Revisiting Aristotle's Fragments

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Herausgegeben von
Susanne Daub, Michael Erler, Dorothee Gall,
Ludwig Koenen und Clemens Zintzen

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New Essays on the Fragments of Aristotle's Lost Works

Edited by
António Pedro Mesquita, Simon Noriega-Olmos,
and Christopher Shields

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Introduction

This book consists of a peer-reviewed selection of papers presented at the conference *The Fragments of Aristotle's Lost Works* on July 6th and 7th, 2016, at the University of Lisbon. This conference was one of a series of academic events organised in Europe and North America in celebration of Aristotle's 2400th anniversary. The Centre of Philosophy of the University of Lisbon (CFUL) hosted the conference at the initiative of the Centre for Historical Ontology (Heidelberg – Helsinki – Leuven) and with the full support of the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon (FLUL), and the project *Complete Works of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary* (PTDC/MHC-FIL/0787/2014). One achievement of this project was the first Portuguese translation of the fragments of Aristotle's dialogues, the completion of which gladly coincided with the preparation of the event.

Like the conference, this book seeks to reignite work on Aristotle's fragments and challenge existing paradigms of interpretation. It presents a reassessment of a considerable number of fragments of Aristotle's lost works, and offers innovative ways of dealing with them. We expect this publication to have a specific place in the development of scholarship on Aristotle's fragments, but equally hope its reassessment and innovative methodology will shed new light on the extant works of Aristotle.

The book fills a long gap in the bibliography on Aristotle's lost works and fragments. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Valentin Rose was the first to assemble, organise, and edit the first modern collection of fragments and testimonies of Aristotle's lost works (Rose (1863)). This collection, which subsequently appeared in several editions of different forms (Rose (1870) and (1886)), had a recognizable impact on Aristotelian scholarship. It helped to inaugurate an entirely new period in the study of Aristotle. This period saw the publications of trendsetting works such as Jaeger's study of Aristotle's development (Jaeger (1923)), the works of Bignone (1936) and Bidez (1943) on the "lost Aristotle", as well as, among many others, Düring's and Chroust's reconstructions of Aristotle's lost *Protrepticus* (respectively, Düring (1961) and Chroust (1964)). For scholars of this period, there were two main sets of issues surrounding the fragments of Aristotle's lost works. The first set concerned their authenticity and dating. The second explored how their content related both to Aristotle's formative period under Plato in the Academy and to his philosophical production as reflected in the transmitted works.

Although the study of Aristotle fragments has ever since enjoyed an intermittent interest, including new editions and translations of the whole set of texts,

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this area of research has fallen into the background since the 1960s. This is surprising for at least two reasons. First, the liveliness of debates surrounding Aristotle's fragments in earlier periods of scholarship. Second, it stands in stark contrast to the remarkable flourishing of Aristotelian scholarship in the last sixty years. In this period, the study of Aristotle has taken several different innovative and exciting directions. However, questions about origin, influence, development, and intellectual context have given way to an ever more prevalent interest in Aristotle's thought on its own right. More specifically, developmental questions have given way to interest on Aristotle's thought as represented in his extant writings. Comparative studies have in no small measure yielded to philosophical analysis and argument-criticism. To some extent, this prevailing lack of interest in comparative and developmental studies has resulted in a disregard for Aristotle's fragments.

This situation is unfortunate, particularly if we take into consideration the fact that the currently keen concern with Aristotle's philosophical argument itself offers – or could offer – a new assessment of developmental questions, and indeed of the material of the fragments independent of their role in such questions. In this sense, current preoccupations and methods could very well promise a new use for the fragments in assessing Aristotle's philosophy. As things currently stand, Aristotle fragments need reassessment, and there is also great methodological potential in studying these materials afresh with new interests and methodologies. Precisely because of the advances in critical analysis of Aristotle's texts, we are now in an optimal position to update the current scholarship on his fragments. Such an update is precisely the purpose of this book.

All this does not mean that our volume ignores discussion of authenticity and dating of fragments. On the contrary, it addresses these traditional issues within specific philosophical discussions and by articulating a new approach to Aristotle's lost works. This new approach finds philosophical value in Aristotle's fragments precisely in the bridges we can build between them and the transmitted works. From this perspective, we may view the fragments as tools of interpretation which we can use to shed light on Aristotle's extant work – and of course the extant works, in their turn, to shed light on the views of the fragments.

In many cases, we argue, where the extant Aristotle is sloppy or makes assumptions incomprehensible to the modern reader, the fragments can fill the gap. When a claim in the extant *corpus* is unsubstantiated, or an argument appears to be incomplete, the fragments can set the record straight. And where Aristotle's motives are unclear, the fragments can provide needed context for the modern reader. To be sure, the fragments have a value on their own as rem-

nants and testimonies of works lost to history. Even so, or indeed partly because of this value, they also have a value at the service of illuminating works of the extant Aristotelian corpus. This book provides secure ground for philosophical interpretation of endlessly debatable passages from the *Physics, De anima,* the biological treatises, the *Metaphysics, Politics, Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. At the same time, it challenges traditional assumptions about the dating of Aristotle's lost works, his philosophical development, and the contents of the fragments.

The book divides into two parts. The first part, "Philosophy and Philosophical Perspectives in Aristotle's Fragments", focuses on Aristotle's interests and perspectives in his lost exoterical writings, and particularly on how he worked out his understanding of philosophy in both his popular and scientific works. The second part, "Philosophical Problems in Light of Aristotle's Fragments", articulates a new approach to Aristotle's lost works. It deals with issues of philosophical interpretation in Aristotle's extant works, which fragments of lost Aristotelian works serve to illuminate. The philosophical issues treated in this section range from Theology to Natural Science, Psychology, Politics, and Poetics. The individual chapters are neither in agreement in terms of content nor unified in terms of methodology. For this reason, the chapters are not intended to be read as a continuous treatise. Instead, we invite the reader to explore different ways of reading the Aristotelian texts in order to forge an individual understanding of his work.

In the first part, Ronja Hildebrandt, "What is Philosophy in the *Protrepticus*?", examines what it means to do philosophy according to the *Protrepticus*. In contrast to the influential verdict of Werner Jaeger who claimed that Aristotle's conception of philosophy in the *Protrepticus* is still Platonic, she argues that it is genuinely Aristotelian: philosophy in the *Protrepticus* is the possession and use of both theoretical and practical knowledge. Moreover she shows that Aristotle, as in other works, associates philosophy with more universal kinds of knowledge.

Also concerned with the status of philosophy in Aristotle is Christopher Moore in his paper "Aristotle's *Philosophêmata*". Influenced by Simplicius' opinion, interpreters have traditionally believed that *philosophêmata* in Aristotle refers to any of his lost published works. Moore, however, reads *philosophêmata* as the noun's ending *-ma* suggests, and argues that this term in Aristotle does not refer to any of his lost published works. According to Moore, *philosophêmata* in Aristotle refers instead to a common medium of the discipline of philosophy, and that medium is arguments that transcend specific conversational contexts. In this reading of *philosophêmata*, Aristotle understands philosophizing as a contribution to an always-improving disciplinary trove of arguments, positions, and explanations.

