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Aristotelian Political Friendship: *Koinonia*, *Homonoia*, and *Philia*

Aristotle argues that friendship holds cities together more than justice (1155a22-24).¹ This claim demonstrates that friendship has a political element and that it is more important than justice. What, then, is political friendship for Aristotle? Although Aristotle assigns friendship a prominent political role, he does not provide a systematic account of political friendship. Thus, political friendship lends itself to varying interpretations. The scholarly debate regarding Aristotelian political friendship centers around the extent to which political friendship participates in virtue, utility, and pleasure, like friendships in general. These three categories provide a useful framework for thinking about political friendship; indeed, Aristotle himself employs them to some extent, but political friendship does not arrange neatly into any of these categories. Therefore, Aristotelian political friendship, I argue, should be understood not only through the categories of pleasure, utility, and virtue but also in three other senses: *koinonia*, *homonoia*, and *philia*. First, *koinonia* or “community” denotes the utility of living in community. Second, *homonoia* or “like-mindedness” constitutes agreement about the general terms of political cooperation among decent people and provides the precondition for public discourse. *Philia*, the third sense of political friendship, is also the word for friendship in general, but Aristotle uses *philia* in a political sense in the *Politics*. There *Philia* is affection that fosters bonds of civic unity that conduce toward the noble enjoyment of leisured pastimes. These three senses—*koinonia*, *homonoia*, and *philia*—provide a fuller interpretation of Aristotelian political friendship than simply virtue, utility, and pleasure, and through these three senses, the importance of political friendship to Aristotelian political philosophy emerges.

¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002).

Friendship

Before examining the political implications of friendship, it is necessary to consider Aristotelian friendship in general, which entails considering Aristotle's various uses of the word *philia*. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle uses *philia* to mean "love and liking." Defining love and liking, Aristotle writes, "And let liking be understood as wanting someone to have the things one believes are good, for that person's sake and not one's own, and to have what is apt to bring that about as much as possible. A friend is someone who likes another person and is liked in return, and those who believe this is the case between them believe that they are friends" (1380b38-1381a4).² Here *philia* denotes willing the good of the other as other and the central quality of friendship. Within the context of the *Rhetoric*, *philia* is a feeling that persuasive speech can arouse in listeners.³ In books VIII and IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *philia* refers to friendship itself. Aristotle distinguishes *philia*, "friendship," from *philêsis*, "feeling" or "affection:" "Affection seems like a feeling [*philêsis*], but friendship [*philia*] seems like an active condition, for affection is no less present for inanimate things, but loving in return involves choice, and choice comes from an active condition" (1157b29-31). In short, friendship is a virtue of character because it involves action, but affection or feeling is not because it does not involve action. Furthermore, in book IV.6, Aristotle uses *philia* to denote a minor social virtue of character. A person with this virtue, Joe Sachs comments, "can judge when, and when not, to go along with crowd."⁴ Aristotle, unsure of what to name this virtue, writes "There has not been any name given to it, but it seems most like friendship [*philia*]" (1126b20-21). While this minor social

² Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. Joe Sachs, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009).

³ See Sachs's footnote 239 for the context of *philia* in the *Rhetoric* and also for the distinction between *philia* and *philêsis*.

⁴ See Sachs's footnote 94

virtue does not pertain significantly to friendship, it does illustrate the complexity of the word *philia*. Understanding that Aristotle uses *philia* in a variety of ways will be relevant for how he uses it in the *Politics*. First, however, I will consider what he means by *philia* as friendship proper.

The primary sources for Aristotle's account of friendship are books VIII and IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and book VII of the *Eudemian Ethics*. The *NE* provides the fuller account, but the *EE* is helpful for its discussion of political friendship and friendship as the mutual falling in love with a transcendent third. The account of friendship in the *NE* begins with criteria for friendship. The first criterion is reciprocal goodwill, which means friends wish for good things for one another in the same way insofar as they are good" (1156b9-10). This prevents friendship with inanimate things: "it is not friendship that is meant in the case of loving inanimate things, since there is no loving in return, or wishing for the good of that thing" (*NE* 1156b28-29). A rock cannot love one in return, so friendship with rocks is impossible because friendship requires reciprocal goodwill. The second criterion necessitates awareness of the reciprocal goodwill. For example, Aristotle says, "For many people are goodwilled toward those they have not seen, but believe to be decent or useful, and one of the latter might feel this same way toward the former...but how could one say they were friends when they are unaware of how they stand toward each other?" (1155b30-1156a5). Not only must friends have goodwill, but they also must be aware of that goodwill: "Therefore, it is necessary to have goodwill and wish for good things for one another, not being unaware of it" (1156a5-7). Without goodwill and awareness, true friendship is impossible.

Next, Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of friendship based on three lovable things: utility, pleasure, and virtue. The goodwill in each varies accordingly.⁵ In useful friendships, for example, the goodwill is not for the other friend himself but for the utility the friend provides: “So those who love one another for what is useful do not love one another for themselves, but insofar as something good comes to them from one another” (1156a11-13). The same is true for pleasure friendships; one loves the pleasure the friend provides not the friend. In virtue friendship, however, the friend is loved. “But the complete sort of friendship,” Aristotle writes, “is that between people who are good and alike in virtue, since they wish for good things for one another in the same way insofar as they are good, and they are good in themselves” (1156b7-10). Still, one could ask whether it is the friend who is loved or whether it is virtue that is loved. The answer is both. Virtue, for Aristotle, is an active condition of the soul.⁶ Thus to love the virtue of the friend is to love the most important aspect of the friend: the condition of the soul. Friendships of virtue make the most complete friendships because genuine care for the friend exists. It’s not that the virtuous friend loves the other for his own sake; that is, for the pleasure he receives from beholding a virtuous soul. Rather, Aristotle writes, virtuous friends “wish for good things for their friends for their own sake” (1156b10-11). A virtuous friendship, moreover, is the most complete because it includes the other two types of friendship, but the other two types do not include virtue.⁷ Another aspect peculiar to virtue friendship is the friend as the second self: “the friend is another self” (1165a33). This, however, only occurs in virtue friendships. Each friend recognizes his virtue and the other’s virtue to be identical and therefore recognizes the self in the other. Virtue friendship, then, meets the full criteria for friendship—reciprocal goodwill and

⁵ See also *EE* VII.11 20-30 for the different variations of good will in the various friendships.

⁶ See *NE* II.V-V for virtue as an active condition of the soul.

⁷ See *NE* II.III and *EE* 12367a6-8.

awareness thereof—while also elevating the friend to a second self. Since utility and pleasure friendships lack the requirements for complete friendship, they should be understood as *secondary* friendships. They are friendships insofar as the friends reciprocally provide lovable things (i.e. utility and pleasure), but they do not provide the reciprocal goodwill necessary for friendship.

The *Eudemian Ethics* introduces another characteristic peculiar to virtue friendship: the mutual falling in love with a transcendent third. Aristotle explains, “the primary friendship [virtue] is nothing other than the reciprocal choice of the things that are good and pleasant in the abstract, and that friendship itself is the state that finds expression in such choice” (1237a30).⁸ Friends have an agreed upon conception of the good and the activity of the friendship expresses the mutual orientation to the good. Virtue friends recognize the friend as a second-self through the shared conception of the good; they recognize their own virtue in each other only because they share a conception of virtue. In a virtue friendship, the shared conception of the good is the good as noble, *to kalon*. Once the friends share this conception of the good, then the virtuous friends act together toward the good. They act in the particular toward the universal, which constitutes the activity of virtue for Aristotle: “What is to be sought is that things in the abstract should be good for you too. For what is worthwhile for you is what is good for you: and these must be brought to coincide. This is what virtue does” (1236b39-1237a3). Virtue harmonizes the universal good with the particular actions. This happens *par excellence* in virtue friendships because two individuals are striving together toward their shared conception of the good. That the friends strive together toward the good is crucial to the virtue friendship. One could argue that if virtue friends share the same conception of the good, they can independently strive toward

⁸ Aristotle, *The Eudemian Ethics*, trans. Anthony Kenny (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

the good; one friend's striving need not affect the other friend's striving. This picture fails to meet the criteria for virtue friendship because Aristotle argues that it is not enough for the friends only to be good in the abstract; rather, they must also be good in the particular, which in friendship means they must be good *for each other*. Aristotle, expressing this notion writes, "if a man is to become your friend, he must be not only good in the abstract but good for you. A man is good in the abstract simply by being good, but he is a friend by being good for someone else, and he is both good in the abstract and good for an individual when these two coincide, so that what is good in the abstract is likewise good for the other" (1238a2-8). Thus, an independent striving does not constitute a virtue friendship. In a virtue friendship, rather, the friends must contribute to each other's growth toward the good as noble.

Political Friendship

With these essentials of Aristotelian friendship discussed, a consideration of political friendship is in turn. Aristotle writes about civic friendship⁹ specifically in the *Eudemian Ethics*.¹⁰ He argues that civic friendship is a derivation of utility friendship: "Civic friendship, more than any other, is based on utility, for it is the lack of self-sufficiency that brings people together, even if they would have come together simply for the sake of company" (1242a7-10). Since cities arise for the sake of meeting needs, citizens are friends first because it useful. This friendship resembles the friendship of a mechanic and a butcher as mechanic and butcher.¹¹ The mechanic fixes the butcher's car, and the butcher provides the mechanic meat, or more likely, they will use money to equalize the exchange. Utility, then, serves one purpose of political friendship. The purpose of the city, however, exceeds utility for virtue, as Aristotle states in the

⁹ Civic and political friendship will be used synonymously.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, VII.X

¹¹ Dr. Sweeney, I must credit you for this fine example.

Politics: “The complete community, arising from several villages, is the city. It reaches a level full of self-sufficiency, so to speak; and while coming into being for the sake of living, it exists for the sake of living well” (*Pol.* 1252b28-31).¹² Does the political friendship of the mechanic and the butcher contribute to the city living well? Or, or is their political friendship only for living and utility?

One prominent answer to this question comes from John Cooper, who argues that civic friendship contributes to the living well of society by fostering mutual well-wishing¹³ among citizens.¹⁴ The claim rests on Cooper’s attempt at harmonizing virtue, utility, and pleasure friendships by arguing that mutual well-wishing is present in all three.¹⁵ First, he maintains, based on Aristotle’s definition of *philia* in the *Rhetoric*,¹⁶ that mutual well-wishing is the central characteristic of all friendships. Therefore, for utility and pleasure friendships to be at all, they must possess mutual well-wishing, which he suggests is the case. The experiences of utility and pleasure come first, but after an accumulation of these positive experiences, goodwill for the other person as other arises. Rather than being fully self-centered, pleasure and advantage friendships are “instead a complex and subtle mixture of self-seeking and unself-interested well-wishing and well doing.”¹⁷ If pleasure and advantage friendships possess mutual well-wishing, and civic friendship is a type of advantage friendship, then civic friendship is capable of mutual-well wishing. Cooper elaborates, “in a city animated by civic friendship each citizen has a certain measure of interest in and concern for the well-being of each other citizen just because the other

¹² Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Carnes Lord, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

¹³ This is Cooper’s phrase for willing the good of the other as other.

