

BOOK VI

[VIRTUES OF THOUGHT]

1

[The Mean and the Virtues of Thought]

1138b Since we have said previously that we must choose the intermediate condition, not the excess or the deficiency, and that the intermediate condition is as the correct reason says, let us now determine what it says.* For in all the states of character we have mentioned, as well as in the others, there is a target that the person who has reason focuses on and so tightens or relaxes; and there is a definition of the means, which we say are between 25 excess and deficiency because they accord with the correct reason.

§2 To say this is admittedly true, but it is not at all clear.* For in other pursuits directed by a science, it is equally true that we must labor and be idle neither too much nor too little, but the intermediate amount prescribed by correct reason. But knowing only this, we would be none the wiser about, for instance, the medicines to be applied to the body, if we were told we must apply the ones that medical science prescribes and in the way that the medical scientist applies them.

§3 That is why our account of the states of the soul, in the same way, must not only be true as far as it has gone, but we must also determine what the correct reason is, that is to say,* what its definition is.

1139a §4 After we divided the virtues of the soul, we said that some are virtues of character and some of thought. And so, having finished our discussion of the virtues of character, let us now discuss the others as follows, after speaking first about the soul.

5 §5 Previously, then, we said there are two parts of the soul, one that has reason, and one nonrational.* Now we should divide in the same way the part that has reason. Let us assume there are two parts that have reason: with one we study beings whose principles do not admit of being otherwise than they are, and with the other we study beings whose principles admit of being otherwise.* For when the beings are of different kinds, the parts of the soul naturally suited to each of them are also of different kinds, since the parts possess knowledge by being somehow similar and appropriate [to their objects].

15 §6 Let us call one of these the scientific part, and the other the rationally calculating part; for deliberating is the same as rationally calculating, and no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise. Hence the rationally calculating part is one part of the part of the soul that has reason.

§7 Hence we should find the best state* of the scientific part and the best state of the rationally calculating part; for this state is the virtue of each of them. Now a thing's virtue is relative to its own proper function, [and so we must consider the function of each part].*

2

[Thought, Desire, and Decision]

There are three [capacities] in the soul—sense perception, understanding, desire*—that control action and truth. §2 Of these three, sense perception is clearly not the principle of any action, since beasts have perception, but no share in action.* 1139a 20

As assertion and denial are to thought, so pursuit and avoidance are to desire. Now virtue of character is a state that decides; and decision is a deliberative desire. If, then, the decision is excellent, the reason must be true and the desire correct, so that what reason asserts is what desire pursues. This, then, is thought and truth concerned with action. §3 The thought concerned with study, not with action or production, has its good or bad state in being true or false; for truth is the function of whatever thinks. But the function of what thinks about action is truth agreeing with correct desire.* 25 30

§4 The principle of an action—the source of motion, not the goal—is decision;* the principle of decision is desire and goal-directed reason.* That is why decision requires understanding and thought, and also a state of character; for acting well* or badly requires both thought and character. 35

§5 Thought by itself moves nothing; what moves us is goal-directed thought concerned with action.* For this thought is also the principle of productive thought; for every producer in his production aims at some [further] goal,* and the unqualified goal is not the product, which is only the [qualified] goal of some [production], and aims at some [further] goal. [An unqualified goal is] what we achieve in action, since acting well is the goal, and desire is for the goal. That is why* decision is either understanding combined with desire or desire combined with thought; and this is the sort of principle that a human being is. 1139b 5

§6 We do not decide to do what is already past; no one decides, for instance, to have sacked Troy. For neither do we deliberate about what is past, but only about what will be and admits of being or not being; and what is past does not admit of not having happened. That is why Agathon is correct to say 'Of this alone even a god is deprived—to make what is all done to have never happened'.* 10

The function of each of the understanding parts, then, is truth. And so the virtues of each part will be the states that best direct it toward the truth.*

3

[Scientific Knowledge]

Then let us begin again, and discuss these states of the soul.* Let us say, then, that there are five states in which the soul grasps the truth in its 15

1139b affirmation or denials. These are craft, scientific knowledge, prudence, wisdom, and understanding; for belief and supposition admit of being false.

20 §2 What science is, is evident from the following, if we must speak exactly and not be guided by [mere] similarities.* For we all suppose that what we know scientifically does not even admit of being otherwise; and whenever what admits of being otherwise escapes observation, we do not notice whether it is or is not, [and hence we do not know about it]. Hence what is known scientifically is by necessity. Hence it is everlasting; for the things that are by unqualified necessity are all everlasting, and everlasting things are ingenerable and indestructible.

25 §3 Further, every science seems to be teachable, and what is scientifically knowable is learnable. But all teaching is from what is already known, as we also say in the *Analytics*;* for some teaching is through induction, some by deduction, [which both require previous knowledge]. Induction [leads to] the principle, i.e., the universal,* whereas deduction
30 proceeds from the universal. Hence deduction has principles from which it proceeds and which are not themselves [reached] by deduction. Hence they are [reached] by induction.

35 §4 Scientific knowledge, then, is a demonstrative state, and has all the other features that in the *Analytics** we add to the definition. For one has scientific knowledge whenever one has the appropriate sort of confidence, and knows the principles; for if one does not know them better than the conclusion, one will have scientific knowledge [only] coincidentally.

So much for a definition of scientific knowledge.

4

[Craft Knowledge]

1140a What admits of being otherwise includes what is produced and what is achieved in action.* §2 Production and action are different; about them we rely also on [our] popular discussions. And so the state involving reason and concerned with action is different from the state involving reason
5 and concerned with production. Nor is one included in the other;* for action is not production, and production is not action.

10 §3 Now building, for instance, is a craft, and is essentially a certain state involving reason concerned with production; there is no craft that is not a state involving reason concerned with production, and no such state that is not a craft. Hence a craft is the same as a state involving true reason concerned with production.

§4 Every craft is concerned with coming to be, and the exercise of the craft is the study* of how something that admits of being and not being comes to be, something whose principle is in the producer and not in the

product. For a craft is not concerned with things that are or come to be by necessity; nor with things that are by nature, since these have their principle in themselves.* 1140a 15

§5 Since production and action are different, craft must be concerned with production, not with action.

In a way craft and fortune are concerned with the same things, as Agathon says: 'Craft was fond of fortune, and fortune of craft.'* 20

§6 A craft, then, as we have said, is a state involving true reason concerned with production. Lack of craft is the contrary state involving false reason and concerned with production. Both are concerned with what admits of being otherwise.

5

[Prudence]

To grasp what prudence is, we should first study the sort of people we call prudent. It seems proper to a prudent person to be able to deliberate finely* about things that are good and beneficial for himself, not about some restricted area*—about what sorts of things promote health or strength, for instance—but about what sorts of things promote living well in general.* 25

30 §2 A sign of this is the fact that we call people prudent about some [restricted area] whenever they calculate well to promote some excellent end, in an area where there is no craft.* Hence where [living well] as a whole is concerned, the deliberative person will also be prudent.

35 §3 Now no one deliberates about things that cannot be otherwise or about things that cannot be achieved in his action. Hence, if science involves demonstration, but there is no demonstration of anything whose principles admit of being otherwise (since every such thing itself admits of being otherwise); and if we cannot deliberate about things that are by necessity; it follows that prudence is not science nor yet craft knowledge. It is not science, because what is achievable in action admits of being otherwise; and it is not craft knowledge, because action and production belong to different kinds. 1140b

5 §4 The remaining possibility, then, is that prudence is a state grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about things that are good or bad for a human being. For production has its end in something other than itself, but action does not, since its end is acting well itself.*

10 §5 That is why Pericles and such people are the ones whom we regard as prudent, because they are able to study what is good for themselves and for human beings; we think that household managers and politicians are such people.*

This is also how we come to give temperance (*sōphrosunē*) its name, because we think that it preserves prudence (*sōzousan tēn phronēsīn*).*

1140b §6 It preserves the [right] sort of supposition. For the sort of supposition
that is corrupted and perverted by the pleasant or painful is not every
15 sort—not, for instance, the supposition that the triangle does or does not
have two right angles—but suppositions about what is achievable in
action. For the principles of things achievable in action are their goal, but
if someone is corrupted because of pleasure or pain, no [appropriate]
principle can appear to him, and it cannot appear that this is the right
20 goal and cause of all his choice and action; for vice corrupts the princi-
ple.* And so prudence must be a state grasping the truth, involving reason,
and concerned with action about human goods.*

§7 Moreover, there is virtue [or vice in the use] of craft, but not [in the
use] of prudence. Further, in a craft, someone who makes errors voluntar-
ily is more choiceworthy; but with prudence, as with the virtues, the
25 reverse is true. Clearly, then, prudence is a virtue, not craft knowledge.*

§8 There are two parts of the soul that have reason. Prudence is a vir-
tue of one of them, of the part that has belief; for belief is concerned, as
prudence is, with what admits of being otherwise.

Moreover, it is not only a state involving reason. A sign of this is the
fact that such a state can be forgotten, but prudence cannot.*

6

[Understanding]

30 Scientific knowledge is supposition about universals, things that are by
necessity. Further, everything demonstrable and every science have prin-
ciples, since scientific knowledge involves reason. Hence there can be nei-
ther scientific knowledge nor craft knowledge nor prudence about the
35 principles of what is scientifically known. For what is scientifically
known is demonstrable, [but the principles are not]; and craft and pru-
1141a dence are about what admits of being otherwise. Nor is wisdom [exclu-
sively] about principles;* for it is proper to the wise person to have a
demonstration of some things.

