Thucydides, Book One
The Archaeology
(Hammond Translation)

BOOK ONE

1 Thucydides of Athens wrote this history of the war fought against each other by the Peloponnesians and the Athenians.

He began his work right at the outbreak, reckoning that this would be a major war and more momentous than any previous conflict. There were two grounds for this belief: both sides were at the full height of their power and their resource for war, and he saw the rest of the Greeks allying with one or the other, either immediately or in intent.

This was in fact the greatest disturbance to affect the Greek and a good part of the non-Greek world, one might even say the majority of mankind. Accurate research into earlier or yet more ancient history was impossible given the great gap of time, but I have enquired as far into the past as I can, and on the evidence which I can trust I think there was nothing then on a large scale, either in wars or in anything else.

2 It is clear that what is now called Greece was not originally a country of stable settlements. In earlier times there were constant migrations, any group readily moving on from its present land each time they were forced out by others who happened to be superior in numbers. There was no trade, no secure communication with each other by land or sea. Each group grazed its own land for subsistence, not building up financial reserves or farming the land, as it was never known when someone else might attack and take it from them—besides, there were no walls. In the belief that they could acquire the daily necessities of food anywhere else, it was easy enough for them to uproot. For that reason they lacked the strength of large cities and all other kinds of resource. The best land always had the most changes of population—what is now called Thessaly and Boeotia, most of the Peloponnese apart from Arcadia, and the finest soil elsewhere. It was the quality of the earth which led to an imbalance of power and the resulting internal quarrels which destroyed communities, as well as the greater risk of aggression from outsiders. Certainly the thin soil of Attica kept it largely free of such internal strife, so the original population remained. And here is substantial proof of my argument that migrations prevented comparable development elsewhere: the

most powerful of those forced out of the rest of Greece by war or civil strife resorted to Athens as a stable society. These new arrivals, admitted to citizenship, directly increased the population of the city from its original size, so that later, with Attica no longer able to support them, colonies were sent out to Ionia.

3 This again I see as significant proof of the weakness of the ancient population: before the Trojan War there is no evidence of any previous enterprise undertaken in common by Greece. Even the very name 'Hellas' was not, I believe, applied to the whole country: and before Hellen the son of Deucalion this appellation did not even exist. Before then the various tribes took their own names, with the Pelasgians the foremost. When Hellen and his sons grew to power in Phthiotis, and were called in as allies to aid the other settlements in the region, these other peoples began one by one to be known as Hellenes, by association: but it was a long time before this name prevailed over all others. The best evidence for this is Homer. He lived much later, born long after the Trojan War, and yet nowhere does he apply this name to the whole Greek force, confining it to Achilles' contingent from Phthiotis, the original Hellenes: in his poems he calls the Greeks Danaans, Argives, or Achaeans. Indeed there is no mention of 'barbarians' either, the reason being, it seems to me, that there had not yet evolved any equivalent generic term for the Greeks. However that may be, these various peoples who came to be called Hellenes—either individually, as understanding of a common language gradually spread from people to people, or, later, collectively—by reason of their weakness and their isolation from each other undertook no combined action before the Trojan War. But they could only make this joint expedition because by now they had acquired greater experience of the sea.

4 Minos is the earliest of those known to tradition who established a navy. He took control of most of what is now called the Hellenic Sea, and ruled over the Cyclades islands, in most of which he founded the first colonies, driving out the Carians and installing his own sons as governors: and naturally he set about clearing the sea of piracy, as far as he could, to protect his own increasing revenues.

5 As soon as traffic in ships developed between them, piracy was the recourse of the ancient Greeks and of the barbarians occupying coastal regions of the mainland and the islands. The leaders were powerful men motivated both by personal gain and by the provision of food for the weak. They fell for their plunder on unwalled communities with

the population scattered in villages, and this was much of their livelihood. Such occupation did not yet carry any stigma: rather it even brought some glory. Further illustration is given by some of the mainlanders even now, who take successful piracy as a compliment, and by the ancient poets: the regular question put to all who arrive by sea is 'Are you pirates?', with no expectation of denial by the questioned or criticism from the questioner.

They robbed each other on land also. Even to the present day much of Greece maintains the old ways—among the Ozolian Locrians, the Aetolians, the Acarnanians, and the mainland thereabouts. These mainlanders still retain the habit of bearing arms from the old days of robbery. There was a time when all of Greece carried arms: with 6 their settlements unprotected and travel dangerous, arms were a regular part of their lives, as among barbarians now. The fact that those parts of Greece which I have mentioned still live like this is an indication of what was once a universal practice.

The Athenians were the first to abandon weapons and relax their lifestyle into something more luxurious. Affectation lingered long: it is only recently that older men of the wealthier families stopped wearing linen tunics and tying their hair in a topknot fastened with golden cicadas—hence the same fashion which prevailed for some time among the older of their kinsmen in Ionia. It was then the Spartans who first adopted simple dress and set the present style: in other ways also the wealthier among them conformed their habits to those of the common people. They were the first, too, to strip naked for the games, to take off their clothes in public and to rub themselves with oil after exercise. Originally—even in the Olympic games—contending athletes took part with loincloths covering their genitals, and it is not many years since this practice ceased. Some barbarians even now, especially in Asia, hold boxing and wrestling bouts in which loincloths are worn. There are many other resemblances one could point to between the old Greek and the present barbarian ways of life.

The more recent foundations—when navigation was more 7 common and there was greater capital resource—were of cities built with fortifying walls right on the coast, commanding the isthmuses in each case both for trade and for defence against neighbouring peoples. The old cities, both in the islands and on the mainlands, were established away from the sea because of the prevalence of piracy—and the pirates plundered not only one another but also any

coastal dwellers who lacked sea power. These cities are still in their inland locations.

8 The islanders were pirates no less. They were Carians and Phoenicians, the peoples who colonized most of the islands. The evidence is that when Delos was purified by the Athenians in the course of this war and all the graves of those buried in the island were opened, over half of the bodies were seen to be Carians—identified by the style of armour buried with them and the method of burial, which is still in use among them.

After Minos had established his navy communication by sea became safer—in the process of colonizing most of the islands he also drove the malefactors out of them. People living by the sea could now build up greater wealth and lead a more secure existence: with their new affluence some even surrounded themselves with walls. Desire for profit was the motivation both for the weaker to tolerate the domination of the stronger and for the more powerful to use their economic advantage for the subjection of lesser cities. This sort of development had progressed some way by the time of the expedition to Troy.

9 I am inclined to think that it was Agamemnon's pre-eminent power at the time which enabled him to raise this fleet, and not so much that he was followed by the suitors of Helen, bound by the oaths they had sworn to Tyndareus. Those who have preserved most clearly the traditional lore of the Peloponnese say that first of all Pelops acquired such power from the vast wealth which he brought with him from Asia to a poor country that the whole land took its name from him, despite his foreign origin. Thereafter his descendants grew yet more prosperous. Eurystheus was killed in Attica by the sons of Heracles, but as he set out on that expedition he had entrusted Mycenae and its rule, out of kinship, to his maternal uncle Atreus, who had been banished by his father for the murder of Chrysippus. When Eurystheus failed to return, at the Mycenaeans' own request (they were frightened of the sons of Heracles) Atreus took over the kingship of Mycenae and all else that Eurystheus had ruled: he had the reputation of a powerful man, and he had cultivated the common people. So it was that the line of Pelops established supremacy over the line of Perseus. This was Agamemnon's inheritance, and, with greater naval power than any other, it seems to me that his gathering of the expeditionary force depended more on fear than on good will. He evidently brought the largest number of ships to Troy and, in addition to his own, provided a fleet for the Arcadians—so

Homer declares, if he is sufficient authority. And in the description of the sceptre he inherited Homer speaks of Agamemnon as 'king over many islands and all of Argos'. Now as a mainland ruler Agamemnon could not have controlled any islands other than the relatively few close by if he did not possess a substantial navy. From this expedition we can make conjectures about the nature of those before it.

10 The fact that Mycenae was a small place—or that the buildings of any town of that period do not now seem very impressive—would not be a valid argument for doubting the scale of the expedition as related by the poets and maintained in the tradition. For example, if the city of Sparta were to become deserted, with only the temples and the foundations of buildings left to the view, I imagine that with the passage of time future generations would find it very hard to credit its reputed power. And yet the Spartans occupy two-fifths of the Peloponnese and lead the whole, as well as many external allies: but their dispersed settlement, devoid of temples or expensive buildings, more a collection of villages in the old Greek way, would seem rather disappointing. If the same happened to Athens, people would assume from the overt appearance that the city's power was twice what it is. So there is no cause for disbelief, nor should we judge cities by their appearance rather than their power. It is reasonable to think that that Trojan expedition was greater than all in previous history, but still short of the modern scale. If once more we can trust Homer's poems in this respect—and it is likely that, being a poet, he would exaggerate—even so Agamemnon's forces seem less than those of the present day. Homer gives a total of twelve hundred ships, with the Boeotian ships carrying a hundred and twenty men and Philoctetes' ships fifty, thereby indicating, it seems to me, the largest and the smallest: at any rate there is no other mention of complement in the Catalogue of Ships. That all were fighting men as well as rowers is clear from his description of Philoctetes' ships, where he has all those at the oars archers too.

It is unlikely that there were many non-rowing passengers apart from the kings and the highest other commanders, especially since they had to cross the open sea with all their military equipment and in ships without fenced decking, built in the old piratical style. So to take the mean of the largest and the smallest ships the numbers embarked do not seem very great for a combined expedition from the whole of Greece.

11 The reason was not shortage of men so much as shortage of money. Lack of supplies made them limit the expeditionary force to the

number of troops they thought would be able to live off the land they were fighting in: and even when they had secured the initial victory on arrival (clearly—otherwise they would not have been able to fortify their camp), they did not bring to bear their full force, but were diverted to cultivation of the Chersonese and pillage to supply the lack of food. This dispersal of the Greek troops contributed to the Trojans' ability to hold out against them for those ten years—they could match whatever proportion of the Greek army remained in the field. If the Greeks had come with plentiful supplies and prosecuted the war in full numbers without the interruptions of pillage and cultivation, they would easily have prevailed in the field and taken the city, given that even in less than full numbers they could hold the enemy with whatever sections they had at their disposal: and if they had settled down to a siege they could have taken Troy in shorter time and with less difficulty. But the reason was shortage of money, which had kept all previous campaigns small-scale. Even this one, which became the most famous of them all, is seen to be less impressive in fact than in reputation and in the prevailing tradition established by the poets.

