

A MISPLACEMENT IN ARISTOTLE'S *METAPHYSICS* XII

Mohammad Habibollahi

ABSTRACT

Aristotle discusses divine intellect in *Metaphysics* XII.9. This chapter, however, seems incomplete, as a question posed in it (1074b36–8) remains unaddressed. On the other hand, there is another passage (1072b14–30) in *Metaphysics* XII.7 that seems to address a similar topic. Nevertheless, the latter passage appears, in several respects, to be extraneous to its present chapter. This article argues that the placement of the aforementioned passage within *Metaphysics* XII.7 is incorrect, and its original position is actually at the end of *Metaphysics* XII.9. This alternative reading not only offers a better understanding of 1072b14–30 but also has the potential to finalize the unfinished discussion in *Metaphysics* XII.9.

KEYWORDS

Divine intellect – the Prime Mover – God's well-being – *Metaphysics* XII.7 – *Metaphysics* XII.9 – Misplacement

INTRODUCTION¹

The *locus classicus* of a discussion concerning intellect² in *Met.* XII is ch.9. This chapter, however, seems incomplete, as a question posed in 1074b36–8 remains unaddressed. On the other hand, there is a passage (1072b14–30) in *Met.* XII.7, amidst a discussion on the Prime Mover, that appears extraneous to its present context. I will argue that the placement of 1072b14–30 (henceforth referred to as MP [= Misplaced Passage]) within ch.7 is incorrect, and its original position is actually at the end of ch.9.

The argument consists of two parts: first, that MP does not belong in ch.7, and second, that it belongs in ch.9. I will explicate these two parts in the following two sections.

AN ALIEN PASSAGE WITHIN *METAPHYSICS* XII.7

To acknowledge MP's misfit within ch.7, we must first discern the chapter's purpose, which is revealed through its placement in the sequence initiated in ch.6. The latter sets out to establish that 'an *eternal unmoved* substance is necessary' (1071b3–4). Ch.6 primarily focuses on the attribute 'eternal' and demonstrates the existence of a substance that is eternal (b5–11) yet distinct from eternal material entities (i.e., heavenly bodies)³ because its essence, unlike theirs,

¹ The following works are repeatedly cited throughout this article: W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford, 1924); L. Judson, *Aristotle Metaphysics Book A* (Oxford, 2019); M. Frede and D. Charles (eds.), *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda: Symposium Aristotelicum* (New York, 2000); L. Elders, *Aristotle's Theology: A Commentary on Book A of the Metaphysics* (Assen, 1972).

² Following Brunschwig, I translate the word-family as νοῦς = intellect; νόησις = intellection; νοεῖν, νοεῖσθαι = intelligize, to be intelligized; νοούμενον = what is intelligized, the intelligized object; νοητόν = intelligible. See J. Brunschwig, 'Metaphysics Λ 9: a short-lived thought-experiment', in Frede and Charles (n. 1), 275–306, at 275 n. 6

³ For the notion that heavenly bodies possess matter, see *Met.* XII.2, 1069b24–6

is activity and devoid of matter (b12–22).⁴ This distinction positions this eternal substance as a promising candidate for being an *unmoved* substance, yet the explicit justification for the attribute ‘unmoved’ is deferred to ch.7.

Ch.7 declares that the first heaven is a substance with eternal motion (1072a21–3). The mover of this moved object, which is the eternal substance of ch.6, must not be itself moved because something that is both moving and moved is intermediate. Thus, that mover must be an ultimate mover which is not itself moved (a23–6; cf. *Phys.* VIII.5, 256b14–24).

After establishing the existence of this unmoved substance (the Prime Mover), the discourse centres on its *modus operandi* and how it can move without being moved (1072a26–b4). The response posits that it moves in a manner akin to the object of desire (τὸ ὀρεκτὸν) and akin to the intelligible (τὸ νοητὸν) (a26–7). However, rational (or intellectual) desire (βούλεσθαι) is directed toward what is καλόν, that is, fine or beautiful (a27–8). As the first substance is the most καλόν, for it occupies the highest position on the positive side of the Pythagorean columns (a30–b1), it emerges as the most desired entity, serving as the for-the-sake-of-which in the sense of that at which actions aim, not in the sense of that for whose benefit actions are carried out (b1–3).⁵ Consequently, it moves as what is beloved (ἐρώμενον) (b3) and operates as a final cause.

