages from Plato's political works, wherein the latter describes his ideal statesman.

---

thought that was considered 'closer' (ἐγγύτερόν, 1266a33) to actual constitutions. Hereafter, Aristotle even discusses the existing constitutions of Sparta, Crete, and Carthage in II.9-11. This shows that Aristotle already looked to reality in the books where the general focus was rather utopian. The reverse is also the case, in the sense that Aristotle offers Platonic or utopian perspectives in the books with a more practical focus. In *Politics* IV.2, for instance, Aristotle clearly adopts a mere theoretical hierarchy of regimes that he took from Plato, and in IV.7 he distinguishes an ideal version of aristocracy from more realistic variants.

[205] That is why scholars sometimes also presume a development within the political thought of Plato, see G. Klosko, *The Development of Plato's Political Theory* (London, 1986), or C. Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast* (Oxford, 2002). Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to go into this matter, I do not believe that we have to posit a development in Plato's political thought: just as Aristotle in his *Politics*, Plato seems to offer different but compatible perspectives. In any case, Plato does not reject his utopian ideas in the *Laws*, since he mentions in the fifth (739a-e) and ninth book (875a-d) that these remain the ideal.

[206] Aristotle discusses the *Laws* in *Politics* II.6, but indicates that Plato eventually brings the regime of Magnesia around again to the regime of Kallipolis in the *Republic*. Aristotle does not agree with such an utopian regime, for although one should assume the premises that one wishes, one should not presume the impossible (1265a17-18), a starting point repeated when he deals with his own version of the best regime in *Politics* VII.4 (1325b33-39).

[207] See also E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), pp. 579-80. This does not mean that both passages from Plato and Aristotle express exactly the same perspective: Plato offers a more narrative description, with an intervening god and a presentation of Lycurgus as a semi-divine man (691d-e). The Spartan king Theopompus, who installed the office of the Ephors, is also not called by his name, but described as a 'third savior' (τρίτος σωτήρ, 692a). Aristotle's description is sober, without any divine references, and more anecdotal. It reports, in agreement with what Aristotle is arguing for, the answer Theopompus supposedly gave when his wife asked whether he was not ashamed to pass over a less powerful kingship to his sons: 'Not at all, he said, for I am handing over one that will be longer lasting' ('οὐ δῆτα', φάναι, 'παραδίδωμι γὰρ πολυχρονιωτέραν', 1313a33).

Plato's two main political treatises, the *Republic* and the *Laws*, come to mind first, but it is in fact an important part of the *Statesman* (293a-303b) that contains a strongly similar point of reasoning. In comparing Plato and Aristotle, scholars have pointed out already that Aristotle in *Politics* III.15-16, just like Plato in his *Statesman*, embeds the question of kingship into a larger discussion concerning the question whether it be advantageous to be ruled by the best laws or by the best man.[208] We will focus only on the result of this discussion here, in so far as both philosophers agree that a situation is at least conceivable where some individuals should be permanent rulers.[209]

There are three significant correspondences between Aristotle's god-like king and Plato's ideal ruler, namely with regard to their (1) quantity, (2) quality and (3) relation to the laws. First, just as Aristotle in **P1**, Plato mentions in the *Statesman* (293a and 297c) one or a few persons who could take up this role in the state (cf. *Republic* 540d). But just as Aristotle, he continues to speak of these individuals in the singular (294a, 296e, 300c, or 301a) and therefore calls them kings. It is thus with regard to kingship that both philosophers discuss the idea of permanent rule. Second, Plato is describing such an outstanding person in divine terms as well (303b; cf. *Laws* 713c-d), even, as Aristotle in **P5**, both with regard to their body and soul (301e). Thus, this permanent ruler is also for Plato a god-like king who differs extensively from his regular human subjects and therefore deserves all authority. Third, like Aristotle in **P1**, Plato indicates that such a person should stand above the (written) laws (294a-b or 300c-d), but also that in regular constitutions, where such an ideal ruler is not present (301e; cf. *Laws* 875c-d), it is always better to have a lawful regime (302c-03b). This indicates, finally, that Plato too considers laws to be authoritative in regular circumstances, though not in his ideal state.[210]

---

[208] See J.R. Cohen, 'Rex aut Lex', *Apeiron* 29 (1996), pp. 145-61, and C. Atack, 'Aristotle's *Pambasileia* and the Metaphysics of Monarchy', *Polis* 32 (2015), pp. 309-13.

[209] In this comparison, I will assume that the philosopher-kings from Plato's *Republic* are to be identified with the ideal statesmen from his *Statesman*, see also R.K. Sprague, *Plato's Philosopher-King* (Columbia, 1976), p. 100. A more critical position towards this identification may be found in M. Schofield, *Plato. Political philosophy* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 176-80.

[210] One might still see a difference on this level between Plato and Aristotle, in so far as Plato argues primarily for the ideal ruler and only in the lack of it for a lawful regime, whereas

In a way, hence, you have a similar type of reasoning in Plato's *Statesman* and Aristotle's *Politics*: if there would be a divine individual who is fitted for permanent rule, you should give him (or them) all the power in the state. Since in practice, these god-like individuals are not likely to occur, people should adopt a government where laws rule and citizens share power. It becomes tempting to think, as scholars often did, that the god-like king from the *Politics* is to be equated then with Plato's famous conception of the ideal ruler in the *Republic* (473c-e): the philosopher-king.[211] As such, this is not altogether unlikely, because in his (juvenile) *Protrepticus* (47-49), Aristotle indeed seems to endorse the claim that statesmen and especially legislators should be philosophers.[212] However, in the work that definitely reflects his mature political philosophy, that is the *Politics*, no confirmation is given of such a claim.[213] In III.4 (1277b25-26), Aristotle even states that the only (intellectual) virtue a ruler should have is prudence. Since the 'political' or 'practical capacity' from **P1** and **P4** are taken to be this prudence, as was argued above, this general requirement still seems to apply in the case of the god-like king. But then, these kings are not philosophers in the Platonic sense as individuals with real 'scientific knowledge' (ἐπιστήμη) of an everlasting truth, but only

Aristotle does the reverse and considers the lawful regime as the standard, with the god-like king as its only exception, see C.H. Kahn, 'The Normative Structure of Aristotle's "Politics"', in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' Politik* (Göttingen, 1990), p. 380.

[211] This is the case, for instance, in T.A. Sinclair, *A History of Greek Political Thought* (London, 1951), p. 220. This Platonic interpretation of Aristotle's absolute ruler is brought up again in more recent literature as T.K. Lindsay, 'The "God-Like Man" versus the "Best Laws"', *The Review of Politics* 53 (1991), p. 506; R.C. Bartlett, 'Aristotle's science of the best regime', *The American Political Science Review* 88 (1994), p. 148; or C.A. Bates, *Aristotle's "Best Regime"* (Baton Rouge, 2003), p. 210.

[212] A further comparison between the concept of philosopher-rulers in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Protrepticus* may be found in C. Bobonich, 'Why Should Philosophers Rule?', *Social Philosophy and Policy* 24 (2007), pp. 153-75. An often overlooked plea for the rule of philosophers may be found as well in *Rhetoric* II.23 (1398b17-20), where it is said that the city-state of the Thebans flourished when its 'leaders' (προστάται) became philosophers. It is unclear, however, whether this is Aristotle's own opinion or still a part of a cited fragment from Alcidamas, see C. Rapp, *Aristoteles. Rhetorik*, vol. II (Berlin, 2002), pp. 763-64.

[213] To be honest, neither does the *Politics* contain a straightforward criticism to the philosopher-king, although Aristotle criticizes in II.2-5 many other aspects from Plato's *Republic*. Scholars as Fred Miller believe that his objection to the idea of the philosopher-king could be gathered from his critique on Plato's theory of forms and his division between theoretical and practical wisdom, see F.D. Miller, 'Aristotle on the Ideal Constitution', in G. Anagnostopoulos (ed.), *A Companion to Aristotle* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 545-46.

men with an extraordinary practical capacity, useful in politics for deliberation and decision-making.[214]

Such a difference between Plato and Aristotle is not necessary, because Aristotle's *Politics* is often in agreement with Plato, and sometimes even contains phrases and concepts from the latter without referring to his works.[215] But on this point, a difference between both philosophers is not unlikely and may even be presumed, for it would make clear why Aristotle puts so much emphasis on this notion. The fact that he mentions a certain point and then repeats it several times suggests that Aristotle does not entirely agree with Plato. Thus, in looking for an explanation for Aristotle's god-like king, one has to take into account that Plato described his ideal rulers in a similar way, without going so far as to identify them completely with each other. In other words, we should look for a philosophical explanation that not only reveals the similarities between Plato and Aristotle, but also, and maybe even primarily, one that deals with the differences between both.

3.4 Absolute kingship as best regime

In an article that appeared some thirty years ago, Paul Vander Waerdt came up with a straightforward philosophical motivation of Aristotle's god-like kingship by explaining how it deals with a question already present in Plato, without falling victim to one of the weaknesses of his master's answer.[216] His

[214] The distinction between ἐπιστήμη and φρόνησις is made in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.5 (1140a31-1140b4), where he relates scientific knowledge to necessary things that cannot be otherwise, whereas prudence as deliberative capacity does not apply to these things. Later on, in VI.8 (1141b23-33), prudence is therefore thought to be the 'leading capacity' (ἀρχιτεκτονική) in the domain of politics. In both Plato's *Republic* (428b-29a) and his *Statesman* (292b-e), it is nevertheless ἐπιστήμη that is required from the ideal rulers.

[215] An interesting example is the description in III.15 of many rulers subjected to the laws as 'law-guardians and servants of the laws' (νομοφύλακες καὶ ὑπηρέται τοῖς νόμοις, 1287a21-22). As it functions as an argument against kingship, and thus also against Plato's ideal ruler from the *Statesman*, one could think that this perspective is only influenced by the Greek practice of installing a college of νομοφύλακες. The notion of law-guardians, however, appears quite frequently in Plato's *Laws* as well, but it is especially the second part of the description, ὑπηρέται τοῖς νόμοις, that appears literally in the fourth book of the *Laws* (715c), where Plato seems to have coined, as is explicitly mentioned, this description.

[216] See P.A. Vander Waerdt, 'Kingship and Philosophy in Aristotle's Best Regime', *Phronesis* 30 (1985), pp. 249-73.

explanation is that Aristotle thinks that this god-like kingship is, although exceptional, still better than a regular political regime where every citizen participates in power, because it totally endorses the good life that the citizens aim for. The thesis is that, ultimately, the citizens of a political community need 'leisure' (σχολή) to lead a good life, and participation in politics seems to prevent them from achieving this aim.[217] With this leisure, citizens will not only engage in philosophy in the strict sense as contemplative activity, but will take part in a broader intellectual culture, which includes music and other arts as well.[218] Since a god-like king would take away the participation in power of the citizens in a normal political regime, this kingship is thus best suited to promote the best life in the city-state. Although Aristotle understands the best life then in a more broadened sense than Plato, he still agrees with Plato that the unoccupied life of 'philosophy' (φιλοσοφία) is the best way of life and that kings are the best rulers to implement it.

A problem, however, is that a philosopher-king is normally not willing to rule, because it is not in his interest to assume power in the state, since it deprives him of the life *he* wants to lead. It is repeatedly argued in the *Republic* (499b-c, 519c, or 521b) by Socrates that such men may have to be compelled to rule. Aristotle solves this issue here, according to Vander Waerdt, since the god-like kings of whom Aristotle speaks in the *Politics* are not philosophers with, or at least aiming for, scientific knowledge, but true divine or heroic individuals. Such men would have no need for contemplative activities, wherefore they grant their subjects the time and leisure to engage with these activities. This is because they differ *in kind* from their subjects in the sense that their virtue is considered to be a heroic virtue, incomparable to any (regular) human virtue.[219] It is only due to the fact that such individuals are

[217] See especially *Politics* VII.14 (1333a30-b5 or 1334a2-10), where Aristotle ranks leisure above 'occupation' (ἀσχολία), and indicates that the latter is for the sake of the former.
[218] That φιλοσοφία can adopt such a broad meaning is argued in C. Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle* (Ithaca, 1982), pp. 196-202.
[219] This can be inferred from **P1**, **P3**, and **P5**, where Aristotle indeed emphasizes the god-like character of these rulers. Vander Waerdt additionally points as well to *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.1 (1145a18-24), where Aristotle speaks of such a superhuman excellence that is 'something heroic and divine' (ἡρωική τινα καὶ θεία), which can only be achieved 'by excess

highly unlikely in practice, that Aristotle does not pay more attention to them in his *Politics*. Vander Waerdt, then, concludes that Aristotle, on the one hand, believes with Plato that the life men aim for is a life of leisure devoted to philosophy, and that kingship is a regime that, at least theoretically, serves best to fulfil this aim; he does not, on the other hand, agree with Plato on the exact meaning of philosophy, neither on the characteristics of the king that are required to install this version of the best regime.[220]

Vander Waerdt's analysis already received some critique, because one of its premises, namely that the best life in Aristotle's *Politics* is to be assimilated (exclusively) with a life of leisure, is too rigid and does not meet Aristotle's overall validation of political participation.[221] It remains generally accepted, though, that contemplative activities are, if not sufficient, then at least necessary conditions for a good life. But if one accepts this starting point, then there are good reasons to agree with Vander Waerdt's analysis, because in that case it can serve as the philosophical explanation of the many passages in the *Politics* on the god-like kingship: it illustrates on what point Aristotle still agrees with his former master and where he differs in opinion. The latter is then the reason *why* it is important to bring it up in the *Politics* and return to it several times. However, when we look more closely to these passages and the context in which they are brought up, Vander Waerdt's thesis can be confronted with two problems, of which the second will be fatal: first, Aristotle does not endorse the rule of philosophers in the *Politics*, but neither does he explicitly

of virtue' (δι' ἀρετῆς ὑπερβολήν), see P.A. Vander Waerdt, 'Kingship and Philosophy in Aristotle's Best Regime', *Phronesis* 30 (1985), pp. 266-67.

[220] See P.A. Vander Waerdt, 'Kingship and Philosophy in Aristotle's Best Regime', *Phronesis* 30 (1985), p. 271: 'Aristotle thus agrees with Plato that the way of life of the best regime consists in the cultivation of φιλοσοφία and that kingship is the εἶδος ἀρχῆς best suited to bring about the necessary conditions for it, but he disagrees with Plato both in the meaning he assigns to φιλοσοφία as the way of life of the best regime and in the kind of virtue which constitutes the king's incomparable virtue.'

[221] For criticism of this thesis, see F.D. Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1995), pp. 235-37, or C.C.W. Taylor, 'Politics', in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (New York, 1995), pp. 248-52. Very recently, Carol Atack also criticized Vander Waerdt (and other scholars), arguing that he falls into the trap of creating a model that is not present in Aristotle's texts. According to her, Aristotle is exploring rather than supporting the virtue model of monarchy, see C. Atack, 'Aristotle's *Pambasileia* and the Metaphysics of Monarchy', *Polis* 32 (2015), p. 300 and p. 317.

reject it, and, second, he presents the rule of the god-like king as primarily just and only secondarily in the interest of his subjects.

The first problem may appear odd, because it was already argued that the god-like king is not a philosopher in the Platonic sense, as scholars nowadays generally seem to recognize.[222] Nevertheless, we should not draw too much attention to the fact that Aristotle considers his permanent ruler as someone completely different from a philosopher-king, because strangely enough he never explicitly criticizes this Platonic doctrine in the *Politics*.[223] On the contrary, Aristotle once indicates in II.5, in a critique on the educational program of the *Republic*, that it is strange that Plato believes the city-state could be made excellent by his proposals, and not 'by habits, philosophy, and laws' (τοῖς ἔθεσι καὶ τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ καὶ τοῖς νόμοις, 1363b39-40), just as the legislators in Sparta and Crete did by installing common messes. Good habits and laws are common concepts to aim for in Aristotle's political thought, but the report of philosophy here is remarkable: does Aristotle then believe that philosophy not only is an important aim in the private life of the citizens, but a useful means in the public life of the city-state as well? Vander Waerdt does not seem to believe so, for he understands the difference between Plato's and Aristotle's ideal kingship as a difference between the rule of scientific philosophers and heroic statesmen. Although he recognizes that the *Politics* itself does not explicitly refer to this difference, he points to a famous fragment from late antiquity that could support his claim:

> Πλάτων μὲν οὖν, εἰ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα θεῖος καὶ αἰδοῖος, ἀλλὰ τοῦτόν γε ἀτεχνῶς ἀποκεκινδυνευμένως προήκατο λόγον, ὅτι μὴ πρότερον τὰ κακὰ λήξει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, πρὶν ἂν ἢ φιλόσοφοι βασιλεύσωσιν ἢ βασιλεῖς φιλοσοφήσωσιν. ἐλήλεγκται δὲ ὁ λόγος καὶ δέδωκεν εὐθύνας τῷ χρόνῳ. ἄγασθαι δὲ ἄξιον Ἀριστοτέλην, ὅτι μικρὸν τὰ Πλάτωνος ῥήματα μεταθεὶς τὸν λόγον πεποίηκεν ἀληθέστερον, φιλοσοφεῖν μὲν τῷ βασιλεῖ, οὐχ ὅπως ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι φάσκων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμποδών, τὸ δὲ φιλοσοφοῦσιν ἀληθινῶς τυγχάνειν εὐπειθῆ καὶ

[222] See, for instance, W. Desmond, *Philosopher-Kings of Antiquity* (London, 2011), pp. 49-51, or D.J. Riesbeck, *Aristotle on Political Community* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 282-85.
[223] At one point in *Politics* II.5 (1264b6-10), Aristotle criticizes Socrates for always selecting the same rulers, but the reason has nothing to do with them being philosophers. Rather, Aristotle simply indicates that such a procedure would create factional conflict, for it impedes other citizens to take up offices within the city.

> εὐήκοον. ἔργων γὰρ ἀγαθῶν τὴν βασιλείαν ἐνέπλησεν, οὐχὶ ῥημάτων (Themistius, *Oratio* VIII, 107c-d = Rose fr. 647).
>
> Plato, even if in all other respects he was divine and admirable, was completely reckless when he uttered this saying, that evils would never cease for men until either philosophers became kings, or kings became philosophers. His saying has been refuted and has paid its account to time. We should do honor to Aristotle, who slightly altered Plato's words and made his thesis truer; he said that it was not merely unnecessary for a king to philosophize, but even a hindrance; what he should do was to be obedient and inclined to give ear to those who truly philosophize, since then he would fill his kingship with good deeds, not merely with words.[224]

This fragment could derive from any of Aristotle's lost works on politics.[225] According to Themistius, Aristotle disagrees on the fact that kings should be philosophers, as Plato argued in the fifth book of his *Republic* (473d-e); rather, they should listen to philosophers. For two reasons, however, I doubt that this supports Vander Waerdt's claim that it was Aristotle's aim in the *Politics* to show that god-like kings are not philosophers. First, the fragment from Themistius does not seem to point to the god-like kingship as such, for when a king is in need of advisors, he simply seems to lack the divine characteristics of Aristotle's absolute ruler. Second, Aristotle does not seem to reject the thesis entirely that philosophers are useful in politics, in so far as he still sees a role for them in the rule of the city-state: not as the rulers themselves, but as the ones to whom the rulers should listen. Although I agree with Vander Waerdt that Aristotle's god-like kings are indeed not philosophers, it seems too farfetched to make it Aristotle's point: the *Politics* itself pays too little attention to it and the fragment from Themistius does not tell us sufficiently explicitly that god-like rulers do not need to be philosophers.

One may ask what the role of the philosopher would be if he does not take up the position of ruler. With regard to this question, only speculative answers can be given, for Aristotle is just as little explicit on any philosopher's function

[224] Translation, though slightly adapted, taken from D. Ross, *Select Fragments* (Oxford, 1967).
[225] As such, the advice that a king should listen to true philosophers rather than be one himself could have been taken up in *On Kingship* too, but the passage from Themistius does not give us any clue in that regard. For further discussion, see A.-H. Chroust, *Aristotle. New Light on His Life and on Some of His Lost Works*, vol. II (London, 1973), pp. 216-23.

in the city-state, if he has a function at all. Although it is not very important here, there may be reason to assume that Aristotle indeed considers philosophers yet to be useful to the city-state, though not as the rulers but as the lawgivers. As we mentioned before, Aristotle only requires a ruler to have prudence, which is a capacity to deliberate well on particular cases. This is why philosophers in general, with their universal scientific knowledge, are useless as rulers.[226] In *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.8 (1141b23-33) Aristotle nevertheless indicates that politics also has a leading part called 'legislation' (νομοθετική) which does not deal with particulars. That is why at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1180b13-28) he explicitly understands this lawgiving as a 'science' (ἐπιστήμη), for it deals with what is universal. This is why, as has been argued by Peter Scholz, the scientific men that develop the legislation of a city-state may indeed be regarded as philosophers.[227] Although Aristotle does not expressly confirm this in his *Politics*, it is yet notable that he indicates in II.10 that the Cretan legislator 'has philosophized' (πεφιλοσόφηκεν, 1272a22-23) well about the common messes. This brings it in line, first, with the critique on Plato's *Republic* that a good city-state needs habits, philosophy, and laws. It is the philosopher, then, who creates laws and installs the desired habits. But it also may fit, second, the fragment from Themistius, in the sense that the advisors of the king are understood as lawgivers. In that sense, Aristotle is dealing in the latter fragment not with his ideal version of kingship, but with a realistic version according to law.