12 Even after the Trojan War Greece continued in a state of upheaval and resettlement, with no opportunity for peaceful growth. The long delay of the Greek return from Troy caused many changes: internal strife developed widely in the cities, and those who were driven into exile founded settlements elsewhere. For example, in the sixtieth year after the capture of Troy the present Boeotians were driven out of Arne by the Thessalians and founded what is now Boeotia but was earlier called Cadmeïs (there had been a contingent of them in this country before, which contributed to the Trojan expedition): and in the eightieth year the Dorians occupied the Peloponnese with the descendants of Heracles. After a long period of difficulty Greece eventually reached a stable state of peace, when the shifts of populations ceased and they began to send out colonies. The Athenians colonized Ionia and most of the islands: the Peloponnesians founded the majority of the colonies in Italy and Sicily, and some in other parts of Greece. All these colonies were established after the Trojan War.

13 As Greece became more powerful, and the accumulation of wealth exceeded previous levels, the growth of revenues led in most cities to the establishment of tyrannies in place of the earlier hereditary kingships with fixed prerogatives: and Greece began to fit out navies and make increasing use of the sea. It is said that the Corinthians were the

first to have managed shipbuilding in something close to the present way, and that the first triremes in Greece were built in Corinth. A Corinthian shipbuilder, Ameinocles, is known to have built four ships for the Samians, and his visit to Samos was about three hundred years before the end of this present war. The earliest sea-battle of which we have record was that between the Corinthians and the Corcyraeans about two hundred and sixty years before the same date.

Situated as it is on the Isthmus, the city of Corinth was always, from the very beginning, a commercial centre. In earlier times when traffic was more by land than by sea, the Greeks within and without the Peloponnese had to pass through Corinthian territory to trade with each other, and Corinth was an economic power—witness the epithet 'wealthy' applied to the place by the ancient poets. When the Greeks took more to sea transport, the Corinthians acquired a fleet and set about eliminating piracy: able then to offer commerce on both elements, they kept their city powerful on the revenues thus received.

Later substantial naval power developed among the Ionians. This was in the time of Cyrus, the first King of Persia, and of his son Cambyses, and in war with Cyrus the Ionians controlled for some time the whole of their own sea. Then Polycrates, tyrant of Samos in the time of Cambyses, used his naval strength to subject a number of the islands, including Rheneia, which he captured and dedicated to Delian Apollo. The Phocaeans too, when they were colonizing Massalia, won a sea-battle against the Carthaginians.

14 These were the most powerful navies of the time. And yet it is clear that, though operating many generations later than the Trojan War, they employed few triremes and were still equipped with the penteconters and long ships of that much earlier age. Shortly before the Persian Wars and the death of Dareius (King of Persia after Cambyses), triremes came to be used in numbers by the Sicilian tyrants and the Corcyraeans: these were the last navies of any significance in Greece before the expedition of Xerxes. The Aeginetans and the Athenians, and a few others, had acquired small fleets, which consisted largely of penteconters. It was only recently, when Athens was at war with Aegina and the barbarian invasion was in prospect, that Themistocles persuaded the Athenians to build the ships in which they subsequently fought their great sea-battle: and even these did not yet have full decking.

15 Such then was the state of the Greek navies of both earlier and more recent times. Yet those who concentrated on their navies acquired

considerable power through financial revenue and the domination of others: islands were subjugated by naval expeditions, especially by those who were short of territory. There was no land war which resulted in any shift of power. Such wars as took place were all local affairs between contiguous states, and the Greeks did not undertake distant expeditions for foreign conquest. The big cities had not yet formed leagues of subject allies, nor did they choose to make common cause in any joint expedition: rather all wars were fought individually between neighbours. The main exception was the war fought long ago between Chalcis and Eretria, when alliance with one side or the other split the rest of Greece.

16 There ensued a range of obstacles to the progress of the various Greek states. The Ionians, for example, had been developing strongly, but then Cyrus and the Persian kingdom destroyed Croesus, invaded the area between the river Halys and the sea, and subjugated the mainland cities—Dareius later doing the same to the islands with the

17 power of his Phoenician fleet. As for the tyrants in the Greek cities, whose only concern was for themselves, for their own physical safety and the aggrandizement of their family, security was as far as possible their greatest political aim, and nothing notable was done by any of them, other than perhaps in a campaign against their neighbours: and in Sicily the tyrants did indeed increase their power greatly in this way. The result was that all over Greece there was a long paralysis preventing any clear common action or individual initiative in the cities.

18 Eventually the Spartans deposed not only the Athenian tyrants but also those in the rest of Greece, which for the most part had fallen under tyrannies earlier than Athens—at least they deposed the majority of them: with the exception of those in Sicily these were the last of the tyrants. Sparta itself, after the arrival of the present Dorian inhabitants, went through the longest period of unrest in recorded history, yet even so its system of good order is very ancient and it has never been subject to tyrants. The Spartan constitution has remained unchanged for somewhat over four hundred years dating to the end of this war—a source of strength, enabling their political intervention in other states.

Not many years after the deposition of the Greek tyrants the battle of Marathon was fought between the Persians and the Athenians. Ten years later the barbarians returned with their huge armament for the subjection of Greece. With great danger impending, the Spartans,

as the leading power, took command of the Greeks allied for the war, and in the face of the Persian invasion the Athenians decided to abandon their city: they decamped, took to their ships, and became sailors. A joint effort had driven away the barbarians, but not long afterwards the Greeks—both the allied combatants and those who had revolted from the King of Persia—split into two groups, favouring either the Athenians or the Spartans. These were now conspicuously the greatest powers, the one strong on land, the other by sea. The defensive alliance held for a short while, but then differences broke out and the Spartans and the Athenians, together with their allies, were at war with each other—any other Greeks who might have disputes now joining one side or the other. So from the Persian War to the present conflict there were alternating periods of truce and war, either against each other or caused by revolts among their allies. As a result both sides were well prepared militarily and had acquired the added experience of drills tested in real danger.

19 The Spartan hegemony did not involve the imposition of tribute on their allies, but they took care to ensure oligarchic rule exclusively in their own interest: whereas the Athenians in time came to deprive all subject cities of their ships and require payment of tribute, with the exceptions of Chios and Lesbos. The resources of Athens alone for this present war were greater than those at the height of the combined power when the alliance against Persia was intact.

20 Such are my conclusions about the past, though in this investigation it was difficult to rely on every one of a whole series of indications. All men show the same uncritical acceptance of the oral traditions handed on to them, even about the history of their own country. Most Athenians, for example, think that Hipparchus was tyrant of Athens when he was killed by Harmodius and Aristogeiton: they do not know that Hippias was the ruler as the eldest of the sons of Peisistratus, with Hipparchus and Thessalus his younger brothers. In fact on that very day Harmodius and Aristogeiton had a sudden suspicion that Hippias had been informed by some of the conspirators: so they kept clear of Hippias, thinking him forewarned, and, wanting to take their chances with some bold action before they were arrested, found Hipparchus organizing the Panathenaic procession by the shrine called Leocoreium and killed him.

I could point to many other false beliefs—about the contemporary world, not the long-forgotten past—in the rest of Greece too: for example, that the Spartan kings do not have one vote each, but two;

and that at Sparta there is a company of troops called 'the Pitana division', which in fact has never existed. This shows how little trouble most people take in their search for the truth—they happily resort to ready-made opinions.

21 Nevertheless anyone accepting the broad facts of my account on the arguments I have adduced will not go wrong. He will put less faith in the glorified tales of the poets and the compilations of the prose chroniclers, whose stories are written more to please the ear than to serve the truth, are incapable of proof, and for the most part, given the lapse of time, have passed into the unreliable realms of romance. He will conclude that my research, using the clearest evidence available, provides a sufficiently accurate account considering the antiquity of the events. As for this present war, although men always think that any war they are engaged in is the greatest of all wars, and then when it is over return to their awe of past conflicts, this war will even so prove itself, to those who examine the pure facts, a greater war than any in previous history.

22 Of the various speeches made either when war was imminent or in the course of the war itself, it has been hard to reproduce the exact words used either when I heard them myself or when they were reported to me by other sources. My method in this book has been to make each speaker say broadly what I supposed would have been needed on any given occasion, while keeping as closely as I could to the overall intent of what was actually said. In recording the events of the war my principle has been not to rely on casual information or my own suppositions, but to apply the greatest possible rigour in pursuing every detail both of what I saw myself and of what I heard from others. It was laborious research, as eyewitnesses on each occasion would give different accounts of the same event, depending on their individual loyalties or memories. It may be that the lack of a romantic element in my history will make it less of a pleasure to the ear: but I shall be content if it is judged useful by those who will want to have a clear understanding of what happened—and, such is the human condition, will happen again at some time in the same or a similar pattern. It was composed as a permanent legacy, not a show-piece for a single hearing.

23 The most extensive action in previous history was the Persian War: yet even that was brought to a swift conclusion by two battles at sea and two on land. This war far exceeded the Persian War in length, and over its course the suffering that resulted for Greece was

unparalleled in such a timescale. Never before were so many cities captured and desolated, some by barbarians, others through internal conflict (and in some a change of population followed their capture); never so many refugees or such slaughter, both in the war itself and as a consequence of civil strife. The phenomena in the old stories, more often told than attested, now became credible fact: earthquakes, which affected large areas with particular intensity; eclipses of the sun, occurring more frequently than in previous memory; major droughts in some parts, followed by famine; and, one of the most destructive causes of widespread death, the infectious plague. All these had their impact along with this war.

The war was begun by the Athenians and Peloponnesians when they broke the Thirty Years Treaty which they had established after the capture of Euboea. I have set out first the grievances and disputes which led to this breach, so that nobody in future will need to look for the immediate cause which brought such a great war on the Greeks. In my view the real reason, true but unacknowledged, which forced the war was the growth of Athenian power and Spartan fear of it: but the openly proclaimed grievances on either side causing the breach of the treaty and the outbreak of war were as follows.

