

THE ORGANIZATION OF PLATO'S *STATESMAN* AND THE STATESMAN'S RULE AS A HERDSMAN

JACQUELINE PFEFFER MERRILL

DISCERNING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DIALOGUE IS A FIRST PUZZLE for an interpreter of one of Plato's dialogues. The *Statesman* presents an especially compelling puzzle because it combines seemingly disparate topics—including some that seem hardly political—in strange ways. Its organization seems particularly obscure early in the dialogue when the Visitor leads his interlocutor in an attempt to determine what divides human beings from other creatures by a bizarre diaeresis, and gives a mythical account of the cycles in human history that emphasizes—surely this is odd in a dialogue about the statesman!—the age *before* human beings have acquired for themselves the art of politics. However, the *Statesman* seems disjointed and confused even when, in its final two-fifths, the conversation of the Visitor and young Socrates turns to matters that are obviously political, such as legislation. “No dialogue seems to be less well conceived than the *Statesman*. It discusses briefly what interests us politically, and it discovers at length what holds no interest for philosophy,” Seth Benardete remarked (1984, 1986: xiv). The effect of this bizarre organization of the dialogue is that it may seem “weary” to a reader (Ryle 1966: 285).

While the *Statesman* seems haphazard and disorganized upon first reading, many readers have been not weary but especially curious about why Plato chose to compose this dialogue in such a strange way. And, in fact, the *Statesman* has recently been interpreted as having a carefully crafted order by C. J. Rowe, who argues that the *Statesman* is “a perhaps peculiarly directed, and single-minded piece of writing . . . [in which] there is a single, well-defined path leading from beginning to end, with only occasional diversions and a number of stops along the way” (1996: 155). Rowe's judgment that this dialogue has a single line of argument accords with the view that Plato's late dialogues are closer to treatises than to the lively dialogues of his earlier writings: for example, A. E. Taylor wrote that the *Statesman* and other late dialogues “are formal expositions of doctrine by a leading character speaking with authority” (1960: 371).¹ Other scholars too have offered interpretations of the organization of the *Statesman*,² and their understanding of its organization has colored their interpretations of the teaching of the dialogue. Thus, for example, Rowe interprets the *Statesman* as a dialogue in which “Plato

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¹ See Miller 1980: x–xii.

² For examples, see Miller 1980: xvii–xviii, 137–138; Hoffmann 1993: 77–98.

in fact has his main character partly looking past his partner and directly at his readers"—an interpretation that "depends partly" on his understanding of the dialogue as having a very straightforward order (1996: 155). This recent attention to the order within a Platonic dialogue as a first step in interpretation of the dialogue has important precedent in the work of scholars such as Paul Friedländer and Eric Voegelin, whose work was marked by close attention to the order within Plato's dialogues—consider Voegelin's insistence on beginning his interpretation of the *Republic* with an interpretation of the organization of the dialogue.³

There is no single, correct interpretation of the organization of each of Plato's dialogues: indeed, there may be incommensurate interpretations of the organization of a dialogue that nevertheless each illuminate the teaching of the dialogue. Carol Poster (1998) has argued in these pages for alertness to the various and sometimes incommensurate ways in which the Platonic corpus as a whole may be ordered—chronologically by date of composition, chronologically by date of dramatic action, pedagogically, and metaphysically—and the ways in which assumptions about the order of the corpus color readings of the dialogues. She counselled openness to a variety of schemata of ordering the dialogues, and thus a variety of readings of the dialogues. Analogously, I urge alertness to the various ways of interpreting the organization of each of the dialogues and openness to a variety of readings that follow from these distinct interpretations of the organization of each dialogue. Plato's dialogues may each admit several valid interpretations of its organization, and, therefore, at least as many valid interpretations of its teaching.

It does not follow, however, that every interpretation of the organization of the dialogue is equally plausible. The two tests of an interpretation of a dialogue's organization are whether or not it coheres with the text, and whether or not it illuminates the text's meaning. I present an account of the *Statesman's* organization that, I believe, meets both of these tests. I argue that the dialogue is organized as a ring cycle, and that seeing the dialogue as a ring illuminates its teaching in several respects. In particular, I argue that the Visitor characterizes the statesman's rule as being like that of a herdsman, and that the ring structure of the dialogue allows him to make this characterization obliquely. This interpretation of one of Plato's dialogues as a ring is unusual, but not without precedent: Voegelin described a similar principle of organization (although he does not call it a "ring") in the *Republic*, and Michel Foucault suggested that the *Apology of Socrates*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo* considered together form a cycle around the event of Socrates' death, in which the notion of care (ἐπιμέλεια) is considered and reconsidered.⁴

³ Voegelin 1957: 46–50. Voegelin comments (49–50): "While the schema [of the *Republic*] had to be given as a basis for further analysis, it now turns out to be the first step of the analysis itself." Paul Friedländer (1969) indicated in outline the order in each of Plato's dialogues in the margins of the second and third volumes of his *Plato* trilogy.

⁴ This cycle is described by Nehamas (1998: esp. 157–169, 180–184). My thanks to the anonymous reader for *Phoenix* who alerted me to this example.

While we are always able (and often eager) to turn back the pages and then leaf ahead while reading a piece of writing, a text organized as a ring particularly invites return to and reconsideration of earlier parts of the text and glances ahead to later parts of the text. Before proceeding with my argument, I note that there is a special aspect of the *Statesman* and its companion dialogues, the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, that invites, and legitimates, such a turning backward and looking ahead in our reading, and a bringing together of disparate parts of the dialogue that treat the same topics and questions. At the beginning of the *Theaetetus* there is a dialogue between Euclides and Terpsion that serves as a preface to the entire trilogy (*Theaetetus* 142a1–143c7). In this preface we learn that Socrates, then awaiting his trial, recounted to Euclides conversations in Theodorus' school to which Socrates was party. Euclides transcribed Socrates' account of these conversations and then took care to correct his record by questioning Socrates about what he, Euclides, had forgotten about Socrates' account. The trilogy is presented to the reader as Euclides' record of the conversations recounted to him by Socrates. Euclides made this careful record for the purpose of being able to consider the conversations, in all their various aspects, at leisure. He studied and amended details of his record of the conversations, necessarily moving back and forth in the text in the process. Thus, this trilogy is presented to the reader as a record that was re-examined and reconsidered time and again by moving back and forth within the dialogue: a contemporary reader may imitate the dialogues' ostensible transcriber by moving back and forth within the dialogues as he interprets the texts.

I. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE *STATESMAN*

The five elements of the organizational schema are (A) the question of how the statesman is to be defined, (B) human beings in a herded community, (C) the practitioners of arts other than statesmanship and its arts, (D) the statesman and his art and knowledge, and (E) method and the paradigm of weaving.⁵ The chart on the following page presents the organization of the *Statesman* in a schematic outline. As illustrated in this outline, there are even rings within the ring: the discussions of the statesman and his art are framed by discussions of practitioners of other arts, thus making the ring CDC twice in the dialogue. The introduction of the weaving paradigm is framed by discussions of method, thus making the ring E₁E₂E₁. The discussion of the statesman as a

⁵The opening conversation between the Eleatic Visitor, the young Socrates, Socrates, and Theodorus indicates that the discussions of the *Statesman* follow the discussions recorded in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. These opening passages precede the attempt to define the statesman and so stand outside of the organizational scheme of the remainder of the text (257a1–258a10). These opening passages of the *Statesman* link the attempt in this dialogue to define the statesman and his knowledge to the attempt to define knowledge recorded in the *Theaetetus* and the attempt to define the sophist, the statesman's most dangerous rival, recorded in the *Sophist*.