§2 [The states of the soul] by which we always grasp the truth and
5 never make mistakes, about what can or cannot be otherwise, are scien-
tific knowledge, prudence, wisdom, and understanding. But none of the
first three—prudence, scientific knowledge, wisdom—is possible about
principles. The remaining possibility, then, is that we have understanding
about principles.*

7

[Wisdom versus Prudence]

10 We ascribe wisdom in crafts to the people who have the most exact exper-
tise in the crafts.* For instance, we call Pheidias a wise stoneworker and

Polycleitus a wise bronze worker; and by wisdom we signify precisely 1141a
virtue in a craft. §2 But we also think some people are wise in general,
not wise in some [restricted] area, or in some other [specific] way (as 15
Homer says in the *Margites*: 'The gods did not make him a digger or a
ploughman or wise in anything else').* Clearly, then, wisdom is the most
exact [form] of scientific knowledge.

§3 Hence the wise person must not only know what is derived from
the principles of a science, but also grasp the truth about the principles.
Therefore wisdom is understanding plus scientific knowledge; it is scien-
tific knowledge of the most honorable things that has received [under-
standing as] its coping stone.*

For it would be absurd for someone to think that political science or 20
prudence is the most excellent science;* for the best thing in the universe
is not a human being [and the most excellent science must be of the best
things].

§4 Moreover,* if what is good and healthy for human beings and for
fish is not the same, whereas what is white or straight is always the same,
everyone would also say that the content of wisdom is the same in every 25
case, but the content of prudence* is not. For the agent they would call
prudent is the one who studies well each question about his own [good],
and he is the one to whom they would entrust such questions.* That is
why prudence is also ascribed to some of the beasts, the ones that are evi-
dently capable of forethought about their own life.*

It is also evident that wisdom is not the same as political science.* For if 30
people are to say that science about what is beneficial to themselves [as
human beings] counts as wisdom, there will be many types of wisdom
[corresponding to the different species of animals]. For if there is no one
medical science about all beings, there is no one science about the good of
all animals, but a different science about each specific good. [Hence there
will be many types of wisdom, contrary to our assumption that it has
always the same content.] It does not matter if human beings are the best
among the animals; for there are other beings of a far more divine nature 1141b
than human beings—most evidently, for instance, the beings composing
the universe.

§5 What we have said makes it clear that wisdom is both scientific
knowledge and understanding about the things that are by nature most
honorable. That is why people say that Anaxagoras or Thales* or that sort 5
of person is wise, but not prudent, whenever they see that he is ignorant
of what benefits himself. And so they say that what he knows is extraor-
dinary, amazing, difficult, and divine, but useless, because it is not human
goods that he looks for.

§6 Prudence, by contrast, is about human concerns, about things open 10
to deliberation. For we say that deliberating well is the function of the
prudent person more than anyone else; but no one deliberates about

1141b things that cannot be otherwise, or about things lacking any goal that is a good achievable in action.* The unqualifiedly good deliberator is the one whose aim accords with rational calculation in pursuit of the best good for a human being that is achievable in action.*

15 §7 Nor is prudence about universals only. It must also acquire knowledge of particulars, since it is concerned with action and action is about particulars.* That is why in other areas also some people who lack knowledge but have experience are better in action than others who have knowledge. For someone who knows that light meats are digestible and
20 [hence] healthy,* but not which sorts of meats are light, will not produce health; the one who knows that bird meats are light and healthy* will be better at producing health. And since prudence is concerned with action, it must possess both [the universal and the particular knowledge] or the [particular] more [than the universal]. Here too, however, [as in medicine] there is a ruling [science].*

8

[Types of Prudence]

Political science and prudence are the same state, but their being is not the same.*

25 §2 One type of prudence about the city is the ruling part; this is legislative science. The type concerned with particulars [often] monopolizes the name 'political science' that [properly] applies to both types in common.* This type is concerned with action and deliberation, since [it is concerned with decrees and] the decree* is to be acted on as the last thing [reached in deliberation]. Hence these people are the only ones who are said to be politically active; for these are the only ones who put [political science] into practice, as hand-craftsmen put [a craft] into practice.

30 §3 Similarly, prudence concerned with the individual himself seems most of all to be counted as prudence; and this [type of prudence often] monopolizes the name 'prudence' that [properly] applies [to all types] in common. Of the other types, one is household science, another legislative, another political, one type of which is deliberative and another judicial.

1142a §4 In fact knowledge of what is [good] for oneself is one species [of prudence].* But there is much difference [in opinions] about it.* The one who knows about himself, and spends his time on his own concerns, seems to be prudent, while politicians seem to be too active.* Hence Euripides says, 'Surely I cannot be prudent, since I could have been inactive, numbered among all the many in the army, and have had an equal share. . . . For those who go too far and are too active. . . .'* For people seek what is good for themselves, and suppose that this [inactivity] is the right action [to achieve their good]. Hence this belief has led to the view that

1142a these are the prudent people.* Presumably, however, one's own welfare requires household management and a political system. Further, [another reason for the difference of opinion is that] it is unclear, and should be examined, how one must manage one's own affairs. 10

§5 A sign of what has been said [about the unclarity of what prudence requires] is the fact that whereas young people become accomplished in geometry and mathematics, and wise within these limits, prudent young people do not seem to be found.* The reason is that prudence is concerned with particulars as well as universals, and particulars become known from experience, but a young person lacks experience, since some
15 length of time is needed to produce it.

§6 Indeed [to understand the difficulty and importance of experience] we might consider why a child can become accomplished in mathematics, but not in wisdom or natural science. Surely it is because mathematical objects are reached through abstraction,* whereas in these other cases the principles* are reached from experience. Young people, then, [lacking experience], have no real conviction in these other sciences, but only say
20 the words,* whereas the nature of mathematical objects is clear to them.

§7 Further, [prudence is difficult because it is deliberative and] deliberation may be in error about either the universal or the particular.* For [we may wrongly suppose] either that all sorts of heavy water are bad or that this water is heavy.

§8 It is apparent that prudence is not scientific knowledge; for, as we said, it concerns the last thing [i.e., the particular], since this is what is achievable in action.* §9 Hence it is opposite to understanding.* For understanding is about the [first] terms,* [those] that have no account of them; but prudence is about the last thing, an object of perception, not of scientific knowledge. This is not the perception of special objects,* but the sort by which we perceive that the last among mathematical objects is a triangle; for it will stop there too.* This is another species [of perception
30 than perception of special objects]; but it is still perception more than prudence is.*

9

[Good Deliberation]

Inquiry and deliberation are different, since deliberation is a type of inquiry. We must also grasp what good deliberation is,* and see whether it is some sort of scientific knowledge, or belief, or good guessing, or some other kind of thing.

§2 First of all, then, it is not scientific knowledge. For we do not
1142b inquire for what we already know; but good deliberation is a type of deliberation, and a deliberator inquires and rationally calculates.

1142b Moreover, it is not good guessing either. For good guessing involves no reasoning, and is done quickly; but we deliberate a long time, and it is said that we must act quickly on the result of our deliberation, but deliberate slowly.* §3 Further, quick thinking is different from good deliberation, and quick thinking is a kind of good guessing.

Nor is good deliberation just any sort of belief. Rather, since the bad deliberator is in error, and the good deliberator deliberates correctly, good deliberation is clearly some sort of correctness.

10 But it is not correctness in scientific knowledge or in belief. For there is no correctness in scientific knowledge,* since there is no error in it either; and correctness in belief consists in truth, [but correctness in deliberation does not].* Further, everything about which one has belief is already determined, [but what is deliberated about is not yet determined].

15 However, good deliberation requires reason; hence the remaining possibility is that it belongs to thought. For thought is not yet assertion; [and this is why it is not belief]. For belief is not inquiry, but already an assertion; but in deliberating, either well or badly, we inquire for something and rationally calculate about it.

20 §4 But good deliberation is a certain sort of correctness in deliberation. That is why we must first inquire what [this correctness] is and what it is [correctness] about.* Since there are several types of correctness, clearly good deliberation will not be every type.* For the incontinent or base person will use rational calculation to reach what he proposes to see, and so will have deliberated correctly [if that is all it takes], but will have got himself a great evil.* Having deliberated well seems, on the contrary, to be some sort of good; for the sort of correctness in deliberation that makes it good deliberation is the sort that reaches a good.*

25 §5 However, we can reach a good by a false inference, as well [as by correct deliberation], so that we reach the right thing to do, but by the wrong steps, when the middle term is false.* Hence this type of deliberation, leading us by the wrong steps to the right thing to do, is not enough for good deliberation either.

§6 Further, one person may deliberate a long time before reaching the right thing to do, while another reaches it quickly. Nor, then, is the first condition enough for good deliberation; good deliberation is correctness that accords with what is beneficial, about the right thing, in the right way, and at the right time.

30 §7 Further, our deliberation may be either good without qualification or good only to the extent that it promotes some [limited] end.* Hence unqualifiedly good deliberation is the sort that correctly promotes the unqualified end [i.e., the highest good], while the [limited] sort is the sort that correctly promotes some [limited] end.* If, then, having deliberated well is proper to a prudent person, good deliberation will be the type of correctness that accords with what is expedient for promoting the end about which prudence is true supposition.*

10

[Comprehension]

Comprehension, i.e. good comprehension, makes people, as we say, comprehend and comprehend well.* It is not the same as scientific knowledge in general. Nor is it the same as belief, since, if it were, everyone would have comprehension. Nor is it any one of the specific sciences [with its own specific area], in the way that medicine is about what is healthy or geometry is about magnitudes. For comprehension is neither about what always is and is unchanging nor about just anything that comes to be. It is about what we might be puzzled about and might deliberate about. That is why it is about the same things as prudence, but not the same as prudence.

10 §2 For prudence is prescriptive, since its end is what action we must or must not do, whereas comprehension only judges.* (For comprehension and good comprehension are the same; and so are people with comprehension and with good comprehension.) Comprehension is neither having prudence nor acquiring it.