The second and more important problem with Vander Waerdt's thesis is that he believes that the god-like kingship is better than a regime with political rule, because it would benefit the subjects and is thus primarily in their interest.

[226] In *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.7 (1141b2-8), Aristotle mentions the philosophers Anaxagoras and Thales, but considers them to be useless in politics, for they do not know what is to their own advantage. In *Politics* I.11 (1159a5-21), however, this image is partly countered by a story about Thales, who could become very rich on the basis of his philosophical wisdom.

[227] See P. Scholz, *Der Philosoph und die Politik* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 139-146, and especially at p. 144: 'Die ihrem architektonischen Wesen angemessenste, praktische Aufgabe des politischen Theoretikers bzw. Philosophen liegt dementsprechend in der Theorie der Gesetzgebung, deren Realisierung die höchste Form politischen Handelns bedeutet: Hier finden die potentiellen Fähigkeiten des Politikers Anwendung – der 'Normen stiftende Mann' (νομοθετικός) wird zum „*Gesetzgeber*" (νομοθέτης).'

The first aspect of this claim appears to be indicated in **P5**, where Aristotle indeed says that such a regime would be 'better' (βέλτιον, 1332b22) than one where everyone rules in turn. However, we are not compelled to understand this as better in an absolute sense, that is best as such, for it likewise could mean better in a relative sense, that is best given the situation when divine or heroic individuals would appear. In the latter situation, it is indeed better that a god-like king rules permanently rather than that he has to share his rule with his inferior subjects.[228] This is in line with what Plato argued for in the fourth book of his *Republic* (434a-c): the fixed positions of working men, soldiers, and guardians should not be alternated as cobblers and carpenters who could change positions among themselves, for that would be injustice. Hence, in his critique on Plato in *Politics* II.2 Aristotle initially follows this line of thinking when he indicates that 'it is clear that it is better if the same always rule, *where* this is possible' (δῆλον ὡς τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἀεὶ βέλτιον ἄρχειν, εἰ δυνατόν, 1261a38-39). He immediately adds that where this is not possible, as in the case where everyone is equal, it would be 'just' (δίκαιος, 1261b1) to give them all a share in ruling. It is, thus, only relative to the theoretical possibility of the appearance of divine individuals that it would be better for them to rule, and not, as Plato seems to believe, as such.[229]

But even when the regime of an absolute king would be better as such than a regime with political rule, that would not imply that, as Vander Waerdt believes, it is for the benefit of the subjects. As we already discussed in the second chapter, the concept of euergetism is hard to reconcile with the idea of a god-like king, for the friendship constitutive to benefactions does not seem to be possible when one party is too superior in proportion to the other. Indeed, in none of the five passages does Aristotle explicitly indicate that the rule of an

[228] Likewise, Aristotle gives two reasons immediately after **P5** against permanent rule when the citizens would be equals (1332b28-29), for then it would be unjust and not likely to endure long, see R. Kraut, *Aristotle. Politics Books VII and VIII* (Oxford, 1997), p. 136.

[229] Since Aristotle, as Eckart Schütrumpf notes, presents political rule of equals as just, it must be understood in the sharpest contrast with Plato's *Republic*, see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch II-III* (Berlin, 1991), p. 171. Trevor Saunders is more reluctant, for he argues that Aristotle only has actuals states in mind, whereas Plato assumes ideal circumstances in his *Republic*, see T.J. Saunders, *Aristotle. Politics Books I and II* (Oxford, 1995), p. 110.

absolute king is in the interest of the subjects. On the contrary, in **P3** and **P4** he puts the emphasis, as in the above cited passage from II.2, on the fact that it would be only 'just' (δίκαιος, 1288a18 and 1325b12) for these highly excellent individuals to rule permanently, thus for *their* sake. If there would occur a situation where one or a few individuals are in virtue and ability in a non-comparative way better fitted as rulers, then it would be simply unjust to deny them all power, as Aristotle mentions already in **P1** (ἀδικήσονται, 1284a9). It seems, then, that we should look for an alternative explanation that fits the text better than Vander Waerdt's analysis.

3.5 Kingly versus political rule

In the meantime, other scholars have dealt with the issue of the god-like king as well. Whether they all agree (completely) with Vander Waerdt's thesis is less important, but what seems to be a common assumption in understanding these passages is that Aristotle argues that the permanent rule of a god-like king is an ideal that is ranked higher than a lawful regime where power is shared among the citizens. One does not, however, need to assume that a regime with permanent rule as such is *better* than one with ruling and being ruled. It is both true that the god-like kingship is (1) not a regime with political rule and (2) presented as an instantiation of the best regime, but these two premises do not lead to the conclusion that *every* instantiation of the best regime is not one with political rule.[230] The only valid conclusion would be that *some* instantiations of the best regime are not regimes with political rule. But this leaves open the possibility that others may be seen as instantiations of the best regime, and I believe that aristocracy can fulfil this role.

In Aristotle's sixfold model of regimes, as presented in *Politics* III.7, kingship, aristocracy, and polity were thought to be correct because they look towards the common advantage, rather than the mere advantage of the one,

[230] Otherwise, in syllogistic terms, the *Latius Hos*-rule would be violated, for the quantity of one of the terms ('being an instantiation of the best regime') may not be higher (i.e. universal) in the conclusion than in the premise (where it is particular).

few, or many rulers, as in a tyranny, oligarchy, or democracy. But a further difference between kingship (as correct rule by one) and aristocracy (as correct rule by few) on the one hand and polity (as correct rule by many) on the other, is that the degree of virtue of the rulers in the former two regimes can be thought to reach a complete level of excellence, whereas in the latter it cannot: 'It is possible for one or a few to be outstanding in virtue, but where more are concerned it is difficult for them to be proficient with a view to virtue as a whole' (ἕνα μὲν γὰρ διαφέρειν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἢ ὀλίγους ἐνδέχεται, πλείους δ' ἤδη χαλεπὸν ἠκριβῶσθαι πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀρετήν, 1279a39-b1).[231] As the expression διαφέρειν κατ' ἀρετήν reminds us of the main reason in **P1** and **P2** why a god-like king earns all the power in a state, it seems that the same applies to an aristocracy.[232] Aristotle here simply follows Plato's *Republic* (445d) and *Statesman* (293a), in saying that the ideal regime can be both a kingship (rule by one) or an aristocracy (rule by few).

It is not remarkable, then, that Aristotle considers kingship and aristocracy as the two regimes where this (high) degree of virtue is conceivable (1289a30-35 and 1310b30-34). The difference, however, is that in an aristocracy one could still speak of a citizen community, although certainly smaller than the one from a polity, whereas in a kingship this is no longer the case. For in an aristocracy, as we discussed in the first chapter, the select group of citizens might still share its power among its participants, but in a kingship the only and thus permanent ruler remains the king. In that respect, it makes sense that Aristotle indicates in III.13 that with regard to the best regime, a citizen is 'one who is capable of and intentionally chooses being ruled and ruling with a view to the life in accordance with virtue' (ὁ δυνάμενος καὶ προαιρούμενος ἄρχεσθαι καὶ ἄρχειν πρὸς τὸν βίον τὸν κατ' ἀρετήν, 1284a2-3), which seems to describe the life in an aristocracy. Immediately hereafter, he refers to kingship as

[231] That polity is nevertheless a good regime in Aristotle's eyes is dealt with in K.M. Cherry, 'The Problem of Polity', *The Journal of Politics* 71 (2009), pp. 1406-21.

[232] In a god-like kingship, however, the outstanding virtue must also contain a certain 'excess' (ὑπερβολή) or 'preeminence' (ὑπεροχή), which makes the king incomparable to all others.

exception of permanent rule, which is **P1**. Similarly, but more outspoken, the conclusion of the third book in *Politics* III.18 reads:

> Ἐπεὶ δὲ τρεῖς φαμεν εἶναι τὰς ὀρθὰς πολιτείας, τούτων δ' ἀναγκαῖον ἀρίστην εἶναι τὴν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρίστων οἰκονομουμένην, τοιαύτη δ' ἐστὶν ἐν ᾗ συμβέβηκεν ἢ ἕνα τινὰ συμπάντων ἢ γένος ὅλον ἢ πλῆθος ὑπερέχον εἶναι κατ' ἀρετήν, τῶν μὲν ἄρχεσθαι δυναμένων τῶν δ' ἄρχειν πρὸς τὴν αἱρετωτάτην ζωήν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς πρώτοις ἐδείχθη λόγοις ὅτι τὴν αὐτὴν ἀναγκαῖον ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν εἶναι καὶ πολίτου τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἀρίστης· φανερὸν ὅτι τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν ἀνήρ τε γίνεται σπουδαῖος καὶ πόλιν συστήσειεν ἄν τις ἀριστοκρατουμένην ἢ βασιλευομένην, ὥστ' ἔσται καὶ παιδεία καὶ ἔθη ταὐτὰ σχεδὸν τὰ ποιοῦντα σπουδαῖον ἄνδρα καὶ τὰ ποιοῦντα πολιτικὸν καὶ βασιλικόν (1288a32-b2).
>
> Since we assert that there are three correct regimes, that of these one is necessarily best which is managed by the best persons, and that this is the sort of regime in which there happens to be one certain person or a whole family or a multitude that is preeminent in virtue with respect to all the rest, of persons capable being ruled and of ruling with a view to the most choiceworthy way of life, and since in our earlier discourses it was shown that the virtue of man and citizen is necessarily the same in the best city, it is evident that it is in the same manner and through the same things that a man becomes excellent and that one might constitute a city under an aristocracy or a kingship. So the education and the habits that make a man excellent are essentially the same as those that make him a political or kingly ruler.

This conclusion may be summarized as follows: the best regime has to be one of the correct regimes, but it can only be a regime where the best men also rule, which are kingship and aristocracy.[233] Although Aristotle mentions three cases, one person, a family, and a multitude, the first two apply to kingship, as Aristotle's indicates in **P3**. The last one, a multitude capable of being ruled and ruling, then must be a reference to aristocracy. Aristocracy and kingship are the two instantiations of the best regime, but only the rule in an aristocracy is called 'political' (πολιτικός, 1288b2) here. Aristotle hence considers aristocracy and kingship as similar, on the one hand, in so far as both qualify as the best regime, but also different, on the other hand, in so far as only the rule of the former is called political, whereas the latter is not.

If, therefore, one is looking for a philosophical explanation that elucidates why Aristotle puts so much emphasis in the *Politics* on the idea of a god-like

[233] See W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. III (Oxford, 1902), pp. 305-06, or P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the* Politics *of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), p. 183.

king, one does not need to explain why it is better than aristocracy, but rather why it is different. The answer, then, is that the rule of a god-like king is no longer *political* rule. As such, this does not seem to be an important point, but it is in fact one of the main aims from the outset of the *Politics* (1252a7-16, and later again in 1253b18-20 and 1254b2-6) to differentiate between despotic, household, kingly, and political rule.[234] As we noticed already in the first chapter, this is an argument by which Aristotle dissociates himself from Plato. In the latter's *Statesman*, the Stranger from Elea, after making a distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge, asks the following:

> *ΞΕ.* Πότερον οὖν τὸν πολιτικὸν καὶ βασιλέα καὶ δεσπότην καὶ ἔτ᾽ οἰκονόμον θήσομεν ὡς ἓν πάντα ταῦτα προσαγορεύοντες, ἢ τοσαύτας τέχνας αὐτὰς εἶναι φῶμεν ὅσαπερ ὀνόματα ἐρρήθη (258e).
>
> *VISITOR*: Then shall we posit the statesman and king and slave-master and the manager of a household as well, as one thing, when we refer to them by all these names, or are we to say that they are as many sorts of expertise as the names we use to refer to them?[235]

Further in the dialogue, the question is answered in favor of the first position: there is no difference between a large household and a small city, for 'it is clear that there is only one sort of knowledge concerned with all these things' (φανερὸν ὡς ἐπιστήμη μία περὶ πάντ᾽ ἐστὶ ταῦτα, 259c). Plato does believe that there is only one art of ruling and that the various names it may take up only refer to a different number of persons ruled.

Aristotle, however, disagrees and indicates that these are truly different forms of authority. Not only does he explicitly rejects Plato's identification of a large household and a small city-state (1252a12-13), he also indicates the mistaken assimilation between king and statesman: '[T]hey consider a kingly ruler one who has charge himself, and a political ruler one who, on the basis of the precepts of *this* sort of science, rules and is ruled in turn' (ὅταν μὲν αὐτὸς

[234] Scholars often consider this as the main aim of Book I of the *Politics*, see M. Schofield, *Saving the City* (London, 1999), pp. 128-32, and K.M. Cherry, *Plato, Aristotle, and the Purpose of Politics*, (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 29-36.
[235] Translations from the *Statesman* are taken from Christopher Rowe in J.M. Cooper & D.S. Hutchinson (eds.), *Plato. Complete Works* (Indianapolis, 1997).

ἐφεστήκῃ, βασιλικόν, ὅταν δὲ κατὰ τοὺς λόγους τῆς ἐπιστήμης τῆς τοιαύτης κατὰ μέρος ἄρχων καὶ ἀρχόμενος, πολιτικόν, 1252a14-16). Although Aristotle seems to have used his own definitions of king and politician here, he does not agree that it is the same science that applies to both: a king should only know how to rule permanently whereas statesmen should be able to rule as well as to be ruled in turn.[236] Further in the first book of the *Politics*, Aristotle deals with despotic rule over slaves (I.4-7) and the spousal and paternal rule over wife and children (I.12-13), but for his treatment of kingly rule, one has to wait until the third book.[237] If that is true, why not read the passages on the god-like kingship, then, as illustrations whose aim it is exactly to point to the difference between kingly and political rule?

That the rule of a god-like king is non-political, was already presented in the introduction of this chapter as something evident, but that this is exactly Aristotle's point is less obvious. Nevertheless, *all* the five passages where Aristotle argues for absolute rule are brought up as being in contrast to a regime with statesmen who share and alternate power: this contrast is indicated right before the passage, as in **P1** (1283b42-84a3) or **P4** (1325b7-10), within the passage, as in **P2** (1284b30-31) or **P3** (1288a24-26), or right after the passage, as in **P5** (1332b23-27). A further indication may be found as well in **P1**, the

[236] The verb ἐφίστημι, used to describe the 'being in charge' of the king, is used as well two times in Aristotle's discussion of kingship in *Politics* III.16 (1287a2 and a26), but never in Plato's *Statesman* to define kingly rule (only once in 274c, but not with regard to kingship). Likewise, as Trevor Saunders has noted, the political character of κατὰ μέρος ἄρχων καὶ ἀρχόμενος is barely mentioned in the *Statesman* (though it is taken up in *Laws* 643e or 942c), see T.J. Saunders, *Aristotle. Politics Books I and II* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 58-59: 'In so far as alternation of rule by statesmen is different from permanent rule by one man, the sentence has nothing with which Aristotle can disagree; so 'that sort of' may mean 'kingly', which would point up the paradox, as he sees it, of the assumption of a single political knowledge common to rulers as different as a king and statesman.' Carnes Lord reads another difference, in so far as the 'precepts' (λόγοι, 1252a15) refer to written laws that would constrain the politician but not the king, see C. Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics (Chicago, 2013), p. 1.

[237] At the end of the first book of the *Politics* (1260b20-24), Aristotle refers to some remaining questions that he will deal with elsewhere. According to Kevin Cherry, this remark probably points to Aristotle's treatment of kingship in the third book, see K.M. Cherry, *Plato, Aristotle, and the Purpose of Politics*, (Cambridge, 2012), p. 35. An explanation for the scattered exposition on the different kinds of rule in the first and third book could be the following: in the first book, Aristotle deals with power in the household, in the third book (and further) with power in the city-state. This is why the rule of a master and a household manager is discussed in the former, the rule of a king and statesmen in the latter.

first (and thus guiding) of the five passages on permanent rule. First, Aristotle says that if you would suppose one or more god-like rulers, you should not suppose a group that large that it can 'provide a full complement for the city' (πλήρωμα παρασχέσθαι πόλεως, 1284a4-5), because then it would become another political community, as he indicates earlier.[238] Second, a few lines later, he adds that such god-like individuals would no longer be considered as 'part of the city' (μέρος πόλεως, 1284a8), which is the political community.[239] Within this first passage, Aristotle thus tries to make clear that, although justified, the rule of a god-like king occurs outside a political context. Admittedly, I am certainly not the first one to notice that Aristotle indicates in **P1** that the permanent rule of such a king would be non-political.[240] But I propose that the problematic nature of all these passages in the *Politics* disappears if we do not only read it this way, but even understand it as Aristotle's argumentative point. We may, therefore, take it to be that Aristotle intends to say that the rule of genuinely god-like individuals would indeed be justified, but that it simultaneously differs from the rule to be expected in a city-state, where power is shared among the citizens.

In looking for an explanation, we assumed that Aristotle's point must be related to Plato's thought, since the similarities with the latter cannot be coincidental. But to understand Aristotle's emphasis, it seems likely that his version of an ideal kingship also differs from the Platonic account. If we argue that it is indeed Aristotle's point that such kingly rule is different from the political version of the best regime, then an important difference with Plato's

[238] The point of reference seems to be the few lines earlier in III.13, where Aristotle indicates that the virtuous are few in number, which brings up the question 'whether they are capable of administering the city, or whether there is a multitude of them large enough to from a city' (εἰ δυνατοὶ διοικεῖν τὴν πόλιν ἢ τοσοῦτοι τὸ πλῆθος ὥστ' εἶναι πόλιν ἐξ αὐτῶν, 1283b12-13).
[239] A similar remark appears in *Politics* I.2: 'One who is incapable of sharing or who is in need of nothing through being self-sufficient is no part of a city, and so is either a beast or a god' (ὁ δὲ μὴ δυνάμενος κοινωνεῖν ἢ μηδὲν δεόμενος δι' αὐτάρκειαν οὐθὲν μέρος πόλεως, ὥστε ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός, 1253a27-29). This anticipates the god-like character of the absolute king.
[240] See especially W.R. Newell, 'Superlative Virtue', *The Western Political Quarterly* 40 (1987), pp. 170-74. More recently, this distinction between kingly and political rule in **P1** is also recognized by V. Laurand, 'Nature de la royauté dans les *Politiques* d'Aristote', in E. Bermon e.a. (eds.), *Politique d'Aristote* (Bordeaux, 2011), pp. 81-85, and K.M. Cherry, *Plato, Aristotle, and the Purpose of Politics* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 102 and p. 114.

Statesman can and must be noted: Plato considers (especially) kingly and political rule throughout the whole dialogue as interchangeable.[241] Moreover, this identification between kingship and statesmanship is also acknowledged in the *Euthydemus* (291c). Since Aristotle, from the outset of the *Politics*, disagrees with such an assimilation, it seems that he sincerely felt the urge to react against it and that the passages on god-like kingship are the ones in which he does so. The reason why Aristotle disagrees with Plato is simply that kingship would not (any longer) be a regime that fits Aristotle's standard conception of a polis as community of peers.[242] One has to suppose an almost divine individual to make his rule justified, but even then it does not happen without consequences, for such a ruler seems to put the polis as a political community to an end, by being, strictly speaking, the only ruler that partakes in power.[243] The concept of absolute rule in Aristotle's *Politics* may be thought to function as the illustration of this consequence.

3.6 Two possible objections

There yet seem to be two difficulties with the above explanation of the five passages on permanent rule: (1) Aristotle still considers kingship 'political' somehow and (2) he indicates two times that kingship is indeed better than

[241] As Eckart Schütrumpf has indicated, Plato considers the art of a king and a statesman in his *Statesman* to be the same (259d and 280a), which is why they are placed often side by side (276c, 289d, 291c and 311c) and when the one is mentioned, the other is often used as a synonym a few lines later (277a, 287a-d, 290a, 303e-304a, and 305c-d), see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles*. *Politik Buch I* (Berlin, 1991), p. 177.

[242] As we noticed already, Aristotle argues at several occasions in the *Politics* (1252b19-20, 1286b8-10, and 1313a3-5) that kingship is a regime from the past. In that sense it may be understood as pre-political. But, as Valéry Laurand indicates, the rule of a god-like king differs from this pre-political rule, because it surpasses rather than precedes political rule, see V. Laurand, 'Nature de la royauté dans les *Politiques* d'Aristote', in E. Bermon e.a. (eds.), *Politique d'Aristote* (Pessac, 2011), p. 85: 'Ce roi est comme un dieu, il s'agit d'une royauté d'exception, qui n'est plus infra-politique, ou pré-politique, mais *super-politique*, parce qu'il dépasse ce qu'on trouve dans une cité, la nature des citoyens'. This is true, but does not inhibit that god-like kingship, with super-political rule, remains non-political.