Chart I. Schematic Outline of the *Statesman*

Link with the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* (257a1–258a10)

Introduction:

A. The question of how to define the statesman posed (258b1–261a7)

Part I: Disordered Politics

B. Human beings in a herded community (261a8–267d12)

C. Practitioners of other arts (267e1–268d4)

D. The statesman presented in myth (268d5–275a11)

C. Practitioners of other arts (275b1–277c8)

Part II: Philosophy

E. Method and the paradigm of weaving

E₁. Method: the use of paradigms (277d1–278e11)

E₂. The paradigm of weaving (279a1–283a9)

E₁. Method: the mean (283b1–287a7)

Part III: Politics Ordered by the Statesman

C. Practitioners of other arts (287a7–291c)

D. The statesman and his regime

D₁. Typology of regimes: rejected attempt (291c8–292d9)

D₂. The statesman as a legislator (292e1–302b4)

D₁. Typology of regimes: new attempt (302b5–303c7)

C. Practitioners of other arts (303c8–305e7)

B. Human beings in a herded community as citizens (305e8–311b6)

Conclusion:

A. The question of how to define the statesman answered (311b7–c8)

legislator is framed by consideration of typologies of regimes, thus making the ring $D_1D_2D_1$.

Three of the elements of the organizational schema correspond to the three main elements of the paradigm of weaving that is offered by the Visitor as a paradigm for the statesman's art. Two of these elements of the paradigm of weaving are the weaver and the fabric woven by him. These two correspond, respectively, to the statesman and to the human beings that are woven together by the statesman's art. The third element of the paradigm of weaving is the arts that are necessary to but distinct from weaving and the practitioners of these arts. These arts are said to be of two sorts. One sort is the arts that produce the tools (ὄργανα, 281e2) used in weaving, which are termed contributory causes (συναίτιους, 281e9) of cloaks. The arts that are contributory causes of cloaks correspond to the arts that the Visitor terms the contributory causes of the city. These contributory causes of the city are concerned with the production of those things necessary for the material welfare of the city (287c7–289c2).⁶ The other

⁶For the most part, these arts are concerned with providing for the needs of the body—an important exception is music—and these arts provide things that are enjoyed separately by each

arts necessary for weaving are the arts that treat and fashion (θεραπευούσας καὶ δημιουργούσας, 281e10) cloaks, of which carding is an example, and which are termed as causes (αἰτίαι, 281e10) of a cloak. Such arts correspond to several kinds of arts in the analysis of the Visitor and young Socrates. Some of these arts are the arts of heralds, scribes, priests, and seers (290a8–e8).⁷ Others of these arts that correspond to the causes of cloaks are more plainly political; these are the arts of those who practice rhetoric, lead military campaigns, and decide judicial matters (303d4–305e1).⁸

Part II is the linch-pin of the text. The consideration of philosophic method in Part II provides the basis for an assessment of the failed attempt to define the statesman by diaeresis and myth in Part I; the introduction of the paradigm of weaving in Part II is the basis for the supposedly more satisfactory attempt to define the statesman by use of paradigm in Part III. Part II begins and ends with discussion of method: it begins with the Visitor's exposition of the use of paradigms (E₁, 277d1–278e11) and ends with the Visitor's account that it is appropriate to judge their argument and the practice of arts generally by reference to a mean (E₁, 283b1–287a7). The climax of Part II is the introduction of the paradigm of weaving (E₂, 279a1–283a9), which will govern the remainder of the *Statesman*. The placement of the paradigm of weaving at the center of the dialogue's organizational scheme confirms that the dialogue's chief concern is this paradigm and its use in the explication of the art of rule.⁹

household, not by the city considered as one. That is, the contributory causes of the city each produce what is an "instrument for life" (ὄργανον πρὸς ζῶην, *Pol.* 1253b31 Lord tr.). The distinction between the contributory causes of the city and other arts seems to parallel the distinction drawn by Aristotle between those things provided for in a village that are "for the sake of living" and those things that are provided for in a city that are "for the sake of living well" (*Pol.* 1252b27–30 Lord tr.). The contributory causes of the city provide for living; the other arts, and crucially the art of the statesman, provide for living well.

⁷Heralds, scribes, priests, and seers are, in different ways, involved in directing the city as a whole—the heralds by announcing laws to the city, scribes by executing the business of the city, the priests and seers by ministering to the whole—but do not care for the city's affairs in the manner of a statesman. Through their civil or religious directives, these practitioners prepare souls but do not weave together the fabric of the citizenry, which is the special task of the statesman, just as carders and spinners prepare wool but do not weave the fabric, which is the special task of the weaver.

⁸The arts of rhetoricians also prepare souls by devising persuasive myths (304c7–e1). Perhaps the judges, too, prepare souls by handing down punishments that will educate the souls of wrongdoers. The military art alone seems to have no analogue in an art connected to weaving.

⁹Methods of philosophy briefly seem to be the most important concern of the dialogue when the Visitor surprises a reader who presumed that this dialogue had been undertaken for the sake of defining the statesman by saying that the dialogue has been undertaken for the sake of making them more skillful at argument (285d4–6). Some have taken the Visitor at his word. An example is Guthrie (1978: 163), who wrote "for those tidy minds . . . which like every dialogue to have one single aim, one real subject, *Hauptzweck* and so on, Plato has for once provided an explicit clue. He describes the *Politicus* [i.e., the *Statesman*], as primarily an essay in method: 'has our search for the statesman been proposed for its own sake, or rather to make us better reasoners on any subject?' 'Clearly the latter.'" Kochin (1999: 71–72, 83–84) refers to the Visitor and young Socrates' discussion of the mean in the course of arguing that the Eleatic Visitor is preoccupied with philosophy and is interested in politics

Parts I and III are each other's complements, in that the deficiencies of the arguments in Part I are addressed in Part III. In Part I, the Visitor and young Socrates, proceeding by the methods of diaeresis and myth, reach only an unsatisfactory definition of the statesman as a sort of herdsman. This definition leaves the interlocutors puzzled about how to describe political communities, which they are unable to distinguish from herds (267e1–268c3, 275b1–276e13). In Part III the Visitor and young Socrates, now proceeding by reference to the paradigm of weaving, reach the most satisfactory definition of the true statesman as a legislator—although, as I argue below, he is still described as a sort of herdsman caring for a herd (D₂, 292e1–302b4). Since Part III answers the deficiencies of the arguments in Part I, it is not surprising that Parts I and III mirror each other in their architecture: discussion of the statesman himself is at the center of both, discussion of practitioners of other arts frame the discussion of the statesman in both, and discussion of human beings living in a community begins Part I and ends Part III.¹⁰ In both Parts I and III the discussion of the statesman and his art allows the Visitor and young Socrates to resolve a puzzle: in Part I, discussion of the statesman through myth makes it possible to begin to distinguish the statesman from practitioners of other arts (275c9–e8), which the Visitor and young Socrates were unable to do immediately before the myth (267e1–268d1), and, in Part III, the discussion of the statesman as a legislator makes it possible to give a typology of regimes satisfactory to the Visitor and young Socrates (D₁, 291c8–292d9), which the interlocutors were unable to do immediately before the discussion of the statesman as a legislator (D₁, 302b5–303c7). The discussions of human beings living in communities in Parts I and III mirror each other in the additional respect that both are characterized by the use of the method of diaeresis.

