Book I

I 1

Every craft and every method of inquiry and likewise |**1094a1**| every action and deliberate choice seems to seek some good.[1] That is why they correctly declare that the good is "that which all seek."[2]

A certain difference, however, appears to exist among ends.[3] For some are activities while others are works of some sort beyond the activities themselves.[4] |5| But wherever there are ends beyond the actions, in those cases, the works are naturally better than the activities. But since there are many sorts of actions and of crafts and sciences, their ends are many as well. For health is the end of medicine, a ship of shipbuilding, victory of generalship, and wealth of household management.[5]

Some of these fall under some one capacity, however, as |10| bridle making falls under horsemanship, along with all the others that produce equipment for horsemanship, and as it and every action in warfare fall under generalship, and, in the same way, others fall under different ones.[6] But in all such cases, the ends of the architectonic ones are more choiceworthy than the ends under them, since these are pursued |15| for the sake also of the former.[7] It makes no difference, though, whether the ends of the actions are the activities themselves or some other thing beyond them, just as in the sciences we have mentioned.[8]

I 2

If, then, there is some end of things doable in action that we wish for because of itself, and the others because of it, and we do not choose everything because of something else (since if *that* is the case, it will go on without limit |20| so that the desire will be empty and pointless), it is clear that this will be the good—that is, the best good.[9] Hence regarding our life as well, won't knowing the good have great influence and—like archers with a target—won't we be better able to hit what we should?[10] If so, |25| we should try to grasp in outline, at least, what the good is and to which of the sciences or capacities it properly belongs.[11]

It would seem to be the one with the most control, and the most architectonic one.[12] And politics seems to be like this, since it is the one that prescribes which of the sciences need to exist in cities and

which ones each group in cities should learn and up to what point.[13] |**1094ᵇ1**| Indeed, we see that even the capacities that are generally most honored are under it—for example, generalship, household management, and rhetoric.[14] And since it uses the other practical sciences and, furthermore, legislates about what must be done and what avoided, |5| its end will circumscribe those of the others, so that it will be the human good.[15]

For even if the good is the same for an individual and for a city, that of a city is evidently a greater and, at any rate, a more complete good to acquire and preserve.[16] For while it should content us to acquire and preserve this for an individual alone, it is nobler and more divine to do so for a nation and city. And so |10| our method of inquiry seeks the good of these things, since it is a sort of politics.[17]

I 3

Our account will be adequate if its degree of perspicuity is in accord with its subject matter.[18] For we must not look for the same degree of exactness in all accounts, any more than in all products of the crafts.[19]

Noble things and just things, which are what politics investigates, admit of so much difference and |15| variability that they seem to exist by conventional law alone and not by nature.[20] Good things seem to admit of variability in the same way too, because they result in harm in many cases, since some have in fact been destroyed because of wealth, others because of courage. So it should content us, in an account that concerns and is in accord with such things, to show the truth roughly and in outline, |20| and—in an account that concerns things that hold for the most part and is in accord with them—to reach conclusions of the same sort too.[21] It is in the same way, then, that we also need to take each of the things we say. For it is characteristic of a well-educated person to look for the degree of exactness in each kind of investigation that the nature of the subject itself allows.[22] |25| For it is evident that accepting persuasive arguments from a mathematician is like demanding demonstrations from a rhetorician.[23]

But each person correctly discerns the things he knows and is a good discerner of these. Hence a person well educated in a given area is a good discerner *in that area,* while a person well educated in all areas is an unconditionally good discerner.[24] |**1095ᵃ1**| That is why a young person is not a suitable audience for politics.[25] For he has no experience of the actions of life, and the accounts are in accord with these and concerned with these.[26]

Further, since he tends to follow his feelings, it will be pointless and not beneficial for him to be in the audience, since the end is not |5| knowledge but action.[27] And it makes no difference whether he is young in years or immature in character, since the deficiency is not a matter of time but is due to living and pursuing each thing in accord with his feelings. For to people like that, knowledge turns out to be profitless in just the way it does to those who lack self-control.[28] For those who form their desires and do their actions in accord with reason, however, |10| it will be of great benefit to know about these things.

So much for the prefatory remarks concerning the audience, how our discussion is to be received, and what we are proposing to do.

I 4

Let us, then, resume our account. Since every sort of knowledge and every deliberate choice reaches after some good, let us say what it is |15| politics seeks—that is, what the topmost of all the good things doable in action is.