Although intertwined, three distinct moments emerge from the discussion above: 1) the establishment of an unmoved mover (the intermediate-ultimate argument); 2) its beauty and fineness (the argument based on the Pythagorean columns); and 3) its desirability and consequently its role as a final cause (the argument of desire and love).

The subsequent lines of the chapter (1072b4–14) advocate for the first two moments differently and allude to the third moment. The discussion unfolds as follows: The mover of the first moved object cannot itself be in motion, as it engenders the most fundamental type of motion in the first heaven, leaving no more primary motion for itself to possess (b4–10) (first moment). Since it lacks motion and thus cannot exist in any other way, it exists of necessity (for a necessary thing is that which cannot be otherwise [b13]) and inasmuch as it exists of necessity, it exists in a fine manner (καλῶς) (b10–1) (second moment),⁶ and in this way it is a principle (b11) (third moment).

The cornerstone of the discussion on the Prime Mover’s *modus operandi* is its beauty and fineness (τὸ καλόν). The same point is indicated by the closing sentence of the preceding passage at the threshold of MP: ‘On such a principle, therefore, depend the heaven and the nature’ (1072b13–4). Thus, it would be appropriate to address the Pythagoreans and Speusippus, who denied this aspect, at this juncture. Ironically, right after MP, there is a passage (1072b30–1073a3) that addresses them. This occurrence subtly hints at the nature of MP as an interpolation.⁷

⁴ The notion of eternity in 1071b21 seems out of place. Perhaps, ἐνέργεια (b22) was a later correction to αἰδίου (b21) on the margin of the manuscript, with ἄρα (b22) indicating that something which had not been grasped before is now apprehended. See Elders (n. 1), 145. Therefore, b20–2 could be revised as follows: ‘Moreover, these substances must be without matter; for, if in fact something else [apart from the heavenly bodies] is eternal, it must be activity.’

⁵ Reading <καὶ> τινός, at 1072b2 with Ross and Jaeger.

⁶ I will refrain from addressing the difficulties of this argument as they are not pertinent to my objective.

⁷ One may argue that in the closing lines of MP, the Prime Mover is described as ἄριστον (best) (1072b29), which appears to align with the subsequent discussion concerning the beliefs of the Pythagoreans and Speusippus, who denied that the finest (κάλλιστον) and the best (ἄριστον) were at the beginning. Hence, it may seem that MP is necessary for, or at least, suited to the subsequent discussion, thereby indicating its appropriate placement.

However, perhaps the continuity of the discussion before and after MP does not suffice to claim that it is an interpolation. It is essential to examine MP itself and demonstrate that it cannot be seamlessly integrated into the ongoing discussion. Since a detailed explanation of MP will be provided later, for now, we will take a general overview of it.

MP features discussions on the concepts of life (b26–7), pleasure (b17, 24), intelligizing (b18–9, 27), and divinity (b25, 28–30) of the Prime Mover. These notions indicate the potential irrelevance of MP to its surrounding contexts in three ways:

Firstly, some of these features, specifically, intelligizing (b18–9, 27) and divinity (b25), are not argued for in MP; instead, they are presupposed as obvious aspects of the Prime Mover without any prior justification—a fact that may surprise and perplex the reader when encountering MP.⁸ Perhaps it is this perplexity that led some to deny these two features of the Prime Mover, at least in the context of ch.7.⁹

Secondly, these features are not pertinent to the argument for the Prime Mover's existence (first moment) or its mode of moving (second and third moments), which are the focal points of ch.7 before and after MP. The Prime Mover's status as beloved, crucial for its role as a final cause, hinges solely on its being καλόν, fine and beautiful. The attributes highlighted in MP do not bear relevance to this status. Even if these attributes are consequences of being the finest, as they may appear to be, they do not contribute to its status as beloved and hence as a final cause. At least, Aristotle does not rely on them when he refers to the Prime Mover's belovedness, and MP itself does not indicate such a reliance.

Thirdly, the concluding lines of the chapter (1073a3–13), which summarize the findings of ch.6 and 7, do not mention the life, pleasure, intellection, or divinity of the Prime Mover, despite their apparent significance. This omission also suggests that MP does not originally belong in this context.

Actually, it is acknowledged that MP delves beyond the inquiry into how the Prime Mover can induce movement and is somewhat related to a new topic, namely, identifying the nature of the activity of the Prime Mover (Judson [n. 1], 229). Keeping in mind the continuity of the discussion before and after MP, the introduction of a new topic poses a serious difficulty for the present position of MP and alludes to its being an interpolation.

