

**THAT PRUDENCE IS A TRUE SUPPOSITION:  
A Note on a Problem in Aristotle.**

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The problem of Aristotle has always been his teacher: Plato. The *Nichomachean Ethics* invented the non-Platonic distinction between ethical virtue and intellectual virtue. Many have believed this Aristotelian invention to be the pupil's way of liberating himself from the influence of the teacher. Because complete ethical virtue is found only in the prudent human being, they have believed the prudent one to be the analogy of the philosopher-king. But they have never explained satisfactorily why Aristotle considered prudence an intellectual virtue. The opening of Book VI of the *Ethics* is straightforward,

Since we happened to have said before that the mean is to be chosen and not excess nor deficiency, and the mean is as right reason declares, let us distinguish this. [τὸ δὲ μέσον ὡς ὁ λόγος ὁ ὀρθὸς λέγει. 1138<sub>b20</sub>.]

Nonetheless, commentators regularly describe this book devoted to the intellectual virtues as a demonstration of the independent status of ethical virtue. A paraphrase of one recent effort will fully describe this tendency:

[Aristotle's] stand on the rational foundation of social planning... [...] repudiate[s] the Platonic view, that effective social planning can in general be done outside the context of action by prescribing types of action which are to be carried out mechanically by the agent. Consequently, [Aristotle] repudiate[s] the Platonic corollary that effective social planning can, in general, be carried out by a group of experts who hand down prescriptions to be mechanically carried out by non-experts. [Aristotle] locate[s] the rational basis of planning in the perceptiveness of the experienced individual agent.<sup>1</sup>

What Professor Miller calls “planning” is traditionally translated “deliberation.” Hence, he argues that Aristotle has articulated a means of private deliberation which can not be generalized—which cannot extend the rule of reason beyond the individual himself.

Prudence or practical wisdom—the specific form of deliberative excellence [1141<sub>b10</sub>] can be radically individual, only if the subject matters of deliberation are radically individual, as they are clearly subordinate. They are subordinate to the subject of contemplation.

ὡστ' εἴη ἅν ἡ σοφία νοῦς καὶ ἐπιστήμη ὧπερ κεφαλὴν ἔχουσα ἐπιστήμη τῶν τιμιωτάτων. -- ἄτοπον γὰρ εἰ τις τὴν πολιτικὴν ἢ τὴν φρόνησιν σπουδαιοτάτην οἴεται εἶναι, εἰ μὴ τὸ ἄριστον τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἀνθρωπὸς ἐστίν. εἰ δ' ὑγιεινὸν μὲν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἕτερον ἀνθρώποις καὶ ἰχθύσι, τὸ δὲ λευκὸν καὶ εὐθύ ταυτὸν πάντες ἅν εἴποιεν φρόνιμον δὲ ἕτερον. 1141<sub>a20</sub>

So that wisdom would be intellect and knowledge, as if knowledge were holding the head of the most honored things. Strange if someone should believe politics or prudence to be the most important thing, if man is not the best of things in the cosmos. Even if health and good differ for men and for fish, the white and the straight are always the same, and everyone would say the wise thing is the same, while the prudent

thing differs.

The wise man is the same for all, while the prudent one is different. And the specific examples Aristotle employs suggest much individual variability—“on account of which some [persons] not knowledgeable are more prudent than others knowledgeable.” 1141<sub>b16</sub> That is, empirics are sometimes more useful than theorists. But that seems to suggest the priority of particular experiences in arriving at sound moral and political judgments—as opposed to general standards of natural right. *ἡ φρόνησις πρακτική* Aristotle says next, contrasting empirical knowledge with general or theoretical knowledge. But, he adds, significantly, a note of ambiguity:

So that it is necessary to have both, rather than that one. For there must be some architectonic principle. [ὥστε δεῖ ἀμφω ἔχειν ἢ ταύτην μᾶλλον εἶη δὲ τὰς καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἀρχιτεκτονική.]

The ambiguity is introduced by practice itself, since there are two kinds of practical action.

The same characteristic is political and prudential, though indeed it is not the same thing in them. Of that which concerns the city [it is] the legislative art or architectonic, while that which concerns each single thing has the common name, politics. The latter concerns action and deliberation. 1141<sub>b25</sub>

Because action and deliberation are indeed individual phenomena, it is misleading to call this process by the name of politics. But insofar as the private things must depend on legislation or politics in the full sense, it is clear that private processes borrow the name politics from their ultimate dependence on politics.

