

The Plan and Intention of Aristotle's Ethical and Political Writings*

PAUL A. VANDER WAERDT

My objective here is to reconstruct the plan of Aristotle's exposition of political science (*politikē*) in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, and to show that this plan reveals certain fundamental but unnoticed features of his philosophical intention. First I demonstrate, on the basis of numerous programmatic but unfulfilled forward references in the extant *Politics*, that Aristotle planned to complete this work in certain promised "discourses on the regimes" (*Pol.* 1260b8–20) by reconsidering his accounts of moral virtue, education and household management from the perspective of the different forms of regime and the divergent ends each promotes. Secondly, I explore the philosophical intention of this plan of *politikē*, arguing that Aristotle's enquiry remains fundamentally incomplete without this reconsideration. His aim of providing the statesman with the knowledge of "legislative science" necessary to apply the teaching on the human good presented in the ethical writings, I suggest, requires this promised account of the way in which the moral virtues vary according to the ends promoted by the different forms of regime. Our enquiry will help to clarify the philosophical significance of Aristotle's conception of "ethics," as tradition has come to know it, as political science.¹

*This paper has a long history: I first conceived many of the views here presented when I studied Aristotle's political thought with David O'Connor in 1984, and I remain indebted to him for much valuable discussion over the years. This paper was first presented at Duke University in December 1988, as part of a lecture series on Aristotle, and a subsequent version was read to the seminar in Traditional and Modern Philosophy at The University of Sydney in September 1990. I am grateful to these audiences, as well as to Michael Frede, Phillip Mitsis and A. E. Raubitschek, for helpful suggestions. Particular thanks are due to my late colleague in Chapel Hill, Friedrich Solmsen, who helped to shape my thinking on this subject through much stimulating discussion. It is an honor to dedicate the final result to his memory.

¹In recent years three valuable studies on this subject have appeared: E. Trépanier, "La politique comme philosophie morale chez Aristote," *Dialogue* 2 (1963) 251–79; S. Cashdollar, "Aristotle's Politics of Morals," *JHP* 11 (1973) 146–60; R. Bodéüs, *Le philosophe et la cité: Recherches sur les rapports entre morale et politique dans la pensée d'Aristote* (Paris 1982); see also P. A. Vander Waerdt, "The Political Intention of Aristotle's Moral Philosophy," *Ancient Philosophy* 5 (1985) 77–89.

Study of this problem has been plagued by confusion since antiquity. Traditional assumptions notwithstanding, abundant evidence demonstrates that Aristotle's ethical writings do not constitute an "autonomous moral science,"² but rather form part of his comprehensive political science.³ Despite the unfortunate title of one recent article, Aristotle *never* "calls ethics ethics."⁴ He never employs the terms "ethics" (**ēthikē*) or "ethical science" (**ēthikē epistēmē*).⁵ Whenever he refers to the subject-matter of his ethical writings, he always designates it as *politikē*. Thus in the *Rhetoric*, when discussing "the investigation concerned with matters of character, which it is just to call political" (1356a26–27; cf. 1359b9–11), he outlines the whole complex of topics treated in the ethical writings under this heading.⁶ Numerous passages of the *EN*, moreover, clearly identify his

² This is the view of R. A. Gauthier and J. Jolif, *L'Éthique à Nicomaque* (Louvain 1959) II.1 1–2, 10–12; see *contra* Cashdollar (previous note) 157–58 and Bodéüs (previous note) 81, who rightly insist that one cannot infer an "autonomous moral science" from Aristotle's use of the term *ēthikoi logoi* (see below, note 13). This confusion may be traced back to the early Peripatos. The author of the *MM*, an early Peripatetic of Theophrastus' generation who frequently defends the framework of Aristotelian doctrine the philosophical motivation of which no longer is understood (cf. W. Jaeger, "Über Ursprung und Kreislauf des philosophischen Lebensideals," *SBBerlin* [1928] 402–12; P. A. Vander Waerdt, "The Peripatetic Interpretation of Plato's Tripartite Psychology," *GRBS* 26 [1985] 283–302), undertakes to speak "concerning ethics" (ὕπερ ἠθικῶν [1181a25–81b1]), but insists repeatedly that his enquiry is part of *politikē* (cf. 1182b1–6, 27–32; 1183a3–5, 21–24, 33–35; 1197b28–29), evidently to save Aristotle's official designation of his enquiry. Aristotle's presentation of *politikē* in separate treatises seems to have led even early Peripatetics to isolate his enquiry into character from *politike* as a whole.

³ Cashdollar (above, note 1) 148–49 argues that Aristotle "never speaks of a subdivision or branch of politics which treats moral matters apart from matters of state," but his division of the science of the human good into *politikē*, *oikonomikē* and *phronēsis* (*EE* 1218b12–16) suggests that Aristotle considered enquiry into the individual, household and city each to be subdivisions of *politike* as a whole, a view confirmed by his plan of exposition (cf. Vander Waerdt [above, note 1] 82–84). In the further discussion here promised (1218b15–16), he distinguishes between *phronēsis* as (a) concerned with the individual; (b) concerned with the household; (c) the architectonic part concerned with legislation, *phronēsis nomothetikē*; and (d) the "political" part, subdivided into deliberative and judicial components (1141b23–42a11). Thus one subdivision of *politikē* is concerned with "moral matters."

⁴ C. Chamberlain, "Why Aristotle Called Ethics Ethics," *Hermes* 112 (1984) 176–83, who argues that Aristotle invented *ta ēthika* to designate "the new field of ethics" (he follows Gauthier and Jolif uncritically).

⁵ As J. Burnet pointed out long ago, *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London 1900) 25–27. The curious scholarly fashion of rejecting Aristotle's stated position is well exemplified by M. Riedel's claim that Aristotle's designation of his enquiry as *politikē* "indicates conceptual confusion" ("Concerning Several *Aporiai* in Aristotle's Practical Philosophy," *Ancient Philosophy* 1 [1981] 156–57 with 159 n. 28; similarly, e.g., H. H. Joachim, *Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics* [Oxford 1951] 16).

⁶ In treating the subjects of deliberative, forensic and epideictic oratory (1358b4–59a5), Aristotle resumes all the basic topics treated in the ethical and political writings, explicitly stating that these topics properly belong to *politikē* rather than rhetoric; cf.

subject-matter as *politikē*, as do parallels in the *EE*.⁷ Such evidence shows plainly that this subject-matter belongs to political science, not to an independent science of ethics. More importantly, as I shall argue, Aristotle's doctrine in the *EN* can only be properly understood in light of the political framework in which it was conceived and presented.

If we are to understand Aristotle's intention in offering a teaching on *politikē*, we must first clarify the place of the ethical writings within its plan. Failure to reconstruct this plan precisely, I suggest, has obscured the interpretation of Aristotle's moral philosophy in fundamental ways.

I

Let us begin, for purposes of orientation, by surveying Aristotle's programmatic statements concerning his plan and intention in the *EN*. We will then consider the genuine difficulties which have hindered understanding of this plan in the past, and outline our proposed solution.

In the opening pages of the *EN*, Aristotle designates the subject-matter of his inquiry as *politikē*, the architectonic science of the human good (1094a26–b15), specifies the proper audience of *politikē* (1095a2–13), and discusses its methodology (1095a30–b13). The aim of *politikē* is to educate citizens in accordance with the human good, a final end which is chosen for its own sake (1094a18–22), as Aristotle explains (1094a28–b11):

Politikē determines which of the sciences are to exist in the cities, which sciences each [of the citizens] is to learn, and to what extent. And we see that even the most honored of the capacities are subordinate to it—military strategy, household management and rhetoric, for example. Since *politikē* uses the rest of the sciences and since, furthermore, it legislates what [the citizens] are to do and what they are not to do, its end would seem to encompass the ends of the other sciences and capacities, so that the end of *politikē* would be the human good. For even if this is the same for the individual and for the city, the good of the city would appear to be the greater and more perfect thing to attain and preserve, for the attainment of the good by one man

below, note 19, and *Poetics* 1450b4–12 with G. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics* (Cambridge, MA 1957) 265–70.