24 The city of Epidamnus is situated on the right as you sail up the Ionian Gulf: it is bordered by the Taulantians, a barbarian people of Illyrian descent. Epidamnus was colonized by the Corcyraeans, though the founder-colonist was a Corinthian, Phalius the son of Eratocleides, of the Heraclid family: as was the old custom, the founder was invited from the original mother-city. A number of other settlers joined from Corinth and the rest of the Dorian peoples.

As time went on Epidamnus grew in power and population: but then, it is said, after many years of internal strife the Epidamnians were destroyed in a war with their barbarian neighbours and lost most of their power. Most recently, just before this great war, the people of Epidamnus drove out the men in political control: these then joined forces with the barbarians and began to attack the city people in raids by land and sea. When the Epidamnians in the city found themselves beleaguered, they sent representatives to Corcyra, as their mother-city, appealing for intervention: Corcyra should not stand by and see them destroyed, but should broker a settlement with the exiled party and put an end to the war waged by the barbarians. They made this appeal sitting as suppliants in the temple of Hera: but the Corcyraeans rejected their supplication, and sent them away empty-handed.

man and me, when I put the question on his behalf: "If Hippocrates becomes a pupil of Protagoras, and goes away a better man on the very day he becomes a pupil, and makes similar progress every day, what will he be better at, and in what respect will he make progress?"'

Protagoras answered, 'You have put a good question, Socrates, and I like answering people who do that. If Hippocrates comes to me he won't have the same experience as he would have had had he gone to any other sophist. The others maltreat young men; they come to them to get away from school studies, and they take them and pitch them back into those studies against their will, and teach them arithmetic and astronomy and geometry and music and literature'—and as he said this he looked at Hippias—'but if he comes to me he won't learn anything but what he came for. What I teach is the proper management of one's own affairs, how best to run one's household, and the management of public affairs, how to make the most effective contribution to the affairs of the city both by word and action.'

'Have I understood you correctly, then?' I said. 'You seem to me to be talking about the art of running a city, and to be promising to make men into good citizens.'

'That, Socrates,' he said, 'is precisely what I undertake to do.'

'It's a splendid thing to have discovered,' I said, 'if you have in fact discovered how to do it (for I shall not say, particularly to you, anything other than what I really think). I didn't think that that was something that could be taught, but since you say that you teach it I don't see how I can doubt you. Why I think that it can't be taught or handed on from one man to another, I ought to explain. I say, as do the rest of the Greeks, that the Athenians are wise. Well, I observe that when a decision has to be taken at the state assembly about some matter of building, they send for the builders to give their advice about the buildings, and when it concerns shipbuilding they send for the shipwrights, and similarly in every case where they are dealing with a subject which they think can be learned and taught. But if anyone else tries to give advice, whom they don't regard as an expert, no matter how handsome or wealthy or well-born he is, they still will have none

5 of him, but jeer at him and create an uproar, until either the would-be speaker is shouted down and gives up of his own accord, or else the police drag him away or put him out on the order of the presidents. That's the way they act in what they regard as a d technical matter. But when some matter of state policy comes up for consideration, anyone can get up and give his opinion, be he carpenter, smith or cobbler, merchant or ship-owner, rich or poor, 5 noble or low-born, and no one objects to them as they did to those I mentioned just now, that they are trying to give advice about something which they never learnt, nor ever had any instruction in. So it's clear that they don't regard that as something that can be e taught. And not only is this so in public affairs, but in private life our wisest and best citizens are unable to hand on to others the excellence which they possess. For Pericles, the father of these young men, educated them very well in those subjects in which 320a there were teachers, but he neither instructs them himself nor has them instructed by anyone else in those matters in which he is himself wise; no, they wander about on their own like sacred cattle looking for pasture, hoping to pick up excellence by chance. Or take the case of Cleinias, the younger brother of Alcibiades here. 5 Pericles, whom I mentioned just now, is his guardian, and no doubt for fear he should be corrupted by Alcibiades he took him away from him and sent him to be brought up in Ariphron's house; and b before six months were up he gave him back to Alcibiades, not knowing what to do with him. And I could mention many others, good men themselves, who never made anyone better, either their own families, or anyone else. So when I consider these facts, 5 Protagoras, I don't think that excellence can be taught. But then when I hear you say that you teach it, I am swayed once again and think that there must be something in what you say, as I regard you as someone of great experience and learning, who has made discoveries himself. So if you can show us more clearly that c excellence can be taught, please don't grudge us your proof, but proceed.'

'Certainly I shall not grudge it you, Socrates,' he said. 'But would you rather that I showed you by telling a story (as an older man speaking to his juniors) or by going through a systematic

exposition?'

Several of those who were sitting around asked him to proceed in whichever way he preferred. 'Well,' he said, 'I think that it will be more enjoyable to tell you a story.' 5

Great Speech

'Once upon a time there were just the gods; mortal beings did not yet exist. And when the appointed time came for them to come into being too, the gods moulded them within the earth, mixing together earth and fire and their compounds. And when they were about to bring them out into the light of day, they appointed Prometheus and Epimetheus to equip each kind with the powers it required. Epimetheus asked Prometheus to let him assign the powers himself. "Once I have assigned them", he said, "you can inspect them;" so Prometheus agreed, and Epimetheus assigned the powers. To some creatures he gave strength, but not speed, while he equipped the weaker with speed. He gave some claws or horns, and for those without them he devised some other power for their preservation. To those whom he made of small size, he gave winged flight, or a dwelling underground; to those that he made large, he gave their size itself as a protection. And in the same way he distributed all the other things, balancing one against another. This he did to make sure that no species should be wiped out; and when he had made them defences against mutual destruction, he devised for them protection against the elements, clothing them with thick hair and tough skins, so as to withstand cold and heat, and also to serve each kind as their own natural bedding when they lay down to sleep. And he shod some with hooves, and others with tough, bloodless skin. Then he assigned different kinds of food to the different species; some were to live on pasture, others on the fruits of trees, others on roots, and some he made to prey on other creatures for their food. These he made less prolific, but to those on whom they preyed he gave a large increase, as a means of preserving the species. d 5 e 321a 5 b

'Now Epimetheus, not being altogether wise, didn't notice that he had used up all the powers on the non-rational creatures; so last of all he was left with human kind, quite unprovided for, and he was at a loss what to do. As he was racking his brains Prometheus came to c

inspect the distribution, and saw the other creatures well provided
5 for in every way, while man was naked and unshod, without any
covering for his bed or any fangs or claws; and already the appointed
day was at hand, on which man too had to come out of the earth
to the light of day. Prometheus was at his wits' end to find a means
d of preservation for mankind, so he stole from Hephaestus and
Athena their technical skill along with the use of fire—for it was
impossible for anyone to acquire or make use of that skill without
fire—and that was what he gave to man. That is how man acquired
5 his practical skill, but he did not yet have skill in running a city;
Zeus kept watch over that. Prometheus had no time to penetrate
the citadel of Zeus—moreover the guards of Zeus were terrible—but
he made his way by stealth into the workshop which Athena and
e Hephaestus shared for the practice of their arts, and stole
Hephaestus' art of working with fire, and the other art which
Athena possesses, and gave them to men. And as a result man was
322a well provided with resources for his life, but afterwards, so it is
said, thanks to Epimetheus, Prometheus paid the penalty for theft.

'Since man thus shared in a divine gift, first of all through his
kinship with the gods he was the only creature to worship them,
5 and he began to erect altars and images of the gods. Then he soon
developed the use of articulate speech and of words, and discovered
how to make houses and clothes and shoes and bedding and how to
b till the soil. Thus equipped, men lived at the beginning in scattered
units, and there were no cities; so they began to be destroyed by
the wild beasts, since they were altogether weaker. Their practical
art was sufficient to provide food, but insufficient for fighting
5 against the beasts—for they did not yet possess the art of running a
city, of which the art of warfare is part—and so they sought to come
together and save themselves by founding cities. Now when they
came together, they treated each other with injustice, not possessing
the art of running a city, so they scattered and began to be destroyed
c once again. So Zeus, fearing that our race would be wholly wiped
out, sent Hermes bringing conscience and justice to mankind, to be
the principles of organization of cities and the bonds of friendship.
Now Hermes asked Zeus about the manner in which he was to give
5 conscience and justice to men: "Shall I distribute these in the same

way as the arts? These are distributed thus: one doctor is sufficient for many laymen, and so with the other experts. Shall I give justice and conscience to men in that way too, or distribute them to all?"

'"To all," said Zeus, "and let all share in them; for cities could not come into being, if only a few shared in them as in the other arts. And lay down on my authority a law that he who cannot share in conscience and justice is to be killed as a plague on the city." So that, Socrates, is why when there is a question about how to do well in carpentry or any other expertise, everyone including the Athenians thinks it right that only a few should give advice, and won't put up with advice from anyone else, as you say—and quite right, too, in my view—but when it comes to consideration of how to do well in running the city, which must proceed entirely through justice and soundness of mind, they are right to accept advice from anyone, since it is incumbent on everyone to share in that sort of excellence, or else there can be no city at all. That is the reason for it, Socrates.

d 5 e 323a

'Just in case you still have any doubts that in fact everyone thinks that every man shares in justice and the rest of the excellence of a citizen, here's an extra bit of evidence. In the case of the other skills, as you say, if anyone says he's a good flute-player or good at any other art when he isn't, they either laugh at him or get angry at him, and his family come and treat him like a madman. But in the case of justice and the rest of the excellence of a citizen, even if they know someone to be unjust, if he himself admits it before everyone, they regard that sort of truthfulness as madness, though they called it sound sense before, and they say that everybody must say that he is just whether he is or not, and anyone who doesn't pretend to be just must be mad. For they think that everyone must possess it to some extent or other, or else not be among men at all.