[243] That is why in *Politics* II.2 Aristotle criticizes Plato exactly on this point: Socrates argues in *Republic* IV (423d) that a city should strive for unity as much as possible. Aristotle, however, argues that a city is in its nature a kind of aggregation that will become a household or even a single person when unity is striven after too rigidly: 'So even if one were able to do this, one ought not to do it, as it would destroy the city' (ὥστ' εἰ καὶ δυνατός τις εἴη τοῦτο δρᾶν, οὐ ποιητέον· ἀναιρήσει γὰρ τὴν πόλιν, 1261a21-22).

aristocracy. The first problem with the above explanation that kingly rule essentially differs from political rule, is that Aristotle is certainly not consistent in saying that god-like kingship is in every respect non-political. For already in **P1** he calls the required capacity twice 'political' (πολιτική, 1284a7 and a10). Similarly, he says in III.17, as we noticed already in the first chapter, that the rulers fitted for kingship must be 'preeminent in virtue relative to political leadership' (ὑπερέχον κατ' ἀρετὴν πρὸς ἡγεμονίαν πολιτικήν, 1288a9). This is not a real problem, though, since we may understand the word πολιτική in Aristotle's *Politics* in a general sense as the study of the human well-being, as well as in a narrow sense as the study of (power in) political constitutions.[244] In the argument that god-like kingship is really different from a regime with political rule, πολιτική is thus only used in the narrow sense as πολιτικὴ ἀρχή. This becomes evident if one reads the above sentence from III.17 in opposition with the next one, where it is said of aristocracy that such a regime requires rulers 'whose virtue makes them expert leaders relative to political rule' (κατ' ἀρετὴν ἡγεμονικῶν πρὸς πολιτικὴν ἀρχήν, 1288a11-12). A kingship is, then, still 'political' in the general sense of a political leadership that aims for the good life, but not any more in the narrow sense, like an aristocracy, as a regime with political rule. That is even necessarily so, for if kingship would be non-political in every sense of the word, it would not have been taken up as a subject to look into Aristotle's political science.

In recent literature, scholars as David Riesbeck and Bruno Langmeier have nonetheless tried to show that Aristotle's analysis ultimately does not lead to a difference between (absolute) kingship and political regimes. Although both authors wrote impressive contributions to the literature on Aristotle's political thought in general, I believe their arguments with regard to the political character of kingship are misrepresentations of what Aristotle actually says. Riesbeck, on the one hand, argues that kingship may still be understood as a regime with political rule, for a king will need multiple rulers to help him.[245]

[244] See R. Kraut, *Aristotle. Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2002), p. 16.
[245] See D.J. Riesbeck, *Aristotle on Political Community* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 236-40.

Aristotle indeed indicates in *Politics* III.16 that one man simply cannot be in charge of everything, which is why he will be in need of 'a number of persons to be selected as rulers under him' (πλείονας τοὺς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καθισταμένους ἄρχοντας, 1287b9). A few lines later, these rulers are even considered as the king's 'co-rulers' (συνάρχοι, 1287b31). As the argument goes, these co-rulers may be considered as the king's friends and a friend is someone similar and equal, which is why these co-rulers are thought to have an equal right to rule. Such a line of thinking indeed describes the basic outline of a regime with political rule. Riesbeck goes wrong, however, in arguing that this is Aristotle's view that kingship is a regime with political rule. First, Aristotle does not present this as his own argument, but rather as one from 'those who dispute against kingship' (οἱ διαμφισβητοῦντες πρὸς τὴν βασιλείαν, 1287b35-36). We therefore do not have to assume that he agrees with the argument itself. But even if he does, second, it is far more likely to understand the argument the other way around: not that kingship is a regime with political rule, but that such a regime with factual political rule is not (any longer) a true kingship. As other scholars have noted before, Aristotle here simply seems to put forward another argument against kingship, advancing that a single individual is not entitled to rule alone, as is indicated by the factual practice of appointing co-rulers.[246] We therefore do not have to assume, with Riesbeck, that Aristotle himself believes kingship to be a regime with political rule.

Langmeier, on the other hand, developed an argument that kingship is not different from a political regime, in so far as both could be considered as lawful regimes.[247] Although it is, as we discussed in the first chapter, the case that some categories of kingship are according to law, this does not seem to apply to the absolute kingship. In III.16 Aristotle explicitly expresses that the παμβασιλεία is a kingship where the king rules 'in all matters according to his own will' (πάντα κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βούλησιν, 1287a9-10). This does not imply that an absolute king will rule without laws, for Aristotle already states in **P1**

[246] See M.P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen* (Totowa, 1992), p. 79, or P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the* Politics *of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), pp. 188-89.
[247] See B. Langmeier, *Ordnung in der Polis* (München, 2018), pp. 298-306.

that absolute rulers *are* laws themselves (1284a13-14). In III.16 Aristotle also indicates, in a eulogy on the law, that 'one who asks law to rule, therefore, seems to be asking god and intellect to rule alone' (ὁ μὲν οὖν τὸν νόμον κελεύων ἄρχειν δοκεῖ κελεύειν ἄρχειν τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὸν νοῦν μόνους, 1287a28-30), which may equally be read as a reference to the god-like character of the absolute king. It would be wrong, however, to understand these remarks, as Langmeier does, in the exact same way as law functions in regimes with political rule: in political regimes, the laws are sovereign over the rulers, whereas in an absolute kingship, the ruler is sovereign over the laws. Consequently, we do not have to presume that Aristotle understood absolute kingship as a regime according to law.

The second problem seems to pose a greater challenge, because Aristotle considers a kingship twice to be the best regime within a hierarchy of all six: once in *Politics* IV.2 (1289a38-b5) and once in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 (1160a31-b9). Within this scale, kingship is thus presented as a regime that is ranked higher than aristocracy, which reminds us of both the indication in **P5** that such rule was better than ruling and being ruled in turn, and the explanation that Vander Waerdt came up with to demonstrate why. We cannot counter these passages with the argument that 'better' here means best relative to given circumstances, for Aristotle here compares regimes as such. Moreover, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* he explicitly calls kingship 'best' (βελτίστη, 1160a35), that is in an absolute sense. Before dealing with these two passages separately, we must note already that Aristotle is not consistent in his presentation of kingship as being better than aristocracy. We showed already in chapter one that Aristotle argues in *Politics* III.15 (1286b3-7) that aristocracy was more choiceworthy than kingship, which thus presents the opposite view. A similar perspective, against the one from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, may be found in *Eudemian Ethics* VII.9, where Aristotle calls aristocracy, and not kingship, 'best' (ἀρίστη, 1241b37).[248]

[248] Admittedly, some translators omit this ἀρίστη, for it does not seem to contribute anything to the argument in *Eudemian Ethics* VII.9, see, for instance, Solomon's translation in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. II (Princeton, 1984), p. 1968. Others translate ἡ

Let us start with the passage from *Politics* IV.2. The only motivation that Aristotle apparently gives in ranking these regimes is that the greater the difference between a correct regime and its deviation, the worse the deviation is.[249] This explains why Aristotle considers tyranny as the worst and democracy as the least bad regime, for the latter is seen as 'most moderate' (μετριωτάτη, 1289b4) of the deviations. A regime with many rulers simply has more checks and balances than a monarchy because power is distributed. Unfortunately, an argument why kingship, as a correct regime, is ranked higher than the other correct regimes, and especially aristocracy, does not appear here. Aristotle calls kingship 'the first and most divine' (ἡ πρώτη καὶ θειοτάτη, 1289a40), but arguing that it is best *because* of this character, seems circular. It is clear from a corresponding passage in Plato's *Statesman* (302c-03b) that Aristotle took this hierarchy from his former master and we could suggest that he did so without thinking through its consequences. The six regimes in the *Statesman* (293c-e) are all thought to be distinct from a seventh one, which is Plato's variant of the god-like kingship. Plato ranks the six regimes in a hierarchy depending on how well they approximate the ideal. Since a law-abiding kingship is the most similar to its divine variant, it makes sense that Plato understands it as the best of all six (302e).

But in Aristotle's hierarchy, an absolute standard as seventh regime is missing, wherefore the Platonic reason why kingship is best does not work. As we saw already in the first chapter, Aristotle understands the absolute kingship as an exception to a standard of political rule rather than *vice versa*. In that sense, it also corresponds to the reason why the common wren is called king: because it could transcend the flight of the eagle in a contest, which is why the eagle, according to the *History of Animals* (609b11-12 or 615a19-20), is at war

ἀριστοκρατικὴ ἀρίστη in an attributive rather than predicative sense as 'the best aristocratic arrangement', see A. Kenny, *Aristotle. The Eudemian Ethics* (Oxford, 2011), p. 130.
[249] See W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1902), p. 146.

with him.[250] The reason why Aristotle, then, took Plato's model in *Politics* IV.2 may have been to criticize another Platonic point.[251]

The problem is that Aristotle not only regards kingship as better than aristocracy in the *Politics*, but also in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the former work, Aristotle does not seem to be entirely consistent, for sometimes he chooses aristocracy above kingship. In the latter work, however, there is no such ambiguity, nor any reason to believe that he mentions Plato's model for another reason. This is why some scholars came up with an explanation to indicate why Aristotle believes kingship is best, though these explanations do not seem to be free from difficulties either.[252] One way to resolve this issue is not to look at the difference between kingship and aristocracy as such, but at the relation to their respective deviations. The difference between kingship and tyranny is considered to be more extreme than the difference between aristocracy and oligarchy, for the latter two are only presented as second-best and second-worst. If we want to take this difference into account, it is not clear

[250] The story, also known by Plinius (*Natural History* X.95) but only told by Plutarch (*Moralia* 806e-f), is that the wren hid in the plumage of the eagle, and when the latter could not fly any higher, the wren appeared and exceeded the flight of the eagle. Plutarch, however, uses the word βασιλίσκος, which could also refer to the golden-crested wren, see W.G. Arnott, *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Z* (London, 2007), p. 21 and p. 247.

[251] Aristotle indicates in *Politics* IV.2 that 'someone' (τις, 1289b5) already proposed such a scheme, but that it was wrong in the supposition that there is a good and bad variant of every regime. Aristotle disagrees in saying that a regime as oligarchy is simply bad, and can only be regarded as less worse than another. That Plato is this someone against whom Aristotle argues is obvious, though Plato only considers democracy to have a good and bad variant. This is why Richard Robinson suggests that Aristotle may have forgot where he took this from, see R. Robinson, *Aristotle. Politics Books III and IV* (Oxford, 1995), p. 72.

[252] One explanation by Richard Kraut is that kingship is better than aristocracy for it has the advantage of being more efficient, since in an aristocracy there is always the possibility of disagreement among the many rulers, see R. Kraut, *Aristotle. Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 424-26. Aristotle, however, argues in *Politics* III.15 (1286b2-7) that one can suppose equally virtuous people in an aristocracy, which makes the latter more rather than less preferable, since multiple rulers are less likely to be corrupted than a single ruler. Another explanation, from Thornton Lockwood, is that elsewhere in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1113a5-9 or 1180a14-21) the reason may be found why kingship is presented as the best regime, in so far as it is used herein as a model for the inculcation of virtue, see T. Lockwood, 'The best regime of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*', *Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2006), pp. 360-63. Although correct, this does not sufficiently explain why kingship itself is ranked higher than aristocracy. Moreover, it would be odd that an absolute king, with superhuman virtue, serves best as the model to inculcate regular human virtue.

at first sight, as Michael Pakaluk has argued, whether Aristotle considers tyranny worst because kingship is best or *vice versa*.[253]

A reason to accept the first reasoning is that the greater the excellence of a ruler, the better it would be for the city-state, and thus, *mutatis mutandis*, the greater the vice, the worse. But then we are still left at the point where we have to defend why kingship is the best regime and Aristotle himself does not seem to give us any answer. In the classical period, it simply seems to have been an undefended assumption that the best imaginable ruler could only be a single man.[254] Yet if this is true, it would be philosophically very weak. A reason to believe, therefore, that Aristotle deems kingship best, is that he deduced it from the premise that tyranny is worst.[255] Admittedly, in *Politics* IV.10 (1295a17-19) Aristotle does not present absolute kingship as the counterpart of true tyranny, but the other way around, though the latter could be attributed to the fact that, at that stage in the *Politics*, he already discussed the παμβασιλεία but not yet the true tyranny. An argument in favor of this interpretation is that he indicates multiple times that tyranny is indeed 'worst' (χειρίστη), both in the *Politics* (1289a40-41 and 1289b2) and in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1160b9 and 1161a32). Since he only indicates once that kingship is 'best', Aristotle seems more firmly convinced that tyranny is in fact worst.

This is why it seems better to understand Aristotle's view that kingship is the best regime in *Politics* IV.2 and *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 because kingship constitutes, in its absolute variant, the theoretical counterpart of the

[253] See M. Pakaluk, *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics Books VIII and IX* (Oxford, 1998), p. 118.
[254] Not only Plato and Aristotle present the best imaginary ruler as a single individual, for such a presumption may be found as well in the famous Persian debate in Herodotus' *Histories* (III.82), or in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Isocrates' *Nicocles*, see M. Haake, 'Writing Down the King' in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Splendors and Miseries of Ruling Alone* (Stuttgart, 2013), pp. 170-72, or N. Luraghi, 'One-Man Government', in H. Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government* (Chichester, 2013), p. 143. See also M. Schofield, *Plato. Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2006), p. 153: 'The fact is that many Athenian texts of the fifth and fourth century, especially by writers of aristocratic tendency, treat kingship as the default system when it comes to conceptualizing the idea of the exercise of rule over others.'
[255] One may even consider this a general way of reasoning of political thinkers from fourth century BCE, see N. Luraghi, 'One-Man Government', in H. Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government* (Chichester, 2013), pp. 143-44: '[S]tricly speaking, the *basileus* is an imaginary double of the *tyrannos.* In others words, in Greek political discourse the image of the good king was created by turning all the vices of the tyrant into their opposites.'

worst regime, which is a true tyranny. Such an assumption has a great benefit, for Aristotle explicitly indicates in his *Politics* (1310b5-7 and 1311a8-22) *why* tyranny is the worst regime: because it combines the evils of both oligarchy (a mere focus on wealth and a distrust of the people) and democracy (a rivalry with and attack on the notables). But this will lead us, then, from one problem to the other, for Aristotle also speaks sometimes, as we saw at the end of the first chapter, positively of tyranny.

Chapter 4:
The Preservation of Tyranny

A famous matter of controversy in the Politics *is the fact that Aristotle elaborates on two ways to preserve a tyranny while he simultaneously holds it to be the worst of regimes. The first way to preserve a tyranny still confirms that it is a bad regime, but the second one suggests that it can be maintained in a better way in imitating kingship. With these two modes, Aristotle appears to indicate that tyranny is not necessarily a regime without the consent of the subjects, as it is traditionally understood by predecessors as Plato. Aristotle seems to argue that a tyrant can rule willing subjects as well, just as a king does. That would imply that tyranny and kingship do not diverge as greatly as Plato seems to believe, in which respect Aristotle distinguishes himself once again from his former master.*[256]

4.1 The paradox of tyranny in the *Politics*

As we made abundantly clear by now, Aristotle considers tyranny together with kingship as a monarchy or regime with one-man rule. But both as such and in reference to kingship, there is a remarkable contrast in Aristotle's dealing with tyranny in the fourth and the fifth book of the *Politics*. In the fourth book, Aristotle not only categorizes tyranny as the worst of all regimes (1289b2-3), but he also indicates later that he will discuss it last, because it equally is the least of all a regime (1293b27-30). That is why he admits at the beginning of IV.10 (1295a1-4), the chapter on tyranny and its various categories, that he does not have much to say about it and only deals with it for the sake of completeness. At this point, it seems a sincere statement, for this chapter is one

[256] This chapter is based on the forthcoming note 'Aristotle on the Preservation of Tyranny' in *Classical Philology*, though the last section is entirely new.

of the shortest in the whole *Politics* and even consists for the greater part of repetition. It is in any case far more dense than the elaborate chapters on kingship from the third book (III.14-17).

In the fifth book, however, Aristotle thoroughly deals with tyranny. In this book he discusses the causes for the destruction of regimes and the means to preserve them. In chapters V.10-11, he respectively handles the destruction and preservation of monarchies, but now Aristotle has far less to say on kingship, since the majority of the content is devoted to tyranny. Striking is that these chapters are, in contrast to IV.10, the longest in the whole *Politics*. Aristotle not only has more to say on tyranny than in the fourth book, but little by little he also seems to display another attitude towards it. The myriad of historical examples in V.10 of tyrants who lost their power (and their lives) still seems to confirm that tyranny is the worst regime, since causes as injustice or contempt are listed as to explain why they lost control.[257] In V.11, however, Aristotle devotes just as much attention to the preservation of tyranny, where he makes a distinction between a traditional and a new way.

The traditional way to preserve a tyranny is almost entirely described in amoral terms, although Aristotle once still indicates that he considers these measures not to be free from 'depravity' (μοχθηρία, 1314a14). The essence of the whole analysis is that a tyrant should aim for three things: first, that the subjects only 'have modest thoughts' (μικρὰ φρονεῖν, 1314a16) of themselves; second, that they 'distrust one another' (διαπιστεῖν ἀλλήλοις, 1314a17); third, their 'incapacity for activity' (ἀδυναμία τῶν πραγμάτων, 1314a23). Aristotle notices that when the subjects of a tyrant do not think highly of themselves, they will not conspire against the rule of the tyrant, no more than when they distrust each other or lack the resources or abilities to start a rebellion. It is therefore the tyrant's aim to belittle his subjects as much as possible. Next to

[257] An example of injustice due to arrogance was the attack on the Pisistratids or the conspiracy against Periander of Ambracia (1311a36-b1), because both insulted one or more of their subjects. An example of contempt was the attack of Dio on Dionysius II of Syracuse (1312a4-6), because the latter was always drunk. Since *Politics* V.11 especially deals with personal assaults on the life of tyrants, one may regard it as a casuistic of tyrant murder, see E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles*. *Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), p. 544.

this, he should also prevent them from joining together in meetings or gaining trust in themselves or others, by spreading discord and slander. Finally, he should also disarm his subjects, make them as poor as possible by imposing heavy taxes, and continuously wage war so that they will always be in need of a strong leader. The core of the traditional way to preserve a tyranny is that a tyrant can remain in power as a vicious ruler if he makes every effort to assure that his subject *cannot* resist against his rule.[258]

The new way, on the other hand, is described in such a fashion that it is hard not to read it as a mode that receives Aristotle's (relative) appreciation. Aristotle now does not start with the causes that destroy tyrannies in order to describe next the measures to counter these, but links this way of preservation with the destruction of kingship:

> ἔστι δὲ λαβεῖν αὐτὸν ἐκ τῆς φθορᾶς τῆς τῶν βασιλειῶν. ὥσπερ γὰρ τῆς βασιλείας εἷς τρόπος τῆς φθορᾶς τὸ ποιεῖν τὴν ἀρχὴν τυραννικωτέραν, οὕτω τῆς τυραννίδος σωτηρία τὸ ποιεῖν αὐτὴν βασιλικωτέραν, ἓν φυλάττοντα μόνον, τὴν δύναμιν, ὅπως ἄρχῃ μὴ μόνον βουλομένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ μὴ βουλομένων. προϊέμενος γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο προΐεται καὶ τὸ τυραννεῖν. ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν ὥσπερ ὑπόθεσιν δεῖ μένειν, τὰ δ' ἄλλα τὰ μὲν ποιεῖν τὰ δὲ δοκεῖν ὑποκρινόμενον τὸν βασιλικὸν καλῶς (1314a33-40).
>
> One may grasp this in connection with the destruction of kingships. For just as one mode of destruction for kingship is to make the rule more tyrannical, so it is a source for preservation for tyranny to make it more kingly, provided one thing only is safeguarded – his power, so that he may rule not only willing persons, but also those who are unwilling; for if this is thrown away, so is the tyranny. This must remain as a presupposition, then, but in whatever else he does or is held to do he should give a fine performance of the part of the kingly ruler.

