Aristotle's Peculiar Analysis of Monarchy[1]

Introduction

Aristotle's political thought consists for the most part of an analysis of regimes. In *Politics* III.6, he defines a constitution or regime (πολιτεία) as 'an arrangement (τάξις) of a city with respect to its offices, particularly the one that has authority over all matters (τῆς κυρίας πάντων)' (1278b8-10).[2] Depending on how these authoritative offices are arranged, one could speak of different regimes. Within this chapter, Aristotle introduces a first, qualitative criterion to distinguish regimes from each other by referring to the different kinds of rule in the household. The rule over slaves is primarily thought to be to the advantage of the master, and only accidentally in the interest of the slaves, who are not free, whereas the rule over free subjects as women and children is for their sake, or at least for the sake of something common to all (1278b32-40). By analogy, one could equally rule a city either to the private advantage of the rulers or to the common advantage of rulers and ruled. Since cities are essentially thought to consist of free men, Aristotle understands regimes where one rules with a view to the common advantage as correct, while those where rulers only look for their own advantage as errant and deviating from the correct ones (1279a17-21).

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[2] All translations from the *Politics* are taken from C. Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics, 2nd edition (Chicago, 2013).

In the next chapter, *Politics* III.7, Aristotle adds another criterion, but now a quantitative one: depending on whether there are one, few, or many rulers, you could further distinguish the various regimes. In combination with the qualitative criterion from the former chapter, he then ends up with a well-known classification of six regimes: kingship, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, polity, and democracy (1279a32-1279b10, cf. 1289a26-30).[3] This classification occurs outside the *Politics* as well, both in *Eudemian Ethics* VII.9 (1241b27-32) and *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 (1160a31-35), with as sole differences that democracy in the former is simply called the 'people' (δῆμος), and polity in the latter timocracy, based as it is on a property qualification. The sixfold model of regimes is certainly not an invention of Aristotle himself, but has its roots in a long tradition of Greek intellectual thought.[4] As indicated by Mogens Herman Hansen, it is nevertheless Aristotle who often gets the credit for this model, for it is in the third book of the *Politics* that the typology received its classical formulation.[5] This model can be outlined as follows:

Diagram I:

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

As such, the first two regimes, kingship (βασιλεία) and tyranny (τυραννίς), seem to fit well into this model, in so far as they are considered the two instantiations of a regime with a single ruler, a monarchy or regime with 'one-man rule' (μοναρχία). A kingship is the correct regime with a ruler who reigns for the common advantage, whereas a tyranny is its deviant variant with rule only for the sake of the ruler, just

[3] The Greek word πολιτεία is used by Aristotle to indicate both a regime or constitution in general, and a specific regime in particular. The latter is translated as 'polity'.
[4] See especially J. de Romilly, 'Le classement des constitutions d'Herodote à Aristote', *Revue des Études Grecques*, 72 (1959), pp. 81-99, who traces the quantitative distinction between one, few, and many rulers back to Herodotus (III.80-82), with further duplications in later authors. Plato in particular seems to have influenced Aristotle's model, since the *Statesman* (302c-e) also contains a sixfold classification of regimes and the *Laws* (715b) mention a similar distinction between rule to the common and the particular advantage, see F.D. Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1995), p. 153.
[5] See M.H. Hansen, *Reflections on Aristotle's* Politics (Copenhagen, 2013), p. 2.

as an aristocracy differs from an oligarchy in case of few rulers, and a polity from a democracy in case of many rulers. The most significant line of demarcation within this model therefore seems to be the horizontal line, determined by the qualitative distinction between two kinds of rule.

An inquiry into Aristotle's political thought nevertheless shows that there are many ways in which there also seems to be a contrast between monarchies on the one hand and the regimes with few or many rulers on the other, thus making the line of demarcation vertically instead of horizontally. Although many scholars have written before on the place of either kingship or tyranny in the *Politics*, there does not seem to exist a systematic account of Aristotle's understanding of monarchy, considered as the generic term for both kingship and tyranny.[6] It will hence be interesting to investigate the contrast between monarchies and the other regimes in order to highlight the peculiar position of one-man rule in Aristotle's analysis of regimes.

As a point of departure, I will start my argumentation with an overview of all the variants of monarchy, in order to show how they relate to each other, but equally, and more importantly, how they differ from the other regimes. Next, I will deal with three ways wherein monarchies indeed seem to be treated differently in comparison with the other regimes, namely with regard to their constitutional status, their kind of rule, and their relative valuation. I will always start with the model from *Politics* III.6-7, so as to compare it with other chapters and passages from the works of Aristotle. This will lead to the result that monarchies are dealt with oddly in a twofold respect, for (1) Aristotle is not consistent in his definitions of kingship and tyranny, which points to the fact that (2) he not only understands them as essential parts of the sixfold model, but simultaneously seems to set them apart from the other regimes in alternative models.

[6] Kingship and tyranny are recently dealt with in V. Laurand, 'Nature de la royauté dans les *Politiques* d'Aristote', in E. Bermon, V. Laurand and J. Terrel (eds.), *Politique d'Aristote. Famille, Régimes, Éducation* (Pessac, 2011), pp. 71–87 and S. Gastaldi 'La tirannide nella *Politica* di Aristotele', in S. Gastaldi and J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran. Études sur les figures royale et tyrannique dans la pensée politique grecque et sa postérité* (Sankt Augustin, 2009), pp. 139-55 respectively. The only exception I know that deals with monarchy in general is the short appendix in B. Yack, *The Problems of a Political Animal. Community, Justice, and Conflict in Aristotelian Political Thought* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 85-7, where monarchies are set apart from the republican forms of political communities. Since Yack at the end indicates that a more comprehensive account of monarchy 'would devote considerably more space' (p. 87) to explore all the difficulties, my paper may be considered as an attempt that tries to meet this requirement of comprehensiveness.