⁷ Aristotle's audience in the *EE* consists of statesmen (1216b35–39), and he attempts (at 1216b26–17a18) to identify the mode of enquiry necessary to achieve the conjunction between the individual's good and the good without qualification which it is the purpose of *politikē* to produce (cf. 1236b39–37a3, 1248b26–37; *Pol.* 1331b24–32b10). (For other hints that the *EE* is conceived as a political inquiry: 1216a10–37 with 1153b7–25, 1214a30–b5, 1215b1–5; 1216b18–25 with *EN* 1112b11–14; 1218a33–35; 1218b11–16 with 1141b21–42a11; 1234b22–23; and, in the common books, 1130b25–29 with 1276b16–77b32; 1137b17–24; 1152b1–5.) At 1216b37 I accept the emendation τῷ πολιτικῷ for the τῶν πολιτικῶν of the MSS (M. Woods in his edition of the *EE* [Oxford 1982] 201 ascribes this emendation to Ross/Walzer, but it may be found in H. Richards' *Aristotelica* [London 1915] 53).

alone is desirable, but it is even nobler and more divine for peoples and cities. Our inquiry, then, aims for these things, being a political one.

Thus *politikē* aims to direct the other practical sciences in achieving ends, both for individuals and cities, which properly conform to the human good. Its aim, in short, is not knowledge but action (1095a5–6).⁸ And this is why Aristotle's audience consists of statesmen (actual or potential),⁹ whose training in *politikē* is intended to enable them to produce citizens who are good, obedient to the laws and practitioners of noble deeds (cf. 1099b28–32, 1102a7–10, 1103b3–6, 1140b7–11, 1177b12–15).¹⁰

Accordingly, Aristotle aims throughout the *EN* to provide this audience with the knowledge of the human good necessary to legislate well. Thus, for example, he explains that inquiry into pleasure and pain is of particular importance for the political philosopher (cf. 1095a10–12, 1152a1–3), just as study of the voluntary and involuntary is useful for the lawgiver in allocating honors and punishments (1109b30–35; cf. 1180a5–14). Above all, when introducing his programmatic division of the soul in 1. 13, Aristotle explains that the true statesman must study the *human* soul in order to attain a knowledge of *eudaimonia* sufficient to legislate well (1102a7–25). His psychology in the *EN* accordingly is not intended, like that of the *De Anima*, to account for all the soul's functions, but only for those directly relevant to human conduct;¹¹ thus it is fundamentally

⁸ Cf. *EN* 1099b28–32, 1102a7–12, 1103b3–6, 1140b7–11, 1177b12–15, 1179a35–b2; *EE* 1236b39–37a3. Of course Aristotle does introduce "theoretical philosophy" wherever appropriate (*EE* 1214a15)—an important example of which is his introduction of "disembodied *nous*" from the *De Anima* in *EN* 10 (see below, note 12). But his use of it is subservient to his practical intention: While theoretical knowledge is an end in itself, it may be useful "accidentally" (1216b3–17a18), and the statesman must acquire such knowledge to attain the ends of *politikē* (1216b35–39, 1236b39–37a3; cf. 1215b2–4, 1216a25–26).

⁹ For the evidence, see Bodéüs (above, note 1) 123–25. Since legislative science is useful (and necessary in inferior regimes) for individuals who seek to turn others toward virtue, Aristotle's enquiry benefits not just statesmen. Still, Aristotle can achieve his *practical* aim only by educating political men, who alone are able to bring about the conjunction between the citizens' good and the good without qualification which *politikē* aims to produce.

¹⁰ Aristotle holds that the city exists by nature to foster *eudaimonia* among its citizens (cf. 1252b29–30, 1278b21–24, 1281a1–4, 1325a5–10, 1328a35–41), a purpose of course realized only in the case of the best regime, whose educational program accords with the human good (cf. *EE* 1236b38–37a3, 1248b26–37; *Pol.* 1293b1–7, 1328b34–29a2, 1331b24–32a38); see C. Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle* (Ithaca 1982); P. A. Vander Waerdt, "Kingship and Philosophy in Aristotle's Best Regime," *Phronesis* 30 (1985) 249–73.

¹¹ This contrast between Aristotle's moral and theoretical psychology emerges clearly from his criticism of the familiar divisions of moral psychology at *De Anima* 432a24–b7; see P. A. Vander Waerdt, "Aristotle's Criticism of Soul-Division," *AJP* 108 (1987) 627–43.

informed by the political intention animating his enquiry as a whole.¹² Finally, as Aristotle explains in detail in *EN* 10. 9, his teaching on *politikē* remains incomplete without an account of legislation and the forms of regime.

Let us turn, then, to restore Aristotle's moral philosophy to this political framework. We must first clarify three genuine difficulties which have impeded this task in the past: (i) the relation of the two ethical writings to the *Politics*; (ii) the latter's plan of argument; and (iii) Aristotle's intention in dividing his account of *politikē* into separate treatises.

(i) Although the *EE* is not, like the *EN*, elaborately linked to a political work, all citations of the *ēthikoi logoi* in the extant *Politics* refer to the *EE* or to the common books (*EN* 5–7 = *EE* 4–6), which—as is generally agreed—were originally written for the *EE*,¹³ the earlier of the two treatises. Thus the composition of the extant *Politics* postdates the *EE* and antedates the *EN*.¹⁴ Given this chronology, which has been strangely neglected, it is

¹² I have argued this thesis in detail in an essay on "The Statesman and the Soul," which I plan to publish in the near future.

¹³ Cf. 1261a30, 1280a18, 1282b20, 1295a36, 1332a8, 1332a22 and *Met.* 981b25 with W. Jaeger, *Aristotle* (Oxford 1948) 283–85, F. Dirlmeier, *Eudemische Ethik* (Berlin 1962) 111–15 and A. Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethics* (Oxford 1978) 5–8. Kenny argues in detail for the *Eudemian* origin of the common books, although much of his case is seriously flawed (cf. J. M. Cooper, *Nous* 15 [1981] 381–92). Cooper claims that Aristotle reworked the common books for inclusion in the *EN*, but his sole argument in support—that 1130b26–29 refers not to the *Politics* as generally thought but to 1180b23–81a31—is not cogent. Aristotle does not discuss the individual's education in 10. 9 (1180b7–8) insofar as he is *haplōs anēr agathos*, nor is the relation between the good man and good citizen—which, as the *gar* (1130b29) clearly shows, is part of the evidence for the promised discussion—even mentioned in 10. 9. Therefore 1130b26–29 must refer to the thematic discussion at *Pol.* 1276b16–77b32 (subsequently elaborated at 1278b1–5, 1283b40–84a3, 1288a38–b2, 1293b5–7, 1328b33–29a2, 1333a11–16), and Cooper's claim is left without support.

¹⁴ The fact that the *Politics* cites the *EE* rather than the *EN* is strangely neglected by Kenny (above, note 13) 226–30 in his attempt to prove the priority of the *EN* to the *EE*, but it is incontrovertible proof of the relative chronology here advocated: If the *Politics* postdated the *EN*, after all, it would follow the plan of 1181b12–24, and it would not cite the *EE*. Kenny's claim that *EE* 1244b29–36 criticizes *EN* 1170a25–b9 fails: (a) There is no evidence that Aristotle is criticizing a written text: the phrase ἐν τῷ λόγῳ does not mean "in the book," but merely refers to the *aporia* raised at the beginning of 7. 12 (cf. 1244b31, which refers to the "argument" of b29–30; 1245a27 and 1245b12, where *logos* refers to the *aporia* raised at the beginning of 1244b2). (b) The *EN* does not advance the position criticized at *EE* 1244b29–36, since it never asserts that the happy man will have no friends, which the *logos* in question maintains. (c) Kenny's claim that τὸ γινώσκειν αὐτό (*EE* 1244b29) is a criticism of the *EN* for "the exaggerated value placed upon the abstract awareness of one's own or other's existence" misses Aristotle's point about the relation between friendship and self-sufficiency: God escapes the need for friendship by being his own object of cognition, whereas we, in order to know ourselves as good, require an object for the operation of our cognitive capacities, a need which our friend fulfills. Kenny's argument thus provides no evidence at all for the chronological relation between the two ethical writings.

no surprise that the *EN* and *Politics* do not provide a straightforward, comprehensive exposition of *politikē*.