5 b 5 c

'On the point, then, that they are right to accept advice from anyone about this sort of excellence in the belief that everyone shares in it, that is all I have to say. I shall next try to show that they think that it does not come by nature or by luck, but that it can be taught, and that everyone who has it has it from deliberate choice. In the case of undesirable characteristics which people think

5

d are due to nature or chance, nobody gets annoyed at people who have them or corrects or teaches or punishes them, to make them any different, but they pity them; for instance, is anyone silly enough to try treating the ugly or the small or the weak in any of 5 those ways? No, that sort of thing, I think, they know comes about, fair and foul alike, by nature and by chance. But when it comes to the good qualities that men acquire by deliberate choice, e and by practice and teaching, if someone doesn't have them, but the opposite bad qualities, it's then that people get annoyed and punish 324a and correct him. One such quality is injustice and impiety and in a word whatever is the opposite of the excellence of a citizen. There everyone gets annoyed with anyone who does wrong, and corrects him, clearly because it's something which you acquire by deliberate choice and learning. For if you care to consider, Socrates, the effect 5 which punishment can possibly have on the wrongdoer, that will itself convince you that people think that excellence is something which can be trained. For no one punishes a wrongdoer with no b other thought in mind than that he did wrong, unless he is retaliating unthinkingly like an animal. Someone who aims to punish in a rational way doesn't chastise on account of the past misdeed—for that wouldn't undo what is already done—but for the 5 sake of the future, so that neither the wrongdoer himself, nor anyone else who sees him punished, will do wrong again. This intention shows his belief that excellence can be produced by education; at least his aim in punishing is to deter. Now this opinion is shared by c everyone who administers chastisement either in a private or in a public capacity. And everyone chastises and punishes those whom they think guilty of wrongdoing, not least your fellow citizens, the Athenians; so according to this argument the Athenians are among 5 those who think that excellence can be trained and taught. It seems to me, Socrates, that I have now adequately shown that your fellow citizens are right to accept the advice of smiths and cobblers on political matters, and also that they regard excellence as d something that can be taught and trained.

'That still leaves us with your problem about good men, why it is that they teach their sons and make them knowledgeable in 5 those subjects where there are teachers, but as far as concerns

that excellence which they themselves possess, they don't make their sons any better than anyone else. On this point, Socrates, I shan't tell any more stories, but rather give a literal exposition. Look at it this way; is there or is there not one quality which every citizen must have, if there is to be a city at all? On this point, e and this alone, depends the solution of this problem of yours. For if there is, and this one quality isn't skill in carpentry or in metalwork or in pottery but justice and soundness of mind and 325a holiness–human excellence, in a word–if this is the quality which everyone must have and always display, whatever else he wants to learn or to do, and anyone who lacks it, man, woman or child, must 5 be taught and punished until he reforms, and anyone who doesn't respond to teaching and punishment must be regarded as incurable and banished from the city or put to death–if that's the way things b are, but none the less good men have their sons taught other things, but not this, then think how astonishing their behaviour is. For we have shown that they regard it both in the private and in the public 5 sphere as something that can be taught. So though it can be taught and fostered, nevertheless they have their sons taught other things, do they, where ignorance doesn't carry the death penalty, but in that sphere where their own sons must suffer death or exile if they are not taught and brought up to be good, not to mention the confis- c cation of their goods and in a word the absolute ruin of themselves and their families, they don't take the utmost care to have them properly taught? No, Socrates, you ought to realize that they 5 begin when their children are small, and go on teaching and correcting them as long as they live. For as soon as a child can understand what is said to him, his nurse and his mother and his teacher and his father himself strive to make him as good as possible, d teaching and showing him by every word and deed that this is right, and that wrong, this praiseworthy and that shameful, this holy and 5 that unholy, "do this" and "don't do that". If he obeys voluntarily, so much the better; if not, they treat him like a piece of wood which is getting warped and crooked, and straighten him out with threats and beatings. And then when they send him to school they tell the teachers to pay much more attention to the children's behaviour e than to their letters or their music. The teachers do that, and then

when they have learned their letters and are going on to understand the written word, just as they did with speech before, they set
5 before them at their desks the works of good poets to read,
326a and make them learn them by heart; they contain a lot of exhortation, and many passages praising and eulogizing good men of the past, so that the child will be fired with enthusiasm to imitate them, and filled with the desire to become a man like that. The music teachers, too, do just the same, and see to it that the children
5 are well behaved and don't do anything bad. Moreover, once they have learned to play the lyre, they teach them the poems of
b other good poets, lyric poets in this case, which they set to music and make the children's souls habituated to the rhythms and the melodies, so that they become gentler, more graceful, and better
5 adjusted, and so better in word and action. For every aspect of human life requires grace and proper adjustment. And then they send them to a trainer as well, so that once their minds are properly formed their bodies will be in a better condition to act under their
c direction, and they won't be forced by physical deficiency to act the coward in battle or in any other situation. The people who are
5 best able to do it—I mean, the wealthiest—do this especially, and their sons begin to go to school at the earliest age and stay there the longest. And when they have left school the city itself makes them
d learn the laws and live according to their example, and not just act in any way they like. Just as, when a child is still learning to write, the teacher draws lines on his book with his pencil and then makes
5 him write the letters following the lines, so the city lays down laws, devised by good lawgivers of the past, for our guidance, and makes us rule and be ruled according to them, and punishes anyone who transgresses them. This punishment is called correction, both here
e and in many other cities, since the law corrects. Considering, then, that such trouble is taken about excellence both by the state and by private individuals, are you really surprised, Socrates, and doubtful that it can be taught? You ought not to be; it would be far more
5 surprising if it could not be taught.

* 'Why, then, do good men often have worthless sons? The reason is this; it's not at all surprising, if it's true what I said before,
327a that excellence is something of which no one must be ignorant, if

— also ascribed to Euripides

The Critias fragment

from Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* ix 54

(trans. R. G. Bury, rev. by J. Garrett)

Last revised (in a very minor way): October 19, 2009

I revised Bury's translation a few years ago when I was translating a book on Aristotle by Richard Bodéüs, who discusses the Critias fragment in chapter 3. The book has been since published by State University of New York Press: *Aristotle and the Theology of the Living Immortals* (2000).—J. G. 8-09-01

1 A time there was when disorder ruled
Human lives, which were then, like lives of beasts,
Enslaved to force; nor was there then reward
For the good, nor for the wicked punishment.
5 Next, it seems to me, humans established laws
For punishment, that justice might rule
Over the tribe of mortals, and wanton injury be subdued;
And whosoever did wrong was penalized.
Next, as the laws held [mortals] back from deeds
10 Of open violence, but still such deeds
Were done in secret,—then, I think,
Some shrewd man first, a man in judgment wise,
Found for mortals the fear of gods,
Thereby to frighten the wicked should they
15 Even act or speak or scheme in secret.
Hence it was that he introduced the divine
Telling how the divinity enjoys endless life,
Hears and sees, and takes thought
And attends to things, and his nature is divine,
20 So that everything which mortals say is heard
And everything done is visible.
Even if you plan in silence some evil deed
It will not be hidden from the gods: for discernment
Lies in them. So, speaking words like these,
25 The sweetest teaching did he introduce,

Concealing truth under untrue speech.
The place he spoke of as the gods' abode
Was that by which he might awe humans most,—
The place from which, he knew, terrors came to mortals
30 And things advantageous in their wearisome life—
The revolving heaven above, in which dwell
The lightnings, and awesome claps
Of thunder, and the starry face of heaven,
Beautiful and intricate by that wise craftsman Time,—
35 From which, too, the meteor's glowing mass speeds
And wet thunderstorm pours forth upon the earth.
Such were the fears with which he surrounded mortals,
And to the divinity he gave a fitting home,
By this his speech, and in a fitting place,
40 And [thus] extinguished lawlessness by laws.

Note. Sextus Empiricus (3rd c. AD) assumes that "Critias" is the same Critias as Plato's uncle, the leader of the Thirty tyrants who ruled Athens briefly at the end of the Peloponnesian War. This citation is generally taken to be an extract from a tragedy or satirical drama called *Sisyphus*, a discourse placed in the mouth of one of its characters. If the historical Critias is its source, then this document goes back to the 5th century B.C. In any case, it probably reflects ideas of approximately that time.

Plato Republic (Bloom Translation) book II

368 can't help out. For in my opinion I'm not capable of it; my proof is that when I thought I showed in what I said to Thrasymachus that justice is better than injustice, you didn't accept it from me. On the other hand, I can't not help out. For I'm afraid it might be impious to be here when justice is being spoken badly of and give up and not bring help while I *c* am still breathing and able to make a sound. So the best thing is to succour her as I am able."

Glaucon and the others begged me in every way to help out and not to give up the argument, but rather to seek out what each is and the truth about the benefit of both. So I spoke my opinion.

"It looks to me as though the investigation we are undertaking is no ordinary thing, but one for a man who sees sharply. Since we're not clever men," I said, "in my opinion we should make this kind of *d* investigation of it: if someone had, for example, ordered men who don't see very sharply to read little letters from afar and then someone had the thought that the same letters are somewhere else also, but bigger and in a bigger place, I suppose it would look like a godsend to be able to consider the littler ones after having read these first, if, of course, they do happen to be the same."

"Most certainly," said Adeimantus. "But, Socrates, what do you notice in the investigation of the just that's like this?" *e*

"I'll tell you," I said. "There is, we say, justice of one man; and there is, surely, justice of a whole city too?"

"Certainly," he said.

"Is a city bigger[23] than one man?"

"Yes, it is bigger;" he said.

"So then, perhaps there would be more justice in the bigger and it would be easier to observe closely. If you want, first we'll investigate what justice is like in the cities. Then, we'll also go on to consider it in 369 *a* individuals, considering the likeness of the bigger in the *idea*[24] of the littler?"

"What you say seems fine to me," he said.

"If we should watch a city coming into being in speech," I said, "would we also see its justice coming into being, and its injustice?"

"Probably," he said.

"When this has been done, can we hope to see what we're looking for more easily?" *b*

"Far more easily."

"Is it resolved[25] that we must try to carry this out? I suppose it's no small job, so consider it."

"It's been considered," said Adeimantus. "Don't do anything else."

"Well, then," I said, "a city, as I believe, comes into being be-

369 b cause each of us isn't self-sufficient but is in need of much. Do you believe there's another beginning to the founding of a city?"

"None at all," he said.

c "So, then, when one man takes on another for one need and another for another need, and, since many things are needed, many men gather in one settlement as partners and helpers, to this common settlement we give the name city, don't we?"

"Most certainly."