Carlos Megino, "On the Role of the Platonic Interlocutor in Aristotle's Dialogue *On Philosophy*", criticizes the accepted opinion that some views in the lost *On Philosophy* have to be ascribed to an interlocutor defending Platonic views as if speaking for Plato himself. He contends that the arguments of that work, which prove the existence of god (*Phil.*, frags. 13.2 and 13.3 Ross) and the indestructibility of the world (*Phil.*, frag. 19c Ross), do not unequivocally reflect a Platonic view. These arguments do not reflect a Platonic view, according to Megino, for the following reasons. There is only one argument put forward in frags. 13.2 and 13.3, and it is implausible that Aristotle used the same argument to prove both his theological doctrine and Plato's. Further, frags. 13.2 and 13.3 do not imply a Platonic architect creator of the world. Instead, they imply a first cause of the ingenerate and imperishable world's order. Finally, frag. 19c contains an Aristotelian doctrine.

Scholars have reconstructed fragments 8 – 9 Ross of the lost *Symposium* after Plutarch's *Quaestiones Convivales* III.iii.1, Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* 10, 429cd, and Macrobius' *Saturnalia* VII.vi.15 – 16. Maya S. Petrova, "Aristotle on Wine and Intoxication", shows that these fragments are also in debt to *Saturnalia* VII.vi.17 – 21. This realization significantly amplifies our understanding of the content of the lost *On Intoxication*. According to Petrova, Aristotle's lost work discussed the effects of wine on people of different sexes and age groups. This discussion follows practices familiar to the extant corpus and particularly the biological corpus.

The second part of the book provides concrete examples of how the fragments of Aristotle's lost works may illuminate issues of philosophical interpretation in the extant works of physics, biology, psychology, theology, politics, and poetics. Andrea Falcon concentrates on the work *On Philosophy*, to which Aristotle himself refers in his extant writings (most notably, in *Ph.* II 2, 194a35 – 36 = *Phil.*, frag. 28 Ross). Falcon explores the possible way(s) in which the results achieved in the work *On Philosophy* may contribute to his science of nature. His results are largely negative. He argues that there remains an unbridgeable gap between the lost work *On Philosophy*, which was geared to a public of non-specialists, and the scientific writings on natural philosophy. In all probability, it is no coincidence that Aristotle invokes the work *On Philosophy* in *Physics* II, which is concerned with the principles of the science of nature and as such is a sort of prolegomenon to the entire project of natural investigation.

With a combination of philological expertise and knowledge of Aristotle's biology, Robert Mayhew, "Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* 7 and Aristotle's lost *Zoïka or On Fish*", offers a reassessment of the current understanding of Aristotelian fragments about animals. He studies the references to Aristotle on fish in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* 7 to determine which of these are in fact fragments

from Aristotle's lost work *Zoïka* (which Athenaeus sometimes refers to as *On Fish*). Mayhew's analysis not only illuminates Aristotle's study of animals, it also suggests corrections to the traditional organisation of animal-texts in earlier collections of Aristotle's fragments.

Christopher Shields, "In Dialogue about Harmony", gives compelling reasons to question Jaeger's dating of the *Eudemus* and *De philosophia*. The arguments in *De anima* I 4 – a late work – against the theory of the soul as *harmonia* are inconclusive. However, we can regard these arguments as elliptical but conclusive, provided we show that they presuppose the robust notion of form of *De anima* I 4. This robust notion of form is a notion of form as a teleological principle that unifies the body and which we can specify in fully-intensional terms. Shields shows that we can find this notion of form in the *Eudemus* and *De philosophia*. He shows that these two works criticize the theory of the soul as *harmonia* with more sophisticated arguments than the *De anima*. And all this indicates that the *Eudemus* and *De philosophia* already operated with what we call "mature Aristotelian hylomorphism". These findings have a series of surprising conclusions. First, we must conclude that there is no development in Aristotle's critique of the *harmonia* theory. We must contradict Jaeger's view that the *Eudemus* is an Academic work committed to Platonic metaphysics and that *De philosophia* is a transitional work from Platonism to Aristotelianism. Second, it is highly disputable that the *Eudemus* and *De philosophia* are early works. And if they happen to be early works, they already provide strong evidence of mature Aristotelian hylomorphism. And third, we have good reason to avoid non-doctrinal speculation about the origins of the *Eudemus* and *De philosophia* and their relations to Aristotle's exoteric works.

Next, Jason G. Rheins, "The Spurious Fragments of a Supposed Aristotelian Argument from Design", revises the fragments scholars study to understand the origins of Aristotelian teleology. Frag. 13.1 Ross, i.e. the "*Subterraneans* Argument" (Cicero's *Nat. Deor.* II.xxxvii.95–96), is the fragment from *De philosophia* most likely to indicate philosophical differences between Aristotle's popular works and his surviving works. Commentators usually read frag. 13.1 as deploying an argument from design. Such reading commits Aristotle to the following: the non-eternity and creation of the cosmos and natural species, nature being product of deliberate and intelligent design, and the god(s) concern with inferior parts of reality. Rheins takes this argument and frag. 12a.1 Ross (Sextus, *M.* IX.20–23) to be genuine. However, he deflates Aristotle's commitment to the teleology in frags. 13.1 and 12a.1. He also argues that other fragments thought to support Aristotle's commitment to teleology in frag. 13.1 are *spuria*. These *spuria* seem to express views from Philo, the Septuagint Torah, Plato's *Timaeus*, Stoic sources, and perhaps even Hellenistic pseudo-Pythagorean texts.

The two last essays concern Aristotelian practical and productive sciences. António Pedro Mesquita, "Aristotle's Lost Dialogue *On Good Birth* and Kingship as the Best Regime" tackles what appears to be a contradiction in Aristotle's political theory. In the *Politics*, Aristotle holds that kingship, i. e. the rule of a man over the city-state aiming at the common benefit, is in general terms the best possible political regime. However, he also believes that authority exerted by many is in general preferable to authority exerted by one single man. It is not clear at first sight whether we have here a straight contradiction or a clash of views that we can explain and resolve coherently. Unfortunately, Aristotle never provides in the extant corpus any apparent reason for his support of kinship. Mesquita coherently explains why Aristotle considers kingship the best regime. He finds the clues for his solution in material from the lost *On Good Birth*. This material provides an argument for interpreting good birth as "excellence of stock", and this specific understanding of good birth can justify to a considerable extent Aristotle's preference for kingship.

Finally, Gertjan Verhasselt, "Did Homer Nod Off? Aristotle and Homeric Problem-Solving", inquires what Aristotle's position in the ancient debate between Homer-bashers and Homer-defenders was. Homer-bashers either reproved Homer on moral grounds or mocked the inconsistencies and plot holes of his poems. Homer-defenders tried to explain or dissolve those "apparent" inconsistencies and "immoral" passages. Aristotle is a defender of Homer, but unlike other defenders, he refuses allegorical interpretations. Verhasselt argues that Aristotle's approach to Homeric problems is in line with his views on literary problems set out in *Poetics* 25. According to these views, poetry should primarily be judged by poetic standards. Solving Homeric problems involves an adequate knowledge of old customs, traditional myths and the poetic diction (archaic words, metaphors, polysemy, homonymy …). Verhasselt focuses in particular on "knowledge of old customs", in order to show that this designates a historical method Aristotle uses in his *Constitutions* and which is also at work in Thucydides. Aristotle also devotes attention to the larger context in Homer and explains certain problems on the basis of the psychological motivation of the characters involved. Unlike later grammarians, Aristotle does not solve problems by deleting the Homeric line in question. Verhasselt concludes that, in general, Aristotle is much more conservative with regard to the Homeric text and does not consider emendations real solutions.