About its name, most people are pretty much agreed, since both ordinary people and sophisticated ones say it is "happiness" and suppose that living well and doing well are the same as being happy.[29] Concerning happiness, however, and what |20| it is, they are in dispute, and ordinary people do not give the same answer as wise ones. For ordinary people think it is one of the plainly evident things, such as pleasure or wealth or honor—some taking it to be one thing, others another. And often the same person thinks it is different things, since when he gets a disease, it is health, whereas when he is poor, it is wealth. But when these people are conscious of their own ignorance |25| they are wonder-struck by those who proclaim some great thing that is over their heads. And some people did used to think that, beyond these many good things, there is another intrinsically good one that causes all of them to be good.[30]

Now it is presumably quite pointless to inquire into all these beliefs, and enough to inquire into those that are most prevalent or that seem to have some argument for them.[31]

We must not let it escape our notice, however, |30| that arguments leading from starting-points and arguments leading to starting-points are different.[32] For Plato too was rightly puzzled about this and would inquire whether the route was leading from starting-points or to starting-points—as, in a stadium racecourse, that of the athletes may lead away from the starting-point toward the boundary or in the reverse

direction. |**1095ᵇ1**| We must indeed start from things that are knowable. But things are knowable in two ways, since some are knowable to us, some unconditionally.[33] So presumably we should start from things knowable to us.

That is why we must be nobly brought up if, where noble things, just things, and the topics of politics as a whole are concerned, |5| we are to be an adequate audience.[34] For the starting-point is the fact that something is so, and, if this is sufficiently evident, we do not also need the explanation of why it is so.[35] A nobly brought up person, then, either has the starting-points or can easily get hold of them. And as for someone who neither has nor can get hold of them, he should listen to Hesiod:

> Best of all is the one who understands everything himself, |10|
> Good too is that person who is persuaded by one that has spoken well.
> But he who neither understands it himself nor listening to another
> Takes it to heart, that one is a useless man.[36]

I 5

But let us take up our account at the point where we digressed.[37] People seem (which is not unreasonable) to get their suppositions about the good—that is, happiness—from their lives.[38] |15| For ordinary people, the most vulgar ones, suppose it to be pleasure. And that is why the life they like is the life of indulgence. For there are three lives that stand out: the one we just mentioned, the political, and, third, the contemplative.[39]

Now ordinary people do seem wholly slavish, because the life they deliberately choose is one that is characteristic of grazing cattle. |20| They have an argument for their choice, though, because many of those in positions of authority feel the same as Sardanapalus.[40]

Sophisticated people, on the other hand, and doers of action, deliberately choose honor, since it is pretty much the end of the political life. It, however, is apparently more superficial than what we are looking for, since it seems to be in the hands of the honorers more than of the honorees, whereas |25| we have a hunch that the good is something that properly belongs to us and is difficult to take away.[41] Further, people seem to pursue honor in order to be convinced that they are good—at any rate, they seek to be honored by practically-wise people, among people who know them, and for virtue.[42] It is clear, then, that according to them, at least, virtue is better.

Maybe one might even suppose that *it* is more |30| the end of the political life than honor is. But even virtue is apparently too incomplete, since it seems possible to have virtue even while sleeping or being inactive throughout life or while suffering evils and bad luck of the worst sort. Someone who was living like *that*, however, |**1096ª1**| no one would call happy unless he was defending a thesis at all costs.[43] That is enough about these issues, since they have also been adequately discussed in the works that are in circulation.[44]

The third life is the contemplative one, which we shall undertake to investigate in what follows.

The life of a moneymaker |5| is in a way forced, and wealth is clearly not the good we are looking for, since it is useful and for the sake of something else.[45] Hence we might be more inclined to suppose that the things already mentioned are the end, since they are liked because of themselves. But they are apparently not the end either—indeed, many arguments have been presented against them. So we may set them aside.[46] |10|

I 6

But perhaps we had better investigate the universal good and go through the puzzles concerning the way in which it is said of things, even if this sort of inquiry is an uphill one because the men who introduced the forms were friends of ours.[47] Yet it would seem better, perhaps, and something we should do, at any rate when the preservation of the truth is at stake, to confute even what is properly our own, most of all because we are philosophers. |15| For while we love both our friends and the truth, it is a pious thing to accord greater honor to the truth.

Those, then, who introduced this view did not posit forms for things among which they spoke of prior and posterior, which is why they did not furnish a form of the numbers.[48] But the good is said of things in the categories of what it is, quality, and relation, and |20| what is intrinsically—that is, substance—is naturally prior to relation (for a relation would seem to be an offshoot or coincidental attribute of what is), so that there will not be some common form set over these.[49]

Further, good is said of things in as many ways as being. For it is said of things in the category of what it is (for example, the god and the understanding), in that of quality (the virtues), in that of quantity (the |25| moderate amount), in that of relation (the useful), in that of time (the opportune moment), in that of place (a livable dwelling), and so

on.[50] Thus it is clear that it will not be some common universal—that is, a "one."[51] For then it would not be said of things in all the categories but only in one.