Six different monarchies

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

In *Politics* III.14, Aristotle lists five sorts of kingships. The enumeration is clearly systematic, in so far as he begins by describing the variant that is closest to him in space and time, and then continues with the ones that are further away, first in space, then in time.[7] The first category of kingship (1285a2-16) is particularly seen present in Sparta, which is a kingship being especially 'based on law' (κατὰ νόμον). In such a regime, the sovereign authority of the king is limited almost exclusively to matters related to war, when the kings are on campaign.[8] This moderate version of a kingship is therefore regarded by Aristotle as a mere generalship for life. Whether the subjects of such a king assent to his rule is not made explicit, but since Aristotle indicates in V.10 (1313a5-6) that kingship is a 'voluntary sort of rule' (ἑκούσιος ἀρχή), it cannot be held otherwise. Aristotle further indicates that this kingship is 'on the basis of family' (κατὰ γένος), i.e. hereditary, or elective. Two further points seem remarkable. The first one is that Aristotle does not restrict it to a single city as such, for he presents Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek cities in the Trojan war, as a king from this first category as well.[9] The second point is that it does not even need to be restricted to Greek regimes, for it would also suit certain non-Greek nations.[10]

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[7] See P. Carlier, 'La notion de *pambasileia* dans la pensée politique d'Aristote', in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes* (Fribourg, 1993), p. 106.

[8] Admittedly, Aristotle indicates that 'matters related to the gods' (1285a6) are also assigned to these kings, though in general he connects this kingship only to warlike activities.

[9] Aristotle cites Homer (*Iliad* II.391-393), although not correct, see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik,* vol II. (Berlin, 1991), p. 541.

[10] Already in II.11 (1272b37-1273a2), Aristotle considered the kings from the barbarian city of Carthage comparable with those from Sparta. And in V.11 (1313a23-33), he mentions the powers of the Molossian kings from Epirus, together with the ones from Sparta, as examples of a limited version of kingship. That Aristotle also takes into account non-Greek variants of kingship is apparent from the beginning of III.14 (1284b37-40), when he asks the question whether kingship is advantageous

The second category of kingship (1285a16-29) is exclusively, but not exhaustively, non-Greek, for it is a regime that appears among some of the barbarians. This regime is also based on law, 'hereditary' (πάτρια), and exercised 'over willing persons' (ἑκόντων). Such a king has nevertheless much more power than a general for life, for Aristotle equates it with the despotic rule of a tyrant. This regime is therefore considered to be a monarchy that has features of both kingship and tyranny, which is the reason why we will describe it here as the barbarian monarchy. Although Aristotle does not give examples of such a regime, it is clear that he considers the Persian kingship as a typical example of this monarchy over supposed slavish subjects.[11]

The third category of kingship (1285a29-1285b3) is called an αἰσυμνητεία, which was later considered as the Greek equivalent of the Roman dictator.[12] Aristotle compares this *aisymnêteia* to the barbarian monarchy, for it too is kingly in being lawful and exercised over willing persons, and tyrannical in having despotic powers. It nevertheless differs in two respects from the second category. First, it is not hereditary, but only elective, which is why Aristotle also describes it as an 'elective tyranny' (αἱρετὴ τυραννίς). Second, it appeared only in Greek cities from the past. Aristotle probably has the archaic period in mind, for he says that Pittacus in Mytilene was once elected as such an αἰσυμνήτης.[13]

The fourth category of kingship (1285b3-19) is equally thought to be a category that does not occur anymore, for Aristotle situates it in 'the times of the heroes' (τοὺς ἡρωικοὺς χρόνους), thus even further away in time than the *aisymnêteia*. This is why it can be called a heroic kingship. Characteristic of such a king is that he possessed more power than a military commander, for a heroic king was also in

'for the city or the territory' (καὶ πόλει καὶ χώρᾳ), with χώρα pointing to the area of a non-Greek 'nation' (ἔθνος), see Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles*, p. 539.

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

[12] This comparison is made by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* V.73.3. This is why αἰσυμνητεία is often translated as 'dictatorship', as is the case in Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics, pp. 88-9.

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

charge of juridical and religious matters, without going so far as to equate his power with that of a tyrant. Like the second category, the kingship is thought to be in accordance with law, exercised over willing persons, and hereditary. This last aspect is justified here by the fact that the first of these kings were 'benefactors' (εὐεργέται) of their subjects. Although Aristotle does not give examples himself, such benefactions can point to both Greek cities and barbarian nations.[14]

After the description of the four categories, Aristotle summarizes them in brief, and then adds a fifth category of kingship (1285b29-33). The description of this kingship in III.14 is very short, for it is defined only as the rule of a person who is 'sovereign over all matters' (πάντων κύριος), later called a παμβασιλεία (1285b36). Aristotle only characterizes it as 'household management' (οἰκονομία) for a city or one or several nations, which indicates that it could occur in both Greek and barbarian civilizations. The shortness of its description could be explained by Aristotle already having alluded to such an 'all-kingship' in two passages from III.13 (1284a3-14 and 1284b25-34), where he brings forward the idea of god-like individuals who deserve all authority in the city due to their preeminence in virtue. These individuals do not rule according to law, for 'they themselves are law' (αὐτοὶ γάρ εἰσι νόμος), but their subjects assent to their rule, for it is only natural to obey them 'gladly' (ἀσμένως). It seems that a king with such an extraordinary character could only be chosen, but in III.17 (1288a15-19), Aristotle also takes into account that this preeminence in virtue could occur in a whole family, which makes such rule hereditary as well. To whom this kingship points is not clear and some suggestions were made in the past.[15] There is, however, no need to presume that Aristotle thought of any living king or regime from the present or past. In that respect, the *pambasileia* merely seems to function as Aristotle's ideal version of a (theoretical) kingship.[16]

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

[15] It was once suggested that Aristotle had the Persian monarchy in mind, see W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. III (Oxford, 1902), pp. 255-6. More often, scholars have linked this absolute kingship to the Macedonian royal house in general, and Alexander the Great in particular, see especially H. Kelsen, 'The Philosophy of Aristotle and the Hellenic-Macedonian Policy', *International Journal of Ethics*, 48 (1937), pp. 31-2 and W.W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 366-9.