If politics provides the architectonic principle for prudence, the distinction between ethical virtue and intellectual virtue will remain tenable for so long as politics is not thought to be founded in natural right. But we have seen that Book VI opens with the declaration that what is virtue is declared by right reason. Right reason as such is universally valid, even if applied to particular cases. If politics provides the architectonic principle for prudence, and right reason declares what is virtue, politics must be that which right reason declares. That is, prudence or excellence in deliberation must accord with reason: Hence, Aristotle has not escaped his master.

But there is another side to the story, by which Aristotle may be seen to have discovered a foundation for distinguishing ethical and intellectual virtue without opposing Plato. One of the most disputed passages of the *Ethics* occurs at 1142<sub>b30-35</sub>. It reads as follows:

If something has been well deliberated by the prudent one, the deliberative excellence would be the correctness regarding what is beneficial towards the end, of which prudence is a true supposition. [εἰ δὲ τῶν φρονίμων τὸ εὖ βεβουλευσθαι ἢ εὐβουλίᾳ εἶη ἄν ὀρθότης ἢ καὶ τὸ συμφέρον πρὸς τὸ τέλος οὗ ἡ φρόνησις ἀληθῆς ὑποληψίς ἐστίν.]<sup>2</sup>

The passage is disputed because it is apparently unclear whether prudence perceives the means to the end (that is, whether prudence is merely excellence in deliberation) or the end itself—that is, whether prudence is mere calculation, instrumental reasoning, to be distinguished from ordinary shrewdness only by the fact that it accompanies virtue where shrewdness accompanies vice. That is, the same faculty of the human soul would be accorded two differing names as it occurred in the presence of virtue or vice.

But it is not necessary so to strain the text. Clearly, it is the end which prudence truly pre-supposes, and this for no other reason than that prudence is precisely the art of pursuing the end. And the end is ethical virtue. Hence, prudence is the art of striking the mean.

συνέζευκται δὲ καὶ ἡ φρόνησις τῆ τοῦ ἡθους ἀρετῆ, καὶ αὕτη τῆ, φρόνησει, εἴπερ

αἱ μὲν τῆς φρονήσεως ἀρχαὶ κατὰ τὰς ἠθικὰς εἰσὶν ἀρετὰς τὸ δ' ὀρθὸν τῶν ἠθικῶν κατὰ τὴν φρόνησιν. 1178<sub>a15</sub>

Prudence is yoked together with the ethical virtues, and virtue with prudence, since the first principles of prudence are according to the ethical virtues while the correctness of ethics is according to prudence.

And prudence strikes the mean that right reason declares, always following the formula of “choosing and pursuing *a* by means of *b*” [115<sub>a35</sub>]. What becomes critical, then, is to know how prudence becomes informed of *a*—that is, the end. This is what makes it an intellectual virtue, while we find its functioning strictly practical. Aristotle declares, 1145<sub>a5</sub>, that virtue determines the end. But he made clear, opening Book II, that virtue is a characteristic, not a capacity. Hence, we cannot know the end through virtue. Practical wisdom “makes us do what conduces to the end” by correctly perceiving the end and the means appropriate to it. But that would seem to depend on the perception of virtue itself, or the good at which every action aims.

Most of the variants of 1142<sub>b30</sub> suggest that the οὐ, of which, has for antecedent not the τὸ τέλος, which agrees both in gender and number, but the τὸ συμφέρον, similarly in agreement. That would make prudence the true supposition of the benefit or utility of the end—the good or right—without any provision for the end becoming known to the man of action as such. In short, it would make Aristotle what it is now fashionable to call “deontological” rather than teleological. The temptation to silence Aristotle on the question of an essential moral order seems to spring from the belief that the problem of natural right is not susceptible to solution—that is, there never was nor can be one right, universally valid. Hence, there never is one objective right at which to aim in any particular circumstance.

The problem is this: νοῦς and ἐπιστήμη—intellect and scientific understanding—cannot know or at least make known the end of which prudence is a true supposition. For these regard only the unchanging verities. Human things are changing things. Virtue—even as end—is a concern with human things—the attitude toward human things (and justice most of all), The right attitude toward the human things seems subject to change. Natural right seems subject to change. Is prudence aware—self-conscious of its changeability? If the human things are changing things, it can only be because they are such things as come into being. The true perspective from which to understand them, then, would be their genesis. The genesis of prudence must both reveal the problem of natural right—and solve it—if prudence truly pre-supposes the end.

This is the argument Leo Strauss makes in *Natural Right and History* although he does not suggest that the concern with genesis is crucial.

