

Appendix to Ia1: Texts on "wisdom" [σοφία] and "first philosophy"
outside the Metaphysics (excluding the Protrepticus)¹

A: Ethical texts on wisdom as the kind of knowledge most desirable in itself

[Wisdom is not prudence [φρόνησις], i.e. practical knowledge of human things.] And if [it is said] that man is the best of the animals, this makes no difference, for there are things much more divine by nature than man is, as, most manifestly, those out of which the cosmos is composed [the heavenly bodies]. And from what has been said it is clear that wisdom is both scientific knowledge [ἐπιστήμη] and intuitive knowledge [νοῦς] of the things which are most valuable [τιμιώτατα] by nature. For this reason they say that Anaxagoras and Thales and such people are wise, but not prudent, when they see that these people are ignorant of their own interests, and they say that these people know things which are rare and wonderful and difficult and daemonic, but useless, since they do not seek the human goods. (Nicomachean Ethics VI,7 = Eudemian Ethics V,7 1141a34-b7)

God does not rule by giving orders, but he is that for the sake of which prudence gives orders: for "that for the sake of which" has two senses, as has been determined elsewhere, since [God] is not in need of anything [sc. and therefore cannot be "that for the sake of which" as "to benefit whom," but only as "to attain which"]. So whatever choice and acquisition of naturally good things (whether goods of the body, or wealth, or friends, or other goods) will most produce the contemplation of God, that is the best, and this is the most beautiful standard. And if anything, through defect or excess, prevents us from attending to and contemplating God, that is bad. (Eudemian Ethics VIII,3 1249b13-20)

This text is picking up on an earlier text:

But [prudence] is not master [κυρία] of wisdom or of the better part, just as [the art of] medicine is not master of health: for it does not use it but provides for it to come about; so it gives orders for the sake of it [ἐκείνης, i.e. for the sake of it as to attain which], not to it. Again, it would be as if someone were to say that politics rules over the gods, because it gives orders about everything in the city [sc. including public worship]. (EE V,13 = NE VI,13 1145a6-11, in turn picking up on EE V,12 = NE VI,12 esp. 1143b33-5)

If happiness is activity according to a virtue, it is reasonable that it should be according to the highest virtue, and this would be the virtue of the best [part of the soul]. And whether this is νοῦς or something else which seems to rule and lead by nature, and to have awareness of things beautiful and divine, whether it is itself divine or merely the most divine thing in us, the activity of this according to its proper virtue would be complete happiness The activity of this would be the highest, for νοῦς is the highest of the things in us, and the things which νοῦς is about are the highest of knowable things. (NE X,7 1177a12-21)

Wisdom [by contrast with prudence, which is inferior] is concerning the eternal and the divine.

¹d review with the aid of Bonitz' Index, article 'Ἀριστοτέλης, list of references to the Metaphysics; including the reference in NE I,6 to "another philosophy" 1096b30-31

(Magna Moralia 1197b7)

B: Physical texts on first philosophy as a discipline distinguished from physics

About the formal principle, whether it is one or many, and what it is or what they are, it is the task of first philosophy to determine precisely, so let [the question] be set aside until that occasion; but we will speak about natural and corruptible forms in what will be shown later [i.e. in the remainder of the Physics]. (Physics I,9 192a34-b2)

How far must the physicist know the form and the essence? ... as far as [knowing] that for the sake of which each thing is, and those things which are separate in form [i.e. separable in thought], but which are in matter. For a man and the sun generate a man [sc. and a separate Form of Man, if there is one, does not, so the physicist doesn't have to know about this]. But how the separate form is disposed, and what it is, it is the task of first philosophy to determine. (Physics II,2 194b9-15)

[It belongs to the physicist to know] those things which move by being moved; whatever do not [move in this way] no longer belong to physics, since they do not move by having motion or a principle of motion within themselves, but by being unmoved; so there are three disciplines [πραγματεῖαι], one about unmoved [/immovable] things, one about things that are moved but incorruptible, and one about corruptible things. (Physics II,7 198a27-31)

The physicist [is he who considers] all things which are actions and affections of thus-and-such a body or thus-and-such a matter. [It is] someone else [who considers] whatever is not such: about some things the craftsman, as it may happen, like the builder or the doctor; about the things which are not separate, but where they are not affections of thus-and-such a body and are abstracted, the mathematician; and where they are separated, the first philosopher. (De Anima I,1 403b11-16)

[If physics considers all of soul] there will be no philosophy left over besides natural science. For intellect [νοῦς] is of the intelligibles [νοητά], so that natural science would be about all things [sc. not only the sensibles but also the intelligibles]: for it is of the same [science or act of knowledge] to contemplate both intellect and the intelligible, since these are correlates, and the contemplation of correlates is the same, as in the case of sensation and the sensibles. (Parts of Animals 641a35-b4)

That there are some beings which are ingenerable and entirely immobile belongs rather to an investigation other than and prior to the physical. (De Caelo 298b19-20)

It is the task of another and prior philosophy to make determinations about the immobile principle [sc. about that which is "immobile for all time," conjoined and contrasted with "that which is always moved," sc. the heaven]. (On Generation and Corruption 318a5-6)

[To know whether motion is eternal] will contribute not only toward the contemplation of

nature, but also toward the discipline [μέθοδος] concerning the first principle. (Physics VIII,1 251a6-8)

[That there is only one world] would be shown also through arguments out of first philosophy. (De Caelo I,8_277b9-10, referring to Metaphysics Λ8)

About that which is moved first and eternally, in what way it is moved, and how the first mover moves it, has already been determined in the [books] on first philosophy. (De Motu Animalium 700b8-9, referring to Metaphysics Λ6-9)