(ii) There are in fact serious discrepancies between the political work outlined at *EN* 1181b12–24 and the extant *Politics*: Not only does the latter diverge in detail from the program outlined, but it fails to provide the account of the laws appropriate to each form of regime which Aristotle says is necessary to complete his enquiry. Hence the overall plan of *politikē* has remained quite obscure. Fortunately, however, the numerous unfulfilled forward references in the *Politics*, also strangely ignored, prove conclusively that Aristotle intended to complete his work with an extensive account (his “discourses on the regimes” [*Pol.* 1260b8–20]) of legislation and the forms of regime. These plans for the completion of the *Politics*, I shall argue, correspond exactly to the work outlined at *EN* 1181b12–24.

(iii) Finally, Aristotle’s division of his teaching on *politikē* into separate treatises has encouraged scholars to abstract the *EN* from its political context. For although the *EN* forms part of *politikē*, it nevertheless abstracts from the political considerations—such as the forms of regime, their laws and ways of life—which in practice always inform the individual’s moral education. And the *Politics*, in its extant incomplete form, contains no thematic account of how to relate the doctrine of the *EN* to the divergent ends promoted by the various regimes, or of the practical use the statesman is to make of this doctrine when legislating. Hence it has remained unclear precisely how the *EN* is incomplete without the *Politics*.

These difficulties concerning Aristotle’s intention can be resolved by reconstructing precisely his plan of *politikē*. In his “discourses on the regimes,” Aristotle intended to reconsider his accounts of moral virtue, education and *oikonomia* (already treated in *EN* and *Pol.* 1) from the perspective of the various forms of regime and their divergent ends. When Aristotle abstracts from the political conditions of moral education in the *EN*, he does so quite intentionally, because he plans to complete this account by reconsidering it from a political point of view in his “discourses on the regimes.” This is the intention that underlies the structure of Aristotle’s plan of *politikē*.

My argument is organized as follows. We first (Section II) discuss the unfulfilled forward references in the *Politics*, which demonstrate that Aristotle intended to complete it as promised at *EN* 1181b12–24. Next (Section III), we consider Aristotle’s promised “discourses on the regimes,” their place in the plan of *politikē*, and the philosophical motivation of this plan. In Section IV we examine how to reconcile the teaching on moral education in the *EN* with the doctrine that education must conform to the ends promoted by the regime in force, and how the statesman’s education in legislative science enables him to turn the citizens even of inferior regimes toward the good life properly understood. Finally, we conclude (Section V) by showing that the moral virtues vary according to the “character” and ends promoted by the different forms of regime.

II

In the concluding chapter of the *EN* (10. 9), Aristotle turns to explain why an enquiry into legislation and the forms of regime is necessary to complete his account of *politikē*.¹⁵ Discourses alone do not suffice to produce moral improvement, he says, because some human beings are not amenable to the persuasion of reason; hence the compulsion of law is necessary (1179b20–80b25). And since *politikē* has the practical purpose of improving moral conduct, the *EN* itself remains fundamentally incomplete without a teaching on law to effect this improvement. Aristotle's practical intention thus inevitably subsumes enquiry into human character into what he calls "legislative science" (*phronēsis nomothetikē*), which is the "architectonic" component in Aristotle's division of *politikē*.¹⁶ Accordingly, legislative science takes on an extraordinary scope. First, legislative science regulates the education not merely of the young, but rather of *all* citizens throughout their lives (1180a1–4):

Doubtless it is not sufficient for men to receive the right nurture and discipline in youth, but they must practise what they have learned and reinforce their lessons by habit even when they have grown up. For this purpose we need laws to regulate the discipline of adults as well, and indeed the whole of life.

This continuing education in virtue for mature citizens accords well, of course, with the educational program of Aristotle's best regime in *Pol.* 7–8.¹⁷ Second, *anyone* who wishes to improve the moral conduct of others must acquire legislative science; one who does so will become like Pericles, skilled in managing his own affairs as well as those of the household and city.¹⁸ The scope of legislative science is due in part to the neglect with which cities (Sparta excepted) treat their citizens' moral education. In the absence of an adequate program of public education, Aristotle says, legislative science enables an individual to turn his children and friends to virtue (1180a24–34). As the architectonic component of *politikē*, it directs the moral education both of whole cities and of individual citizens in inferior

¹⁵ See the analysis of Bodéüs (above, note 1) 95–132.

¹⁶ Cf. Bodéüs (above, note 1) 113–14. Since Aristotle holds that *politikē* and *phronēsis* are the same *hexis*, the architectonic component of *phronēsis* is identical with the architectonic component of *politikē*.

¹⁷ Cf. Lord (above, note 10) 34–35, 100–04, 177–79.

¹⁸ Cf. 1142a7–10 (where I accept Richards' πολιτικῆς for the MSS' πολιτείας). Aristotle's conclusion here that one cannot attain *phronēsis* in one's own affairs without *oikonomia* and *politikē* proves that the individual, in order to manage his own affairs well, must acquire legislative science. Cf. 1180b23–26: "Presumably, then, one who wishes to make others (whether many or few) better through discipline must endeavour to acquire legislative science—if indeed we may become better through laws."

regimes who seek to educate their families and friends in accordance with the human good.

Before turning to outline the enquiry necessary to complete the statesman's education in legislative science, Aristotle considers competing claims to teach this science, which is, he says, a "part" of *politikē* (1180b30–31). In this case its practitioners, the statesmen, do not themselves teach it, apparently relying upon experience (*empeiria*) rather than thought (*dianoia*). And the sophists who claim to teach it fail, principally for two reasons: First, they fundamentally misconceive the proper relation between rhetoric and *politikē*, wrongly considering the latter identical with or even inferior to the former (1181a12–19);¹⁹ and second, "they think that it is easy to legislate by collecting the best-reputed of the laws . . . as though the selection did not require understanding (*synesis*)."²⁰ For Aristotle, on the other hand, rhetoric is a subordinate component of *politikē* which the statesman employs to achieve the ends fixed upon by his legislative science.²¹

¹⁹ Aristotle opposes the sophistic assimilation of *politikē* to rhetoric in order to restore *politikē* to its proper status as the architectonic science which governs all the other practical capacities. In fact, he apparently objects to the study of rhetoric in controversy with Isocrates over its proper relation to *politikē*, defending the study of "political rhetoric" on grounds similar to those advanced in the concluding section of *EN* 10. 9 (cf. Cic. *De Oratore* 3. 141; Philodemus, *Rhet.* 6 with H. M. Hubbell, "Isocrates and the Epicureans," *CP* 11 [1916] 405–18, "The *Rhetorica* of Philodemus," *Trans. Conn. Academy of Arts and Sciences* 23 [1920] 243–382; I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* [Göteborg 1957] 299–311). For the precise sense in which he considers rhetoric subordinate to *politikē* see especially his discussion of deliberative oratory in *Rhetoric* 1. 4 (1359b2–16). In the earlier passage to which Aristotle here alludes, he says that, because rhetoric is a kind of offshoot of dialectic and *politike*, it "slips into the garb of *politikē*;" those sophists who claim to possess it do so partly through lack of education, partly through boastfulness, and partly through other all-too-human causes (1356a25–30). Their chief mistake is that they fail to recognize the difference between "common" topics, which furnish syllogisms and enthymemes for all sciences, whatever their difference in species, and "specific" topics, which are derived from propositions peculiar to each species or genus and which correspondingly furnish syllogisms and enthymemes applicable only to a particular science (1358a10–33; cf. 1356a30–33). The sophists' failure to understand this difference leads them to transgress the limits of rhetoric (1358a2–9) and to lose sight of the fact that only *politikē* can supply the "specific" topics necessary for deliberation about political matters. By clarifying the nature and limited scope of rhetoric Aristotle shows why it must be subordinate to *politikē*, the architectonic science which provides these "specific" topics.