There cannot be natural right if all that man could know about right were the problem of right, or if the question of the principles of justice would admit of a variety of mutually exclusive answers, none of which could be proved to be superior to the others. There cannot be natural right if human thought, in spite of its essential incompleteness, is not capable of solving the problem of the principles of justice in a genuine and hence universally valid manner. [p. 24]

In sum, this means that the contrast between intellectual virtue and ethical virtue, as a refutation of Plato, is a failure unless and until ethical virtue can be understood to be rooted in unchanging, universal principle. That is, unless ethical virtue itself can become a legitimate object of intellectual inquiry, and the varieties of ethical practices themselves become the evidence of such inquiry.

But why should we accept the conventional habit of opposing Aristotle to Plato, as if Plato were thoroughly understood? His own Athenian Stranger (*Laws*, 713<sub>E</sub>-714<sub>A</sub>) reveals a foundation for distinguishing intellectual and ethical virtue, while proving the tie that subsists between them. The rule of the demi-gods in the “Age of Cronos” pre-figured all the toilsome and ill-fated efforts of mere mortals in subsequent ages.

ἀλλὰ μιμεῖσθαι δεῖν ἡμᾶς οἰέται πάση μηχανῇ τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ κρόνου λεγόμενον βίον, καὶ ὅσον ἐν ἡμῖν ἀθανασίας ἔνεστι τούτῳ πειθονένους δημοσίᾳ καὶ ἰδίᾳ τὰς τ' οἰκῆσεις καὶ τὰς πόλεις διοικεῖν τὴν τοῦ νοῦ διανομὴν ἐπονομάζοντας νόμον

...and inasmuch as there is immortality in us, [it is necessary] for households and cities to pursue obedience to this both in the many and in individuals, naming the intention of intellect, “law.”

The “law” which is the attempt to realize the goals of the “leader intellect” is nonetheless not wisdom or scientific knowledge. It bespeaks rather the *intention* of intellect than intellect itself, just as prudence is a true supposition of the end and not the contemplation of the end itself. The “abundance of justice” furnished by the gods, as an object of desire for mortals, is a compelling intellectual attraction. It is also the beginning, if imperfectly, of political life [*Laws*, 737<sub>A-8</sub>]. It is imperfect because what charms as “abundance of justice” takes on the mortal political aspect of “scarcity of injustice” [*Laws*, 730<sub>DD</sub>, 733<sub>E</sub>-734<sub>E</sub>]. And the “scarcity of injustice” is produced by means of general education in “self-control” [*Laws*, 637<sub>B5</sub>-682<sub>E</sub>]—through inculcation of moderation (τῆς μετριότητος, the measured, the mean). The Athenian does not use the standard term for moderation here [736E2], but instead of “good sense” employs the term whose root is τὸ μέσον, the mean. Thus, he calls for men to “make a rule of the mean” as a specific form of giving to the “intention of intellect” (the “ordering of intellect”: Bury) the name of “law”—the rule of the mean is the content to which the name, law, points. Aristotle, at least, affirms that all of the sciences, qua rational powers, seek the mean and are destroyed by excess and deficiency [*Ethics*, 1106<sub>A25</sub>-1106<sub>B20</sub>].<sup>3</sup>

This tacit agreement between Plato and Aristotle points to one consideration which may resolve the problem of right: that is, reveal how prudence (a right regard for the particular) is a true supposition of the end. The one consideration, again, is the genesis of virtue. Just as Plato’s Athenian Stranger reveals the status and nature of morality through repetition and changes in his accounts of the virtues (Cf., Strauss, *Argument and Action of Plato’s Laws*), so too does Aristotle both discuss and reveal the status and the nature of the virtues in his listing of them—particularly in the list he considers an enumeration in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as contrasted with the list initially offered in Book II (not an enumeration when invoked in the *Nicomachean Ethics* although it is an enumeration in the original *Eudemian Ethics*).

Strauss points to the significance of this comparison in his essay “On Classical Political Philosophy” in *What is Political Philosophy*.<sup>4</sup> There, he demonstrates that the difference in character between the lists of the virtues in the two treatises on ethics is an indication of Aristotle’s regard for the problematic in moral matters. He especially suggests that the inclusion of shame in the one and its exclusion from the other suggests that virtue is decisively affected by reputation. But Strauss’ argument does not disclose that he recognized the assertion, in Aristotle’s argument, of an account of necessary connections and order in the virtues—hence, a reason or principle tying them all together. To discern whether that reason or principle is natural right or the end, we must reconstruct the list of the virtues. We do so under the reminder that Aristotle, like the Athenian, distinguishes moral virtue and natural virtue (ἡ φυσικῆ ἀρετῆ, 1144<sub>B1-30</sub>), and that the two are distinguished entirely by the absence from the latter of intelligence [*νοῦς*] in some form. The moral virtues are all cultivated excellences. We study the characteristics of excellence in order to become good. [1103B26-30; 1144<sub>B31</sub>-1145<sub>A5</sub>].