Before discussing the significance of the ring schema of the *Statesman*, I comment on one distinction I make that may be unexpected: the distinction

only so far as to determine which regime is easiest to live under, and that this reflects his “thorough disengagement” from political life. Skemp (1952: 18) rightly cautioned that “some interpreters have taken Plato very literally here but it is always dangerous to do this In the *Politicus*, though the logical and metaphysical side is important, it is the content of the final definition and the description of the kingly weaver which is of real importance. How could the Academy of those years have discussed the statesman as a mere school exercise?”

¹⁰The discussions of practitioners of other arts and their arts are much shorter in Part I than in Part III. In Part I, these discussions are limited to consideration of the appropriateness of describing the statesman and practitioners of other arts as herdsmen (267e1–268c3, 275b1–276c2). Herdsmen, as the Visitor points out (268a5–b6), are all sufficient for those whom they herd; the herdsman's art is not supplemented by others'. So, when the statesman is described as herdsman, as he is in the attempts to define him by diaeresis and myth, consideration of other practitioners of arts is brief because a statesman-herdsman's care would not need to be supplemented by the practice of other arts. When, in Part III, the statesman is no longer described as one who alone might care for human beings but rather as one who directs the practice of others' arts, the importance of other practitioners of arts is obvious and, therefore, the discussion of them is much more extensive.

I draw between the posing of the question of what defines the statesman (A, 258b1–261a7) and the first discussion of how to define human beings in a community (B, 261a8–267d12). I divide here into two parts an attempt—that is really two attempts—at definition by diaeresis. Almost all scholars have treated this section of the dialogue as a single piece. They are, perhaps, too impressed by the fact that the method of diaeresis is used in both attempts at definition; the uniformity of method prompts them to put together what ought to be more carefully distinguished.¹¹ As the Visitor and young Socrates take up the task of defining the statesman, they begin by easily agreeing that the statesman is someone knowledgeable (258b4). This agreement is enforced by their agreement that someone is properly designated a statesman, whether or not he rules, so long as he has the knowledge proper to the statesman. The quest to define the statesman, then, is the quest to define the knowledge proper to the statesman. The Visitor and young Socrates begin to define the statesman through diaeresis by dividing the statesman's knowledge from other species of knowledge. They agree that one with the statesman's knowledge would be able to rule not only a city but also other human associations such as a household. The Visitor and young Socrates divide the statesman's knowledge from others by agreeing that the statesman's knowledge is more theoretical (259c10) than manual and practical (259c10–d1), is prescriptive (260b3–4) rather than simply critical (260b4), and that the statesman's art belongs to one who gives his own prescriptions rather than passes along others' prescriptions (260e4–5). So far the interlocutors have made more specific the question of how to define the statesman by focusing their inquiry on a certain sort of knowledge. At this point, the division of the statesman's knowledge and so the attempt to define the statesman by his knowledge breaks off in favor of an attempt to define the statesman by defining the community for which he cares.¹² Now the Visitor and young Socrates attempt to define human beings, those for whom the statesman cares, by dividing all that comes into being (τά γε γινόμενα πάντα, 261b4) in order to isolate human beings. Thus the conversation moves decisively away from characterization of the statesman's knowledge to characterization of the object of the statesman's art, human beings. The Visitor and young Socrates go on to develop two absurd definitions of human beings: first, as living, tame, herded, walking on dry land, travelling by foot, hornless, non-interbreeding, bipeds and, second, as living, tame, herded, walking

¹¹ An exception is Hoffmann (1993: esp. 86–89, 97), who accounts for this break in the diaeresis by a comparison with the definition of the angler in the *Sophist*. Benardete (1984, 1986: 52) and Miller (1980: 18, 28) both offer charts that display their view of the process of diaeresis as a single attempt at definition rather than as two distinct attempts.

¹² It may be that this break is highlighted by the Visitor's questioning whether they have, in the category of those who give their own prescriptions, a category that yet is divisible (261a5–6). Admittedly, the Visitor poses this question in a manner such that we would have been very surprised if young Socrates had not indicated (261a7) that they should proceed with further divisions. However, since it later seems that only the statesman governs himself—all other practitioners are guided by him—perhaps the diaeresis should have stopped here.

on dry land, travelling by foot, biped, wingless creatures (261a8–267c4). They have characterized a herd of human beings, *for which the statesman cares*, and not further characterized the statesman's knowledge, *by which he cares for the human community*. Thus this part of the text where the Visitor and young Socrates attempt to characterize human beings in a herded community (261a8–267c4) is distinct from the part in which they attempt to characterize the statesman's knowledge (258b1–261a7).¹³

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE *STATESMAN* FOR A READING OF THE TEXT

The organization of the *Statesman* as a ring is significant to our interpretation of the text because often it is only by considering together disparate sections of the dialogue that treat the same topic that we are able to appreciate the full significance of the arguments of each section. It does not seem possible for the Visitor and young Socrates to define the statesman through a progressive argument that moves in a straightforward manner from a first hypothesis to a final conclusion in a definition. Rather, the Visitor and young Socrates find it necessary to revisit and reconsider many of the concerns of the dialogue in order to come to a definition of the statesman by a path that even they describe as lengthy and marked by circumlocution (τὰς ἐν κύκλῳ περιόδους, 286e5). The reason that it is not possible to move in a straightforward manner from a first hypothesis to a final conclusion is that many arguments that are apparently rejected in the *Statesman* are not in fact defeated. Arguments that are seemingly defeated early in the dialogue either are subtly reintroduced later in the dialogue, as with the discussion of the statesman as a sort of herdsman and the citizenry as a herd, or are simply superseded by a rival account that is made to seem more attractive by the Visitor but is not more convincing, as in the search for a typology of regimes. These latter are cases in which a bolder and more able interlocutor than the young Socrates might have more to say in defense of the arguments that are supposedly defeated. Since these arguments are not truly defeated, and, moreover, either are subtly reintroduced or remain important plausible alternatives to the arguments finally pressed by the Visitor, it is necessary for the reader himself to do the work of a more able interlocutor by returning to the arguments that have seemingly been set aside without being defeated and weighing them against the arguments that are finally presented by the Visitor.

That it is necessary to revisit the early arguments of the *Statesman* to weigh them fairly against later arguments may be better understood in contrast with the

¹³ My claim that one should separate the diaeresis concerned with the statesman's knowledge from the diaeresis concerned with humankind is not, I think, rendered implausible by the Visitor's summary statement that encompasses both of these two (267a8–c3). Plato has composed the dialogue in such a way that the Visitor's summary does not accurately reproduce the diaeresis. The Visitor's seeming carelessness here may be meant to suggest that this exercise in diaeresis is not entirely serious; in any case, the summary cannot be taken as an accurate guide to the argument.