²⁰ Aristotle holds that the sophists' assumption that it is easy to legislate by collecting the best-reputed of the laws merely reveals ignorance of the understanding (*synesis*) necessary to judge which laws are suitable in which circumstances (1181a15–b12). The sophists fail to recognize that the regime is the guiding source of law, and that different regimes and ways of life are appropriate to different peoples, depending upon their natural character—laws which are appropriate to one form of regime can endanger another's very preservation.

²¹ Cf. C. Lord, "The Intention of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*," *Hermes* 109 (1981) 326–39; and, on Aristotle's critique of Hippodamus, L. Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago 1964) 17–25.

The fundamental deficiencies in the sophists' understanding of the proper task of legislation require Aristotle to consider how the study of regimes may advance the statesman's education. The concluding paragraph of the *EN* requires close attention as his most precise statement of his plan (1181b12–24):

Since our predecessors have left the question concerning legislation unexamined, perhaps it is best if we ourselves investigate it, and indeed the question concerning regimes generally, in order to complete the philosophy concerning human affairs. First, then, let us try to review any discussion of merit contributed by our predecessors on any particular part of the subject; then, on the basis of our collection of regimes, to investigate what kinds of institutions save and destroy cities in general, and each of the forms of regime in particular, and through what causes some are well governed and others the reverse. For after we have investigated these things perhaps we will understand better what is the best regime, and how each of the regimes is ordered and what laws and customs each uses. Let us then begin the discussion.

The discrepancies between this outline and the extant *Politics* frequently have led scholars to declare 1181b12–24 spurious.²² The most serious of their objections is easily removed,²³ and their conclusion is quite

²² For a review of the objections brought against this passage and an able defence of its authenticity, see Bodéüs (above, note 1) 147–52. C. Lord's attempt ("The Character and Composition of Aristotle's *Politics*," *Political Theory* 9 [1981] 472–74) to attribute this passage to Theophrastus as the outline of his *Politics* in six books (D.L. 5. 45) is not cogent.

²³ Aristotle's statement that legislation has been left uninvestigated by his predecessors (1181b12–15) has been widely misunderstood by commentators, who do not see how Aristotle could have written this in view of Plato's works (thus e.g. F. Susemihl and R. D. Hicks speak of their posited interpolator's "madness," *The Politics of Aristotle* [London 1894] 69). To explain this criticism one need only consider his statement that "The *Laws* is concerned for the most part with laws, and little is said about the regime" (1265a1–2). Aristotle holds that the regime is the *taxis* of offices which determines what is sovereign in the city and what is its end, the source of the laws laid down to promote the city's way of life (cf. L. Strauss, *Natural Right and History* [Chicago 1953] 135–38 and R. Bodéüs, "Les législations malheureuses: Remarques sur la constitutionnalité des lois d'après Aristote" [forthcoming]). Plato's *Laws*, however, is *not* an account of the regime in this technical sense (cf. G. R. Morrow, "Aristotle's Comments on Plato's *Laws*," in *Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth Century*, ed. I. Düring and G. Owen [Göteborg 1960] 147–48). Moreover, since Aristotle correctly recognizes that the "second-best" regime of the *Laws* by virtue of its abandonment of radical communism is only a more practical version of the best regime of the *Republic*, as the Athenian Stranger himself suggests (cf. 1265a1–9 and 1265b31–66a6 with *Laws* 739a–e, 711a–12a, 875c–d), and therefore that it presupposes the same educational program and the rule of the same philosophy (cf. H. Chemiss, *Gnomon* 25 [1953] 377–79 and T. L. Pangle, *The Laws of Plato* [New York 1980] 376–77, 459–62, 504, 509–10), he can legitimately deny that Plato as well as his other predecessors (cf. 1288b39–89a10, 1316b25–27) had investigated legislation. Since the laws are laid down to suit the regime and not *vice versa*, an account of legislation presupposes enquiry into the forms of regime, and Plato had concerned himself only with the best regime and not with the "collections of regimes and laws" which would be useful to

unjustified. This passage, I shall argue, rather indicates Aristotle's plan for the revision and completion of the *Politics*.²⁴ Its numerous unfulfilled forward references show conclusively that Aristotle planned to revise it as promised at 1181b12–24. We may begin by considering how well the extant *Politics* conforms to this outline.

This passage does not clearly account for *Pol.* 1: While its argument originates in a refutation of Plato's identification of the forms of rule with one another (*Statesman* 258e–59c), and hence might be regarded together with Book 2 as the promised critique of Aristotle's predecessors (b15–17), an account of *oikonomia* does not obviously fall under the heading of *nomothesia*, the neglect of which by Aristotle's predecessors requires him to undertake the enquiry promised at 1181b12–24. Thus the work here outlined might well have begun with Book 2, if this is the critique of his predecessors that Aristotle has in mind here.²⁵ The following lines (b17–20) do not obviously account for Books 3 and 4; but in promising to explain, on the basis of his collection of regimes, what preserves and destroys them, Aristotle clearly refers to Books 5 and 6 (cf. 1289b23–26, 1301a19–25, 1316b31–36). He then mentions the best regime of Books 7–8 (b20–21), but the further investigation of how each regime is ordered and what laws and customs it uses (b22) does not occur in the extant *Politics*. This fact is of the greatest importance. The emphasis throughout *EN* 10. 9 on the study of legislation does not square well with our *Politics*, which investigates the regimes and does *not* provide the account of legislation which Aristotle says is necessary to complete his enquiry.²⁶

train the statesman in legislative science. Aristotle criticizes Plato because his exclusive interest in the best regime leads him to ignore the forms of regime with which the statesman ordinarily must concern himself, and therefore makes his work insufficient to serve as the basis for the education of Aristotle's statesman (set out in *Pol.* 4. 1).

²⁴ Bodéüs' most recent discussion of this passage, "La recherche politique d'après le programme de *L'Éthique à Nicomaque* d'Aristote," *LEC* 51 (1983) 23–33, offers several stimulating suggestions; but his central claim, that "le philosophe . . . pourrait avoir voulu seulement mettre son auditoire en mesure de voir et comprendre, sans envisager expliquer lui-même ce qui devait être vu et compris," is contradicted not only by the plain syntax of the passage (note the subjunctive verbs), but also by the numerous unfulfilled forward references in the *Politics*, collected herein, which prove that he planned to revise and complete it as outlined at 1181b12–24.

²⁵ Cf. 1260b20–24, where Aristotle undertakes a new beginning by considering his predecessors' views on the best regime. Whatever Aristotle's reasons for beginning the *Politics* with a critique of Plato on the forms of rule and *oikonomia*, the argument of Book 2 does not obviously depend upon Book 1, and so a revised version might have begun with Book 2. If Aristotle did plan to begin with a critique of his predecessors' views on the regime, he certainly would have focused upon the best regime, since his predecessors had left legislation uninvestigated by their exclusive focus on the best regime (cf. above, note 23).

²⁶ In fact the whole argument of the *Politics* from the end of Book 1 (1260b22–24) is devoted to the study of regimes, as may be seen by considering the programmatic remarks at the beginning of each of Books 2–8.