¹⁴ John Cooper, “Politics and Civic Friendship,” in *Reason and Emotion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

¹⁵ John Cooper, “The Forms of Friendship,” in *Reason and Emotion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 312-335.

¹⁶ See page 2 for the definition.

¹⁷ Cooper, *The Forms of Friendship*, 317.

is a fellow citizen. Civic friendship makes fellow-citizens' well-being matter to one another, simply as such."¹⁸ Civic friendship, therefore, bonds society together and orients it toward the common good because citizens will the well-being of other citizens.

Is Cooper's argument valid? It is valid based on the definition of friendship in the *Rhetoric*. If friendship requires goodwill, as the *Rhetoric* insists, then for political friendship to be friendship at all, it must have goodwill, which Cooper argues is the case. However, it is not valid to apply this definition of *philia* to the *NE* and the *EE* because in both Aristotle states that goodwill is absent in utility and pleasure friendships: "no goodwill comes about in those cases" (*NE* 1167a) and "When friendship is divided into three kinds, goodwill is not found either in the friendship of utility or the friendship of pleasure" (*EE* 1241a3-5). Does this create a tension between Aristotle's account of friendship in the *Rhetoric* and the ethical treatises? If the definition from the *Rhetoric* is taken out of context, then yes, there is a clear tension; utility and pleasure friendships should not be considered friendship at all. However, Aristotle's intention in the *Rhetoric* is to show that persuasive speech can change people from being enemies with no good-will to friends with goodwill: "It is evident from these things, then, that it is possible to demonstrate that people are enemies or friends and make them be so when they are not, to refute those who claim they are, and, when people are in a dispute because of anger or hostility, to bring them over to whichever side one chooses" (1382b15-19). Thus, *philia* in the *Rhetoric* is more akin to a feeling of goodwill than a fully developed friendship of virtue, which is perhaps why Aristotle does not use *philia* as the word for friendship. Here Aristotle is more concerned with convincing two people who hate each other to like each other; that is, to have a feeling of good-will toward each other. This is a base level of good-will that ends hostility, but it is not the

¹⁸ Cooper, *Politics and Civic Friendship*, 371.

goodwill of a fully developed virtue friendship that involves willing the good of the other in relation to the good as noble. Moreover, even if the tension between the *Rhetoric* and the two ethical treatises is maintained, it is more reasonable to use the treatment of friendship in the ethical treatises as the foundation for political friendship because Aristotle's primary intention there is to give a full account of friendship. By no means is Aristotle attempting a full account of friendship in the *Rhetoric*, and so it is tenuous to use the *Rhetoric* for a universal definition of friendship.

Moreover, *philia* as willing the good of the other as other is impossible in political friendship. As I argued previously, friendships of pleasure and utility should be understood as *secondary* friendships. They have some aspects of friendship, like providing lovable things for the other, yet they do not fulfill the requirements for complete friendship so are secondary. Although it remains possible for pleasure and utility friendships to develop into virtue friendships, Aristotle's distinction should be respected. If this distinction remains, then goodwill should not be the basis of political friendship because of its rootedness in utility. Thus, the virtue aspect of political friendship must be found somewhere other than goodwill. This is especially true when considering the other criterion of friendship: awareness of the mutual goodwill. How can citizens be aware of all the other citizens' goodwill for them? They cannot. So, for Aristotle, since goodwill is absent from friendships of utility and pleasure, the utility aspect of political friendship makes goodwill an unlikely characteristic of political friendship and, moreover, it is impossible for citizens to be aware of the goodwill of other citizens. Another argument against Cooper is the rarity of virtue friendships: "such friendships are likely to be rare, for such people are few" (*NE* 1156b24-25). This rarity renders complete virtue friendship inadequate for political friendship as it would be impossible to foster many completely virtuous friendships among the

citizenry. Thus, Cooper's position does not provide a sufficient interpretation of Aristotelian political friendship.

Other scholars have criticized Cooper's position as well. R.K Bentley, for example, critiques Cooper's harmonization of the three types of friendships finding altruism (mutual well-wishing), as Cooper understands it, an erroneous basis for civic friendship.¹⁹ He argues that Cooper overemphasizes altruism at the expense of the friend as the second-self. The virtue friend as a second-self demands an unacceptable level of *intolerance* for moral failings: "character [virtue] friends cannot tolerate ethical failings in each other. That would be equivalent to tolerating it in oneself."²⁰ Given this intolerance, it is impossible to scale virtue friendship to many citizens. Therefore, Bentley argues, "civic friendship is best seen as a conditional group benevolence that involves a qualitatively different kind of mutual concern between citizens than is found between perfect friends."²¹ This different concern resembles the mere respect for citizens advocated by contemporary liberalism as opposed to the mutual well-wishing that Cooper suggests.

Like Bentley, Francis V. Valk departs from Cooper for his inadequate consideration of the friend as a second-self.²² but, unlike Bentley, Valk thinks virtue friendship can stand as the basis of political friendship, if understood properly. He argues that virtue friendship exists on a scale of more and less completeness. In a perfectly complete friendship, the entire self appears in the other. However, these friendships are rare, so most virtue friendships involve seeing an

¹⁹ R.K. Bentley, "Civic Friendship and Thin Citizenship," *Res Publica*, no. 19 (2013): 5-19. For an agreement with Cooper, see Eleni Leontsini, "The Motive of Society: Aristotle on Civic Friendship, Justice, and Concord," *Res Publica*, no. 19, (2003): 21-35.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²² Francis Valk, "Political Friendship and the Second Self in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," *Innovations: A Journal of Politics* (2004-2005): 49-63.

incomplete version of the self in the other. Political friendship should reflect this scale: it is possible to see some shared virtues with other citizens and therefore see an incomplete version of the self. Thus, to some extent political friendship resembles virtue friendship, but it is not a complete virtue friendship, as Cooper suggests when he says citizens become friends by acquiring “a disposition to act in all respects morally toward them.”²³ So, both Bentley and Valk critique Cooper for not accounting for the second self, but Valk sees an incomplete second-self as a possibility for incomplete political friendship whereas Bentley limits political friendship to respect for others.

Does the friend as a second-self serve as an adequate basis for political friendship? Bentley is right to critique Cooper by maintaining that political friendship is not complete virtue friendship because it cannot account for the second-self, but this does not mean that political friendship lacks virtue entirely and should be relegated to respect for others. Valk’s scaled account of the second self where some virtues are recognized is more reasonable for political friendship. However, Valk limits the virtues that citizens recognize in each other to *civic* virtues. Although Valk does not clarify the difference between virtue and civic virtue, presumably civic virtues are those relative to the preservation of regime whereas moral virtues are universal and are oriented toward the good as noble rather than the preservation of the regime.²⁴ Thus, citizens recognize in other citizens civic virtues that contribute to the preservation of the regime but not moral virtues oriented toward the good as noble. Both Bentley and Valk curtail the moral excesses of Cooper’s position, but since Aristotle never applies the second self to utility, there is insufficient evidence to ground political friendship in any notion of the second self. Thus,

²³ Cooper, *The Forms of Friendship*, 334.

²⁴ Valk, “Political Friendship and the Second Self,” 59. The distinction between civic virtue and virtue will be discussed further in Aristotle’s account of citizenship in the *Politics*, III.1-5.

Bentley is correct in not establishing the second self as the basis of political friendship, but he is wrong to divorce political friendship entirely from virtue friendship.

Elena Irrera offers another option: political friendship mixes between utility and virtue friendship. Staking this position, Irrera writes, “a stable and good *politike philia* [political friendship] is a kind of friendship grounded in utility, which, nevertheless, will promote in the civic virtues like love of the other, living together, trust and reciprocal reliability on the citizen’s part.”²⁵ These civic virtues resemble moral virtues more closely than in Valk’s account. This position is more reasonable considering Aristotle’s claim that cities originate for the sake of living but exist for the sake of living well. Aristotle’s account of civic friendship as a derivation of utility friendship demonstrates that political friendship is useful for the sake of living. But, if the city also exists for the sake of living well, and virtue friendship is necessary for living well, then virtue friendship must have a role in the city. Therefore, political friendship must be both useful and virtuous, which corresponds with Aristotle’s description of friendship as “not only necessary but also beautiful” (*NE* 1155a29).²⁶ Irrera, however, edges too close to Cooper’s position when she says that political friendship will promote values like “love of the other.” Aristotle does not intend this type of mutual regard between citizens. Therefore, Irrera is correct in positioning political friendship between utility and virtue, but she, like Cooper, overestimates the role of virtue in political friendship.

²⁵ Elena Irrera, “Between Advantage and Virtue: Aristotle’s Theory of Political Friendship,” *History of Political Thought*, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 565-585.

²⁶ Joe Sachs translates *to kalon* as “beautiful.” It is more commonly translated as “noble.” For Sachs’s defense of this translation, see his Introduction to *NE* (xxi-xxv). I subscribe to his defense. Nevertheless, *to kalon* is the end of virtue for Aristotle.

Situated between utility and virtue, political friendship is best understood through the notions of *koinonia* and *homonoia* that Aristotle uses in his account of political friendship.²⁷ Ultimately, these two notions reveal that political friendship begins in utility and incompletely partakes in virtue friendship. The first notion is political friendship in *koinonia*, or “community.”²⁸ In the opening lines of the *Politics*, Aristotle claims that every community exists for the sake of some good: “Since we see that every city is some sort of community, and that every community is constituted for 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” (1252a1-5). One of these goods is utility. Aristotle says, “all communities are like parts of the political community, for people come together for some advantage” (*Pol.* 1160a9-10). The common advantage that people share simply by being in community is one sense of political friendship: “To whatever extent that they share something in common, to that extent is there a friendship” (*NE* 1159b30-31). Aristotle provides examples such as sailors on a voyage to make profit, or soldiers aiming toward the ends of warfare like money and victory or sharing in festivities for the sake of pleasure (1160a15-21). All these examples are friendships derived from *koinonia*. Richard Kraut, commenting on this type of friendship, writes, “All that is meant by applying the word *philia* to such a relationship is that the parties take it to be in their interest to cooperate with each other.”²⁹ This notion of political friendship accords with Aristotle’s account of civic friendship in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where Aristotle argues that the end of civic friendship is utility.³⁰ “The political friendship that exists among citizens,” Kraut continues, “is nothing more high-minded

²⁷ Richard Kraut, “Political Friendship,” in *Aristotle: Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 465-470. Kraut points out that Aristotle does not explicitly acknowledge that he is using political friendship in two different senses in the *NE*, although the evidence is clear that he does.

