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SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

COMMENTARY ON METAPHYSICS  
BOOKS 1–6

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Translated by John P. Rowan

ARISTOTLE COMMENTARIES

Volume 50

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## NOTES ON THE TEXT

### Latin Text of St. Thomas

Thomas's commentaries on Aristotle were written around 1266–1272, and his commentary on the *Metaphysics* was likely completed after Thomas had returned to Paris to teach again, between 1271–1272. Thomas seems to have used multiple Latin translations of Aristotle in working on his commentary, and although he was clearly aware of the existence of books 13 and 14 of the *Metaphysics*, he does not comment on them directly. As of yet, there is no critical edition of Thomas's commentary on the *Metaphysics*; the Latin text used in this edition is thus based on the 1964 Marietti edition, the work of M. R. Cathala, OP, and Raymund M. Spiazzi, OP. The text has been edited and revised by The Aquinas Institute.

### Greek Text of Aristotle

The Greek text of Aristotle is taken from the edition of W. D. Ross (Oxford, 1970). Ross's edition makes use of an important manuscript not taken into account by Bekker, and he pays special attention to punctuation, which is useful in comprehending the Greek text. Ross's text is presented here largely untouched, albeit with a few important emendations.

### English Translation of Aristotle and St. Thomas

The English translation, originally published by the Henry Regnery Company in 1961, is the work of John P. Rowan, who was a professor of philosophy at Duquesne University. In Rowan's words, "This translation does not pretend to be a transliteration of the original. Since strict adherence to this method very often results in the use of latinisms and word structures that are foreign to the English reader, it seemed advisable, if the thought of the original was to be presented in as accurate and readily understandable a form as possible, to render the Latin as idiomatically and meaningfully as current English usage permits. . . . Throughout the whole translation the aim has been to produce as faithful and accurate a rendition of St. Thomas's work as circumstances permit." Rowan's translation has been edited and revised by The Aquinas Institute.

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OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL

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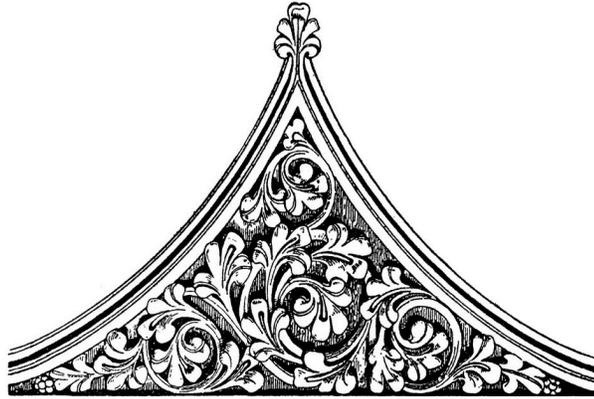
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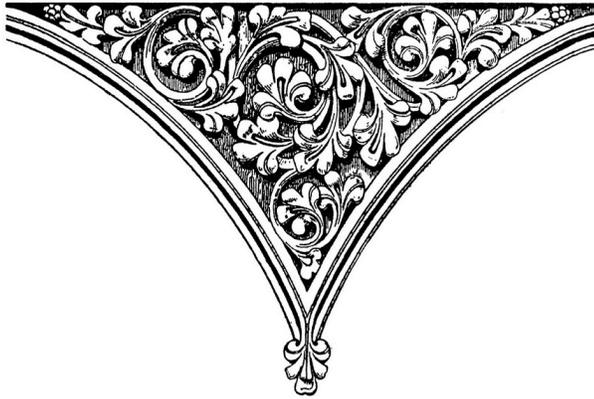
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**COMMENTARY ON METAPHYSICS 1-6**



# PROLOGUE

Sicut docet Philosophus in *Politicis* suis, quando aliqua plura ordinantur ad unum, oportet unum eorum esse regulans, sive regens, et alia regulata, sive recta. Quod quidem patet in unione animae et corporis; nam anima naturaliter imperat, et corpus obedit. Similiter etiam inter animae vires: irascibilis enim et concupiscibilis naturali ordine per rationem reguntur. Omnes autem scientiae et artes ordinantur in unum, scilicet ad hominis perfectionem, quae est eius beatitudo. Unde necesse est, quod una earum sit aliarum omnium reatrix, quae nomen sapientiae recte vindicat. Nam sapientis est alios ordinare.

Quae autem sit haec scientia, et circa qualia, considerari potest, si diligenter respiciatur quomodo est aliquis idoneus ad regendum. Sicut enim, ut in libro praedicto Philosophus dicit, homines intellectu vigentes, naturaliter aliorum rectores et domini sunt: homines vero qui sunt robusti corpore, intellectu vero deficientes, sunt naturaliter servi: ita scientia debet esse naturaliter aliarum regulatrix, quae maxime intellectualis est. Haec autem est, quae circa maxime intelligibilia versatur.

Maxime autem intelligibilia tripliciter accipere possumus.

Primo quidem ex ordine intelligendi. Nam ex quibus intellectus certitudinem accipit, videntur esse intelligibilia magis. Unde, cum certitudo scientiae per intellectum acquiratur ex causis, causarum cognitio maxime intellectualis esse videtur. Unde et illa scientia, quae primas causas considerat, videtur esse maxime aliarum regulatrix.

Secundo ex comparatione intellectus ad sensum. Nam, cum sensus sit cognitio particularium, intellectus per hoc ab ipso differre videtur, quod universalia comprehendit. Unde et illa scientia maxime est intellectualis, quae circa principia maxime universalia versatur. Quae quidem sunt ens, et ea quae consequuntur ens, ut unum et multa, potentia et actus.