Fortunately, however, abundant evidence shows that Aristotle planned to provide this promised (1181b22) account in his "discourses on the regimes." There are several forward references, unfulfilled in our *Politics*, which demonstrate that this work was to include an account of legislation, considered in light of the various forms of regime which lay down the end to which the laws are directed—precisely what Aristotle's account of the lawgiver's education in *EN* 10. 9 would lead one to expect. Thus Aristotle dismisses at the first stage of his argument a discussion of whether it is expedient for a general to hold office for life on the ground that this is more the form of enquiry into laws than of that into the regime (1286a2–7). The implication is that at a later stage, when the enquiry into regimes is completed, Aristotle will take up that concerning the laws. This interpretation is confirmed by his programmatic remarks in 4. 1, where he says that the lawgiver, in order to aid existing regimes, must know not only the various forms of regime but also which laws are suited to which regime; the laws promote the regime's particular ends, and so the lawgiver must understand the forms of regime in order to legislate well (1289a5–25). Hence enquiry into regimes must precede that into legislation (1181b13–14). This evidence, together with *EN* 1181b22 and unfulfilled forward references in Books 4 (1300b5–9) and 6 (1316b40–17a1)—hence Books 4 and 6 cannot be taken as the promised investigation of legislation—show that Aristotle planned to follow his enquiry into the various regimes, which culminates in the account of the best regime in Books 7–8, with one into the laws appropriate to the others as well.²⁷

To reconstruct more precisely how Aristotle planned to revise the *Politics*, let us consider the concluding paragraph of *Pol.* 1, which provides an invaluable guide to the plan of the work as a whole. Here Aristotle explains why his account of the forms of rule and of the virtue and education of members of the household in Book 1 is incomplete and why it must be reconsidered in his promised "discourses on the regimes" (1260b8–20):

²⁷ Note also Aristotle's unfulfilled promise at 1135a13–15 to consider the various forms of justice and injustice, which he may have planned to do in the "discourses on the regimes" in light of the various forms of regime (at 1130b26–29 there is an unambiguous forward reference to the *Politics* [cf. above, note 13]). Note also his account of the five subjects of deliberative oratory in *Rhet.* 1. 4, which he prefaces (1359b16–18) and concludes (1360a37) by saying that these subjects belong properly to *politike* rather than rhetoric. The five subjects are ways and means, war and peace, the defence of the country, imports and exports, and legislation (cf. *Xen. Mem.* 3. 6)—the last being of particular importance, since the city's safety lies in its hands. Consequently, Aristotle says, the deliberative orator must know how many forms of regime there are, what is expedient for each, and how each is destroyed (1360a20–23). And, in order to legislate well, he needs to learn from other peoples "what forms of regime are suitable to what kinds of people" (1360a33), for which purpose he recommends travel books for instruction about the laws of other races. This summary of the subject-matter of *politike* underlines the crucial role of legislation in Aristotle's thought, and confirms our contention that he planned to consider the laws and forms of regime appropriate to various peoples. See also *Rhet.* 1365b21–66a16.

Concerning the virtue belonging severally to the man, woman, children and father and their intercourse towards one another—what is the noble and the ignoble course of action, and how it is necessary to pursue the good and flee the evil—it is necessary to go through in the discourses on the regimes. For since every household is part of a city, and since the members are parts of the household, and one must see the virtue of the part with reference to the virtue of the whole, it is necessary for both children and women to be educated with a view to the regime, if it makes any difference for the goodness of the city whether the children and women are good. And it must make a difference: For the women comprise half of the free population, and from children come the partners in the regime.

Aristotle's promise here to reconsider *oikonomia* from the perspective of the various forms of regime corroborates his plan (1181b22–24) to complete his enquiry by considering how each of the regimes is ordered and what laws and customs each employs. Moreover, this passage also clarifies the contents of the "discourses on the regimes," whose purpose was to discuss the legislation and educational programs appropriate to each of the forms of regime. The many unfulfilled forward references in the *Politics*, to which we now turn, show that this account also was to contain a reconsideration of the contents of Book 1 generally, including natural slavery and acquisition.

(i) In discussing the natural character of the slaves of his best regime, Aristotle states that if possible they should not be of the same stock, and not thymoeidetic (1330a25–33; cf. 1264a34–36; [Ps.-Ar.] *Oec.* 1344b12–14), so that they will be useful for work and unlikely to engage in sedition; or, in the second instance, they should be barbarian subjects who are not thymoeidetic (cf. 1285a19–22).²⁸ He then concludes, "how slaves should be employed, and why it is advantageous to set freedom (*eleutheria*) before them as a reward, we shall explain later" (1330a31–33; cf. [Ps.-Ar.] *Oec.* 1344a23–b22; Xen. *Oec.* 5. 16; Cic. *De Off.* 1. 41). Aristotle probably considered it necessary to reconsider slave-management because he thought that each regime will use slaves differently in accordance with the different ends each promotes (cf. 1322b30–a5).

(ii) The territory of his best regime, Aristotle says (1326b30–39), should be of such a size as to enable the inhabitants to live liberally (*eleutheriōs*) and moderately; but he promises to reconsider this definition more precisely later, when speaking generally about acquisition and the proper use and ownership of wealth. Since Aristotle already has discussed acquisition as a part of *oikonomia* in 1. 8–11, he apparently plans to reconsider it in light of the various forms of regime, because the role of acquisition in a regime varies according to its end (cf. 1280a22–81a8). This

²⁸ Note the reference to the ethnology of 7. 7 at 1285a19–22. Aristotle's insistence that the best regime's slaves not be of a thymoeidetic character is of considerable importance for the interpretation of his account of natural slavery in *Pol.* 1; see "The Statesman and the Soul" (above, note 12) Section IV.

promised account apparently was to form part of Aristotle's reconsideration of *oikonomia* in light of the various forms of regime.²⁹

(iii) Aristotle also planned to discuss education in detail in the "discourses on the regimes"—not surprisingly, given its central role in his political thought. At the conclusion of *Pol.* 1, Aristotle defers discussion of the education of women and children on the grounds that they must be educated with reference to the particular regime in force, since different forms of regime promote different ends, which ends in turn determine its laws and educational program.³⁰ At 1337a14–18, Aristotle states that a city's educational program must correspond to its form of regime, for each regime has its own ethos, which safeguards its particular way of life. Thus Aristotle's account of the laws appropriate to the various forms of regime (1181b22–24) must include discussion of their corresponding educational programs.

Five passages show that he planned to do so. At 1335b2–5, Aristotle promises to discuss the bodily constitution in parents which is most beneficial to children in his discourse on the education of children (*peri paidonomias*), presumably referring to the account promised at 1260b8–20. At 1336b24–27, he promises to consider whether the young should be prevented from seeing iambic verses and comedy; and at 1338a32–36, he promises to consider whether there is one educational program or several in which boys (of the best regime) should be trained with a view to the noble rather than to the necessary. Apparently Aristotle planned to correlate various educational programs with different regimes. Finally, at 1339b10–11 Aristotle promises to consider a series of questions concerning whether music education is able to improve character, and at 1341b38–40 to discuss the meaning of *katharsis*.³¹ The wide variety in subject no less than the specificity of these unfulfilled forward references point to an extensive account of the various programs of public education.

(iv) Aristotle's best regime offers its mature citizens a continuing education in virtue,³² and his promise at 1330a3–5 to explain why common meals are beneficial suggests that he intended to consider the institutional arrangements best suited to educate mature citizens.

One or two of the foregoing examples might conceivably be taken to refer to discussions in other works. But taken cumulatively, they clearly confirm Aristotle's promises to consider how each of the regimes is ordered and what laws and customs each uses, and to complete the *Politics* in his "discourses on the regimes" by reconsidering his initial accounts of virtue and education in light of the various forms of regime. For our purpose it

²⁹ See further above, note 12.

³⁰ Cf. above, note 16 and below, notes 41–42.

³¹ For recent accounts, see Lord (above, note 10) 105–50 and R. Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy* (London 1984) 136–51.