Further, if of things that are in accord with one form there is also one science, then of all goods there would also be some one science.[52] |30| But as things stand there are many, even of goods in one category—for example, of the opportune moment (for in war it is generalship but in disease medicine) and of the moderate amount (in food it is medicine but in physical exertion athletic training).

We might also raise puzzles about what they even mean by *each-thing-itself* if indeed of both human-itself |35| and human there is a single account—namely, that |**1096ᵇ1**| of human.[53] For insofar as each is human, they will not differ at all, and neither will the corresponding "ones," insofar as each is good.

Neither will the good-itself be more of a good by being eternal, if indeed a long-lasting white thing is no whiter than an ephemeral one.

The Pythagoreans seem to have something more convincing to say |5| about this, since they place the One in the column of goods—indeed, Speusippus seems to have followed their lead.[54]

But let us leave these topics for another discussion.

A controversial point, however, does lie concealed in what we have said, because their arguments are not concerned with *every* good. Those said of things in accord with one form are those pursued and liked |10| as intrinsic goods, whereas those that tend to produce or safeguard these, or to prevent their contraries, are said to be good because of these and in a different way.[55] It is clear, then, that "good" would be said of things in two ways, that is, of some as intrinsic goods, of others as goods because of these. So let us separate off the intrinsic goods from the ones that produce a benefit, and investigate whether |15| intrinsic goods are said to be good in accord with a single form.

The intrinsic ones, though, what sorts of things should we suppose them to be? Or aren't they the ones that are pursued on their own as well, such as thinking, seeing, and certain pleasures and honors? For even if we do pursue these because of other things, we might nonetheless suppose them to belong among the intrinsic goods. Or does nothing else belong there except the form? In that case, the form will be pointless.[56] |20| But if these other things belong among the intrinsic ones, the same account of the goodwill have to show up in all of them, just as that of whiteness does in snow and white lead. In fact, though, the accounts of honor, practical wisdom, and pleasure differ and are at variance regarding the very way in which they are goods.

Hence the good is not something common and in accord with a single |25| form.

But how, then, is it said of things? For at least it does not seem to be a case of homonymy resulting from luck.[57] Is it, then, that all goods at least derive from or are related to a single thing? Or is it more a matter of analogy? For as sight is in the case of body, so understanding is in the case of soul, and so on for other things in other cases.[58]

But perhaps we should leave these questions aside for now, since an exact treatment of them more properly belongs to a different branch of philosophy.[59] |30| Similarly in the case of the form. For even if there is some single good predicated in common of all intrinsic goods, a separable one that is itself an intrinsic good, it is clear that it would not be doable in action or acquirable by a human being.[60] But that is the sort that is being looked for.

Maybe someone might think it better to get to know |35| the form in connection with the goods that *are* acquirable and doable in action. |**1097ª1**| For they might think that by having it as a paradigm, we shall also better know those things that are good for us and—knowing them—aim at and hit them. This argument certainly has some plausibility but it seems to clash with the sciences. For each of these, though it seeks some good and looks for how to supply whatever is lacking, |5| leaves aside knowledge of the form. And yet for all craftsmen not to know—and not even to look for—so important an aid would hardly be reasonable.

There is a puzzle too about how a weaver or a carpenter will benefit, as regards his own craft, from knowing the good-itself or how anyone will be a better doctor or a better general from having seen the form-itself. |10| For the doctor does not even seem to investigate health in that way but, rather, human health, or perhaps, rather, the health of this human being, since it is the particular human being that he treats.

So much, then, for these topics.

I 7

Let us return to the good we are looking for and |15| what it could possibly be. For it is apparently different in different actions and different crafts, since it is one thing in medicine, a different one in generalship, and likewise for the rest. What, then, is the good characteristic of each? Or isn't it the thing for whose sake the rest of the actions are done? In medicine this is health, in generalship victory, in building a house, and in other crafts something else, and in |20| every action and deliberate choice it is the end, since it is for the sake of the end that everyone does

the rest of the actions. So if there is some end of all the things doable in action, this will be the good doable in action, and if there are more than one, it will be these.

Taking a different course, then, our account has reached the same conclusion.[61] But we should try to make this yet more perspicuous.

Since there are evidently many |25| ends, and we choose some of them because of something else, as we do wealth, flutes, and instruments generally, it is clear that not all ends are complete. But the best one is apparently something complete.[62] So if one thing alone is complete, this will be what we are looking for, but if there are more, it will be the most complete of them.

We say that |30| what is intrinsically worth pursuing is more complete than what is worth pursuing because of something else, that what is never choiceworthy because of something else is more complete than things that are both intrinsically choiceworthy and choiceworthy because of it, and that what is unconditionally complete, then, is what is always intrinsically choiceworthy and never choiceworthy because of something else.