Republic. In *Republic* 1, three definitions of justice are offered, each of which is defeated on its own terms and so may be definitively set aside. Cephalus' definition of justice as speaking truthfully and returning what is owed to another (331c1–3) cannot be upheld because it cannot be just to return a weapon that was received from a friend who is now deranged; nor should one be wont to tell the truth to a deranged man. Polemarchus' definition of justice as aiding friends and hindering enemies (334b8–9; also 332a9–10, 332b6–8, 332d4–9) cannot be upheld because a man may mistake his friends for enemies and his enemies for friends and because it does not belong to a just man to harm even an unjust man who, by the harm he suffers, is made yet worse and more unjust: the just man cannot by his actions be a promoter of injustice. Thrasymachus' definition of justice as the expediency of the more powerful (338c1–2) cannot be upheld because one more powerful may by mistake pursue what is to his disadvantage rather than his advantage and finally because a true ruler looks not to his own private advantage but to the advantage of the ruled. Each of these arguments is dispatched on terms that are recognized by those who initially offer these arguments. Their responses to the recognition of the failure of their arguments are various—Cephalus quits the conversation (331d6–7), Polemarchus admits his failure to defend adequately his definition of justice (335d11–c6), and Thrasymachus ill-temperedly berates Socrates (345b4–6)—but each man recognizes that the definition of justice he advanced is defeated. These definitions of justice are thus removed from the field of candidate definitions of justice; no one would any longer take them seriously and so it is not necessary to revisit them after a new definition of justice is advanced at the conclusion of *Republic* 9 in order to understand their deficiencies. Even if one were not to accept the account of justice offered in *Republic* 2 to 9, one would not take up one of the definitions of justice rejected in *Republic* 1. In contrast, the characterizations of the statesman and the citizens advanced early in the *Statesman* are not defeated and indeed are recalled by the Visitor in his later arguments, while the typology of regimes initially proposed is not credibly argued against by the Visitor and remains a candidate typology of regimes.¹⁴

The most important instance in which it is necessary to be attentive to the ring schema of the dialogue in order to weigh earlier arguments against later ones is with regard to the characterization of the statesman himself and his relation to the citizens. The Visitor's arguments about the statesman and the citizenry

¹⁴Put another way: if one were to read the *Republic* beginning with *Republic* 2, one would certainly miss out on an explanation of the failings of frequently proffered accounts of justice, the state of Athenian politics around the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War, and the *Republic*'s richest portrayal of Socrates' interactions with others (and all this would be to miss out on a great deal), but one would not miss anything of the final account of justice offered by Socrates in the *Republic*. In contrast, I venture to claim that if one were to read only the portion of the *Statesman* (from 287a onwards) that builds to the definition of the statesman offered at the dialogue's conclusion, one could not fully appreciate the Visitor's account of the statesman and his art, and particularly its herdsmanlike character.

in the third part of the text (287a7–311b6) force a reader to return to the first part (261a8–277c8), as the ring structure already invites him to do, because the Visitor turns out to accept after all arguments he had explicitly rejected in the early pages of the dialogue. The first part of the dialogue ends in the conclusion that the statesman *does not* rule by force and *does not* rule as a herdsman over a herd. However, the third part of the dialogue gives an account of the statesman who *does* rule by force when necessary and who *does* rule as a herdsman over a herd.¹⁵ The Visitor makes no explicit admission in the last part of the dialogue that his final arguments are those earlier rejected. It is up to the reader to discern that the Visitor's position has shifted, and to import into his reading of the final pages of the dialogue what was said about herdsmanlike rule in the early pages of the dialogue. I explain this more fully and speculate about why the Visitor's argument may proceed thus in the next paragraphs.

Characterization of the statesman himself and his relation to the citizens begins with the citizenry being described as a herd, either a tame herd of walking on dry land, travelling by foot, hornless, non-interbreeding, bipeds or a tame herd of walking on dry land, travelling by foot, biped, wingless creatures (261a8–267c4). Since the Visitor and young Socrates have described the citizenry as a herd, they are naturally led in several passages to describe the statesman as a herdsman: they describe him as a sort of herdsman and rearer of a human herd (νομέα καὶ τροφὸν ἀγέλης ἀνθρωπίνης, 268c1–2; see also 267e1–2), as one whose art is one of the herding arts (τῶν νομευτικῶν . . . τεχνῶν μία, 267d6–7), and as one who at one point is described curiously as running together with his herd (μετὰ τῆς ἀγέλης συνδιαθέων, 266c11). However, the Visitor and young Socrates are perplexed about how to distinguish the statesman as a herdsman from others such as merchants, farmers, bakers, gymnastic trainers, and physicians who also claim to care for the citizenry as a whole; a herdsman is alone sufficient to meet the felt needs of his herd, but the statesman cannot claim to be alone sufficient to meet the needs felt throughout the whole community as these others are also necessary for the whole (267e1–268d1). In the face of this difficulty the Visitor asserts that they must make another beginning to define the statesman (268d5–6)—namely a playful myth that cannot be fully considered here. The Visitor's myth tells of two contrasting ages of mankind: a golden age of Kronos and the present age of Zeus. In the age of Kronos, human beings are provided for by divine spirits who severally tend men in herds under the supervision of the god (271d2–e2), and by a bounteous earth that without cultivation yields fruits for nourishment and soft beds of grass for rest (272a3–b1). The transition from the age of Kronos to the age of Zeus takes place when the god suddenly withdraws his care of the world, and, following the god's lead, the divine spirits withdraw their care

¹⁵ Apparently the statesman also rules by a virtue of a knowledge that is said to be critical (κριτικὴν 292b9), even though his knowledge was described as being not so (260c1–4). On this point, see Stern 1997: 267 and Rosen 1995: 150.

of their herds of men. The earth that had spontaneously yielded up what men need for their comfort becomes improvident and men find themselves weak and defenseless (ἀσθενεῖς . . . καὶ ἀφύλακτοι, 274b7–8) against savage beasts. Now men must find their own way in a harsh world and find themselves at first helpless and artless (ἀμήχανοι καὶ ἄτεχνοι, 274c1). It is in this age of Zeus that politics emerges, apparently in response to the need for human beings to cooperate for their survival. The conclusion of the myth, according to the Visitor, is that their search for the statesman has been fundamentally misguided; they aim to define a statesman—a πολιτικός—a man who rules men in a political context, not a sort of divine extrapolitical herdsman. Thus they seem to conclude that, since up to the telling of the myth they had spoken of the citizenry as a herd and the statesman as a sort of herdsman, their discussion thus far has been almost a loss (274e10–275a2). The Visitor says that they must seek a human statesman who rules men by his knowledge, and in particular, he adds, a statesman who rules not by force but by the volition of citizens (276d8–e13). However, as becomes apparent, the account of the statesman as a herdsman actually forms the basis for the Visitor's account of the statesman as a legislator.