Considering all these factors, it becomes evident that the claim of the integrity and proper placement of MP, rather than its misplacement, needs to be substantiated. Indeed, both old and contemporary commentators have grappled with this passage, primarily because they sought to interpret it as an integral section of the chapter. Despite numerous interpretations that have

However, it should be noted that the word ἄριστον in specific instances in MP (1072b24, 28, and 29) does not signify the most καλόν, i.e., the finest, which is the crux of the dispute with Pythagoreans and Speusippus (cf. *Met.* N.4, 1091a29–36), but rather, in this context, as we shall explore, it denotes the most εὐ-ἔχον (happiest). Therefore, the presence of ἄριστον at the conclusion of MP not only fails to confirm the appropriate placement of MP but supports occurring an interpolation.

⁸ DeFilippo contends that the Prime Mover being intelligible (1072a30) implies that it is an intellect. See J.G. DeFilippo, 'Aristotle's identification of the Prime Mover as God', *CQ* 44 (1994), 393–409, at 402–3. However, this implication is not sufficiently obvious to be relied upon in the course of writing a text, as it does not alleviate the reader's surprise upon encountering the feature of intellection in MP. Cf. A. Laks, 'Metaphysics Λ 7', in Frede and Charles (n. 1), 207–44, at 232.

⁹ For instance, Blyth (D. Blyth, 'Aristotle's God in *Metaphysics* 12.7', *Classical Philology* 112 [2017], 138–52) contends that there is no reference to the Prime Mover's intellection in ch.7, while Bodéüs (R. Bodéüs, *Aristotle and the Theology of the Living Immortals*, [New York, 2000], 20–9) argues that the Prime Mover is not depicted as a god at all.

emerged, none seem entirely convincing. Therefore, it is prudent to accept MP's misplacement as a given and shift the focus from how we can integrate MP in ch.7 to where MP belongs. I will address the latter by advocating for the end of ch.9 as a fitting location.

ITS ORIGINAL PLACE: *METAPHYSICS* XII.9

In order to establish that MP belongs at the end of ch.9, we should start from the latter. Ch.9, up to 1074b35, argues in favour of two results: R1: that intellect—specifically, divine intellect—has no potentiality and is pure activity of intellection; hence, its substance is νόησις rather than νοῦς, and R2: it intelligizes itself. There then comes an objection (Obj.) and a question (Quest.) concerning R2 as follows:

[Obj.] But knowledge, perception, opinion, and reflection always appear to be of something else, but of themselves by the way.

φαίνεται δ' αἰεὶ ἄλλου ἢ ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἢ αἴσθησις καὶ ἢ δόξα καὶ ἢ διάνοια, αὐτῆς δ' ἐν παρέργῳ.

1074b35–6

[Quest.] Further, if intelligizing and being intelligized are different, in respect of which does the happiness belong to it, since the essence of intellection and that of object of intelligizing is not the same?

ἔτι εἰ ἄλλο τὸ νοεῖν καὶ τὸ νοεῖσθαι, κατὰ πότερον αὐτῶ τὸ εὖ ὑπάρχει; οὐδὲ γὰρ ταῦτὸ τὸ εἶναι νοήσει καὶ νοουμένῳ.

1074b36–8

Obj. asserts that cognitive activities don't allow identity of the activity and the object, except incidentally, and so should be the intellection at stake.

Aristotle rebuts this objection by stating (1074b38–1075a5) that in certain cases, knowledge is essentially the same as the object. This is evident in mathematics (which is the productive knowledge without matter in a1–2; cf. Elders [n. 1], 263–4), where the object is clearly the substance, i.e., the essence. Similarly, in dialectics (which is the theoretical knowledge in a2), the object is the account and the thought (cf. *DA* I.1, 403a29–31). In these instances where the object lacks matter, the faculty is the same as the object, and so is the intellection in question.

The standard interpretation of ch.9 assumes that the Quest. is left unanswered. It regards the subsequent lines of ch.9 (1075a5–10) as a unified passage which poses an independent aporia. However, the passage involves numerous difficulties, as often acknowledged by commentators.¹⁰ It seems preferable to split the passage into two parts. The first part goes as follows:

It remains, then, a further aporia, if what is intelligized is composite; for it would change in the parts of the whole. Or is what having no matter indivisible?