²⁸ See *NE* VIII.9 for political friendship as *koinonia*.

²⁹ Kraut, “Political Friendship,” 466.

³⁰ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, VII.10.

than this kind of mutually advantageous cooperation.”³¹ Therefore, one undeniable sense of political friendship for Aristotle is the mutual advantage that comes from being in community. *Koinoia* is the relationship of the butcher and mechanic as butcher and mechanic but scaled to the level of community, which makes it political friendship rather than simply a useful friendship between two persons.

The other sense of political friendship is *homonoiia* or “like-mindedness.”³² Aristotle claims in two places that *homonoiia* is political friendship: “like-mindedness seems to be friendship in a political sense” (*NE* 1167b2), and “Concord is friendship in citizenship” (*EE* 1241a33).³³ Given this explicit claim about political friendship, *homonoiia* makes a more reliable foundation for political friendship than mutual regard (Cooper) or second self (Valk). What, then, does Aristotle mean by *homonoiia*? First, it is not merely having the same opinions: “For this reason it [*homonoiia*] is not sameness of opinion, since this could be present even in people who are ignorant of one another; nor do people speak of those who judge alike about anything whatever, such as about the things in the heavens” (*NE* 1167a24-27). Here Aristotle adopts the common use of *homonoiia*; rather than referring to agreement about anything, *homonoiia* refers to agreement in politics.³⁴ Aristotle expounds, “they speak of cities as being like-minded, whenever people judge alike about what is advantageous, and choose the same things, and act on the things they believe in common” (1167a28-31). Then Aristotle provides examples of general agreements that constitute *homonoiia*: offices should be elected, making an alliance, or having the best people rule (1167a30-1167b3). This, however, does not require that citizens agree on the particulars.

³¹ Kraut, “Political Friendship,” 467.

³² More common translations for *homonoiia* include “unanimity” (W.D. Ross) and “concord” (Anthony Kenny).

³³ “Like-mindedness” and “concord” are both translations of *homonoiia*.

³⁴ In footnote 265, Sachs cites Plato, *The Republic*, 545d and Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Bk. VII, Chap. 93 as precedents for the use of *homonoiia* in the political context.

Kraut, commenting on Aristotle's examples of *homonoia*, explains, "Notice that all of these are points of considerable generality: citizens can agree to hold elections, but vote for different candidates; they can favor an alliance, but disagree about its terms....Evidently, like-mindedness is consensus among citizens about the fundamental terms of their cooperation."³⁵ Agreement about general matters of politics, Kraut argues, creates an atmosphere of "trust" and "consensus" wherein the particulars can be discussed without being "poisoned by hostility, suspicion, and bitterness."³⁶ This background of trust and consensus that *homonoia* fosters is crucial for the preservation of the city because it banishes faction; that is, disagreement about the general terms of political cooperation that prevents discourse and threatens the regime. Citizens will not progress in deliberating about the particulars without agreement on the general terms of political cooperation. Thus, by fostering agreement about the terms of political cooperation, *homonoia* allows for a more civil discourse that results in productive solutions to the problems facing the regime and thereby contributing to its preservation.

Moreover, since *homonoia* is the precondition for political deliberation, it is helpful to consider *homonoia* in light of Aristotle's remarks on deliberation in book III.3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. First, Aristotle determines the object of deliberation: "We deliberate about things that are up to us and are matters of action" (1112a31-32). Conversely, we do not deliberate about things that are not up to us, such as the cosmos, or the diagonal side of a square, or the things of fortune and chance, like rain and drought (1112a22-30). Then, Aristotle further clarifying the things of deliberation, writes,

We deliberate not about ends but about the things that are related to the ends, for a doctor does not deliberate about whether he will cure someone, nor a rhetorician about whether he will persuade, nor someone holding political office about whether he will produce

³⁵ Kraut, "Political Friendship," 468.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 468.

good order, nor does anyone else deliberate about ends, but having set down the end, they consider in what way and by what means it would be the case. (1112b12-18)

Consider the contrast between political deliberation and philosophic dialogue. Political deliberation does not concern ends whereas philosophic dialogue does concern ends. For example, a political philosopher dialogues about whether the creation of wealth is the purpose of politics. The citizens of the oligarchy do not deliberate about whether the purpose of politics is the creation of wealth. Rather, they deliberate on how the oligarchy will become wealthier. Means are the object of deliberation. *Homonoia*, then, is the agreement among citizens about the end of the regime that allows deliberation upon the means for achieving this end. However, this does not mean that Aristotle limits deliberation to instrumental means.³⁷ In order to adequately deliberate upon the means, it is necessary to discuss ends. But, this discussion of ends does not entail the consideration of a different end; rather, the deliberation concerns a clarification of the end already agreed upon. To return to the previous example, the citizens of the oligarchy will not deliberate upon whether wealth should be the end of government. Instead, they may discuss the amount of wealth the regime should create, or how the wealth should be distributed. Thus, *homonoia* accords with Aristotle's account of deliberation. Deliberation is primarily about instrumental means for matters of action that are in one's control. It concerns ends only for the sake of clarification, not for the sake of choosing a different end. Another way of viewing *homonoia*, then, is as the general agreement about the ends of the political community that allows deliberation upon the instrumental means necessary for achieving these ends.

³⁷ Susan Bickford, "Beyond Friendship: Aristotle on Conflict, Deliberation, and Attention," *The Journal of Politics*, no. 2 (May 1996): 401-402.

Another important characteristic of *homononoia* is that it occurs only among decent people.³⁸ These people, Aristotle says, “are of like mind both with themselves and with one another...they want things that are just and advantageous, and aim at these in common” (*NE* 1167b7-9). *Homononoia* happens in decent people; that is, those who want what is “just and advantageous” for the city. This, then, is the extent to which political friendship partakes in virtue; it is an active willing of the common good. Aristotle does not claim that decency is itself a virtue. Rather, decency comes with a certain level of character. Without this base-level decency, *homononoia* is impossible: “it is impossible for people of low character to be like-minded except to a small extent, in the same way that it is impossible for them to be friends, since they aim at having more in the way of benefits and come up short in work and public services” (1167b10-13). Thus, it is difficult to form *homononoia* with people of low character, since they rank their own advantage over that of the city. And notice the link to friendship: just as a friendship of character requires wishing the good of the other, the decency necessary for *homononoia* requires wishing what is good for the city. This does not mean, as Cooper suggests, willing the good of each individual citizen as if in a complete virtue friendship. Rather, *homononoia* is a general disposition toward what is just and advantageous for the city, not just oneself. The political friendship between citizens, then, does partake in virtue when citizens actively work for the common good by discussing the means for manifesting the common good.³⁹ Thus, fostering political friendship is the utmost concern for lawmakers because it

³⁸ See *Nicomachean Ethics* V.10 for Aristotle’s account of decency (*epieikeia*) in relation to justice. Decency is a kind of justice that departs from the universal law when it does not conduce to justice in a particular situation. A decent person, then, has an active state of the soul in which one does not rigidly adhere to universal laws of justice but seeks the just and advantageous in particular situations.

³⁹ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1237a30.

creates an atmosphere of trust and cooperation that preserves the city by helping citizens discuss the means necessary for the common good.

With this understanding of *homonoia*, I suggest that political friendship resembles friendship as the mutual falling in love with a transcendent third in the *Eudemian Ethics*.⁴⁰ Although this idea applies most directly to virtue friends who agree about the good, it can be applied to political friendship in a secondary sense: decent citizens who agree about the general terms of political cooperation mutually fall in love with the transcendent third, the common good, although they may disagree about how to manifest it. So, just as in virtue friendship the two friends act in the particular toward an agreed upon abstract good, citizens should act in the particular toward the common good.⁴¹ This agreement about the good primarily concerns general terms of political cooperation. In the ideal city, citizens agree about the good life and orient the citizens toward living it. *Homonoia* does not require agreement about the good life; it only requires agreement about the end of government established by the constitution. Like-mindedness concerning the constitution is essential to the preservation of the city because it fosters an environment of trust, consensus, and cooperation that dispels faction and protects public discourse.

Now, Aristotle's claim that friendship holds cities together more than justice can be considered. "And friendship," Aristotle writes, "seems to hold cities together, and lawmakers seem to take it more seriously than justice, for like-mindedness seems to be something similar to friendship, and they aim at this most of all and banish faction most of all for being hostile to it" (*NE* 1155a23-24). Here it is important to maintain the distinction between friendship, *philia*, and

⁴¹ See *Politics* III.IV for Aristotle's account of citizenship that deals with citizens acting in the particular toward the common good.

like-mindedness, *homonoia*. *Philia*, as the fully developed virtue of character, supersedes justice.⁴² *Homonoia* does not supersede justice as a virtue because it is not a virtue. It does, however, supersede justice in the preservation of cities. Since *homonoia* banishes faction and creates a political environment suitable for public discourse, it is a *precondition* for establishing justice. Determining what is just and unjust requires political deliberation that can only happen in under the aegis of *homonoia*. Thus, law makers should first be concerned with establishing *homonoia* before justice. But justice, since it is the end aimed at, it is higher than *homonoia*, as *homonoia* is means for achieving justice.

However, although *homonoia* dispels faction, it does not banish it completely. To demonstrate this point and further elucidate the concept of *homonoia*, it's helpful to consider *homonoia* in relation to contemporary partisan politics. *Homonoia* does not intend to foster agreement about everything but allows for disagreement.⁴³ Jon von Heyking, in the *Form of Politics*, explains, "Of course, even the best regime is characterized by different factions with different opinions regarding the just and the advantageous. Yet their like-mindedness is characterized by their willingness to seek the just and the advantageous together with *these* particular other citizens."⁴⁴ Rather than attempting to dispel disagreement entirely, *homonoia* establishes the terms of political cooperation and affirms politicians in their mutual desire to manifest the common good. To use a sport analogy, the terms of political cooperation are rules of the game and decency is the sportsmanship. Rules and sportsmanship are necessary for the success of the game as terms of cooperation and decency are necessary for the success of politics. Partisan politics, Heyking argues, takes *homonoia* for granted: "it (*homonoia*) is

⁴² See Sachs, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Footnote 232.

⁴³ In this paragraph, I used Aristotle's account of *homonoia* in the *NE*. He gives a similar account in the *EE* VII.7.