The virtues, as Aristotle enumerates them (1115<sub>24</sub>), are either eleven or twelve. Whether we choose the one or the other number depends upon what we make of the inclusion of shame as the eleventh in the list of virtues. Aristotle declares that shame is a sham virtue [1128<sub>625-30</sub>]. If we dismiss shame, justice becomes the eleventh virtue and remains the end. In that case we also have a central virtue—which goes unnamed. If we retain shame in the enumeration, the mean of the list falls between two virtues, producing parallel lists of six virtues each. The first list begins with the first virtue, courage, followed by moderation, liberality, magnificence [μεγαλοπρεπεία], great-souledness [μεγαλοψυχία], and the nameless virtue. The second list begins with gentleness, followed by friendliness, truthfulness, wittiness, shame, and justice. The parallels are significant, but their soundness is made questionable by the presence of shame in the list

1. Courage	Gentleness
2. Moderation	Friendliness
3. Liberality	Truthfulness
4. Magnificence	Wittiness
5. Great-souledness	Shame
6. Nameless	Justice

Shame may not be a virtue, but it is the opposite of great-souledness: the memory of wrongs done is the opposite of the memory of rights done. The presence of the sham virtue makes it possible for us to see a parallel between the nameless virtue and justice—a parallel which otherwise goes unnoticed. To understand this contrast, we must first understand the nameless virtue. Shame is no help there, for its centrality on the list of eleven virtues is the key to the content or real name of the nameless virtue.

To begin at the beginning and at the surface, the most obvious characteristic of our list of virtues is their division into the self-regarding and the other-regarding. We move from the completely self-regarding courage to the virtue which is entirely “another’s good,” justice [1129<sub>b2off</sub>]. The enumeration of the virtues represents a motion of the human soul—though not emotions [Book VII]. But that motion—an ascent—requires a transition from the self-regarding mode to the other-regarding mode.

It is not obvious how that transition is effected. Before addressing the question of the transition specifically, let us characterize the virtues themselves. The first two—the moderating the fear of pain and heightening a fear of pleasure—are fundamental. They are accessible to all human beings, practically without exception. They are, we might say, the least intellectual and most self-regarding of the virtues. They are followed by liberality, magnificence, and great-souledness, which are all judgmental in character and hence more intellectual. They remain self-regarding in content, but in form are wholly other-regarding. In addition, they are by definition accessible to a few. The first five virtues establish an apparently irrefragable gulf between the few and the many. But, we require to be reminded that the judgmental virtues are built on the foundation of courage and moderation—those characteristics cum capacities without which the higher virtues are impossible for all. In those terms, the judgmental virtues seem to represent the origin of politics in some relationship between the rich and the poor whereby the rich genuinely strive for human excellence as opposed to “class” excellence.

If we have arrived at the point of the origin of politics, we clearly lack but one significant element: the conscious articulation of means to perceive the striving towards human excellence. To this task our nameless virtue is bent. It goes nameless for good reason: to the extent it is achieved it is not necessary to be attempted again (as acquisition); to the extent it fails it does not become visible. Only that philosophy which actually does change the world can be made practically manifest. Similarly, the nameless virtue is that excellence which stands midway between desuetude and unjustified confidence. Aristotle characterizes it as the mean between ambition and unambition, which is sometimes called by the one name, at other times by the other. We come to know it, therefore, only by way of understanding what characterizes these forms of excess and defect. They are, in short, self-regarding means of showing too little and too great regard for the conditions of life of others. The nameless virtue, then, would show such regard in the right way, at the right time, etc.

If the virtues of the few depend upon the virtues of the many, it is no less true that the few depend upon virtue in the many. The objects of liberality may be no less excellent in their way than the profferers of liberality, if the virtue will serve its end. The human excellences must remain in principle accessible to all if they are to be accessible to any. From recognition of this is born the impulse that generates the transition from the self-regarding to the other-regarding virtues. The nameless virtue is the two-fold desire to preserve the condition of a relationship between the rich and the poor on the basis of virtue and to win the honor of having done so. Oddly, this sixth virtue is possible for someone of moderate as well as of wealthy means. The economic origins of politics do not survive the establishment of politics. What remains is a

certain kind of concern with excellence. The impact of the nameless virtue is the source of the emphasis on civic virtues and the generation of a practical idea of the common good. This is reflected in the virtues following upon this transition.