We want to thank the Centre for Historical Ontology and Dr. Jan-Ivar Lindén, without whose encouragement neither the conference nor this book would have materialized. We extend our gratitude to CFUL, FCT, FLUL, and the project *Complete Works of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary* (PTDC/MHC-FIL/0787/2014) for their unwavering support. Last, but not least, we would like to express spe-

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The editors, March 2020.

I.
Philosophy and Philosophical Perspectives in Aristotle's Fragments

Ronja Hildebrandt

What is Philosophy in the *Protrepticus*? *

In the *Protrepticus*, Aristotle argues that everybody should study philosophy since, speaking very generally, doing philosophy is the best activity to which human beings can devote their time. It is unclear, however, what "philosophy" means in the *Protrepticus*. So in this paper, I will examine the question of what Aristotle advises us to do when he encourages us to philosophize in the *Protrepticus*, or, in other words, what Aristotle's conception of philosophy is in this work.

It might seem as if we already know what Aristotle means by the name of "philosophy" in the *Protrepticus*. The most well-known answer has been given by Jaeger in his highly influential work *Aristoteles: Eine Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung* (1923). According to Jaeger, Aristotle's conception of philosophy in the *Protrepticus* is still Platonic for three reasons.[1] First, in contrast with Aristotle's sharp distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Jaeger claims to recognize a Platonic unity of being and value, of "theoretical knowledge and practical conduct"[2] in the *Protrepticus*. In Jaeger's view, the distinction between practical and theoretical knowledge has not yet crossed Aristotle's mind; knowledge of the causes and principles of reality and the search for the goodness and happiness in a human life are still considered to be the same.[3] Second, Jaeger claims to detect a Platonic distinction of philosophy into dialectic, physics and ethics in this work.[4] And third, he believes that Aristotle invokes Plato's theory of Ideas in one large fragment of the *Protrepticus* in relation to the usefulness of theoretical

* I am very grateful to Jonathan Beere, Monte Ransome Johnson and David Ebrey for helpful comments on a previous draft and to Doug Hutchinson and Monte Ransome Johnson for making several of their unpublished papers available to me. I would also like to acknowledge written comments from two anonymous readers.

1 Jaeger (1923). Bignone, Wilpert, de Stryker and de Vogel have since followed Jaeger's interpretation of the *Protrepticus:* Bignone (1936) 17; Wilpert (1949) 9 f. and 64 f.; de Stryker (1960), especially 78n4; de Vogel (1960) and (1965).

2 As Jaeger's translator puts it in the English translation of Jaeger's work: Jaeger (1968) 84. Also cf. Jaeger (1923) 82.

3 Jaeger (1923) 83. As a follower of Jaeger, de Stryker expresses this view later: what is Platonic about the *Protrepticus* is "to consider the science of the good and the science of the prior as being at bottom identical". Cf. de Stryker (1960) 101.

4 Jaeger (1923) 83.

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knowledge for legislation.[5] Philosophy in the *Protrepticus* would then equate to knowledge of Platonic Ideas in the domains of ethics and physics by means of dialectic; this knowledge would ostensibly be theoretical but, at the same time, it would be knowledge of what is good in a human life. Scholars such as Düring and Monan have already expressed doubts about Jaeger's interpretation of the *Protrepticus*, and I will add further reasons to reject it.[6]

Alternatively, we might think that the conception of philosophy in the *Protrepticus* is similar to the conception of philosophy in works which, according to Jaeger, express Aristotle's more mature ideas, such as the *Metaphysics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Unfortunately, the question of what philosophy is for Aristotle in these works has received even less attention than the question of what philosophy is in the *Protrepticus*. The few scholars who have explicitly discussed this issue usually note that the term has several senses in the *corpus aristotelicum*. Among these, the following two are the most prominent: (a) the term φιλοσοφία often means something very similar to ἐπιστήμη, knowledge or science, which explains why Aristotle calls both practical as well as theoretical sciences philosophy;[7] (b) in other instances, when Aristotle speaks of "philosophy" in a more narrow way, he only means to refer to the theoretical sciences and sometimes only to metaphysics as philosophy.[8] Alternative views on what philosophy is in the *Protrepticus* roughly coincide with one of these senses. For example, Fujisawa believes that philosophy in the *Protrepticus* divides into two separate kinds of knowledge, theoretical and practical knowledge.[9] Düring, on the other hand, suggests that philosophy only refers to "speculative", i. e. theoretical,

5 Jaeger (1923) 91 f.

6 See, for example, Düring (1955) and Monan (1968) 34 – 6. See also Schneeweiß (1966).

7 Thus, Bonitz's first entry for "philosophy" in his *Index Aristotelicum* is "*investigatio*, *scientia*" (Bonitz 1955) 820 f. Bien notes that philosophy can refer to "scientific investigation" (Bien 1989) 820 f. There are two instances in which Aristotle uses the word "philosophy" for a practical science. In *EN* X 9, 1181b12 – 15, Aristotle speaks of the "philosophy of human affairs" as the investigation he pursues in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*. Cf. also *Pol.* III 12, 1282b23 where he mentions "political philosophy", which is probably the same as the "philosophy of human affairs". Aristotle's speaks more often about "theoretical philosophy"; the *locus classicus* is *Metaph.* VI 1, 1026a18 – 23.

8 As Bien observes, when Aristotle uses the term "philosophy" without qualification, it always refers to the theoretical sciences and especially to the science of first causes and principles, i. e. metaphysics. Cf. Bien (1989) 26.358. Likewise, Frede argues that any "enterprise aimed at acquiring such [theoretical] knowledge counts as philosophy", but that "what philosophy primarily is is metaphysics"; cf. Frede (2008) 514. Reeve agrees that "any non-practical science will count as philosophy", while Bonitz argues that philosophy *simpliciter* is first philosophy or metaphysics; cf. Bonitz (1955) 821 and Reeve (2012) 161.

9 Fujisawa (1973).

knowledge in the *Protrepticus*, while Mansion notes that philosophy is knowledge of the most perfect theoretical object, which I take to be metaphysics or the study of first principles.[10]

This divergence of opinion makes clear that any attempt to understand the *Protrepticus*' arguments for the value of philosophy must be accompanied by an investigation into the conception of philosophy in this work. It makes a considerable difference whether Aristotle defends the value of the Platonic project of philosophy, the value of practical and theoretical knowledge, the value of theoretical knowledge only, or the value of metaphysics.

Furthermore, asking the question of what philosophy is for Aristotle in the *Protrepticus* is helpful for more than merely understanding the work's defence of the value of philosophy in isolation. The *Protrepticus* itself forms part of a discussion about the nature of philosophy which began within the writings of Isocrates and Plato. For example, in the *Antidosis*, Isocrates expounds his own view about what philosophy is and criticizes Plato's conception of philosophy. According to Isocrates, philosophy constitutes a form of practical education that aims at the improvement of the ability to speak and act well in both public and private day-to-day situations, an education that emphasizes the limits of knowledge and the importance of experience. As for considerations concerning abstract theoretical or practical knowledge about the elements of the world or the nature of human excellence, he deems these to be unhelpful and, therefore, not to count as the objects of philosophy. Since the *Protrepticus* was a response to the *Antidosis*,[11] we can expect Aristotle to react to this view.