Happiness seems to be most like this, since *it* we always choose because of itself and never because of something else. |**1097b1**| But honor, pleasure, understanding, and every virtue, though we do choose them because of themselves as well (since if they had no further consequences, we would still take each of them), we also choose for the sake of happiness, supposing that because of them we shall be happy. Happiness, on the other hand, |5| no one chooses for the sake of these things or because of anything else in general.

The same conclusion also apparently follows from self-sufficiency, since the complete good seems to be self-sufficient. By "self-sufficient," however, we mean not self-sufficient for someone who is alone, living a solitary life, but also for parents, children, wife, and friends and fellow citizens generally, |10| since a human being is by nature political.[63] Of these, some defining mark must be found, since, if we extend the list to ancestors and descendants and to friends' friends, it will go on without limit.[64] But we must investigate this on another occasion. In any case, we posit that what is self-sufficient is what, on its own, makes a life choiceworthy and lacking in nothing, and this, |15| we think, is what happiness is like.

Further, we think it is the most choiceworthy of all things, when not counted among them—for if it is counted among them, it clearly would be more choiceworthy with the addition of the least of goods. For what is added would bring about a superabundance of goods, and of goods, the greater one is always more choiceworthy.[65]

Happiness, then, is apparently something complete and self-sufficient, |20| since it is the end of what is doable in action.

But to say that happiness is the best good is perhaps to say something that is apparently commonplace, and we still need a clearer statement of what it is. Maybe, then, this would come about if the function of a human being were grasped.[66] For just as for a flute player, a sculptor, |25| every craftsman, and in general for whatever has some function and action, the good—the doing well—seems to lie in the function, the same also seems to hold of a human being, if indeed there is some function that is his.

So are there some functions and actions of a carpenter and of a shoemaker but none at all of a human being? And is he by nature inactive? Or, rather, just as of eye, |30| hand, foot, and of each part generally there seems to be some function, may we likewise also posit some function of a human being that is beyond all these?[67]

What, then, could this be? For living is evidently shared with plants as well, but we are looking for what is special.[68] Hence we must set aside the living that consists in nutrition and growth. Next in order |**1098**[a]**1**| is some sort of perceptual living.[69] But this too is evidently shared with horse and ox and every animal.

There remains, then, some sort of practical living of the part that has reason. And of what has reason, one part has it by dint of obeying reason, the other by dint of actually having it and exercising thought.[70] But "living" is said of things in two ways, |5| and we must take the one in accord with activity, since it seems to be called "living" in a fuller sense.[71]

If, then, the function of a human being is activity of the soul in accord with reason or not without reason, and the function of a sort of thing, we say, is the same in kind as the function of an excellent thing of that sort (as in the case of a lyre player and an excellent lyre player), and this is unconditionally so in all cases when we add to the function |10| the superiority that is in accord with the virtue (for it is characteristic of a lyre player to play the lyre and of an excellent one to do it well)—if all this is so, and a human being's function is supposed to be a sort of living, and this living is supposed to be activity of the soul and actions that involve reason, and it is characteristic of an excellent man to do these well and nobly, and each is completed well when it is in accord with the virtue that properly belongs to it |15|—if all this is so, the human good turns out to be activity of the soul in accord with virtue and, if there are more virtues than one, then in accord with the best and most complete.[72] Furthermore, in a complete life, for one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one day.[73] Nor, similarly, does one day or a short time make someone blessed and happy.[74]

Let the good, then, be sketched |20| in this way, since perhaps we should outline first and fill in the details later. It would seem, though, that anyone can develop and articulate the things in the outline that have been correctly done, and that time is a good discoverer and co-worker in such matters. This is even the source of advances in the crafts, since anyone can produce what is lacking.[75] |25|

We must also remember what was said before and not look for the same exactness in everything but, in each case, the one that is in accord with the subject matter and the degree sought by the method of inquiry that properly belongs to it.[76] For a carpenter and a geometer inquire differently about the right angle. A carpenter does so to the degree that is useful |30| for his work, whereas a geometer inquires about what it is or what sort of thing, since he is a contemplator of the truth.[77] We must do things in just the same way, then, in other cases, so that side issues do not overwhelm the works themselves.[78]

Nor should we demand the cause in all cases alike.[79] Rather, in some cases it will be adequate |**1098ᵇ1**| if the fact that they are so has been correctly shown—as it is indeed where starting-points are concerned.[80] And the fact that something is so is a first thing and a starting-point.[81]

We get a theoretical grasp of some starting-points through induction, some through perception, some through some sort of habituation, and others through other means.[82] In each case we should follow the method of inquiry suited to their nature and make very serious efforts |5| to define them correctly. For they are of great and decisive importance regarding what follows. It seems indeed that the starting-point is more than half the whole and that many of the things we were inquiring about will at the same time become evident through it.

