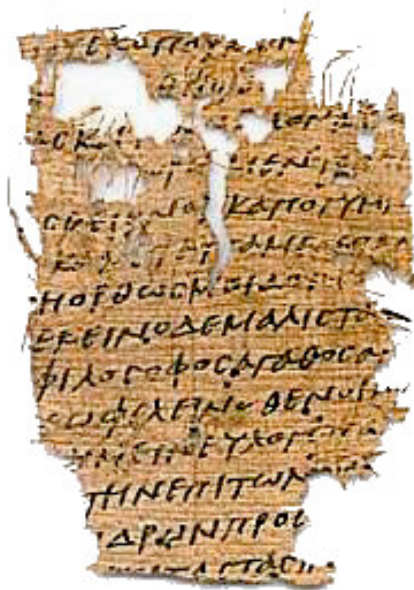
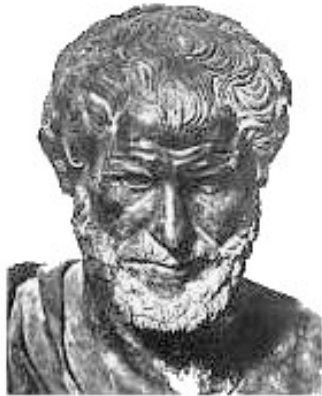


THE GREAT IDEAS ONLINE

Apr '09

Nº 517

“Whether living successfully consists in enjoyment, or in having virtue, or in wisdom, we should do philosophy, for these things come to us most of all, and in a pure way, through doing philosophy”



ARISTOTLE'S LOST *PROTREPTICUS*

“If it is in future accorded its proper recognition by Aristotelian scholars, as they have shown it deserves,” says David Sedley of Christ’s College, Cambridge, “it will make a real difference to our understanding of Aristotle’s ethics, his philosophy of nature and his metaphysics.”

Provisional Reconstruction (2009 January)

D. S. Hutchinson and Monte Ransome Johnson

Part 2 of 3

For, despite no reward coming from people to those who do philosophy, which would make them keen to exert considerable effort in this way, and despite having given to the other skills a big lead, nevertheless the fact that in running a short time they have surpassed them in precision seems to me to be a sign of the easiness of philosophy [40.20]. And again, the fact that everybody feels at home with philosophy and wishes to occupy their leisure with it, renouncing everything else, is no slight evidence that the close attention comes with pleasure; for no one is willing to labor for a long time [40.24]. In addition to these, its practice greatly differs from all others: philosophers need neither tools nor special places for their job; rather, wherever in the inhabited world anyone's thought runs, one apprehends the truth everywhere equally as if it were present there [40.15-41.2].

<Iamblichus next provides, in his *Comm.Math.*, a paragraph of early quotation or paraphrase from the speech of 'Aristotle', who sketches the history of the various forms of practical and theoretical intelligence.>

<evidence: Iamblichus, *De Communi Mathematica Scientia* xxvi 83.6-22>

Now admittedly precision about the truth is the most recent of the occupations [7]. For after the destruction and the inundations they were first compelled to be intelligent about their food and staying alive, but when they became more prosperous they worked out the skills that are for pleasure such as music and so on, and when they had more than the necessities, that's how they undertook to do philosophy [12|13]. And the progress that has now been made from small impulses in a short time by those whose research is about geometry and speeches and the other educational subjects is so great that no other race has made such progress in any of the skills [16]. And yet everyone helps to urge forward by publicly honoring the other skills and giving payment to those who have them, whereas those who busy themselves with these things not only get no exhortation from us, but also are often prevented by us [20|21]. But nevertheless they have advanced the most, because in their nature they have seniority, for what is later in coming to be takes precedence in substance and in perfection [xxvi 83.6 -22].

<The above passage that Iamblichus had quoted was evidently under the eyes of Proclus as well, who paraphrased it as follows in his Euclid commentary.>

<evidence: Proclus, *Commentary on Euclid's Elements I*, chapter 9, 28.13-22>

Evidence that it is intrinsically choice worthy to those who are engaged in it is, as Aristotle somewhere says, the great progress that

mathematical science has made in a short time, despite no reward coming to those who seek it [17]. And again, everyone is fond of it in itself and chooses to occupy their leisure with it to the neglect of other concerns [19]. So those who despise mathematical cognition have no taste for the pleasure there is in these things [ch. 9, 28.13-22].