"Now, does one man give a share to another, if he does give a share, or take a share, in the belief that it's better for himself?"

"Certainly."

"Come, now," I said, "let's make a city in speech from the beginning. Our need, as it seems, will make it."

"Of course."

d "Well, now, the first and greatest of needs is the provision of food for existing and living."

"Certainly."

"Second, of course, is housing, and third, clothing, and such."

"That's so."

"Now wait," I said. "How will the city be sufficient to provide for this much? Won't one man be a farmer, another the housebuilder, and still another, a weaver? Or shall we add to it a shoemaker or some other man who cares for what has to do with the body?"

"Certainly."

"The city of utmost necessity[26] would be made of four or five men."

e "It looks like it."

"Now, what about this? Must each one of them put his work at the disposition of all in common—for example, must the farmer, one man, provide food for four and spend four times as much time and labor in the provision of food and then give it in common to the others; or must he neglect them and produce a fourth part of the food in a 370 a fourth part of the time and use the other three parts for the provision of a house, clothing,[27] and shoes, not taking the trouble to share in common with others, but minding his own business for himself?"

And Adeimantus said, "Perhaps, Socrates, the latter is easier than the former."

"It wouldn't be strange, by Zeus," I said. "I myself also had the thought when you spoke that, in the first place, each of us is naturally not quite like anyone else, but rather differs in his nature; different b men are apt for the accomplishment of different jobs. Isn't that your opinion?"

"It is."

"And, what about this? Who would do a finer job, one man practicing many arts, or one man one art?" *370 b*

"One man, one art," he said.

"And, further, it's also plain, I suppose, that if a man lets the crucial moment in any work pass, it is completely ruined."

"Yes, it is plain."

"I don't suppose the thing done is willing to await the leisure of the man who does it; but it's necessary for the man who does it to follow close upon the thing done, and not as a spare-time occupation." *c*

"It is necessary."

"So, on this basis each thing becomes more plentiful, finer, and easier, when one man, exempt from other tasks, does one thing according to nature and at the crucial moment."

"That's entirely certain."

"Now, then, Adeimantus, there's need of more citizens than four for the provisions of which we were speaking. For the farmer, as it seems, won't make his own plow himself, if it's going to be a fine one, or his hoe, or the rest of the tools for farming; and the housebuilder won't either—and he needs many too. And it will be the same with the weaver and the shoemaker, won't it?" *d*

"True."

"So, carpenters, smiths, and many other craftsmen of this sort become partners in our little city, making it into a throng."

"Most certainly."

"But it wouldn't be very big yet, if we added cowherds, shepherds, and the other kinds of herdsmen, so that the farmers would have oxen for plowing, the housebuilders teams to use with the farmers for hauling, and the weavers and cobblers hides and wool." *e*

"Nor would it be a little city," he said, "when it has all this."

"And, further," I said, "just to found the city itself in the sort of place where there will be no need of imports is pretty nearly impossible."

"Yes, it is impossible."

"Then, there will also be a need for still other men who will bring to it what's needed from another city."

"Yes, they will be needed."

"Now, if the agent comes empty-handed, bringing nothing needed by those from whom they take what they themselves need, he'll go away empty-handed, won't he?" *371 a*

"It seems so to me."

"Then they must produce at home not only enough for themselves but also the sort of thing and in the quantity needed by these others of whom they have need."

371 *a* "Yes, they must."

"So our city needs more farmers and other craftsmen."

"It does need more."

"And similarly, surely, other agents as well, who will import and export the various products. They are merchants, aren't they?"

"Yes."

"Then, we'll need merchants too."

"Certainly."

"And if the commerce is carried on by sea, there will also be need *b* of throngs of other men who know the business of the sea."

"Throngs, indeed."

"Now what about this? In the city itself, how will they exchange what they have produced with one another? It was for just this that we made a partnership and founded the city."

"Plainly," he said, "by buying and selling."

"Out of this we'll get a market[28] and an established currency[29] as a token for exchange."

"Most certainly."

c "If the farmer or any other craftsman brings what he has produced to the market, and he doesn't arrive at the same time as those who need what he has to exchange, will he sit in the market idle, his craft unattended?"

"Not at all," he said. "There are men who see this situation and set themselves to this service; in rightly governed cities they are usually those whose bodies are weakest and are useless for doing any other job. *d* They must stay there in the market and exchange things for money with those who need to sell something and exchange, for money again, with all those who need to buy something."

"This need, then, produces tradesmen in our city," I said. "Don't we call tradesmen those men who are set up in the market to serve in buying and selling, and merchants those who wander among the cities?"

"Most certainly."

e "There are, I suppose, still some other servants who, in terms of their minds, wouldn't be quite up to the level of partnership, but whose bodies are strong enough for labor. They sell the use of their strength and, because they call their price a wage, they are, I suppose, called wage earners, aren't they?"

"Most certainly."

"So the wage earners too, as it seems, go to fill out the city."

"It seems so to me."

"Then has our city already grown to completeness, Adeimantus?"

"Perhaps." *371 e*

"Where in it, then, would justice and injustice be? Along with which of the things we considered did they come into being?"

"I can't think, Socrates," he said, "unless it's somewhere in *372 a* some need these men have of one another."

"Perhaps what you say is fine," I said. "It really must be considered and we mustn't back away. First, let's consider what manner of life men so provided for will lead. Won't they make bread, wine, clothing, and shoes? And, when they have built houses, they will work in the summer, for the most part naked and without shoes, and in the winter adequately clothed and shod. For food they will prepare barley meal *b* and wheat flour; they will cook it and knead it. Setting out noble loaves of barley and wheat on some reeds or clean leaves, they will stretch out on rushes strewn with yew and myrtle and feast themselves and their children. Afterwards they will drink wine and, crowned with wreathes, sing of the gods. So they will have sweet intercourse with one another, and not produce children beyond their means, keeping an eye out against poverty or war." *c*

And Glaucon interrupted, saying: "You seem to make these men have their feast without relishes."

"What you say is true," I said. "I forgot that they'll have relishes, too—it's plain they'll have salt, olives, cheese; and they will boil onions and greens, just as one gets them in the country. And to be sure, we'll set desserts before them—figs, pulse and beans; and they'll roast myrtleberries and acorns before the fire and drink in measure along with it. *d* And so they will live out their lives in peace with health, as is likely, and at last, dying as old men, they will hand down other similar lives to their offspring."

And he said, "If you were providing for a city of sows, Socrates, on what else would you fatten them than this?"

"Well, how should it be, Glaucon?" I said.

"As is conventional," he said. "I suppose men who aren't going to be wretched recline on couches[30] and eat from tables and have relishes and desserts just like men have nowadays." *e*

"All right," I said. "I understand. We are, as it seems, considering not only how a city, but also a luxurious city, comes into being. Perhaps that's not bad either. For in considering such a city too, we could probably see in what way justice and injustice naturally grow in cities. Now, the true[31] city is in my opinion the one we just described—a healthy city, as it were. But, if you want to, let's look at a feverish city, too. Nothing stands in the way. For these things, as it seems, won't satisfy some, or this way of life, but couches, tables, and other furniture *373 a*

373 a will be added, and, of course, relishes, perfume, incense, courtesans and cakes—all sorts of all of them. And, in particular, we can't still postulate the mere necessities we were talking about at first—houses, clothes, and shoes; but painting and embroidery must also be set in motion; and gold, ivory, and everything of the sort must be obtained. Isn't that so?"

b "Yes," he said.

"Then the city must be made bigger again. This healthy one isn't adequate any more, but must already be gorged with a bulky mass of things, which are not in cities because of necessity—all the hunters and imitators, many concerned with figures and colors, many with music; and poets and their helpers, rhapsodes, actors, choral dancers, contractors, and craftsmen of all sorts of equipment, for feminine adornment as well as other things. And so we'll need more servants too. Or c doesn't it seem there will be need of teachers, wet nurses, governesses, beauticians, barbers, and, further, relish-makers and cooks? And, what's more, we're in addition going to need swineherds. This animal wasn't in our earlier city—there was no need—but in this one there will be need of it in addition. And there'll also be need of very many other fatted beasts if someone will eat them, won't there?"

"Of course."

d "Won't we be in much greater need of doctors if we follow this way of life rather than the earlier one?"

"Much greater."

"And the land, of course, which was then sufficient for feeding the men who were then, will now be small although it was sufficient. Or how should we say it?"

"Like that," he said.

"Then must we cut off a piece of our neighbors' land, if we are going to have sufficient for pasture and tillage, and they in turn from ours, if they let themselves go to the unlimited acquisition of money, overstepping the boundary of the necessary?"

e "Quite necessarily, Socrates," he said.

"After that won't we go to war as a consequence, Glaucon? Or how will it be?"

"Like that," he said.

"And let's not yet say whether war works evil or good," I said, "but only this much, that we have in its turn found the origin of war—in those things whose presence in cities most of all produces evils both private and public."

"Most certainly."

"Now, my friend, the city must be still bigger, and not by a small 374 a number but by a whole army, which will go out and do battle with in-

vaders for all the wealth and all the things we were just now talking about." 374 *b*

"What," he said, "aren't they adequate by themselves?"

"Not if that was a fine agreement you and all we others made when we were fashioning the city," I said. "Surely we were in agreement, if you remember, that it's impossible for one man to do a fine job in many arts."

"What you say is true," he said.

"Well then," I said, "doesn't the struggle for victory in war seem to be a matter for art?"

"Very much so," he said.

"Should one really care for the art of shoemaking more than for the art of war?"

"Not at all."

"But, after all, we prevented the shoemaker from trying at the same time to be a farmer or a weaver or a housebuilder; he had to stay a shoemaker just so the shoemaker's art would produce fine work for us. And in the same way, to each one of the others we assigned one thing, the one for which his nature fitted him, at which he was to work throughout his life, exempt from the other tasks, not letting the crucial moments pass, and thus doing a fine job. Isn't it of the greatest importance that what has to do with war be well done? Or is it so easy that a farmer or a shoemaker or a man practicing any other art whatsoever can be at the same time skilled in the art of war, while no one could become an adequate draughts or dice player who didn't practice it from childhood on, but only gave it his spare time? Will a man, if he picks up a shield or any other weapon or tool of war, on that very day be an adequate combatant in a battle of heavy-armed soldiers,[32] or any other kind of battle in war, even though no other tool if picked up will make anyone a craftsman or contestant, nor will it even be of use to the man who has not gained knowledge of it or undergone adequate training?"