⁴⁴ John von Heyking, *The Form of Politics: Aristotle and Plato on Friendship*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 10.

infrequently a topic of special concern for the partisan factions of political society, because their everyday political activity is predicated upon like-mindedness. Like-mindedness is not the object of legislation or political action, but their condition.”⁴⁵ Heyking’s assessment demonstrates the relevance of Aristotle’s account of *homonoia* to contemporary partisan politics. The degradation of current political discourse is in part due to forgetting *homonoia*. Where *homonoia* does exist in the background, it would improve the political discourse to bring it to the foreground. In any form of discussion, it is useful to foreground agreement before discussing disagreement. This keeps the parties involved on the same page and establishes goodwill. Thus, exposing agreements between the two parties creates an environment of goodwill that will improve the discussion of the disagreements. Moreover, affirming the opposing party’s desire to manifest the common good, as opposed to assaulting them with personal invective, will restore the *decency* necessary for *homonoia*, which, in turn, will improve the quality of the political discourse. Although Aristotle’s political philosophy is largely dismissed as irrelevant to contemporary politics, his account of *homonoia* has profound relevance to contemporary politics and provides a path for restoring political discourse.

However, it is worth considering an objection to the relevance of *homonoia* for American political discourse for the sake of clarifying *homonoia*; Aristotle wrote for a smaller citizenry, so it is not feasible to scale *homonoia* to a citizenry the size of the United States. For Aristotle, citizens are only males who partake in decision and office and have the proper amount of leisure to partake in political life; the working class cannot be citizens.⁴⁶ In short, there is a much smaller population for establishing *homonoia*. Given the population of the United States and its

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See *Politics* III.I-III for Aristotle’s account of the qualifications for citizenship.

more liberal qualifications for citizenship, it would be impossible to establish “like-mindedness” among the citizenry. This is to some extent true. However, it depends on the object of *homonioia*. It would certainly be easier to establish *homonioia* concerning morality with a small citizenry and far more difficult in the United States. But, given the flexibility of *homonioia*, that it requires only decency and general terms of political agreement, it is entirely applicable toward a larger citizenry. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution makes a good example. It is not unreasonable to suggest that most Americans would agree that freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition are satisfactory terms of political cooperation. Now, Americans certainly disagree about these freedoms in the particular, but by first establishing and affirming agreement about them in the universal, citizens create a trustful environment for a more civil discourse about their particular application, which, for Aristotle, is the purpose of *homonioia*.

Furthermore, suppose that American citizens do not agree even on the general terms of political cooperation, which is becoming increasingly common. A good example of this is the current debate over the electoral college system. Is *homonioia* still relevant without agreement on political cooperation? Susan Bickford argues that *homonioia* can extend beyond even agreement about general terms of political cooperation; all that is necessary for *homonioia* is an agreement that political deliberation is the best way to solve public problems.⁴⁷ Perhaps even this interpretation requires mutual commitment to freedom of speech, but, nevertheless, the point is plain; in Bickford’s interpretation of *homonioia*, American’s can deliberate over the soundness of the Constitution as long as they are mutually committed to political deliberation. I reject Bickmore’s argument as an interpretation of Aristotle’s account of *homonioia* because Aristotle clarifies that he is using *homonioia* in the traditional sense: “like-mindedness seems to be

⁴⁷ Bickford, “Beyond Friendship: Aristotle on Conflict, deliberation, and Attention,” 408.

friendship in a political sense, just as people mean it” (1167b3-4). People mean it as the general terms of political cooperation promulgated by the regime’s constitution rather than a meta-commitment to political deliberation, especially considering the example of *homonoia* in which citizens agree that leaders should be elected but disagree about who to elect (1167a29-31). But, apart from Aristotle, Bickmore’s reading illustrates the remarkable flexibility of the idea of *homonoia* and its relevance to contemporary politics; even if Americans can’t agree on the general terms of political cooperation, perhaps they could at least agree that political deliberation is the best way to solve public problems, which, hopefully, could improve the level of public discourse and result in renewed agreement about the terms of political cooperation.

In sum, *koinonia* and *homonoia* provide a fuller understanding of Aristotelian political friendship that extends beyond the categories of utility, pleasure, and virtue. *Koinonia* refers to the mutual utility derived from community, which reconciles with Aristotle’s account of civic friendship as useful friendship in the *Eudemian Ethics*. *Homonoia* refers to agreement about the general terms of political cooperation among decent citizens who want what is just and advantageous for the city. It is in this sense that political friendship partakes in virtue and contributes to the city living well. It is not a complete virtue friendship as Cooper suggests nor is it friendship as the second self as Valk suggests. Still less is it the mere respect for other citizens as in contemporary liberal democracy as Bentley maintains. Irrera’s argument that it is between utility and virtue friendship is more fitting. As *koinoia*, it is a useful friendship, and as *homonoia*, it is a very incomplete virtue friendship because it only requires that citizens will the common good and agree on the terms of political cooperation. This common aim resembles friendship as the mutual falling in love with a transcendent third, though in a far more limited way than complete virtue friendships. Although the *homonoia* is limited to general terms of political

cooperation, it is nevertheless essential to the preservation of the city, even more than justice.

And, despite Aristotle's frequent dismissal from contemporary politics, *homonoia*, as agreement on the terms of political cooperation between decent citizens who will the common good, has contemporary relevance, especially for restoring American political discourse.

Political Friendship in Aristotle's *Politics*

Book I: Political Friendship and the Foundations of Aristotle's Political Philosophy

What are the foundations of Aristotle's political philosophy and how do *koinonia* and *homonoia* correspond to them? The *Politics* opens with the most important principle of Aristotelian political philosophy:

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. (*Pol.* 1252a1-7)

The good of the city is the *telos*: "that for the sake of which a thing exists, or the end, is what is best" (1253b34-35). A *telos*, moreover, accords with nature as it reveals the proper function of the thing. To define the city's *telos*, Aristotle first determines the city's component parts, which he does by analyzing the natural origins of the city. The first and most fundamental component of the city is the family. The family arises out of two necessities that cause humans to form households. The first is the necessity of both male and female to produce offspring. The mutual begetting of offspring joins individuals into households. This happens, Aristotle says, through a natural instinct to "to leave behind another that is like oneself" (1252a28-30). The second necessity joining individuals into households is "the naturally ruling and ruled on account of preservation" (1252a30-31). The "ruling," the master, has a superior intellect and thus is more

adept achieving preservation. The “ruled,” the slave, needs the master to achieve preservation. Aristotle quotes Hesiod to illustrate this principle, “‘first a house, and a woman, and ox for ploughing’—for poor persons have an ox instead of a servant. The household is the community constituted by nature for the needs of daily life” (1252b11-13). Necessities join individuals into a household that exists for meeting daily needs, and the division of labor among the different members of the household contributes to meeting these needs. Several households working together to meet daily needs comprise a village. Several villages comprise the complete community, which Aristotle calls the city.

Having examined the components of the city, Aristotle argues that the city has a *telos* beyond meeting daily needs: “The complete community, 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” (1252b28-31). To elucidate this twofold *telos*, Aristotle explains the nature of man that corresponds with it. Aristotle says that “man is by nature a political animal” (1253a2). This means that nature predisposes humans to live in community. Aristotle uses “animal” to indicate that humans share this capacity with animals; animals also join communities for the sake of living. However, animals are not fully political because they lack speech: “That man is much more a political animal than any kind of bee or any herd animal is clear. For, as we assert, nature does nothing in vain; and man alone among the animals has the capacity for speech” (1253a9-10). Why does speech separate political communities from animal communities? With speech, political communities can articulate a conception of justice and the good. Animals can make sounds that indicate the experience of pleasure or pain, but these sounds lack *logos* expressed through reasoned speech. Reason, therefore, separates humans from animals and allows the political community to articulate

notions of justice and the good: “speech serves to reveal the advantageous and the harmful, and hence also the just and the unjust. For it is peculiar to man as compared to other animals that he alone has a perception of the 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” (1253a15-19). This becomes the basis for the second *telos* of city: living well. If humans have the capacity to communicate about justice and the good, the best political community will articulate a conception of justice and the good that guides the city. Justice is the proper ordering of the political community toward the common good (1253a38-40). The good is virtue. Therefore, the capacity to orient the community toward the good and toward justice through articulated speech separates human political communities from animal communities and produces virtuous citizens.

How do *koinonia* and *homonoia* contribute to the city’s two ends of preservation and virtue? First, a citizen must be capable of *koinonien*, “sharing” to partake in *koinonia*, “community.” “One who is incapable of sharing (*koinonien*)⁴⁸ or who is in need of nothing through being self-sufficient is no part of a city, and so is either beast or a god” (1253a28-30). In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *koinonia* means the mutual utility derived from community. Thus, for the *koinonia* to be mutually advantageous, the citizens must be capable of *koinonien*. If citizens lack this disposition, they are incapable of community. And, if a person has no need for the mutual advantage the *koinonia* provides because they are entirely self-sufficient, then they do not fit within the normal spectrum of humans who do need *koinonia*. They are, as Aristotle puts it, “either a beast or a God” since they are not political animals like the rest of humanity. The rest of humanity, Aristotle says, has “by nature an impulse to this sort of community (1253a30-31).

⁴⁸ Lord explains this this translation in footnote 17: “That is, sharing or being partner in (*koinonein*) a community (*koinonia*).”

Thus, *koinonia*, which is the first sense of Aristotle's use of political friendship, also has a role in his political philosophy. Since humans are not by themselves self-sufficient, they need the mutual utility that *koinonia* provides. *Koinonia*, therefore, contributes to the first *telos* of the city: preservation of the citizens.

Homonomia, however, contributes to both preservation and virtue because it is the precondition for the political community to use speech. Speech contributes to preservation by aiding communication regarding necessities, and it orients the city toward virtue by articulating conceptions of justice and the good. The absence of virtue in the city degrades humanity: "without virtue, he [man] is the most unholy and the most savage of the animals" (1253a36-37). Given the importance of speech in politics, one must ask the following question: what does it take to make public discourse of this kind possible? The answer is *homonomia*. *Homonomia* preserves public discourse by creating an environment where reasoned speech can flourish in the political community. Heyking argues that *homonomia* is the precondition for political deliberation: "deliberation over the just and the advantageous presupposes a prior *homonomia* concerning the ends of life upon which the common good is predicated. Those ends of life are contested in factional debate and deliberation, but a shared dedication to their contestation is prior."⁴⁹ *Homonomia* does this by establishing general agreement on the terms of political cooperation. Recall Aristotle's example from the *Nicomachean Ethics*: citizens agree that leaders should be elected, but they disagree about whom to elect. One may object as to the utility of *homonomia* if it does not apply to particulars, but affirming the agreement on the universals creates an environment of trust and loyalty that makes discussion of the particulars more civil and productive because reasoned speech can take precedent over personal invective. Why does this

⁴⁹ Heyking, *The Form of Politics*, 38.

environment foster reasoned speech over personal invective? *Homonoia* occurs between *decent* citizens; that is, citizens who will the common good. If two citizens begin discussion with recognition and affirmation of their mutual desire to manifest the common good, the atmosphere becomes more civil and reasoned discourse can occur. Aristotle viewed speech as a noble human faculty intended to guide the city toward preservation and virtue, but, as the contemporary American political discourse illustrates, this noble human faculty can be diminished so that it is no longer for the sake of the common good but for the sake of individual political victory. Cities must, therefore, have something to protect the quality of the civil discourse. I argue that Aristotle sees *homonoia*, political friendship, as the guardian of political discourse, which is why it is more important than justice; for the city to be just, citizens must first be able to have conversations about means for achieving justice. Although *homonoia* is more important to the preservation of the city than justice, justice is higher than *homonoia* insofar as it is the end aimed at.