Huiusmodi autem non debent omnino indeterminata remanere, cum sine his completa cognitio de his, quae sunt propria alicui generi vel speciei, haberi non possit. Nec iterum in una aliqua particulari scientia tractari debent: quia cum his unumquodque genus entium ad sui cognitionem indigeat, pari ratione in qualibet particulari scientia tractarentur. Unde restat quod in una communi scientia huiusmodi tractentur; quae cum maxime intellectualis sit, est aliarum regulatrix.

When several things are ordained to one thing, one of them must rule or govern and the rest be ruled or governed, as the Philosopher teaches in the *Politics*. This is evident in the union of soul and body, for the soul naturally commands and the body obeys. The same thing is true of the soul's powers, for the concupiscible and irascible appetites are ruled in a natural order by reason. Now all the sciences and arts are ordained to one thing, namely, to man's perfection, which is happiness. Hence one of these sciences and arts must be the mistress of all the others, and this rightly lays claim to the name of wisdom. For it is the office of the wise man to direct others.

We can discover which science this is and the sort of things with which it deals by carefully examining the qualities of a good ruler. For just as men of superior intelligence are naturally the rulers and masters of others, whereas those of great physical strength and little intelligence are naturally slaves (as the Philosopher says in the aforementioned book), in a similar way, the science that is intellectual in the highest degree should be naturally the ruler of the others. This science is the one that treats of the most intelligible objects.

Now "most intelligible objects" can be understood in three ways.

First, from the viewpoint of the order of knowing: those things from which the intellect derives certitude seem to be more intelligible. Therefore, since the certitude of science is acquired by the intellect knowing causes, a knowledge of causes seems to be intellectual in the highest degree. Hence that science that considers first causes also seems to be the ruler of the others in the highest degree.

Second, by comparing the intellect with the senses. While sensory perception is a knowledge of particulars, the intellect seems to differ from sense by reason of the fact that it comprehends universals. Hence that science is pre-eminently intellectual which deals with the most universal principles. These principles are being and those things that follow being, such as unity and plurality, potency and act.

Now such principles should not remain entirely undetermined, since without them complete knowledge of the principles that are proper to any genus or species cannot be had. Nor again should they be dealt with in any one particular science, for, since a knowledge of each genus of beings stands in need of such principles, they would with equal reason be investigated in every particular science. It follows, then, that such principles should be treated by one common science, which, since it is intellectual in the highest degree, is the mistress of the others.

## PROLOGUE

Tertio ex ipsa cognitione intellectus. Nam cum unaquaeque res ex hoc ipso vim intellectivam habeat, quod est a materia immunis, oportet illa esse maxime intelligibilia, quae sunt maxime a materia separata. Intelligibile enim et intellectum oportet proportionata esse, et unius generis, cum intellectus et intelligibile in actu sint unum. Ea vero sunt maxime a materia separata, quae non tantum a signata materia abstrahunt, sicut formae naturales in universali acceptae, de quibus tractat scientia naturalis, sed omnino a materia sensibili. Et non solum secundum rationem, sicut mathematica, sed etiam secundum esse, sicut Deus et intelligentiae. Unde scientia, quae de istis rebus considerat, maxime videtur esse intellectualis, et aliarum princeps sive domina.

Haec autem triplex consideratio, non diversis, sed uni scientiae attribui debet. Nam praedictae substantiae separatae sunt universales et primae causae essendi. Eiusdem autem scientiae est considerare causas proprias alicuius generis et genus ipsum: sicut naturalis considerat principia corporis naturalis. Unde oportet quod ad eandem scientiam pertineat considerare substantias separatas, et ens commune, quod est genus, cuius sunt praedictae substantiae communes et universales causae.

Ex quo apparet, quod quamvis ista scientia praedicta tria consideret, non tamen considerat quodlibet eorum ut subiectum, sed ipsum solum ens commune. Hoc enim est subiectum in scientia, cuius causas et passiones quaerimus, non autem ipsae causae alicuius generis quaesiti. Nam cognitio causarum alicuius generis, est finis ad quem consideratio scientiae pertingit. Quamvis autem subiectum huius scientiae sit ens commune, dicitur tamen tota de his quae sunt separata a materia secundum esse et rationem. Quia secundum esse et rationem separari dicuntur, non solum illa quae nunquam in materia esse possunt, sicut Deus et intellectuales substantiae, sed etiam illa quae possunt sine materia esse, sicut ens commune. Hoc tamen non contingeret, si a materia secundum esse dependerent.

Secundum igitur tria praedicta, ex quibus perfectio huius scientiae attenditur, sortitur tria nomina. Dicitur enim scientia divina sive theologia, in quantum praedictas substantias considerat. Metaphysica, in quantum considerat ens et ea quae consequuntur ipsum. Haec enim transphysica inveniuntur in via resolutionis, sicut magis communia post minus communia. Dicitur autem prima philosophia, in quantum primas rerum causas considerat.

Third, from the viewpoint of the intellect's own knowledge. Since each thing has intellectual power by virtue of being free from matter, those things that are altogether separate from matter must be intelligible in the highest degree. For the intellect and the intelligible object must be proportionate to each other and must belong to the same genus, since the intellect and the intelligible object are one in act. Now those things are separate from matter in the highest degree that abstract not only from signate matter, as the natural forms taken universally of which the philosophy of nature treats, but from sensible matter altogether. These are separate from matter not only in their intelligible constitution, as the objects of mathematics, but also in being, as God and the intelligences. Therefore, the science that considers such things seems to be the most intellectual and the ruler or mistress of the others.

Now this threefold consideration should be assigned to one and the same science and not to different sciences, because the aforementioned separate substances are the universal and first causes of being. Moreover, it pertains to one and the same science to consider both the proper causes of some genus and the genus itself. (For example, the philosophy of nature considers the principles of a natural body.) Therefore, it must be the office of one and the same science to consider the separate substances and being in general, which is the genus of which the aforementioned substances are the common and universal causes.