15 §3 Rather, it is similar to the way learning is called comprehending when someone applies scientific knowledge. In the same way comprehension consists in the application of belief to judge someone else's remarks on a question that concerns prudence, and moreover it must judge them finely since judging well is the same as judging finely. §4 That is how the name 'comprehension' was attached to the comprehension that makes people have good comprehension. It is derived from the comprehension found in learning; for we often call learning comprehending.*

11

[Practical] Thought and Particulars]

20 The [state] called consideration makes people, as we say, considerate and makes them have consideration; it is the correct judgment of the decent person.* A sign of this is our saying that the decent person more than others is considerate, and that it is decent to be considerate about some things. Considerateness is the correct consideration that judges what is decent; and correct consideration judges what is true.

25 §2 It is reasonable that all these states tend in the same direction.* For we ascribe consideration, comprehension, prudence, and understanding to the same people, and say that these have consideration, and thereby understanding, and that they are prudent and comprehending. For all these capacities are about the last things, i.e., particulars.* Moreover, someone has comprehension and good consideration, or has considerateness, in being able to judge about the matters that concern the prudent

1143a person; for the decent is the common concern of all good people in relations with other people.

§3 [These states are all concerned with particulars because] all the things achievable in action are particular and last things. For the prudent person also must recognize [things achievable in action], while comprehension and consideration are concerned with things achievable in action, and these are last things.

1143b §4 Understanding is also concerned with the last things, and in both directions.* For there is understanding, not a rational account, both about the first terms and about the last.* In demonstrations understanding is about the unchanging terms that are first. In [premises] about action understanding is about the last term, the one that admits of being otherwise, and [hence] about the minor premise.* For these last terms are beginnings of the [end] to be aimed at, since universals are reached from particulars.*

9, 10 §5 We must, therefore, have perception of these particulars, and this perception is understanding.* §6 That is why understanding is both beginning and end; for demonstrations [begin] from these things and are about them.*

6 §5 That is why these states actually seem to grow naturally,* so that, whereas no one seems to have natural wisdom,* people seem to have natural consideration, comprehension, and judgment. §6 A sign [of their apparent natural character] is our thinking that they also correspond to someone's age, and the fact that understanding and consideration belong to a certain age, as though nature were the cause. And so we must attend to the undemonstrated remarks and beliefs of experienced and older people or of prudent people, no less than to demonstrations. For these people see correctly because experience has given them their eye.

15 §7 We have said, then, what prudence and wisdom are; what each is about; and that each is the virtue of a different part of the soul.*

12

[Puzzles about Prudence and Wisdom]

20 One might, however, go through some puzzles about what use they are.* For wisdom is not concerned with any sort of coming into being, and hence will not study any source of human happiness. Admittedly, prudence will study this; but what do we need it for? For knowledge of what is healthy or fit (i.e., of what results from the state of health, not of what produces it) makes us no readier to act appropriately if we are already healthy; for having the science of medicine or gymnastics makes us no readier to act appropriately. Similarly, prudence is the science of what is just and what is fine, and what is good for a human being; but this is how the good man acts; and if we are already good, knowledge of them makes

us no readier to act appropriately, since virtues are states [activated in actions].*

28 §2 If we concede that prudence is not useful for this, should we say it is useful for becoming good? In that case it will be no use to those who are already excellent.* Nor, however, will it be any use to those who are not. For it will not matter to them* whether they have it themselves or take the advice of others who have it. The advice of others will be quite adequate for us, just as it is with health: we wish to be healthy, but still do not learn medical science.

35 §3 Besides, it would seem absurd for prudence, inferior as it is to wisdom, to control it [as a superior. But this will be the result], since the science that produces also rules and prescribes about its product.*

We must discuss these questions; for so far we have only raised the puzzles about them.

1144a §4 First of all, let us state that both prudence and wisdom must be choiceworthy in themselves, even if neither produces anything at all; for each is the virtue of one of the two [rational] parts [of the soul].*

5 §5 Secondly, they do produce something. Wisdom produces happiness, not in the way that medical science produces health, but in the way that health produces [health].* For since wisdom is a part of virtue as a whole, it makes us happy because it is a state that we possess and activate.

10 §6 Further, we fulfill our function* insofar as we have prudence and virtue of character; for virtue makes the goal correct, and prudence makes the things promoting the goal [correct].* The fourth part of the soul, the nutritive part, has no such virtue [related to our function], since no action is up to it to do or not to do.

15 §7 To answer the claim that prudence will make us no better at achieving fine and just actions,* we must begin from a little further back [in our discussion]. We begin here: we say that some people who do just actions are not yet thereby just, if, for instance, they do the actions prescribed by the laws either unwillingly or because of ignorance or because of some other end, not because of the actions themselves, even though they do the right actions, those that the excellent person ought to do.* Equally, however, it would seem to be possible for someone to do each type of action in the state that makes him a good person, that is to say, because of decision and for the sake of the actions themselves.*

20 §8 Now virtue makes the decision correct,* but the actions that are naturally to be done to fulfill the decision are the concern not of virtue, but of another capacity.* We must grasp them more perspicuously before continuing our discussion.

25 §9 There is a capacity, called cleverness, which is such as to be able to do the actions that tend to promote whatever goal is assumed* and to attain them.* If, then, the goal is fine, cleverness is praiseworthy, and if the goal is base, cleverness is unscrupulousness. That is why both prudent and unscrupulous people are called clever.*

1144a §10 Prudence is not cleverness,* though it requires this capacity. [Prudence,] this eye of the soul, requires virtue in order to reach its fully developed state,* as we have said and as is clear. For inferences about actions have a principle, 'Since the end and the best good is this sort of thing' (whatever it actually is—let it be any old thing for the sake of argument).* And this [best good] is apparent only to the good person; for vice perverts us and produces false views about the principles of actions. Evidently, then, we cannot be prudent without being good.

13

[Prudence and Virtue of Character]

We must, then, also examine virtue over again.* For virtue is similar [in this way] to prudence; as prudence is related to cleverness, not the same but similar, so natural virtue is related to full virtue.* For each of us seems to possess his type of character to some extent by nature; for in fact we are just, brave, prone to temperance, or have another feature, immediately from birth. But still we look for some further condition to be full goodness, and we expect to possess these features in another way. For these natural states belong to children and to beasts as well [as to adults], but without understanding they are evidently harmful.* At any rate, this much would seem to be clear: Just as a heavy body moving around unable to see suffers a heavy fall because it has no sight, so it is with virtue. [A naturally well-endowed person without understanding will harm himself.]

§2 But if someone acquires understanding, he improves in his actions; and the state he now has, though still similar [to the natural one], will be fully virtue. And so, just as there are two sorts of conditions, cleverness and prudence, in the part of the soul that has belief, so also there are two in the part that has character, natural virtue and full virtue. And of these full virtue cannot be acquired without prudence.*

§3 That is why* some say that all the virtues are [instances of] prudence, and why the inquiries Socrates used to undertake* were in one way correct, and in another way in error. For insofar as he thought all the virtues are [instances of] prudence,* he was in error; but insofar as he thought they all require prudence, what he used to say was right.

§4 Here is a sign of this: Whenever people now define virtue, they all say what state it is and what it is related to, and then add that it is the state in accord with the correct reason.* Now the correct reason is the reason in accord with prudence; it would seem, then, that they all in a way intuitively believe that the state in accord with prudence is virtue.

§5 But we must make a slight change. For it is not merely the state in accord with the correct reason, but the state involving the correct reason, that is virtue.* And it is prudence that is the correct reason in this area. Socrates, then, used to think the virtues are [instances of] reason because

he thought they are all [instances of] knowledge, whereas we think they involve reason. 1144b30

§6 What we have said, then, makes it clear that we cannot be fully good without prudence, or prudent without virtue of character. And in this way we can also solve the dialectical argument that someone might use to show that the virtues are separated from one another.* For, [it is argued], since the same person is not naturally best suited for all the virtues, someone will already have one virtue before he gets another. This is indeed possible in the case of the natural virtues. It is not possible, however, in the case of the [full] virtues that someone must have to be called good without qualification; for one has all the virtues if and only if one has prudence, which is a single state.* 1145a

§7 And it is clear that, even if prudence were useless in action, we would need it because it is the virtue of this part of the soul,* and because the decision will not be correct without prudence or without virtue*—for [virtue] makes us achieve the end, whereas [prudence] makes us achieve the things that promote the end.* 5

§8 Moreover, prudence does not control wisdom or the better part of the soul, just as medical science does not control health.* For medical science does not use health, but only aims to bring health into being; hence it prescribes for the sake of health, but does not prescribe to health. Besides, [saying that prudence controls wisdom] would be like saying that political science rules the gods because it prescribes about everything in the city. 10

BOOK VII

[INCONTINENCE]

1

[Virtue, Vice, and Incontinence]

Let us now make a new start, and say that there are three conditions of character to be avoided—vice, incontinence, and bestiality. The contraries of two of these are clear; we call one virtue and the other continence. 15

The contrary to bestiality is most suitably called virtue superior to us, a heroic, indeed divine, sort of virtue. Thus Homer made Priam say that Hector was remarkably good; 'nor did he look as though he were the child of a mortal man, but of a god.*' §2 And so, if, as they say, human beings become gods because of exceedingly great virtue, this is clearly the sort of state that would be opposite to the bestial state. For indeed, just as a beast has neither virtue nor vice, so neither does a god, but the god's state is more honorable than virtue, and the beast's belongs to some kind different from vice.* 20 25

§3 Now it is rare that a divine man exists. (This is what the Spartans

§4 since that . . . bound to be like: On the subject matter of ethics, cf. 1094b12, 1098a28.

§6 That is why . . . makes it deficient: In his usual way Aristotle tries to remove the puzzles raised by common views of decency, and to show why the beliefs causing the puzzles are true up to a point (see ETHICS [7]), and how his account explains them (marked by 'That is why . . .'). If we confine justice too strictly to law-observance (cf. 1129b11), justice and decency appear to conflict, to the disadvantage of justice. Aristotle's own view of justice, however (1129b17), shows that it is what the law aims at, not necessarily what it achieves; hence justice and decency need not conflict.