[16] With such a concept of kingship, Aristotle not only meddles in the philosophical debate on the ideal king, brought forward by Plato, but also alludes to the pedagogic paradigms of such kings

In *Politics* IV.10, Aristotle lists three sorts of tyrannies. The first two categories (1295a7-17) were already discussed in III.14: the barbarian monarchy and the *aisymnêteia*. The only difference seems to be that the barbarian monarchy is deemed to be elective here, but hereditary in III.14. It seems plausible therefore that Aristotle considers both options as possible.

The third category of tyranny (1295a17-23) is described as one that is 'particularly' (μάλιστα) held to be a tyranny, which is why we will call it a real tyranny. Aristotle indicates that a tyrant rules in 'an unchallenged fashion' (ἀνυπεύθυνος), which seems to point to the fact that his power is not subjected to a higher authority such as the law.[17] The subjects of a real tyrant neither accept his rule, nor would they elect such a ruler, 'for no free person (οὐθεὶς τῶν ἐλευθέρων) would willingly (ἑκών) tolerate this sort of rule'. The fact that Aristotle speaks of free persons seems to imply that he had only Greeks in mind, for he thought that barbarians where slavish in their nature, which was the reason why they accepted barbarian monarchies. Just as with the *pambasileia*, it is not immediately clear whether this category was hereditary, but in V.12, Aristotle goes through several tyrannical dynasties, which indeed show that such power was inherited sometimes. Aristotle does not give us any example of this tyranny here, but he seems to think of any typical tyrant from Greek history.[18]

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

developed by Herodotus, Xenophon, and Isocrates, see C. Atack, 'Aristotle's *Pambasileia* and the Metaphysics of Monarchy', *Polis*, 32 (2015), pp. 309-19.

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

[18] For instance, in V.10 (1310b26-31) Aristotle mentions various individuals, as Pheidon of Argos, Panaetius of Leontini, Cypselus of Corinth, Pisistratus of Athens, and Dionysius of Syracuse, who are all given the title of tyrant.

Diagram II:

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

In reference to the other regimes, four elements are notable. First, Aristotle does not always make a clear distinction between kingships and tyrannies, in so far as some monarchies have characteristics of both, which is the case for the barbarian monarchy and the *aisymnêteia*. This seems to be because there is a generic term used by Aristotle only for regimes with one ruler, whereas the regimes with few and many rulers are always subdivided into two versions. This shows that, although kingships and tyrannies can be distinguished from one another, Aristotle does not always feel the need to make the distinction explicit.[19]

Second, monarchies, as regimes with one ruler, are the only regimes that occur outside a *polis*-context, whereas the other regimes do not transgress the typically Greek state form.[20] Aristotle does not simply lump all the non-Greek monarchies together in the category of the barbarian monarchy, but apparently considers many monarchic categories (four out of six) suitable for barbarian peoples. This indicates that Aristotle, at least for classificatory reasons, was not solely preoccupied with the Greek city-state.[21]

[19] This is why Aristotle indicates in *Politics* IV.7 (1293a35-1293b1) that there are only five regimes: monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, aristocracy, and polity.
[20] Remarkable in this respect is Aristotle's discussion in *Politics* II.11 of a barbarian *polis*, i.e. the city of the Carthaginians, although these citizens are ruled by kings as well (1272b37-38).
[21] For Aristotle's interest in barbarian customs and societies, see especially R. Weil, *Aristote et l'Histoire. Essai sur la «Politique»* (Paris, 1960), pp. 116-21, pp. 211-28, and pp. 380-5. Recently, the assumption that the *Politics* contains a merely *polis*-centered perspective has been challenged by M.G. Dietz, 'Between Polis and Empire: Aristotle's Politics', *American Political Science Review*, 106 (2012), pp. 275-93.

Third, the criterion to distinguish kingship from tyranny seems to depend on the consent of the subjects, which is not the case in other regimes. Although other intellectuals from the fourth century BC maintained that kingships were lawful and tyrannies lawless, Aristotle argued that a *pambasileia* certainly would not be subjected to the law.[22] What all kingships do seem to share is that the subjects assent to the rule of a king, but not any longer to that of a real tyrant.[23] This shows that Aristotle's definition of kingly rule is dependent on the acceptance of the people who are ruled.

Fourth, power in monarchies is especially inherited from family members, whereas in other regimes, offices are normally appointed by election or by lot.[24] Although various monarchies seem to be elective as well, there is only a single category where power is *not* hereditary, i.e the *aisymnêteia*.

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

The constitutional status of monarchies

According to the definition from *Politics* III.6, a πολιτεία was the arrangement of authoritative offices in a city. In that respect, monarchies are regimes were all these offices are in the hands of a single ruler. The generic term μοναρχία is indeed characterized by Aristotle as a πολιτεία in IV.7-8 (1293a37 and 1294a25), and at

[22] The distinction between kingship and tyranny on the basis of their lawful/lawless character is made in Xenophon (*Memorabilia* IV.6.12) and Plato (*Statesman* 302d-e). Aristotle too follows this traditional distinction in *Rhetoric* I.8 (1365b37-1366a2), where he indicates that kingship is 'according to (some) order' (κατὰ τάξιν), whereas tyranny is 'limitless' (ἀόριστος). For these and other distinctions between kingship and tyranny in fourth century BC thought, see P. Carlier, *La Royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre* (Strasbourg, 1984), p. 234.