What a tyrant should do is not any longer act as a true tyrant but imitate the behavior of the king. That is why Aristotle believes that he should show an interest in the common advantage and not merely his own. In a certain respect,

[258] This does not mean that the rule of a vicious tyrant cannot be to the advantage of at least some persons. Aristotle indicates that a tyrant could, just as in an extreme democracy, give a more dominant position to women and more freedom to slaves in order that they would have a better view of his rule (1313b32-39). More important seems the fact that a 'flatterer' (κόλαξ, 1313b39) will hold both regimes in high esteem as well, which was indicated already in a fuller comparison between extreme democracy and tyranny in *Politics* IV.4 (1292a4-38). More correspondences between these two regimes are discussed in I. Jordović, 'Aristotle on Extreme Tyranny and Extreme Democracy', *Historia* 60 (2011), pp. 36-64.

such a king-like tyrant should do similar things as a traditional tyrant, in so far as he should also impose taxes and pay attention to his character as a military leader. The way he presents himself is different, however, because he must give the impression that he acts in the common interest. He should create a dignified image of himself as ruler and make sure that he does not appear as someone who exploits or abuses his subjects. He should look like someone pious and his subjects must believe that it is thanks to his policy that their well-being rests assured. That is why Aristotle, at the end of the analysis, indicates that such a way to preserve tyranny will not only make it last longer, but the tyrant himself and his rule will also become more virtuous. The core of this new way to preserve tyranny is thus, contrary to the traditional way, that a tyrant can remain in power as a virtuous or at least half-decent ruler if he manages that his subjects *will not* resist against his rule.[259]

Just as the exception of an absolute kingship is at odds with Aristotle's idea of political rule, the same seems to apply to the preservation of tyranny in reference to his general conception of the latter regime. With regard to the absolute kingship, we refuted both a biographical explanation as the one from Kelsen or Tarn, and a chronological explanation as the one from Jaeger. With regard to tyranny, a similar explanation that combines the biographical and the chronological one could be raised, for Aristotle was a close acquaintance of the tyrant Hermias of Atarneus. When Aristotle left the Academy around 347 BCE, he went to Asia Minor and spent several years, together with other Academic philosophers, in the company of Hermias.[260] Their relation appears to have been intimate and cordial, because Aristotle married Pythias, Hermias' (adopted) daughter or niece, and wrote a laudatory hymn on Hermias' virtue

[259] See W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle* vol. IV (Oxford, 1902), p. 448, or P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the* Politics *of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), p. 413.
[260] On the rule of Hermias as such, see H. Berve, *Die Tyrannis bei den Griechen*, vol. I (Munich, 1967), pp. 332-35. According to Diogenes Laertius (V.9), Aristotle spent three years with him. According to Strabo (XIII.1.57), he went to Atarneus in the company of Xenocrates. Other Academic philosophers as Erastus and Coriscus could already have been there, because they are jointly addressed with Hermias in Plato's *Sixth Letter* (322c). On this relation between Hermias, Aristotle, and other members from Plato's Academy, see P. Green, 'Politics, Philosophy, and Propaganda', in W. Heckel & L.A. Tritle (eds.), *Crossroads of History* (Claremont, 2004), pp. 34-36.

when the latter was tortured and killed by Persian order.[261] Since Aristotle, then, personally knew a tyrant to whom he was favorably disposed, it could be that this affected his views on the preservation of tyranny in the fifth book of his *Politics.* Werner Jaeger considered Aristotle's sojourn in Asia Minor as a turning point in his supposed evolution from utopian thinker to someone who was more interested in realpolitik, and he believed that Hermias was a key figure in this evolution.[262] Such an assumption problematizes Jaeger's own thesis, in the sense that Aristotle seems to endorse different perspectives on tyranny in the fourth and the fifth book of the *Politics*, two books that Jaeger equally considered to be empirical. Nonetheless, that as such does not prevent us from reading the positive picture of the king-like tyrant in *Politics* V.11 as a reference to Hermias of Atarneus. There are, however, various reasons why such an interpretation is unlikely.

A first reason is that Aristotle clearly indicates in his initial description of the king-like tyrant that the latter should, whatever it takes, hold on to his 'power' (δύναμις, 1314a36). But according to a certain tradition, Hermias changed his tyranny into a 'milder rule' (πραοτέρα δυναστεία), which could point to the diminishment of power.[263] This is, however, not a decisive argument, for πρᾶος more likely refers to his behavior. A second and more

[261] Diogenes Laertius mentions the marriage with Hermias' relative (V.3) and quotes the entire hymn (V.7-8). On this basis, scholars have deduced that Aristotle and Hermias must have shared an intimate friendship, see P. Scholz, *Der Philosoph und die Politik* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 146-53, and C. Natali, *Aristotle*. *His Life and School* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 32-42.

[262] See W. Jaeger, *Aristotle. Fundamentals of the History of his Development* (Oxford, 1948), p. 120. Jaeger calls this transition period Aristotle's years of travel ('Wanderjahre').

[263] The tradition in question derives from a heavily damaged papyrus (P. Berol. 9780) of a work from Didymus *On Demosthenes*. The passage on Hermias (col. 5, lines 57-59, eds. Pearson & Stephens) indicates, or could indicate: ἐς δ(ὲ) τ(ὴν) τυραν[νίδ]α μ̣ε̣θ̣εστη[κώς, εἶχε] π̣ρ[αο]τέραν δυναστείαν. The δυναστεία in question does not seem to point to Aristotle's usage of the word as 'extreme oligarchy', but to rule in general. Some scholars believed that this passage is an indication that Hermias was probably the mysterious 'one man' (εἷς ἀνήρ, 1296a38) that Aristotle mentions in *Politics* IV.11 who created a middling regime between oligarchy and democracy, see P. Andrews, 'Aristotle, *Politics* iv. II. 1296a38–40', *The Classical Review 2* (1952), pp. 141-44. The latter is pure speculation, however, for we do not know with certainty that Hermias diminished his powers, a point explicated more thoroughly in P. Green, 'Politics, Philosophy, and Propaganda', in W. Heckel & L.A. Tritle (eds.), *Crossroads of History* (Claremont, 2004), pp. 36-37. With regard to this 'one man' in *Politics* IV.11, it is more likely to be a reference to the Athenian statesman Theramenes, whose reform politics is spoken of in the *Constitution of the Athenians* (30) or by Thucydides (VIII.97), see W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle* vol. IV (Oxford, 1902), p. 220.

important reason is that Aristotle, as we will see further in this chapter, argues that a king-like tyrant should only appear to act as a king, which is why he already succeeds when he becomes 'half-decent' (ἡμίχρηστος, 1315b9). But as the hymn on Hermias' virtue shows, Aristotle clearly portrays his friend as an example of pure excellence.[264] It is true that the king-like tyrant could also become truly virtuous, but mentioning a minimal requirement of semi-decency makes it hard to consider Hermias the point of reference. A third and most important reason is that Aristotle contrasts his new way to preserve a tyranny with the traditional way in only illustrating the traditional way with examples from history.[265] This lack of historical references in the case of the king-like tyrant thus suggests that it is, like the concept of the god-like king, a philosophical idea rather than a historical description.

One may object that Aristotle lists various cases of tyrannical dynasties in *Politics* V.12 (1315b11-39) as exceptional examples that tyrants can exercise power long: the Orthagorids at Sicyon, the Cypselids at Corinth, the Pisitratids at Athens, and various tyrants at Syracuse. Although scholars have cast doubt on the authenticity of this passage, it is not unlikely that it should be read as an illustration of how some of these tyrants from the past indeed ruled as king-like tyrants.[266] Still, then, these examples merely serve as historical illustrations of a philosophical idea, rather than that the idea itself functions as a historical description. In any case, at no point does Aristotle refer or allude here to the

[264] Aristotle's hymn is dedicated to virtue as such, but it is indicated that it was for her sake that the 'nurseling of Atarneus' (Ἀταρνέος ἔντροφος) lived and died too, which is why he should be remembered. For further information about this hymn and its context, see especially A. Ford, *Aristotle as Poet* (New York, 2011), pp. 1-26.

[265] There is one exception in the analysis on the new way to preserve a tyranny where Aristotle yet seems to point to history: a king-like tyrant should give account for his receipts and expenditure, 'as some tyrants have in fact done in the past' (ὅπερ ἤδη πεποιήκασί τινες τῶν τυράννων, 1314b5-6). To whom Aristotle points is uncertain, but one could compare it with the story in Herodotus' *Histories* (III.142) on the rule of Maeandrius of Samos, see E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), p. 591. In this story, however, Maeandrius himself did not give any account of the money. One of the citizens, a man named Telesarchus, urged him to do so.

[266] Three arguments against the authenticity are (1) the inaccuracy of the list (Dionysius I of Syracuse is not mentioned, while he ruled for many decades), (2) the fact that oligarchy is mentioned too as one of the short-lived regimes, and (3) that tyranny is considered here, in contradistinction to the former chapters of the fifth book, as a πολιτεία (1315b11), see D. Keyt, *Aristotle. Politics Books V and VI* (Oxford, 1999), p. 181.

tyranny at Atarneus.[267] This is not remarkable, for Hermias did not rule for a long period, but this at once shows that his reign could hardly serve as a point of reference for the maintenance of tyranny.

Like the exception of absolute kingship, we can, thus, understand the preservation of tyranny as a true problem in the *Politics.* Various scholars have dealt with Aristotle's analysis of tyranny before and some have indeed come to the conclusion that it is paradoxical too.[268] For if he truly considers tyranny the worst of regimes, why would he then describe the means to preserve it in rather neutral or even positive terms? The standard solution that many scholars seem to endorse is that Aristotle elaborates so extensively on the maintenance of tyranny in *Politics* V.11 because he also wants to look into the measures that could improve existing regimes, even the worst of all.[269] That would be the very reason why Aristotle distinguishes between a traditional way, where the tyrant acts tyrannical, and a new way, where he imitates kingly behavior. Recently, an alternative solution is put forward by Panos Christodoulou, who argues that Aristotle, following Plato, primarily wanted to indicate that a tyrant in the end still does not become a king, no matter how hard he tries to imitate his behavior.[270] Although both solutions are not wrong, I deem that they do not

[267] The only reference to Atarneus appears in *Politics* II.7 (1267a31-37), when the Persian general Autophradates wanted to siege the city, though this event happened around 460 BCE under the reign of Eubulus, Hermias' predecessor, see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch II-III* (Berlin, 1991), p. 253. The only reference in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* to Hermias himself appears in *Economics* II.2 (1351a33-35), where it is indicated that Hermias was taken prisoner by the Greek mercenary Mentor of Rhodos. Scholars generally accept, however, that the *Economics* was not written by Aristotle but by one of his students.

[268] Among the many studies on Aristotle's analysis of tyranny, see especially A. Kamp, 'Die aristotelische Theorie der Tyrannis', *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 92 (1985), pp. 17-34; A. Petit, 'L'analyse aristotélicienne de la tyrannie', in P. Aubenque & A. Tordesillas (eds.), *Aristote. Politique* (Paris, 1993), pp. 73-92; R. Boesche, 'Aristotle's 'Science' of Tyranny', *History of Political Thought* 14 (1993), pp. 1-25; S. Gastaldi, 'La tirannide nella *Politica* di Aristotele', in S. Gastaldi & J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran* (Sankt Augustin, 2009), pp. 139-55. That this analysis is paradoxical is argued most plainly in R. Bodéüs, 'L'attitude paradoxale d'Aristote envers la tyrannie', in C. Steel (ed.), *The Legacy of Aristotle's Political Thought* (Brussels, 1999), pp. 121-26.

[269] See F.D. Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1995), pp. 302-04, or P. Destrée, 'Aristotle on Improving Imperfect Cities', in T. Lockwood & T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle's* Politics (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 218-23. Pierre Destrée correctly criticizes the view that Aristotle argues that tyranny should be overthrown rather than preserved, as is defended in R. Kraut, *Aristotle*. *Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 373-74.

[270] See P. Christodoulou, 'Le tyran dans le rôle du roi', in S. Gastaldi & J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran* (Sankt Augustin, 2009), p. 160.

really grasp the philosophical point of Aristotle's chapter on the preservation of tyranny. I will argue that the point of *Politics* V.11 is that tyranny may occur both with and without the consent of the subjects, which is why Aristotle describes two ways to preserve a tyranny.

To start with, we will look again into the distinction between kingship and tyranny in order to discover Aristotle's demarcation criterion between both regimes. This will be found anew in the consent of the subjects, but now more accurately than in the first chapter: it seems necessary for kingship, thus the lack of it must be sufficient for tyranny. This leaves open the possibility that there are also tyrannies *with* the consent of the subjects. Subsequently, we will investigate when tyrannies arise and subsist. According to Aristotle, this is due to force or deceit. In Plato's thought, the subjects of a tyrant always endure the regime involuntarily, but Aristotle appears to acknowledge that deceit as persuasion can make one's rule voluntary. On the basis of a suggestion made earlier by Richard Bodéüs, we will proceed in the next section with the general claim that the twofold analysis to preserve a tyranny in *Politics* V.11 is used to make a distinction between, on the one hand, a tyranny exercised with force but without the consent of the subjects, and, on the other hand, one where the subjects are deceitfully persuaded but willingly accept the tyrant's rule. We will, next, show two philosophical consequences of this thesis: first, it explains why such a tyranny is improved with respect to the subjects, for they do not seem to be treated unjustly any longer. Second, and more importantly, it also shows how kingship and tyranny are much closer to each other than in Plato's political thought, where the vast contrast between these two regimes remains emphasized. Finally, we will deal with two objections that might be raised against this interpretation and try to refute these.

4.2 The difference between kingship and tyranny

In order to understand Aristotle's analysis of tyranny, we have to know in what respect tyranny differs from kingship. As we saw in the first chapter, Aristotle generally distinguishes kingship from tyranny in *Politics* III.7, where he

indicates that kingship is directed at the common advantage of king and subjects (1279a32-4), though tyranny only at the private advantage of the tyrant himself (1279b6-7). This difference, however, does not bring us very far in distinguishing tyranny sufficiently from kingship, for in the chapters on the various categories of kingship (III.14) and tyranny (IV.10) Aristotle also takes into account two categories that have something of both. We do not have to take this, as Richard Robinson does, as an indication that Aristotle discarded his initial criterion to distinguish correct from deviant regimes.[271] It seems that Aristotle, at least with regard to monarchy, has expanded rather than rejected his original terminology. After all, he still considers both the barbarian monarchy and the αἰσυμνητεία as 'despotic' (1285a22, b2, and 1295a16), which is another way of saying that a regime does only aim at the private advantage of the monarch.[272] But Aristotle adds two other criteria that make the rule of a barbarian monarch or αἰσυμνήτης to be a kingship as well: rule in accordance with the law and over willing subjects. Hence, in looking for a criterion that is sufficient for tyranny, we must look in the direction of these two possibilities. And indeed, these characteristics are not present any longer in the definition of a true tyranny in *Politics* IV.10:

> τρίτον δὲ εἶδος τυραννίδος, ἥπερ μάλιστ᾽ εἶναι δοκεῖ τυραννίς, ἀντίστροφος οὖσα τῇ παμβασιλείᾳ. τοιαύτην δ᾽ ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τυραννίδα τὴν μοναρχίαν ἥτις ἀνυπεύθυνος ἄρχει τῶν ὁμοίων καὶ βελτιόνων πάντων πρὸς τὸ σφέτερον αὐτῆς συμφέρον, ἀλλὰ μὴ πρὸς τὸ τῶν ἀρχομένων. διόπερ ἀκούσιος· οὐθεὶς γὰρ ἑκὼν ὑπομένει τῶν ἐλευθέρων τὴν τοιαύτην ἀρχήν (1295a17-23).
>
> There is also a third kind of tyranny, the one that is most particularly held to be tyranny, being a counterpart to absolute kingship. Any monarchy must necessary be a tyranny of this sort if it rules in an unchallenged fashion over persons who are all similar or better, and with a view to its own advantage and not that of the

[271] See R. Robinson, *Aristotle. Politics Books III and IV* (Oxford, 1995), p. 52: 'These two ambivalent forms, at once kingships and tyrannies, are also the clearest evidence of the truth that Aristotle in making these subdivisions disregards and overrides the principles of his original division.'

[272] In *Politics* III.6 (1278b32-37), Aristotle indicates that 'mastery' (δεσποτεία) is rule with a view to the advantage of the master primarily, and only accidentally the advantage of the slave. In III.14 (1285a19-22), he mentions that the subjects of a barbarian monarch are indeed slavish, which is the reason why they voluntarily accept despotic rule, see P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the* Politics *of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), p. 181.

> ruled. Hence it is rule over persons who are unwilling; for no free person would willingly tolerate this sort of rule.

A true tyranny lacks the kingly characteristics of the mixed monarchies: first, a true tyrant is 'unaccountable' (ἀνυπεύθυνος), which seems to indicate, as we already mentioned in chapter one, that his power is not subjected to any laws. Second, his rule is 'involuntary' (ἀκούσιος), which means that he does not have the consent of his subjects. This is not remarkable, because these two criteria are also taken into account in the works of previous Greek thinkers to distinguish kingship from tyranny.[273] Yet the first of these, not ruling in accordance with the laws, cannot be a good demarcation criterion either, since it does not seem to be sufficient for tyranny: in the above definition of true tyranny Aristotle indicates that it is only 'necessary' (ἀναγκαῖον, 1295a19). This makes sense, for already in III.13 (1284a3-14), as we saw in the first chapter too, Aristotle deems the absolute kingship just as much to be a monarchy above the law.[274] In general, though, not being subjected to the laws cannot even be necessary for tyranny, because the two mixed categories of a monarchy are also κατὰ νόμον although they are tyrannical as well. The only remaining criterion to distinguish tyranny sufficiently from kingship therefore seems to be the consent of the subjects.

Aristotle uses the words ἑκών or ἑκούσιος in the *Politics* in the majority of cases with regard to monarchy and in III.14 (1285b5 and b21) he considers it to be a characteristic of non-tyrannical categories of kingship too. In V.10 he even indicates that kingship in general is 'a voluntary kind of rule' (ἑκούσιος ἀρχή, 1313a5). There seems to be, in other words, no kingship without the consent of the subjects. This makes consent a necessary condition for kingship,

[273] See Plato's *Statesman* (291d-e) and Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (IV.6.12). A further comparison between this single passage from Xenophon and the thought of Plato and Aristotle is made in D. Morrison, 'Tyrannie et royauté selon le Socrate de Xénophon', *Les Études Philosophiques* 69 (2004), pp. 177-92.

[274] To be fair, within the passage from *Politics* III.13 Aristotle does not explicitly indicate that this is an absolute kingship, but only calls it a παμβασιλεία from III.15 (1285b36) onwards. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Aristotle considers the absolute kingship to be different from a kingship κατὰ νόμον, which is specified at the beginning of III.16 (1287a1-10).

which allows us to attribute the following thought to Aristotle: *Every king is a monarch who rules with the consent of his subjects.*

With regard to tyranny Aristotle adds further in V.10 how it is different from kingship: '[O]ne ruling unwilling persons will immediately cease to be king, while the tyrant rules even over unwilling persons' (μὴ βουλομένων εὐθὺς οὐκ ἔσται βασιλεύς, ἀλλὰ τύραννος καὶ μὴ βουλομένων, 1313a14-16). Although syntactically different, βουλομένων and ἑκόντων may be regarded as synonyms here.[275] Hence, if the subjects no longer assent to the rule of a monarch, it immediately stops being a kingship and becomes a tyranny. We can, therefore, rewrite Aristotle's thought on kingship: *Every monarch who does not rule with the consent of his subjects is not a king.* Or, since kingship and tyranny are the exhaustive forms of monarchy: *Every monarch who does not rule with the consent of his subjects is a tyrant.*

If the consent of the subjects is a necessary condition for kingship, then the lack of consent must be sufficient for tyranny. This is the demarcation criterion that we sought to distinguish tyranny from kingship. Important to note is that the lack of consent does not seem to be a necessary condition for tyranny too, because the two mixed categories of monarchy also exercise power over willing subjects while at the same time being tyrannical. Consequently, a tyrant might exercise his power with the consent of the subjects as well. Although Aristotle indicates in his definition of true tyranny in the fourth book that 'no free man' (οὐθεὶς τῶν ἐλευθέρων, 1295a22-23) would endure tyranny willingly, he certainly seems to have broadened his scope in the fifth book in saying that a tyrant lasts '*even*' (καί, 1313a15) when the subjects do not want this, which suggests that tyrants may likewise rule willing subjects.[276] It seems worthwhile to investigate this suggestion further.

---

[275] See E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles*. *Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), p. 574.

[276] A similar but less evident suggestion may be found outside the *Politics* in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1 (1110a4-8), where Aristotle mentions a tyrant who orders a person, with his parents and children taken hostage, to do something base. Aristotle indicates that 'it may be debated whether such actions are involuntary or voluntary' (ἀμφισβήτησιν ἔχει πότερον ἀκούσιά ἐστιν ἢ ἑκούσια). Although the chapter from the *Nicomachean Ethics* does not dwell upon tyranny any further, it is yet remarkable that Aristotle considers the subject of a tyrant as someone who could (possibly) assent to the tyrant's assignment.

If we want to find out in what respect a tyrant could rule with the consent of his subjects, it is important to look for the cases where tyranny occurs. In *Politics* V.10 Aristotle gives us two instances: 'If someone should rule through deceit or force, this is already held to be a sort of tyranny' (ἂν δὲ δι' ἀπάτης ἄρξῃ τις ἢ βίας, ἤδη δοκεῖ τοῦτο εἶναι τυραννίς, 1313a9-10). The fact that Aristotle links tyranny to force or deceit is not remarkable, for, once more, it may be found in the works of his predecessors as well.[277] But at this point we have to be careful, as it is tempting to misinterpret Aristotle's thought. If Aristotle understands monarchic rule that is ἀκούσιος as tyranny, it might seem that βία and ἀπάτη are two instances to which the subjects of the tyrant would not assent.[278] Nevertheless, the only thing that Aristotle literally writes is that force and deceit are sufficient for tyranny, not necessary. One may therefore attribute the following thought to Aristotle: *Every monarch who rules by force or deceit is a tyrant.* It is important to note that, at this point, there seems no further connection between force or deceit on the one hand and involuntary rule on the other, because both are considered to be sufficient conditions for tyranny, without any further implications towards one another. And yet, in *Rhetoric* I.15 Aristotle clearly connects them in general: '[A]ctions due to the force or deceit of others are involuntary' (τὰ βίᾳ καὶ ἀπάτῃ ἀκούσια, 1377b5). How could it be possible, then, that tyranny occurs in cases as force or deceit but still with the consent of the subjects?