"In that case," he said, "the tools would be worth a lot."

"Then," I said, "to the extent that the work of the guardians is more important, it would require more leisure time than the other tasks as well as greater art and diligence."

"I certainly think so," he said.

"And also a nature fit for the pursuit?"

"Of course."

"Then it's our job, as it seems, to choose, if we're able, which are the natures, and what kind they are, fit for guarding the city."

"Indeed it is our job."

"By Zeus," I said, "it's no mean thing we've taken upon our-

Plato's Laws (Pangle translation)

BOOK III

676a Ath. So then that's how these things should be done. But what shall we assert was the original source of the political regime? Wouldn't one see it in the easiest and finest way by looking from this viewpoint . . . ?

Kl. From which?

Ath. From the same viewpoint one should always choose in order to see the progression of cities as they change towards virtue and at the same time towards vice.

Kl. What viewpoint are you speaking of?

676b Ath. I suppose I mean one that embraces an infinite length of time and the changes during that time.

Kl. How do you mean?

Ath. Come, do you think you could ever conceive how long a time there have been cities, and human beings engaged in politics?

Kl. It's not at all easy, at least.

Ath. You do see, though, that it would be an immense and immeasurable time?

Kl. Yes, that at least, indeed.

Ath. Don't we suppose that tens upon tens of thousands of cities have come into being during that time, and that just as many, 676c in the same proportions, have been destroyed? And hasn't each place been governed often by every kind of regime? And haven't they at one time gotten bigger from being smaller, and then smaller from being bigger, and haven't they gone from better to worse and from worse to better?

Kl. Necessarily.

Ath. Let us grasp, if we can, the cause of this change. For this might perhaps show us the first origin and transformation of political regimes.

Kl. You speak well, and we should proceed with eager spirits—you to show what you think about these things, and we to follow.

Ath. Well, then, do both of you believe that there's some truth in the ancient sayings? 677a

Kl. Which sayings?

Ath. The ones that tell of many disasters—floods and plagues and many other things—which have destroyed human beings and left only a tiny remnant of the human race.

Kl. This sort of thing seems entirely credible to everyone.

Ath. Come, of the many disasters let's focus our minds on one that occurred once on account of a flood.

Kl. What shall we think about in regard to it?

Ath. How those who then escaped the destruction would almost all be mountain herdsmen—little sparks of the human race saved on the peaks somewhere. 677b

Kl. Clearly.

Ath. Presumably men such as these, at least, necessarily lack experience in the arts, and especially in the contrivances that city dwellers use against one another, motivated by the desire to have more, the love of victory, and all the other mischief they think up against each other.

Kl. That's likely, anyway.

Ath. Shall we assume that the cities settled in the plains and along the sea were utterly destroyed at that time? 677c

Kl. So we shall assume.

Ath. Won't we assert that all tools were destroyed, and that if some serious and important part of an art—whether politics or some other sort of wisdom—had been discovered, all these things would have perished at that time? For otherwise, best of men, if these things had remained through all time as thoroughly ordered as they are today, how could anything new ever have been discovered?[1]

Kl. In other words, for tens upon tens of thousands of years these things were unknown to the men at that time, and only within the past one or two thousand years have they been brought to light, some by Daedalus, others by Orpheus, and others by Palamedes; the things that pertain to music by Marsyas and Olympos, the things that pertain to the lyre by Amphion; and 677d

very many other arts by other men—just yesterday or the day before, so to speak.[2]

Ath. Is there any reason, Kleinias, why you omitted your friend, who really was around only yesterday?[3]

Kl. You don't mean Epimenides?

677e Ath. Yes, him. He far surpassed all others among your people in inventiveness, my friend; what Hesiod had divined in speech long ago, he actually brought to completion in deed—as you people claim.[4]

Kl. So we claim.

Ath. So what shall we say human affairs were like after the destruction? Wasn't there a vast and frightening desolation, but a great mass of abundant land? Won't we say the other animals were destroyed, while the cattle, and the remnant of the stock of goats that might have happened to remain somewhere, barely supported the life of the herdsmen at the beginning? 678a

Kl. How else could it have been?

Ath. With regard to the city and the political regime and lawgiving—the subjects with which our discussion is now concerned—do we suppose that there was, so to speak, any memory at all?

Kl. None at all.

Ath. So from those men, in that situation, have developed all the things we possess now: cities and political regimes and arts and laws, and much wickedness—but much virtue as well.

Kl. How do you mean?

678b Ath. Do we suppose, you amazing man, that men at that time—inexperienced in the many beautiful things that go with urban life, and inexperienced in the opposite sorts of things as well—ever became either perfectly virtuous or perfectly vicious?

Kl. You've stated it beautifully, and we understand what you mean.

Ath. Then as time went on, and as our race multiplied, everything arrived at the state it's in now?

Kl. That's very correct.

Ath. Not straightaway though, it's likely, but rather little by little over a very long period of time.

678c Kl. This seems most appropriate.

Ath. For I suppose that the fear of descending from the heights into the valleys was ringing in everyone's ears.

Kl. How could it be otherwise?

Ath. Weren't they glad whenever they saw each other, because there were so few of them during that time, although the means of transportation by land and by sea were almost all destroyed, so to speak, along with the arts? I don't think, therefore, that it was very easy to mix with one another. For iron and copper and all metals had disappeared under the mud, 678d and they were at a complete loss as to how to extract such things; as a result they had very little cut timber. If some tool had survived somewhere up in the mountains, it was soon worn out with use and disappeared, and there weren't others to replace it until the art of metals had appeared among human beings.

Kl. How could there have been?

Ath. And how many generations later do we suppose this happened?

Kl. Very many, obviously. 678e

Ath. Doesn't it follow that the arts which depend on iron and copper and all such things would have disappeared for an equal or even longer time?

Kl. How could they not?

Ath. For a variety of reasons, then, civil war and war were destroyed during that time.

Kl. How so?

Ath. First because they were delighted with one another and full of goodwill on account of the desolation. Then again, food was not something they fought over. At that time most lived from herding, and there was no lack of pasture land—except perhaps for some people at the start. 679a So they didn't lack milk and meat. Besides, by hunting they provided themselves with food that was neither poor in quality nor scanty in amount. They were well off in cloaks, bedding, houses, and equipment for use over the fires and also for tasks that don't call for fire. For not one of the molding and weaving arts requires iron; and a god has given these two arts to provide all these things for 679b human beings, so that whenever the human race finds itself in such straits it may be able to grow and progress. Hence they weren't terribly poor, and weren't compelled by poverty to differ with one another. On the other hand, since they lacked gold and silver they didn't ever become rich, either—and such was their situation then. Now the most well bred dispositions usually spring up in a home when neither wealth nor poverty

679c dwell there. For neither insolence nor injustice, nor again jealousies and ill will, come into being there.

They were good on account of these things and also because of what is called naive simplicity. For whenever they heard something was noble or something was shameful, in their simplicity they considered what had been said to be the very truth, and believed it. No one had the wisdom, as they do nowadays, to know how to be on the lookout for lies. They believed that what they heard about gods as well as about human beings was true, and lived according to these things. That is why they were in every way as we have just described them.

679d Kl. To me at least, and to him too, it seems this is the way things were.

Ath. Shouldn't we go on to say that the many generations who passed their lives this way were less practiced and less knowledgeable in the arts generally than those who lived before the flood or those who live now, and especially as regards the arts of war? They didn't know all the present-day arts of war on land or on sea, or in a city all by itself, which are called lawsuits and civil wars, and in which every sort of contrivance of 679e words and deeds is devised in order to do mutual mischief and injustice. So, for the reason we already have explained, shouldn't we say that they were simpler and more courageous and also more moderate and in every way more just?

Kl. What you say is correct.

Ath. Now what we've been saying, and all that is still to follow from it, has been said as a means to our coming to understand 680a what need the men of that time had for laws, and who was lawgiver for them.

Kl. You've stated it in a fine way.

Ath. Isn't it the case, though, that they didn't yet need lawgivers, and that such a thing wasn't yet likely to occur in those times? For writing doesn't yet exist among those born in that part of the cycle, and their lives are guided by habits and by what are called ancestral laws.

Kl. That's likely, anyway.

Ath. But even this is already a kind of political regime.

Kl. Which kind?

680b Ath. I think everyone calls the regime of that epoch "dynasty,"[5] and even now it still exists in many places, among Greeks as

well as barbarians. This is presumably the regime Homer[6] speaks of in connection with the household of the Cyclopes, when he says

> Among these people are neither deliberative
> assemblies nor clan-rules,[7]
> But they dwell on crests of lofty mountains
> In hollow caves, and each gives the rule to
> His own children and wives, and they don't 680c
> trouble themselves about one another.

Kl. This poet of yours seems to have been quite charming. We've gone through other verses of his and found them very urbane. But we're not familiar with much of what he says because we Cretans don't make much use of foreign poetry.

Meg. We, however, do; and he is probably the chief of such poets, although he portrays in each case a way of life that is not 680d Laconian but rather sort of Ionian. He certainly seems to be a good witness now to your argument, since through his myth he attributes their ancient ways to savagery.

Ath. Yes, he is a witness, so let's take his word for it that such regimes do sometimes arise.

Kl. Fine.

Ath. Aren't they found among those who have been scattered in single households or clans in the confusion caused by the destructive disasters? The eldest rules with an authority handed 680e down from the father and mother, whom the others follow, like birds[8] forming one flock. Thus aren't they ruled by paternal laws and by a monarchy that is the most just of all monarchies?

Kl. Most certainly.

Ath. After this, larger numbers come together in bigger communities, making cities. Those who live in the foothills are the first 681a to turn to farming; and they create one common, large dwelling by erecting defensive walls of stone around themselves, on account of wild beasts.

Kl. It seems likely, at any rate, that it happened this way.

Ath. Then what? Isn't the following likely . . . ?

Kl. What?