³² Cf. above, note 17 and the corresponding text.

does not matter whether these "discourses" have been lost through a mechanical accident, or whether they were planned but never written,³³ for the extant *Politics* both in its doctrine and plan of argument unambiguously assumes it. Accordingly, let us consider the place of the "discourses on the regimes" in the plan and intention of *politikē*.

III

The persistent scholarly failure to take seriously Aristotle's programmatic statements concerning the political intention of his enquiry into *politikē* is due in part simply to failure to reconstruct its plan precisely. Now that we have seen that Aristotle planned to complete the *Politics* with the account of legislation promised at the conclusion of the *EN*, we may turn to consider what philosophical considerations led Aristotle to present his teaching on *politikē* in separate treatises—in his apolitical *ēthikoi logoi*, on the one hand, and his account of the various forms of regime and their corresponding laws and educational programs, on the other. We shall focus on how the "discourses on the regimes" bring his enquiry to completion.³⁴

The central difficulty which structures Aristotle's presentation of *politikē* is that of considering the individual's moral education in light of the wide variety of regimes in which such education takes place. Aristotle holds that any regime must provide its citizens with a universal, public education conforming to its particular ends and way of life to ensure its self-preservation; cities which fail to do so are thereby harmed.³⁵ The statesman's first task, accordingly, is to educate his citizens according to the ends promoted by the regime in force, whether it be democratic, aristocratic or some other, *not* to make them good human beings without regard to their regime's way of life (cf. 1276b30–33). Since only the best regime promotes ends which accord with the natural hierarchy of human goods, most human beings receive an education intended to make them good citizens of their particular regime, not good human beings without qualification. The doctrine that human beings are to be educated in accordance with the regime in force thus drives a wedge, except in the exceptional case of the best regime, between an education intended to

³³ Lord (above, note 22) 470–71 proposes the hypothesis of a mechanical accident to explain the compositional anomalies of the *Politics*, but this accident must have taken place very early in the transmission of the text, if at all, for the *Politics* alone among the major works is assigned the correct number of books in the pre-Andronic lists, and the contrast Cicero draws (*Fin.* 5. 11) between Aristotle and Theophrastus is explicable only if the *Politics* in his day did not include the "discourses on the regimes." Since the numerous compositional anomalies of the *Politics* cannot be fully resolved by any rearrangement of the text, I doubt that it ever was a finished work.

³⁴ Further arguments in support of the interpretation here advanced are presented in the essay mentioned above, note 12.

³⁵ Cf. 1282b10–11, 1289a1–25, 1308b20–24, 1310a12–36, 1337a11–32.

produce good citizens—good relative to their regime's end—and one intended to produce human beings who are also good without qualification.

Now *politikē* aims, of course, to effect a conjunction between the citizens' good and the good without qualification (cf. above, note 10). Aristotle's explanation of how the statesman may make men good human beings in inferior regimes is explored in Section IV. At present, we need to consider how this problem shapes Aristotle's plan of *politikē* as set out in Section II.

There are, of course, other plans of exposition that he might plausibly have adopted. Thus Aristotle could have treated the forms of regime and their corresponding educational programs *before* the moral education of individuals. Such is his order of exposition, after all, in the *Rhetoric*: When considering deliberative oratory he enumerates the five most important subjects for political deliberation (1. 4) before he takes up the individual's *eudaimonia* in 1. 5; and, again, in 1. 8–9 he considers the forms of regime before turning to virtue and vice. In both cases the dependence of virtue upon the forms of regime leads him to consider the political phenomena with which oratory is concerned before considering moral phenomena. Why then did Aristotle not adopt a similar plan in his exposition of *politikē*, which would enable him to treat moral education in light of the divergent ends promoted by the various regimes?

Aristotle adopts the plan he does adopt, I suggest, because of his normative intention: Just as the city exists by nature to foster not mere life but rather the good life, so Aristotle's enquiry into *politikē* is intended to enable human beings to lead the good life properly understood. Consequently, the statesman in legislating is guided by a double teleology whereby his minimal aim is to preserve his regime, but his higher aim is to turn it toward the good life, so far as circumstances permit (see below, pp. 249–50). He does not merely legislate in the interest of the regime in force, but rather fosters *eudaimonia* for his citizens as far as possible through political virtue.

Now a moment's reflection shows why this intention precludes the alternative plan of exposition just suggested. That plan would enable Aristotle to treat the individual's moral education in light of the different ends promoted by the various regimes. But, since his purpose is to provide the statesman with the knowledge necessary to turn any regime toward the good life, Aristotle could hardly have treated these regimes without first treating the best regime, dedicated to the promotion of human virtue and *eudaimonia* properly understood, from which all other regimes in some sense are deviations. Yet Aristotle's account of the best regime relies upon his account of the best way of life for the individual, as he makes plain at the beginning of *Pol.* 7 (cf. 1323a14–21, 1324a5–13).³⁶ Aristotle's normative intention thus requires him to adopt the plan he does adopt: first,

³⁶ Cf. Lord's commentary on 7. 1–3 (above, note 10) 180–89.

to inquire into the individual's virtue and *eudaimonia*, abstracting from all political considerations; then to consider the forms of regime, their laws and educational programs; and finally, in his "discourses on the regimes," to reconsider the individual's moral education in light of the divergent ends each form of regime promotes. In adopting this plan, Aristotle is able to tie his teaching on moral education to the diversity of regimes in which education takes place.

This plan obviously gives a crucial place to the "discourses on the regimes," which relate the individual's *eudaimonia* to the divergent ends promoted by the various regimes. In order to aid regimes of all kinds, "divergent" as well as "correct" ones, the statesman must know how to apply the doctrine of the ethical writings, always seeking to preserve the regime even as he turns it toward the good life. In relating moral education to the forms of regime, the "discourses" enable the statesman to apply his knowledge of the human good in all circumstances.

Moreover, Aristotle's plan of exposition entails that his teaching in the *EN* is fundamentally incomplete, in that it abstracts from the political circumstances which regulate the individual's moral education. Since all regimes but the best promote views of justice which are partial or even in conflict with the human good, and since education always takes place within a particular political context, the statesman requires a knowledge of "legislative science" to make this teaching effective in inferior regimes. This point deserves particular emphasis, because scholars of Aristotle's moral philosophy, nearly without exception, have ignored the political intention of his teaching.

To see how the doctrine of the *EN* and of *Pol.* 1 is incomplete, and how the "discourses on the regimes" complete it, let us consider the example of *oikonomia*. As we saw, the "discourses" were to reconsider the topics treated in *Pol.* 1: the virtue and education of subordinate members of the household, the forms of rule (1260b10–13), natural slavery (1330a25–33) and acquisition (1326b33–34). Each topic is incomplete without Aristotle's promised reconsideration. His initial account of these topics is incomplete because of the natural differences in the citizen bodies of the various regimes.³⁷ In the ethnology of *Pol.* 7. 7, where Aristotle considers the natural characters of the Europeans, Asians and Greeks, he explains that different peoples (including different Greek peoples) have different natural characters, which make them suited to different kinds of regimes; the diversity in regimes therefore corresponds to natural differences among human beings (1327b23–38):

The nations in cold places, and particularly those in Europe, are filled with spiritedness (*thymos*), but are relatively lacking in intelligence (*dianoia*) and art (*technē*); hence they remain freer, but lack political institutions and are unable to rule their neighbours. Those in Asia, on

³⁷ See Section V of the essay cited above, note 12.

the other hand, have souls endowed with intelligence and art, but lacking in *thymos*; hence they remain ruled and enslaved. But the race of Greeks shares in both qualities, just as it occupies the middle position in space. For it is endowed with both intelligence and *thymos*; hence it remains free, possesses the best political institutions, and is capable of ruling over all, if it should obtain a single regime (*politeia*). And the nations of the Greeks display the same differences in their relations with one another; for some have a nature that is one-sided, whereas others have a nature that is well-blended in relation to both of these capacities. It is clear, therefore, that those who are to be readily guided by the lawgiver toward virtue must be endowed with both intelligence and *thymos* in their nature.