I 8

We must investigate it, however, not only in accord with the conclusions and premises of our argument but also in accord with the things we say |10| about it.[83] For all the data are in tune with a true view, whereas they soon clash with a false one.[84]

Goods, then, have been divided into three sorts, with some said to be external, some relating to the soul, and some to the body.[85] The goods relating to soul are most fully such, and, we say, are goods to the highest degree, and we take the actions and activities of the |15| soul to be goods relating to soul.[86] So what we have said is correct, according to this view at least, which is long standing and agreed to by philosophers.[87]

It is correct even in saying that actions and activities of some sort are the end, since that way the end turns out to be one of the goods relating to soul, and not one of the external ones.

The saying that someone who is happy |20| both lives well and does well is in tune with our argument too, since happiness has been pretty much defined as a sort of living well and doing well.

Again, all the things that are looked for where happiness is concerned apparently hold of what we have said it is. For to some it seems to be virtue, to others practical wisdom, to others some sort of theoretical wisdom, while to others it seems to be these or one of these involving pleasure or not without pleasure. |25| Other people include external prosperity as well. Some of these views are held by many and are long standing, while others are held by a few reputable men. And it is not reasonable to suppose that either group is entirely wrong but, rather, that they are right on one point at least or even on most of them.[88]

Now with those who say that happiness is virtue or some sort of virtue, our argument is in tune, |30| since activity in accord with virtue is characteristic of that virtue.[89] But it makes no small difference, presumably, whether we suppose the best good to consist in virtue's possession or in its use—that is, in the state or in the activity.[90] For it is possible for someone to possess the state while accomplishing nothing good—for example, if he is sleeping |**1099a1**| or out of action in some other way. But the same will not hold of the activity, since he will necessarily be doing an action and doing it well. And just as in the Olympic Games it is not the noblest and strongest who get the victory crown but the competitors (since it is among these that the ones who win are found), so also |5| among the noble and good aspects of life it is those who act correctly who win the prizes.

Further, their life is intrinsically pleasant. For being pleased is among the things that belong to soul, and to each person what is pleasant is that thing by reference to which he is said to be a lover of such things—as, for example, a horse in the case of a lover of horses, and a play in that of a lover of plays. In the same way, just things |10| are pleasant to a lover of justice and the things in accord with virtue as a whole are pleasant to a lover of virtue.

The things that are pleasant to ordinary people, however, are in conflict because they are not naturally pleasant, whereas the things pleasant to lovers of what is noble are naturally pleasant. And actions in accord with virtue are like this, so that they are pleasant both to such people and intrinsically.

Their life, then, has no need of a pleasure that is superadded to it, |15| like some sort of appendage, but has its pleasure within itself. For besides what we have already said, the person who does not enjoy doing noble

actions is not good. For no one would call a person just who did not enjoy doing just actions, or generous if he did not enjoy doing generous ones, and similarly as regards the others. |20|

If that is so, however, actions in accord with virtue will be intrinsically pleasant. But they are also good, of course, and noble as well. Further, they are each of these things to the highest degree, if indeed an excellent person discerns them correctly—and he does discern them that way.[91]

Hence happiness is what is best, noblest, and most pleasant. And these qualities are not distinguished in the way |25| the Delian inscription says:

> The noblest thing is the most just; the best, to be healthy.
> The most pleasant, however, is to get the thing we desire.

For the best activities possess them all.[92] And it is these—or the one among them that is best—that we say is happiness. |30|

All the same, it apparently needs external goods to be added, as we said, since it is impossible or not easy to do noble actions without supplies.[93] For just as we perform many actions by means of instruments, we perform many by means of friends, wealth, and political |**1099ᵇ1**| power. Then again there are some whose deprivation disfigures blessedness, such as good breeding, good children, and noble looks.[94] For we scarcely have the stamp of happiness if we are extremely ugly in appearance, ill-bred, living a solitary life, or childless, and have it even less, presumably, if our children or friends are totally bad or |5| were good but have died.