From this it is evident that although this science studies the three things mentioned above, it does not investigate any one of them as its subject, but only being in general. For the subject of a science is the genus whose causes and properties we seek, and not the causes themselves of the particular genus studied; a knowledge of the causes of some genus is the goal to which the investigation of a science attains. Now, although the subject of this science is being in general, the whole of it is predicated of those things that are separate from matter both in their intelligible constitution and in being. For it is not only those things that can never exist in matter that are said to be separate from matter in their intelligible constitution and being, such as God and the intellectual substances, but also those that can exist without matter, as being in general. This could not be the case, however, if their existence depended on matter.

Therefore, in accordance with the three things mentioned above from which this science derives its perfection, three names arise. It is called "divine science" or "theology" inasmuch as it considers the aforementioned substances. It is called "metaphysics" inasmuch as it considers being and the attributes that naturally accompany being (for things that transcend the physical order are discovered by the process of analysis, as the more common are discovered after the less common). And it is called "first philosophy" inasmuch as it considers the first causes of things.

Sic igitur patet quid sit subiectum huius scientiae, et qualiter se habeat ad alias scientias, et quo nomine nominetur.

Therefore, it is evident what the subject of this science is, and how it is related to the other sciences, and by what names it is designated.

# BOOK 1

## HISTORY OF METAPHYSICAL INQUIRY

### LECTURE 1

#### *The dignity and object of this science*

- 980a21** Omnes homines natura scire desiderant. [2] πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει. All men naturally desire to know.
- Signum autem est sensuum dilectio. Praeter enim utilitatem, propter seipsum diliguntur, et maxime aliorum, qui est per oculos. Non enim solum ut agamus, sed et nihil agere debentes, ipsum videre prae omnibus (ut dicam) aliis eligimus. Causa autem est, quod hic maxime sensuum nos cognoscere facit, et multas diifferentias demonstrat. σημεῖον δ' ἡ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἀγάπησις: καὶ γὰρ χωρὶς τῆς χρείας ἀγαπῶνται δι' αὐτάς, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν ἄλλων ἢ διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων. οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἵνα πράττωμεν ἀλλὰ καὶ μηθέν {25} μέλλοντες πράττειν τὸ ὄραν αἰρούμεθα ἀντὶ πάντων ὡς εἰπεῖν τῶν ἄλλων. αἴτιον δ' ὅτι μάλιστα ποιεῖ γνωρίζειν ἡμᾶς αὕτη τῶν αἰσθήσεων καὶ πολλὰς δηλοῖ διαφοράς. A sign of this is the delight we take in the senses; for apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves, and most of all the sense that operates through the eyes. For not only that we may act, but even when we intend to do nothing, we prefer sight (as we may say) to all the other senses. The reason is that of all the senses this most enables us to know and reveals many differences between things.
- 980a27** Animalia quidem igitur natura sensum habentia fiunt. [9] φύσει μὲν οὖν αἰσθησὶν ἔχοντα γίνεσθαι τὰ ζῶα, Animals by nature, then, are born with sensory power.
- 980a28** Ex sensibus autem quibusdam quidem ipsorum memoria non fit, quibusdam vero fit. Et propter hoc alia quidem prudentia sunt, alia vero disciplinabiliora non possibilibus memorari. Prudentia quidem sunt sine addiscere, quaecumque sonos audire non potentia sunt, ut apes, et utique si aliquod aliud huiusmodi est animalium genus. Addiscunt autem quaecumque cum memoria et hunc habent sensum. [10] ἐκ δὲ ταύτης τοῖς μὲν αὐτῶν οὐκ ἐγγίγνεται μνήμη, τοῖς δ' ἐγγίγνεται. {980b21} καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα φρονιμώτερα καὶ μαθητικώτερα τῶν μὴ δυναμένων μνημονεύειν ἐστί, φρόνιμα μὲν ἄνευ τοῦ μαθάνειν ὅσα μὴ δύναται τῶν ψόφων ἀκούειν (οἶον μέλιττα καὶ εἴ τι τοιοῦτον ἄλλο γένος ζῶων ἔστι), μαθάνει {25} δ' ὅσα πρὸς τῇ μνήμῃ καὶ ταύτην ἔχει τὴν αἰσθησίν. Now in some animals memory arises from the senses, but in others it does not; for this reason the former are prudent and more capable of being taught than those that are unable to remember. Those that cannot hear sounds are prudent but unable to learn, as the bee and any other similar type of animal there may be. But any that have this sense together with memory are able to learn.
- 980b25** Alia quidem igitur imaginationibus et memoriis vivunt, experimenti autem parum participant: hominum autem genus arte et rationibus. [14] τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα ταῖς φαντασίαις ζῆ καὶ ταῖς μνήμαις, ἐμπειρίας δὲ μετέχει μικρόν: τὸ δὲ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος καὶ τέχνη καὶ λογισμοῖς. Thus other animals live by imagination and memory and share little in experience, whereas the human race lives by art and reasoning.
- 980b28** Fit autem ex memoria hominibus experimentum. Eiusdem namque rei multae memoriae unius experientiae potentiam faciunt. Et fere videtur scientiae simile experimentum esse, et arti. [17] γίνεσθαι δ' ἐκ τῆς μνήμης ἐμπειρία τοῖς ἀνθρώποις: αἱ γὰρ πολλαὶ μνήμαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ πράγματος μιᾶς ἐμπειρίας δύναμιν ἀποτελοῦσιν. {981a1} καὶ δοκεῖ σχεδὸν ἐπιστήμη καὶ τέχνη ὁμοίον εἶναι καὶ ἐμπειρία, Now in men experience comes from memory, for many memories of the same thing produce the capacity of a single experience. And experience seems to be somewhat like science and art.
- 981a2** Hominibus autem scientia et ars per experientiam evenit. *Experientia quidem* ἀποβαίνει δ' ἐπιστήμη καὶ τέχνη διὰ τῆς ἐμπειρίας τοῖς ἀνθρώποις: ἡ μὲν But in men science and art come from experience, for *experience causes art and*