Aristotle's purpose here is to define the natural qualities of the best regime's citizens, whose way of life is dedicated to the leisured cultivation of philosophy (cf. above, note 10). These qualities consist in a natural endowment of *thymos* and *dianoia*, which together make the citizens natural freemen capable of being educated in virtue (cf. 1332b8–10, 1334b7–8), and of maintaining their political freedom. Peoples which lack these natural qualities, Aristotle holds, cannot share in the best way of life.

These natural differences among peoples considerably complicate Aristotle's exposition of *politikē*. For it entails that the diversity among regimes has a natural rather than merely conventional basis. Since peoples differ in their natural characters, different forms of regime and educational programs are needed to promote the different ways of life of which each is capable. The various "correct" forms of regime thus correspond to natural differences among peoples, differences which the statesman must take into account when seeking to make the citizens' good identical with the good without qualification.

It is in consideration of the natural differences among various peoples, I submit, that Aristotle adopts the plan of *politikē* that we have reconstructed. In his initial accounts of the moral virtue and education of the individual and of members of the household, Aristotle plainly wishes to avoid the complexities that would arise from considering them in terms of the divergent ends promoted by various regimes. Accordingly, he abstracts from all relevant political considerations in the *EN* and *Pol.* 1. Similarly, as I have argued in detail elsewhere,³⁸ Aristotle bases the doctrine of *Pol.* 1 on the moral psychology of the ethical writings, abstracting from *thymos*, whose central role in his psychology does not emerge until *Pol.* 7. 7. Thus in his initial account of the *eidē archēs*, for example, he treats the natural relations of rule and subordination in the household on the assumption (later modified by the introduction of *thymos* in *Pol.* 7. 7) that the capacity for prudent deliberation alone constitutes the psychological basis of human freedom. He does so because he holds that not all peoples—or all Greek

³⁸ See Section IV of the essay cited above, note 12.

peoples—possess *thymos*, and that its conjunction with *dianoia* is even rarer. Yet, since the individual's moral education is dependent upon the ends promoted by his regime, Aristotle must reconsider his initial account in light of the natural characters and corresponding forms of regime appropriate to the various peoples. Aristotle planned to provide this reconsideration in his "discourses on the regimes," and the absence of this section from the extant *Politics* has greatly impeded our understanding of the plan and intention animating Aristotle's presentation of *politikē*. Still, our reconstruction of the contents and philosophical motivation of the "discourses" has enabled us to see that the *EN* must be understood in light of the political framework in which it was conceived and presented.

IV

Now that we have reconstructed the plan of Aristotle's exposition of *politikē*, we need to clarify how the statesman uses the teaching of the ethical writings when legislating in particular regimes. In other words, how is that teaching related to the requirement that a regime educate its citizens in accordance with the ends it promotes? As Aristotle explains in *Pol.* 7. 1–3, the statesman's view of the best way of life for his city depends upon his view of the best way of life for the individual.³⁹ But his first task, as Aristotle also emphasizes, is to legislate in accordance with the ends promoted by the regime in force.⁴⁰ Hence Aristotle considers how to preserve not only the "correct" forms of regime, but even tyranny, the worst of the deviant forms. Since the ends promoted by the forms of regime (apart from the best regime) often are incompatible not only with one another but even with the human good,⁴¹ a fundamental dilemma arises. While *politikē* aims to make the citizens' good identical with the human good, the statesman in an inferior regime, if he is to secure its preservation, may well have to legislate with a view to ends which are incompatible with the human good.

It is Aristotle's account of legislative science (*phronēsis nomothetikē*), I suggest, which resolves the dilemma. This science enables an individual, in the absence of an adequate program of public education, to turn his children and friends toward virtue (1180a29–34). Since only Sparta among actual regimes possesses such an educational program, legislative science enables individual citizens as well as the statesman to educate others in accordance with the human good even in inferior regimes which promote

³⁹ Cf. above, note 36 and Vander Waerdt (above, note 1) 84–85.

⁴⁰ Cf. the passages cited above, note 35.

⁴¹ Although Aristotle designates regimes which aim at the common advantage as "correct," and regimes which aim at the ruler's advantage "deviant" (1279a17–21), even correct regimes diverge from the best way of life because the ends they promote are partial and do not accord with the natural hierarchy of human goods (see below, Section V).

ends incompatible with the human good.⁴² In legislating he is guided by a double teleology whereby his first task is to secure his regime's preservation,⁴³ but his higher task is always to turn it toward the good life and to foster genuine *eudaimonia* as far as possible through political virtue.

This double teleology well accords with the role Aristotle assigns to political life in realizing man's natural capacities. As a "political animal" man requires a certain kind of political community in order to survive and live well, and the city comes into being for the sake of life, but it exists for the sake of the good life.⁴⁴ The statesman's purpose, accordingly, is to investigate how cities, families and human beings may share in the good life and *eudaimonia*.⁴⁵ To secure this end he must ensure the city's preservation, and so may be said to be concerned in the first instance with "mere life" as opposed to the good life. But his higher purpose is always to improve his citizens' way of life in accordance with the normative intention of *politiikē*.

The most striking example of this double teleology at work is Aristotle's discussion in 5. 9 of the two ways of preserving tyranny: First, the tyrant may seek to humble his subjects, keeping them in mutual distrust and incapable of action—thus preserving his power but in no way falling short of wickedness (1313a24–14a29); or he may attempt to make his rule kingly, governing in his citizens' interest and protecting only his power—thus his rule will become more honorable and longer lived, and his character will become nobly disposed toward virtue or at least only half-base (1314a30–15b10). This second course of action shows how the tyrant's rule may be turned toward virtue even as it is preserved. This example also illustrates how legislative science can aid in effecting the moral improvement of inferior regimes within the constraints imposed by its ends.

In seeking to reform an existing regime or to found a new one, then, the statesman aims to turn it toward the good life, so much as circumstances permit. To discharge this task, as Aristotle explains in 4. 1, he needs to understand each of the forms of regime, their corresponding laws and

⁴² Bodéüs (above, note 1) 113 n. 26 goes seriously astray in his contention that "il s'agit, en l'occurrence, de remédier aux carences du législateur et non d'édicter des règles de conduite prétendument meilleures que les normes implicitement recommandées par la législation," an assumption which vitiates his conclusion (221–25). This interpretation of the intention of legislative science is unsupported by any text and is refuted by the evidence adduced below which proves that the statesman's task is not merely to legislate in the interest of the regime in force, but to foster *eudaimonia* among his citizens.

⁴³ On Aristotle's preference for reforming a deviant regime rather than replacing it through revolution, see R. Bodéüs, "La durée des régimes politiques comme condition de la morale selon Aristote," *Justifications de l'éthique*, XIXe Congrès de l'Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Française (Louvain 1983) 103–08.

⁴⁴ Cf. 1252b29–30 with 1278b19–30, 1280a31–34, 1280b39–81a4, 1283a14–22; EN 1160a11–30.

⁴⁵ Cf. 1325a7–10 with 1333a33–39; EN 1099b29–30, 1103b2–6, 1113b21–26, 1129b14–30a13.

educational programs, and what tends to preserve and destroy them. In order to realize his normative intention, in other words, he requires a wide body of empirical knowledge, partly provided in Books 4–6 and partly promised for the “discourses on regimes,” to guide him in legislating for the various regimes. The task of *politikē*, Aristotle holds, is four-fold (1288b21–35):

It is clear that, with respect to the regime, it belongs to the same science to investigate (i) what the best regime is, and what quality it should have to be what one would particularly pray for, with external things providing no impediment; and (ii) which regime is fitting for which [peoples]. For perhaps it is impossible for many to obtain the best, so that the good lawgiver and the true statesman ought not to overlook the one that is superior simply and the one that is best under the circumstances. Moreover, thirdly, [it belongs to the same science to investigate] (iii) the regime based upon a presupposition: for any given regime ought to be investigated [to determine how] it could arise in the beginning and in what way, once it has come into existence, it could be preserved for the longest time (I mean the case where it happens that some city neither conducts politics in the manner of the best regime—and lacks even the necessary equipment for it—nor in the manner of the regime possible for it under the circumstances, but some inferior one); and, besides all these things, (iv) the regime that is especially fitting for all cities ought to be recognized . . .