Book II. Diversity, Property, and *Homonoia*

Aristotle's opens book II with the goal of the whole book: "to study the sort of political community that is superior to all for those capable of living as far as possible in the manner one would pray for" (1260b28-30). The goal of the *Politics* is to discover how political life contributes to human happiness. To this end, Aristotle must consider the ideal political community. Aristotle examines regimes that exist in speech, like Plato's *Republic*, and regimes that exist in history, like the Spartan Regime. The philosophical examines the ideal city while the historical examines real cities. He understands that the ideal political community, whatever it may be, will never exist perfectly, but it can serve as a guide for politicians and citizens who

want to improve their own community. History provides examples of cities that have fallen short of the ideal but offer valuable political lessons.

In this context, Aristotle considers the ideal regime of Plato's *Republic*. Here Aristotle is concerned with the distribution of property and the Socratic premise "that it is best for the city to be as far as possible entirely one" (1261a15-16). Aristotle rejects this premise claiming diversity is an essential characteristic of the city: "it is evident that as it [the city] becomes increasingly one it will no longer be a city. For the city is in its nature a sort of aggregation, and as it becomes more a unity it will be a household instead of a city, and a human being instead of a household" (1261a17-20).⁵⁰ He reasons that a household is more unified than a city, and an individual is more unified than a household (1261a20-21). Since the city is an aggregation of different parts, it is erroneous to assume, as Socrates does, that it is best to unify a city as far as possible. Moreover, the individuals comprising the city have different functions: some rule; some are ruled, some make shoes, some make furniture (1261a32-36). Preservation, or self-sufficiency, is one *telos* of the city, and citizens perform different functions to meet that end. Generally, self-sufficiency increases as unity decreases; hence, a household is more self-sufficient than an individual, and a city is more self-sufficient than a household (1261b11-13). Thus, Aristotle concludes, "the more self-sufficient is the more choiceworthy, what is less a unity is more choiceworthy than what is more a unity" (1261b14-15). A city is better if it is more self-sufficient. Excessive unity decreases a city's self-sufficiency because it obscures division of labor. Therefore, Socrates errs in claiming that it is best to unify the city as far as possible.

⁵⁰ Whether Aristotle fairly treats Socrates' position is debatable. Socrates' argument for a tripartite city, for example, qualifies his premise that the city should be unified as far as possible.

Aristotle's critique of Socrates' premise clarifies his concept of *homonoia*. Critics of *homonoia* may object claiming that *homonoia* does exactly what Socrates does in the *Republic*; that is, it seeks to unify the city as far as possible. Given Aristotle's objection to this premise, the purpose of *homonoia* cannot be to excessively unify the city without citing a contradiction in Aristotle's thought as it develops from the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the *Politics*. On the contrary, my reading of *homonoia* acts as an interpretive key between the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* that maintains the coherence of Aristotle's thought. Again, *homonoia*, properly understood, is a general agreement about the terms of political cooperation that fosters a "like-mindedness" among decent citizens who will the common good of the city. Based on this definition, *homonoia* does unify the city to some extent. But, since it leaves room for disagreement about the particulars of the political community, it does not impose an excessive unity on the city. Moreover, *homonoia* does not attempt to unify the different functions of the city that are necessary for self-preservation, which is the thrust of Aristotle's critique of Socrates. Rather, *homonoia* creates a political atmosphere in which the citizens who perform these different functions can debate the best way to ensure the self-sufficiency of the city. *Homonoia*, therefore, allows for the increase of diverse opinion in the city.

After Aristotle considers Socrates' premise, he then analyzes his conclusion: all property should be common. As opposed to Socrates, Aristotle's conclusion is a *via media*; property should not be entirely common or entirely private: "For it [property] should be common in some sense, yet private generally speaking" (1263a26-27). By this he means that citizens should hold private property, but they should offer it for the common use. First, it is important that property be private because citizens are more likely to take better care of something they own than something owned in common. "What is common to the most people," Aristotle claims, "is

accorded the least care: they take thought for their own things above all, and less about things in common” (1261b33-35). For example, citizens will take better care of their own garden than the community garden. Given this characteristic of human nature, Aristotle maintains that property should generally be held in private. However, he proceeds to argue that through virtue and good laws the citizens should be encouraged to offer some private property for the common use.

Aristotle uses a proverb about friendship to express this sentiment: “‘the things of friends are common,’ as the proverb has it, with a view toward use” (1263a29-31). Here Aristotle is not talking about political friendship but friendship in general. Friends, generally, do not mind letting other friends use their property. But, property shared among friends is more akin to the private good rather than the public good. Therefore, political friendship, *homonoia*, can have a role in property distribution for the common good. The legislator has the responsibility to encourage citizens to do this. Expressing this sentiment, Aristotle argues, “It is evident, then, that it is better for property to be private, but to make it to common in use. That the citizens become such as to use it in common—this is a task proper to the legislator” (1263a37-40). This accords with Aristotle’s declaration in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that above all the legislator should be concerned with fostering *homonoia* (1155a22-26). If a person agrees on the terms of political cooperation and has a disposition for willing the common good, he will be more likely to donate property for common use. This would go beyond simply taxation. The person could donate to parks, education, libraries and other public goods. Thus, *homonoia* aids the proper distribution of property in the regime.

Books III-IV. Citizenship and Regimes

How does *homonoia* relate to Aristotle’s treatment of citizenship and regimes in book III? Since *homonoia* is first and foremost political friendship, that is friendship among citizens, a

proper understanding of citizenship is necessary for a proper understanding of *homonoia*.

Aristotle begins his investigation of citizenship by asking who should be called a citizen, and what is a citizen (1275a1). His answer to the former is clear: “The citizen in an unqualified sense is defined by no other thing so much as by partaking in decision and office” (1275a23-24).⁵¹

Aristotle calls people who have such authority citizens, but he has not answered what exactly a citizen is? To answer this question, Aristotle proposes another question: is the virtue of a good man the same virtue as the good citizen? (1276b17-19). Answering this question will clarify the nature of the citizen by determining if it is the same or different than the virtue of the good man. Aristotle begins with an outline of the virtue of the citizen, which he constructs by an analogy to a ship (1276b21-31). The crew members of a ship each have a different responsibility: rowers row, captains steer, fishers fish, etc. While each member has an individual responsibility, they perform their responsibility for the sake of the ship’s safety on the voyage. Citizenship is similar. Each citizen performs his individual task but for the sake of the preservation of the city as a whole. However, the preservation of the city as a whole depends on the type of regime present in that city. Thus, Aristotle concludes “the virtue of the citizen must necessarily be with a view to the regime” (1276b30-31). The assumption is that each type of regime will have a different way of preserving the city. The good citizen, then, knows what his particular regime requires for preservation and will perform his individual task with this knowledge in mind.

In book III, Aristotle considers six types of regimes. He defines “regime” as “an arrangement of a city with respect to its offices, particularly the one that has authority over all matters. For what has authority in the city is everywhere the governing body, and the governing

⁵¹ Aristotle also claims that there are citizens in a qualified sense such as children and the elderly. The children are to become complete citizens while the elderly perhaps were previously complete citizens but have been relieved from political duty (1275a13-20).

body *is* the regime” (1278b9-12). Then, Aristotle provides a criterion for distinguishing between good and bad regimes. A good regime works toward the common good, and the bad regime works toward the good of the rulers (1279a18-22). Of the six regimes he considers, three are good regimes—kingship, aristocracy, and polity—and three are bad regimes—tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. Since a regime refers to governing authority, these six regimes can be classified into three types of governing authority; kingship and tyranny are rule by one; aristocracy and oligarchy are rule by few; polity and democracy are rule by many. Which regime, then, is best? Aristotle ultimately decides that a mixed regime that is a combination of the just regimes is the best.⁵² The deviant regimes, however, rank from best to worst as follows: democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny. In each of the cases, virtue is not the *telos*, and the common good is absent. In democracy the *telos* is freedom and the good that of the poor. In oligarchy the *telos* is wealth accumulation and the good that of the wealthy. And, with tyranny, the *telos* is whatever the tyrant declares because the state exists solely for his advantage, which makes it the worst of all the deviant regimes.⁵³

Aristotle’s consideration of regimes is relevant to understanding his account of citizenship because good citizens preserve the regime under which they live. If a good citizen acts toward the preservation of the regime, and the preservation of the regime varies by regime, then there is no universally good citizen; the virtue of the citizen is always relative to the regime. In the case of a good city—one that manifests the common good and exists for the sake of virtue—the good man and the good citizen have the same virtue. “A citizen in the common sense,” Aristotle writes, “is one who shares in ruling and being ruled; but he differs in

⁵² Aristotle, *Politics*, IV.11

⁵³ This paragraph is based on chapters 6-8 in book III.

accordance with each regime. In the case of the best regime, he is one who is capable of and intentionally chooses being ruled and ruling with a view to the life in accordance with virtue” (1283b42-1284a3). This leads Aristotle to conclude that “the virtue of man and citizen is necessarily the same in the best city” (1288a39). However, citizenship in a bad regime allows Aristotle to distinguish between the good man and the good citizen. The virtue of the good man is not relative. Rather, Aristotle says, “the good man we assert is so in accordance with a single kind—complete virtue. That it is possible for a citizen to be excellent yet not possess the virtue in accordance with which he is an excellent man, therefore, is evident (1276b33-36). Since the virtue of the good man is universal and the virtue of the good citizen is particular, Aristotle concludes that they can be different, especially in deviant regimes. For example, a good citizen of an oligarchy is a wealthy citizen for the end of an oligarchic regime is wealth. But, this wealthy citizen could lack the other virtues that are universally present in the excellent man—courage, temperance, friendship, etc.—and therefore not be an excellent man, despite his excellence as an oligarchic citizen.