- enim *artem fecit*, sicut ait Polus recte dicens, *sed inexperientia casum*. Fit autem ars cum ex multis experimentalibus conceptionibus una fit universalis, velut de similibus, acceptio. [18]
- 981a7 Acceptionem quidem enim habere, quod Calliae et Socrati hac aegritudine laborantibus hoc contulit, et ita multis singularium, experimenti est: quod autem omnibus huiusmodi secundum unam speciem determinatis, hac aegritudine laborantibus contulit, ut phlegmaticis, aut cholericis, aut aestu febricitantibus, artis est. [19]
- 981a12 Ad agere quidem igitur experientia quidem nihil ab arte differre videtur. Sed expertos magis proficere videmus, sine experientia rationem habentibus. Causa autem est, quia experientia quidem singularium est cognitio: ars vero universalium. Actus autem et generationes omnes circa singularia sunt. Non enim medicus sanat hominem nisi secundum accidens: sed Calliam, aut Socratem, aut aliquem sic dictorum, cui esse hominem accidit. Si igitur sine experimento quis rationem habeat, et universale quidem cognoscat, in hoc autem singulare ignoret, multotiens quidem peccabit. Singulare namque magis curabile est. [20]
- 981a24 Sed tamen scire et obviare, magis arte quam experimento esse arbitramur: et artifices expertis sapientiores esse opinamur: tamquam magis sit scire sapientiam sequentem omnia. [23]
- 981a28 Hoc autem est quia hi quidem causam sciunt, illi vero non. Experti quidem enim ipsum sciunt quia, sed propter quid nesciunt; hi autem propter quid, et causam cognoscunt. [24]
- 981a30 Unde et architectores circa quodlibet quidem huiusmodi honorabiliores, et magis scire manu artificibus putamus, et sapientiores, quia factorum causas sciunt. [25]
- Illi vero sicut quaedam inanimatorum faciunt quidem, non scientia autem faciunt quae faciunt, ut ignis quidem exurit. Inanimata quidem igitur natura
- γὰρ ἐμπειρία τέχνην ἐποίησεν, ὡς φησὶ Πῶλος, ἡ {5} δ' ἀπειρία τύχην. γίνεται δὲ τέχνη ὅταν ἐκ πολλῶν τῆς ἐμπειρίας ἐννοημάτων μία καθόλου γένηται περὶ τῶν ὁμοίων ὑπόληψις.
- τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔχειν ὑπόληψιν ὅτι Καλλία κάμνοντι τῆνδὶ τὴν νόσον τοδὶ συνήνεγκε καὶ Σωκράτει καὶ καθ' ἕκαστον οὕτω πολλοῖς, ἐμπειρίας ἐστίν: {10} τὸ δ' ὅτι πᾶσι τοῖς τοιοῖσδε κατ' εἶδος ἐν ἀφορισθεῖσι, κάμνουσι τῆνδὶ τὴν νόσον, συνήνεγκεν, οἷον τοῖς φλεγμιατώδεσιν ἢ χολώδεσι [ἢ] πυρέττουσι καύσῳ, τέχνης.
- πρὸς μὲν οὖν τὸ πράττειν ἐμπειρία τέχνης οὐδὲν δοκεῖ διαφέρειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπιτυγχάνουσιν οἱ ἐμπειροὶ τῶν ἄνευ τῆς ἐμπειρίας {15} λόγον ἔχόντων (αἴτιον δ' ὅτι ἡ μὲν ἐμπειρία τῶν καθ' ἕκαστόν ἐστι γνῶσις ἡ δὲ τέχνη τῶν καθόλου, αἱ δὲ πράξεις καὶ αἱ γενέσεις πᾶσαι περὶ τὸ καθ' ἕκαστόν εἰσιν: οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρώπων ὑγιάζει ὁ ἰατρεύων ἀλλ' ἢ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, ἀλλὰ Καλλίαν ἢ Σωκράτην ἢ τῶν ἄλλων τινὰ {20} τῶν οὕτω λεγομένων ᾧ συμβέβηκεν ἀνθρώπῳ εἶναι: ἐὰν οὖν ἄνευ τῆς ἐμπειρίας ἔχη τις τὸν λόγον, καὶ τὸ καθόλου μὲν γνωρίζῃ τὸ δ' ἐν τούτῳ καθ' ἕκαστον ἀγνοῇ, πολλάκις διαμαρτήσεται τῆς θεραπείας: θεραπευτὸν γὰρ τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον):
- ἀλλ' ὅμως τὸ γε εἰδέναι καὶ τὸ ἐπαῖναι τῆ {25} τέχνη τῆς ἐμπειρίας ὑπάρχειν οἰόμεθα μᾶλλον, καὶ σοφωτέρους τοὺς τεχνίτας τῶν ἐμπειρῶν ὑπολαμβάνομεν, ὡς κατὰ τὸ εἰδέναι μᾶλλον ἀκολουθοῦσαν τὴν σοφίαν πᾶσι:
- τοῦτο δ' ὅτι οἱ μὲν τὴν αἰτίαν ἴσασιν οἱ δ' οὐ. οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐμπειροὶ τὸ ὅτι μὲν ἴσασιν, διότι δ' οὐκ ἴσασιν: οἱ δὲ τὸ διότι {30} καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν γνωρίζουσιν.
- διὸ καὶ τοὺς ἀρχιτέκτονας περὶ ἕκαστον τιμωτέρους καὶ μᾶλλον εἰδέναι νομίζομεν τῶν χειροτεχνῶν καὶ σοφωτέρους, {981b1} ὅτι τὰς αἰτίας τῶν ποιουμένων ἴσασιν
- (τοὺς δ', ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν ἀψύχων ἕνια ποιεῖ μὲν, οὐκ εἰδῶτα δὲ ποιεῖ ἅ ποιεῖ, οἷον καίει τὸ πῦρ: τὰ μὲν οὖν ἀψυχα φύσει τινὶ ποιεῖν τούτων ἕκαστον τοὺς
- inexperience causes luck*, as Polus rightly states. Art comes into being when from many conceptions acquired by experience a single universal judgment is formed about similar things.
- For to judge that this [medicine] has been beneficial to Callias and Socrates and many other individuals who suffer from this disease is a matter of experience; but to judge that it has been beneficial to all individuals of a particular kind (such as the phlegmatic, the bilious, or the feverish) who suffer from this disease is a matter of art.
- In practical matters, then, experience seems to differ in no way from art. But we see that men of experience are more proficient than those who have theory without experience. The reason is that experience is a knowledge of singulars, whereas art is a knowledge of universals. But all actions and processes of generation are concerned with singulars. For the physician heals man only incidentally, but he heals Socrates, or Callias, or some individual that can be named, to whom the nature of man happens to belong. Therefore, if anyone has theory without experience, and knows the universal but not the singulars contained in this, he will very often make mistakes. For it is only the individual man who can be cured.
- Yet we think that to know and to refute objections belong to art rather than to experience, and we are of the opinion that those who are proficient in art are wiser than men of experience, as it is more to know if one's wisdom pursues all things.
- Now this is because the former know the cause whereas the latter do not. For those who have experience know that something is so but do not know why, whereas the others know the why and the cause.
- For this reason, too, we think that the architects in each art are more honorable, and that they know more and are wiser than the manual laborers, because they understand the causes of the things done.
- Indeed, we think that the latter resemble certain inanimate things, which act but do not know what they do, like a fire which burns. Therefore, inanimate things