The remaining virtues—gentleness, friendliness, truthfulness, wittiness, and justice—are all other-regarding. They are by definition accessible to many or most. And, though made possible by the transition, the virtues are preserved by justice, the fear of evil reputation proving insufficient and being by no means excellent in any event.

Our enumeration of virtues, then, culminates in the declaration of the objectives of the public-spirited—while pointing to the “dianoetic” or intentional virtues, which are summarized in the term, “prudence.” In the enumeration, the other-regarding characteristics of the wealthy become the preferred characteristics of all, generically. This is expressed through articulation of the common good, which makes a kind of greatness of soul or magnanimity possible for the least (thus, a kind of human excellence). Justice is (an) equality. It is by definition accessible to all. But it is not a virtue in the sense of a characteristic of soul (although it has the name of a virtue), so much as in the character of deeds. It has no self-regarding form of expression and similarly does not depend (in the normal case) on any special circumstance in the individual. It is not judgmental, but is rather a matter of attitude, as in the attitude of obedience to law. By obeying the law the many become virtuous. Their virtue is only the virtue of the citizen, unless the laws are good in the human sense. The laws are intentions, good laws are rational intentions. That laws be good in a human sense requires that they be informed by wisdom. Where justice is possible for many, wisdom is possible only for some few; it is judgmental. Justice—political virtue—depends on intellectual or intentional virtue. Equality in a truly human city depends on inequality.

If we are approaching the *Republic* and an identity between Aristotle and Plato, it is probably not by accident. Nonetheless, that movement can be corrected, both by completing Aristotle’s account and by reminding ourselves to beware of believing to understand Plato.

First, let us remind ourselves how men pursue justice—as a prelude to asking “How is prudence a true supposition?” Aristotle states

Thus our assertion that a man becomes just by performing just acts and self-controlled by performing acts of self-control is correct; without performing them, nobody could even be on the way to becoming good. Yet most men do not perform such acts, but by taking refuge in argument they think that they are engaged in philosophy and that they will become good in this way. [1106<sub>a0-15</sub>]\*

Now, the specific method of performing just acts is the method of performing virtuous action (deliberation and choice), with the addition of law as assistance in deliberation [1112<sub>b10</sub>]. And in deliberation it is of course the means and not the ends that are at stake. The ends may be illumined by some “natural gift of vision”—in any event, “to be well-endowed by nature means to have this natural” eye “to make correct judgments and to choose what is truly good” [1114<sub>b5ff</sub>]\*. This may lead to some obscuring of the distinction between the good and the bad [1114<sub>b15</sub>] so far as their capacities (not characteristics) are concerned. But with the assistance of law the good may always be distinguished by the objectives to which their capacities are bent [1129<sub>b19-23</sub>].

Our problem was to discern that capacity called justice, which is itself the foundation of law. Hence we cannot define it with reference to law. The fact that a certain shamelessness is at the origin of justice only partially resolves the difficulty. It reveals that the end declared by justice—natural right—is not itself discoverable through the pursuit of justice. But the other part of the problem is to know how the end can be kept in mind if it is not discoverable by the pursuit of justice. We have already seen that, formally, prudence—the intentional virtue—is that by which the end is kept in mind. We do not know how it does—that is, we do not know if it is truly an intellectual excellence. The Athenian Stranger made a rule of moderation, which became worthy of “speechless silence” [*Laws*, 696<sub>c</sub>]. But Aristotle praised the union

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\* Ostwald translation.

\* Ostwald translation.

of virtue and right reason [1144<sub>b25</sub>]. The Stranger was more moderate than Aristotle.