Just as we said, then, happiness does seem to need this sort of prosperity to be added.[95] That is what leads some to identify good luck with happiness and others to identify virtue with happiness.[96]

I 9

It is also what leads people to puzzle about whether happiness is something acquirable by learning or by habituation or by some other sort of training, or whether it comes about in accord with some divine dispensation or even by luck.[97] |10|

Well, if anything is a gift from the gods to human beings, it is reasonable to suppose that happiness is also god given—especially since it is the best of human goods. Perhaps this topic properly belongs more to a different investigation, yet even if happiness is not a godsend but comes about through virtue and some sort of learning or |15| training, it is evidently one of the most divine things, since virtue's prize and end

is evidently something divine and blessed.[98] At the same time, it would also be something widely shared, since it is possible for it to be acquired through some sort of learning or supervision by all those not disabled in relation to virtue.[99]

If it is better to acquire it in that way than to be happy by luck, |20| however, it is reasonable to suppose that this is how we do acquire it, if indeed what is in accord with nature is by nature in the noblest possible condition. Similarly with what is in accord with craft or with any cause whatsoever—above all, what is in accord with the best one. To entrust what is greatest and noblest to luck would strike a very false note.

The answer we are looking for is also entirely evident from our argument. |25| For we have said that happiness is a certain sort of activity of the soul in accord with virtue, while of the remaining goods, some are necessary conditions of it, others are by nature co-workers and useful as instruments. This also would agree with what we said at the start.[100] For we took the end of politics to be the best end. And its supervision aims above all at producing |30| citizens of a certain sort—that is, good people and doers of noble actions.[101]

It makes perfect sense, then, that we do not say that an ox, a horse, or any other animal whatsoever is happy, since none of them can share in this sort of activity. This is the |**1100ᵃ1**| explanation of why a child is not happy either, since he is not yet a doer of such actions because of his age. Children who are said to be blessed are being called blessed because of their prospects, since for happiness there must be, as we said, both complete virtue and a complete life.[102] For many reversals of fortune |5| and all sorts of lucky accidents occur in life, and the most prosperous may meet with great disasters in old age—just as is said of Priam in the story of the events at Troy.[103] And no one counts someone happy who has suffered strokes of luck like that and dies in a wretched way.[104]

I 10

Are we then to count no other human being happy either, |10| as long as he is still living but—in accord with Solon's advice—must we see the end?[105] And if we are indeed to accept his view, is it really that someone is happy only when he *is* dead? Or is that, at any rate, a completely strange notion—most of all for those who say, as we do, that happiness is a sort of activity?

Even if we do not say that the dead are happy, however—and this is not what Solon means either, |15| but only that when a human being has died it will at that point be safe to call him blessed (since he is then

outside the reach of bad things and misfortunes)—that is also something we might dispute to some extent. For to some extent it does seem that something may prove good or bad for someone who is dead, if indeed there are also good or bad things for someone who is living but not actively perceiving them—for example, honor and dishonor, and children |20| or descendants generally who do well or who suffer misfortunes.

But this also raises a puzzle. For it is possible for many reversals of fortune involving his descendants to befall someone who has lived a blessed life until old age and died accordingly. Some of his descendants may be good people and get the life they deserve while to others the contrary may happen. |25| And it is clear that the degree of separation between them and their ancestors admits of all sorts of variation. But it would be strange, surely, if the dead person changed along with them and was happy at one time and wretched at another. Yet it would also be strange if what happens to descendants did not affect their ancestors to any extent or for any period of time. |30|

But we should go back to the first puzzle. For maybe from it we will also be able to get a theoretical grasp on what we are now inquiring about. Suppose that we must wait to see the end in each case and at that point call someone blessed—not as then being blessed but because he was so before. Would it not be strange, then, if when he is happy, we cannot truly attribute to him what he actually possesses, because of our not |35| wishing to call the living happy because of reversals of fortune, |**1100ᵇ1**| and because we suppose that happiness is something steadfast and in no way easy to reverse, whereas the same person's luck often turns completely around? For it is clear that if we were to be guided by luck, we would often have to say that the same person is happy and then wretched turn and turn about, |5| thereby representing the happy person as a sort of chameleon and as someone with unsound foundations.[106]

Or is it that to be guided by luck is not at all correct? For it is not in *it* that living well and living badly are to be found but, rather, a human life needs this to be added, as we said, whereas it is activities in accord with virtue that control happiness and the |10| contrary ones its contrary.[107] The puzzle we are now going through further testifies to our argument for this. For none of the functions of human beings are as stable as those concerned with activities in accord with virtue, since they seem to be more steadfast even than our knowledge of the sciences. And of these sciences themselves, the most estimable are more steadfast, because the blessed |15| live most of all and most continuously in accord with them.[108] This would seem to be the cause, indeed, of why forgetfulness does not occur where they are concerned.[109]

What we are inquiring about, then, will be characteristic of the happy person, and throughout life he will be as we say. For he will always or more than anyone else do actions and get a theoretical grasp on things in accord with virtue, and will bear what luck brings in the noblest way and, in every case, |20| in the most suitable one, since he is "good, four-square, beyond blame."[110]

Many things happen in accord with luck, however, that differ in greatness and smallness. But small strokes of good luck or similarly of the opposite clearly will not have a strong influence on his way of living, whereas great and repeated ones, when |25| good, will make his life more blessed, since by nature they help to adorn it, and his use of them is noble and excellent. If they turn out the reverse, though, they reduce or spoil his blessedness, since they involve pain and impede many activities. All the same, even in these cases nobility shines through |30| when someone calmly bears repeated strokes of great bad luck—not because he is insensitive to suffering but because of being well bred and great-souled.