§7 as the lead . . . the stone: Probably Aristotle refers to a flexible lead ruler that could be made to fit the shape of an irregular stone, and hence could be used to find a second stone to fit next to the first in a dry stone wall. For this purpose, having a rigid ruler would be useless for building. The point is that the rule or standard should be adaptable to fit the specific circumstances.

(c) §8. Definition of decency

11

11. §1–6. Puzzles about injustice to oneself

(a) §1–3. General injustice

§1 Is it possible . . . been said: Here we return to the questions discussed in ch. 9. we are legally . . . kill ourselves: In a6 read *ouk ea(i)* ('does not allow') (OCT: *ou keleuei*, 'does not command'). In a7 delete *ha de mē keleuei, apagoreuei* (retained by OCT; 'and what it does not command, it forbids').

§3 That is why . . . does injustice to the city: The specific form of 'dishonor' (*atimía*) that Aristotle has in mind is the loss of the status of a free citizen (see Aeschines, in *Ctesiphontem* 244), and hence the withdrawal of civil rights.

(b) §4–6. Special injustice

11. §7–8. Is it worse to do injustice or to suffer it?

§7 It is also evident . . . intermediate amount are bad]: The account of doing and suffering injustice reflects Aristotle's application of the doctrine of the mean. Cf. 1133b33.

But doing injustice . . . state of] injustice): Aristotle reverts to the distinction drawn in ch. 8.

11. §9. Can there be justice and injustice within a single person?

§9 For in these discussions . . . for ruler and ruled: Cf. 1166b19; Plato, *Rep.* 442d–444e. In b11, 'against one's own desires', read *heautou* (OCT: *heautōn*; 'their own desires').

BOOK VI

1

1. §1–7. A full account of virtue of character requires an account of the virtues of thought.

(a) §1–3. To explain the definition of virtue as a mean involving the correct reason, we must give an account of the correct reason.

§1 Since we have . . . determine what it says: The general formula in the account of the virtues needs to be made more precise; cf. 1103b21, *EE* 1220a13–29, 1222b5–9, 1249a22–b7. In 1107a1 Aristotle has already suggested that some reference to PRUDENCE will be needed to explain what the correct reason (see REASON [2]) is and what it aims at. Here the search for an account of the correct reason leads naturally into a discussion of the virtues of thought (1103a3), which includes prudence. This discussion is begun in 1138b35.

§2 true, but it is not at all clear: This formula is characteristic of the *EE*; see 1216b32, 1220a16.

§3 that is to say: Lit., 'and'.

(b) §4–7. An account of the correct reason requires an account of the virtues of the rational parts of the soul.

§5 Previously, . . . one nonrational: Aristotle returns to the division of the soul that he introduced in i 7 and i 13.

Now we should . . . being otherwise: Aristotle distinguishes the part of the soul concerned with SCIENCE from the part concerned with nonscientific rational calculation about non-NECESSARY states of affairs. In fact not all of these states of affairs are matters of rational calculation and deliberation, as 1112a26–b9 makes clear.

In a8 read *ta hōn endechontai* (OCT: *ta endechomena*; 'beings that admit of being otherwise').

§7 the best state: This is how the *EE* introduces the discussion of virtue; see 1218b38.

Now a thing's virtue . . . function of each part]: Aristotle still keeps the argument of i 7 (or *EE* ii 1, the corresponding passage) in mind, and returns to the connection between virtue and FUNCTION, as he did in the account of virtue of character (1106a15). The supplement tries to make it clear that this sentence introduces the argument of ch. 2 (and hence it is a bit misleading to mark a chapter break here).

2

2. §1–6. Virtue of character requires correct decision, and therefore requires both correct thought and correct desire.

(a) §1–3. The role of thought in action

§1 sense perception, understanding, desire: In this chapter Aristotle seems not to distinguish UNDERSTANDING (*nous*) from THOUGHT (*dianoia*) and REASON (*logos*). Contrast 6. §1–2, 11. §5.

§2 Of these . . . no share in action: Here and in the rest of the chapter, 'action' is used in a restricted sense, confined to rational action on a DECISION. See ACTION (2). This narrow use of 'action' is typical of the *EE*.

§3 for truth . . . correct desire: Aristotle explains why practical thought must be concerned with truth.

(b) §4–5. The relation of thought and desire in a correct decision

§4 The principle . . . decision: The inquiry into correct reason leads into a discussion of the right decision. We need virtue of thought to find the true reasoning, and we need the right sort of character if we are to follow true reasoning in our actions. Aristotle does not say that a virtue of character is separable from true reasoning. His point is that the character must agree with true reasoning if we are to have a genuine virtue of character. The rest of Book VI looks for the true reasoning that is needed.

In 'the source of motion, not the goal' (lit., 'that from which the motion [is] but not that for the sake of which (*hou heneka*) [the motion is]'), Aristotle refers to the efficient and final CAUSES. 'Goal' translates both *telos* and *hou heneka*.

the principle of decision . . . goal-directed reason: Aristotle does not make it clear whether (a) desire is prior to all reasoning, and goal-directed reasoning is subordinate to this desire, or (b) goal-directed reasoning may itself produce the relevant desire. See note to §5. This issue is complicated by the fact that the DESIRE required for decision is not nonrational desire, but rational wish (*boulēsis*) aiming at the good (cf. iii 3.§19 and note). 'Goal-directed reason' might refer to the reasoning on the basis of which we come to believe that x is good for its own sake and hence form a wish for x.

acting well: Or 'doing well' (i.e., faring well). The Greek *eupraxia* (see ACTION) is cognate with *eu prattein* ('do well'; cf. i 4.§2).

§5 Thought by itself . . . concerned with action: Thought moves us to action only when it is for the sake of some end. Aristotle might mean: (a) Thought moves us when it is directed toward some end that we already desire. (b) Thought moves us when it is directed toward some end that we recognize as worthy of desire. If he intends (a), he implies that thought moves us only if we already desire an end. If he intends (b), he allows thought to move us even in the absence of a prior desire. See note to §4.

Whichever interpretation is right, Aristotle does not say that thought moves us to action only if it depends on a desire that is independent of thought; for wish is not necessarily independent of thought. Hence he does not commit himself to a Humean view of the relation between reason and desire (see Hume, *Treatise* ii 3.3).

In speaking of 'thought concerned with action' Aristotle uses '*praxis*' in its narrowest sense, referring to action done for its own sake. See ACTION (3).

For this thought . . . [further] goal: Aristotle anticipates (as he did in i 1) the division between PRODUCTION and ACTION, which he explains in vi 4–5. Production aims at some product that is itself subordinate to some end pursued for its own sake, which is the end of action.

and desire is for the goal. That is why . . . : A different punctuation: 'Now desire is for the goal. That is why . . .'

(c) §6. The virtues of thought that are relevant to correct decision

§6 That is why Agathon . . . never happened': Agathon (TGF fr. 5) was an Athenian tragic poet (end of fifth century B.C.). He is a character in Plato's *Symposium*.

The function . . . toward the truth: Since practical thought is concerned with action and decision, it must be concerned with deliberation, and hence must belong to the rationally calculating part. Aristotle returns to the division into two rational parts at 1139a6–16.

3

3.§1. *The virtues of thought*

§1 Then let us . . . soul: This section goes better with ch. 2. It introduces the discussion of the particular virtues of thought. In 'begin again' Aristotle alludes to the discussion of the particular virtues of character, and promises to do the same for the virtues of thought.

3.§2–4. *Scientific knowledge*

(a) §2. It is about necessary facts.

§2 What science is, . . . similarities: Aristotle indicates that he is speaking in the strictest sense, so that practical 'sciences' do not count. See SCIENCE (2).

(b) §3. Its principles cannot be scientifically known.

§3 But all teaching . . . Analytics: See APO i 1. In 'already known', *progignōskomenōn*, the verb represented by 'know', *gignōskein*, has a wider scope than *epistasthai*, the verb corresponding to *epistēmē*, scientific knowledge. We can *gignōskein* (i.e., grasp, be acquainted with) something without scientific knowledge of it.

Induction [leads to] the principle, i.e., the universal: In b28 read *tēs archēs* (OCT: *he archē*; 'is the beginning'). Aristotle may be alluding to the literal sense of 'INDUCTION', i.e., 'leading on'.

(c) §4. It requires demonstration from indemonstrable principles.

§4 Analytics: See APO i 3.

4

4.§1–6. *Craft*

(a) §1–2. The difference between production and action

§1 What admits . . . action: Aristotle begins to draw the important distinction between ACTION and PRODUCTION by describing production and the CRAFT that is concerned with it. For the distinction see MM 1197a3; Plato, Ch. 163b. Much of Aristotle's discussion here is an implicit reply to SOCRATES' identification of virtue with craft knowledge. See 1140b21–5.

§2 Nor is one included in the other: In a5 read *kai oude* (OCT: *diho oude*; 'that is why one is not included . . .').

(b) §3–6. Craft is concerned with production.

§4 and the exercise of the craft is the study: In a11 read *technazein theōrein* (OCT: *technazein kai theōrein*).

nor with things . . . in themselves: On natural things, see CRAFT, NATURE.

§5 as Agathon . . . of craft': Agathon, TGF fr. 6.

5

5.§1–4. *Prudence*

(a) §1–2. It requires deliberation about living well.

§1 deliberate finely: 'Finely' (*kalōs*) is often used more or less equivalently to 'well'. In its narrower sense, however, it is the characteristic aim of the virtues of

character (see FINE), and Aristotle may intend this narrower sense here, as in the account of deliberation at 1112b17.

some restricted area: Or 'partial' (*kata meros*).

what sorts of things promote living well in general: For 'promote' (*pros*), see note to iii 2.§9, DECISION (2). 'Living well' is equivalent to 'happiness'; see 1095a19. On the general scope of prudence, see 1094b6 (for the connection with POLITICAL SCIENCE see 1141b23), 1160a21; Plato, *Pr.* 318e. The prudent person does not simply find means to ends that are taken for granted. He begins with the very indefinite conception of the end as 'living well', and his deliberation shows him the FINE actions and states that living well consists in.