[23] This is the reason, as Aristotle indicates in *Politics* V.10 (1313a8-16), why a king who no longer has the consent of his subjects must be regarded as a tyrant.

[24] The only exception seems to be one of the categories of oligarchy, discussed in *Politics* IV.5 (1292b5), where sons succeed their fathers. This, however, does not necessarily mean that power is hereditary, as in a monarchy. Aristotle at least seems to use the adjective πάτριος in the sense of 'hereditary' (1285a19, 1285a24, 1285a33, 1285b5, and 1285b9) or the related expression κατὰ γένος (1285a16, 1285b28, 1285b39, and 1313a10) only with regard to monarchies.

the beginning of his further subdivisions of kingships in III.14 (1284b36-37) and tyrannies in IV.10 (1295a3), he categorizes these both as 'among the regimes'. Certainly, not every category of monarchy is considered to be a regime. For instance, the generalship for life has not enough authority, and the barbarian monarchy is never thought to occur in a city.[25] Other categories, however, do seem to be regimes. Both in *Politics* IV.13 (1297b25-26) and *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3 (1113a7-9), Aristotle counts kingship among 'the ancient regimes', clearly referring to the heroic kingship. In *Politics* III.15 (1286a5-6), he says that a kingship with authority over all matters, as the *pambasileia*, is indeed a πολιτεία. And in V.12 (1315b11-12), he calls tyranny one of 'the most-short lived regimes'. There is thus no doubt that Aristotle understood (some) monarchies, just as the other regimes from the sixfold model, as πολιτεῖαι.

It must be admitted, however, that Aristotle is certainly not consistent in his consideration of counting monarchies among the regimes. In the fifth book of the *Politics*, for instance, it seems to be the rule rather than the exception to regard monarchies *not* as regimes. Within this book, he discusses the decline and preservation of all the various state forms, but in doing so he makes a clear distinction between regimes (democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy, and polity) on the one hand, and monarchies (kingship and tyranny) on the other. That the latter are not seen as regimes becomes clear from both the passages where he indicates that he finishes his discussion of πολιτεῖαι (1307b24-25 and 1310a36-38), as those where he says that the decline and preservation of monarchies run in a similar fashion (1310a40-1310b2, 1311a22-25, 1311b36-37, and 1315b40-1316a1). Commentators of the *Politics* indicate that such a distinction between regimes and monarchies is not uncommon in ancient Greek thought.[26] Additionally, David J. Riesbeck argued recently that such a distinction seems justified, since Aristotle

[25] Aristotle indicates in *Politics* III.16 (1287a3-8) that kingship according to law, as the generalship for life, is not a πολιτεία in itself, for this kingly office can occur in any other regime that is not a kingship. That the barbarian monarchy is not a πολιτεία is not indicated explicitly, but can be read implicitly in VII.4 (1326b3-7), where Aristotle opposes a *polis* to an *ethnos*.

[26] See W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. I (Oxford, 1887), p. 521 and E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik*, vol. III (Berlin, 1996), p. 545, who refer to Xenophon (*Hellenica* VI.3.8), Isocrates (*Panegyricus* 125) and Demosthenes (*Olynthiaca* 1, 5). For further references to the ambivalent constitutional status of monarchies, see especially J. Bordes, *Politeia dans la pensée grecque jusqu'à Aristote* (Paris, 1982), pp. 261-78.

refers in V.10-11 to various examples from barbarian nations which certainly do not fit his idea of a regime in a city.[27]

The inconsistency, however, does not restrict itself to the fifth book of the *Politics*, nor to monarchy in general. The heroic kingship was thought to be one of the ancient regimes, but when Aristotle points to such rule in III.15 (1286b8-13), he indicates that it was only hereafter, when more men participated in power, that they 'established a regime'.[28] Accordingly, in IV.13 (1297b16-18), Aristotle situates 'the first sort of regime' after this kingship. The same inconsistency applies to the *pambasileia* and the real tyranny, which were monarchies with authority over all matters. In the *Politics*, kingship is thought to be comparable with aristocracy in being based on virtue (1289a30-35 and 1310b31-34). In IV.7 (1293b1-7), however, Aristotle indicates that aristocracy is the only regime on the basis of virtue, thus excluding the kingship of a *pambasileus* from being constitutional. Similarly, tyranny is assimilated with both the extreme forms of democracy and oligarchy in their being lawless (1292b5-10, 1293a30-34, and 1298a28-33). Yet in IV.4 (1292a30-34), Aristotle indicates that these cannot be called regimes, for 'where the laws do not rule there is no regime', thus denying that a real tyranny is constitutional. This applies to the *pambasileia* as well inasmuch as it is a monarchy where the king rules without the law.

The inconsistency with regard to the constitutional status of monarchies suggests that they are not always considered as similar to the other regimes from the sixfold model. And indeed, as has been recognized before, there seems to be an alternative model of regimes, brought forward in the fourth book of the *Politics*, where kingship and tyranny are omitted.[29] This may be deduced from an alternative definition of a regime in IV.3 (1290a7-11), where Aristotle describes it as an arrangement of offices where 'all distribute (διανέμονται) these either on the basis of the power of those taking part in the regime or on the basis of some equality common to them –

[27] See D.J. Riesbeck, 'The Unity of Aristotle's Theory of Constitutions', *Apeiron*, 49 (2016), pp. 120-1.