If, however, it is activities that control living, as we said, no blessed person will ever become wretched, since he will never do hateful or base actions.[111] For a truly |35| good and practically-wise person, we think, will bear what luck brings graciously |**1101ᵃ1**| and, making use of the resources at hand, will always do the noblest actions, just as a good general makes the best uses in warfare of the army he has and a good shoemaker makes the best shoes out of the hides he has been given, and the same way |5| with all other craftsmen.

If this is so, however, a happy person will never become wretched—nor *blessed* certainly—if he runs up against luck like Priam's. He will not, then, be variable or easily subject to reversals of fortune, since he will not be easily shaken from his happiness by just any misfortunes[112] that chance to come along but only by great |10| and repeated ones. And from these he will not return to being happy again in a short time but—if indeed he does do so—in a long and complete one in which he achieves great and noble things.

What, then, prevents us from calling happy the person who is active in accord with complete virtue and is adequately supplied with external goods |15| not for some random period of time but in a complete life? Or must we add that he will continue living like that and will die accordingly, since the future is obscure to us and we suppose happiness to be an end and complete in every way? If so, we shall call "blessed" those living people who have and will continue to have the things we mentioned—blessed, |20| though, in the way human beings are.[113]

So much for our determinations on these topics.

I 11

The view that the luck of someone's descendants and all his friends have not the slightest effect on him is evidently a view too inimical to friendship and one that is contrary to the beliefs held on the subject.[114] But since the things that happen are many and admit of all sorts of differences, and some of them get through to us more and |25| others less, it is evidently a long—even endless—task to distinguish all the particular cases, and it will perhaps be enough to speak about the matter in universal terms and in outline.

If, then, of even the misfortunes that affect the person himself, some have a certain weight and a strong influence as regards his life, whereas others seem to have a lighter one, the same also holds for what affects all his friends. |30| And for each incident, it makes a difference whether it involves the living or the dead—much more than whether the unlawful and terrible deeds in tragedies have happened beforehand or are enacted on the stage.

Our deductive argument, then, must also take account of this difference, but even more account, perhaps, of the results of going through the puzzles about whether the dead share in any good thing |35| or in any of the opposite ones.[115] For it seems likely from these considerations that even if |**1101ᵇ1**| anything at all does get through to them, whether good or the opposite, it is something feeble and small, either unconditionally so or so for them. Or if it is not like that, it is of a size and sort, at any rate, that does not make happy those who are not happy or take away the blessedness of those who are. It does, then, contribute |5| something to the dead, apparently, when their friends do well and similarly when they do badly, but something of such a sort and size that it neither makes the happy ones unhappy nor does anything else of this sort.

I 12

Having made these determinations, let us investigate whether happiness |10| is included among praiseworthy things or, rather, among estimable ones, since it is clear at least that it is not included among capacities.[116]

Well, apparently all the things that are praiseworthy are praised for being of a certain quality and for standing in a certain relation to something. For we praise the just person and the courageous one—in fact, the good person and his virtue generally—because of his actions and his |15| works, also the strong person and the good runner, and so on in

each of the other cases, because he is naturally of a certain quality and stands in a certain relation to something good or excellent.[117] This is also clear from awards of praise involving the gods. For these are evidently ridiculous if it is by reference to us that they are awarded. But this happens because awards of praise involve |20| such a reference, as we just said.[118]

If praise is of things like this, it is clear that of the best things there is no praise but something greater and better—as is in fact evident. For we call the gods both blessed and happy and call the most divine of men this as well. Similarly in the case of goods too. For we never |25| praise happiness as we praise justice, but call it blessed since it is a more divine and better thing.[119]

It seems, in fact, that Eudoxus advocated in the correct way the cause of pleasure in the competition for supreme excellence.[120] For not to praise pleasure, while including it among the goods, is to reveal, he thought, that it is better than things that are praised, in the way that the god and the good are, |30| since it is to these that the others are referred.[121]

For praise is properly given to virtue, since we are doers of noble actions as a result of it, whereas encomia are properly given to its works, in like manner both to those of the body and those of the soul.[122] But perhaps an exact treatment of these topics more properly belongs to those who work on encomia. It is clear to us from what |35| we have said, however, that happiness is included among things both estimable and complete. |**1102ª1**|