There are two prominent interpretations of Aristotle’s conclusion. They differ primarily in how the good citizen preserves a bad a regime. For Aristotle, different regimes have different ends determined by the constitution: “the defining principle of aristocracy is virtue, as that of oligarchy is wealth, and of the rule of the people freedom” (1294a11-12). Does a good citizen of an oligarchy, a deviant regime, preserve the regime by contributing to wealth production, or does the good citizen of an oligarchy preserve the regime by mitigating the excesses of the unfettered pursuit of wealth that could destroy the regime? Ernest Barker adopts the former position: “In such a State [oligarchy], to be a good citizen is simply to seek and to accumulate wealth; and, consequently, in such a State, the good citizen would be a bad man, and the good man a bad

citizen.”⁵⁴ The life of accumulating wealth is not the good life. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle spends all of one sentence considering the money making life: “The life of money making is a type of compulsory activity, and it is clear that wealth is not the good being sought, since it is instrumental and for the sake of something else” (1096a5-7). Yet, in an oligarchy, where the purpose of the regime is wealth accumulation, the good citizen will work toward that end, rendering him a good citizen but a bad man for pursuing wealth inordinately.

Richard Kraut, on the other hand, argues that the good citizen preserves the deviant regime not by encouraging vicious excesses but by mitigating them.⁵⁵ His argument depends on Aristotle’s definition of the virtue of the citizen: “the good citizen should know and have the capacity both to be ruled and to rule, and this very thing is the virtue of a citizen—knowledge of rule over free persons from both points of view” (1277b14-17). Although the virtue of the citizen includes both ruling and being ruled, only the ruler requires prudence. Aristotle, making this claim, writes, “prudence is the only virtue peculiar to the ruler. The others, it would seem, must necessarily be common to both rulers and ruled, but prudence is not a virtue of one ruled, rather true opinion” (1277b26-28). Based on this account of the virtue of the citizen, Aristotle proceeds in saying that manual laborers cannot be good citizens because they do not have the necessary leisure to cultivate the virtue peculiar to being ruled: having true opinion about political things. If, for Aristotle, manual laborers cannot have true opinion about political things, then the preservation of the regime must be more complicated than simply promoting freedom in a democracy or promoting wealth in an oligarchy, which, Kraut argues, manual laborers would be able to do.⁵⁶ What, then, is a good citizen of a bad regime to do? Kraut answers, “A good citizen

⁵⁴ Ernest Barker, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1959), 287.

⁵⁵ Kraut, *Aristotle*, 368-372.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 369.

of a democracy is not someone who pushes it ever further toward an extreme; rather, he is someone who opposes such extremism.”⁵⁷ Kraut cites evidence from Aristotle’s own thoughts about how to preserve deviant regimes: “to be educated relative to the regime is not to do the things that oligarchs or those who want democracy enjoy, but rather the things by which the former will be able to run an oligarchy and the latter to have a regime that is run democratically” (1310a20-24).⁵⁸ Thus, one way to preserve democracy is to mix it with oligarchy, and likewise, to preserve oligarchy, mix it with democracy. Moreover, if Kraut is correct that a good citizen in a bad regime moderates the vicious excesses rather than furthering those excesses, is it possible to be a good man and a good citizen in a bad regime? Although Kraut does not answer this question specifically, it can be inferred from his position that someone can be a good man and a good citizen in a bad regime, if he seeks to moderate the excesses and not contribute to them. However, Kraut does emphasize that the good citizen does not need complete virtue because prudence is not required for citizenship, only right opinion. The virtuous man, however, will need prudence.⁵⁹ So, Aristotle’s conclusion that the virtue of the good man and the virtue of the good citizen can differ, remains intact.

These contrary interpretations, regardless of whether Barker or Kraut is correct, illustrate the importance of *homonoia* for Aristotle’s account of citizenship and regimes. Indeed, it could be that Barker is right in relation to just regimes, and Kraut is right in relation to just regimes. Nevertheless, the work of the citizen is the preservation of the regime (1276b30). The virtue of the citizen is to rule and be ruled well (1277a27-28). And, the virtue peculiar to being ruled is true opinion (1277b28). Therefore, to be a good citizen, one must have a true opinion about

⁵⁷ Ibid., 370.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 371.

what preserves the regime. Knowing what preserves regimes, in both good and deviant regimes, is not obvious. Barker argues that to preserve a regime, a good citizen pushes the regime toward its telos. Kraut's position is odd in that it advocates the preservation of the deviant regimes by limiting the extent that they pursue their *telos*, but this accords with Aristotle's methodology for preserving democracies and oligarchies. Regardless of who is correct, this debate shows the importance of *homonoia*. *Homonoia* creates the environment for citizens to discuss the best means for preserving the regime. If for a citizen to be a good citizen they must have a true opinion about the best way to preserve a regime, then discussion about the preservation of the regime is essential because true opinion will arise only through deliberation among the citizens. Though their discussion is theoretical rather than political, in a sense, Barker and Kraut are doing what citizens should do; that is, discussing the preservation of the regime to come to a true opinion about the matter. *Homonoia* allows this to happen because it requires general agreement on the terms of political cooperation. The citizens agree on the regime and its end established in the constitution. Under the aegis of *homonoia*, the citizens can discuss the particulars of the best way to preserve the regime. Thus, *homonoia* is essential for good citizens because it fosters an environment where they can cultivate true opinions regarding the preservation of the regime.

Book V-VI: *Homonoia* and the Preservation of the Regime

Before Aristotle considers preserving regimes, he considers two threats to the regime: factional conflict and revolution. Factional conflict, Aristotle says, "is everywhere the result of inequality" (1301b26-27). Often regimes arise from a particular conception of equality or inequality. Aristotle uses "rule of the people," which presumably refers to democracy rather than polity though each are rule by the many, and oligarchy as examples of regimes that arose from and ideas concerning equality and inequality: "Rule of the people arose as a result of those who

are equal in any respect supposing they are equal simply; and oligarchy arose as a result of those who are unequal in some one respect conceiving themselves to be wholly unequal, for as they are unequal in regard to property they conceive themselves to be unequal simply” (1301a28-34). Regimes governed by the rule of the people claim that all people are equal simply, and thus, all merit participation in government. The oligarchic regime justifies the rule of the wealthy by claiming that wealth is the sole factor for determining inequality and therefore should be the single factor for determining who should rule (1301a34-38). Factional conflict surfaces when citizens no longer submit to the regime’s notions of equality and inequality: “when either group does not take part in the regime on the basis of the conception [of equality and inequality] it happens to have, they engage in factional conflict” (1301a38-40). Moreover, Aristotle distinguishes two ways that revolutions occur (1301b5-11). First, when factional conflict is with a view to the regime, then the revolutions can occur with the intention of transforming the established regime, from an oligarchy to a democracy, for example. Second, the revolutions occur for the sake of obtaining power within the established regime. Ultimately, both factional conflict and revolution threaten the preservation of the regime.

Then, Aristotle continues analyzing factional conflict by identifying its three starting points. The first starting point involves the condition of men when they engage in factional conflict. “Some,” Aristotle writes, “engage in factional conflict because they aim at equality, if they consider that they have less in spite of being equal to those who are aggrandizing themselves; others, because they aim at inequality or preeminence, if they conceive themselves to be unequal but not to take a greater part, but an equal or lesser one” (1302a25-29). This harkens back toward Aristotle’s claim that all factional conflict has its source in inequality (1301b26-27). Men who engage in factional conflict are in some way discontent with the status

of inequality or equality in the regime. The second starting point is the ends for the sake of which men engage in factional conflict. These ends are profit, honor, and their opposites (1302a34-35). Although Aristotle does not elaborate on these ends, they follow from the first starting point. In an oligarchy, perhaps the many cause faction for the sake of profit, that is, for equitable distribution of wealth. Or, in a democracy, those who want “preeminence,” as Aristotle put it previously (1302a28), because they see themselves as unequal or superior to the others, cause faction for the sake of honor. The opposite can also be true; men cause factional conflict because they see another receiving undue honor or profit (1302a39-1302b2). Lastly, Aristotle identifies the “beginning points of political disturbances and of factional conflict among one another” (1302a22-23). He lists these beginning points as follows: profit, honor, arrogance, fear, preeminence, contempt, disproportionate growth, electioneering, underestimation, neglect of small things, and dissimilarity (1302a39-1302b5). These three factors—the condition of men who engage in faction, the end for which they engage in faction, and general dispositions that invoke faction—constitute Aristotle’s outline for thinking about the origins of faction.

After outlining faction Aristotle advises how to preserve the regime, but he does not develop the concept of *homonioia*. Therefore, first, I will consider how *homonioia*, as Aristotle develops it in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, applies to some of the origins of factional conflict and contributes to the preservation of the regime. Then, I will consider Aristotle’s advice on preserving regimes in V.8-9 of the *Politics*.

If *homonioia* contributes to the preservation of the regime, it must address inequality, the source of factional conflict (1301b267). When men engage in factional conflict, they are discontent with the status of equality and inequality in the regime (1302a25-29). Often, this discontent arises from a disagreement with the regime’s conception of equality and inequality:

“when either group [the many or the few] does not take part in the regime on the basis of the conception it happens to have, they engage in factional conflict” (1301a39-40). How does *homonoia* address this? In short, it fosters agreement about the regime’s concept of equality and inequality. If citizens agree on this concept, they will not engage in factional conflict. *Homonoia* is not about questioning whether the regime’s concept of equality is good or bad; rather, it simply creates agreement with and loyalty toward the concept, which prevents the rise of factional conflict by mitigating discontent toward the status of equality and inequality insofar as it accords with the concept of the regime. This does not prevent factional conflict entirely. Citizens who partake in *homonoia* and agree with the regime’s concept of equality may still feel that the status equality in the regime does not accord with the concept. In this case, they may engage in factional conflict for the sake of making the city more or less democratic or oligarchic but not for the sake of changing the established regime, as would a revolution. Aristotle accounts for this possibility: “there may be factional conflict concerning more and less—for example, where there is an oligarchy, to make it more oligarchically run or less, or where there is a democracy, to make it more democratically run or less, and similarly in the case of remaining regimes, either to tighten or to loosen them” (13018b14-17). So, while *homonoia* can prevent factional conflict based on disagreement with the regime’s notion of equality, it does not necessarily prevent factional conflict based on the extent to which the regime fulfills the notion. However, the latter type of factional conflict is less a threat to the regime than the former; faction is less dangerous than revolution because a revolution changes the regime entirely. If citizens agree that the regime should be democratically run, it will be easier to determine the extent to which it should be democratically run than debating whether the regime would be better as an oligarchy. Thus, *homonoia* is important to preventing factional conflict based on inequality.