[28] Lord, *Aristotle's* Politics, p. 91, translates this πολιτεία as 'polity', but this is implausible, for such a regime deteriorated into oligarchy (1286b14-16). But in the latter, there are only few rulers, not many. It is therefore more convincing that Aristotle simply wanted to indicate that the heroic kingship was not a constitutional regime. This also corresponds with the *Constitution of the Athenians* (41.2), where it is indicated that when king Theseus diverged slightly from kingship, Athens received 'something of a constitutional order' (τι πολιτείας τάξις).

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

I mean, [the power of] the poor (τῶν ἀπόρων) or the well off (τῶν εὐπόρων), or some [equality] common to both'. A regime is still presented as an arrangement of offices, just as in the definition from III.6. What is different now is that these offices are (1) thought to be distributed rather than possibly in the hands of one, and (2) divided according to a sociological criterion of wealth rather than a quantitative criterion of numbers. It seems meaningful to translate πολιτεία in this sense as 'constitution', for is seems only here that it is '*con*-stituted' (as set up *together*) by several citizens.[30] This definition of a constitution, however, is difficult to apply to monarchies, because kings and tyrants control all the (authoritative) offices, which means that these are principally *not* distributed, and their title depends on the willingness of the ruled, and *not* on the wealth of the rulers.

Throughout the *Politics*, it is the case that Aristotle above all pays attention to two of the most common regimes: democracy and oligarchy. Within these, power is indeed often divided according to a sociological criterion rather than a quantitative one.[31] In IV.3 (1290a13-29), just after the alternative definition, Aristotle even indicates that one often assumes only a dichotomy between these two regimes, though he adds: 'But it is truer and better to distinguish as we have, and say that one or two are finely constituted (καλῶς συνεστηκυία) and the others deviations (παρεκβάσεις) from them – deviations from the well-blended harmony (εὖ κεκραμένη ἁρμονία) as well as from the best regime (ἀρίστη πολιτεία)'. Although somewhat cryptic, this passage seems to point to polity and aristocracy (or a unity of both), of which democracy and oligarchy are the deviations.[32] This

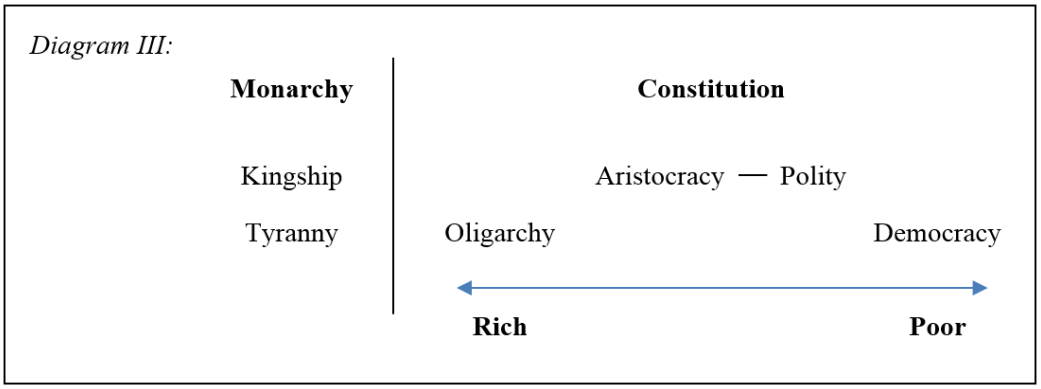
[30] It is argued that 'Aristotle had in mind four distinct senses in using *politeia* in the *Politics* – citizenship, citizen-body, constitution or arrangement of offices, and regime', see J.J. Mulhern,'*Politeia* in Greek literature, inscriptions, and in Aristotle's *Politics*: Reflections on translation and interpretation', in T. Lockwood and T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle's* Politics. *A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 84. This distinction between 'constitution' and 'regime', however, does not correspond with mine, for I use 'regime' for the arrangement of offices, and 'constitution' only when these are distributed among various citizens.

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

[32] This is not an uncontroversial interpretation, for many scholars seem to think that Aristotle is referring to kingship and aristocracy as the finely constituted regime(s), see W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1902), p. 157, W.W. Fortenbaugh, 'Aristotle on Prior and Posterior, Correct and Mistaken Constitutions', in D. Keyt and F.D. Miller, (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle's* Politics (Oxford, 1991), p. 234, and Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles*, p. 250. Although *Politics* IV.2 (1289a30-33) points in this direction, it is rather implausible in this passage. Kingship is, unlike polity, never mentioned in chapter IV.3 and even difficult to reconcile with the alternative definition of a regime. Polity, on the other hand, corresponds very well with the description 'well-blended harmony', for in IV.8 (1293b33-34), Aristotle clearly says that polity can be understood as a 'mixture' (μίξις) between oligarchy and democracy. Additionally, it also explains why polity and

can be considered as anticipating the classification of constitutions from IV.11, where aristocracy and polity are regarded on a sociological spectrum of wealth as intermediate constitution(s), because power is taken up especially by the middle class, and not as in an oligarchy or democracy, by the rich or poor respectively. But this implies, as the following diagram shows, that monarchies as kingship and tyranny are excluded from this model:

Diagram III:



According to the sixfold model of regimes, kingship and tyranny were simply the two regimes with one ruler, but the alternative model of constitutions seems to put them aside.[33] Whether these two models are compatible with each other is an interesting question, but not of much importance here.[34] What is essential up to this point, is that monarchies seem to have an ambivalent constitutional status in Aristotle's political thought, seeing that one time they are considered as a regime, another time not.

aristocracy may be understood here as the same regime, for in IV.11 (1295a31-34), Aristotle indicates that a so-called aristocracy borders to a polity, 'hence we may speak of both as one'.