§2 A sign . . . no craft: Cf. 1112a34; *Rhet.* 1357a1. The common use of 'prudent' for deliberation outside the area of a craft is justified; for since prudence is concerned with living well in general, it must be concerned with ACTION (3), not with production; hence it cannot be a craft.

(b) §3. It is neither scientific knowledge nor craft.

(c) §4–5. It is concerned with action, not production.

§4 For production . . . acting well itself: This sentence explains why prudence is concerned with ACTION (in the narrow sense) and not with production. If it is concerned with living well in general, it must also be concerned with the unqualified end, which is action, the end of production (1139b1–4). Hence it is concerned with acting well (*eupraxia*; see note on 2.§4 above).

What does Aristotle mean by distinguishing action from production? He will face serious difficulties if he does not allow the same event to be both an action (insofar as it is done for its own sake) and a production (insofar as it is done for the sake of some end external to it). Many events that are virtuous actions, and as such decided on for themselves, are also productions; consider, for instance, a magnificent person's effort to have a suitable warship equipped. Similar questions arise about the relation between MOVEMENTS and ACTIVITIES. Cf. note to x 7.§7.

5.§5–8. *Defense of the account of prudence*

(a) §5. It fits the character of people recognized as prudent.

§5 That is why Pericles . . . such people: Aristotle appeals to APPEARANCES (see ETHICS [7]) to confirm his account. The account in turn vindicates the appearances, showing that they are reasonable if they rest on something like Aristotle's conception of prudence. Aristotle is not committed to endorsing all the appearances (he rejects some appearances about prudence at 1141b28). Here he appeals to recognized examples of prudent people. Pericles' prudent judgment on political and strategic questions is often emphasized by Thucydides (see esp. i 139.4; ii 65; perhaps ii 65.8 on Pericles' incorruptibility explains Aristotle's claim that such people know what is good for themselves).

(b) §5–6. It fits the recognized connection between prudence and temperance.

This is also . . . phronēsin: Aristotle's fanciful etymology (cf. Plato, *Cra.* 411e) indicates the special connection of prudence—as opposed to some other virtues of thought—to character. The special connection results from the fact that prudence is about action, and hence about actions to be chosen for their own sakes. Prudence requires knowledge of noninstrumental goods; but any conviction about

noninstrumental goods must compete with conceptions of good that we form from our uneducated desire for pleasure; cf. 1113a33. In a badly educated person, the pleasure-based conceptions of good prevent the formation of the convictions required for prudence.

Here Aristotle suggests that repeated mistaken indulgence in the wrong pleasures will result in our losing our belief in their wrongness; cf. 1144a31. Repeated INCONTINENCE degenerates into intemperance; cf. 1114a15.

§6 For the principles . . . their goal . . . corrupts the principle: Aristotle begins with 'principles' in the plural, but he seems to have in mind just one principle, which is the goal, i.e., the ultimate end. He seems to be referring to an agent's conception of the final good, i.e., of happiness. Cf. vi 12.§10; vii 8.§5.

And so prudence . . . human goods: The argument relies on the common belief that temperance preserves prudence. Since what temperance preserves is true supposition about action, and especially about noninstrumental goods achievable in action, this is the sort of supposition that prudence must be.

(c) §7–8. It fits the common belief that prudence cannot be misused or forgotten.

§7 Moreover, there is virtue . . . not craft knowledge: Aristotle rejects the attempt to identify prudence with a craft. He attributes the position he rejects to Socrates in Plato's early dialogues. See 1137a19; *MM* 1197a18; *Rhet.* 1355b2; *Met.* 1025a6; Plato, *HMi.* 375d–376c, *Rep.* 333e. The same point of disagreement with Socrates is expressed in Aristotle's distinction between CAPACITIES and STATES.

§8 A sign . . . prudence cannot: On forgetting, see 1100b11. Since prudence is about human goods, we do not find ourselves with no occasion to use it, so that we might come to forget it. Aristotle probably also refers to the close connection of prudence with character and habit, and hence with the virtuous person's immediate response to situations; I do not have to remember that I ought to be angry about injustice.

6

6.§1–2. *Understanding*

(a) §1. There must be a virtue of thought concerned with principles.

§1 Nor is wisdom [exclusively] about principles: The supplement seems to be required by 7.§3 (see note), which implies that wisdom includes understanding.

(b) §2. This virtue must be understanding.

§2 The remaining . . . understanding about principles: Here 'UNDERSTANDING' has its strictest use (3a). When SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE is also spoken of in the strictest way, so that it requires demonstration, understanding a truth excludes having scientific knowledge of it, since no further account or REASON (1140b33) can be given of the PRINCIPLES of which we have understanding. See also 1142a25, 1143a35.

7

7.§1–5. *Wisdom*

(a) §1–3. It embraces scientific knowledge and understanding.

§1 We ascribe wisdom . . . exact expertise in the crafts: Here EXACTNESS implies that a piece of work is complete and finished in detail.

§2 (as Homer . . . anything else'): Aristotle, like other ancient readers, ascribes the comic epic *Margites* to Homer (here he quotes fr. 2)

§3 Therefore wisdom . . . coping stone: Here Aristotle implies that wisdom includes understanding (cf. note on 6.§1). He defends his narrow use of 'wisdom', which confines it to scientific knowledge and understanding, and thereby to necessary truths. These are also the subject matter of theoretical STUDY. The common use of 'wisdom' applies it to many more areas. But common sense also agrees that wisdom requires exact knowledge; since Aristotle thinks exact knowledge is confined to scientific knowledge and understanding, he claims that common sense implicitly supports his restricted use of 'wisdom'.

(b) §3–5. In contrast to prudence, wisdom is concerned with the highest realities.

For it would . . . most excellent science: 'Science' is supplied from here to the end of 8.§3 (the Greek has only feminine adjectives without nouns). (But in §5 below 'scientific knowledge' translates *epistēmē*.) Though it is hard to avoid speaking, as Aristotle himself speaks, of political science and MEDICAL science, these disciplines do not meet Aristotle's strictest criteria for a SCIENCE.

§4 Moreover: In a22 read *ei d'* (OCT: *ei dē*; 'If, then . . .').

the content of wisdom . . . the content of prudence: Lit., 'the wise', 'the prudent' (and 'what is white', lit., 'the white').

For . . . would call . . . would entrust such questions: In a26 read *phaien an* and *epitrepseian an* (OCT: *phēsin . . . epitrepsei*; 'one says . . . will entrust').

That is why . . . their own life: On animal prudence, cf. *Met.* 980b21; *GA* 753a7–17.

It is also . . . political science: Unlike Plato, Aristotle sharply distinguishes the subject matter of wisdom and of prudence. Wisdom not only has no immediate practical end; it does not even study the same things, because the things studied by prudence are not necessary states of affairs. The objects of demonstrative science are the most honorable (or 'valuable', *timion*). They deserve most HONOR because (a) they are the necessary and unchanging principles of the universe, and necessity and unchangingness are the marks of divine realities (see GOD [6]); and (b) they are thoroughly intelligible to reason because the truths about them are necessary and exceptionless, not exposing reason to ignorance or mistake (cf. 1139b21 on the non-necessary). Hence demonstrative scientific knowledge of necessary truths is the fullest expression of a human being's capacity for rational thought, hence the best ACTIVITY, and hence the highest VIRTUE of thought; in demonstration rational inference by itself can reach justified true conclusions starting from necessary premises, with no exceptions or qualifications.

§5 Anaxagoras or Thales: See 1179a15; *EE* 1216a11; *Pol.* 1259a6; Plato, *Tht.* 174a.

7.§6–7. Prudence contrasted with wisdom

(a) §6. It is concerned with action.

§6 Prudence, by contrast, . . . achievable in action: From here to the end of ch. 8 divisions into chapters and sections are not clear, and the connection of thought is not entirely obvious. (This was also true in Book v, another book originally

belonging to the *EE*.) In this section Aristotle returns to the discussion of prudence, interrupted at the end of ch. 5; he has already said something about the differences between wisdom and prudence, and now he emphasizes the differences by expanding his description of prudence.

The unqualifiedly good deliberator . . . achievable in action: The topic of good deliberation is resumed in ch. 9.

(b) §7. Hence it must consider particulars.

§7 Nor is prudence . . . is about particulars: Aristotle introduces a new feature of prudence—its close connection with PARTICULARS. He describes this feature more fully in 8.§7–9 and 11.§2–6.

In this passage, 'particulars' seems to refer to relatively determinate types (e.g., 'bird meat' as opposed to 'light meat') rather than to particular instances (individuals, e.g., this piece of chicken), though no doubt Aristotle also means that the prudent person needs familiarity with particular instances too. Such information will be a source of useful specific descriptions; see note to 11.§4.

How is this concern with particulars related to the claim that prudence is a deliberative virtue? If particulars are determinate types, identification of particulars is part of good deliberation. If they are particular instances, they are not themselves discovered by deliberation, but perception of them is required for successful deliberation, so that good deliberation must include good perception; see iii 3.§16.

§7 For someone . . . [hence] healthy: The supplement makes it explicit that Aristotle is giving an example of someone who knows why light meat is healthy; this grasp of the CAUSE is characteristic of CRAFT and SCIENCE. By contrast, the one who knows only that chicken is light and healthy does not know why it is healthy, but can identify healthy meat.

bird meats are light and healthy: Retain *koupha kai* (OCT deletes).

Here too, however . . . [science]: Cf. 1180b11–28. Aristotle wants to correct a false impression that might be created by his previous remarks; he does not mean that general principles are unimportant for the prudent person. Prudence must include a ruling science (cf. 1094a27, 1152b2); and at once he proceeds to explain this.