Another source of faction that *homonoia* prevents is dissimilarity. Aristotle begins his account of dissimilarity with the following: “Dissimilarity of stock is also conducive to factional conflict, until a cooperative spirit develops. For just as a city does not arise from any chance multitude, so it does not arise in any chance period of time. Hence those who have admitted joint settlers or later settlers [of different stock] have for the most part split into factions” (1303a25-30). Dissimilarity threatens *homonoia*. Admitting people into the city who are not of the “same stock,” that is from a different background, threatens *homonoia* because these people may not agree about the terms of political cooperation established by the regime’s constitution. Aristotle, to be sure, is not arguing that a city should reject all people of different stock. Rather, he warns that if these people are accepted, there must be an effort to establish a “cooperative spirit,” lest dissimilarity cause faction. Aristotle does not clarify what he means by “cooperative spirit,” but it is reasonable to suppose he means something akin to *homonoia*: having decent citizens who agree on the terms of political cooperation. People can be of different stock as long a cooperative spirit persists. Indeed, as Aristotle says in Book II, the city arises from *dissimilarity* of peoples: “the city is made up not only of a number of human beings, but also of those differing in kind: a city does not arise from persons who are similar” (1261a22-24). Therefore, fostering *homonoia* is not about making all citizens similar, as diversity is essential to the nature of the city; instead, *homonoia* is about establishing a cooperative spirit that allows the city to benefit from the diversity of peoples without the dissimilarity causing faction. This happens by ensuring that the citizens, regardless of background, accept the regime’s general terms of political cooperation. Under the aegis of this cooperative spirit, a city benefits from diversity in two ways. First, diversity brings the city closer to its nature rooted in dissimilarity. Second, diversity develops the reason of the citizens because they are forced to dialogue with viewpoints of others from a

different stock. These benefits, however, are only possible with *homonoia*; otherwise, dissimilarity will destroy the city.

Having considered what destroys regimes, Aristotle moves to what preserves regimes. Before considering Aristotle's account of the preservation of the regime, it is worth noting that he never mentions *homonoia*. If in the *Nicomachean Ethics* *homonoia* is essential to the preservation of the regime, why does Aristotle not mention it in the *Politics*? First, all of Aristotle's recommendations for the preservation of the regime require deliberation to be appropriately applied to a particular a regime. The recommendations function more as guidelines than practical suggestions. Thus, *homonoia*'s atmosphere of cooperation in which civil discourse flourishes is essential for deliberation on the practical application of Aristotle's recommendations. For example, in *Politics* V.8 Aristotle recommends the following; to prevent any transgressions of the law (1307b31-32); to beware of "things devised against the multitude" (1308a1); to treat those within and outside the regime well (1308a5); to institute term limits where appropriate (1308a15-25); to instill fear so citizens will be more vigilant to preserve the regime (1308a25-31); to prevent faction among the nobles (1308a32-34); to account for inflation (1308a35-1308b9); to not distribute greatness and honor contrary to proportion (1308b10-19); to establish an office that oversees those who act contrary to the regime (1308b20-32); to prevent profiting from office (1308b33-35). Consider his first suggestion: prevent any transgression of the law. The obvious question that the citizen should raise is how? How, Aristotle, does the state prevent any transgression of the law? The answer to this legitimate and practical question requires discussion and deliberation. The same can be said for any other of Aristotle's recommendations for preserving the regime. Therefore, although *homonoia* has no particular role

in any of Aristotle's recommendations, the debate over their application happens best under the rubric of *homonioia*.

This holds true also for Aristotle's advice on preserving regimes in V.9. For example, Aristotle says that regimes should not neglect the middling element (1309b19-34). The middling element moderates extremes in the regime. The extremes arise from what is popular in the regime: "for many of the things that are held to be characteristically popular overturn democracies, and many of those held to be characteristically oligarchic overturn oligarchies. Those who suppose this to be the single virtue pull the regime to an extreme" (1309b20-24). Freedom, for example, is characteristically popular in democracy. But, if the majority of citizens, holding freedom as the sole virtue of democracy, push the regime to be as free as possible for the sake of making the regime as democratic as possible, the excessive freedom will destroy the regime. The regimes prevent these types of extremes by attending to the middling element. One way to do this, Aristotle goes on to say, is to blend oligarchy with democracy and democracy with oligarchy (1310a). This will prevent these deviant regimes from pursuing extremes that will destroy them. Again, like Aristotle's other prescriptions for preservation, determining the proper way that regimes should be blended requires deliberation, which happens best under *homonioia*. Moreover, although Aristotle does not mention *homonioia* directly, it is latent in his declaration that "the greatest of all the things that have been mentioned with a view to making regimes lasting...is education relative to the regime" (1310a13-15). Education relative to the regime involves inculcating *homonioia* insofar as *homonioia* constitutes agreement about the regime's political terms and decency. If this is true, then it illustrates the harmony between the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle claims that *homonioia* preserves cities more than justice (1155a22-26), and the *Politics*, where Aristotle claims that education relative to the regime is the

most important factor for preserving regimes (1310a13-15). To further examine this claim, it will be necessary to consider Aristotle's account of education in books VII and VIII, but first, I will consider the third sense in which Aristotle uses political friendship: *philia*.

Books VII and VIII: *Homonoia* and *Philia*

Apart from *koinonia* and *homonoia*, Aristotle also writes of the political benefits of *philia*. I emphasize political benefits because *philia* is not in itself political friendship. *Philia*, as previously discussed,⁶⁰ has a variety of senses and uses. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, it is the term used for friendship in general, but since *philia* has important political implications in the *Politics*, it is, in a sense, political friendship. Aristotle mentions *philia* in book III.9, but its full significance surfaces in books VII and VIII in Aristotle's account of education in the best regime. I will begin with its first mention in book III.9. Ultimately, the purpose of *philia* is to orient the city toward virtue. The context for Aristotle mentioning *philia* is his critique of oligarchy and democracy. Both forms of government are concerned with rule based on inequality and equality. The oligarchs hold that inequality in wealth means inequality simply, providing the wealthy a basis for their rule. The democrats hold that since equality in freedom means equality simply, providing the free a basis for their rule (1280a23-25). Aristotle critiques both groups for ignoring the most important factor of inequality that should determine rule: political virtue. Aristotle writes, "Whoever takes thought for good governance, however, gives careful attention to political virtue and vice" (1280b5-7). Why are political virtue and vice important for determining good governance? The reason is that the city exists for the sake of virtue. Thus,

⁶⁰ See page 2.

political rulers should be evaluated for the ability to orient their city toward virtue, not wealth or freedom. In this context, Aristotle mentions *philia* as a way of orienting the city toward virtue:

This will not be possible [virtue and self-sufficiency in political life] unless they [citizens] inhabit one and the same location and make use of intermarriage. It was on this account that marriage connections arose in cities, as well as clans, festivals, and the pastimes of living together. This sort of thing is the work of affection [*philia*]⁶¹; for affection is the intentional choice of living together. Living well, then, is the end of the city, and these things are for the sake of this end. (1280b35-40)

Here *philia* emerges as a sense of political friendship distinct from *homonoia*. Political friendship as *philia* is not agreement over the terms of political cooperation for the sake of debates about the common good; rather, *philia* is about engaging in leisurely activities with people for whom one has affection. The purpose of these leisurely activities is virtue, which makes them indispensable for achieving the *telos* of the city. How does performing leisurely activities contribute to virtue? The virtuous person takes pleasure beautiful things, those oriented toward *to kalon*, for their own sake. Participating in useless activities oriented toward *to kalon* constitutes an essential aspect of the human life. Thus, if virtue is understood as performing the activity of one's nature well, engaging in such leisureed activities oriented toward *to kalon* contributes to virtue. When a community does this together, it bonds the citizens and orients the city as a whole toward *ta kalon*. Moreover, *philia* separates the human city from the animal community. Animals, Aristotle says, "do not partake in happiness or in living in accordance with intentional choice" (1280a32-34). Therefore, a city is not merely "a community sharing a location and for the sake of not committing injustice against each other and conducting trade" (1280b30-32). Since the human *telos* is virtue, a human city will engage in activities that are distinctly human;

⁶¹ *Philia* can also be translated as friendship. For example, Joe Sachs translates the same passage as follows: "And this sort of thing is the work of *friendship*, because *friendship* is a choice to live life in common. The end aimed at by a city is living well, and these things are for the sake of that end" (1280b33-40). Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Indianapolis: Focus Publishing, 2012).

that is, things that are for the sake of virtue, not simply utility and preservation, which humans have in common with animals. *Philia* encourages citizens to engage in festive leisure that partakes in *to kalon*, leads to virtue, and contributes to the *telos* of the city.

Here it will be useful to consider some other readings of *philia* in the political sense. Cooper argues for *philia* as *koinonia philia*. That is, civic friendship in the fullest since in which citizens will the good of other citizens as in a virtue friendship.⁶² Simon Hope objects to Cooper's reading.⁶³ Hope argues that Cooper, along with other modern political philosophers, seek a "robust" and "inclusive" interpretation of *philia* in politics. By "robust," he means *philia* in the fullest sense as willing the good of the other, and by "inclusive" he means all other citizens.⁶⁴ For Hope, interpretations of this kind are mistaken because *philia*, in the truest sense, "is only possible between two virtuous agents who know each other well and have regular meaningful interactions."⁶⁵ Thus, Hope concludes, "This [*philia*] is not the kind of virtue that supports any sort of civic disposition."⁶⁶ I agree in part with Cooper and in part with Hope. Cooper is right that *philia* does have a political dimension but wrong, as Hope points out, to interpret this as willing the good of every citizen. Hope, however, is wrong to conclude that *philia* has no political dimension. Clearly, Aristotle intends a political dimension of *philia* when he says that "we suppose affection [*philia*] to be the greatest of good things for cities" (1262b8-9). How, then, should the political dimension of *philia* be understood? The political dimension of *philia* is that it encourages citizens to engage in leisured activities, that is, activities which transcend the realm of necessity. *Philia* in this sense is not the kind of good will as in virtue

⁶² Cooper, "Political Animals and Civic Friendship," 356-377.

⁶³ Simon Hope, "Friendship, Justice, and Aristotle: Some Reasons to Be Sceptical," *Res Publica*, no. 19 (December 2012): 37-52.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

friendships. It is more akin to *eunoia*, or goodwill in general, which Irrera argues is relative to the kind of relationship in which it takes place.⁶⁷ The *eunoia* present in *koinonia philia*, then, is of a lesser degree than in *philia* as friendship. Carnes Lord's translation of *philia* as "affection" captures *koinonia philia* as lesser than friendship simply. Affection implies the *feeling* or *emotion* of goodwill. This is the kind of *eunoia* present between citizens, not the kind of goodwill present in a virtue friendship. This good feeling encourages citizens to participate in leisured activities that transcend the realm of necessity and lead to virtue. *Philia* as the feeling of good-will is insufficient for virtue because virtue requires activity⁶⁸. Thus, *philia* contributes to the virtue of the citizens by encouraging them to engage in activities of leisure that participate in *to kalon*.