Now, in the *Protrepticus*, I wish to argue that Aristotle believes, in contrast to Isocrates, that philosophy is concerned with the possession and use of *knowledge* rather than experience, and that this most likely includes both theoretical and practical knowledge. Moreover, we can see the traces of a connection between philosophy and universality, which will be of lasting importance for Aristotle's conception of philosophy, to the extent that philosophy is associated with more fundamental, i. e. more universal, knowledge.

In this discussion I will proceed in the following way. First, since the *Protrepticus* is a fragmentary work, I provide a short introduction to the history and the current status of its authentication. Second, I will start my evaluation of what philosophy is in the *Protrepticus* with Aristotle's most general description of phi-

10 Düring (1961) 202 and 275; Mansion (1960) 67 f.

11 Hutchinson and Johnson's have convincingly argued for this point (made by previous scholars) by means of a comparison between the *Antidosis* and the *Protrepticus* in Hutchinson and Johnson (Unpublished Manuscript 3). See also Bernays (1863), Jaeger (1923), Einarson (1936), Düring (1961), Hutchinson and Johnson (2018).

losophy, namely that philosophy is the possession and use of wisdom which consists in knowledge. In one major fragment of the *Protrepticus*, Aristotle reports Isocrates' objection to such a view, namely that knowledge is not useful for practice. Aristotle's response to this objection is an argument concerning the possibility of acquiring two branches of philosophy, namely knowledge of the just and useful, and knowledge of nature and the rest of reality. I will discuss the arguments concerning the possibility of acquiring these two branches separately in section three and four, before I come back to the question of their relation in section five: are they two distinct fields of knowledge or two perspectives on the same knowledge? Finally, I will reconsider the alternatives for what philosophy could be in the *Protrepticus* and add some speculations on the universal nature of philosophy.

1 The Authentication of Aristotle's *Protrepticus*[12]

Let me begin with a short history of the authentication of Aristotle's *Protrepticus*. Although no manuscripts have survived of this work, we know from testimonia that Aristotle wrote an exhortation towards philosophy with the title *Protrepticus*, which concluded that "one should (or must) do philosophy" (φιλοσοφητέον).[13] The story of the *Protrepticus*' recovery started in 1863 when Bernays suggested that Cicero had used Aristotle's *Protrepticus* as a model for his *Hortensius*.[14] A major breakthrough, however, happened in 1869: starting from Bernays' hypothesis, Bywater claimed that the Neoplatonic author Iamblichus of Chalcis must have quoted *verbatim* large chunks from Aristotle's *Protrepticus* within chapters 6-12 of his own *Protrepticus*.[15] This led to the publication of fragments of Aristotle's *Protrepticus* in Rose's edition of Aristotelian fragments,[16] followed by the editions of Walzer and Ross, as well as Bignone's work on the reconstruction of the *Protrepticus*.[17] Against these attempts to authenticate more and more fragments primarily on the basis of comparisons with Cicero's *Hortensius*, Rabinowitz published a study of some of the fragments in 1957, arguing that

12 Cf. Hutchinson and Johnson (2005) 196–203, who have presented the history of the *Protrepticus*' authentication in more detail. Cf. also Rabinowitz (1957) 1–22, Wilpert (1960) and Düring (1961) 12f. For a history of its interpretation, see Monan (1968) 1–12.

13 Cf. the testimonies in Walzer (1934) 21–4. Cf. also Ross (1952) 26–9.

14 Bernays (1968) 119ff.

15 Bywater (1869).

16 Rose (1886).

17 Walzer (1934); Ross (1952); Bignone (1936).

we do not have enough evidence to attribute any but perhaps one of these fragments to Aristotle's *Protrepticus*.[18]

Rabinowitz's extreme and negative critique was soon rejected by Düring, among others, who published his reconstruction of the *Protrepticus* a few years later.[19] Starting from the common assumption at the time that Iamblichus must have rearranged parts of Aristotle's *Protrepticus* for his own purposes, Düring divided the fragments further and ordered them in the way he best saw fit. Schneeweiß did the same five years later but produced a different ordering of the fragments.[20] Where he deemed it helpful, Schneeweiß even added passages from other works of Aristotle in-between the fragments. However, the risk of Düring's and Schneeweiß's approach is that it gives a misleading picture of the *Protrepticus* based on their own speculations about what the philosophical point and rhetorical strategy of the work might have been.

Only very recently, Hutchinson and Johnson have improved the situation considerably and published the best reconstruction of the *Protrepticus* we have so far.[21] Following a lead suggested by Flashar,[22] they made use of the fact that Iamblichus did not just recycle Aristotle but also parts of Plato's dialogues in chapters XIII-XIX. Since we still possess these dialogues from which Iamblichus quoted, Hutchinson and Johnson were able to study Iamblichus' method of quotation. On the assumption that Iamblichus treated Plato and Aristotle in the same way, a comparison between Plato's dialogues and Iamblichus' quotations can shed light on how Iamblichus may have quoted from Aristotle's *Protrepticus*. Their conclusion is worth citing in full:

> The method of literary construction used by Iamblichus for both the Plato and the Aristotle chapters is to assemble into each chapter one or a few pure blocks of quotation in a natural sequence, marking them off from each other by thin comments of his own. The blocks of quotation are solid and pure, in that no passages are removed from them and no extraneous passages are added to them, though they are sometimes carefully modified. The sequence of quotation blocks is natural, in that Iamblichus never returns to a work he has earlier been quoting from, nor does he ever return to any earlier part of a work he has been quoting from.
>
> Hutchinson and Johnson (2005) 194

18 Rabinowitz (1957), especially 93 – 5.
19 Düring (1961). Opponents of Rabinowitz's view include Mansion (1958) and Furley (1959).
20 Schneeweiß (1966).
21 Hutchinson and Johnson (2005).
22 Flashar (1965).

Hutchinson's and Johnson's findings seem to have been generally accepted[23] and, assuming that they are correct, we can reach three general conclusions. First, Iamblichus continuously quoted from Aristotle's *Protrepticus* in chapters VI–XII, so that we do not need to rearrange the fragments we find in these chapters. Second, we can distinguish with good reliability between Iamblichus' introductory and transitional remarks and blocks of (sometimes paraphrased) quotations. And third, we can be cautiously confident that Iamblichus did not try to distort Aristotle's arguments when he modified them.