Ath. As these dwellings are growing bigger out of the smaller original ones, each of the small family groups arrives clan by clan, possessing both its own eldest who rules, and its own particular customs because it has lived apart. The variety of their dif- 681b

ferent customs pertaining to the gods and to themselves derives from the variety in their parents and in those who reared them; the rather orderly have rather orderly customs and the manly have rather manly customs. Since they each thus imprint their own conceptions on their own children and on their children's children, they come, as we say, to the larger common dwelling bringing their own particular laws.

Kl. Of course, how could they not?

681c Ath. Moreover, presumably the laws of each are necessarily pleasing to them, while the others' are less so.

Kl. So it is.

Ath. It's likely that we've stumbled unawares, as it were, upon the origin of legislation.

Kl. Indeed it is.

Ath. Surely, after this, those who have come together are compelled to choose certain men common to them who look over the customs of all the clans and, having picked out the ones they find especially agreeable for the community, display them clearly and present them for the approval of the leaders and chiefs, 681d the monarchs as it were, of the populace. The men who do this will be called lawgivers; but although they have appointed the ruling officials, thus fashioning a sort of aristocracy or even monarchy out of the dynasties, during the period when the regime is undergoing the transformation they themselves will rule.

Kl. Things would turn out just this way, though step by step.

Ath. Now let's say that yet a third pattern of regime emerges, in which all forms and experiences of political regimes and of cities come together.

681e Kl. Which is this?

Ath. The one that comes after the second, as Homer[9] reveals when he says the third emerged in this way: ". . . and he founded Dardania," he asserts somewhere,

> since sacred Ilium had not yet been
> Founded on the plain, a city of human beings endowed
> with speech,
> But instead they still dwelled among the foothills of Ida
> with the many springs.

682a When he speaks these words, and those others that he spoke about the Cyclopes, he speaks somehow according to god, as well as according to nature. For the race of poets is divine, and

becomes inspired when it sings: each time, singing in the company of certain Graces and Muses, they hit upon many things that truly happened.

Kl. They surely do.

Ath. Let's proceed still further into this myth which has now come upon us, since it may reveal something about the object of our inquiry. Shouldn't we?

Kl. Certainly. 682b

Ath. Ilium was settled, we assert, when they left the heights for the wide and beautiful plain and settled on a low hill with many rivers that rushed down from Ida.

Kl. So they say, anyway.

Ath. Don't we suppose that this came to pass many ages after the flood?

Kl. It had to be many ages.

Ath. It's likely that they were possessed by an amazing degree of forgetfulness regarding the disaster just now discussed, when 682c they thus set up a city close to a lot of rivers flowing down from the heights, putting their trust in some hills that were not very high.

Kl. This makes it completely clear that they were separated by a great interval of time from such suffering.

Ath. I suppose that already, at that time, there were many other cities being settled down below, since human beings were multiplying.

Kl. But of course.

Ath. And presumably these others undertook a military expedition against this one, and probably came by sea, since now everyone was making use of the sea without fear. 682d

Kl. So it appears.

Ath. After remaining about ten years, presumably, the Achaeans[10] sacked Troy.

Kl. They certainly did.

Ath. And so during this time, a ten-year period, while Ilium was being besieged many evils befell each of the besiegers at home, through the revolts of the young men.[11] When the soldiers returned to their cities and homes they were not nobly received by these, nor with justice, but instead in such a 682e way as to produce many deaths and slaughters and exiles. The ones who were driven into exile came back again though, having changed their name from Achaeans to Dorians because

Dorieus was the one who gathered the exiles together at that time.[12] And surely it is you, O Lacedaimonians, who tell the myth and complete the account of all the things that happened after this.

Meg. But of course.

Ath. We have come now once again, as if according to a god, to the point at the beginning of our dialogue about laws where we digressed and fell into the topics of music and drunken carousals. The argument is, as it were, letting us get a good hold[13] on it again, for it has arrived at the very settling of Lacedaimon, which you both were asserting to have been correctly settled (along with Crete, as if by codes of law that were brothers). Now we've gained this much by the meanderings of the argument, by going through certain regimes and settlements: we have seen the first, the second, and the third city, settled one after the other, as we believe, over immense stretches of time. And here this fourth city—or nation, if you wish—comes before us, having been settled in an earlier time and now being settled once again. If from all of this we are able to learn what has and has not been nobly settled, which laws preserve the things that are preserved and which destroy the things that are destroyed, and what sort of changes would make a city happy, then, Megillus and Kleinias, we ought to discuss all these things again, from the beginning as it were—unless we have some objection to what has been said so far. (683a, 683b)

Meg. If, stranger, some god would promise us that if we make a second attempt at an investigation into lawgiving we will hear arguments no worse and no shorter than what were said just now, I at least would be willing to have a long walk, and for me this day would seem to become short—even though we are close to the day when the god turns from summer toward winter.[14] (683c)

Ath. So it's likely that these things must be investigated.

Meg. By all means.

Ath. Let's put ourselves in thought back into that time when not only Lacedaimon but also Argos and Messene and their dependencies were sufficiently under the control of your ancestors, Megillus. According to what is said in myth[15] at least, they decided next to divide the army into three parts and found three cities—Argos, Messene and Lacedaimon. (683d)

Meg. Indeed they did.

Ath. Temenos became king of Argos, Kresphontes of Messene, and Procles and Eurusthenes of Lacedaimon.

Meg. But of course.

Ath. And everyone at that time swore that they would come to their aid if anyone subverted their monarchies. (683e)

Meg. Of course.

Ath. In the name of Zeus! Is a monarchy dissolved, or has any rule ever been dissolved, by anybody other than the rulers themselves? Or have we now forgotten that we established this just a little while ago now, in the speeches we chanced to make?

Meg. How could we?

Ath. Then we shall now have made such a thesis even firmer. For it's likely that the deeds we've chanced upon lead us to the same argument, so we won't be investigating the same argument on the basis of some empty figment, but on the basis of something that really happened and possesses truth. (684a)

What happened was this: the three kings and the three cities that were to be governed monarchically all swore mutual oaths, in accordance with the common laws they set up for ruling and being ruled. The former swore not to make their rule harsher as time went on and the line continued, while the latter swore that if the rulers kept their oaths, they in return would never dissolve the monarchies or allow others to try to do so. They also promised that the kings would help the other kings or the populaces if they were treated unjustly, and that the populaces would help the other populaces or kings if they were treated unjustly. Isn't that the way it was? (684b)

Meg. That's the way it was.

Ath. Now, whether the kings or certain others did the legislating, wasn't this a very great advantage in the three regime-establishments that were legislated in the three cities . . . ?

Meg. What?

Ath. The fact that there were always two cities ready to take the field against any one of the cities that disobeyed the established laws.

Meg. Clearly.

Ath. Of course, the many command their lawgivers to establish such laws as the populaces and the majorities will accept voluntarily, just as if someone were to command gymnasts or doctors to do what is pleasant as they care for and cure the bodies they care for. (684c)

Meg. Entirely so.

Ath. Yet in fact it is often the case that one must be contented if someone can make bodies strong and healthy with only modest pain.

Meg. But of course.

684d Ath. At that time, they were provided with yet this other advantage that had no small role in making the laying down of the laws easy.

Meg. What?

Ath. When the lawgivers were arranging for them some sort of equality in property they were not subjected to that very great reproach raised in many other cities during the time of the establishment of laws, whenever someone seeks to change land tenure and dissolve debts because he sees that otherwise a sufficient degree of equality will never be possible. When a 684e lawgiver tries to change any of such things, everyone raises against him the cry, "Do not move the immovable!"[16] and curses him for introducing redivision of the land and dissolution of debts, and thus putting every man at his wit's end. But for the Dorians there was this further advantage, that the process went along in a fine way and was free from blame,[17] because they could divide up the land without disputes and, in addition, there were no large, ancient debts.

Meg. True.

Ath. So then how, you two best of men, did the settlement and legislation ever turn out so badly for them?

685a Meg. What do you mean, and what do you blame in them?

Ath. The fact that of the three existing dwelling places, two of them swiftly corrupted their regime and laws, while only one held fast—your city.

Meg. That's not a very easy question you're asking.

Ath. But this is what we must now investigate and inquire into, playing at this moderate old man's game concerning laws, and proceeding on our way without discomfort, as we asserted we 685b would do when we began our walk.

Meg. Why not? It must be done as you say.

Ath. And what more beautiful inquiry into laws could we make than an inquiry into the laws which have brought order to these cities? Could we inquire into the settlement of cities more famous and greater than these?

Meg. You wouldn't easily find substitutes for these!

Ath. Now it's pretty clear that at that time they at least intended their arrangement to be a sufficient defense not only of the Peloponnese but of all the Greeks, in case any of the barbar- 685c ians might do them injustice, as happened when the people who once lived in the area around Ilium relied on the support of the Assyrian Empire of Ninos and rashly stirred up the Trojan War.[18] For what was left of the grandeur of that empire was not insignificant: just as we nowadays fear the Great King,[19] so they at that time trembled at that combined system; and in fact, since Troy was a part of that empire, its second[20] 685d capture was a grave charge against them. In the face of all this, the unified arrangement whereby the army was then divided up into three cities seemed to be a fine discovery on the part of the brother kings, the sons of Heracles,[21] and a mode of organization superior to that of the expedition against Troy. For in the first place, the sons of Heracles were considered to be better rulers than the descendants of Pelops; then again, this army of theirs was considered to be superior in virtue to the 685e army that went against Troy. After all, these bore the victory, and the others were defeated by them: the Achaeans were defeated by the Dorians. Don't we suppose that the men of those days organized themselves this way and with this intention?

Meg. Certainly.

Ath. Isn't it also likely that they supposed these things would remain stable, and last a long time, since they had shared 686a together many toils and risks, and had been organized by brother kings belonging to a single family? Moreover, hadn't they employed many diviners, including the Delphic Apollo?

Meg. That is indeed likely.

Ath. It's likely, however, that these great expectations flew away soon after—except, as we just said, what pertained to the small part in your area, and even that part has never to this 686b day ceased fighting with the other two parts. For if the original intention had been carried through, and unified consonance had been established, it would have possessed an irresistible power in war.

Meg. How could it not have?

Ath. So how and in what way was it destroyed? Isn't it worthwhile to investigate what sort of chance it was that ever destroyed so great a system of this kind?