To further elucidate *philia* in this sense, it is helpful to compare it to *homonioia*. The leisured activities that *philia* encourages, like festivity, surpass *homonioia*. This passage by Heyking begins to explain:

Festivity is the political or civic version of sunaesthetic⁶⁹ friendship, and the clearest expression of the common good. This view of the common good is deeper than those that characterize it as common deliberation...While deliberation takes place in "normal" time, festivity takes place in special time, the time when the regime comes together with and before itself, and where citizens express the essential character of the regime, over and above its factions...Festivity also takes place with a higher degree of freedom because it is a form of play, and as such it transcends the realm of necessity in which politics is so deeply embedded.⁷⁰

Homonioia makes political deliberation possible, but political deliberation is not the highest good of the city because of its rootedness in necessity. However, this does not mean that politics is entirely a matter of necessity and not good in itself. Insofar as politics involves speech about the

⁶⁷ Irrera, "Between Advantage and Virtue," 575-576.

⁶⁸ See *Nicomachean Ethics* (1157b29-34).

⁶⁹ *Sunaisthesis* is the intellectual dimension of virtue friendship, the mutual perception of the good. See Heyking, *Form of Politics*, 37.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

justice and goodness, it is a way for humans to fulfill their *telos*, which does, in a sense, render politics a noble good, but that does not dismiss the fact that politics will always remain necessary for living. Reasoned speech makes politics human and noble, but humanity shares the necessity of politics with animals. Because it will always be a necessity, it is impossible to fully separate the political from the animal. However, the offspring of *philia*—festivity, recreation, celebration—entirely depart from the realm of necessity, making them even more human activities than political deliberation because they are entirely separate from the animal. Yet, they are still political because they contribute to common good of the city. These festivities allow for a kind of political contemplation among the citizens that is an image and likeness of the contemplation of the philosopher. Thus, Aristotle says in II.4 that “we suppose affection [*philia*] to be the greatest of good things for cities, for in this way they would least of all engage in factional conflict” (1262b9-8). The common good is a virtuous citizenry, and virtue, Aristotle says, is the work of *philia* (1280b38-40). And this work of *philia* does not happen independently of the political deliberation; rather, *philia* depends on good political deliberation to ensure that the necessities of the city are met. Citizens will not engage in festivities if they are starving because the economy is broken, or if barbarians are invading the city. Politics ensures that the necessities are met so that the activities that transcend all necessity can occur. Aristotle makes this point clearly in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: “happiness seems to be present in leisure, for we engage in un leisured pursuits in order that we may be at leisure, we make war in order that we may stay at peace” (1177b6-8). Conversely, *homonoia* needs *philia*. While *homonoia* does not require full virtue, it does require decent citizens who will the good of the city. By engaging in the activities of *philia*, the citizens become more virtuous, which increases the likelihood that they will the common good and adopt *homonoia* with their fellow citizens. Thus, *homonoia*

needs *philia*, and *philia* needs *homonoia*. *Homonoia* makes political deliberation possible, and *philia* makes leisure possible. Politics needs leisure, and leisure needs politics.

The interdependence of politics and leisure emerges further in books VII and VIII. The theme of VII.1-3 is the best way of life. If the *telos* of politics is virtue, then determining the best way of life is necessary to determine the best regime, which ought to be oriented toward the best way of life: “that the best regime must necessarily be that arrangement under which anyone might act in the best manner and lived blessedly is evident” (1324a24-26). In Aristotle’s view, virtue is clearly the best way of life, but, among those who agree that virtue is the best way of life, there is a disagreement about whether the political life or the philosophic life is more choiceworthy (1324a26-29). In answering the question, Aristotle concludes that the best life for all people must involve activity, as the final cause is always an activity: “Happiness is to be regarded as the same as acting well, the best way of life both in common for every city and for the individual would be the active one” (1325b14-16). This does not end the debate between the political life and the philosophic life because both include activity. However, Aristotle does argue that the philosophic life is more active than the political life because the theoretical thinking of philosophy is an end in itself, which makes it more human and more rational than political deliberation (1325b20-21). For Aristotle, then, the philosophic life is more choiceworthy than the political life, but that is not the central question at issue here. More important is the question of the best way of life in relation to the best regime.

Although a theoretical life is indeed the most choiceworthy life for the individual, it is not the best manner of life for the regime, since only a few citizens are capable of the purely philosophic life. Therefore, when Aristotle says that the city exists for the sake of the good life, he does not mean that the city should try to turn all its citizens into philosophers. Rather,

Aristotle writes, “It belongs to the excellent legislator to see how a city, a stock of human beings, and every other sort of community will share in the happiness that is possible for them” (1325a8-11). The key phrase here is *possible for them*. A life of pure contemplation is not possible for most citizens, at least because of the necessities—food, shelter, defense—that the city requires. Most citizens will be involved in the procuring of these necessities and thus will not have enough leisure for the purely speculative life. And, most people lack the intellectual capacity for a life dedicated to philosophy at the highest level. If the purely philosophical life is not possible for most citizens, what kind of life is? Carnes Lord argues that a life of leisure is the best life possible for most citizens and therefore the manner of life for the best regime:

The best way of life for the city is not the speculative life simply but rather the closest approximation to that life which is possible on the level of politics. What is required is an activity which provides the intrinsic satisfactions of philosophy without imposing the demands of philosophy or while be accessible to men of ordinary capacities. What is required is a leisured activity which can be regarded by most men as the end or reward of political activity and hence as the genuine locus of public happiness.⁷¹

The leisured activities of the citizens is an image and likeness of the contemplation of the philosophers. In order for citizens to engage in leisure of this kind, they must cultivate the ability to enjoy leisure, which, curiously, Aristotle says is “*philosophia*” (1334a24-25). Lord reads “*philosophia*” not as speculative thought simply but in broader sense “of what would today be called ‘culture.’”⁷² That is, things which societies do that are ends in themselves, things that transcend necessity. These things are the kinds of things that Aristotle said is the work of *philia* in book III.9: clans, festivals, and the pastimes of living together. This sort of thing is the work of

⁷¹ Carnes Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 198.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 199.

affection” (1280b37-38). Thus, *philia*, the affection between citizens that is the precondition for leisure, is essential for the manner of life in the best regime.

Moreover, it is through education that the citizens cultivate the capacity for the noble enjoyment of leisure, but, since leisure depends on politics, citizens must first be educated for the sake of political virtue. Lord, reinforcing this notion, writes, “‘Education’ (*paideia*) as Aristotle uses the term is primarily and fundamentally education to moral and political virtue.”⁷³ And, for Aristotle, an education in political virtue must be relative to the regime:

That the legislator must, therefore, make the education of the young his object above all would be disputed by no one. Where this does not happen in cities it hurts the regime. One should educate with a view to each sort, for the character that is proper to each sort of regime both customarily safeguards the regime and establishes it from the beginning—the democratic character a democracy, for example, or the oligarchic an oligarchy. (1337a12-17).

Although Aristotle does not explicitly mention it here, the cultivation of *homonoia* is an essential aspect of an education in political virtue, especially given Aristotle insistence that education be relative to the regime. *Homonoia*, as I have previously argued, is the agreement about the terms of political cooperation as promulgated by the regime. The essential virtue of the citizen is that he partakes in the deliberation about what is just and unjust and about what is good and what is bad, and in doing so he comes to true opinion about what preserves the regime. The only way a citizen will be able to engage in political discourse of this kind is if he first agrees on the general terms of political cooperation. If there is no general agreement on the terms of political cooperation, then there is no common ground for citizens to engage in political discourse. If citizens are not able to engage in political discourse, then they do not have political virtue. Since political virtue is the same as citizen virtue, then political virtue is ruling and being ruled well.

⁷³ Ibid., 180.

Being ruled well means having true opinion about what preserves the regime. True opinion about what preserves the regime comes through political deliberation, and political deliberation happens only with *homonoia*. Therefore, *homonoia* is necessary for political virtue, in which case *homonoia* must be part of a political education.

Although education is first and foremost for the sake of moral and political virtue, it is also for the sake of leisure: “So it is evident that certain things should be learned and there should be education with a view to leisure that is spent in pastime as well, and that these subjects should be for their own sake” (1338a10-13). Aristotle names four categories of education: letters, gymnastic, music, and drawing (1337b24-25). Letters and drawing have many uses and gymnastic is useful for developing courage, but music, Aristotle goes on to argue, is an end in itself (1338a21). To illustrate the importance of music, Aristotle cites Homer as a precedent: “Odysseus says that this is the best pastime, when human beings are enjoying good cheer and ‘the banqueters seated in order throughout the hall listen to a singer’” (1338a28-30).⁷⁴ Music, therefore, is the highest form of civic leisure, which warrants its prominence in Aristotle’s education system. This is not to say that children should not be educated in utility. The learning of letters, for example, is important for other kinds of learning and is essential to the development of reason, which is most essential aspect of education since reason is the human *telos*. Nevertheless, the children of the best regime should be educated not only in things that are useful and necessary but also in things that are liberal and noble (1338a11-13). Besides philosophy in the strict sense, which is the most liberal and the most noble pursuit, music is the highest of the leisurely activities that the many are capable of participating in. Thus, Aristotle’s accounts of *homonoia* and *philia* accord with his account of education. *Homonoia* is necessary

⁷⁴ Homer, *Odyssey*, 9.5-6.

for the sake of education in political virtue, and *philia*, as the bonds of affection that unite the city, is the precondition for civic engagement in leisured activities, the highest of which is music. Political friendship, as *homonoia* and *philia*, is the glue that holds Aristotle's best regime together, since *homonoia* makes political deliberation possible and *philia* makes leisure possible.

Conclusion

The question I have attempted to answer is what, for Aristotle, is political friendship. To answer this question, I have argued that Aristotle has three different senses of political friendship: *koinonia*, *homonoia*, and *philia*. *Koinonia* is the friendship of utility that develops when a community lives together for the sake of meeting necessities. *Homonoia* is a "like-mindedness" about the general terms of political cooperation among decent people. Although Aristotle does not directly mention *homonoia* in the *Politics*, it becomes the precondition for public discourse. Public discourse for Aristotle is essential to the regime. Speech about the good and the bad and the just and the unjust separates the human political community from the animal community. Speech contributes both to the preservation of the regime and orienting the city toward virtue. Indeed, humans need to participate in the public discourse to fully develop their reason and fulfill their human *telos*. *Homonoia* makes all this possible by creating an environment of trust and consensus under which the public discourse can take place. And, although political deliberation is essential for the city, it is not the highest good because politics exists for the sake of leisure. The noble enjoyment of leisure is the manner of life in the best regime. Fostering environment for leisured activity to occur, Aristotle says, is the work of *philia*, the bonds of affection that unite citizens (1280b38-39). Within the bonds of *philia*, citizens can together enjoy the useless things: music, poetry, philosophy, romance, love, and especially friendship.

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