While the main evidence for Aristotle's *Protrepticus* comes from Iamblichus' *Protrepticus*, scholars have also considered secondary sources. Due to an overlap in text and content, it must be the case that Iamblichus used Aristotle's *Protrepticus* for some chapters of his *De communi mathematica scientia* (henceforth *DCMS*). It is generally accepted that *DCMS* 26 contains material from the *Protrepticus*, while the discussion is still ongoing for chapters 22, 23 and 27.[24] Another topic of current debate is the literary form of the *Protrepticus*, which revolves around the question whether it was a dialogue or a monologue.[25] My analysis of Aristotle's conception of philosophy in his *Protrepticus* will only rely on the

23 Recent studies that include analyses of Aristotle's *Protrepticus* make use of Hutchinson's and Johnson's findings; see Bobonich (2007) 163n13, Walker (2010) 135, Wareh (2012) 41, Collins (2015) 244. Only Flashar – apparently taking back his earlier view – expressed doubts about whether we can infer how Iamblichus quoted Aristotle from the way he quoted Plato. He argues that, since Iamblichus was a Neoplatonic, he may have quoted Plato faithfully but modified and rearranged Aristotle's text so as to make him agree with Plato's ideas; cf. Flashar (2006) 174 f. Although we cannot exclude this possibility, I believe that the burden of proof lies with Flashar. Considering what we know about how Iamblichus cited Plato, we have little reason to doubt that Iamblichus also cited Aristotle in this way. Further evidence for rejecting Flashar's objection comes from a recent study by Hutchinson and Johnson. They studied how Iamblichus quoted another text for which we have an independent manuscript tradition, namely the Pythagorean Golden Verses, which Iamblichus' quotes in chapter III of his *Protrepticus*. Here again, they found that Iamblichus' technique of excerption is as they hypothesized in their early work on the authentication of Aristotle's *Protrepticus*. Cf. Hutchinson and Johnson (Unpublished Manuscript 2) nn29 – 41.

24 Cf. the commentary on this evidence in Hutchinson and Johnson's forthcoming collection of citations, fragments, paraphrases and other evidence: Hutchinson and Johnson (Unpublished Manuscript 1). Cf. also their work on the relation between the *DCMS* and the *De partibus animalium* in Hutchinson and Johnson (Unpublished Manuscript 4).

25 The question of whether the *Protrepticus* was a dialogue is as old as the history of its authentication. To mention just the most prominent members of this discussion: Jaeger and Düring think it was a monologue; see Jaeger (1923); Düring (1961) 29 – 32. Bywater and, most recently, Hutchinson and Johnson argue that it was a dialogue: Bywater (1869); and Hutchinson and Johnson (Unpublished Manuscript 1). All things considered, I believe that it is more likely that the *Protrepticus* was a dialogue, but nothing hinges on it for the conclusions of this paper.

fragments from Iamblichus' *Protrepticus* and *DCMS* 26, and I will remain neutral on the question of the *Protrepticus*' form.

2 Philosophy as the Possession and Use of Wisdom

The most general description of philosophy in the *Protrepticus* can be found at the very beginning of chapter 6 of Iamblichus' *Protrepticus*. There Aristotle states that philosophy is the possession and use of wisdom, be it wisdom that is either essentially or accidentally helpful for managing our life and the state well:[26]

> τὰ ὑποκείμενα πρὸς τὸν βίον ἡμῖν, οἷον <τὸ> σῶμα καὶ <τὰ> περὶ τὸ σῶμα, καθάπερ ὄργανά τινα ὑπόκειται, τούτων δ' ἐπικίνδυνός ἐστιν ἡ χρῆσις, καὶ πλέον θάτερον ἀπεργάζεται τοῖς μὴ δεόντως αὐτοῖς χρωμένοις. δεῖ τοίνυν ὀρέγεσθαι τῆς ἐπιστήμης κτᾶσθαί τε αὐτὴν καὶ χρῆσθαι αὐτῇ προσηκόντως, δι' ἧς πάντα ταῦτα εὖ θησόμεθα. φιλοσοφητέον ἄρα ἡμῖν, εἰ μέλλομεν ὀρθῶς πολιτεύσεσθαι καὶ τὸν ἑαυτῶν βίον διάξειν ὠφελίμως.
>
> The underlying things of our life, such as, for example, the body and the things that concern the body, are underlying just like some instruments (ὄργανά) whose use is dangerous, and [which] cause more harm to those who do not use them as they should. It is necessary, then, to aim at this knowledge, to acquire (κτᾶσθαί) it and make use of (χρῆσθαι) it suitably, by means of which we will make the best of all these things. Therefore, we ought to philosophize (φιλοσοφητέον) if we are to take part in politics correctly and to manage our life beneficially.
>
> *Prt*. 37.3–11 Pistelli

A later quote that refers to this earlier passage puts the same point in a nutshell:

> Clearly, then, we should not flee from philosophy, since philosophy is, as we believe, both the possession and use of wisdom (κτῆσίς τε καὶ χρῆσις σοφίας), and wisdom is among the greatest goods.
>
> *Prt*. 40.1–4 Pistelli

First and foremost, this description of philosophy as the possession and use of wisdom includes an allusion to a passage in Plato's *Euthydemus*, in which Socrates and his interlocutor agree that the mere possession (κτῆσις) of good things

26 All references to Aristotle's *Protrepticus* are to Pistelli's edition of Iamblichus' *Protrepticus* or to Festa's edition of Iamblichus' *De communi mathematica scientia*. All translations of passages attributed to Aristotle's *Protrepticus* as well as passages from Isocrates' works are mine. All translations from Aristotle's corpus are from Barnes' standard edition of Aristotle's works.

is not enough to make us happy; we also need to know *how to use* (χρῆσθαι) these good things properly (280d4 – 7).[27] Therefore, philosophy should not only be the possession of knowledge (288d8), but also – as the *Euthydemus* suggests – the use of knowledge (cf. 288d – 289b). However, the differentiation between the possession and use of knowledge is also a theme in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*.[28] In general, although Aristotle does not repeat the phrase that philosophy is the possession and use of wisdom in other works, it is certainly compatible with it: considering the *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, philosophy seems to be both theoretical knowledge in the domains of theology, nature and mathematics (cf. *Metaph.* VI 1, 1026a18 f.) as well as practical knowledge,[29] the end of which is not the mere acquisition of knowledge, but action.

Now, according to this description of philosophy in the *Protrepticus*, what is essential to philosophy is that it is concerned with wisdom understood as knowledge. This knowledge is also described as helpful for living and ruling well, but that does not tell us much about the kind of knowledge which philosophy is supposed to be. More specifically, it does not help us decide whether "wisdom" includes only one kind of knowledge that is both theoretical and helpful for acting and living well, as Jaeger believes, or whether Aristotle believes that wisdom includes two distinct fields of knowledge, namely a theoretical and a practical kind of knowledge.

In any case, the idea that philosophy is knowledge and that this knowledge is somehow useful for living and ruling well, constitutes one of Isocrates' main objections against Plato's conception of philosophy in the *Antidosis*.[30] Interest-

27 In the background of this passage of the *Protrepticus* is probably also *Meno* 87c – 89a, where Socrates and Meno conclude that excellence must be knowledge since nothing that is traditionally thought of as useful (such as strength, beauty or wealth) can be used correctly (ὀρθὴ χρῆσις) if it is not accompanied by reason. Without knowledge, such things can be harmful.

28 *EE* II 9, 1225b11 – 12: ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ ἐπίστασθαι καὶ τὸ εἰδέναι διττόν, ἓν μὲν τὸ ἔχειν, ἓν δὲ τὸ χρῆσθαι τῇ ἐπιστήμη. And *EN* VII 5, 1146b31 – 33: καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἔχων μὲν οὐ χρώμενος δὲ τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ ὁ χρώμενος λέγεται ἐπίστασθαι.