8

8.§1–9. The range of prudence: universals and particulars

(a) §1–3. Different applications of prudence, to the individual and to the community

§1 their being is not the same: See note to v 1.§20.

§2 One type . . . both types in common: Aristotle does not explain how this discussion of types of prudence is connected with the preceding section. The connection, however, is fairly clear. Aristotle continues the thought of the last sentence of ch. 7, which counterbalanced his remarks about prudence and particulars by emphasizing the universal, comprehensive scope of prudence; this was the scope he claimed for POLITICAL SCIENCE in 1094a26 (cf. *EE* 1218b12). In this section, he rejects a common, but unduly restricted conception of prudence and political science which (a) confines prudence to concern for my own good and no one else's, and (b) confines political science to the political and legislative process. In

(a) we neglect the connection between the agent's good and other people's (1097b9) that makes ethics inseparable from political science. In (b) we neglect the principles that should guide political action.

In b26 read *hōs kath' hekasta* (OCT: *hōs ta kath' hekasta*).

1141b27 decree: DECREES are to be contrasted with laws, which belong to the legislative form of prudence.

(b) §4. Prudence must consider the individual's good with reference to a community.

§4 In fact knowledge . . . [of prudence]: Here as in §1, the connection with what precedes is inexplicit, but fairly clear. Once again Aristotle emphasizes the universal scope of prudence, and argues against the assumptions that underlie a common restrictive view.

In b34 delete *gnōseōs* ('one species of knowledge'; OCT retains).

But there is . . . about it: Or 'It is very different [from the other species]'

too active: Or 'busybodies' (*polupragmones*), a standard pejorative term for overinvolvement in politics (especially on the side disapproved of by the speaker). Cf. Plato, *Gorg.* 485e–486d. Aristotle neither endorses the ordinary political life (cf. 1095b22, 1179a1; *Pol.* vii 3–4) nor recommends withdrawal from political concerns.

Hence Euripides . . . too active: These lines are spoken by Odysseus in Euripides' lost play *Philoctetes* (TGF fr. 787–8), before he engaged in the morally dubious tricks involved in stealing Philoctetes' bow (if the plot resembled that of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* on this point). Odysseus regrets having abandoned the quiet life of an ordinary soldier.

1142a7 For people seek . . . prudent people: The common view about prudent people is understandable once we see it rests on a false belief about the human good. See ETHICS (7).

(c) §5–7. Since prudence must take account of these various considerations, it is difficult to acquire and depends on experience.

§5 A sign of what has been said . . . to be found: The reference of 'what has been said' is not clear. The supplement assumes that §5–6 are meant to explain and illustrate the previous sentence, 'Moreover . . .'. In explaining the different views about prudence, Aristotle mentions the difficulty of its subject matter. Part of the difficulty is the need for experience of particulars, which leads us back to the topic of 7. §7. Other possible views: (1) §5–6 are out of place, and the text should be rearranged so that they follow 7. §7. (2) They are a digression, interrupting the sequence of thought connecting §4 and §7.

§6 reached through abstraction: Abstraction (*aphairesis*, removal) involves the removal in thought, i.e., ignoring, of all the features of an object except those relevant to the particular question. For instance, the nongeometrical properties of physical objects are abstracted when we study them geometrically (i.e., insofar as they are geometrical objects). See *Phys.* 193b31–4; *Met.* 1077b17–1078a31. Since these disciplines attend to fewer properties of physical objects, they demand less detailed empirical familiarity with the objects, and especially demand less than is demanded by natural science.

principles: Or 'beginnings' (*archai*). The translation and supplement assume that Aristotle is referring to the theoretical principles of the science, not to the starting points in perception.

Young people, . . . only say the words: Cf. vii 3. §8.

§7 Further, [prudence . . . or the particular: Again the connection of thought is inexplicit. The supplement suggests that §7 continues the argument of §5–6, supporting the claim in §4 about the difficulty of the questions that concern prudence.

In this sentence the PARTICULARS Aristotle has in mind seem to be particular instances (e.g., this water here, as in the next sentence), rather than determinate types (cf. 1141b15).

(d) §8–9. Since prudence must consider particulars, it is different from scientific knowledge and understanding.

§8 It is apparent . . . achievable in action: The reference of 'as we said' is not clear. Since he has just remarked in §7 that prudence is concerned with particulars, he returns to the topic of 7. §7, which also leads him back to the discussion of UNDERSTANDING in ch. 6. The 'last thing' that concerns prudence is (as the supplement suggests) last as one proceeds from the more general to the more particular (cf. notes to 11. §2–3 below, 1146a9).

§9 Hence it is opposite to understanding: Or perhaps 'Hence it corresponds to understanding' (in that both are concerned with things that cannot be further defined—though for quite different reasons).

For understanding is about the [first] terms: Understanding grasps the primary terms in a demonstrative science. ('Terms', *horoi*, might refer to the things defined or to the DEFINITIONS.) These come first in a demonstrative science (not in a practical science) because they are the most universal. Prudence is concerned with terms that come last in a practical science (not in a demonstrative science) because they are the most particular. Aristotle does not deny his normal claim that prudence also grasps the first principles in practical affairs; for this claim, cf. 1140b18, 1142b33. He omits his normal claim about prudence grasping general principles, because he is focusing on a point of contrast between prudence and theoretical understanding.

This is not the perception of special objects: Having said that prudence is concerned with particulars, Aristotle argues that it must include some sort of PERCEPTION, since this is how we become aware of particulars. To specify the sort of perception he has in mind, he contrasts it with the ordinary perception of 'special objects' ('objects' supplied in this paragraph), i.e., color, sound, etc., which are 'proper sensibles', the objects proprietary to sight, hearing, etc. See DA ii 6.

but the sort . . . stop there too: We have to recognize, without being given any further reason, that the triangle is the last, i.e., the simplest, mathematical figure. In 'stop there too' Aristotle means that unless we can recognize something without being given a further argument, we will face an infinite regress. He made this point about deliberation and perception in iii 3. §16.

In a28 retain *en tois mathēmatikōis* (OCT deletes).

This is another . . . prudence is: Lit., 'But this is more (or 'rather') perception than prudence, but another species of it.' The translation and supplement assume that Aristotle is contrasting (a) the perception of a triangle as the last figure with both (b) perception of proper sensibles, and (c) the perception proper to prudence. He recognizes that (c) is less like (a) than (b) is. He may have in mind the fact that the perception proper to prudence requires grasp of a more elaborate range of theoretical judgments (those that figure in ethical deliberation) than we need for either (a) or (b).

In a30 read $\bar{\epsilon}$ [$\bar{h}\bar{\epsilon}$] *phronēsis* (OCT: no supplement, hence 'is more perception than [it is] prudence').

9

9.§1–8. *Good deliberation*

(a) §1–3. Since it involves inquiry, it must be distinguished from the intellectual states that result from completed inquiry.

§1 **We . . . good deliberation is:** Aristotle returns to the 'unqualifiedly good deliberator' who was introduced in the discussion of prudence in 7.§6. The whole of ch. 9 is an explanation of the description of the good deliberator at the end of 7.§6. It does not draw on any of the points made in 7.§7–8.§9; this is another sign of the rather loose organization of this part of Book vi. Cf. notes to 10.§1 and 11.§2.

§2 **For good guessing . . . deliberate slowly:** Deliberation, and hence DECISION, requires a process that takes time and precedes the action. Cf. 1117a20.

§3 **1142b10 no correctness in scientific knowledge:** There is no proper subset of scientific knowledge that is correct, since scientific knowledge must be correct.

1142b11 [but correctness . . . not]: For the supplement, see 1112a5.

(b) §4–7. Correctness in deliberation requires the correct conclusion and the correct process, aiming at the correct end.

§4 **what [this correctness] . . . [correctness] about:** In b16 delete $\bar{h}\bar{\epsilon}$ *boulē* (OCT retains; 'what deliberation is and what it is about').

Since there are . . . every type: Since there are different types of CORRECTNESS, the correctness of the prudent person's deliberation must be distinguished from the other types. Aristotle shows that good deliberation is not simply the discovery of the most effective means to ends that are taken for granted.

For the incontinent . . . great evil: This passage makes it clear that it is possible to act incontinently as a result of deliberation about the satisfaction of one's bad appetite. But though the incontinent acts on deliberation, he does not act on a DECISION; see iii 2.§4. He does not act on decision, because the DESIRE that originates the deliberation is a nonrational appetite rather than the rational wish that is required for decision (see iii 3.§19). By 'what he proposes to see', Aristotle probably means 'the result he looks for'.

In contrast to the incontinent person, the vicious person acts on a decision, and hence on a wish (vii 8.§3). Simply acting on some sort of decision and wish is not sufficient for good deliberation.

for the sort of correctness . . . reaches a good: A vicious person might deliberate correctly about ways to make money dishonestly. In one respect, then, he reaches a good, since wealth is a good. In another respect, however, he fails to reach a good, since wealth is not a good for him, given that he is vicious (see v 1.§9). This second respect is the one Aristotle has in mind here.

§5 **However, we can reach . . . term is false:** The good deliberator, and therefore the prudent and virtuous person, must reach the correct conclusion by the right method. If my deliberation tells me correctly that I ought not to steal now, but does not tell me this for the right reasons (if, for instance, it tells me I ought not to steal simply because I am likely to be found out, or because my victim is a friend of mine), it is not good deliberation.

§7 **Further, our . . . [limited] end:** Lit., 'Further, it is possible to have deliberated well both without qualification and toward some end'.

Hence unqualifiedly good . . . [limited] end: The 'unqualified end' is unqualified because it is the end for a human being, not just in relation to some limited aim or imperfection of a particular human being; cf. 1139b2.