- quadam unumquodque faciunt horum, sed manu artifices propter consuetudinem faciunt, tamquam non secundum practicos esse sapientiores sint, sed secundum quod rationes habent ipsi, et causas cognoscunt.
- δὲ χειροτέχνας {5} δι' ἔθος, ὡς οὐ κατὰ τὸ πρακτικὸς εἶναι σοφωτέρους ὄντας ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ λόγον ἔχειν αὐτοὺς καὶ τὰς αἰτίας γνωρίζειν.
- perform each of their actions as a result of a certain natural disposition, whereas manual laborers perform theirs through habit, implying that some men are wiser not insofar as they are practical, but insofar as they themselves have the theories and know the causes.
- 981b7** Et omnino signum scientis est posse docere, et ob hoc magis artem experimento scientiam esse existimamus. Possunt enim hi docere, illi autem docere non possunt. [29]
- ὄλως τε σημεῖον τοῦ εἰδότος καὶ μὴ εἰδότος τὸ δύνασθαι διδάσκειν ἐστίν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὴν τέχνην τῆς ἐμπειρίας ἡγούμεθα μᾶλλον ἐπιστήμην εἶναι: δύνανται γάρ, οἱ δὲ οὐ δύνανται διδάσκειν.
- In general, a sign of scientific knowledge is the ability to teach, and for this reason we think that art rather than experience is science. For those who have an art are able to teach, whereas the others are not.
- 981b10** Amplius autem sensuum, nec unum sapientiam esse ponimus, cum et his singularium cognitiones maxime sint propriae. Sed propter quid de nullo dicunt: ut propter quid ignis calidus, sed quia calidus solum sit. [30]
- ἔτι δὲ τῶν αἰσθήσεων οὐδεμίαν ἡγούμεθα εἶναι σοφίαν: καίτοι κυριώταταί γ' εἰσὶν αὐταὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα γνώσεις: ἀλλ' οὐ λέγουσι τὸ διὰ τί περὶ οὐδενός, οἷον διὰ τί θερμὸν τὸ πῦρ, ἀλλὰ μόνον ὅτι θερμόν.
- Furthermore, we do not hold that any one of the senses is wisdom, since the cognition of singular things belongs especially to the senses. However, these do not tell us why a thing is so; for example, they do not tell us why fire is hot but only that it is so.
- 981b13** Primum quidem igitur conveniens est quamlibet artem invenientem ultra communes sensus, ab hominibus mirari, non solum propter aliquam inventorum utilitatem, sed sicut sapientem, et ab aliis distinguentem. Pluribus autem repertis artibus, et aliis quidem ad necessaria, aliis vero ad introductionem existentibus: semper tales illis sapientiores esse arbitrandum est propter id, quod illorum scientiae ad usum non sunt. [31]
- τὸ μὲν οὖν πρῶτον εἰκὸς τὸν ὁποιανοῦν εὐρόντα τέχνην παρὰ τὰς κοινὰς αἰσθήσεις θαυμάζεσθαι {15} ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων μὴ μόνον διὰ τὸ χρήσιμον εἶναι τι τῶν εὐρεθέντων ἀλλ' ὡς σοφὸν καὶ διαφέροντα τῶν ἄλλων: πλειόνων δ' εὐρισκομένων τεχνῶν καὶ τῶν μὲν πρὸς ἀναγκαῖα τῶν δὲ πρὸς διαγωγὴν οὐσῶν, αἱ σοφωτέρους τοὺς τοιοῦτους ἐκεῖνων ὑπολαμβάνεσθαι διὰ τὸ μὴ πρὸς {20} χρῆσιν εἶναι τὰς ἐπιστήμας αὐτῶν.
- It is only fitting, then, that the one who discovered any art whatsoever that went beyond the common perceptions of men should be admired by men, not only because of some usefulness of his discoveries, but as one who is wise and as distinguishing from others. And as more of the arts were discovered, some to supply the necessities of life, and others to introduce us [to the sciences], those who discovered the latter were always considered to be wiser than those who discovered the former, because their sciences were not for the sake of utility.
- Unde omnibus talibus rebus iam partis, quae non ad voluptatem, nec ad necessitatem scientiarum repertae sunt. Et primum in his locis ubi vacabant. Unde circa Aegyptum mathematicae artes primum substiterunt. Ibi namque gens sacerdotum vacare dimissa est.
- ὅθεν ἤδη πάντων τῶν τοιούτων κατεσκευασμένων αἱ μὴ πρὸς ἡδονὴν μηδὲ πρὸς ἀναγκαῖα τῶν ἐπιστημῶν εὐρέθησαν, καὶ πρῶτον ἐν τούτοις τοῖς τόποις οὐ πρῶτον ἐσχόλασαν: διὸ περὶ Αἴγυπτον αἱ μαθηματικαὶ πρῶτον τέχναι συνέστησαν, ἐκεῖ γὰρ ἀφείθη σχολάζειν {25} τὸ τῶν ἱερέων ἔθνος.
- Hence, after all such arts had already been developed, those sciences were discovered which are pursued for the sake of neither pleasure nor necessity. This happened first in those places where men had leisure. Hence the mathematical arts originated in Egypt, for there the priestly class was permitted leisure.
- 981b25** In moralibus quidem igitur, quae sit artis et scientiae differentia et similibus generum, dictum est. [34]
- εἴρηται μὲν οὖν ἐν τοῖς ἠθικοῖς τίς διαφορὰ τέχνης καὶ ἐπιστήμης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ὁμογενῶν:
- (The difference between art and science and similar mental states has been stated in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.)
- 981b27** Cuius autem gratia nunc sermonem facimus, hoc est, quia denominatam sapientiam circa primas causas et principia existimant omnes versari. Quare sicut dictum est prius, expertus quidem quemcumque sensum habentibus sapientior esse videtur, artifex autem expertis, architector autem manu artifice, speculativi autem magis activis.
- οὐ δ' ἔνεκα νῦν ποιούμεθα τὸν λόγον τοῦτ' ἐστίν, ὅτι τὴν ὀνομαζομένην σοφίαν περὶ τὰ πρῶτα αἴτια καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς ὑπολαμβάνουσι πάντες: ὥστε, καθάπερ εἴρηται πρότερον, {30} ὁ μὲν ἔμπειρος τῶν ὁποιοῦν ἔχόντων αἰσθησὶν εἶναι δοκεῖ σοφώτερος, ὁ δὲ τεχνίτης τῶν ἐμπίρων, χειροτέχνην δὲ ἀρχιτέκτων, αἱ δὲ θεωρητικαὶ τῶν ποιητικῶν μᾶλλον.
- Now the reason for undertaking this investigation is that all men think that the science that is called wisdom deals with the primary causes and principles of things. Hence, as we have said before (981a24–981a28), the man of experience is considered to be wiser than one who has any of the senses; the artist wiser than the man of experience; the architect wiser