29 Cf. *EN* X 9, 1181b12 – 15, and *Pol.* III 12, 1282b23. The question of whether practical philosophy or philosophy that is πολιτική constitutes knowledge for Aristotle is highly debated. In this regard, it is worth pointing out that Aristotle calls πολιτική "knowledge" or "science" (cf. ἡ πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη) in *Rh.* I 4, 1359b17, even though it might not be knowledge in the strict sense of *EN* VI 3. I use the terms "knowledge" and "science" in a wide sense here which includes practical knowledge.

30 That Isocrates directs his criticism in *Antidosis* 258 – 269 primarily against Plato is widely acknowledged by commentators although, as usual, Isocrates does not mention his opponents by name. Instead, he describes them as masters of eristic arguments who spend time with astronomy, geometry and other such studies (cf. 262). There are many reasons why Plato is the most

ingly, such an objection has been preserved in *DCMS* 26. The discussion of this objection will be useful for understanding Aristotle's conception of philosophy in the *Protrepticus* because it illuminates the rival concept to which he was responding.[31]

At the beginning of *DCMS* 26 we read that two domains are sometimes associated with "it", i.e. philosophy:[32]

> φασὶ γὰρ οἱ μὲν εἶναι τὴν τῶν ἀδίκων καὶ δικαίων καὶ κακῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἐπιστήμην, ὁμοίαν οὖσαν γεωμετρίᾳ καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ταῖς τοιαύταις, οἱ δὲ τὴν περὶ φύσεως τε καὶ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀληθείας φρόνησιν, οἵαν οἵ τε περὶ Ἀναχαγόραν καὶ Παρμενίδην εἰσηγήσαντο.
>
> For they [i.e. certain philosophers] say, on the one hand, that it [i.e. philosophy] is knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) of what is unjust, just, bad and good, [a kind of knowledge] that is similar to geometry and other such sciences; on the other hand, they say that it is wisdom (φρόνησις) about nature and the rest of reality, [i.e. a kind of wisdom] as those around Anaxagoras and Parmenides proposed.
>
> *DCMS* 79.10 – 15 Festa

The subsequent lines contain the objection against such conceptions of philosophy. Note how this objection plays with the words "possession" and "using", which were integral for Aristotle's description of philosophy as the possession and use of wisdom:

> δεῖ δὴ μὴ λεληθέναι τὸν μέλλοντα περὶ τούτων ἐξετάζειν, ὅτι πάντα τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ πρὸς τὸν βίον ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐν τῷ χρῆσθαι καὶ πράττειν ἐστίν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τῷ γινώσκειν μόνον· οὔτε γὰρ ὑγιαίνομεν τῷ γνωρίζειν τὰ ποιητικὰ τῆς ὑγιείας, ἀλλὰ τῷ προσφέρεσθαι τοῖς σώμασιν· οὔτε πλουτοῦμεν τῷ γιγνώσκειν πλοῦτον, ἀλλὰ τῷ κεκτῆσθαι πολλὴν οὐσίαν· οὐδὲ τὸ πάντων μέγιστον εὖ ζῶμεν τῷ γιγνώσκειν ἄττα τῶν ὄντων, ἀλλὰ τῷ πράττειν εὖ· τὸ γὰρ εὐδαιμονεῖν ἀληθῶς τοῦτ' ἐστίν.

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probably addressee of Isocrates' criticisms here, but maybe the most convincing reason is that Plato proposes a curriculum for the education of the guardians and philosophers in *Republic* VII, which includes *inter alia* astronomy, geometry and dialectic (cf. 521d together with 528de and 533cd). Since Isocrates can only conceive of dialectic as eristics, he could easily characterise Plato's curriculum by means of these three subjects: geometry, astronomy and eristics.

31 As Hutchinson and Johnson (Unpublished Manuscript 3) 10 note: "To read Isocrates' *Antidosis* and the remains of Aristotle's *Protrepticus* side by side is to see that one work is answering the other as a whole and by means of a multilevel counterattack."

32 The preceding lines suggest that "it" could refer to the science of mathematics, but that seems unlikely since Aristotle says that "it" is like geometry. I assume that Iamblichus has somewhat distorted the context of the passage. The argument only makes sense if "it" here refers to philosophy.

> So, someone who is going to examine these things should not overlook that everything that is good and useful for the life of humans lies in using (χρῆσθαι) [these things] and acting (πράττειν) rather than in understanding (γινώσκειν) alone. For neither are we healthy by knowing (γνωρίζειν) the things that produce health, but by applying [them] to our bodies; nor do we become wealthy by knowing wealth, but by possessing (κτάομαι) lots of property; and most of all do we not live well by knowing some beings, but by acting well. For this is what it means to be truly happy (τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν).
>
> *DCMS* 79.15 – 24 Festa

According to this objection, every candidate branch of knowledge for what is truly philosophy must pass the requirement of being good and useful for a human life. Yet, what it is to be happy for humans is to act well, rather than to possess knowledge. Thus, whether some knowledge can qualify as philosophy depends, in this view, on whether it contributes to being happy, i. e. to acting well. This view that the end of philosophy is successful action in private and public affairs is a commonplace in Isocrates' works (cf. especially *Antidosis* 266, but also *Against the Sophists* 7 – 8, *Encomium of Helen* 5, *Antidosis* 271, *Letter to Alexander* 4, *Panathenaicus* 30), so it is plausible that the critical voice behind this objection is – at least partly – Isocrates.[33] If the *Protrepticus* was a dialogue, then the character "Isocrates" could have expressed himself this way; if it was a monologue, then Aristotle might have reported such an objection as that of a critic.[34]

In the following lines of *DCMS* 26 (cf. 80.5 – 81.1 Festa), we find examples that suggest a gap between knowledge and practice: just in virtue of their knowledge of demonstrations (δι' ἀποδείξεως) pertaining to geometry, geometers cannot survey land properly, while those who lack such knowledge of geometry but possess experience in this line of work can. Likewise, just in virtue of their knowledge of demonstrations (ἀποδείξεις) and syllogisms (συλλογισμοί), those who study the theory of music cannot play an instrument, while those who have experience, but no knowledge of musical theory, can. In general, so the argument goes, those who have experience and opinions are better in actual practice than those who only have knowledge of the demonstrations, proofs and causes in any given scientific domain. Even worse, once those with experience

33 The Socrates of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* could also be in the background of the criticism: he criticizes the same fields of studies (geometry and astronomy) as being useless in *Mem.* IV.vii.
34 See note 25 above.

gain such explanatory knowledge[35] in the appropriate field, they become less good at what they do.

Although we do not find this exact line of reasoning in Isocrates' works, it looks like something which Isocrates could and should have said to defend his view. What we do find in Isocrates is the thought that experience is more important than knowledge for acting well (cf. *Against the Sophists* 14, *Encomium to Helen* 5, *Antidosis* 191 and 296), because, as Isocrates claims, the most important things about performing successful actions elude knowledge: we cannot have knowledge of the right moment for doing or saying something (cf. *Antidosis* 184) and we cannot know whether the consequences of our actions will benefit us in the future (cf. *Against the Sophists* 2–3). The examples, however, which carry most of the force of the objection in *DCMS* 26 are absent from Isocrates' work,[36] although he does argue that sciences like "astronomy, geometry and other such studies" (*Antidosis* 261) are useless for acting well and can only serve as mental gymnastics for the young (*Antidosis* 263–265). Isocrates comes closest to the argument of *DCMS* 26 in his late work *Panathenaicus*, where he claims that experts in mathematical studies and, more generally, people who have studied a subject for such a long time that they can teach students, "are more senseless in [handling] other businesses of life than their students (since I hesitate to say [even more senseless] than their slaves)" (*Panathenaicus* 16). For Isocrates, philosophy cannot be pure knowledge, because knowledge does not provide any proper benefits for acting well in private and public affairs.