<Iamblichus next provides, in his *Comm.Math.*, two paragraphs of paraphrase from the *Protrepticus* of Aristotle, where the speaker is still probably ‘Aristotle’.>

<evidence: Iamblichus, *De Communi Mathematica Scientia* xxvi 83.23-84.17>

And so the knowledge of the mathematical is far superior to all these other kinds of knowledge, leading all the occupations in beauty and accuracy [83.25]. But this is true according to the following argument as well [84.1]. For the things that are first in the order of growth are much desired by people so that they have as much as possible, but the things that are liberated from our bodily nature are much more valuable than the first [84.5]. For the things that are chosen out of necessity are presupposed, but what is valuable for itself and serious is worthy of dignities and honour [xxvi 83.23-84.7].

Now then, the mathematical turn out to be no small use for the whole of human life, as is made clear by the successes for our way of life of the works due to the mathematical skills [10|11]. But in fact such things are worth little effort, but the greatest one is the purification of the immortal soul, the turning of intelligence towards the intelligible, and the communion with the actuality of being [14]. But the mathematical science supplies all the good things to us when it is studied, so that I do not know if there is any other method that so contributes to the goal of success [xxvi 84.7-17].

<when Iamblichus resumes citing Aristotle’s text, the speaker is ‘Aristotle’, who elaborates his argument that being intelligent and observant is most valuable for humans, being the function of the highest virtue>

<evidence: Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* VII 41.7-43.25>

To be intelligent and cognizant is in itself valuable for humans, for it is not possible to live as a human without these; and it is also useful for our way of life, for nothing good comes to us unless it is accomplished after we have reasoned and acted in accordance with intelligence [11]. Moreover, whether living successfully consists in enjoyment or in having virtue or in intelligence, according to all these we should do philosophy, for these things come to us most of all, and in pure way, through

doing philosophy [15]. Furthermore, part of us is soul, part body; and the one has authority, the other is under authority; the one uses, the other supports it as a tool [18]. Further, it is always with reference to that which has authority and uses it that the use of that which is under authority, i.e. the tool, is coordinated [20]. And of the soul one part is reason (which by nature has authority and judges our affairs), the other part is a follower and is naturally under authority [22]. And everything is well disposed when it is in accordance with its own proper virtue, for to obtain this is good [VII 41.7-24].

Moreover, it's when a thing's most dominant and most honourable parts have their virtue that it is well disposed; therefore the natural virtue of that which is better is naturally better [41.27]. And that which is by nature more authoritative and more commanding is better, as a human is over the other animals; thus soul is better than body (for it is more authoritative), as is the part of the soul which has reason and thought, for this kind of thing is what prescribes and proscribes and says how we ought or ought not to act [42.1]. Whatever, then, is the virtue of this part is necessarily the most valuable virtue of all, both for everything in general and for us; in fact, I think one might actually take this position, that we are this part, either alone or especially [VII 41.24-42.4].

Furthermore, it's when the natural function of each thing is achieved, not as a result but in itself, that it is called finest, and then it should also be called good, and one should take the most dominant virtue to be the one by which each thing naturally accomplishes this very thing [9]. So that which is composite and divisible into parts has many different activities, but that which is by nature simple and whose being is not relative to anything else, necessarily has a single virtue in itself in the strict sense [VII 42.5-13].

So if the human is a simple animal whose being is ordered according to reason and intellect, there is no other function for it than only the most precise truth, i.e. having the truth about existing things; but if it is naturally composed of several capacities, it is clear that, of the several things it can naturally achieve, the best of them is always their function, e.g. of the doctor health, and of the pilot safety [20]. And we can name no function of thought, or of the thinking part of our soul, which is better than truth [22]. Truth therefore is the most authoritative function of this part of the soul [VII 42.13-23].

And it does this simply with knowledge, and it does this more with more knowledge; and the most authoritative end for this is observation [42.25]. For when of two things one is valuable because of the other, the one on account of which the other is valuable is better and more valuable; for example, pleasure is better than pleasant things, and health than healthy things, for the latter are said to be productive of the former [42.29|43.1]. Thus nothing is more valuable than intelligence, which we say is a capacity of the most authoritative thing in us, when disposition is judged against disposition; for the cognitive part, both apart and in combination, is better than all the rest of the soul, and its knowledge is a virtue [VII 42.23-43.5].

Therefore its function is none of what are called ‘parts of virtue’, for it is better than all of them and the end produced is always better than the knowledge that produces it [8]. Nor is every virtue of the soul in that way a function, nor is success; for if it is to be productive, different ones will produce different things, as the skill of building (which is not part of any house) produces a house [12]; however, intelligence is a part of virtue and of success, for we say that success either comes from it or is it [14]. Thus according to this argument too, it is impossible for this to be productive knowledge; for the end must be better than the thing which comes to be, and nothing is better than intelligence, unless it is one of the things that have been mentioned and none of those is a function distinct from it [18]. Therefore a certain observational knowledge is what one should name this kind, since it is surely impossible for production to be its end [20]. Hence being intelligent and observant are a function of the virtue, and this of all things is the most valuable for humans, comparable, I think, to seeing for the eyes, which one would choose to have even if there wasn’t anything different that was going to result from it beyond the vision itself [VII 43.5-25].