If we want to answer this question, we need to look at the cases of force and deceit separately. It is beyond any doubt, as Aristotle indicates in *Politics* III.10, that when a tyrant 'uses force' (βιάζεται, 1281a23), he cannot rule willing subjects, for both in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1 (1109b35-10a4) and *Eudemian Ethics* II.8 (1224a10-11) Aristotle makes clear that βία is one of the two cases where something is done involuntarily. That force belongs to tyranny and excludes voluntariness, is a thought that Aristotle again appears to have

[277] See Plato's *Republic* (573e-74a) or Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (III.9.10). Xenophon, however, does not link force and deceit directly to tyranny, as Plato does, but only denies that they could be characteristics of kings and (legitimate) rulers.
[278] As understood in W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1902), p. 445.

adopted from Plato. For in the *Statesman* (276d), the Elean stranger, in looking for the correct definition of the true statesman, argues at a certain point that rule may be exercised in two dissimilar ways: 'enforced' (βίαιος) and 'voluntary' (ἑκούσιος). Subsequently, he connects the first one to tyranny, the second to kingship/statesmanship:

> ΞΕ. Καὶ τὴν μέν γέ που τῶν βιαίων τυραννικήν, τὴν δὲ ἑκούσιον καὶ ἑκουσίων διπόδων ἀγελαιοκομικὴν ζῴων προσειπόντες πολιτικήν, τὸν ἔχοντα αὖ τέχνην ταύτην καὶ ἐπιμέλειαν ὄντως ὄντα βασιλέα καὶ πολιτικὸν ἀποφαινώμεθα (276e);
>
> VISITOR: And should we perhaps call tyrannical the expertise that relates to subjects who are forced, and the herd-keeping that is voluntary and relates to willing two-footed living things that expertise which belongs to statesmanship, displaying, in his turn, the person who has this expertise and cares for his subjects in this way as being genuinely king and statesman?

Young Socrates concurs with this question. Later in the dialogue, however, it turns out that consent is *not* a definite characteristic of kingship, only the expertise or knowledge of the statesman (292a-c). When Plato in the end distinguishes the various imitations of this ideal regime, he does not use consent and force any longer to characterize the difference between kingship and tyranny. A kingly imitation of the ideal regime of the true statesman is one in accordance with the established laws, whereas a tyrannical imitation will deviate from these laws (302c-e). This does not mean, however, that force is not a characteristic of tyranny any longer, because Plato never indicates in the *Statesman* that the subjects of a tyrant could assent to his rule; what he is arguing for is that consent is not a necessary characteristic of kingship. Similarly, in *Laws* VIII (832c) Plato writes that tyranny (just as democracy or oligarchy) is rule 'over unwilling subjects' (ἀκόντων) that is 'always accompanied by some force' (σὺν ἀεί τινι βίᾳ). Aristotle does not seem to agree with Plato that kingship is possible without the consent of the subjects, but certainly does agree with him that tyranny does not have the consent of the subjects when force is used.

When we look at a tyrant ruling by deceit, however, the result is less straightforward. According to *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1 (1110b18-24) and

Eudemian Ethics II.9 (1225b6-8) there is, in addition to force, a second situation where something is done involuntarily, namely in the case of 'ignorance' (ἄγνοια).[279] Although this is not the same as ἀπάτη, it is not hard to connect both concepts: people who are deceived seem to be ignorant in a certain respect and will therefore act involuntarily. There is, nonetheless, another way to understand deceit: not as being ignorant, but as being persuaded. In *Eudemian Ethics* II.8 Aristotle says the following: 'Now the enforced and the necessary, force and necessity, seem opposed to the voluntary and to persuasion in the case of acts done' (δοκεῖ δὴ τὸ βίαιον καὶ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον ἀντικεῖσθαι, καὶ ἡ βία καὶ ἡ ἀνάγκη, τῷ ἑκουσίῳ καὶ τῇ πειθοῖ ἐπὶ τῶν πραττομένων, 1224a13-15, cf. 1224a38-b1). But persuasion is, in contrast to ignorance, voluntary instead of involuntary. Being persuaded seems to be a more suitable candidate than being ignorant to understand the deceit of a tyrant, because the former is used for people acted upon, the latter for people acting.[280] In the case of a tyrant ruling certain subjects, these subjects are obviously acted upon. It is true that Aristotle does not explicitly indicate in his ethical treatises that persuasion may be a form of deceit, but this is clearly how he understands it in a key passage at the end of *Politics* V.4:

> κινοῦσι δὲ τὰς πολιτείας ὁτὲ μὲν διὰ βίας ὁτὲ δὲ δι' ἀπάτης, διὰ βίας μὲν ἢ εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἢ ὕστερον ἀναγκάζοντες. καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἀπάτη διττή. ὁτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἐξαπατήσαντες τὸ πρῶτον ἑκόντων μεταβάλλουσι τὴν πολιτείαν, εἶθ' ὕστερον βίᾳ κατέχουσιν ἀκόντων, οἷον ἐπὶ τῶν τετρακοσίων τὸν δῆμον ἐξηπάτησαν φάσκοντες τὸν βασιλέα χρήματα παρέξειν πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον τὸν πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους, ψευσάμενοι δὲ κατέχειν ἐπειρῶντο τὴν πολιτείαν· ὁτὲ δὲ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τε πείσαντες καὶ ὕστερον πάλιν πεισθέντων ἑκόντων ἄρχουσιν αὐτῶν (1304b7-17).
>
> Regimes are sometimes changed through force, sometimes through deceit. Force may be used right at the beginning, or they may resort to compulsion later on.

[279] In this passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics* everything done through ignorance is always considered to be '*non*-voluntary' (οὐχ ἑκούσιον), but it is only thought to be '*in*voluntary' (ἀκούσιον) when it also produces pain and regret. The fact that Aristotle does not consider non-voluntariness and involuntariness as synonyms here is not problematic to our interpretation, since he does not seem to apply this distinction in the *Politics*, where ἑκών/ἑκούσιος and ἄκων/ἀκούσιος are mutually exclusive.

[280] In both *Nicomachean Ethics* III.1 and *Eudemian Ethics* II.9 Aristotle argues that one is not *acting* voluntary when one is ignorant about certain important elements concerning the deed; he does not say anything about ignorance of people *acted upon*.

> Deceit is also twofold. Sometimes they use deceit at first and make revolution in the regime with the others willing, and then later on keep hold of it by force when the others are unwilling (at the time of the four hundred, for example, they deceived the people by asserting that the king [of Persia] would provide funds for the war against the Spartans, and having put out this lie attempted to keep hold of the regime); but sometimes they both persuade at the beginning and maintain the persuasion later on, and rule over willing persons.

In this passage Aristotle connects βία with involuntariness and ἀπάτη with voluntariness, for he understands persuasion here as a form of deceit. Since this passage from the fifth book of the *Politics* describes the two instances in which tyrannies arise, it implies that a tyrant may indeed rule both willing and unwilling subjects: when a tyrant uses force, his subjects do not assent to his rule, but when he uses deceitful persuasion, he will gain their consent.[281] Although commentators of the *Politics* have often linked this passage to Aristotle's conception of tyranny in V.10 as regime of force or deceit, they seem to fail to connect it as well with Aristotle's twofold analysis in V.11 on the preservation of tyranny.[282] Yet, as we will argue in the next section, this difference between a tyranny over unwilling subjects and one over willing subjects, seems to be the issue at stake in that chapter.

4.3 Tyranny with the consent of the subjects

Aristotle's analysis on the preservation of tyranny in a kingly fashion is, just as the five passages on the absolute kingship, remarkable and requires for an

[281] One may find a further hint to this thought in *Politics* VII.2, where Aristotle investigates whether a despotic and tyrannical regime could be justified. He answers it negatively while indicating that it does not matter whether someone is 'ruling over willing or unwilling subjects' (καὶ βουλομένων καὶ μὴ βουλομένων, 1324b25-26), because neither will it be the task of a doctor or a ship captain to submit their patients or crew members through 'either persuasion or force' (ἢ πεῖσαι ἢ βιάσασθαι, 1324b30-31). Not only plain use of violence but rhetorical persuasion too may thus be, directly or indirectly, seen as a characteristic of a despotic regime like tyranny, see A. Pons, 'Tyrannie, politique et philosophie', *Les Études philosophiques* 23 (1968), p. 181, or A. Petit, 'L'analyse aristotélicienne de la tyrannie', in P. Aubenque & A. Tordesillas (eds.), *Aristote. Politique* (Paris, 1993), pp. 78-79.

[282] The connection with tyranny is made in W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1902), pp. 332-33; E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), pp. 457-58; or M. Curnis e.a., *Aristotele. La Politica Libri V-VI* (Rome, 2016), p. 339. However, none of these commentators seems to indicate that tyrants can rule willing subjects, because they fail to see how their ἀπάτη can be persuasion, as in *Eudemian Ethics* II.8, and only understand it in accordance with *Rhetoric* I.15.

explanation. In an interesting paper that appeared some twenty years ago, Richard Bodéüs investigated its importance in the *Politics* and discussed several possibilities that could explain the occurrence of a king-like tyrant. He came to the conclusion that the first six possibilities failed, which is why he believed that the seventh should be adopted: the preservation of a tyranny in a kingly fashion is a regime where the subjects could accept the rule of the tyrant.[283] Bodéüs, however, seems to present this as a negative explanation, in the sense that it should be accepted only because all other options appear to fail. Nonetheless, there seem to be various arguments to turn this into a positive explanation that makes it intrinsically plausible.

As a preceding thought, we have to take the structure of *Politics* V.11 again into consideration: Aristotle begins with a short passage on the preservation of kingship, and then continues with a more elaborate analysis of two ways to preserve a tyranny, first the traditional way and then the new one. On the maintenance of kingship, we indicated already in the second and third chapter that Aristotle argues that kingship can only be preserved by making it more moderate. A king, therefore, does not need to become more virtuous but less powerful. The traditional way to preserve a tyranny partly corresponds and partly differs from this moderate king: a traditional tyrant does not have to become more virtuous just as little as a moderate king, but he should hang on to his power in order to make sure that his subjects could not rise against him. The new way to preserve a tyranny again partly corresponds with the traditional way and partly differs from it: a king-like tyrant should hang on to his power, just as a traditional tyrant, though he should not appear as a cruel and harsh ruler but as a virtuous king. It is remarkable, then, to detect that the king-like tyrant is certainly different from the moderate king: the first is given the advice to remain powerful and to show that he earns it, the second to refrain from (too much) power because he does not earn it. Aristotle, thus, presents three

[283] See R. Bodéüs, 'L'attitude paradoxale d'Aristote envers la tyrannie', in C. Steel (ed.), *The Legacy of Aristotle's Political Thought* (Brussels, 1999), pp. 131-32. The seven possibilities that Bodéüs discusses are (1) an example of effectiveness, (2) an indirect enlightenment of kingship, (3) an historical description, (4) a transformation of the regime, (5) a continuity of monarchy, (6) objective royal conditions, and (7) subjective acceptable conditions.

different ways to preserve a monarchy. What are our reasons now to believe that he is pointing in this chapter to the difference between a tyrannical rule with and without the consent of the subjects?

Let us begin with two arguments related to the structure of this chapter and then continue with two arguments related to the content. A first argument with regard to structure is that the division of the chapter into three parts neatly corresponds to our conclusion that kingship always implies the consent of the subjects, whereas tyranny might be with or without such consent. This could explain why Aristotle only deals with one way to preserve a kingship and two ways to preserve a tyranny. A second argument with regard to structure is that the two ways to preserve a tyranny are presented as each other's opposites, which agrees with the opposition between force and persuasion indicated in the last section. It is in that respect also remarkable that the key passage from *Politics* V.4 describes regimes governed at some point with force and those always with persuasion, while he only illustrates the former with an example from history.[284] This corresponds to the analysis of the two ways to preserve a tyranny, where only the measures of the traditional way are illustrated with (many) historical examples. On the basis of the structure of V.11, we therefore have some reason to believe that the difference between voluntariness and involuntariness does indeed play a role here.

The two arguments related to the content of this chapter may give us further reason to think so. A first argument is that the whole analysis of the two ways to preserve a tyranny seems to agree very well with the concepts of force and deception.[285] The traditional way, on the one hand, corresponds quite well with the idea of using force: by using verbs as 'to lop off' (κολούειν, 1313a40)

[284] The example in this passage from *Politics* V.4 is not a tyranny, but the short-lived oligarchy of the so-called Four Hundred in Athens during the year 411 BCE, dealt with in the *Constitution of the Athenians* (29-33). Nonetheless, Aristotle could easily have given an example of a tyrant as well, for in his *Constitution of the Athenians* he describes how Pisistratus first 'won the people by persuasion' (συνέπεισε τὸν δῆμον, 14.1) as well as how he later tried to 'recover the government by force' (ἀνασώσασθαι βίᾳ τὴν ἀρχήν, 15.2).

[285] See also the analysis in R. Boesche, 'Aristotle's 'Science' of Tyranny', *History of Political Thought* 14 (1993), pp. 17-22, especially at p. 20: 'Aristotle regarded violence as inevitably necessary for a tyrant, but also as a sign of instability, and he certainly regarded deception as a more effective mean to make a tyranny lasting.'

or ‘to destroy’ (ἀναιρεῖν, 1313a41) from the start of his analysis, Aristotle illustrates how such a tyrant acts violently towards his subjects to remain in power. Naturally, the subjects of such a ruler would never assent to his rule. The new way, on the other hand, shows a strong similarity with the concept of deception: by constantly using the verbs ‘to seem’ (δοκεῖν, 1314a39-40 or b7) and especially ‘to appear’ (φαίνεσθαι, 1314b15, b18, b23-24, b31, b33, b39, 1315a3, a21, b1), Aristotle makes clear, as scholars already recognized before, that a tyrant should not become a king, but only imitate one.[286] Such a tyrant should therefore deceitfully persuade his subjects of his being a king without really being so.[287] Does Aristotle consequently also believe that the subjects would assent to his rule?

A second argument is that Aristotle indeed gives us at least two clues that the new way to preserve a tyranny is one with the consent of the subjects. A first clue, which was cited already, is that Aristotle writes that such a tyrant must keep only one thing, his δύναμις, ‘so that he may rule not only willing persons, but also those who are unwilling’ (ὅπως ἄρχῃ μὴ μόνον βουλομένων ἀλλὰ καὶ μὴ βουλομένων, 1314a36-37).[288] This is a plain reference to the thought from *Politics* V.10 (1313a14-16), also cited earlier, where Aristotle had suggested that tyrants may rule willing subjects as well.[289] Consequently,

[286] See A. Petit, ‘L’analyse aristotélicienne de la tyrannie’, in P. Aubenque & A. Tordesillas (eds.), *Aristote. Politique* (Paris, 1993), p. 91, or P. Christodoulou, ‘Le tyran dans le rôle du roi’, in S. Gastaldi & J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran* (Sankt Augustin, 2009), pp. 168-69. According to David Keyt, one can even make a further distinction between the cases where Aristotle uses the verb φαίνεσθαι with an infinitive, on the one hand, and with a participle, on the other hand. When used with an infinitive it points, just as the verb δοκεῖν, to the deceitful appearance of a tyrant that masks his character, whereas when used with a participle it points to his actions as public person that are observed by his subjects, see D. Keyt, *Aristotle*. *Politics Books V and VI* (Oxford, 1999), p. 175.

[287] Although Aristotle does not literally mention the word ἀπάτη within his analysis of the king-like tyrant, he does connect it in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.4 with the pretense of pleasure, ‘for it appears a good when it is not’ (οὐ γὰρ οὖσα ἀγαθὸν φαίνεται, 1113a34-b1).

[288] This δύναμις may especially mean ‘military power’, see C. Lord, *Aristotle’s* Politics (Chicago, 2013), p. 164. In *Politics* III.15 (1286b27-40), Aristotle uses the same concept in his discussion on the size of a monarch’s guard. Interesting to note, although quite obvious, is that Aristotle indicates that using such a power is a measure of force, for a monarch then ‘will be capable to force those who are not willing to obey’ (δυνήσεται βιάζεσθαι τοὺς μὴ βουλομένους πειθαρχεῖν, 1286b29-30). This hence seems to be a measure for a traditional tyrant that a king-like tyrant must always be able to use when his deceit fails.

[289] On the basis of these two sentences from *Politics* V.10-11, David Keyt seems to reach a similar conclusion, see D. Keyt, *Aristotle*. *Politics Books V and VI* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 174-75:

we can understand its meaning in line with the key passage from *Politics* V.4: if a tyrant uses deceit at first and (military) force later on, he will eventually rule unwilling subjects, but if he uses and keeps using deceitful persuasion, he will continuously remain to rule willing subjects. Everything thus depends on how well he plays the role of the king. A second clue is that, if the tyrant is in fact good in keeping up appearances, he can indeed receive the consent of his subjects. It may seem odd at first sight that the subjects would voluntarily accept a regime that is not truly good, but only apparent. On the basis of a passage in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* I.10, however, one could conclude that this is yet enough for receiving someone's consent:

> πάντ' ἂν εἴη, ὅσα ἑκόντες πράττουσιν, ἢ ἀγαθὰ ἢ φαινόμενα ἀγαθά, ἢ ἡδέα ἢ φαινόμενα ἡδέα· τίθημι γὰρ καὶ τὴν τῶν κακῶν ἢ φαινομένων κακῶν ἢ ἀπαλλαγὴν ἢ ἀντὶ μείζονος ἐλάττονος μετάληψιν ἐν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς (αἱρετὰ γάρ πως), καὶ τὴν τῶν λυπηρῶν ἢ φαινομένων ἢ ἀπαλλαγὴν ἢ μετάληψιν ἀντὶ μειζόνων ἐλαττόνων ἐν τοῖς ἡδέσιν ὡσαύτως (1369b21-28).
>
> [A]ll voluntary actions must either be or seem to be either good or pleasant; for I reckon among goods escape from evils or apparent evils and the exchange of a greater evil for a less (since these things are in a sense desirable), and likewise I count among pleasures escape from painful or apparently painful things and the exchange of a greater pain for a less.

Admittedly, Aristotle does not argue that all actions being (apparently) good or pleasant are voluntarily accepted, but only the reverse. We cannot, therefore, in a strong sense deduce from this passage that a tyrant who appears to act good will immediately have his subjects' consent, but only in a weaker sense abduce that it is possible. The subjects are yet significantly better off in a regime where a single ruler appears as a good king rather than acts as a violent tyrant, for his rule will be 'nobler and more enviable' (καλλίω καὶ ζηλωτοτέραν, 1315b5-6). Aristotle, therefore, certainly must maintain that they can assent to the rule of a tyrant who acts in the new way.

'The tyrant who takes this path tries to win his subjects' acquiescence in, if not their active consent to, his rule.' Keyt, however, does not consider consent as the criterion at stake to distinguish the traditional mode from the new one, for he calls the first one the 'Way of Repression' and the second the 'Way of Moderation'.

This way, we have reinforced Bodéüs' suggestion, though this cannot be the final step in the argumentation, for it does not explain why Aristotle considers the preservation of tyranny so important. Bodéüs himself further compares the situation of a king-like tyrant with both a social contract and our modern parliamentary system of a representative democracy.[290] Neither of these comparisons, however, seems to be very well chosen. First, he compares the situation of a king-like tyrant with a social contract between the tyrant and his subjects: the subjects accept that they do not have a share in the power of the tyrant while the tyrant tries to take measures that are in the advantage of his subjects. The concept 'social contract', however, used by modern philosophers as Hobbes or Rousseau, may be misleading to describe this situation, for Aristotle believes that the subjects of this tyrant are deceived rather than that they knowingly assent to his rule. If the subjects would know the true intentions of the tyrant, they would probably suspend their acceptation, which would be the point where the king-like tyrant has to act in the traditional way. Second, Bodéüs compares the situation of a king-like tyrant also with our current democracy: the subjects of a tyrant would abandon their claims to share in the rule of the state, as voters nowadays do when they elect representatives to serve in the parliament. This analogy again is deficient, because the citizens in a parliamentary democracy have the option to (try to) take up a political mandate (as they could run for office as well), whereas such an option is not available to the subjects of the king-like tyrant.

A more significant problem to the notion that a king-like tyrant has to aim for the consent of his subjects is that the character of his tyranny then completely depends on the nature of his subjects. If the latter are easily deceived, the tyrant should only take minimal measures to retain his power, whereas when his subjects are not that easily won over, the tyrant should put more effort in playing his role as king. This means that the consent of the subjects is only a subjective criterion. But if Aristotle prefers the preservation

[290] See R. Bodéüs 'L'attitude paradoxale d'Aristote envers la tyrannie', in C. Steel (ed.), *The Legacy of Aristotle's Political Thought* (Brussels, 1999), pp. 132-35.

of tyranny in this new way above the traditional way – and he clearly does – then it is not sufficiently explained yet why. It is hard to believe that Aristotle would have considered it better just because the subjects think that they are better off in comparison to being a subject of a traditional tyrant. This is not to say that consent is a meaningless explanation, but rather that we still need to find an element that makes it also objectively better.

4.4 The amelioration of tyranny

If it is true that Aristotle argues in *Politics* V.11 that a tyrant can also rule willing subjects, what would be the philosophical point of such a thought? Scholars have often read Aristotle's analysis on the preservation of tyranny as indication that he was not merely interested in just indicating how regimes could be preserved, but also how they could be improved.[291] In that sense, it may serve as another argument against Jaeger's developmental thesis: Aristotle is not only interested in how tyranny is traditionally maintained, as one would expect from an empirical perspective, but also in how it could be ameliorated in bringing it closer to a certain ideal. But then not the willingness of the subjects is at the forefront, but the amelioration of tyranny itself. That is apparently also why Pierre Destrée, in his recent analysis on the improvement of tyranny, indicates that the acceptance of the subjects will only follow when the tyrant imitates the king, rather than that it would be his main goal.[292] The fact that a tyrant improves his rule by taking certain kingly measures could explain why Aristotle also believes that this tyranny would be objectively better, but in that case the consent of the subjects does not seem to play an

[291] See, for instance, C.J. Rowe, 'Aims and Methods in Aristotle's *Politics*', *The Classical Quarterly* 27 (1977), p. 168, or C.H. Kahn, 'The Normative Structure of Aristotle's "Politics"', in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' Politik* (Göttingen, 1990), pp. 383-84.