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

[34] See Riesbeck, 'The Unity of Aristotle's Theory', pp. 93-7, who further argues against the incompatibility of these models. Although his argumentation is convincing in many respects, his explanation with regard to monarchies seems weak, for he argues that Aristotle holds throughout the *Politics* that some monarchies are regimes and some are not (p. 121). Given the inconsistency, it seems better to say that monarchies are sometimes regarded as regimes and sometimes not.

The kind of rule within monarchies

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

Once again, Aristotle does not seem to be consistent in applying this dichotomy of types of rule to the various regimes. One would expect that kingship, together with aristocracy and polity, is a regime with political rule, but in fact Aristotle seems to exclude kingship from it. The opening lines of the *Politics* (1252a7-16) distinguish four types of rule (political, kingly, household, and despotic rule), and Aristotle indicates, in contrast to some predecessors, that these are not identical with each other.[35] Political rule is defined here as rule where one 'rules and is ruled in turn' (κατὰ μέρος ἄρχων καὶ ἀρχόμενος), whereas kingly rule is permanent rule by the one who is in charge. In a kingship, the king still rules for the common advantage, but there is no alternation of power. Such alternation, however, is thought to be characteristic of political rule, with power distributed among equals

[35] The predecessors against whom Aristotle reacts in the opening lines of the *Politics* are Plato (*Statesman* 258e-259a) and Xenophon (*Memorabilia* III.4.12). Aristotle, however, does not seem to argue that all these types of rule are dissimilar, but rather that they are not all alike, since sometimes, he does make comparisons between some of them. In *Politics* I.7 (1255b20) or III.14 (1285b29-33), for instance, monarchic or kingly rule on the one hand and household rule on the other are thought to be similar somehow, see E. Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles. Politik*, vol. I (Berlin, 1991), pp. 179-80.

(1255b20, 1261b2-4, and 1279a8-10), as in a polity or aristocracy.[36] When we leave aside the household rule for a moment, this explains why Aristotle in the *Politics* not only highlights a general dichotomy between despotic and political rule, as said above, but also a more accurate trichotomy between despotic, political, and kingly rule (1254b2-6 and 1287b37-39). That way, kingship is distinguished from the other regimes directed to the common advantage.

Quite the reverse happens with respect to tyranny. One would expect that tyranny, together with oligarchy and democracy, is a regime with despotic rule, but in fact Aristotle seems to reserve, and hence restrict, the term to tyranny alone. After the description of the sixfold model, Aristotle clearly says in III.8 (1279b16-19) that tyranny is 'monarchic rule of a master' (μοναρχία δεσποτική), but then continues with the thesis that the authority in an oligarchy rests in the hands of the rich, in a democracy in the hands of the poor. Thus, in general, the rule in an oligarchy and a democracy does not seem to be despotic.[37] On the contrary, it may be called political, just as in an aristocracy and a polity.[38] Such rule is not thought to be correct, because it still is primarily for the sake of the ruling class, but that does not alter the fact that there is (somehow) alternation of power in these regimes, as political rule requires. But then, tyranny seems to be distinguished from the other

[36] That a polity, if not by its name, then certainly by its number of rulers, consists of political rule is indicated in III.17 (1288a12-15), in so far as it contains a multitude 'capable of ruling and being ruled'. That aristocracy equally consists of political rule is indicated in the same chapter (1288a9-12), although the alternation of power seems unnecessary with few rulers. Aristotle, however, does not restrict this alternation to time, as he understands it in II.2 (1261a32-37). Sometimes he associates it with age as well, as in VII.14 (1332b25-1333a3), in so far as younger citizens must be ruled by the older ones in order to learn how to rule when they acquire the appropriate age. Cf. M. Schofield, *Saving the city. Philosopher-Kings and other classical paradigms* (London, 1999), p. 105: 'It is, of course, a highly Pickwickian construction of the notion of rotation of office. Aristotle has simply hijacked the idea for his own aristocratic purposes.'

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

[38] That a democracy also consists of political rule becomes obvious in reading VI.2 (1317a40-1317b3), where Aristotle indicates that democracy, with freedom as its aim, consists of 'being ruled and ruling in turn'. Less straightforward is the case of oligarchy, but just as aristocracy can be understood as a regime with political rule, the same seems to apply to oligarchy, but then only with wealth rather than virtue as the criterion. Both *Politics* IV.8 (1294a9-11) and *Nicomachean Ethics* V.3 (1131a24-29) indicate that rule can be distributed equally among various persons according to 'virtue' (ἀρετή), 'freedom' (ἐλευθερία), or 'wealth' (πλοῦτος), which indeed incorporates rather than excludes democracy and oligarchy. Both chapters indicate that virtue belongs to aristocracy, freedom to democracy, and wealth to oligarchy. There is a fourth criterion, 'good birth' (εὐγένεια, 1294a20-22), but this can be seen as combination of wealth and virtue. Polity is not connected to a separate criterion, since it is thought to be a mixture of the poor and the wealthy (1294a22-23).

regimes directed towards the private advantage of the rulers, for it is the only one that can be characterized as non-political.[39]

With the trichotomy of three types of rule in mind, we can turn now to two chapters, *Politics* I.12 and *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10, where Aristotle makes a comparison to the different kinds of rule in the household and the city. In *Politics* I.12 (1259a37-1259b1), Aristotle describes 'household rule' (οἰκονομική) as the covering term for three types of rule: despotic rule over slaves, 'paternal rule' (πατρική) over children and 'marital rule' (γαμική) over a wife. The rule over wife and children is different from despotic rule, because the subjects are free, 'though it is not the same manner of rule in each case, the wife being ruled in political (πολιτικῶς), the children in kingly fashion (βασιλικῶς)'. Aristotle thus makes a distinction between three types of rule: despotic, political, and kingly rule, of which the latter two have correspondent types in the household as marital and paternal rule respectively.