Quod quidem igitur sapientia et circa {982a1} ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ σοφία περί τινας than the manual laborer; and speculative  
 quasdam causas et principia sit scien- ἀρχὰς καὶ αἰτίας ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη, δηλον. knowledge wiser than practical knowl-  
 tia, manifestum est. [35] edge. It is quite evident, then, that wis-  
 dom is a science of certain causes and  
 principles.

1. Huic autem scientiae Aristoteles prooemium prae-  
 mittit, in quo duo tradit.

Primo quidem ostendit circa quid haec scientia ver-  
 setur.

Secundo qualis sit ista scientia, ibi, *quia vero non  
 activa*.

Circa primum duo facit.

Primo ostendit, quod huius scientiae, quae sapientia  
 dicitur, est considerare causas.

Secundo quales vel quas causas considerat, ibi, *quo-  
 niam autem scientiam hanc*.

Circa primum praemittit quaedam ex quibus ad pro-  
 positum arguit.

Secundo ex praedictis rationem sumit, ibi, *cuius au-  
 tem gratia nunc*.

Circa primum duo facit.

Primo ostendit in communi scientiae dignitatem.

Secundo, ostendit cognitionis ordinem, ibi, *animalia  
 quidem igitur* et cetera.

Scientiae autem dignitatem ostendit per hoc quod  
 naturaliter desideratur ab omnibus tamquam finis. Unde  
 circa hoc duo facit.

Primo proponit intentum.

Secundo probat, ibi, *signum autem*.

Proponit igitur primo, quod omnibus hominibus na-  
 turaliter desiderium inest ad sciendum.

2. Cuius ratio potest esse triplex: primo quidem,  
 quia unaquaeque res naturaliter appetit perfectionem  
 sui. Unde et materia dicitur appetere formam, sicut im-  
 perfectum appetit suam perfectionem. Cum igitur intel-  
 lectus, a quo homo est id quod est, in se consideratur  
 sit in potentia omnia, nec in actum eorum reducatur  
 nisi per scientiam, quia nihil est eorum quae sunt, ante  
 intelligere, ut dicitur in tertio *De anima*: sic naturaliter  
 unusquisque desiderat scientiam sicut materia formam.

3. Secundo, quia quaelibet res naturalem inclinatio-  
 nem habet ad suam propriam operationem: sicut cali-  
 dum ad calefaciendum, et grave ut deorsum moveatur.  
 Propria autem operatio hominis in quantum homo, est  
 intelligere. Per hoc enim ab omnibus aliis differt. Unde  
 naturaliter desiderium hominis inclinatur ad intelligen-  
 dum, et per consequens ad sciendum.

4. Tertio, quia unicuique rei desiderabile est, ut suo  
 principio coniungatur; in hoc enim uniuscuiusque per-

1. Aristotle first sets down an introduction to this sci-  
 ence, in which he treats of two things.

First [2], he points out with what this science is con-  
 cerned.

Second [53], he explains what kind of science it is, at  
*that this is not a practical science* (982b11).