[292] See P. Destrée, 'Aristotle on Improving Imperfect Cities', in T. Lockwood & T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle's* Politics (Cambridge, 2015), p. 220: 'So even if the tyrant may just play the king, the fact is that his people will benefit from practical measures a real king would have typically done, and they will therefore be much more willing to accept his rule, or at least not willing to foment trouble.'

important role any more. Is there, then, nothing that makes the subjects' consent also objectively better than the lack of it?

The *Politics* itself does not seem to give us any clue why the willingness of the subjects would be in itself an improvement, but we may find a hint of it in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where voluntariness is also taken up in the fifth book in the context of justice. In V.9 Aristotle handles the question whether someone can be voluntarily harmed and distinguishes in this regard 'suffering injustice' (τὸ ἄδικα πάσχειν) from 'being treated unjustly' (ἀδικεῖσθαι): these are not thought to be equivalent, because someone can suffer injustice without being treated unjustly, just as someone can do something unjust without also acting unjustly (1136a23-28, cf. 1135a15-20). This is further said to depend on the wish of the person acted upon, for only if this person does not want something to happen, he or she is also treated unjustly.[293] This is why Aristotle connects suffering injustice and being treated unjustly with different statuses of willingness: 'Then a man may be voluntarily harmed and voluntarily suffer what is unjust, but no one is voluntarily treated unjustly; for no one wishes to be unjustly treated' (βλάπτεται μὲν οὖν τις ἑκὼν καὶ τἄδικα πάσχει, ἀδικεῖται δ' οὐδεὶς ἑκών· οὐδεὶς γὰρ βούλεται, 1136b5-6). What follows in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is obscure and difficult to understand.[294] What seems clear, however, is that Aristotle does not rule out the possibility that someone can voluntarily suffer injustice, though no one will be voluntarily treated unjustly as well. Hence, as soon as you voluntarily accept the actions of someone else, you cannot be truly treated unjustly.

If the difference between τὸ ἄδικα πάσχειν and ἀδικεῖσθαι could indeed point to a difference between being acted upon voluntarily and involuntarily, can we read it also in relation to tyranny? Aristotle does not explicitly give us any confirmation, but it seems possible to do so. When a tyrant rules willing subjects, he also makes his rule objectively better, for his subjects will still

[293] This idea refers back to *Nicomachean Ethics* III.8 (1135b19-24), where Aristotle indicates that a man who acts with knowledge but not after deliberation is only acting unjustly, without being unjust himself. The latter is only the case when he acts from choice, which will make him an unjust and vicious man as well.
[294] See S. Broadie & C.J. Rowe, *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 2002), p. 353.

suffer injustice – after all, tyranny remains a deviant regime – though they are not being treated unjustly any more. In playing the role of the king, the tyrant deceives his subjects, but with his actions he could gain their consent, which is why he lessens the injustice of his rule. In the new way to preserve a tyranny in *Politics* V.11, Aristotle indeed says that this tyrant should make sure that his subjects do not fall victim to 'being treated unjustly' (ἀδικεῖσθαι, 1315a35). But such a tyrant is no king, for only the latter acts justly in order that his subjects 'suffer no injustice' (μηθὲν ἄδικον πάσχωσιν, 1311a1). In that sense, a tyrant who rules willing subjects is acting unjustly without also treating his subjects that way. This is in contrast to the subjects of a traditional tyrant, who receive an unjust treatment in every respect. When comparing the new and traditional way to preserve a tyranny, we can see, thus, that the former is an improvement on the latter with regard to the injustice towards the ruled. The consent of the subjects does not make a tyranny just, but may nonetheless make it less unjust than one without any consent.[295]

We can see now how Aristotle's ideas on the preservation of tyranny may be read along the same lines as the exception of kingship: both the regime of a god-like king and the one of a king-like tyrant is a regime that does not know alternation of rule or subjection to the laws, as Aristotle would generally see fit in a political community. Yet it is also, or even mainly, with regard to justice that both theoretical regimes are discussed in the *Politics*: the absolute kingship is an ideal that serves as an exceptionally justified kingship, discussed for the sake of the ruler; the preservation of tyranny in the new way is a striving for this ideal that is less unjust than traditional tyranny, though now discussed for the sake of the ruled. What both regimes nonetheless have in common is that they are, and remain, non-political.

[295] This may then serve as a more balanced perspective on this new way to preserve a tyranny than the one from Peter Simpson, who argues that such a tyrant's rule 'being over unwilling and equal or superior subjects, is still fundamentally unjust', see P.L.P. Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the* Politics *of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), p. 415. A similar distinction between the consent of the ruled and the justice of a monarchy is given in D.J. Riesbeck, *Aristotle on Political Community* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 239-48.

If a tyrant ruling willing subjects is an original idea in the *Politics*, the final question, then, will be how this idea relates to the work of his predecessors, and especially Plato.[296] Although there are many correspondences between both thinkers, we could once again argue that Aristotle really distinguishes himself from his former master with this new way to preserve a tyranny. Plato describes in the eighth and ninth book of the *Republic* the emergence of tyranny and the psychology of a tyrant. Remarkable is that a tyrant does not appear as a cruel and harsh ruler at the beginning of his reign. In *Republic* IX, Socrates rhetorically asks Glaucon the following:

> Ἆρ' οὖν, εἶπον, οὐ ταῖς μὲν πρώταις ἡμέραις τε καὶ χρόνῳ προσγελᾷ τε καὶ ἀσπάζεται πάντας, ᾧ ἂν περιτυγχάνῃ, καὶ οὔτε τύραννός φησιν εἶναι ὑπισχνεῖταί τε πολλὰ καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ, χρεῶν τε ἠλευθέρωσεν καὶ γῆν διένειμεν δήμῳ τε καὶ τοῖς περὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ πᾶσιν ἵλεώς τε καὶ πρᾶος εἶναι προσποιεῖται (566d-e);
>
> During the first days of his reign and for some time after, will he not smile in welcome at anyone he meets, saying that he is no tyrant, making all sorts of promises both in public and in private, freeing the people from debt, redistributing the land to them and to his followers, and pretending to be gracious and gentle and all?[297]

It is only afterwards, when a tyrant has a good grip on power, that his true nature will rise to the surface. Hence, according to Plato, a tyrant can conceal his tyrannical character, which is explicitly indicated later when Socrates tells us that someone can only judge a tyrant truly 'when he is stripped of his theatrical façade' (ἂν ὀφθείη τῆς τραγικῆς σκευῆς, 577b). On the basis of these remarks, Panos Christodoulou has pointed out that Plato also used the idea of a tyrant playing a theatrical role, just as Aristotle's deceitful tyrant from the *Politics*, who 'acts in the character of the king' (ὑποκρινόμενον τὸν βασιλικόν, 1314a40); Christodoulou nevertheless admits that there is a difference between

[296] A comparison with Xenophon's *Hieron* or Isocrates' *To Nicocles* is of less philosophical importance, but may be found in S. Gastaldi, 'La tirannide nella *Politica* di Aristotele', in S. Gastaldi & J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran* (Sankt Augustin, 2009), pp. 151-52. Aristotle may have been influenced by these pieces through the concrete descriptions of measures to ameliorate the rule of a monarch, but differs from his older contemporaries in so far as he strongly connects the rule of a king-like tyrant with mere pretense, see D. Keyt, *Aristotle*. *Politics Books V and VI* (Oxford, 1999), p. 146.

[297] Translation from G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C. Reeve, taken up in J.M. Cooper & D.S. Hutchinson (eds.), *Plato. Complete Works* (Indianapolis, 1997).

Plato's and Aristotle's tyrant: the former will stop playing his role when he has his power secured, whereas the latter may also continue his deceit.[298] We could now see how this is exactly the reason why Plato's description of a tyrant is only in agreement with Aristotle's traditional way of preserving a tyranny. In the key passage from *Politics* V.4 it is indeed pointed out that someone who deceives first and afterwards rules through force – the *modus operandi* of Plato's tyrant in *Republic* IX (573e-74b) – does not rule willing subjects in the end. That is why many of Aristotle's listed measures to maintain tyranny in the traditional way, such as killing citizens (1313a40-41), impoverishing the people (1313b18-21), or constantly waging war (1313b28-29), also occur in Plato's *Republic* VIII (566e-67a). Although Aristotle's analysis of the traditional way contains many historical examples, he actually seems to have adopted most ideas from his former master.[299] But additionally, Aristotle also pays attention to a tyrant who successfully continues his deception, through which he maintains to hold the consent of his subjects.

Once more, and now for the very last time, we can illustrate this with an animal metaphor. Plato indicates in *Republic* VIII (565d-66a) how a democratic leader degenerates into a tyrant: by eating human flesh, he turns into a wolf. The comparison between a wolf and a tyrant was common in ancient Greek literature, and Plato seems to have used it several times.[300] A tyrant is, just as a wolf, a wild and violent creature, only interested in his own desires and hostile to everyone who stands in his way. Aristotle, on the one hand, seems to follow this connection between the tyrant and a wild beast. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.1 he presents 'brutishness' (θηριότης, 1145a17), the characteristic attitude of a wild beast, as the opposite of superhuman

[298] See P. Christodoulou, 'Le tyran dans le rôle du roi', in S. Gastaldi & J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran* (Sankt Augustin, 2009), pp. 160-61 and p. 166: 'Pourtant, l'analyse d'Aristote se différencie de celle de Platon sur un point essentiel: le Stagirite ne distingue pas deux temps du processus tyrannique, deux moments dans le comportement du tyran. L'idée essentielle d'Aristote est que, même après avoir obtenu le pouvoir dans la cité, le tyran peut continuer de jouer le rôle du bon roi, du bon chef.'

[299] See E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), p. 577.

[300] See C. Arruzza, 'The Lion and the Wolf', *Ancient Philosophy* 38 (2018), p. 54. Cinzia Arruzza points to both the *Phaedo* (82a) and the *Laws* (906d), although in the latter work Plato only applies the metaphor of the wolf to a criminal and an unjust man.

excellence. Since we may regard the latter as the virtue of the absolute king, we can consider this brutishness as a characteristic of a true tyrant. Although Aristotle does not say much more on this brutishness, he does indeed connect it further in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.5 (1148b19-24 and 49a12-15) with eating humans, as allegedly was done by the tyrant Phalaris of Acragas.[301] In that respect, he seems to acknowledge Plato's picture of the tyrant as a violent beast. Yet, on the other hand, Aristotle also uses the word τύραννος in his *History of Animals* as the name for the golden-crested wren, which he describes as 'a charming and graceful little bird' (εὔχαρι τὸ ὀρνίθιον καὶ εὔρυθμον, 592b23-25). Of course, we should not suppose that Aristotle invented the name of this bird.[302] But this positive picture of a 'tyrant' could serve as the metaphor of how Aristotle, unlike Plato, took into account the possibility, small as it may be as the bird itself, that the tyrant's behavior could be ameliorated. The tyrant, then, is no longer represented by the violence of the wolf's teeth, but by the (deceitful) charm of the goldcrest's song.

The reason that Aristotle has enlarged Plato's analysis of tyranny may be that he does not agree in the end with the vast contrast that Plato sketches between a king and a tyrant. In *Republic* IX (576d-e) Plato states that the opposition between kingship and tyranny is the largest among any of the regimes, a thought that Aristotle adopts in *Politics* IV.2 (1289a39-b3). But in *Politics* V.10-11, he adds another perspective in order to show that a tyrant can be very similar to a king, in so far as both could rule willing subjects. Since the consent of the subjects must be understood as a good demarcation criterion between kingship and tyranny, as we have indicated earlier, Aristotle then shows how tyranny in the end may approximate kingship. In this respect, he

[301] This connection between brutishness and the tyranny of Phalaris is also noted in D. Keyt, *Aristotle. Politics Books V and VI* (Oxford, 1999), p. 145. Phalaris was known, especially via Pindar (*Pythian* I.95-98), as a cruel and violent ruler that burned people alive in a bronze bull, see H. Berve, *Die Tyrannis bei den Griechen*, vol. I (Munich, 1967), pp. 130-31. Aristotle mentions him also in *Politics* V.10 (1310b28) and *Rhetoric* II.20 (1393b9-11), but in a more neutral sense explaining how he came to power and how he received a bodyguard.

[302] A reason to believe that he did is the fact that the goldcrest, or firecrest, seems to have been more commonly known as βασιλίσκος, and not, as in Aristotle's *History of Animals*, as τύραννος, see J. Pollard, *Birds in Greek Life and Myth* (London, 1977), p. 37.

did not change his mind on tyranny in the fifth book of the *Politics* in reference to the fourth, but merely extended his thought.

4.5 Two possible objections

To conclude this chapter, we can again look for possible counterarguments. We will take two of them into account: (1) it does not seem at first sight that Aristotle is as original as above argued with his presentation of an ameliorated tyranny, for Plato as well puts tyranny in a positive daylight in a curious passage from the fourth book of the *Laws.* (2) If Aristotle truly believes that a tyrant can gain the consent of his subjects and he simultaneously takes this consent as the demarcation criterion between kingship and tyranny, it seems that he is simply arguing that a tyrant has, or at least could, become a king. Let us deal with these two arguments one after another.

The positive picture of the king-like tyrant in *Politics* V.11 adjusts the generally negative image of tyranny elsewhere in the *Politics* as well as in Plato's *Republic* or *Statesman*. In Plato's *Laws*, however, tyranny appears once as a kind of rule that likewise does not seem to be the worst regime any more. In the fourth book, the Cretan Clinias and the Athenian visitor are trying to find an ideal starting point for a lawgiver to establish the best possible constitution. The Athenian suddenly comes up with a conspicuous suggestion when he presents what this lawgiver would wish for:

> ΑΘ. Τόδε· "Τυραννουμένην μοι δότε τὴν πόλιν," φήσει· "τύραννος δ' ἔστω νέος καὶ μνήμων καὶ εὐμαθὴς καὶ ἀνδρεῖος καὶ μεγαλοπρεπὴς φύσει· ὃ δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν ἐλέγομεν δεῖν ἕπεσθαι σύμπασιν τοῖς τῆς ἀρετῆς μέρεσι, καὶ νῦν τῇ τυραννουμένῃ ψυχῇ τοῦτο συνεπέσθω, ἐὰν μέλλῃ τῶν ἄλλων ὑπαρχόντων ὄφελος εἶναί τι" (709e-10a).
>
> ATHENIAN: Then this is what he'll say: "Give me a state under the absolute control of a tyrant, and let the tyrant be young, with the good memory, quick to learn courageous, and with a character of natural elevation. And if his other abilities are going to be any use, his tyrannical soul should also possess that quality which was earlier agreed to be an essential adjunct to all the parts of virtue".[303]

[303] Translation, though slightly adapted, from Trevor Saunders in J.M. Cooper & D.S. Hutchinson (eds.), *Plato. Complete Works* (Indianapolis, 1997). Saunders translates τύραννος

Plato presents a tyrant here not as the prototype of a bad and base man, as he does in the *Republic*, but as a young and promising ruler. The latter is only the case when he meets certain criteria that are listed as required characteristics to make him a virtuous ruler. And yet, this ruler is not considered to be a king, as one would expect, for Plato explicitly and repeatedly portrays him as a tyrant. When Clinias afterwards tries to summarize the viewpoint of the Athenian visitor, he still calls him a 'well-behaved tyrant' (τύραννος κόσμιος, 710d). This picture of a decent tyrant is a remarkable passage in Plato's political philosophy that does not seem to correspond very well with Plato's general disapproval of tyranny.[304] Nonetheless, it seems to present a strongly similar picture as Aristotle's king-like tyrant in *Politics* V.11: both tyrants appear to behave well and seem to walk the path of virtue.[305] But if that is true, then Aristotle's analysis of the second mode to preserve tyranny is not as original as we indicated, for it is very similar to Plato's picture.

There are, however, two fundamental differences between Aristotle's king-like tyrant and Plato's wished-for tyrant. A first difference is that Aristotle's tyrant only becomes virtuous, or half-decent, through his actions in imitating kingship, whereas Plato's tyrant is already supposed to be a good man: he is described as 'young, restrained, quick to learn, with a retentive memory, courageous, and elevated' (νέος, σώφρων, εὐμαθής, μνήμων, ἀνδρεῖος, μεγαλοπρεπής, 710c). Plato, therefore, did not present this positive picture of a tyrant as a consequence of his good behavior, as Aristotle did, but rather as the starting point of something else. This brings us to the second difference: Aristotle's analysis in *Politics* V.11 serves as a survey of how to preserve monarchy, whereas Plato uses the image of a tyrant in *Laws* IV as point of departure to bring about a regime that is considered best. The exact

and τυραννουμένη as 'dictator' and 'dictatorial', but I deem it better to stick with the Greek notions of 'tyrant' and 'tyrannical', as we did elsewhere.

[304] Malcolm Schofield, for instance, considers this passage and its reference to tyranny as 'disconcerting', see M. Schofield, *Plato. Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2006), p. 184.

[305] Aristotle may even allude to Plato's image of the τύραννος κόσμιος when he indicates in *Politics* V.11 that the king-like tyrant 'must furnish and *adorn* the city as if he were a steward' (κατασκευάζειν δεῖ καὶ κοσμεῖν τὴν πόλιν ὡς ἐπίτροπον ὄντα, 1314b37-38).

constitutional status of this new regime remains vague, but Clinias does not hesitate to mention that it could hardly be a tyranny (712c). The reason why tyranny is then taken as the starting point to establish the new regime is not because tyranny itself is a good regime nor because Plato believes it could be ameliorated, but because it is the most efficient start to achieve this regime. At various occasions, Plato indicates that where the number of unrestricted rulers is the smallest, as in a tyranny, the situation occurs for a lawgiver to bring about a new regime in the quickest and easiest way (710b, 710d, and 711a). Plato, hence, does not present tyranny as a regime that could or should be preserved, but only as a useful tool to create the best constitution. In that sense, he does the opposite of Aristotle: he does not focus on the maintenance of tyranny, but on its quick reform.[306] We may, therefore, disregard the first counterargument, for Aristotle's analysis of the king-like tyrant remains an original contribution that differs from Plato's account of tyranny.

The second possible counterargument does not relate to Plato's thought any more, though it could be understood by making a reference to him: if Aristotle believed that tyranny and kingship do not necessarily differ as much as Plato thought, is there, then, eventually still a difference between king and tyrant? After all, if a tyrant acts like a king and rules over willing subjects, why would his reign not become a kingship? Some scholars have argued that this is indeed what happens with a tyrant who imitates kingly behavior.[307] It is true that Aristotle believes and explains in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.1-2 (1103a34-b2 or 1104a33-b3) that someone becomes virtuous by performing virtuous acts. Although Aristotle admits at the end of *Politics* V.11 that a deceitful tyrant becomes (half-)virtuous as well, this does not imply that the tyrant also

[306] This difference between Plato and Aristotle is also noted in H. Berve, *Die Tyrannis bei den Griechen*, vol. I (Munich, 1967), p. 367, and E. Schütrumpf & H.-J. Gehrke, *Aristoteles. Politik Buch IV-VI* (Berlin, 1996), p. 576. Both authors point to Plato's *Eight Letter* (354a-c), where it is argued that a tyrant should change his rule into a kingship by subjecting himself to laws. One may question Plato's authorship, but this point as such agrees very well with the project of the *Laws* in general, and especially with the description in the fourth book of a decent tyrant who should cooperate with, if not subject himself to, the lawgiver.

[307] See M.P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen* (Totowa, 1992), p. 108, or R. Boesche, 'Aristotle's 'Science' of Tyranny', *History of Political Thought* 14 (1993), p. 22.

becomes a king. If that would be the case, the whole argumentation in that chapter would be a rhetorical veil, for it would be an analysis on how to reform a regime rather than to preserve one. But what is the difference, then, between a king and his tyrannical imitator?

The difference between a true king and a deceitful tyrant is not his moral character but his reason to rule. David Keyt seems right in saying that a king-like tyrant still differs from a true king through his motivation: he ultimately wants to retain power.[308] Although the actions of a king and an imitative tyrant could be identical, the reason why they perform these is still different. The purpose of a true king is the common advantage, but in the eyes of a king-like tyrant this is only a means to achieve his own interest. Aristotle indicates that a deceitful tyrant should present himself as the safeguard of common rather than private things (ὡς κοινῶν ἀλλὰ μὴ ὡς ἰδίων, 1314b17-18). But this is mere pose, for the only thing that he eventually cares for is his own interest. This is why Aristotle indicates the following in *Politics* V.10: 'Tyranny, as has often been said, looks to nothing common, *unless* it is for the sake of private benefit' (ἡ δὲ τυραννίς, ὥσπερ εἴρηται πολλάκις, πρὸς οὐδὲν ἀποβλέπει κοινόν, εἰ μὴ τῆς ἰδίας ὠφελείας χάριν, 1311a2-4). This implies that a tyrant always rules in his own interest, even when he presents himself, like a king-like tyrant, as someone who rules in the interest of his subjects.