A similar, but more extensive comparison between household and city is given in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 (1160b22-1161a9). In accordance with *Politics* I.12, the paternal rule of a father is compared here with that of a king, and the despotic rule of a master (now explicitly) with the rule of a tyrant. Different from *Politics* I.12, however, is that Aristotle now says that marital rule is commensurable with the rule in an aristocracy, and not with political rule as such.[40] Additionally, he introduces a new type of rule, 'fraternal rule' (ἀδελφική), which is compared to the rule in a timocracy, that is the equivalent of a polity in the *Politics* and *Eudemian Ethics* VII.9 (1241b30-31). Thus both marital and fraternal rule seem to be analogous with political rule.[41] When these kinds are thought to deviate from their natural course, then Aristotle compares them now to oligarchy and democracy. He does not call these regimes despotic, however, as he did with tyranny. When we thus

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

[40] On the apparent difficulty that Aristotle compares marital rule with both aristocratic and political rule, see M. Deslauriers, 'Political rule over women in *Politics* I', in T. Lockwood and T. Samaras (eds.), *Aristotle's* Politics. *A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 46-63.

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

take the comparison of rule in the *oikos* and *polis* into account, then we can summarize it as follows:

Diagram IV:

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

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

The relative valuation of monarchies

There is a final peculiarity with the valuation of monarchies. According to the sixfold model, the regimes which are directed to the mere advantage of the ruling class are 'deviations' (παρεκβάσεις) from those directed to the common advantage. This seems to be primarily a value judgement, for the former regimes are called 'errant' (ἡμαρτημέναι) in III.6 (1279a17-20), the latter 'correct' (ὀρθαί).[42] Kingship is therefore thought to be a correct monarchy, tyranny a wrong one, which implies that a king and a tyrant ought to differ comprehensively from each other. This becomes obvious when one compares the *pambasileia* and the real tyranny, which

[42] The word 'deviant' can also have a temporal meaning, as *Politics* III.1 (1275a38-1275b3) seems to show, in so far as deviant regimes are thought to be historically posterior in reference to the correct regimes. Cf. the historical sequence of regimes in III.15 (1286b8-22). Against this temporal interpretation argues Fortenbaugh, 'Aristotle on Prior and Posterior', pp. 226-7.

are described in IV.10 (1295a18) as each other's 'counterpart' (ἀντίστροφος). A king as the *pambasileus* was characterized by his outstanding virtue, wherefore he deserves absolute power that every subject would assent to, but a tyrant was a ruler with similar power that is acceptable to no one. Further differences between king and tyrant are indicated in V.10 (1311a4-7): 'the tyrant's goal is pleasure (ἡδύ); the goal of a king is the noble (καλόν). Hence, of the objects of aggrandizement, material goods (τὰ χρημάτων) are characteristic of tyranny, while what pertains to honor (τὰ εἰς τιμήν) is characteristic of kingship'. This shows how kingship is understood as the correct rule by a truly virtuous person, whereas tyranny simply seems to be the opposite.

But once again, Aristotle does not seem to be consistent in his appreciation of kingship and tyranny. Although he considers kingship as a correct regime, he does not hesitate to offer an abundance of critical arguments against it in *Politics* III.15-16, especially in reference to the 'laws' (νόμοι).[43] In III.15 (1286a8-9), Aristotle starts his evaluation with the question 'whether it is more advantageous to be ruled by the best man or by the best laws'. The question is answered in favor of the laws, for they are universal principles that cannot be affected by passions, as are human beings (1286a14-21).[44] In addition, it is argued that various persons – presuming that they are as virtuous as the best man – are better fitted to rule, because they too are less corruptible than a single person. That is why aristocracy is thought to be 'more choiceworthy' (αἱρετώτερον) than kingship (1286b3-7).[45] In III.16 (1287a16-21), Aristotle equally expresses his preference for many rulers, because the 'arrangement' (τάξις) of ruling and being ruled in turn is considered now as a kind of law in itself. The rulers then function as 'law-guardians and servants of the law' (νομοφύλακες καὶ ὑπηρέται τοῖς νόμοις). Kingship therefore no longer seems to be

[43] For an analysis of all the arguments, see P.L.P. Simpson, *A philosophical commentary on the Politics of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill, 1998), pp. 183-90.

[44] Cf. *Politics* III.11 (1282b1-6), where Aristotle already argued that laws should be authoritative rather than men. Richard Mulgan points to a similar but often overlooked plea for the rule of law in *Rhetoric* I.1 (1354a31-1254b11), see R.G. Mulgan, 'Aristotle and Absolute Rule', *Antichthon*, 8 (1974), p. 23.

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

correct, since Aristotle indicates in III.17 (1287b41-1288a5) that 'among similar and equal persons it is neither advantageous nor just for one person to have authority over all matters'. The only imaginable exception is the rule of an extremely virtuous individual or family.

On the other hand, tyranny does not always seem perceived as an errant monarchy. That Aristotle deals with tyranny in the *Politics* seems odd, for in IV.10 (1295a1-4), he indicates that he has not much to say about it. In V.11, however, he elaborates on the means to preserve tyrannies. He differentiates between two modes, the traditional way, or 'the mode that has been handed down' (ὁ παραδεδομένος), and a new one (discussed respectively in 1313a34-1314a31 and 1314a31-1315b10).[46] This new mode is characterized as the opposite of the traditional mode in so far as a tyrant should not act as a typically vicious and unscrupulous ruler, but as a monarch with the appearance of a king, in order to make his rule longer lasting. What is notable is that Aristotle does not seem to argue that such a tyrant should present himself as someone who rules according to law.[47] Rather, the advice seems to be that the tyrant should (try to) present himself as a virtuous *pambasileus*.[48] The ultimate purpose is then that the tyrant appears as someone who is worthy of such sovereign rule. This way, as Aristotle concludes chapter V.11 (1315b4-10), the tyranny will be 'nobler and more enviable' (καλλίω καὶ ζηλωτοτέρα), and the tyrant himself 'fine in relation to virtue' (καλῶς πρὸς ἀρετήν), for he will be at least 'half-decent (ἡμίχρηστον), not vicious but half-vicious' (μὴ πονηρὸν ἀλλ' ἡμιπόνηρον). Such a tyranny does not seem to be an (entirely) errant regime any longer.