§7 **what is expedient for promoting the end about which prudence is true supposition:** It is grammatically possible, though implausible, to take 'what is expedient . . . ' rather than 'the end' to be the antecedent of 'about which' (so that Aristotle does not affirm that prudence is correct supposition about the end). The more probable rendering requires Aristotle to affirm that prudence is correct supposition about the unqualified end. His saying this has been taken to conflict with his claim that prudence is concerned only with deliberation about what promotes the end (see 5.§1). We need not believe there is any conflict, however, if we bear in mind the broad scope of 'promoting the end' (*pros to telos*; see DECISION), and hence of deliberation. As a result of deliberating about what promotes happiness, we discover its constituents, and so we have a more precise conception of happiness. This precise conception is probably what Aristotle has in mind when he says that prudence is true supposition about the end. Deliberation both precedes this true conception of the end and follows it (since a fairly precise conception of happiness is the basis for further deliberation about what to do). This passage does not make it clear whether Aristotle is thinking about the deliberation that forms the correct supposition about the end, or about the deliberation that follows it; he may well have both in mind. Cf. 1144a8, 31.

10

10.§1–4. *Comprehension*

(a) §1. It has the same subject matter as prudence.

§1 **Comprehension, . . . comprehend well:** As 11.§2 shows, this chapter fits at the end of ch. 8, as part of the survey of intellectual virtues that leads up to the discussion of particulars in ch. 11. It does not fit so naturally at the end of ch. 9 (though deliberation is mentioned in 1143a6), which did not fit naturally at the end of ch. 8 (see note on 9.§1).

(b) §2–4. In contrast to prudence, it is not prescriptive.

§2 **For prudence is prescriptive . . . judges:** Cf. EE 1220a9, b6. Comprehension says, 'If you apologize to him, he will be less resentful'. Prudence says, 'Since you must remove his resentment, you must apologize to him'. Aristotle does not mean that prudence produces imperatives rather than statements; the distinction between prudence and comprehension does not rest on a grammatical distinction.

§4 **It is derived . . . call learning comprehending:** The Greek *manthanein* used here is applied both to the process of learning and to the grasping of the subject that we have learned; it is this grasping that is identified with comprehension.

11

11.§1. *Consideration and considerateness*

§1 **The [state] called consideration . . . decent person:** This section should

really be a separate chapter parallel to the chapters on the other intellectual virtues. Here Aristotle describes the connection between 'consideration' (*gnōmē*; or 'good judgment') and 'considerateness' (*sungnōmē*; see PARDON) and their relation to the decency that is described in v 10.

11. §2–7. *The application of practical thought to particulars*

(a) §2–3. Different virtues are needed to grasp particulars.

§2 **It is reasonable . . . direction:** This begins a new chapter, in which Aristotle sums up some of his remarks on the intellectual virtues and draws some conclusions. He does not refer back to ch. 9 (on good deliberation), which, as we saw, fits better after 7. §6 than after ch. 8.

For all . . . last things, i.e., particulars: Lit., 'last things and particulars'. Cf. note to 8. §8.

(b) §4–6. The special role of understanding in grasping particulars

§4 **Understanding is also . . . in both directions:** 'In both directions' indicates that here 'last' indicates both the last things as you go toward the more universal (hence in a36 they are the 'first terms') and the last things as you go from universal to particular (hence 'last' in a36). As in 8. §9, Aristotle contrasts (a) understanding in demonstrative science with (b) the way in which prudence is aware of particulars. In 1142a25 he called (b) a type of perception that he opposed to understanding. Here he calls (b) a type of understanding. He calls it understanding because it is analogous to (a), insofar as no further account or reason can be given for our grasp of the particular, just as none can be given for our grasp of a first principle of demonstration. Though the terms used here are different from those in 1142a25, the same basic contrast is drawn between prudence and understanding.

both about the first terms and about the last: Here 'first' and 'last' mark the same contrast as the one Aristotle has just marked by using 'last in both directions'.

In [premises] . . . minor premise: Lit., 'of the last and the admitting and of the other premise (*protasis*)'. In speaking of the minor premise, Aristotle presupposes the account of practical INFERENCE at 1147a25–31; cf. 1144a31. Understanding is needed to find the relevant features of particular situations, so that general principles can be applied to them. If, for instance, a general principle says 'Excessive display in equipping warships should be avoided', some grasp of what would be excessive in this particular case, in outfitting this warship, is needed (cf. iii 3. §16).

For these last . . . reached from particulars: Lit., 'for these are the *archai* of that for the sake of which; for universals are from (or "out of", *ek*) particulars'. We might translate *archai* 'principles' rather than 'beginnings'. But the following clause suggests that Aristotle is thinking of the process of acquiring universals, not of the PRINCIPLES that are our basic premises. If we use understanding of particulars to identify the appropriate features of particular situations, we will form more useful and determinate rules; see note to 7. §7. This will be a process of induction; see INFERENCE.

§5 **We must, . . . perception is understanding:** If this is the role that Aristotle has in mind for understanding of particulars, the state that he calls 'understanding' here is the same as the one that he called 'perception' (as opposed to understanding) in 8. §9. In the earlier passage, he was careful to point out that it was not ordinary perception; now he seems to have decided that the difference from ordinary perception is best captured by calling it 'understanding'.

§6 **That is why understanding . . . about them:** In the mss. this sentence comes in §6, after 'as though nature were the cause'. OCT deletes it as spurious, perhaps correctly. If it is genuine, it fits best at this point in §5. The translation assumes that Aristotle means: In practical (as opposed to theoretical) reasoning we begin from understanding exercised in particular situations, and we form generalizations that will be applicable to particular situations. This interpretation requires us to take 'demonstrations' rather loosely, since Aristotle normally contrasts demonstrative science with ethical reasoning (as in §4).

(c) §5–7. These virtues of thought concerned with particulars develop through experience.

§5 **That is why . . . to grow naturally:** Aristotle does not concede that these states really grow naturally, or that age implies prudence. He means that the important fact that EXPERIENCE is needed for prudence (cf. 8. §5–6) explains the mistaken view that prudence grows naturally.

no one seems to have natural wisdom: Wisdom requires demonstration, which requires teaching (1139b25).

§7 **We have said, . . . part of the soul:** The reference to the two parts of the soul recalls 2. §6. Aristotle suggests that the point of the discussion in chs. 8–11 has been to make clear the contrast between wisdom and prudence.

12

12. §1–3. *Puzzles about prudence and wisdom*

(a) §1. How do they contribute to being virtuous?

§1 **One might, . . . use they are:** The discussion of these puzzles takes up all of chs. 12 and 13.

For knowledge . . . in actions: The translation departs from the structure of the Greek. Lit.: 'What do we need it for, if prudence is that about the just things and fine things and good things for a human being, and these are the things it belongs to the good man to do, but we are no more prone to act by knowing them, if the virtues are states, just as neither the healthy things nor the fit things (as many as are spoken of not by producing but by being from the state)—for we are no more prone to act by having the medical and gymnastic?'

This puzzle rests on the assumption that just as (1): (a) I can do what is healthy and hence (b) be healthy, without (c) knowing medicine, so also (2): (a) I can do what is virtuous and hence (b) be virtuous, without (c) having prudence. Aristotle challenges the alleged parallel between (1) and (2). He denies that (2b) follows from (2a), if (2a) is understood so as not to require prudence; see 1144a11.

(b) §2. How does prudence help us to become virtuous?

§2 **If we concede . . . excellent:** This puzzle assumes that prudence is analogous to a specialized CRAFT whose products are useful to me, but whose practice I can leave to someone else; though I value the product of MEDICINE, I need not be a doctor myself. This objection reflects failure to distinguish prudence and virtue from craft (cf. 1105a26–b5).

In b28 read *chrēsímon* ('is not useful') (OCT: *phronímon*, 'prudent').

Nor, however, . . . matter to them: In 1143b30 read *mē ousi* (OCT: *mē echousi*) and *autois echein* (OCT: *autois echein*).

(c) §3. Does prudence control wisdom?

§3 Besides, it would . . . its product: This puzzle relies on the assumption, accepted by Aristotle, that prudence produces wisdom; see note to 13.§8.

12.§3–9. *Wisdom, prudence, and virtue of character*

(a) §3–6. The value of wisdom and prudence

§4 First of all, . . . [of the soul]: In reply to the first puzzle (in §1), Aristotle maintains the intrinsic value of wisdom and prudence. These are part of the formal CAUSE of happiness. We say, 'He is healthy because his body is in a healthy condition, which is . . . (giving details)'; we thereby say what health consists in. Similarly we say, 'He is happy because he is wise and . . . (adding the other components)'; we thereby say what happiness consists in.

§5 1144a4 health produces [health]: Less probably: 'health produces [happiness]'.
§6 Further, we fulfill our function: Aristotle returns to the connection between virtue and FUNCTION, recalled at the beginning of this book; see 1.§7, 2.§6. Despite the loose structure of some of the middle sections of Book vi, Aristotle has a fairly clear plan in mind.

for virtue . . . goal [correct]: For this division of labor between virtue and prudence, cf. 1144a20, 1145a4, 1178a16. We might take it to imply that (a) prudence finds what promotes a goal, and (b) this goal has already been fixed by virtue independently of prudence. Claim (a) is correct, provided that we take account of the wide scope of 'PROMOTES'. When we take account of this, however, we raise doubts about (b). For if deliberation about happiness produces a conception of the nature (components) of happiness, it produces the virtuous person's correct conception of the end (see note to 9.§7). If, contrary to (b) above, prudence itself helps to fix the goal that virtue aims at, we should not suppose that the virtue of character that makes the end correct is independent of prudence. On this question about virtue, cf. EE ii 11 (it is not anticipated so explicitly in the earlier books of the EN).

(b) §7. Virtue of character requires the correct decision.

§7 To answer . . . fine and just actions: The answer seems to come first in §10, where Aristotle says that prudence requires cleverness. A fuller answer comes in 13.§2. For 'better at achieving' (*praktikōteroi*) one might substitute 'more prone to do'.