The account of the statesman as a legislator comes only in the third part of the dialogue. The Visitor describes the statesman to young Socrates as someone whose knowledge uniquely qualifies him to give law, whether written or unwritten, to the citizens. The attempts of anyone else to give law would be like the attempts of those who, although neither ship captains nor physicians, prescribe rules for sailing or curing illnesses—with the inevitable result that the arts of sailing and healing would be ruined (297e11–299e9). In ruling, as in sailing and healing, only the knowledgeable are qualified to prescribe rules. In the context of this description of the statesman as a legislator, the Visitor recalls the myth by saying that the statesman will rule like a herdsman: the statesman as a legislator will preside over the *herds* about justice and their compacts with one another (τὸν νομοθέτην . . . τὸν ταῖσιν ἀγέλαις ἐπιστατήσοντα τοῦ δικαίου περὶ καὶ τῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους συμβολαίων, 294e8–295a1) and is one who gives laws, written or unwritten, to the *herds of human beings* concerning the just and unjust, the beautiful and the base, the good and the evil things (Τῷ δὲ τὰ δίκαια δὴ καὶ ἄδικα καὶ καλὰ καὶ αἰσχροὶ καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακὰ γράψαντι καὶ ἄγραφα νομοθετήσαντι ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀγέλαις, 295e4–6).¹⁶ The statesman, after all, is a herdsman of human beings!¹⁷ A herdsman is different in

¹⁶The art of providing for a herd recurs soon after this reintroduction of herdsmanlike rule (ἀγελαιοκομικήν, 299d8; compare 275e5). Here the Visitor seems to refer to animal herds (he has just mentioned horses) but this additional mention of herds and their tending reinforces his return to thinking of human herds.

¹⁷Of course there are differing views on how important the return to the images of herds and herding are to a reading of this later part of the dialogue. Rosen (1995: 163) comments only briefly on the appearance of these images in this part of the dialogue. Benardete notes that the Visitor makes an "equation of herd and city" (1984, 1986: 131). Commenting specifically on the Visitor's question of

some respects from other herdsmen, to be sure, but like other herdsmen in that he may rule his charges by force when it is necessary for their welfare; citizens who are ruled forcibly for their betterment have no grounds for complaint, just as patients who are made well by a forcibly administered course of treatment have no grounds for complaint against their physicians (296b1–297b4). Moreover, like the god of the myth who cared for men not directly but through divine spirits under his supervision, it seems that the statesman rules his human charges not directly but through intermediaries such as rhetoricians, generals, and judges who are subordinate to him (305c9–d4).¹⁸ That the statesman is, after all, likened to the divine herdsman of the myth goes a long way to explaining one of the puzzles of the dialogue, namely why the dialogue's myth emphasizes not the political age of Zeus but instead the age of Kronos, the age before human beings have acquired for themselves the art of politics and instead are pastured by divine spirits. The mythic account of divine herdsmanlike rule in the age of Kronos turns out to be the model for the ideal human rule of the true

whether slaves are to be distinguished from herd animals, but with the larger question of the citizen's freedom in view, he also suggests (121–122) that for the Visitor it may be that “political science as a kind of herding cannot be of free men and hence is the same as the slavemaster's art [T]he stranger . . . wishes . . . to raise the problem of freedom in as radical a manner as possible.” Herded citizens may not quite be slaves, but they are not free to live their lives autonomously. Clark (1995) asserts that at some point in our history human beings were domesticated and bred by other, apparently more intelligent men “to be obedient to abstract law and to the living law, their leaders” (247), though he admits that this is “obviously a difficult thought for people to embrace” (245). Domestication is linked with civilization. So Clark seems to conclude that there is something valid in the position that “statesmanship amounts to the domestication of creatures that would otherwise be wild” (240). I share Morrison's critique (1995) of Clark's position that a herded animal whose sign of consent is hearkening to the call of the herdsman cannot be considered a free being: “to govern free beings with their consent is *not* herdsmanship, but civilization” (274). Miller (1980: 94–95) connects, as I do, the reprise of the image of herds to the myth; he notes that the statesman and the god both are unseen by those for whom they care and that the statesman stands outside the city and the laws he composes just as the god of the myth transcends the cosmos he has fashioned. Miller concludes, “as the unrecognized lawgiver, the statesman is the analogue to the god” (95). Thus far I follow Miller. Miller, however, seems to hold, or at least to hold that the Visitor holds, that one could, to a suitable interlocutor, articulate a “vision of philosophical statesmanship” (114). I differ from Miller, and from Clark, in that I find the images of herds and herdsmanship extremely disquieting, and I take the reappearance of these images as a sign that in the Visitor's account there is after all no philosophic statesmanship that could realize the best regime. The fact that human beings best ruled would be ruled as herd animals must mean, I conclude, that there is something fundamentally unnatural about politics and that there is no ideal regime that would be consonant with both the statesman's knowledge and the freedom proper to human beings.

¹⁸That the statesman rules only indirectly rather than directly may go some way to helping to explain why the Visitor now describes the statesman's knowledge as critical and superintendent (ἐπιστατικὴν, 292b10; see also 308e5–6) rather than, as he had earlier described it, as prescriptive (ἐπιτακτικὴς, 260c3; see also 260b4–5) and not critical (see above, n. 15). One who rules directly is prescriptive; one who rules indirectly superintends those who directly command the citizens after critically discerning what needs be done in the city.

statesman by law, and is thus key to the explication of the rule of the true human statesman.¹⁹

The reappearance of the image of the herdsman is occasion for recalling what was said in the Visitor's myth about the statesman as a herdsman and so for illuminating the account of the statesman as a legislating herdsman. What was said about an age of herdsmanlike rule in the age of Kronos is that rule will be by a god (275a1); that such rule will come to an end (272d6–273a3); and that it will be an unphilosophic age (272b1–d4). And indeed the statesman's rule does share these characteristics: his city is distinguished from others as a god is from men (303b3–5); his rule will end when he departs the city as by his death (consider 295b10–c); and the ordinary citizens are unable to partake of any great knowledge (292e1–3; see also 303d4–e5). The reappearance of the image of the herdsman is also occasion for recalling the distaste a reader presumably felt about hearing the citizenry described as a herd and about the prospect of forcible rule. Young Socrates overcomes his distaste for forcible rule (296b5–d5; compare 293e6–7), but the reader may question whether or not he can overcome his own.

The discrepancy between the conclusion in the first part of the dialogue that the statesman does not rule forcibly in the manner of a herdsman and the reverse conclusion in the third part of the dialogue leaves the question of why the Visitor should reverse his position. What happened between the myth and the discussion of the statesman as a weaver to cause this change in conclusion? And why is the change in conclusion unannounced? Answers to these difficult questions must be speculative. It may be that the Visitor shares the reluctance that the elder Socrates felt in *Republic* 5 to speak boldly about the impracticability of the regime and the herd-like character of the citizenry in the regimes they describe. Like the Visitor in the *Statesman*, Socrates in *Republic* 5 speaks plainly enough about herds and about force in order to be understood by his interlocutors (*Rep.* 451c8 for the city as a herd, and, *inter alia*, 455d9 for men and women termed animals, and, *inter alia*, 461c4–7, 540e5–54a7 on force)—yet for both the Visitor and Socrates there seems to be a certain hesitation, a hesitation about which Socrates is explicit (*Rep.* 450a7–451b7), to speak too boldly about what the best regime would be like could it be realized. Perhaps in the Visitor's case he is unwilling to state bluntly the terrible problem of politics—that the best regime is impossible, and could it be realized it would reduce most men to the status of herd animals—and so to corrupt such a young man (compare *Rep.* 537d7–539d7). In any case, the ring structure of the Visitor's argument, by suggesting a connection between these two