The mixed categories of the barbarian monarchy and the αἰσυμνητεία are, as was indicated before, regimes with despotic rule too. The distinction made in the first chapter between the common advantage as aim of kingship and the private advantage as aim of tyranny thus still stands, but here anew, just as with the willingness of the subjects, with a certain nuance: since every monarchy that aims to the common advantage is a kingship, it implies that every tyranny aims to the private advantage, though not *vice versa*. In other words, the private

[308] Keyt gives the example of honesty: a true king would act honestly because he is an honest man; a king-like tyrant would act honestly because he believes that this is the best policy to stay in power, see D. Keyt, *Aristotle. Politics Books V and VI* (Oxford, 1999), p. 177. That the aim of a tyrant is indeed to retain his power, was evident already from *Politics* V.11 (1314a36), where Aristotle says that a tyrant should always guard his δύναμις. Even more straightforward is *Rhetoric* I.8 (1366a6), where the goal of tyranny is said to be its 'preservation' (φυλακή).

advantage is a necessary condition for tyranny.[309] By using the willingness of the subjects, a tyranny can appear as and even approximate kingship, but the private interest is what still distinguishes the tyrant from becoming a king. This is why the difference between king and tyrant may still be maintained in Aristotle's analysis on the preservation of tyranny.

Of course, this does not mean that tyranny *must* be maintained, so we still have to go a step further in arguing against the second counterargument, and also positively refute the argumentation of the scholars who believe that the king-like tyrant becomes a king. To start with, Mary Nichols believes that Aristotle argued in *Politics* V.11 that kingships can only be preserved by making them more moderate, as political regimes, and that the second way to preserve tyranny must be understood along the same lines.[310] This would imply that Aristotle is arguing for the reform of tyranny into a moderate kingship, and thus indirectly into a political regime. Moderation is certainly the aim of the preservation of kingship (1313a18-20), and Aristotle points two times to the importance of moderation (μετριάζειν τοῖς τοιούτοις in 1314b33 and τὰς μετριότητας τοῦ βίου διώκειν in 1315b2-3) in his analysis of the new way to preserve a tyranny. The way to make a kingship more moderate is by diminishing its power through the subjection to the laws.[311] Something similar, then, may be seen in the new way to preserve a tyranny.

In *Politics* V.12, Aristotle gives examples of the few tyrannies that were long-lived, and there indeed he indicates that the one from Orthagoras and his

[309] Despotic rule as rule to the private advantage cannot be a sufficient condition for tyranny, as was the unwillingness of the subjects, for the mixed categories of monarchy were considered to be kingships as well. One anonymous reviewer argued that this counterexample only implies that despotic rule in a monarchy cannot be a sufficient condition for non-kingships. Although strictly speaking he/she is correct, a monarchy that is not a kingship can only be a tyranny, which then boils down to the same thing. If not, it would lead to the unwelcome consequence that despotic rule in a monarchy is a sufficient condition for either tyranny *or* kingship, which seems to become a pointless statement in distinguishing tyranny from kingship.

[310] See M.P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen* (Totowa, 1992), p. 106: 'Kingships are preserved, in others words, to the extent they become less like overall kingships and more like polities. […] Similarly, when he [sc. Aristotle] advises tyrants how to preserve their rule, he advises them to be more like kings, indeed, more like statesmen.'

[311] Aristotle gives the example of the Spartan kingship in *Politics* V.10 (1313a25-33) as one that was preserved through moderation. In III.14, he calls this Spartan kingship one that is 'particularly representative of kingships based on law' (μάλιστα τῶν κατὰ νόμον, 1285a4).

sons in Sicyon lasted hundred years, because 'they treated their subjects with moderation and to a great extent made themselves slaves to the laws' (τοῖς ἀρχομένοις ἐχρῶντο μετρίως καὶ πολλὰ τοῖς νόμοις ἐδούλευον, 1315b15-16). Similarly, Roger Boesche argues that Aristotle may have had Pisistratus in mind when he spoke of the new way to preserve a tyranny, for the rule of the Athenian tyrant is pictured in remarkably positive terms in the *Constitution of the Athenians*.[312] But if moderation of power is essential to the new way to preserve a tyranny, as it is to the preservation of kingship, then it may have been not the consent of the subjects but rather the subjection to a higher authority that would be important in *Politics* V.11. That would imply that such a tyranny should be made κατὰ νόμον, which was a kingly characteristic too of the barbarian monarchy and the αἰσυμνητεία.

Both Nichols and Boesche, however, founded their views on assumptions that we already dismissed (implicitly). Let us first refute Nichols' view that tyranny should be made more moderately by making it more kingly. Although she seems correct in assuming that real and actual kingships (in contradistinction with the παμβασιλεία) could only be preserved by making them more politically, she seems incorrect in applying the same thought to tyranny. A submission to the laws does not seem to be a necessary requirement of the new way to preserve a tyranny, for a king-like tyrant is given the explicit instruction to retain power at all costs. Aristotle explains in his chapter on the preservation of monarchies how the δύναμις of a king should be diminished (1313a28-30), whereas, as was indicated before, it should be safeguarded in a tyranny (1314a33-37). This is why a tyrant can allow himself to imitate the good behavior of a king, for he may always switch to the measures of a traditional tyrant when his deception fails, as it is *he* who has authority over the city (κύριος ὢν τῆς πόλεως, 1314b8-9). The reason, on the one hand, why Aristotle stresses the moderation of a king-like tyrant does not concern his

[312] See R. Boesche, 'Aristotle's 'Science' of Tyranny', *History of Political Thought* 14 (1993), p. 22. The *Constitution of the Athenians* indicates twice that Pisistratus' rule was 'more political than tyrannical' (μᾶλλον πολιτικῶς ἢ τυραννικῶς, 14.3 and 16.2) and that he held power long because he was accustomed 'to observe the laws, without giving himself any exceptional privileges' (διοικεῖν κατὰ τοὺς νόμους, οὐδεμίαν ἑαυτῷ πλεονεξίαν διδούς 16.8).

power, but the way he should act and live. The reason, on the other hand, why tyrants as the Orthagorids observed the laws is less straightforward, but it seems that they and other king-like tyrants could do that in order to give additional proof of their apparently good intentions, which could be another impulse to voluntarily accept the tyrant's rule.[313]

The view from Boesche that Aristotle had Pisistratus in mind when he spoke of the king-like tyrant presupposes that the idea neatly corresponds to a historical ruler, which we already turned down when we investigated whether Aristotle's analysis was meant as a description of Hermias of Atarneus. Once again, the new way to preserve a tyranny is meant as a philosophical analysis, and not as a historical description. Though, that as such does not exclude the possibility that Aristotle considered at least some of these measures as executed by certain historical tyrants. In the *Constitution of the Athenians* (16.2), Pisistratus' rule is described as 'temperate' (μετρίως) and he himself as 'humane, mild, and ready to forgive those who offended' (φιλάνθρωπος ἦν καὶ πρᾷος καὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι συγγνωμονικός).[314] This general attitude and certain of his policy acts agree very well with what Aristotle describes in his *Politics* as the measures of a king-like tyrant.[315]

Yet the historical case of Pisistratus in the *Constitution of the Athenians* does not only apply to the new way to preserve a tyranny, for the disarmament of the people (15.3-4) and the engagement to make them occupied with their daily work (16.3) are measures that Aristotle designates to a traditional tyrant (1313b18-21). That is why Pisistratus himself is probably best understood as a mixture of traditional and king-like tyrant. This seems in line with the

[313] The only explicit reference to laws in Aristotle's analysis of the new mode to preserve a tyranny seems to be the utterance that men are less afraid of being treated 'in some respect contrary to law' (τι παράνομον, 1314b40) when a ruler acts with respect to the gods. This is thus in accordance with the interpretation that a tyrant should not necessarily rule κατὰ νόμον.
[314] Translations from the *Constitution of the Athenians* are taken from F.G. Kenyon in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. II (Princeton, 1984).
[315] The best example is probably that Pisistratus is said to held power long, because he had the support of both the upper and the lower class. In the *Constitution of the Athenians* (16.2 and 16.9) it is indicated that he aided them both financially. Likewise, in *Politics* V.11 Aristotle says that a king-like tyrant should first and foremost focus on the common funds (1314a40-b7), and last but not least deal with both the rich and the poor (1315b31-40).

Constitution of the Athenians, where it is indicated that Pisistratus' aim was that his subjects 'might have neither the wish nor the time to attend to public affairs' (μήτ' ἐπιθυμῶσι μήτε σχολάζω[σι]ν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῶν κοινῶν, 16.3-4). Pisistratus, thus, made sure that his subjects did not wish to rise against him, but also arranged it that they could not even do it, which combines the aim of a king-like and a traditional tyrant.

If Pisistratus' reign only partly agrees with Aristotle's philosophical analysis of the king-like tyrant, we may ask ourselves how Aristotle would categorize his rule, just as we did with Alexander the Great and the Macedonian monarchy in the second chapter. Since Pisistratus is regarded as a τύραννος, Aristotle's conception of the true tyranny comes to mind first, but this (third) category of tyranny is problematic. As Pisistratus is portrayed to have ruled benevolently, it certainly does not hold true that no one would have willingly tolerated his rule. Moreover, Pisistratus is not the best example of someone who was unaccountable, for Aristotle indicates in *Politics* V.12 (1315b21-22) that the Athenian tyrant was summoned before the court at the Areopagus and also showed up to defend himself.

Although Aristotle never explicitly says so, it seems better to understand Pisistratus, therefore, as a ruler similar to an αἰσυμνήτης, as Pittacus of Mytilene. The fact that Pisistratus, according to the *Constitution of the Athenians* (16.8), observed the laws and did not grant himself exceptional privileges at least agrees more with this restricted category than with the unlimited variant of true tyranny.[316] That might explain the positive portrayal of Pisistratus' rule in the *Constitution of the Athenians*, certainly in reference to the rule of his sons, who succeeded Pisistratus but made the tyranny 'much harsher' (πολλῷ τραχυτέραν, 16.8 or 19.1). Admittedly, Pisistratus does not entirely fit the conception of the αἰσυμνητεία, for Aristotle calls it an 'elective tyranny' (αἱρετὴ τυραννίς, 1235a31-32 and b26) in his *Politics*, while the

[316] It is not entirely true that Pisistratus did not ask for privileges, as he requested a (small) bodyguard, which Aristotle recognizes in both the *Rhetoric* (1257b31-33) and the *Constitution of the Athenians* (14.1-2). Such a request, however, does not contradict the assumption of Pisistratus' rule being an αἰσυμνητεία, for in *Politics* III.15 (1286b37-39) Aristotle indicates that in ancient times an αἰσυμνήτης received such a bodyguard as well.

Athenian tyrant is said to have 'made himself tyrant' (τύραννος κατέστη, 22.4) in the *Constitution of the Athenians*. Nevertheless, the use of various tyrannical categories for the rule of Pisistratus and his sons may help us to understand Aristotle's observation in *Politics* V.10 (1312b21-23) that most tyrants who acquired the office could retain it, while the ones who inherited it soon lost it. If this is true, we could also posit an evolution within tyrannical dynasties such as the Pisistratids from the one category to the other: founding father Pisistratus may still have been a rather moderate monarch, as an αἰσυμνήτης, but the rule of his successors soon fell into decay through their despotism. In that sense, we could see the opposite evolution as within kingship: not a reduction of power from the heroic kingship to the generalship for life, but an expansion of power from the αἰσυμνητεία to a real tyranny.

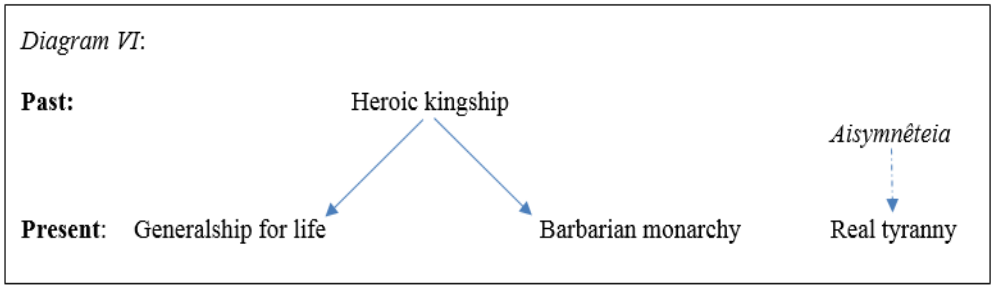
Conclusion

In this dissertation, we investigated the problem of monarchy in Aristotle's political thought. Although kingship and tyranny are presented as essential parts of a classical model of regimes, there is good reason to believe that they simultaneously occupy a peculiar position in that model. When we looked into all the subcategories of kingship and tyranny, various criteria were used that are not, or not as explicitly, applied in distinguishing all the other regimes: monarchies are not either kingships or tyrannies, but may have characteristics of both; they are not only found in Greek city-states, but in barbarian nations as well; they are not only characterized by the aim of the ruler, but by the consent of the subjects too; and they are not merely elective, but (and more often) hereditary as well. All these characteristics suggest that kingship and tyranny may be presented as different regimes in comparison to the other four from the sixfold model. And indeed, this is the case in a threefold respect: within kingship and tyranny, power is not distributed among many rulers, neither do they take turns, nor is their rule always subjected to a higher authority as the law. Instead, the power within monarchies is undivided, permanent, and unrestricted. But if this is Aristotle's general conviction, then it is strange that he also puts so much emphasis on both the exception of absolute kingship and the preservation of tyranny.

We argued that this peculiar position of monarchy cannot be explained as a reference to the historical kings and tyrants that Aristotle knew during his life. Alexander the Great, on the one hand, does not correspond to the picture that Aristotle presents of the god-like ruler who earns the absolute kingship, for the Macedonian king lacks the characteristics of this category. It seems likely, therefore, that Aristotle urged Alexander in his *On Kingship* to another

category of kingship, namely the far more moderate generalship for life. Hermias of Atarneus, on the other hand, does not fit Aristotle's analysis of an ameliorated tyranny very well either, not because he lacks the characteristics of a king-like tyrant, but, on the contrary, because Aristotle seems to have held him in too high esteem. We can see, then, how the mere categorization of kingship and tyranny as such must be distinguished from the philosophical use of these categories in certain arguments and analyses.

This does not mean that the categorization of kingship and tyranny is of little utility. Quite the opposite, the various categories of monarchy that Aristotle distinguishes enable us to display an evolution within a given monarchy, as well as to ascribe various degrees of power to different circumstances. Although Aristotle generally focusses on the city-state and its participatory rule, we could use his categories of monarchy to find out how he thought about monarchy from the past and how he hoped it to develop in the future. In that respect, these various categories from past and present may be combined to look into a historical monarchy, both vertically and horizontally. The following diagram may help to show these connections:



Except for the absolute kingship, all the other categories of monarchy seem attested in history: some of these categories may still be found in the present (generalship for life, barbarian monarchy, or real tyranny), while others only occurred in the archaic (αἰσυμνητεία) or even mythical past (heroic kingship). Aristotle nevertheless did not consider these categories as unrelated items, for a historical monarchy could be assigned to various categories. A vertical (or diagonal) perspective could show how the Macedonian monarchy evolved

from a heroic kingship into a barbarian monarchy. Similarly, although less certain (hence the dashed line), Pisistratus may be regarded as a Greek dictator but his sons as true tyrants. A horizontal perspective could show how the rule of the Macedonian king could simultaneously be a justified monarchy over both Greeks and barbarians by applying two different categories for each group, the generalship for life and the barbarian monarchy respectively. Hence, Aristotle's categorization of one-man rule is not just an enumeration of various exclusive species of a certain genus, but a refined model to elucidate and evaluate the reign of historical monarchs.

Since Aristotle's connections with actual monarchs do not seem to have anything to do with his analyses of the exception of absolute kingship or of the preservation of tyranny, we looked for a philosophical explanation for their occurrence in Aristotle's political thought. This explanation was sought in the relation to the political thought of Plato, for many of Aristotle's ideas on monarchy may be seen as views that are either in agreement with or reactions against Plato. The agreement between the two authors consists in the fact that both philosophers offer a general scheme of six regimes, wherein kingship and tyranny are taken up. They also agree that kingship may be placed at the top of a hierarchy and tyranny at the bottom. But Aristotle also disagrees with Plato on three points: he denies monarchies a constitutional status, he distinguishes political from non-political kinds of rule, and he criticizes kingship extensively and sometimes speaks highly of tyranny as well. A meaningful explanation of Aristotle's peculiar analysis of monarchy, therefore, needs to take up these correspondences and differences.

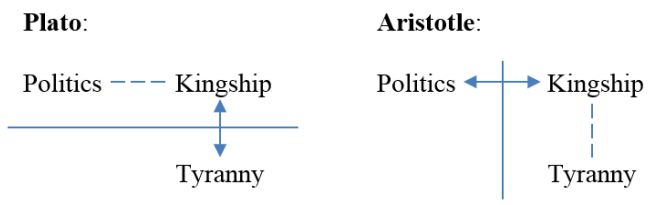
Aristotle argues, on the one hand, that kingship could be exceptionally justified when a certain god-like individual would appear with all the required but preeminent characteristics that make him an absolutely perfect ruler. Only in that theoretical circumstance, he would be allowed to rule as a permanent king not restricted by any laws. This corresponds with the picture that Plato displays of his ideal ruler, although Aristotle does not any longer seem to believe that these rulers should be philosophers. But neither does he seem to

argue that philosophers do not have any place in politics, for they might still be seen as lawgivers. What does seem to be Aristotle's point in bringing up the exception of kingship several times is that such a kind of rule would be, although justified, not any longer a political kind of rule. That does not mean that kingship as such has no place in an investigation on politics, but that the absolute kingship transcends the standard kind of rule in a political community. In that regard, Aristotle strongly differs from Plato. The latter seems to focus in his political thought on the requirements for a good ruler, for Plato believes that it must be someone with true knowledge about how to rule well. Since Plato considers his ideal statesman to be rare, he presents the best possible ruler as a king. It is only because such a ruler is hard to find in reality, that Plato looks at other possibilities as well as second best options, thus from a top-down perspective. Aristotle, however, seems to focus on the requirements for good rule, for he thinks that statesmanship depends on certain requisites as the alternation of rule or the subjection to the laws. This general standard of shared and restricted rule may only be abandoned when a rare individual as a true king would appear, thus from a bottom-up perspective.

Aristotle also argues, on the other hand, that tyranny is a regime that can be preserved by giving it the appearance of a kingship. This way of preserving a tyranny should be distinguished from a traditional way where a tyrant acts as a true despot that prevents his subjects from plotting against him by using force. The king-like tyrant should not really become a king and give up his power, but remain a tyrant in deceiving his subjects that he is indeed a king. In showing such behavior, he will nevertheless be able to approximate kingship, for he will gain the consent of the subjects, which is a necessary condition for kingship. This analysis, anew, is partly based on the thought of Plato, who recognizes that a tyrant could both deceive and force his subjects. But in the end, Plato believes that the theatrical façade of the tyrant will always pass into the use of violence. Aristotle, however, believes that a tyrant could continue his deceit, which will make his rule not only longer-lasting but better as well. As the king-like tyrant acts like a king, he will still rule willing subjects, though his

motivation to act this way is only to remain in power. The absolute contrast that Plato sketches between kingship and tyranny is thus softened by Aristotle as a gradual difference between two resembling regimes. Here again, the focus on the consent of the subjects is not a characteristic of the ruler himself, but a requirement for good rule that Aristotle apparently brings forward only in relation to monarchy. We can schematically sum up these differences between Plato and Aristotle in the following diagram:

Diagram VII:



If we consider the place of kingship and tyranny in politics according to Plato and Aristotle, then both philosophers seem to have used a similar model, with the same result as outcome: they both present kingship as the best regime and tyranny as the worst. But Plato strongly connects politics with kingship (the horizontal dashed line), and sharply distinguishes this from tyranny (the vertical double arrow). Aristotle, on the contrary, seems to split good versions of political rule from those where a king rules (the horizontal double arrow), and argues that, at least in practice, kingship and tyranny do not need to differ strongly from each other (the vertical dashed line).

As the various counterarguments at the end of the last two chapters show, these conclusions do not form the only possible interpretation of Aristotle's analysis of monarchy. Since Aristotle himself does not formulate the ideas that we attributed to him as explicitly as we may have wished for, we should remain humble in considering them only as hypotheses that have a certain probability. Nevertheless, I believe that they serve as the best answer to the problem of monarchy that we presented in the first chapter of this dissertation. As a

consequence, these conclusions reveal how monarchy not only occupies a peculiar place in Aristotle's political thought, but that this peculiar place is exactly what Aristotle is arguing for: monarchies differ from political regimes and thus, in a certain sense, are situated beyond the scope of politics. Such a difference would probably be a hard nut to crack for anyone who wishes to present Aristotle's political thought as a unified political theory, with every regime fitting the general doctrine.

The presumed difference between monarchy and politics nevertheless seems to have an important advantage. If we indeed take for granted that Aristotle wanted to indicate in his political investigation that monarchy differs from a political regime – a wren may be present in the hedge, but in the end still differs from it – we may deem this an acceptable viewpoint. In today's paradigm of liberal democracy, one also believes that a political regime should have a government with multiple rulers who only stay in power temporarily and are controlled by the law. But western history after Aristotle took monarchy for many centuries as the standard form of government, from the Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors of antiquity to the feudal lords and absolute monarchs of the *Ancien Régime*. It is only since the modern era that states gradually tend to move towards more participation of the citizens and control of the rulers. Aristotle may be a stranger to us when he thought about politics from a different paradigm and expressed many views that we no longer agree with. But like a stranger in the street can be identified as an acquaintance or a friend when he takes off his hat and scarf, Aristotle's ideas on monarchy may raise in us this kind of recognition.