ἔτι δὴ λείπεται ἀπορία, εἰ σύνθετον τὸ νοούμενον: μεταβάλλοι γὰρ ἂν ἐν τοῖς μέρεσι τοῦ ὅλου. ἢ ἀδιαίρετον πᾶν τὸ μὴ ἔχον ὕλην;

1075a5–7

This aporia (Apr.) arises from the response given to Obj. (cf. Brunschwig [n. 2], 297). The response posited that some knowledges are identical with the object. The aporia asserts that

¹⁰ See, for instance, Elders (n. 1), 266–8; Brunschwig (n. 2), 298–301; Judson (n. 1), 323–6.

this identity implies that in the case of composite objects of intelligizing, the intellect would be changing in the parts of the object, now be one with this part, now with that, because it cannot be one with the whole at the same time, for intellect itself is simple.

The answer to this concern is brief and straightforward: The identity occurs when the object lacks matter, and everything which has no matter is indivisible.

R2, i.e., that divine intellect intelligizes itself, can only be accepted and conceived as well-founded after rebutting Obj., which occurs in a complete manner only after resolving Apr. Accordingly, at this juncture, we should expect an answer to Quest., which presupposes R2, instead of disputing it. Therefore, it can be suggested that the remaining words of ch.9 (1075a7–10) (RW) should be a response to Quest. RW goes as follows:

Then, just as human intellect or rather that of composites is in a certain period of time (for it does not have happiness at this moment or at that, but it has its best, being something different, in a whole period), so throughout eternity is the intellection which has itself as its object.

ὥσπερ οὖν ὁ ἀνθρώπινος νοῦς ἢ ὁ γε τῶν συνθέτων ἔχει ἐν τινι χρόνῳ (οὐ γὰρ ἔχει τὸ εὖ ἐν τῷδι ἢ ἐν τῷδί, ἀλλ' ἐν ὅλῳ τινὶ τὸ ἄριστον, ὃν ἄλλο τι), οὕτως δ' ἔχει αὐτὴ αὐτῆς ἢ νόησις τὸν ἅπαντα αἰῶνα.

1075a7–10

First, let's consider what has led commentators to view this passage as a continuation of the response to Apr. One reason may be the absence of any particle at the beginning of RW indicating a transition to a new topic or even a new independent sentence. The particle οὖν at a7,¹¹ translated here as 'then,' is not included in editions of Bekker, Ross, and Jaeger. Without this particle, it would imply an intolerable asyndeton to separate ὥσπερ from the preceding sentence. Nevertheless, recognizing the discrepancy between RW and what precedes, some scholars have detached it from what precedes at the cost of such an asyndeton.¹²

Another factor could be the presence of the word 'composites' (τῶν συνθέτων) in a8. The composite object of intelligizing was a key aspect of Apr., and the word 'composite' had been mentioned in a5. The inclusion of this word might suggest a connection with Apr., and lead some to assume that both instances of 'composites' refer to the same thing.¹³ In contrast, some commentators have recognized that the genitive case of τῶν συνθέτων cannot be objective and is rather subjective. Therefore, ὁ... τῶν συνθέτων should indicate the intellect that is possessed by composite beings, rather than the intellect that has composites as its object.¹⁴

I will have the opportunity to examine this phrase later. For now, it suffices to say that the term 'composite' by itself holds potential for various interpretations. The inclination to perceive it similarly to that of a5 may stem from regarding RW as a continuation of the answer to Apr. Hence, if we disassociate RW from Apr., such an inclination would cease to exist. Therefore, the mere repetition of this term cannot be taken as a sign of continuity.

A third reason for recognizing a continuum could be the inadequacy of RW for introducing a

¹¹ With S. Alexandru, *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda* (Brill and Boston, 2014).

¹² For instance, Kosman (A. Kosman, 'Metaphysics Λ 9: divine thought', in Frede and Charles [n. 1], 307–26, at 322 and 325) and much earlier, Cousin (V. Cousin, *De la Métaphysique d'Aristote* [Paris, 1838], 215 n. 1) have regarded RW as a new beginning both syntactically and semantically.

¹³ See e.g. Elders (n. 1), 267; Brunschwig (n. 2), 299–300.

¹⁴ See Ross (n. 1), 2.398–9; DeFilippo (n. 8), 562

new theme. A commentator might question, ‘What can I do with this passage if I detach it from what precedes it?’ This deficiency is what I aim to rectify by connecting MP to RW.