<Here Iamblichus stops his citation; when he resumes citing Aristotle’s text, the speaker is still ‘Aristotle’, who focuses his comments on the comparative value of sight, perception, opinion, and knowledge>

<evidence: Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* VII 43.25-45.3>

Again, if we like sight for its own sake, this gives sufficient witness that everybody ultimately likes being intelligent and cognizant [43.27]. **Again, if someone likes a particular thing because something else coincides with it, it is clear that he will wish more for that which has more of it: for example, if someone happened to choose walking because it’s healthy, and it oc-**

curred to him that running is more healthy for him, and possible, he will choose this even more, and would choose it as soon as he recognized that [44.4]. Further, if true opinion is similar to intelligence, since having true opinions is valuable in that and insofar as it is similar to intelligence on account of its truth, if this exists more in intelligence, then being intelligent will be more valuable than having true opinions [VII 43.25-44.9].

But yet, living is distinguished from not living by sense perception, and living is defined by its presence and power, and if this is removed life is not worth living, as though life itself were removed along with sense perception [13]. But among the senses the capacity of sight is distinguished by being the most distinct, and for this reason as well we value it most; but every sense perception is a capacity for becoming familiar with things through a body, just as hearing perceives the sound through the ears [VII 44.9-17].

Therefore, if living is valuable because of the perception, and the perception is a kind of cognition, and we choose it because the soul is able to have familiarity by means of it, and we've been saying for a long time that of two things the more valuable one is always the one which has that more, and of the senses vision is necessarily the most valuable and honourable, and intelligence is more valuable than it and all the others, and more valuable than living, then the intelligence of truth is more authoritative; hence the main pursuit of all humans is to be intelligent [44.26]. For because people like living they like being intelligent and recognizing, for they value it for no other reason than for the sake of perception, and above all for the sake of vision; for people seem to love this capacity exceedingly; for it is, compared with the other senses, virtually a kind of knowledge [VII 44.17-45.3].

<Here Iamblichus stops citing Aristotle's text; when he resumes, the speaker is now 'Heraclides', who articulates a Pythagorean set of arguments (from opposites) for the intrinsic value of intelligence>

<evidence: Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* VIII 45.6-47.4>

So then, this, at least, is quite clear to everyone, that nobody would choose to live in possession of the greatest estate and power of all people if they nevertheless were deprived of their intelligence and were raving mad, not even if they were going to live enjoying the wildest pleasures, in the way that some people who are out of their minds lead their lives [11]. Thus

everybody, it seems, avoids being unwise most of all [12]. Now intelligence is the opposite of being unintelligent, and of these opposites the one is to be avoided, the other is valuable [13 | 14]. So, just as being sick is to be avoided, so is being healthy valuable for us [VIII 45.6-15].

Intelligence, it seems, according to this argument too, is the most desirable of all things, and not for the sake of anything else that results from it, as the common conceptions give witness [18]. **For even if someone had everything, but has some affliction affecting his intelligence, that way of life would not be valuable, for none of his other goods would be of any benefit [20|21]. Hence everybody, insofar as they have some perception of being intelligent and are capable of tasting of this thing, think the other things to be nothing; and this is the cause on account of which not a single one of us would put up with being either drunk or infantile up to the ends of our lives [VIII 45.15-25].**

So, on account of this, too, though sleep is extremely pleasant, it is not valuable, even if we were to suppose that all of the pleasures were present to the sleeper, because the images during sleep are false, while those of the waking are true [46.4]. For sleep and waking are no different from each other except that the waking soul often has the truth, but when sleeping is always thoroughly deceived; for the phantasm in dreams is actually entirely false [VIII 45.25-46.7].

And the fact that most people avoid death also shows the soul's love of learning; for it avoids what it does not recognize, what is dark and not clear, and naturally seeks what is evident and recognizable [11]. This is the main reason why we say one should honour those who have caused us to see the sun and the light, and revere our fathers and mothers as causes of the greatest of goods; and causes they are, it seems, of our having any intelligence and sight [15]. It is for the same reason that we also enjoy what we are acquainted with, both things and people, and call 'friends' those with whom we are familiar [18]. These things, then, might show distinctly that what's recognizable and evident and clear is likable; and if what's recognizable and what's distinct is likable, it is clear that recognizing is necessary, and so is being intelligent, likewise [VIII 46.8-21].