Aristotle probably took this objection very seriously. He still recognizes the advantage of experience over knowledge in matters of practice in *Metaphysics* I 1: "With a view to action experience seems in no respect inferior to art, and we even see men of experience succeeding more than those who have theory without experience" (981a12–15). In *DCMS* 26, the Isocratean objection is followed by arguments concerning the possibility, usefulness and easiness of the knowledge under attack, arguments that overlap to a large extent in text and content with the more detailed arguments of chapter 6 of Iamblichus' *Protrepticus* (cf. *DCMS* 80.7–83.1 Festa and *Prt.* 37.22–41.5 Pistelli). Iamblichus must have used these arguments from Aristotle's *Protrepticus* for both the *DCMS* and his own *Protrepticus*. Thus, the argument in *Protrepticus* 6 must be understood as a response to Isocrates' objection that philosophy cannot be the possession and use of knowledge, because knowledge is useless for action. In this paper,

35 By "explanatory knowledge" I mean knowledge not just of facts but also of reasons for why a certain fact holds true. This is ἐπιστήμη strictly speaking for Aristotle (cf. *Metaph.* I 1), and this is consistently the notion of ἐπιστήμη and "knowledge" that I believe is at issue in the *Protrepticus*.
36 However, we can find two of the examples in Xenophon's *Mem.* IV.vii.

I will only deal with the first set of arguments with which Aristotle answers this objection, which is the set of arguments intended to show that it is possible to acquire philosophy understood as knowledge. In this argument, we can see what kind of knowledge Aristotle thinks philosophy is, which he will later show to be useful and easy to acquire.

3 Philosophy and Knowledge of the Just and Useful

We have seen that Isocrates criticized the value of knowledge for action. The first stage of Aristotle's answer to this objection is to provide evidence about the possibility of acquiring such knowledge that Isocrates found unhelpful for action:

> ἔτι τοίνυν, ἐπεὶ τὰ δυνατὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα πάντες αἱρούμεθα, παραδεικτέον ὡς τῷ φιλοσοφεῖν ἀμφότερα ταῦτα ὑπάρχει, καὶ ὅτι τὴν χαλεπότητα τῆς κτήσεως ὑποδεεστέραν ἔχει τοῦ μεγέθους τῆς ὠφελείας· τὰ γὰρ ῥᾴω πάντες ἥδιον πονοῦμεν. ὅτι μὲν οὖν τὰς περὶ τῶν δικαίων καὶ τῶν συμφερόντων, ἔτι δὲ περὶ φύσεώς τε καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἀληθείας ἐπιστήμας δυνατοὶ λαβεῖν ἐσμεν, ῥᾴδιον ἐπιδεῖξαι.
>
> Further, since all choose the things that are possible and beneficial, we must show that both of these [features] hold true for philosophizing, and that the difficulty of acquiring it [i.e. philosophy] is less than the greatness of its benefit. For we all work on the easier things with more pleasure. That we are able to grasp knowledge about what is just and what is useful, as well as knowledge about nature and the rest of reality, is easy to demonstrate.[37]
>
> *Prt*. 37.22 – 38.3 Pistelli

37 The whole passage is most likely a transitional addendum by Iamblichus: it exhibits the metatextual features characteristic of Iamblichus' addenda (cf. "we must show" and "it is easy to demonstrate"). It is nevertheless likely that Iamblichus hereby summarizes Aristotle's actual strategy and reuses some of Aristotle's original words. For, first, it is probable that Aristotle proceeded in this way, since he explicitly argues that a protreptic speech should (among other things) provide arguments concerning the possibility, usefulness and easiness of the thing that you encourage towards. Cf. *Rh*. I 3, 1359a11 – 16 and 1359a30 – b1; I 6, 1362a15 – 21, and I 7, 1364a29 f. Also cf. Hutchinson and Johnson (Unpublished Manuscript 1) 21. Second, the division of philosophy in this passage ("knowledge about what is just and what is useful as well as knowledge about nature and the rest of reality") alludes to the two kinds of philosophy the criticism of *DCMS* 26 targeted. According to the criticism, philosophers think that the end of studying philosophy is either of two kinds of knowledge: (1) "knowledge of what is unjust and just, bad and good" (79.10 f. Festa) or (2) "wisdom about nature and such reality" (79.12 f. Festa). The parallel phrasing in *DCMS* 26 suggests that Iamblichus borrows the division of philosophy in *Protrepticus* 6 from Aristotle's original text.

Isocrates did not question that such knowledge exists or that we can acquire it in the objection from *DCMS* 26, but only that such knowledge is unhelpful for actual practice. Yet, Hutchinson and Johnson[38] have argued that this way of proceeding is in accordance with Aristotle's own strategy for deliberative speeches, of which protreptic speeches are a subclass; in *Rhetoric* I 3, for example, Aristotle argues that one must show that the thing deliberated about is possible (1359a11–16 and 1359a30–b1). In fact, it is easy to see that the possibility of something is a pre-requisite for a discussion about its usefulness and easiness. When something is impossible, talk about whether we should obtain it because it is useful and easy to acquire is pointless.

Before discussing this argument in detail, I wish to pause for a moment and address the division of philosophy into kinds of knowledge in this passage, i.e. 37.26–38.3 Pistelli. Jaeger has argued that this passage presents a Platonic division of philosophy into ethics, physics and dialectic: knowledge about the just and the useful would be ethics, knowledge of nature physics, and knowledge of the rest of reality would be dialectic.[39] It is questionable whether this would even be a Platonic division, and it is even more questionable whether "the rest of reality" refers to dialectic. In any case, considering only the textual evidence of this passage and leaving aside Jaeger's broader view on the development of Aristotle's thought, his interpretation is purely speculative. Indeed, the strictly twofold structure of the following argument suggests a twofold rather than a threefold distinction. As de Stryker has shown, every premise of the argument has two parts, one for knowledge of the just and useful, and one for knowledge of nature and the rest of reality.[40] I quote Aristotle's argument in full below, distinguishing the parts dealing with (a) the possibility of knowledge of the just and useful, and (b) the possibility of knowledge of nature and the rest of reality:

> ὅτι μὲν οὖν τὰς περὶ τῶν δικαίων καὶ τῶν συμφερόντων, ἔτι δὲ περὶ φύσεώς τε καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἀληθείας ἐπιστήμας δυνατοὶ λαβεῖν ἐσμεν, ῥᾴδιον ἐπιδεῖξαι. ἀεὶ γὰρ γνωριμώτερα τὰ πρότερα τῶν ὑστέρων καὶ τὰ βελτίω τὴν φύσιν τῶν χειρόνων. τῶν γὰρ ὡρισμένων καὶ τεταγμένων ἐπιστήμη μᾶλλόν ἐστιν ἢ τῶν ἐναντίων, ἔτι δὲ τῶν αἰτίων ἢ τῶν ἀποβαινόντων. ἔστι δ' ὡρισμένα καὶ τεταγμένα τἀγαθὰ τῶν κακῶν μᾶλλον, ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος ἐπιεικὴς ἀνθρώπου φαύλου· τὴν αὐτὴν γὰρ ἔχειν ἀναγκαῖον αὐτὰ πρὸς ἄλληλα διαφοράν. αἴτιά τε μᾶλλον τὰ πρότερα τῶν ὑστέρων· ἐκείνων γὰρ ἀναιρουμένων ἀναιρεῖται τὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ἐξ ἐκείνων ἔχοντα, μήκη μὲν ἀριθμῶν, ἐπίπεδα δὲ μηκῶν, στερεὰ δὲ ἐπιπέδων, στοιχεῖα δὲ τῶν ὀνομαζομένων συλλαβῶν.