Aristotle silently indicates the foundation of his account in Book VII. The book on Continence and Incontinence reveals the necessity of prudence to pursuit of the end. This faculty of judgment overcame every resistance: the incontinent could not be practically wise because practical wisdom (prudence) must lead to virtue. Book VII completes the discussion of prudence—a function of the calculative faculty—by introducing its parallel, cleverness. What prudence does for virtue, cleverness may do for incontinence. Incontinence is the case of one who knows the rule of right, but pursues wrong, powerless to stop himself. Cleverness—a rational principle—enables the incontinent one to reach his wrong end successfully. Here is a case of a true supposition of the end, not allied with virtue. Aristotle at length distinguishes this case from the case of prudence and virtue, but he is completely silent on the case of the union of continence and cleverness. The case of continence is that of one who longs for the wrong, but pursues the right, powerless to stop himself. Cleverness is the vehicle through which he would attain the right end. Aristotle says that one may be continent and clever, but, for all that, not prudent. But cannot we see that the two persons are wholly indistinguishable—save to the soul doctor who perceives the pleasures which charm their souls [Cf., last portion of Book VII, especially chapter 13, and “Cephalus” section of Plato’s *Republic*]? Does not this also reveal the nature of prudence and why it is a true supposition? Prudence is that rational faculty which tutors the desires of the soul—especially the spirited part—in the requirements of right reason. It is the point of connection between reason and desire. It is a supposition precisely because it can disclose although it cannot discover. It can disclose what is discovered to it—whether through shamelessness or law. The foundation of the original disclosure—the natural vision—is obscure. Though in general it must be *νοῦς*, we do not see the particular case. But this parallels the obscurity of the foundations of virtue or politics.

The latter obscurity is made manifest in the indistinguishability of the prudent and the clever continent under ordinary circumstances. The clever continent are entirely—that is, excessively—motivated by pleasures, base pleasures, that they do not in fact pursue. The prudent seek to avoid pains, are wholly virtuous, and are not charmed by base appetites. Yet, the decent regime may be preserved though not established by the one as well as the other. It therefore follows that the study of regimes can never completely account for actual regimes that are decent; that study can never reveal how far the true end of politics informs that regime. The distinction between a life oriented in terms of the high and a life oriented in terms of the low loses some of its analytical force in this context. But the dependence of the low on the high is made all the more manifest, as is the consequence—the liberation of the high—of the modern or Machiavellian strain of political philosophy.

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<sup>1</sup> Fred D. Miller, Jr., “The Rational Basis of Planning in Aristotle,” an unpublished paper, Bowling Green State University.

<sup>2</sup> εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς ὑπολήψεως διαφοραί, ἐπιστήμη καὶ δόξα καὶ φρόνησις καὶ τὰναντία τούτων, περὶ ὧν τῆς διαφορᾶς ἕτερος ἔστω λόγος. *De Anima*. 427<sub>b25</sub>. “There are distinctions of supposition itself—knowledge, opinion, and prudence and the things opposite these, concerning the distinctions of which let there be another argument.” And again, *Ethics*, 1139<sub>b17</sub>: ὑπολήψει γὰρ καὶ δόξῃ ἐνδέχεται διαψευσθεσθαι. “In supposition and in opinion it is possible to be mistaken.” These uses of ὑπόληψις support the translation applied at 1142<sub>b35</sub>, but do not clarify application of the relative pronoun save by inference. The inference is that a supposition of the end is entirely possible. Hence, whether ends or means become the focus of 1142<sub>b30-35</sub> turns entirely on the meaning of φρόνησις instead of ὑπολήφισ. The following examples of widely used translations of the passage reveal the differences:

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- Gauthier: Si donc c'est une qualité des sages que de bien délibérer, le bon conseil sera la rectitude qui consiste à trouver ce qui est utile à la fin dont la sagesse est une aperception vraie.
- Ostwald: ... excellence in deliberation will be correctness in assessing what is conducive to the end, concerning which practical wisdom gives a true conviction.
- Rackham: ... Deliberative Excellence must be correctness of deliberation with regard to what is expedient as a means to the end, a true conception of which constitutes prudence.
- Ross: ...excellence in deliberation will be correctness with regard to what conduces to the end of which practical wisdom is the true apprehension.

The tendency of these versions, with the possible exception of Ross, is to treat prudence as if it is exclusively concerned with means. Rackham explicitly acknowledges this in his note to the passage, but curiously closes the note with a "perhaps" that would concede a more substantial role to prudence.

<sup>3</sup> But, cf., Rackham, note a, 1108b10 and Ostwald, note 29, 1108b10. Then compare Ostwald, 1139b32, note 14, with Rackham translation of same passage and the term, *ἐξίς*, to understand why *συλλογισμός* is not regarded as a product of *λογικῶν ἀρετῶν*. They fail to see that *νοῦς*, as such, is no more a rational power than are *ἄρχαι* arguments. Taking the analogy of geometry too seriously, intellect is reduced to method and method is deprived of excellence.

<sup>4</sup> Illinois, Free Press, 1959, p. 94.