This also seems to hold because happiness is a starting-point, since it is for the sake of it that we all do all the other actions that we do, and we suppose that the starting-point and cause of what is good is something estimable and divine.[123]

I 13

Since happiness is some activity of the soul in accord with |5| complete virtue, we must investigate virtue, since maybe that way we will also get a better theoretical grasp on happiness. It seems too that someone who is truly a politician will have worked most on virtue, since he wishes to make the citizens good and obedient to the laws.[124] A paradigm case is provided by the Cretan |10| and Spartan legislators and by any others there may have been that are like them.[125] If this investigation belongs to politics, however, it is clear that our present inquiry will be in accord with the deliberate choice we made at the start.[126]

It is also clear that the virtue we must investigate is human virtue. For it is in fact the human good we are looking for, and human happiness. |15| By "human virtue," though, we mean not that of the body but that of the soul; and happiness, we say, is an activity of the soul. But if all this is so, it is clear that a politician must in a way know about what pertains to the soul, just as someone who is going to take care of people's eyes must know about the body generally—more so, indeed, to the extent that politics is more estimable |20| and better than medicine—and that doctors (the ones who are more sophisticated) occupy themselves greatly with knowing about the body.[127] It is also for a politician, then, to get a theoretical grasp on what concerns the soul. But his theoretical grasp should be for the sake of the things in question and of an extent that is adequate to the things being looked for, since a more exact treatment is perhaps harder work than |25| the topics before us require.

Enough has been said about some aspects of the soul in the external accounts too, and we should make use of these—for example, that one part of the soul is nonrational whereas another part has reason.[128] Whether these are distinguished like the parts of the body or like anything else that is divisible or whether they are two in definition but inseparable by nature (like |30| convex and concave in a curved surface) makes no difference for present purposes.[129]

Of the nonrational part, one part seems to be shared and vegetative—I mean, the cause of nutrition and growth. For this sort of capacity of soul is one that we suppose is present in all things that take in nourishment, even embryos, and that this same one |**1102ᵇ1**| is also present in completely grown animals, since that is more reasonable than to suppose a different one to be present in them.

Hence the virtue of this capacity is apparently something shared and not distinctively human. For this part and this capacity seem to be most active in sleep, and a good person and a bad one are least clearly distinguished during |5| sleep (leading people to say that the happy are no different from the wretched for half their lives, which makes perfect sense, since sleep is idleness of the soul in that respect with reference to which it is said to be excellent or base), unless—to some small extent—some movements do get through to us and, in this way, the things that appear in the dreams of decent people are better than those of any |10| random person.[130] But that is enough about these things, and we should leave the nutritive part aside, since by nature it has no share in human virtue.[131]

Another natural constituent of the soul, however, also seems to be nonrational, although it shares in reason in a way. For we praise the reason—that is, the part of the soul that has reason—of a person with

self-control and of a person without it, since |15| it exhorts them correctly toward what is best. But they also have by nature something else within them besides reason, apparently, which fights against reason and resists it. For exactly as with paralyzed limbs (when their owners deliberately choose to move them to the right, they do the contrary and move off to the left), so it is in the case of the soul as well, |20| since the impulses of people who lack self-control are in contrary directions. In the case of the body, to be sure, we see the part that is moving in the wrong direction, whereas in the case of the soul we do not see it. But presumably we should nonetheless acknowledge that in the soul as well there is something besides reason, countering it and going against it. How it is different, though, is not important.

But this part |25| apparently also has a share of reason, as we said, at any rate, it is obedient to the reason of a self-controlled person.[132] Furthermore, that of a temperate and courageous person, presumably, listens still better, since there it chimes with reason in everything.

Apparently, then, the nonrational part is also twofold, since the vegetative part does not share in reason in any way but the appetitive part (indeed, the desiring part as a whole) does so |30| in some way, because it is able to listen to reason and obey it.[133] It has reason, then, in the way we are said to have the reason of our fathers and friends and not in the way we are said to have that of mathematics.[134] The fact, though, that the nonrational part is persuaded in some way by reason is revealed by the practice of warning people and of all the different practices of admonishing and exhorting them.

If we should say that it too has reason, |**1103ᵃ1**| however, then the part that has reason will be double as well—one part having it fully and within itself, the other as something able to listen to it as to a father.

Virtues are also defined in accord with this difference, since we say that some are of thought, others of character. Theoretical wisdom, comprehension, |5| and practical wisdom are virtues of thought; generosity and temperance virtues of character.[135] For when we talk about someone's character we do not say that he is theoretically-wise or has comprehension but that he is mild-mannered or temperate. But we do also praise a theoretically-wise person with reference to his state, and—among the states—it is the praiseworthy ones that we call virtues. |10|