In addition to these, just as with property, it is not the same possession that is for the sake of living, and of living well, for humans; so too, with wisdom: we do not, I think, need the same wisdom for merely living and for living nobly [46.26]. Now then, much allow-

ance is made for the many who do this (they pray to be successful, but like it if they can just stay alive), but anyone who thinks that there is no need to endure living in every way already thinks it's ridiculous not to bear every burden and exert every effort so as to possess this intelligence that will cognize the truth [VIII 46.22-47.4].

<Here Iamblichus stops citing or paraphrasing Aristotle's text; when he resumes the speaker is still 'Heraclides', who reaches a tremendous conclusion to his speech, that in this world everything other than intelligence is nonsense and foolishness>

<evidence: Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* VIII 47.6-48.21>

For one will discover that all the things that seem great to people are an optical illusion [8]. This makes it also right to say that the human creature is nothing and that nothing is secure in human affairs [10]. For strength, size, and beauty are laughable and of no worth -- and beauty seems to be the sort of thing it is by our seeing nothing accurately [12]. For if one were able to see as keenly as they say Lynceus did, who saw through walls and trees, how could such a sight seem bearable, seeing what bad things they are composed of? [15|16]. And honours and reputations, objects of more striving than the rest, are full of indescribable nonsense; for to those who behold anything eternal it is silly to take seriously those things [18]. What is great or what is long-lasting in human affairs? [19] No, it is owing to our weakness, I think, and the shortness of our life, that even this appears sizeable [VIII 47.6-21].

So who could look at all this and think themselves successful and happy, if, right from the start, we are naturally put together as if for punishment, all of us, as they say in the initiation rites? [47.24]. For the ancients have an inspired saying that says that the soul 'pays penalties', and we live for the atonement of certain great failings [48.2]. For the conjunction of the soul with the body looks very much like a thing of this sort; for as the Tyrrhenians are said to torture their captives often by chaining corpses right onto the living, fitting limb to limb, similarly the soul seems to be extended through and stuck onto all the sensitive members of the body [VIII 47.21-48.9].

So nothing divine or happy belongs to humans apart from just that one thing worth taking seriously, as much insight and intelligence as is in us, for, of what's ours, this alone seems to be immortal, and this alone divine [13]. And by being able to

share in such a capacity, our way of life, although naturally miserable and difficult, is yet so cleverly managed that, in comparison with other things, a human seems to be a god [16]. For ‘insight is the god in us’ whether it was Hermetimus or Anaxagoras who said so and ‘the mortal phase has a portion of some god’ [18]. One ought, therefore, either to do philosophy or say goodbye to life and depart hither, since all of the other things anyway seem to be a lot of nonsense and foolishness [VIII 48.9-21].

<Here Iamblichus stops citing Aristotle’s text; when he resumes, the speaker is no longer ‘Heraclides’ but ‘Aristotle’, who elaborates an argument revolving around the ideas of skill and nature, that nature has intended humans to be intelligent>

<evidence: Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* IX 49.3-51.6>

Some of the things that come to be come to be from a certain kind of thought and skill, e.g. a house or a ship (for a certain skill and thought is a cause of both of these), while others come to be not by means of any skill but through nature; for nature is a cause of animals and plants, and all such things come to be by nature [8]. But then some other things come to be by luck as well, for of all the things that come to be neither through skill nor through nature nor by necessity, we say that most of these come into being through luck [IX 49.3-11].

Now then, of the things that come to be from luck, none comes to be for the sake of anything, nor do they have any end; but the things that come into being by skill have in them both the end and the purpose (for the man who has a skill will always provide you with a reason why he wrote, i.e. for what purpose), and this is better than what comes to be because of it [16] [17]. (I mean all such things as skill is naturally a cause of, in virtue of itself and not coincidentally, for strictly speaking we should assume medicine to be the cause of health rather than of disease, and architecture to be the cause of houses, not of their demolition) [20]. Therefore everything done with skill comes to be for the sake of something, and this its end is the best thing; however that which is by luck does not come to be for the sake of anything, for something good might happen from luck indeed, but yet it is not insofar as it is from luck and in accordance with luck that it is good; and that which comes to be by luck is always indeterminate [IX 49.11-25].