Bibliography

Texts, translations, and commentaries

Barker, E., *The Politics of Aristotle*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1946.

Barnes, J., *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford Translation*, 2 vols., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Broadie, S. and Rowe, C.J., *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Brémond, É. and Mathieu, G., *Isocrate*. *Discours*, vol. IV, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1962.

Burnet, J., *Platonis Opera*, 5 vols., Oxford: Clarendon, 1900-1907.

Bywater, I., *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1894.

Cooper, J.M. and Hutchinson, D.S., *Plato. Complete Works*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997.

Curnis, M. and Accattino, P., *Aristotele*. *La Politica Libro III*, Rome: Bretschneider, 2013.

Curnis, M., De Luna, M.E. and Zizza, C., *Aristotele*. *La Politica Libri V-VI*, Rome: Bretschneider, 2016.

D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, M.A. *Aristotle. Historia Animalium*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1910 [reprint in 1967].

Düring, I., *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, Stockholm: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1957.

—— , *Aristotle's Protrepticus*, Stockholm: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1961.

Dreizehnter, A., *Aristoteles*' *Politik*, Munich: Fink, 1970.

Flashar, H., Dubielzig, U. and Breitenberger, B., *Aristoteles*. *Fragmente zu Philosophie, Rhetorik, Poetik, Dichtung*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006.

Gigon, O., *Aristotelis Opera. Librorum Deperditorum Fragmenta*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987.

Hose, M., *Aristoteles*. *Die historischen Fragmente*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002.

Jaeger, W., *Aristotelis De Animalium Motione et De Animalium Incessu*. *Ps.-Aristotelis De Spiritu Libellus*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1913.

Kassel, R., *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976.

Kenny, A., *Aristotle. The Eudemian Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Keyt, D., *Aristotle*. *Politics Books V and VI*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1999.
Kraut, R., *Aristotle*. *Politics Books VII and VIII*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1997.
Laurenti, R., *Aristotele. I frammenti dei dialoghi*, 2 vols., Napoli: Loffredo, 1987.
Lord, C., *Aristotle's* Politics: *Second Edition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
Louis, P., *Aristote. Histoire des animaux*, 3 vols., Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1964-1969.
Newman, W.L., *The Politics of Aristotle*, 4 vols., Oxford: Clarendon, 1887-1902 [reprint in New York: Arno Press, 1973].
Norlin, G., *Isocrates*, 3 vols., London: William Heinemann, 1966-1968.
Oppermann, H., *Aristotelis Ἀθηναίων Πολιτεία*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1928.
Pakaluk, M., *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics Books VIII and IX*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.
Rapp, C., *Aristoteles. Rhetorik*, 2 vols., Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002.
Reeve, C.D.C., *Aristotle. Politics: A New Translation*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 2017.
Rhodes, P.J., *A Commentary on the Aristotelian* Athenaion Politeia, Oxford: Clarendon, 1981.
Robinson, R., *Aristotle. Politics Books III and IV*, with a supplementary essay of D. Keyt, Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.
Rose, V., *Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1886.
Ross, W.D., *Aristotelis Fragmenta Selecta*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1955.
—— , *Aristotelis Politica*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1957.
—— , *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1959.
——, *Aristotle. Select Fragments*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1967.
Saunders, T.J., *Aristotle*. *Politics Books I and II*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.
Schütrumpf, E., *Aristoteles*. *Politik*, 4 vols., with cooperation of H.-J. Gehrke to vol. III, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1991-2005.
Simpson, P.L.P., *A Philosophical Commentary on the Politics of Aristotle*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
Susemihl, F., *Aristotelis Ethica Eudemia*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1884.

Secundary literature

Andrews, P., 'Aristotle, *Politics* iv. II. 1296a38–40' *The Classical Review* 2, 3-4 (1952), pp. 141-144.
Arnott, W.G., *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Z*, London: Routledge, 2007.
Arruzza, C., 'The Lion and the Wolf: The Tyrant's Spirit in Plato's *Republic*', *Ancient Philosophy* 38, 1 (2018), pp. 47-67.

Atack, C., ‘Aristotle’s *Pambasileia* and the Metaphysics of Monarchy’, *Polis*: *The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought* 32, 2 (2015), pp. 297-320.

Badian, E., ‘Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind’, *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 7, 4 (1958), pp. 425-444.

Balot, R.K., *Greek Political Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.

Barceló, P.A., *Basileia, Monarchia, Tyrannis. Untersuchungen zu Entwicklung und Beurteilung von Alleinherrschaft im vorhellenistichen Griechenland*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993.

Bartlett, R.C., ‘Aristotle’s Science of the Best Regime’, *The American Political Science Review* 88, 1 (1994), pp. 143-155.

Bates, C.A., *Aristotle’s “Best Regime”. Kingship, Democracy, and the Rule of Law*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003.

Berve, H., *Die Tyrannis bei den Griechen*, 2 vols., Munich: Beck, 1967.

Bielawski, J. and Plezia, M., *Lettre d’Aristote à Alexandre sur la politique envers les cités*, Wroclaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1970.

Biondi Khan, C-A., ‘Aristotle, Citizenship, and the Common Advantage’, *Polis*: *The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought* 22, 1 (2005), pp. 1-23.

Bobonich, C., *Plato’s Utopia Recast. His Later Ethics and Politics*, Oxford: Clarendon, 2002.

——, ‘Why Should Philosophers Rule? Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Protrepticus*’, *Social Philosophy and Policy* 24, 2 (2007), pp. 153-175.

Bodéüs, R., ‘L’attitude paradoxale d’Aristote envers la tyrannie’, in C. Steel (ed.), *The Legacy of Aristotle’s Political Thought*, Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en schone kunsten van België, 1999, pp. 121-135 [appeared also in *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 61, 3 (1999), pp. 547-562].

Bordes, J., *Politeia dans la pensée grecque jusqu'à Aristote*, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1982.

Boesche, R., ‘Aristotle’s ‘Science’ of Tyranny’, *History of Political Thought* 14, 1 (1993), pp. 1-25.

Borza, E.N., *In the Shadow of Olympus. The Emergence of Macedon*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Bringmann, K., ‘The King as Benefactor. Some Remarks on Ideal Kingship in the Age of Hellenism’, in A. Bulloch, E.S. Gruen, A.A. Long and A.F. Stewart (eds.), *Images and Ideologies. Self-definition in the Hellenistic World*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 8-25.

Buekenhout, B., ‘Kingly versus Political Rule in Aristotle’s *Politics*’, *Apeiron: A Journal For Ancient Philosophy and Science* 49, 4 (2016), pp. 515-537.

—— , ‘Aristotle’s Peculiar Analysis of Monarchy’, *History of Political Thought* 39, 2 (2018), pp. 216-234.

—— , ‘Aristotle’s *On Kingship* and Euergetism’, in G. Roskam and S. Schorn (eds.), *Concepts of Ideal Rulership from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2018, pp. 91-121.

—— , ‘Aristotle on the Preservation of Tyranny’, *Classical Philology: A Journal Devoted to Research in Classical Antiquity* (accepted for publication on March 21, 2018), forthcoming.

Carlier, P., ‘Étude sur la prétendue *lettre* d’Aristote à Alexandre transmise par plusieurs manuscripts arabes’, *Ktèma*: *Civilisations de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques* 5 (1980), pp. 277-288.

—— , *La Royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre*, Strasbourg: AECR, 1984.

—— , ‘La notion de *pambasileia* dans la pensée politique d’Aristote’, in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes*, Fribourg: Université de Fribourg. Séminaire d’histoire ancienne, 1993, pp. 103-118.

Cherry, K.M., ‘The Problem of Polity: Political Participation and Aristotle’s Best Regime’, *The Journal of Politics* 71, 4 (2009), pp. 1406-1421.

—— , *Plato, Aristotle, and the Purpose of Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Christodoulou, P., ‘Le tyran dans le rôle du roi. À propos du chapitre 11 du livre V de la *Politique* d’Aristote’, in S. Gastaldi and J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran. Études sur les figures royale et tyrannique dans la pensée politique grecque et sa postérité*, Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2009, pp. 157-177.

Chroust, A.-H., *Aristotle. New Light on His Life and on Some of His Lost Works*, 2 vols., London: Routledge, 1973.

Cohen, J.R., ‘Rex aut Lex’, *Apeiron: A Journal For Ancient Philosophy and Science* 29, 2 (1996), pp. 145-161.

Cooper, J.M., ‘Political Animals and Civic Friendship’, in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles’ Politik*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1990, pp. 220-241 [reprint in R. Kraut and S. Skultety (eds.), *Aristotle’s* Politics. *Critical Essays*, Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005, pp. 65-90].

de Romilly, J., ‘Le classement des constitutions d’Herodote à Aristote’, *Revue des Études Grecques* 72 (1959), pp. 81-99.

Deslauriers, M., ‘Political Rule over Women in *Politics* I’, in T. Lockwood and T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle’s* Politics. *A Critical Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 46-63.

Desmond, W., *Philosopher-Kings of Antiquity*, London: Continuum, 2011.

Destrée, P., ‘Aristotle on Improving Imperfect Cities’, in T. Lockwood and T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle’s* Politics. *A Critical Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 204-223.

Dietz, M.G., ‘Between Polis and Empire: Aristotle’s *Politics’*, *American Political Science Review* 106, 2 (2012), pp. 275-293.

Ehrenberg, V., *Alexander and the Greeks*, translated by R. Fraenkel von Velsen, Oxford: Blackwell, 1938.

Engels, J., 'Macedonians and Greeks', in J. Roisman and I. Worthington (eds.), *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp. 81-98.

Ford, A., *Aristotle as Poet. The Song for Hermias and its Contexts*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Fortenbaugh, W.W., 'Aristotle on Prior and Posterior, Correct and Mistaken Constitutions', in D. Keyt and F.D. Miller (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, pp. 226-237.

Garlan, Y., 'Decret d'Iasos en l'honneur d'Antiochos III', in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 13 (1974), pp. 197-198.

Gastaldi, S., 'Il re "signore di tutto": il problema della *pambasileia* nella *Politica* di Aristotele', in S. Gastaldi and J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran. Études sur les figures royale et tyrannique dans la pensée politique grecque et sa postérité*, Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2009, pp. 33-52.

——, 'La tirannide nella *Politica* di Aristotele', in S. Gastaldi and J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran. Études sur les figures royale et tyrannique dans la pensée politique grecque et sa postérité*, Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2009, pp. 139-155.

Gauthier, P., *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs*, Athens: École française d'Athènes, 1985.

Goodenough, E., 'The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship', *Yale Classical Studies* 1 (1928), pp. 55-102.

Goulet, R., *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, suppl. I, Paris: CNRS, 2003.

Green, P., 'Politics, Philosophy, and Propaganda: Hermias of Atarneus and his Friendship with Aristotle', in W. Heckel and L.A. Tritle (eds.), *Crossroads of History: The Age of Alexander*, Claremont: Regina, 2004, pp. 29-46.

Greenwalt, W.S., 'Argead Dunasteia during the Reigns of Philip II and Alexander III: Aristotle Reconsidered', in E.D. Carney and D. Ogden (eds.), *Philip II and Alexander the Great*: *Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 151-163.

Haake, M., 'Writing Down the King. The Communicative Function of Treatises *On Kingship* in the Hellenistic Period' in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Splendors and Miseries of Ruling Alone. Encounters with Monarchy from Archaic Greece to the Hellenistic Mediterranean*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 2013, pp. 165-206.

Hammond, N.G.L., *Epirus. The Geography, the Ancient Remains, the History and the Topography of Epirus and Adjacent Areas*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1967.

—— , *The Macedonian State. Origins, Institutions and History*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.

Hansen, M.H., 'Aristotle's Alternative to the Sixfold Model of Constitutions', in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes*, Fribourg: Université de Fribourg. Séminaire d'histoire ancienne, 1993, pp. 91-101.

—— , *Reflections on Aristotle's* Politics, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2013.

Hatzopoulos, M.B., *Macedonian Institutions under the Kings*, 2 vols., Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1996.

Heckel, W., '*Somatophylakia*: A Macedonian Cursus Honorum', *Phoenix: The Journal of the Classical Association of Canada* 40, 3 (1986), pp. 279-294.

Jaeger, W., *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Metaphysik des Aristoteles*, Berlin: Weidmann, 1912.

—— , *Aristotle. Fundamentals of the History of his Development*, translated by R. Robinson, Oxford: Clarendon, 1948 [revised edition of *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung*, Berlin: Weidmann, 1923].

Jordović, I., 'Aristotle on Extreme Tyranny and Extreme Democracy', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 60, 1 (2011), pp. 36-64.

Kahn, C.H., 'The Normative Structure of Aristotle's "Politics"', in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' Politik*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1990, pp. 369-384.

Kamp, A., 'Die aristotelische Theorie der Tyrannis', *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 92 (1985), pp. 17-34.

Kelsen, H., 'The Philosophy of Aristotle and the Hellenic-Macedonian Policy', *International Journal of Ethics* 48, 1 (1937), pp. 1-64 [partial reprint in J. Barnes, M. Schofield and R. Sorabji (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle II. Ethics and Politics*, London: Duckworth, 1977, pp. 170-194].

Keyt, D., 'Aristotle's Theory of Distributive Justice', in D. Keyt and F.D. Miller (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, pp. 238-278.

—— , 'Aristotle and Anarchism', *Reason Papers* 18 (1993), pp. 133-152 [reprint in R. Kraut and S. Skultety (eds.), *Aristotle's* Politics. *Critical Essays*, Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005, pp. 203-222].

—— , *Nature and Justice. Studies in the Ethical and Political Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, Leuven: Peeters, 2017.

King, C.J., 'Macedonian Kingship and other Political Institutions', in J. Roisman and I. Worthington (eds.), *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp. 373-391.

Klosko, G., *The Development of Plato's Political Theory*, London: Methuen, 1986.

Kraut, R., *Aristotle. Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Langmeier, B., *Ordnung in der Polis. Grundzüge der politischen Philosophie des Aristoteles*, Munich: Verlag Karl Alber Freiburg, 2018.

Laurand, V., 'Nature de la royauté dans les *Politiques* d'Aristote', in E. Bermon, V. Laurand and J. Terrel (eds.), *Politique d'Aristote. Famille, régimes, éducation*, Pessac: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2011, pp. 71-87.

Lindsay, T.K., 'The "God-Like Man" versus the "Best Laws". Politics and Religion in Aristotle's *Politics*', *The Review of Politics* 53, 3 (1991), pp. 488-509.

Lockwood, T., 'The Best Regime of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*', *Ancient Philosophy* 26, 2 (2006), pp. 355-370.

Lord, C., *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Luraghi, N., 'One-Man Government: The Greeks and Monarchy', in H. Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, pp. 131-145.

Mager, G., 'Aristoteles-Viten und -Schriftenkataloge. Die Aristoteles-Schrift des Ptolemaios im Licht der Überlieferung', *Studi Classici e Orientali* 61 (2015), pp. 97-166.

Mayhew, R., 'Rulers and Ruled', in G. Anagnostopoulos (ed.), *A Companion to Aristotle*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2009, pp. 526-539.

Miller, F.D., *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's* Politics, Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.

—— , 'Aristotle on the Ideal Constitution', in G. Anagnostopoulos (ed.), *A Companion to Aristotle*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, pp. 540-554.

—— , 'The Rule of Reason', in M. Deslauriers and P. Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's* Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 38-66.

Miller, J., 'Aristotle's Paradox of Monarchy and the Biographical Tradition', *History of Political Thought* 19, 4 (1998), pp. 501-516.

Morrison, D., 'Aristotle's Definition of Citizenship: A Problem and Some Replies', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 16, 2 (1999), pp. 143-165.

—— , 'Tyrannie et royauté selon le Socrate de Xénophon', translated by L.-A. Dorion and G. Mosquera, *Les Études Philosophiques* 69, 2 (2004), pp. 177-192.

—— , 'The Common Good', in M. Deslauriers and P. Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's* Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 176-198.

Mulgan, R.G., 'A Note on Aristotle's Absolute Ruler', *Phronesis: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy* 19, 1 (1974), pp. 66-69.

—— , 'Aristotle and Absolute Rule', *Antichthon* 8 (1974), pp. 21-28.

Mulhern, J.J., '*Politeia* in Greek Literature, Inscriptions, and in Aristotle's *Politics*: Reflections on Translation and Interpretation', in T. Lockwood and T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle's* Politics*. A Critical Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 84-102.

Murray, O., 'Περὶ Βασιλείας: Studies in the Justification of Monarchic Power in the Hellenistic World', unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford, 1971.

—— , 'Philosophy and Monarchy in the Hellenistic World', in T. Rajak, S. Pearce, J. Aitken and J. Dines (eds.), *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, pp. 13-28.

Nagle, D.B., 'Alexander and Aristotle's *Pambasileus*', *L'Antiquité Classique* 69, 1 (2000), pp. 117-132.

Natali, C., *Aristotle. His Life and School*, translated and edited by D.S. Hutchinson, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013 [revised edition of *Bios theoretikos: la vita di Aristotele e l'organizzazione della sua scuola*, Bologna: Mulino, 1991].

Newell, W.R., 'Superlative Virtue: The Problem of Monarchy in Aristotle's *Politics*', *The Western Political Quarterly* 40, 1 (1987), pp. 159-178 [reprint in C. Lord and D.K. O'Connor (eds.), *Essays on the Foundations of Aristotelian Political Science*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, pp. 191-211].

Nichols, M.P., *Citizens and Statesmen. A study of Aristotle's* Politics, Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992.

Olbrycht, M.J., 'Macedonia and Persia', in J. Roisman and I. Worthington (eds.), *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp. 342-369.

Pangle, T.L., *Aristotle's Teaching in the* Politics, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Pellegrin, P., 'La "Politique" d'Aristote: unité et fractures. Éloge de la lecture sommaire', *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* 177, 2 (1987), pp. 129-159.

Petit, A., 'L'analyse aristotélicienne de la tyrannie', in P. Aubenque and A. Tordesillas (eds.), *Aristote Politique. Études sur la* Politique *d' Aristote*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993, pp. 73-92.

Pollard, J., *Birds in Greek Life and Myth*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1977.

Pons, A., 'Tyrannie, politique et philosophie. Note sur l'idée de tyrannie dans la pensée Grecque', *Les Études philosophiques* 23, 2 (1968), pp. 169-184.

Riesbeck, D.J., 'Aristotle on the Politics of Marriage: 'Marital rule' in the *Politics*', *The Classical Quarterly* 65, 1 (2015), pp. 134-152.

—— , 'The Unity of Aristotle's Theory of Constitutions', *Apeiron: A Journal For Ancient Philosophy and Science* 49, 1 (2016), pp. 93-125.

—— , *Aristotle on Political Community*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Rist, J.M., *The Mind of Aristotle. A Study in Philosophical Growth*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989.

Romer, F.E., 'The *Aisymnêteia*: A Problem in Aristotle's Historic Method', *The American Journal of Philology* 103, 1 (1982), pp. 25-46.

Rowe, C.J., 'Aims and Methods in Aristotle's *Politics*', *The Classical Quarterly* 27, 1 (1977), pp. 159-172 [reprint in D. Keyt and F.D. Miller (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, pp. 57-74].

—— , 'Aristotelian Constitutions', in C.J. Rowe and M. Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 366-389.

Schofield, M., *Saving the City. Philosophers-Kings and Other Classical Paradigms*, London: Routledge, 1999.

—— , 'Aristotle: An Introduction', in C.J. Rowe and M. Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 310-320.

—— , *Plato. Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Scholz, P., *Der Philosoph und die Politik. Die Ausbildung der philosophischen Lebensform und die Entwicklung des Verhältnisses von Philosophie und Politik im 4. und 3. jh. v. Chr.*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998.

Simpson, P.L.P., 'Aristotle', in H. Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, pp. 105-118.

Sinclair, T.A., *A History of Greek Political Thought*, London: Routledge, 1951.

Sprague, R.K., *Plato's Philosopher-King. A Study of the Theoretical Background*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1976.

Swain, S., *Themistius, Julian, and Greek Political Theory under Rome*. *Texts, Translations, and Studies of Four Key Works*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Tarn, W.W., *Alexander the Great*, 2 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948.

Taylor, C.C.W., 'Politics', in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 233-258.

Vander Waerdt, P.A., 'Kingship and Philosophy in Aristotle's Best Regime', *Phronesis: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy* 30, 3 (1985), pp. 249-273.

Walbank, F.W., 'Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas', in F.W. Walbank and A.E. Astin (eds.), *The Hellenistic World to the Coming of the Romans*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 62-100.

Weil, R., *Aristote et l'Histoire. Essai sur la «Politique»*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1960.

—— , 'Sur la 'lettre d'Aristote à Alexandre'', in J. Wiesner (ed.), *Aristoteles. Werk und Wirkung, Paul Moraux gewidmet*, vol. I, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1985, pp. 485-498.

Worthington, I., *Alexander the Great. A Reader*, London: Routledge, 2003.

—— , *Philip II of Macedonia*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Yack, B., *The Problems of a Political Animal. Community, Justice, and Conflict in Aristotelian Political Thought*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.