Aristotle’s program of *politikē* is intended to avoid his predecessors’ errors of failing to investigate the best possible regime and the one more attainable for all, or of praising some existing one, such as the Spartan (cf. 1260b27–36). In contrast, Aristotle holds that the statesman should be able to aid existing regimes by reforming them in accordance with an arrangement that arises directly out of those that exist (1289a1–5; cf. above, note 43). His knowledge of legislative science enables him to educate his citizens in accordance with the human good even in regimes which promote ends conflicting with that good.

V

Our purpose has been to reconstruct the political framework of Aristotle’s moral philosophy. In dividing his account of *politikē* into separate works, he does not seek to establish “ethics” as an autonomous science, but to account for the variety of regimes in which moral education takes place. In his “discourses on the regimes,” as we have seen, Aristotle planned to explain the relation between these two works by reconsidering the topics treated in the *EN* and *Pol.* 1 in light of the divergent ends and ways of life promoted by the various forms of regime. Let us now turn to consider the implications of this plan for interpretation of one aspect of Aristotle’s ethical writings, his account of moral virtue.

It is not controversial that an individual's views about the human good are decisively informed by the laws, customs and educational programs of his regime. What is most striking about Aristotle's position, however, and what has gone entirely unnoticed in the scholarship, is that justice and the moral virtues vary according to the end promoted by the regime in force. Since the "discourses on the regimes" are not extant, we lack the comprehensive account of the relation between the virtues and the forms of regime that Aristotle planned to provide here. But when discussing deliberative oratory in *Rhetoric* 1. 8 he writes as follows (1365b21–66a16):

The greatest and most authoritative of all the means of persuasion and of noble counsel is to know all the regimes and to distinguish the customs, manners and advantage of each. For all men are persuaded by what is advantageous, and that which preserves the regime is advantageous. Moreover, the declaration of authority is authoritative, for there are as many [forms of] authority as there are [forms of] regime. And there are four [forms of] regime—democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy and monarchy—so that the deciding authority is always a part or the whole of one of these . . .

One should not neglect the end of each regime, for men make choices with reference to the end. Now the end of democracy is liberty, of oligarchy wealth, of aristocracy things relating to education and the laws, [. . .] and of tyranny self-preservation. It is clear, then, that one must distinguish the customs, manners and advantage relating to the end of each, since men choose with reference to this. But since proofs are established not only by demonstrative but also by ethical argument (for we trust one who appears to be of a certain sort—good or well-intentioned or both), we would need to be acquainted with the characters of each of the regimes, for with reference to each the character most likely to persuade is that characteristic of it. These characters will be grasped by the same means, for characters are manifest in accordance with intentional choice, and intentional choice has reference to the end.

Aristotle does not discuss the "character" of each of the forms of regime in the extant *Politics*, but it is clear that this character decisively informs a regime's way of life. At the outset of his account of the best regime's educational program, Aristotle says "it is necessary to educate with a view to each [form of] regime; for the special character of each regime both customarily preserves the regime and establishes it in the beginning, for example the democratic character democracy and the oligarchic character oligarchy; and the best character is always the cause of a better regime" (1337a14–18; cf. 1310a12–18). Aristotle ranks regimes according to their character because this character reflects the partial or incomplete way in which the various regimes promote the best way of life as elaborated in *Pol.* 7–8. Similarly, his account of justice and the other virtues depends on the divergent ends promoted by the various regimes. In *Pol.* 5. 9 he says that a ruler ought to possess virtue and justice: "in each regime the kind that is

relative to the regime; for if justice is not the same in all regimes, there must also necessarily be differences in [the virtue of] justice" (1309a36–39). Thus not only the good citizen's justice but his other moral virtues as well vary according to the end promoted by his regime (cf. 1276b30–33, 1284a1–3). In the extant *Politics* Aristotle does not spell out how the moral virtues are adjusted to the ends of the various regimes.⁴⁶ He does state, however, that "[the virtue of] justice is a virtue characteristic of associations, and that all the other virtues necessarily follow upon it" (1283a38–40). The other virtues evidently follow upon justice because justice is perfect virtue not simply but toward others and so in a sense is not a part of virtue but the whole of virtue (cf. 1129b11–30a10).⁴⁷ Hence the moral virtues depend upon a regime's ends just as justice as a whole does. In short, the good citizen's virtue varies according to his regime's end.

Aristotle provides some indication of how the moral virtues depend upon the forms of regime in his account of the partial claims to justice advanced by the democrats and oligarchs. Both parties agree that justice consists in a certain kind of equality, but the democrats suppose that those who are equal in one respect, freedom, are equal simply, whereas the oligarchs suppose that those who are unequal in another respect, wealth, are unequal simply (cf. 1280a7–25, 1282b16–83a22, 1301a25–b4). Both parties, Aristotle argues in *Pol.* 3. 9, overlook the decisive consideration: the end for which the city is constituted. If the city were constituted for the sake of possessions, the oligarchs' argument would be strong; but since it is rather constituted for a complete and self-sufficient life, for the sake not merely of living together but of noble actions, the decisive consideration is virtue. Both democratic justice and oligarchic justice only partially reflect justice properly understood. And since the other moral virtues follow upon inclusive or universal justice, democratic and oligarchic regimes presumably educate their citizens according to an understanding of the human good as partial as their principles of justice. A regime's character comes to light in the laws it enacts to promote its ends, and this character is better the more closely its ends, whether democratic, oligarchic or some other, correspond to the human good (cf. 1310a12–18, 1337a14–18).

The fact that justice and the moral virtues vary according to a regime's ends sharply underscores the importance of the political framework of Aristotle's moral philosophy. In practice, the moral virtues always come to light in a particular regime, whose perspective is partial to the extent that its ends diverge from those of the best regime. The account of the moral virtues presented in the ethical writings, accordingly, is incomplete inasmuch as it abstracts from the political circumstances which in practice always govern the individual's moral education—the "character," laws and

⁴⁶ As W. L. Newman recognizes in his commentary (Oxford 1902) IV 403.

⁴⁷ On this subject see D. O'Connor, "The Actiology of Justice," to appear in a volume of essays on the *Politics* edited by C. Lord.

educational programs of the various forms of regime. In fact, it is only in the exceptional case of the best regime, which educates its citizens in accordance with the natural hierarchy of human goods,⁴⁸ that the moral virtues appear just as they are presented in the ethical writings. In all inferior regimes, they emerge in the partial perspective of ends which diverge from the best way of life. But since all regimes educate their citizens in accordance with the ends they promote, one who wishes to employ legislative science to turn others towards virtue must understand these inferior regimes in order to apply his knowledge of the human good properly. It is only through the statesman's legislative science that the political face of virtue in inferior regimes may somehow come to resemble virtue properly understood. That is why, after all, the enquiry into *politikē* that Aristotle begins in the *EN* is incomplete without the extant *Politics* and the promised "discourses on the regimes."

Contrary to the near-universal assumption of modern scholarship, then, Aristotle's teaching in the ethical writings emerges in its proper light only within its political framework. The scholarly practice of reading the ethical writings in isolation from the *Politics* has no foundation whatsoever in Aristotle's thought. If we wish to understand his moral philosophy, we must restore it to the political context in which it was originally conceived and presented.

Duke University

⁴⁸ Or at least as far as is possible on the level of politics: see Vander Waerdt (above, note 1) 84–85.