Meg. If one were to disregard this investigation, one would seek in

Aristotle's Politics (Lord translation)

Book 1

CHAPTER I

(1) Since we see that every city is some sort of community, and that every community is constituted for the sake of some good (for everyone does everything for the sake of what is held to be good), it is clear that all communities aim at some good, and that the community that is most authoritative of all and embraces all the others does so particularly, and aims at the most authoritative good of all. This is what is called the city or the political community. 1252a 5

(2) Those who suppose that the same person is expert in political rule, kingly rule, managing the household, and being a master of slaves do not argue finely.[1] For they consider that each of these differs in the number or fewness of those ruled and not in kind—for example, the ruler of a few is a master, of more a household manager, and of still more a political or kingly ruler—the assumption being that there is no difference between a large household and a small city; and as for the political and kingly rulers, they 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.[2] But these things are not true. (3) This will be clear to those investigat- 10 15

1 · The reference appears to be particularly to Plato, *Statesman* 258e–59d; consider also Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.4. 12 (cf. 6.14), *Oeconomicus* 13.5. "Expert in political rule" (*politikos*) can equally be translated "statesman." *Kalōs* ("finely" or "nobly") often means little more than "well" in Greek; but the nuance can sometimes be important, suggesting conventional approbation rather than one's own considered view.

2 · That there is a single "science" of political and kingly rule is asserted in *Statesman* 259c. The "precepts" (*logoi*) in question would appear to be writings (i.e., laws) that constrain the political ruler but not the king (cf. *Statesman* 299c).

ing in accordance with our normal sort of inquiry.[3] For just as it is necessary elsewhere to divide a compound into its uncompounded elements (for these are the smallest parts of the whole), so too by investigating what the city is composed of we shall gain a better view concerning these kinds of rulers as well, both as to how they differ from one another and as to whether there is some artful expertise[4] that can be acquired in connection with each of those mentioned.

CHAPTER 2

(1) Now in these matters as elsewhere it is by looking at how things develop naturally from the beginning that one may best study them. (2) First, then, there must of necessity be a conjoining of persons who cannot exist without one another: on the one hand, male and female, for the sake of reproduction (which occurs not from intentional choice but—as is also the case with the other animals and plants—from a natural striving to leave behind another that is like oneself); on the other, the naturally ruling and ruled, on account of preservation. For that which can foresee with the mind is the naturally ruling and naturally mastering element, while that which can do these things with the body is the naturally ruled and slave; hence the same thing is advantageous for the master and slave. (3) Now the female is distinguished by nature from the slave. For nature makes nothing in an economizing spirit, as smiths make the Delphic knife,[5] but one thing with a view to one thing; and each instrument would perform most finely if it served one task rather than many. (4) The barbarians, though, have the same arrangement for female and slave. The reason for this is that they have no naturally ruling element; with them, the community of man and woman is that of female slave and male slave. This is why the poets say "it is fitting for Greeks to rule barbarians"[6]—the assumption being that barbarian and slave are by nature the same thing.

(5) From these two communities, then, the household first arose, and Hesiod's verse is rightly spoken: "first a house, and woman, and ox for

3 · The meaning of "our normal sort of inquiry" (*hē hyphēgēmenē methodos*) is not certain; the analytic approach alluded to here is by no means rigidly followed throughout Aristotle's writings. Cf. 1.8. 1.

4 · Or "some technical skill" (*ti technikon*), from *technē*, art or skill.

5 · Probably a kind of knife used at the religious center of Delphi for a variety of sacrificial purposes, but the meaning is uncertain.

ploughing"[7]—for poor persons have an ox instead of a servant. The household is the community constituted by nature for the needs of daily life; Charondas calls its members "mess-mates," Epimenides of Crete "stable-mates."[8] The first community arising from several households and for the sake of non-daily needs is the village. (6) By nature the village seems to be above all an extension of the household. Its members some call "milk-mates"; they are "the children and the children's children."[9] This is why cities were at first under kings, and nations are even now.[10] For those who joined together were already under kings: every household is under the eldest as king, and so also were the extensions [of the household making up the village] as a result of kinship. (7) This is what Homer meant when he says that "each acts as law to his children and wives"; for men were scattered and used to dwell in this manner in ancient times.[11] And it is for this reason that all assert that the gods are under a king—because they themselves are under kings now, or were in ancient times. For human beings assimilate not only the looks of the gods to themselves, but their ways of life as well.

(8) The complete community,[12] arising from several villages, is the city. It reaches a level of full self-sufficiency, so to speak; and while coming into being for the sake of living, it exists for the sake of living well. Every city, therefore, exists by nature, if such also are the first communities. For the city is their end, and nature is an end: what each thing is—for example, a human being, a horse, or a household—when its coming into being is complete is,

7 · Hesiod, *Works and Days* 405.

8 · The legislator Charondas of Catana is mentioned again in 3.12 and 4.11 and 13. Epimenides of Crete is said to have written poetry as well as a prose work on the Cretan regime (Diogenes Laertius 1.109–15).

9 · The latter phrase is Homeric in origin (*Iliad* 20.308; cf. Plato, *Laws* 681b); both expressions seem to have designated the extended family (*genos*). The word "extension" (*apoikia*) derives from a phrase meaning "away from the household"; it is the normal term for a colonial settlement. Precisely what Aristotle means by "village" (*kōmē*) is unclear. It is probably to be understood as a country district (canton) rather than a proto-commercial center or town; and Aristotle may be overstating the role of blood relationships in giving rise to it. Cf. Lord 1991, 64 n. 2, Saunders 1995, 66–67.

10 · "Nations" (*ethnē*) were communities organized on a tribal basis and lacking major urban centers—though often occupying more territory than an average polis.

11 · The reference is to the Homeric Cyclopes: "These have no assemblies to take counsel nor customary laws [*themistes*], but dwell in the heights of lofty mountains / in hollow caves: each acts as law to [*themisteuei*] his children and wives, and pays no attention to the others" (*Odyssey* 9.112–15). Cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1180a24–32, Plato, *Laws* 680b–e.

12 · That is, the community that is the perfect or final or fully realized (*teleios*) form

we assert, the nature of that thing. (9) Again, that for the sake of which a thing exists, or the end, is what is best; and self-sufficiency is an end and what is best.[13]

1253a From these things it is evident, then, that the city belongs among the things that exist by nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. He who is without a city through nature rather than chance is either a mean sort or superior to man; he is "without clan, without law, without hearth," like the person reproved by Homer; (10) for the one who is such by nature has by this fact a desire for war, as if he were an isolated piece in a game of backgammon.[14] That man is much more a political animal than any kind of bee or any herd animal is clear.[15] For, as we assert, nature does nothing in vain; and man alone among the animals has speech. (11) The voice indeed indicates the painful or pleasant, and hence is present in other animals as well; for their nature has come this far, that they have a perception of the painful and pleasant and signal these things to each other. But speech serves to reveal the advantageous and the harmful, and hence also the just and the unjust. (12) For it is peculiar to man as compared to the other animals that he alone has a perception of good and bad and just and unjust and the other things of this sort; and community in these things is what makes a household and a city.[16]

The city is thus prior by nature to the household and to each of us. (13) For the whole must of necessity be prior to the part; for if the whole body is destroyed there will not be a foot or a hand, unless in the sense that the term is similar (as when one speaks of a hand made of stone), but the thing itself will

13 · The "end" (*telos*) of a thing is its complete or perfect form. Aristotle appeals here to the doctrine of final causes of his scientific writings (cf. *Physics* 194a27–33). It is far from clear, however, how far the analogy between the city and a living organism is meant to extend.

14 · Homer, *Iliad* 9.63–64: "Without clan, without law [*athemis*], without hearth is the man / who longs for chilling war among his people." (Note that Aristotle reverses the terms of this comparison.) It is not certain exactly what game is referred to, beyond one involving the use of dice; the piece is apparently given a technical name or description, "unyoked" (*azyx*), suggesting an unprotected position.

15 · In *History of Animals* (1.1.487b34 ff.), Aristotle defines "political animal" as one that "has a single and common task [*ergon*]" or function, and indicates that the category includes bees, ants, and other animals of this sort in addition to man.

16 · The Greek word *logos* means both "speech" and "reason"; it is man's reasoning ability that enables him to distinguish between the just and unjust, and therefore to conduct himself morally in relation to others in a way that makes human community possible—whether in a household or a polis.

be defective. Everything is defined by its function and its capacity, and if it is no longer the same in these respects it should not be spoken of in the same way, but only as something similarly termed. (14) That the city is both by nature and prior to each individual, then, is clear. For if the individual when separated from it is not self-sufficient, he will be in a condition similar to that of the other parts in relation to the whole. One who is incapable of sharing[17] 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.

(15) Accordingly, there is in everyone by nature an impulse toward this sort of community. And yet he who first founded one is responsible for the greatest of goods. For just as man is the best of the animals when completed, when separated from law and adjudication he is the worst of all. (16) For injustice is harshest when it is furnished with arms; and man is born naturally possessing arms for [the use of] prudence and virtue which are nevertheless very susceptible to being used for their opposites. This is why, without virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of the animals, and the worst with regard to sex and food.[18] Justice is a thing belonging to the city. For adjudication is an arrangement of the political community, and justice is judgment as to what is just.[19]

CHAPTER 3

1253b (1) Since it is evident out of what parts the city is constituted, it is necessary first to speak of household management; for every city is composed of households. The parts of household management correspond to the parts out of which the household itself is constituted. Now the complete household is made up of slaves and free persons. Since everything is to be sought for first in its smallest elements, and the first and smallest parts of the household are master, slave, husband, wife, father, and children, three things must be investigated to determine what each is and what sort of thing it ought to be. (2) These are mastery, marital rule (there is no term for the union of man

17 · That is, sharing or being partner in (*koinōnein*) a community (*koinōnia*).

18 · Aristotle probably means to allude to incest, cannibalism, and similar phenomena; cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1145a15–33, 1148b15–49a20.

19 · Or "justice [*dikē*] is an ordering [*taxis*] of the political association," as it is usually understood. *Taxis* here appears to have the sense of "institution," while *dikē* refers to the process or administration of justice. "Justice" as used in the text here (*dikaiosynē*) connotes the virtue of justice. Cf. Saunders 1995.