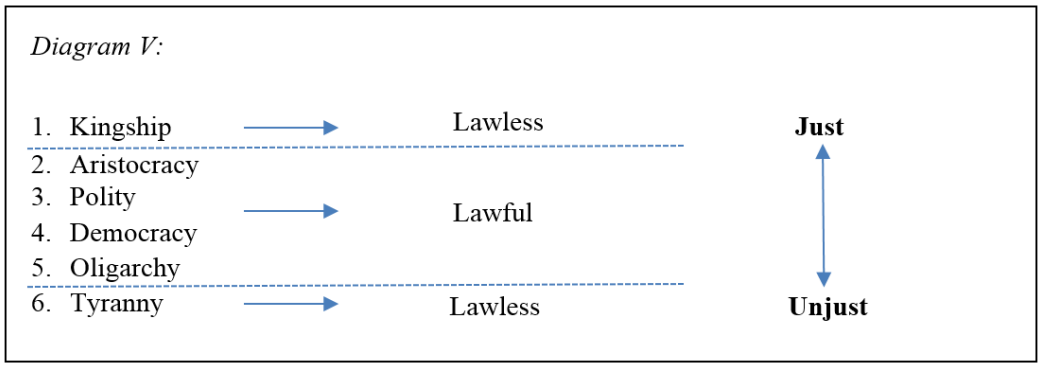
In *Politics* IV.2 (1289a26-1289b5) and *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10 (1160a35-1160b22), Aristotle presents kingship as the best and tyranny as the worst of all regimes from the sixfold model (with aristocracy as second best, oligarchy as second worst, and polity/timocracy and democracy as least good and bad respectively). Kingship is thought to be best, for it is 'first and most divine' (πρώτη καὶ θειοτάτη),

[46] For a full discussion of both modes, see Simpson, *A philosophical commentary*, pp. 411-5.
[47] The only reference to laws within Aristotle's discussion of this new mode seems to be the utterance that men are less afraid of being treated 'in some respect contrary to law' (τι παράνομον, 1314b40) when a ruler acts in a god fearing and respecting way. This is thus in accordance with my interpretation that a tyrant should not rule, or even appear to rule, κατὰ νόμον.
[48] Aristotle argues that he should appear to his subjects as a good king and 'household manager' (οἰκόνομος, 1314b7 and 1315b1) and that he should make a show of taking measures 'for the sake of management of the city' (τῆς οἰκονομίας ἕνεκα, 1314b15). This reminds us of the definition of the absolute kingship in III.14 (1285b31-33) as οἰκονομία, which indeed was a kingship above the law. Cf. Gastaldi 'La tirannide nella *Politica* di Aristotele', pp. 150-1.

recalling the god-like status of the *pambasileia*. Tyranny, as its deviation, is therefore thought to be worst. As such, this hierarchy seems to affirm that kingship is one of the correct regimes and tyranny one of the errant, but the extreme positions on the scale nevertheless allow us to put them apart from the other regimes.

It seems evident that such scale of all regimes is set up with regard to justice, and this can be connected with the rule of law. In *Politics* III.11 (1282b10-13), Aristotle indicates the following: 'If nothing else, it is evident that laws should be enacted with a view to the regime. But if this is the case, it is clear that those enacted in accordance with the correct regimes are necessarily just, and those in accordance with the deviant ones, not just'. In the eyes of Aristotle, it would thus only be 'just' (δίκαιος, 1288a18 and 1325b12) to transcend this and accept the lawless rule of an absolute king when he is outstanding in virtue. In normal circumstances, however, it is just that laws are authoritative and rulers should function as their guardians and servants, as would be the case in regimes such as aristocracy, polity, democracy, or oligarchy. Otherwise, as *Nicomachean Ethics* V.6 (1134a35-1334b8) indicates, the ruler would become a tyrant. This ratio of regimes can therefore be presented as follows:

Diagram V:



The sixfold model of regimes prescribes that kingship is one of the correct and tyranny one of the errant regimes, but this new scale of regimes seems to present kingship and tyranny, with the emphasis on the *pambasileia* and the real tyranny, as standing apart from the other regimes. The former is thought to be an ideal that does not correspond to normal circumstances in the current times, the latter, as counterpart of the ideal, the worst imaginable deviation. Both can nevertheless be thought of together in so far as each of them is lawless in its nature.

Conclusion

When one takes into account the central chapters from *Politics* III.6-7, then monarchies seem to fit quite neatly into Aristotle's classification of regimes, because kingship and tyranny are presented as the two instances of one-man rule within the sixfold model. Kingship corresponds with aristocracy and polity in being a correct regime with a rule to the common interest, whereas tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy are errant in so far as they are only directed to the private advantage of the ruling class. A closer look into all the subcategories of a monarchy nevertheless shows that Aristotle seems to understand regimes with a single ruler in various ways as unique in comparison with the other regimes. An investigation into three central aspects of regimes demonstrates that Aristotle indeed does not seem to be consistent in his analysis of monarchy, for his unclear attitude towards the constitutional status, the kind of rule, and the relative valuation of monarchies seem to compel us to put kingship and tyranny aside from the other regimes. This is why its place in Aristotle's political thought may be described as peculiar.