To answer the puzzle, Aristotle goes back to the account of virtue of character as involving the correct decision, which causes one to choose the virtuous actions for their own sakes.

we say that some people . . . either unwillingly or because of ignorance or because of some other end, . . . ought to do: 'Unwillingly' might refer to force, or to the conditions mentioned in 1135b4–8. Ignorance is, of course, in Aristotle's view, another source of unwilling and involuntary action.

Equally, however, . . . because of decision and for the sake of the actions themselves: See 1105a32 (cf. 1134a20, 1135b35). We can now understand (see note on §4) why a decision, and hence deliberation about what promotes an end, is necessary for choosing the correct actions for their own sakes (i.e., as part of the conception of happiness that one has reached by deliberation).

(c) §8–10. Prudence requires both cleverness and virtue of character.

§8 Now virtue makes the decision correct: We might take this in either of two ways. (1) Aristotle is repeating what he said in §6 when he said that virtue makes the goal right; hence he means, strictly speaking, that virtue makes our decision aim at the right goal. In that case, the role he attributes to cleverness is the same as the role he attributed to prudence in §6: finding what promotes the end. Prudence differs from cleverness only because our deliberative ability is called 'prudence' only if it serves the correct end. (2) When he says that virtue makes the decision correct, he includes the roles that he ascribed to virtue and to prudence in §6, since both of these are required for a correct decision. The role he attributes to cleverness is not the deliberative task of finding what promotes an end. See notes to 13.§2, 7.

but the actions . . . another capacity: Cf. EE 1227b40. We should not suppose that this capacity is entirely separate from virtue; since prudence requires CLEVERNESS, and virtue requires prudence, it follows that virtue requires cleverness. See notes to 12.§6, ix 11.§3. In 'the actions . . . fulfil the decision', Aristotle does not speak of things that 'promote the end'; these are found by deliberation, and precede a decision. He seems to have in mind nondeliberative facility in finding ways to carry out a decision already made. He never says that cleverness involves deliberation.

§9 to be able to do . . . goal is assumed: Here Aristotle speaks of actions that promote a goal, whereas he has just spoken of those that promote the fulfillment of a decision; he is presumably referring to the same actions in different ways. Once again, he takes the mark of cleverness to be resourcefulness in action, not in deliberation.

and to attain them: Or perhaps 'to hit on them' (i.e., to discover or identify them). Read *tunchanein autōn*. (OCT unnecessarily emends to *tunchanein autou*, i.e., 'achieve the goal'.) Cf. EE 1227b40. If the role of cleverness is nondeliberative, Aristotle perhaps makes room for it in iii 3.§16, where he recognizes the limits of deliberation. In that case, he returns here to the concern of prudence with particulars, which he discussed in ch. 11.

both prudent . . . clever: Read *kai tous panourgous* (OCT: *kai panourgous*).

§10 Prudence is not cleverness: Read *ouch hē deinotēs* (OCT: *ouch hē dunamis*).

[Prudence,] . . . **developed state:** Lit., 'The state comes to be for this eye of the soul not without virtue'. Aristotle relies on his standard contrast between CAPACITY and STATE (cf. ii 5.§5) to make it clear that prudence requires our capacities to be turned in the right direction. Until someone is virtuous he has only an aptitude for prudence, not prudence itself. Cleverness in action is not sufficient for prudence, which also requires the right ends that belong to virtue, and hence requires the correct decision (1152a10). Aristotle does not mean, however, that the prudent person is simply a clever person who has also been well brought up. He has the right end because he has deliberated 'well' in the way explained in ch. 9.

For inferences . . . sake of argument: Cf. note to 11.§4. Here Aristotle considers the major premise. Only the good person has the correct conception of what the highest good consists in. He reaches this conception by good deliberation; cf. note to 1142b32. The demanding conditions for good deliberation (see esp. 9.§5) explain why even continent and incontinent people cannot have the right conception of the good, even though their decision is in some way correct (cf. vii 8.§5). For the bad effects of vice, cf. 1140b11.

13

13. §1–8. The connection between virtue of character and prudence

(a) §1–2. Full virtue, as opposed to natural virtue, requires prudence.

§1 We must, . . . again: It is rather misleading to mark a chapter division here, since the argument is continuous. Having argued that prudence requires virtue, Aristotle now considers the other direction of dependence, and argues that virtue requires prudence.

For virtue . . . natural virtue . . . full virtue: Cf. 1117a4, 1127b14, 1151a18, 1179b21–6; NATURE (1). Aristotle refers to natural aptitudes, not to genuine virtues (cf. 1103a23).

But still we look . . . evidently harmful: Without prudence someone will lack full (see CONTROLLING) virtue, because he will lack the appropriate discernment and flexibility in less familiar situations (cf. 1137a9, 1180b20).

§2 And so, . . . acquired without prudence: The condition that Aristotle contrasts with mere natural aptitude is full virtue of character, which includes prudence. (He also calls this ‘habitual virtue,’ 1151a18–19). Virtue of character is not simply the result of good upbringing without prudence (cf. 1095b4–9). Since virtue of character includes prudence, Aristotle cannot regard the process he calls ‘habituation’ as complete until the person being habituated has acquired prudence.

(b) §3–7. Virtue of character and prudence require each other.

§3 That is why: As usual, this connective (see note to i 1. §1) indicates facts or beliefs that Aristotle claims to make intelligible.

Socrates used to undertake: ‘Used to’ (Greek imperfect tense) indicates Aristotle’s intention to speak of the historical SOCRATES; cf. note to i 4. §5. Socrates examines and (many readers believe, in agreement with Aristotle) defends the identification of every virtue with knowledge of good and evil, in the *La.* and *Pr.* Plato rejects this doctrine in *Rep.* iv.

[instances of] prudence: Lit., ‘prudences’. Perhaps ‘[forms of] prudence’. The same question arises where ‘[instances of]’ is supplied in §5.

§4 Whenever people now . . . the correct reason: Aristotle now answers the question about the correct reason that he raised in ch. 1 (cf. 1103b32). The correct reason is specified by prudence (1107a1); the description of prudence has explained more fully what the content of the correct reason will be. Aristotle still has not explained as fully as some might wish what the correct reason will prescribe. The reader needs to be convinced that someone who deliberates in the way prescribed in Book vi and who accepts the conception of happiness in Book i will decide on the virtues described in Books iii–iv.

§5 For it is not . . . that is virtue: In distinguishing (a) ‘in accord with (*kata*) the correct reason’ from (b) ‘involving (*meta*) the correct reason’, Aristotle probably means to distinguish (a) actions on the virtuous person’s decision from (b) actions, based on instinctive reactions and FEELINGS, that are not actions on decision, but still would not be what they are without his rational reflection and decision (cf. 1117a22). The same distinction is drawn in ‘reason . . . involves reason’ (b29–30) and ‘prudence . . . require prudence’ (b20). Cf. notes to i 7. §13, 8. §6, 13. §18–19. Prudence is a necessary part, not the whole, of virtue.

§6 And in this way . . . one another: Though Aristotle rejects the Socratic belief

in the unity and identity of all the virtues, he thinks (a) each virtue is inseparable from prudence (1107a1, 1138b18–34, 1178a16–19), and since (b) prudence is inseparable from all the virtues, it follows that (c) each virtue is inseparable from all the other virtues. We have seen why he believes (a); but (b) and (c) seem to neglect the role of external conditions in some of the virtues (magnificence and magnanimity, for instance); cf. 1122a28, 1123b5, 1125b4 (and for a different sort of exception see 1115a20). To cope with these cases (b) and (c) seem to need revision (as Aquinas suggests in *ST* 1–2 q65 a1 ad 1). Cf. *MM* 1199b35–1200a11.

for one has . . . single state: Read *mia(i) ousē(i) huparchousē(i)* (OCT: *mia(i) huparchousē(i)*). Lit., ‘for at the same time as prudence, being one, being present, all will be present’.

§7 And it is clear . . . part of the soul: We return to the first puzzle (12. §1). Though Aristotle has officially been answering the second and third puzzles until now, he has also made his answer to the first more convincing by suggesting how prudence is the virtue of a rational part of the soul.

and because . . . without virtue: The translation implies that this is a second reason why we would need prudence even if it did not affect our action; we would need it in order to have the right decision, and hence the right character. Alternatively, instead of ‘because (*hoti*) the decision . . .’ one might translate ‘that’ (*hoti*), making a second ‘that’ clause dependent on ‘And it is clear’ (parallel to the *hoti* in a3). This gives an inferior sequence of thought, since it now becomes difficult to see what the point of the remark about decision is meant to be at this stage in the chapter.

for [virtue] . . . promote the end: This clause takes up the previous ‘without prudence or without virtue’, in chiasmic order. By ‘achieve the end’, Aristotle probably means ‘achieve the right grasp of the end’ (which he previously expressed by saying that virtue makes the end correct), rather than ‘attain the end we were aiming at’. The issues raised above about the relation between virtue and prudence arise again here (cf. notes to 12. §6, 8). Here again, it is difficult to maintain, consistently with Aristotle’s other remarks in chs. 12–13, that virtue, quite independently of prudence, fixes the right end, and then prudence finds what promotes it. For Aristotle has just insisted that virtue (which makes the end correct) requires prudence (which makes the things promoting the end correct); hence, it seems, we cannot make the end correct without making the things promoting the end correct. This conclusion is reasonable if prudent deliberation about what promotes the ultimate end (i.e., what constitutes happiness, fixing our conception of happiness) results in a correct conception of the end (i.e., of what constitutes happiness). On virtue and prudence, cf. 1178a16.

(c) §8. The relation of prudence to wisdom

§8 Moreover, prudence . . . control health: Wisdom has its place in a life organized and planned by prudence, but it is not thereby of less value than prudence. The place of wisdom in happiness is explained in x 6–8.

BOOK VII

1

1. §1–5. Introduction to the discussion of incontinence