But yet what is in accordance with nature does come to be for the sake of something, and is always constructed for the sake of

something better than what comes to be through skill; for nature does not imitate the skill, but it imitates nature, and it exists to help nature and to fill in what nature leaves out [50.2]. For some things nature itself seems capable of completing by itself without actually needing any help, but others it completes with difficulty or is completely unable to do [50.5]. For example, to begin with, even with reproduction, some seeds presumably germinate without protection, whatever kind of land they fall onto, but others also need the skill of farming, and, in a similar way, some animals also attain their full nature by themselves, but humans need many skills for their security, both at first in respect of their birth, and again later, in respect of their nurturing [IX 49.26-50.12].

Further, if skill imitates nature, from this it follows for the skills as well that everything that comes to be comes to be for the sake of something [14]. For we should take the position that everything that comes into being correctly comes into being for the sake of something [15]. And surely if nobly, then correctly; and everything that comes to be (or has come to be) in accordance with nature at any rate comes to be (or has come to be) nobly, since what is unnatural is ugly, and a coming into being in accordance with nature comes to be for the sake of something [IX 50.12-19].

And someone could see this also from each of our parts; if, for example, one inspected the eyelid, one would see that it has come to be not in vain but in order to help the eyes, so as to provide them with rest and prevent things from falling into the eye [50.23 |24]. Thus it is the same thing, both that for the sake of which something has come to be and that for the sake of which it needs to have come to be; for example, if a ship needed to come to be to provide transport by sea, that's why it actually has come to be [50.26|27]. Moreover the animals are surely things that have come to be by nature, either absolutely all of them or the best and most honourable of them; for it makes no difference if someone thinks that most of them have come into being unnaturally because of some corruption or wickedness [51.4]. But certainly a human is the most honourable of the animals down here; hence it's clear that we have come to be both by nature and according to nature [IX 50.19-51.6].

<Here Iamblichus seems to have skipped over a portion of Aristotle's text (the bit containing the reference to Phlius) and resumed with the reason that Pythagoras gave for humans to be alive. The speaker is 'Aristotle', who concludes, "Therefore Pythagoras was right" to say that god constructed us for intellectual work.>

<evidence: Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* IX 51.6-52.8>

This is the thing for the sake of which nature and the god have brought us into being [7]. So what is this thing? [8] **When Pythagoras was asked, he said, ‘to observe the heavens,’ and he used to claim that he himself was an observer of nature, and it was for the sake of this that he had been released into this way of life [10|11]. And they say that when somebody asked Anaxagoras for what reason anyone might choose to come to be and be alive, he replied to the question by saying, ‘To observe the heavens and the things around it, stars, as well as moon and sun,’ because everything else at any rate is worth nothing [IX 51.7-15].**

Further, if for everything the end is always better (for everything that comes to be comes to be for the sake of the end, and that for the sake of which is better, indeed the best of all), and an end in accordance with this nature is that which is in the order of generation naturally last when the generation reaches its limit without interruption, surely the first parts of a human being to reach their end are the bodily ones, and later on the parts of the soul, and somehow the end of the better part always comes later than its coming to be [51.23 |51.24]. Surely the soul is posterior than the body, and intelligence is the final stage of the soul, for we see that it is the last thing to come to be by nature in humans, and that is why old age lays claim to this alone of good things; therefore, some form of intelligence is by nature our end, and being intelligent is the ultimate thing for the sake of which we have come to be [52.4]. Now surely if we have come to be, it’s also clear that we exist for the sake of some kind of intelligence and learning [51.5|51.6]. Therefore Pythagoras was right, according to this argument anyway, in saying it’s for the sake of cognition and observation that every human person has been put together by the god [IX 51.16-52.8]

< Here Iamblichus finishes this part of the speech of ‘Aristotle’ by citing or paraphrasing his conclusion >

<evidence: Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* IX 52.8-16>

But whether the object of this cognition is the cosmos or some other nature is a question for us perhaps to consider later; what we have said is enough for us for now as a preliminary [11]. For if intelligence is an end in accordance with nature, then to be wise would be best of all [12]. Hence, the other things we do we ought to do for the sake of the goods that come about in him, and, of

these goods, those in the body for the sake of those in the soul, and virtue for the sake of wisdom; for this is the highest of all [IX 52.8-16].

<Iamblichus has finished this part of the speech of 'Aristotle'; then after a gap he cites the rhetorically climactic conclusion of the counterattack of 'Aristotle' against 'Isocrates'>

<evidence: Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* IX 52.16-54.5>

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THE GREAT IDEAS ONLINE

published weekly for its members by the

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE GREAT IDEAS

Founded in 1990 by Mortimer J. Adler & Max Weismann

Max Weismann, Publisher and Editor

Ken Dzugan, Senior Fellow and Archivist

A not-for-profit (501)(c)(3) educational organization.

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