In regard to the first he does two things.

First, he shows that the office of this science, which is  
 called wisdom, is to consider the causes of things.

Second [36], he explains with what causes or kinds of  
 causes it is concerned, at *but since we are in search* (982a4).

In regard to the first, he prefaces certain preliminary  
 considerations from which he argues in support of his  
 thesis.

Second [35], he draws a conclusion from these consid-  
 erations, at *now the reason for undertaking* (981b27).

In regard to the first he does two things.

First, he makes clear the dignity of scientific knowledge  
 in general.

Second [9], he explains the hierarchy in knowing, at  
*animals by nature* (980a27).

Now he establishes the dignity of scientific knowledge  
 from the fact that it is naturally desired as an end by all  
 men. Hence, in regard to this he does two things.

First, he states his intention.

Second [2], he proves it, at *a sign of this* (980a21).

Accordingly, he first says that the desire to know be-  
 longs by nature to all men.

2. Three reasons can be given for this. The first is that  
 each thing naturally desires its own perfection. Hence mat-  
 ter is also said to desire form as any imperfect thing desires  
 its perfection. Therefore, since the intellect, by which man  
 is what he is, considered in itself is all things potentially,  
 and becomes them actually only through knowledge, be-  
 cause the intellect is none of the things that exist before it  
 understands them, as is stated in *On the Soul* 3, so each man  
 naturally desires knowledge just as matter desires form.

3. The second reason is that each thing has a natural  
 inclination to perform its proper operation, as something  
 hot is naturally inclined to heat, and something heavy to  
 be moved downwards. Now the proper operation of man  
 as man is to understand, for by reason of this he differs  
 from all other things. Hence the desire of man is naturally  
 inclined to understand and therefore to possess scientific  
 knowledge.

4. The third reason is that it is desirable for each thing to  
 be united to its source, since it is in this that the perfection

fectio consistit. Unde et motus circularis est perfectissimus, ut probatur octavo *Physicorum*, quia finem coniungit principio. Substantiis autem separatis, quae sunt principia intellectus humani, et ad quae intellectus humanus se habet ut imperfectum ad perfectum, non coniungitur homo nisi per intellectum: unde et in hoc ultima hominis felicitas consistit. Et ideo naturaliter homo desiderat scientiam.

Nec obstat si aliqui homines scientiae huic studium non impendant; cum frequenter qui finem aliquem desiderant, a prosecutione finis ex aliqua causa retrahantur, vel propter difficultatem perveniendi, vel propter alias occupationes. Sic etiam licet omnes homines scientiam desiderent, non tamen omnes scientiae studium impendunt, quia ab aliis detinentur, vel a voluptatibus, vel a necessitatibus vitae praesentis, vel etiam propter pigritiam vitant laborem addiscendi.

Hoc autem proponit Aristoteles ut ostendat, quod quaerere scientiam non propter aliud utilem, qualis est haec scientia, non est vanum, cum naturale desiderium vanum esse non possit.

5. Deinde ostendit quod proposuerat, per signum: quia cum sensus ad duo nobis deserviant; scilicet ad cognitionem rerum, et ad utilitatem vitae; diliguntur a nobis propter seipsos, in quantum cognoscitivi sunt, et etiam propter hoc, quod utilitatem ad vitam conferunt. Et hoc patet ex hoc, quod ille sensus maxime ab omnibus diligitur, qui magis cognoscitivus est, qui est visus, quem diligimus non solum ad agendum aliquid, sed etiam si nihil agere deberemus. Cuius causa est, quia iste sensus, scilicet visus, inter omnes magis facit nos cognoscere, et plures differentias rerum nobis demonstrat.

6. In quo manifestum est quod duas praeeminentias visus in cognoscendo ad alios sensus ponit.

Unam quidem quia perfectius cognoscit. Quod quidem visui accidit, eo quod spiritualior est inter omnes sensus. Quanto enim aliqua vis cognoscitiva est immaterialior, tanto est perfectior in cognoscendo. Quod autem visus sit immaterialior, patet si consideretur eius immutatio, qua ab obiecto immutatur. Nam, cum omnia alia sensibilia immutent organum et medium sensus secundum aliquam materialem immutationem, sicut tactus obiectum calefaciendo et infrigidando, obiectum vero gustus, afficiendo sapore aliquo organum gustus mediante saliva, obiectum autem auditus per motum corporalem, obiectum autem odoratus per fumalem evaporationem, solum obiectum visus non immutat nec organum nec medium nisi spirituali immutatione. Non enim pupilla nec aer coloratur, sed solum speciem coloris recipiunt secundum esse spirituale. Quia igitur sensus in actu consistit in actuali immutatione sensus

of each thing consists. This is also the reason why circular motion is the most perfect motion, as is proved in *Physics* 8, because its terminus is united to its starting point. Now it is only by means of his intellect that man is united to the separate substances, which are the source of the human intellect and to which the human intellect is related as something imperfect to something perfect. It is for this reason, too, that the ultimate happiness of man consists in this union. Therefore, man naturally desires to know.

The fact that some men do not devote any study to this science does not disprove this thesis. For those who desire some end are often prevented from pursuing it for some reason or other, either because of the difficulty of attaining it or because of other occupations. And in this way, too, even though all men desire knowledge, still not all devote themselves to the pursuit of it because they are held back by other things such as pleasures or the needs of the present life—or they may even avoid the effort that learning demands because they are lazy.

Now Aristotle makes this statement in order to show that it is not pointless to search for a science that is not useful for anything else (such as this science), since a natural desire cannot exist in vain.

5. Then he establishes his thesis by means of an example. Since our senses serve us in two respects—in knowing things and in meeting the needs of life—we love them for themselves inasmuch as they enable us to know and also assist us to live. This is evident from the fact that all men take the greatest delight in the sense that is most knowing, the sense of sight. We value it not merely so we can do things, but even when we are not required to act at all. This is because this sense of sight is the most knowing of all our senses and makes us aware of many differences between things.