¹⁹In spite of the Visitor's assertion that the myth fails because it likens the statesman to a god (274e10–275a2), the statesman is a god-like figure. It is for this reason that the Visitor, at the end of his discussion of regime types, remarks that the regime of the true statesman should be distinguished from actual regimes as god from men (303b3–5). Friedländer (1969: 3.285) puts the matter thus: "the myth links order in the state and the true statesman with the order in the universe, that is to say, with the forms and with God."

parts of the dialogue, serves to turn the reader's attention back to the discussion of herdsmanlike rule in his myth when the Visitor gives his later account of the statesman as legislator; that is, the ring serves to point out to a reader what the Visitor, for whatever reason, prefers to remain if not unspoken then certainly stated *sotto voce*. This apparent wish to leave the herdsmanlike character of the best political rule obscurely stated is a reason for the Visitor's argument to take the form of a ring, and goes some way toward explaining why the Visitor and his interlocutor cannot define the statesman in a progressive argument from a first hypothesis to a final conclusion: such a straightforward argument would require a willingness to state all of his premises baldly, which the Visitor, for some reason, is reluctant to do.

The argument concerning a valid typology of regimes is an example of how the Visitor allows an earlier argument to be superseded by an apparently more attractive but perhaps not more convincing one. When the Visitor suddenly turns the conversation to the question of developing a typology of regimes, he and young Socrates first classify regimes according to various criteria—whether rule is by one, few, or many (291d1–10), whether rule takes place by force or by consent, by the wealthy or by the poor, and by laws or unlawfully (τὸ βίαιόν . . . καὶ ἐκούσιον . . . καὶ πενίαν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ νόμον καὶ ἀνομίαν, 291e1–2), and so describe familiar regime types: monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, and democracy, the latter of which may be marked by forcible rule of the many over the wealthy and disregard for the existing laws or by the wealthy's consent to the rule of the many and the upholding of the existing laws.²⁰ They quickly abandon this typology because the Visitor complains that they have not understood the delimiting mark (τὸν ὄρον, 292c5) between the regimes—apparently their criteria are too various, and they are yet inattentive to the real delimiting mark of a regime, namely whether or not its ruler has the knowledge (292c7) of a true statesman. Thus they cannot place the regime governed by the true statesman in their typology. When they cannot place the statesman in this typology, the Visitor develops the account mentioned above of the true statesman as the one uniquely competent to make new laws, written or unwritten, and so able to rule forcibly without regard for existing law. Following from this account of the statesman as the only one competent to make new law, the Visitor and young Socrates give a new typology of regimes, or really two typologies of regimes. In the first, the regime governed by the legislating statesman stands above the other regimes as god stands above human beings (303b3–5). The second divides these other regimes according to the two criteria of, first, whether the regime is governed in strict accordance with the existing laws, as by rulers who recognize their incompetence to make new law, or is governed by those who boldly make new

²⁰ The Visitor seems to distinguish between a better and a worse democracy at 291e10–292a3, but characterizes the typology as having five regime types (291d9, 301b7) and as having an undifferentiated (ἀπλήν, 302d4) notion of democracy.

laws, and, second, whether rule is by the one, the few, or the many. On this account there are six regimes: monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, lawful democracy, and unlawful democracy (301a6–c4, 302b5–303c7).

That these new typologies and the arguments advanced on their behalf do not constitute a convincing argument against the first and more usual typology of regimes rejected by the Visitor and young Socrates may be seen by looking at Aristotle's *Politics*. Aristotle was certainly concerned to make a reply to some of the arguments of the *Statesman*, as is evident from the very first chapter of the *Politics*, which is a comment on the Visitor's argument in the *Statesman* that political rule is not a distinctive form of rule. However, when Aristotle came to give a typology of regimes in chapters six through eight of *Politics* 3 (see also *Pol.* 4.1, 2) he gave very nearly the typology set aside by the Visitor—monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, and democracies of two sorts distinguished according to whether the ruling many look to the common advantage of all the classes in the city or only to the advantage of the poor.²¹ This is nearly identical to the Visitor's rejected typology of monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, and democracy distinguished according to whether the many rule forcibly over the wealthy and disregard existing laws or the many have the wealthy's consent to their rule and uphold the existing laws. Moreover, Aristotle characterized regimes by at least one criterion that the Visitor rejects as inexact, namely the wealth or poverty of the rulers, and other criteria that seem such that the Visitor would have rejected them as inexact, such as the virtue of the ruling class (1279a35, 1279a39–1279b4) and whether the rulers look to the common advantage (τὸ κοινῇ συμφέρον) or ignore them (1279a17–21, 25–31). Aristotle seemingly felt no obligation to reply to the critique of the second typologies offered by Plato's Visitor, and indeed he gave at some length a fairly convincing account of why at least the wealth or poverty of the rulers—a criterion rejected by the Visitor—is an important criterion for classifying a regime (1279b20–1281a6). Perhaps most readers share what was apparently Aristotle's reaction that the arguments for the Visitor's final typologies—arguments that rest on a claim that there is one special human being uniquely competent to make new laws—are not at all convincing²² and do not discredit the Visitor's first typology. Thus—unlike the arguments for the candidate definitions of justice advanced by Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus, which are simply defeated—the familiar typology of regimes given first by the Visitor and young Socrates is not superseded and remains a plausible candidate typology that is not defeated by the arguments of the Visitor.

²¹ To mark the difference in democracies, Aristotle termed a democracy that looks to the common advantage πολιτεία (1279a37–39) and one that does not look to the common advantage δημοκρατία (1279b6).

²² Aristotle on balance seems to argue that law, not men, should be sovereign, as at *Pol.* 1282b1–6 and 1281a34–6, although this is qualified by the observation that the law cannot allow for particular circumstances so well as a man can (see *inter alia* 1286a7–24).

I offer below three examples of the ways in which a return to earlier arguments invited by the ring schema is fruitful for an analysis of the methodology of the Visitor. The three examples concern the method of diaeresis, the role of ideals in argument, and the place of the ruler in the Visitor's overall argument.

There are two instances of the use of the method of diaeresis that end in perplexity, each succeeded by a fruitful use of it. The first concerns the definition of the human beings in a community as political and the other the definition of the weaver. The reasons for the perplexity upon the original uses of diaeresis may only be seen in hindsight from the perspective of the subsequent successful arguments. In these cases, the revisiting that is invited by the ring schema of the dialogue is important because it illuminates the proper use of diaeresis as a method of argument. I shall discuss the use of diaeresis to characterize human beings in a community as political at some length and its use to define the weaver more briefly.