38 Cf. Hutchinson and Johnson (2018).
39 Jaeger (1923) 83.
40 De Stryker (1960).

That we are able to grasp knowledge about just and useful things as well as knowledge about nature and the rest of reality, is easy to demonstrate. (b) For the prior is always more knowable than the posterior, (a) and the better by nature [is more knowable] than the worse. (a) For knowledge is more of determinate and ordered things than of the opposite [kind of] things, (b) and more of the causes than of effects. (a) Yet, good things are more determinate and ordered than bad things, as for example a decent person is more determinate and ordered than a bad person: for, they necessarily show the same difference relative to each other. (b) And the prior things – more than later things – are causes: for, if these things are eliminated (ἀναιρεῖν), the things which have their essence out of these are eliminated, ([as for example] lines [are eliminated] when numbers [are eliminated], surfaces when lines, solids when surfaces) and letters [are causes more] than the so-called "syllables".[41]

Prt. 37.26 – 38.14 Pistelli

ὥστε εἴπερ ψυχὴ μὲν σώματος ἄμεινον (ἀρχικώτερον γὰρ τὴν φύσιν ἐστί), περὶ δὲ σῶμα τέχναι καὶ φρονήσεις εἰσὶν ἰατρική τε καὶ γυμναστική (ταύτας γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἐπιστήμας τίθεμεν καὶ κεκτῆσθαί τινας αὐτάς φαμεν), δῆλον ὅτι καὶ περὶ ψυχὴν καὶ τὰς ψυχῆς ἀρετάς ἐστί τις ἐπιμέλεια καὶ τέχνη, καὶ δυνατοὶ λαβεῖν αὐτήν ἐσμεν, εἴπερ γε καὶ τῶν μετ' ἀγνοίας πλείονος καὶ γνῶναι χαλεπωτέρων.

(a) Thus, since soul is better than body (for its nature is more architectonic (ἀρχικώτερον), while the arts and wisdoms (τέχναι καὶ φρονήσεις) concerning the body (περὶ δὲ σῶμα) are medicine and gymnastics (for we take these to be fields of knowledge and say that some have acquired them), it is clear that there must exist some sort of care (ἐπιμέλεια) and art concerning the soul and the excellences of the soul (περὶ ψυχὴν καὶ τὰς ψυχῆς ἀρετάς); and we are able to acquire them, if indeed [we are able to acquire a care and an art] of things about which our ignorance is greater and [we are able] to know what is more difficult.

Prt. 38.14 – 22 Pistelli

ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τῶν περὶ φύσεως· πολὺ γὰρ πρότερον ἀναγκαῖον τῶν αἰτίων καὶ τῶν στοιχείων εἶναι φρόνησιν ἢ τῶν ὑστέρων. οὐ γὰρ ταῦτα τῶν ἄκρων οὐδ' ἐκ τούτων τὰ πρῶτα πέφυκεν, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἐκείνων καὶ δι' ἐκείνων τἆλλα γίγνεται καὶ συνίσταται φανερῶς. εἴτε γὰρ πῦρ εἴτ' ἀὴρ εἴτε ἀριθμὸς εἴτε ἄλλαι τινὲς φύσεις αἰτίαι καὶ πρῶται τῶν ἄλλων, ἀδύνατον τῶν ἄλλων τι γιγνώσκειν ἐκείνας ἀγνοοῦντας· πῶς γὰρ ἄν τις ἢ λόγον γνωρίζοι συλλαβὰς ἀγνοῶν, ἢ ταύτας ἐπίσταιτο μηδὲν τῶν στοιχείων εἰδώς;

41 Editors and commentators have struggled with the construal of this passage. The most natural construal of στοιχεῖα δὲ τῶν ὀνομαζομένων συλλαβῶν is "letters [are eliminated] when the so-called 'syllables' [are eliminated] ", but this must be wrong (see also 39.7 f. Pistelli). The best solution has been proposed by Hutchinson and Johnson in Hutchinson and Johnson (Unpublished Manuscript 2) n129 *ad Prt*. 38.14: "To us the awkwardness seems merely an artefact of the selection process of Iamblichus, which makes the overall shape of the line of reasoning at times unclear simply by shortening it; the phrase construes nicely when governed by the parallel above at 38.10 – 11."

> (b) Likewise, [we are able to know] the things about nature: for, with much more priority is it necessary that wisdom (φρόνησις) is of causes and elements than of the posterior. For, these [i.e. posterior things] are not among the highest things, nor are the first things by nature [composed] out of them, but it is manifest that it is out of these [i.e. the elements] and because of these that everything else comes to be and is composed. For, whether it is fire, air, number or some other natures that are the causes and the first things of everything, it is impossible to know one of these when you fail to understand them [i.e. the causes and the first things]. For, how could someone either grasp a word when he fails to understand syllables or know these [viz. the syllables] when he has not even understood letters?
>
> *Prt*. 38.22 – 39.8 Pistelli

I will discuss part (a) and part (b) of the arguments separately. For now, I will start with part (a), which concerns the possibility of knowledge of the just and useful. This argument has two stages. The first appears in 37.26 – 38.14 Pistelli, showing that the better is more knowable than the worse:

Conclusion A: The better is more knowable than the worse.

Premise 1: Knowledge is more of the determinate and ordered than of their opposites.

Premise 2: Better things are more determinate and ordered than worse things.

The second stage can be found in 38.14 – 22 Pistelli, where, starting from the first stage's conclusion, Aristotle argues further:

Premise 3: Soul is better than body.

Premise 4: We are able to acquire knowledge of the body (namely through medicine and gymnastics).

Conclusion B: We are able to acquire knowledge of the soul.

In the reconstruction provided, which follows the text closely, the argument is incomplete. From the conclusion of the first stage of each argument that the better is more knowable than the worse and the additional premise 3 that soul is better than body, Aristotle infers implicitly that the soul is more knowable than the body. Given this conclusion and the fact that we can acquire knowledge of the body, we must then conclude that we can also acquire knowledge of the soul.

In his intensive work on the whole passage, de Stryker has provided references to passages in Plato's dialogues for all premises of this argument.[42] I agree with him about the Platonic background of the premises, but I do not agree with his inference that this is supposed to entail that the argument is Platonic *rather* than Aristotelian, and that, therefore, the picture of philosophy that we receive in the *Protrepticus* is Platonic *rather* than Aristotelian. In going through

42 De Stryker (1960).