6. In this part, it is clear that he gives two reasons why sight is superior to the other senses in knowing.

The first is that it knows in a more perfect way, and this belongs to it because it is the most spiritual of all the senses. For the more immaterial a power is, the more perfectly it knows. And evidently sight is a more immaterial sense if we consider the modification produced in it by its object. All other sensible objects change both the organ and medium of a sense by a material modification: for example, the object of touch by heating and cooling, the object of taste by affecting the organ of taste with some flavor through the medium of saliva, the object of hearing by means of motion in the body, and the object of smell by means of the evaporation of vaporous elements. But the object of sight changes the organ and medium of sight only by a spiritual modification. Neither the pupil of the eye nor the air becomes colored, but they only receive the form of color in a spiritual mode of being. Therefore, because actual sensation consists in the actual modification of a sense by

ab objecto, manifestum est illum sensum spiritualiorem esse in sua operatione, qui immaterialius et spiritualius immutatur. Et ideo visus certius et perfectius iudicat de sensibilibus inter alios sensus.

7. Aliam autem praeeminentiam ponit, quia nobis plura demonstrat. Quod quidem accidit ex ratione sui obiecti. Tactus enim et gustus, et similiter odoratus et auditus sunt cognoscitivi illorum accidentium, in quibus distinguuntur inferiora corpora a superioribus. Visus autem est cognoscitivus illorum accidentium, in quibus communicant inferiora corpora cum superioribus. Nam visibile actu est aliquid per lucem, in qua communicant inferiora corpora cum superioribus, ut dicitur secundo *De anima*; et ideo corpora caelestia solo visu sunt sensibilia.

8. Est autem alia ratio, quia visus plures differentias rerum demonstrat; quia sensibilia corpora praecipue per visum et tactum cognoscere videmur, et adhuc magis per visum. Cuius ratio ex hoc sumi potest: quod alii tres sensus sunt cognoscitivi eorum quae a corpore sensibili quodammodo effluunt, et non in ipso consistunt: sicut sonus est a corpore sensibili, ut ab eo fluens et non in eo manens: et similiter fumalis evaporatio cum qua et ex qua odor diffunditur. Visus autem et tactus percipiunt illa accidentia quae rebus ipsis immanent, sicut color et calidum et frigidum. Unde iudicium tactus et visus extenditur ad res ipsas, iudicium autem auditus et odoratus ad ea quae a rebus ipsis procedunt, non ad res ipsas. Et inde est quod figura et magnitudo et huiusmodi, quibus ipsa res sensibilis disponitur, magis percipitur visu et tactu, quam aliis sensibus. Et adhuc amplius magis visu quam tactu, tum propter hoc quod visus habet maiorem efficaciam ad cognoscendum, ut dictum est, tum propter hoc, quod quantitas et ea quae ad ipsam sequuntur, quae videntur esse sensibilia communia, proximius se habent ad obiectum visus quam ad obiectum tactus. Quod ex hoc patet, quod obiectum visus omne corpus habens aliquam quantitatem aliquo modo consequitur, non autem obiectum tactus.

9. Deinde cum dicit *animalia quidem* prosequitur de ordine cognitionis.

Et primo quantum ad bruta animalia.

Secundo quantum ad homines, ibi, *alia quidem igitur* et cetera.

Circa vero bruta animalia tangit primo quidem id in quo omnia animalia communicant.

Secundo id in quo animalia differunt, et seinvicem excedunt, ibi, *ex sensibus*.

Communicant autem omnia animalia in hoc quod naturaliter sensus habent. Nam ex hoc animal est animal, quod habet animam sensitivam, quae natura est

its object, it is evident that that sense which is changed in a more immaterial and spiritual way is more spiritual in its operation. Hence sight judges about sensible objects in a more certain and perfect way than the other senses do.

7. The other reason which he gives for the superiority of sight is that it gives us more information about things. This is attributable to the nature of its object, for touch and taste, and likewise smell and hearing, perceive those accidents by which lower bodies are distinguished from higher ones. But sight perceives those accidents that lower bodies have in common with higher ones. For a thing is actually visible by means of light, which is common both to lower and higher bodies, as is said in *On the Soul* 2. Hence the celestial bodies are perceptible only by means of sight.

8. There is also another reason. Sight informs us of many differences between things, for we seem to know sensible things best by means of sight and touch, but especially by means of sight. The reason for this can be drawn from the fact that the other three senses perceive those accidents that in a way flow from a sensible body and do not remain in it. Thus sound comes from a sensible body inasmuch as it flows away from it and does not remain in it. The same thing is true of the evaporation of volatile elements, with which and by which odor is diffused. But sight and touch perceive those accidents that remain in sensible bodies, such as color, warmth, and coldness. Hence the judgment of sight and touch is extended to things themselves, whereas the judgment of hearing and smell is extended to those accidents that flow from things and not to things themselves. It is for this reason that figure and size and the like, by which a sensible being itself is disposed, are perceived more by sight and touch than by the other senses. And they are perceived more by sight than by touch, both because sight knows more efficaciously, as has been pointed out [6], and also because quantity and those [accidents] which naturally follow from it (which are seen to be the common sensibles) are more closely related to the object of sight than to that of touch. This is clear from the fact that the object of sight belongs in some degree to every body having some quantity, whereas the object of touch does not.

9. *Animals by nature, then* (980a27). Here he considers the hierarchy in knowledge.

He first does this [9] with respect to brute animals;

and then [14], with respect to men, at *thus other animals* (980b25).

With respect to brute animals he mentions first what all animals have in common;

second [10], that by which they differ and surpass one another, at *now in some animals* (980a28).

Now all animals are alike in the respect that they possess by nature the power of sensation. For an animal is an animal by reason of the fact that it has a sentient soul,