The first treatment of human beings in a community, already discussed briefly above (41–42), proceeds by diaeresis to distinguish human beings from everything else in this world and concludes in two absurd definitions of them, namely that they are living, tame, herded, walking on dry land, travelling by foot, hornless, non-interbreeding, bipeds and that they are living, tame, herded, walking on dry land, travelling by foot, biped, wingless creatures (261a8–267c4). Neither of these bizarre definitions is useful for explaining why human beings have a need for a statesman and may be considered as political creatures. Why not? As the Visitor points out to young Socrates, these definitions cannot help them distinguish the statesman from others who claim to manage the nurture of humankind. This is revealed immediately when the Visitor asks whether they are now able to distinguish the statesman from practitioners of other arts. The Visitor supposes that merchants, farmers, bakers, gymnastic trainers, and physicians, like the statesman, may each claim to care for the nurture of humankind (τῆς τροφῆς ἐπιμελοῦνται τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης, 268a2). Each has an apparently valid claim to be one who cares for a community of wingless bipeds: a physician cares for the whole community and a statesman cares for the whole community (267e1–268d1). Thus this first diaeresis, which defines the community that is in the care of the physician and also of the statesman, cannot distinguish the statesman from practitioners of other arts. Moreover, not only do the two definitions of human beings just given by the Visitor and young Socrates fail to differentiate amongst those who care for a community of human beings, but also, reciprocally, they fail to define such a community: it may be described as a political community of citizens when considered with reference to the care of the statesman or, equally, as a community of patients when considered with reference to the care of the physician. They have not identified by this diaeresis what about human beings is particular to their being characterized as political beings and so potentially as citizens.

The second treatment of human beings in a community is found near the dialogue's end when the Visitor and young Socrates finally apply the paradigm

of weaving to human beings (305e8–311b6). The Visitor uses the method of diaeresis to show that human beings are divided simply into two types: one type that is courageous (ἀνδρείαν, 307c3, 308a4) and daring, and the other type that is quiet (κόσμιοι, 307e2), moderate (σώφρονα, 307c3), and retiring. These two types distrust each other; men of each type form a faction in the politics of a city. The resulting two factions have an antipathy (ἔχθραν, 307d3, 306b10) for one another. This antipathy endangers the city, because if the faction of courageous men prevails in the politics of a city, it eventually will imprudently risk the city in war and the city will be enslaved. If, on the other hand, the faction of moderate men prevails, it will be too hesitant to go to war and finally the city will be enslaved by a bolder city (307e1–308b1). Thus, either way, when men are left to their own devices and inclinations, their city will be enslaved. It is to avoid this fate that they require the statesman and his political art.²³ By his art, the statesman is able to overcome these natural divisions between the citizens by fashioning divine bonds (θείῳ . . . δεσμῶ, 309c2) in the souls of the citizens by education (309c1–310a6), and human bonds (ἀνθρωπίνους δεσμούς, 310a7) between the citizens through institutional arrangements of marriage and political offices (310a7–311b6); the citizens are bound together by the statesman just as the weaver binds together the warp and woof of a fabric. This second,

²³The teaching of the *Statesman*, then, is in tension with that of Aristotle's *Politics*. While Aristotle holds that politics fulfils the best of human nature, the Visitor's arguments suggest that politics compensates for the deficiencies in human nature. To that degree, I would argue, politics is not natural as Aristotle would have us understand politics to be natural—that is, as a fulfilment of the best in man's nature. Dixsaut (1995: 268) seeks to maintain the contrary position: that the *Statesman* presents “une politique vraiment conforme à la nature”—indeed a politics that conforms to nature in two ways. The regime governed by the statesman is marked on the one hand, by a recognition that nature has internal contradications (explicated in the dialogue as two ages in the myth, and later as two contrary parts of human virtue) and, on the other hand, “en voulant croire qu'elle n'est pas désertée par le divin et par l'intelligence” (272). But these two ways of conforming to nature are contradictory. The natural antipathy between the courageous and the moderate is “conforme à la nature, mais également incompatible avec l'existence d'une cité” (271); hence spontaneous nature must be overcome. The factions that display opposing virtues must be unified through the statesman's weaving so that these naturally opposing factions are unified just as the virtues they display are unified in the soul of the statesman—or, as she styles the statesman, “le philosophe”: “le philosophe réalise une cité à son image, à l'image de sa propre nature” (272). Politics thus supposedly conforms to nature exactly by repressing the natural division of human beings into courageous and moderate factions. At most, politics will conform to nature in expressing the desire to believe in the guidance of a divine intelligence (a weaker claim, surely, than the claim that politics does conform to the plan of a divine intelligence). Dixsaut seems almost to recognize this difficulty for her position when she rightly points out that nature has internal contradictions (so that it must be unclear how politics can wholly conform with a nature that does not conform with itself), and that the unity of the statesman's own soul is discerned only by the statesman, not by the citizens. The citizens will necessarily experience their being woven together as an unnatural forcing together of parties who would rather have nothing to do with each other because they cannot be given the philosophic account that would explain the necessity of their being woven together: “la parole du philosophe n'a pas plus sa place dans la cité vertueuse en totalité que dans les autres [cités] Toute parole publique est une parole auxiliaire, persuasive, rhétorique” (273).

simple diaeresis that divides human beings into two types—the courageous and the moderate—explains why human beings have a need for a statesman and may be considered as citizens.

This second discussion of human beings in community, at 305e8–311b6, is, in contrast to that at 261a8–267d12, adequate to characterize human beings in a community as political because it explains their need for politics. Both discussions of human beings in a community proceed by diaeresis. However, the first discussion fails to define human beings as political because it could not account for the peculiarly human need for politics. The second attempt shows that human beings are naturally divided into two factions whose disputes would lead to the enslavement of the city without the intervention of the statesman; thus this second diaeresis succeeds in defining human beings as political. The second discussion succeeds because it illuminates distinctions *within a community of human beings*—namely, that human beings are naturally divided into two factions—rather than distinctions *between human beings and everything else in this world*, which is the concern of the first discussion of human beings. This suggests a criterion for the proper use of diaeresis: this method must be used to discern divisions within the thing under consideration, not between that thing and everything else.

This lesson about the use of diaeresis explains why the first attempt to use it to define weaving ends in perplexity. The Visitor first attempts to define weaving by defining its product, a cloak, and by dividing that product from everything else that may be made by art (279c7–280a6). However, the Visitor points out to young Socrates that describing the cloak produced by the art of the weaver but also in part by the art of the carder cannot distinguish between the weaver and the carder, as the arts of both are necessary for the production of the cloak (280e6–281d4)—just as describing the human community for which the statesman and the physician both care cannot distinguish the statesman from the physician. None of these practitioners can be described by the object towards which their arts are directed, cloaks or communities of human beings, but these practitioners must be described by the ways in which their arts are related to the objects of those arts. The Visitor and young Socrates are able to distinguish the art particular to the weaver and distinct from that of the carder only when they attend in a second attempt at diaeresis to the divisions amongst the various arts that must be practiced in order to produce the cloak, such as separating the wool on the part of the carder and braiding wool together in the case of the weaver (281d5–283a8)—just as they successfully characterized human beings as political only when they attended to divisions within a human community.

A second way in which attention to the ring schema of the *Statesman* may help a reader in an analysis of the methodology of the Visitor is with regard to the role of ideals in the Visitor's argument. Early in the dialogue the Visitor claims that the true statesman is not to be sought among those who are rulers in practice. Rather if someone has the knowledge proper to rule, he should be designated a king—whether or not he rules or is in a private station (259b3–5). Therefore, to

define the statesman it is necessary to study one who would be a true king and his knowledge rather than to study the practice of actual rulers. One must begin with the ideal rather than the actual.²⁴ This explicit assertion by the Visitor that ideals should be our referent in political life and the measure of political rule is reinforced by the organization of the dialogue. As we know, consideration of rule begins with the Visitor's mythic account of an ideal of divine herdsmanlike rule over human beings in the idyllic age of Kronos. The rule of the god and his subordinate divine spirits is, as the Visitor and young Socrates realize, unattainable for human beings. It does, however, as I have argued above (45), set the ground for the discussion of rule by the true human statesman whose rule turns out to be like that of a herdsman as he cares for the city and weaves it into a whole. The mythic account of ideal divine herdsmanlike rule turns out to be the model for the ideal human herdsmanlike rule of the true statesman through legislation, and is thus key to the explication of the rule of the true human statesman. However, like the rule of the god and his subordinate divine spirits, so also the rule of the true statesman is an unattainable ideal (301d8–e2). But just as the divine rule turns out to be the model for the rule of the true statesman, the law of the true statesman turns out to be the law to which actual rulers ought to hold fast in their rule (297b7–301a4). Thus the regime of the true statesman is the measure that defines the typology of actual regimes (301a6–c4, 302b5–303c7). Bringing together the disparate sections of the text concerned with the statesman himself and his rule, we see that in the conversation of the Visitor and young Socrates there is an overall movement from divine ideal in the myth to human ideal in the account of a perfect statesman-legislator to actual human practice. In thinking of politics, we must begin not with what is, because this is not an adequate guide to the good in political life, but with ideals. Thus the organization of the dialogue enforces the Visitor's early claim that study of the ideal must precede a turn to the actual. As Guthrie comments (1978: 166), Plato's "method of presentation [in the *Statesman*] . . . points to connexions in Plato's mind which we might otherwise miss, especially those between method and subject-matter."

A final way in which attention to the organization of the *Statesman* may help a reader in an analysis of the methodology of the Visitor is with regard to the place of the ruler in the Visitor's overall argument. The organization of the text emphasizes the point that the statesman himself is the crucial feature of the best city and is the crucial touchstone in their analysis. All the climactic points in the dialogue—the mythic account of an ideal of divine rule over human beings in the idyllic age of Kronos, the introduction of the paradigm of weaving, and the discussion of the statesman as a legislator—are especially closely concerned with the statesman and his rule. It is very important that two of these discussions

²⁴On this point, see Kochin 1999: esp. 64–69. Kochin gives a very thoughtful analysis of the ideal human rule of the true statesman as a model for rule by actual rulers and cogently explains the inadequacy of the Visitor's proposal that actual rulers imitate a true statesman.

between the Visitor and young Socrates that are especially concerned with rule and the statesman—the mythic account of divine rule and the account of the statesman as a legislator—prove to be the correctives for what had just gone awry in their arguments. The myth suggests, in answer to the analysis that immediately precedes the myth, how the statesman is to be distinguished from physicians and others who care for the nurture of humankind (τῆς τροφῆς ἐπιμελοῦνται τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης, 268a2). As described above, in their first discussion of practitioners of arts other than statesmanship the Visitor and young Socrates are unable to distinguish the care offered by the statesman from the care offered by merchants, farmers, bakers, gymnastic trainers, and physicians (267e1–268d1). The myth of divine rule generates the insight that the way to define the statesman (and so to distinguish him from the practitioners of other arts) is to be attentive to the manner (τρόπον) of his rule over others (275a8–10). On this basis, the Visitor says that the statesman’s art may be set off from the arts of others—he means the merchants, farmers, bakers, gymnastic trainers, and physicians that he mentioned earlier—by noting that these other arts are particularly arts concerned with nurturing (τρέφειν) a herd of human beings while the statesman’s art is not one of nurture (275d8–e1). While we may find that this still leaves matters obscure, the discussion is able to proceed in a new direction.²⁵ Thus the mythic account of divine rule helps to answer an earlier deficiency in their argument. Likewise, the discussion of the statesman as a legislator enables the Visitor and young Socrates to develop a supposedly valid typology of regimes, which they were unable to do immediately prior to the discussion of the statesman as a legislator (compare 291c8–292d9 with 302b5–303c7). Finally, the discussion of the statesman as a legislator seems to enable the Visitor and the young Socrates to say that they have distinguished the sophist from the statesman—although, importantly, they do not state in what this distinction consists—a task that they had taken up shortly before beginning their discussion of the statesman as a legislator (compare 291a1–c8 with 303b8–d2). An appreciation of the organization of the dialogue reveals how the recurring attention of the Visitor and young Socrates to the statesman himself—in essence, keeping their eyes on the prize—helps to recast the conversation so as to resolve difficulties in their discussion. In the Visitor’s emphasis on the ruler as the crucial touchstone in the argument, Plato has him echoing the elder Socrates’ account of the indispensability of the philosopher-kings to *kallipolis* (*Rep.* 473c11–e5, 546a1–547a5), and anticipating the Athenian Visitor’s announcement that he and his interlocutors are concerned especially with the excellence and the badness of the legislators (*Leg.* 637d1–3).

²⁵ Perhaps some of the mystery in the Visitor’s pronouncement is addressed by noting that while these other arts provide nurturing care for bodies the statesman cares for souls, and by noting that while these other arts provide nurture to separate human beings (in the forms of particular medical advice for each, separate loaves of bread for each, and so on), the statesman provides laws to the community in aggregate.

The seemingly haphazard construction of the *Statesman* belies its careful organization as a ring. This ring has the effect of inviting a reader to return to earlier passages in the dialogue. When he does so, he is better able to discern the method of diaeresis, the role of ideals, and the place of the ruler in the Visitor's argument, and to see that the usual typology of regimes has not been superseded. The ring schema of the Visitor's argument also turns the reader's attention back to the mythic account of herdsmanlike rule when the Visitor gives his later account of the statesman-legislator and so reinforces his suggestions in that later account that the statesman as a legislator will rule like a herdsman. The supposedly defeated arguments about herdsmanlike rule actually serve to complete the Visitor's final argument about the statesman as a sort of legislating herdsman. In this instance, the Visitor himself, as portrayed by Plato, seems to intend that his interlocutor will recall late in the dialogue what was said earlier about herdsmen, as the ring schema invites him to do. Thus the ring schema of his argument has the effect of amplifying the Visitor's subtle suggestions that the statesman-legislator will rule like a herdsman, and lets him state obscurely what he seems reluctant to assert boldly—namely, that in the best regime men will be ruled like herd animals. At least one question that remains is why the Visitor uses the device of this ring structure in order to offer his argument in an obscure way, in contradistinction to the elder Socrates who often uses irony in order to state something obscurely. The Visitor shares Socrates' trait of being less than straightforward with interlocutors—consider Socrates' statements in the early pages of the *Meno* or *Republic* 5. However, we see Socrates as employing irony, not—as the Visitor does—subtly hinting to his interlocutors by the organization of the argument that they must recall now what was said earlier. Whether this difference can be attributed to a difference between the Visitor's Parmenidean philosophy and Socrates' philosophy, or to the difference between the Visitor's prospect of a return to his apparently safe home in Elea and Socrates' imminent trial in Athens, or to some other cause, remains open to question.

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

P.O. Box 2800

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21404

U.S.A.

jacqueline.merrill@sjca.edu

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