Now, let's examine RW. If we interpret it as introducing a new theme distinct from Apr., the presence of the syntax of ὡσπερ...οὕτως..., which signifies a comparison, becomes indisputable.¹⁵ It is not necessary to provide a new explanation of RW, because actually that of Ross, with some slight completions, will satisfy our need.¹⁶ So, I will explain some of his points together with some additional elucidations.

A first issue concerns the phrase ἐν τινι χρόνῳ. Bonitz had drawn a comparison with μικρὸν χρόνον ἡμῖν (1072b15) and ὡς ἡμεῖς ποτέ (b25) of MP.¹⁷ Ross argues that this comparison is misleading. He maintains that when ἐν is used with time (χρόνος), it should signify 'in' (cf. 1101a12 and 1174a27–9). Consequently, ἐν τινι χρόνῳ should be interpreted not as 'for a certain time' or 'at certain times', but as 'in a certain time'. He concludes that the reference is not to the enjoyment of the *summum bonum* in moments of illumination but to its progressive attainment (Ross [n. 1], 2.399). Therefore, excluding the parenthetical part, the meaning of RW would be as follows: divine intellect's intellection exists in its best state for all eternity, a state that human intellect achieves only over a period of time.

A second issue, as previously hinted, concerns the composites (τῶν συνθέτων). Ross doesn't go further than saying it is a subjective genitive and the phrase refers 'to any beings other than man who have reason and also have matter' (Ross [n. 1], 2.399).

With regard to the overall meaning of the comparison, his assertion is completely in place. There is no justification for interpreting the genitive case as objective, because whether the object of human intellect is simple or composite doesn't relate to that comparison. However, the subjective interpretation is not without challenges. We still need to elucidate what these composite entities are, because for Aristotle the only composite beings possessing intellect are humans (Judson [n. 1], 324–5).

One possible option could be heavenly bodies.¹⁸ However, this doesn't seem plausible because RW juxtaposes the intellect of composites with that of human beings and contrasts it with divine intellect, while heavenly intellects, like divine intellect, are always in their best state.

As an alternative interpretation, we can suggest that ὁ in ἡ ὁ γε τῶν συνθέτων should not be understood as referring to intellect in general, but instead to human intellect (ὁ ἀνθρώπινος νοῦς). Thus, the meaning would be: or at least that human intellect which is possessed by composites. With this qualification, the active intellect is excluded because it doesn't belong to the composite of soul and body, at least in the same manner as the passive intellect does.

This point can be perceived from the discussion in *Met.* XII.3, where substances are divided into three kinds: matter, nature (or form), and the composite of them (1070a9–13).¹⁹ It is then asserted that forms do not survive the destruction of the composite, unless the form is a soul.

¹⁵ The presence of δέ after οὕτως is not problematic. This δέ is what is known as the apodotic δέ, one of whose instances is in the principal clause of comparative sentences. See H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar for Colleges* (USA, 1920), No. 2837; see also Ross (n. 1), 2.399.

¹⁶ As appears from his translation, Ross is one of those scholars who admit a new beginning in RW, at least syntactically, at the cost of an asyndeton.

¹⁷ H. Bonitz, *Observationes criticae in Aristotelis libros Metaphysicos* (Berlin, 1842), 20.

¹⁸ Xenocrates calls the Heaven ‘composite’ for it is visible by sense and intelligible by means of astronomy (fr. 5 Heinze).

¹⁹ The word ‘composite’ is mentioned in 1070a14.

But even in this case, the form does not survive as a whole; only the intellect (1070a21–7). This intellect, which remains after the destruction of the composite, can be legitimately described as human intellect because it is at least regarded as a part of the human soul. However, this surviving human intellect is in its best state all the time and cannot be considered in contrast to divine intellect in this respect. We know this because in *De anima*, it is stated that the surviving intellect is the active intellect while the passive one is destructible (*DA* III.5, 430a23–5). Furthermore, the active intellect always engages in intellectual activity (430a22), which implies its being in its best state at all times. Since the human active intellect doesn't attain its best over a period of time, it must be excluded from the comparison in question, and this is what the phrase ἢ ὁ γε τῶν συνθέτων accomplishes. Of course, both passive and active intellects belong to the composite in one way or another, but the passive one, unlike the active one, belongs to the composite in a way that it cannot survive its destruction. Therefore, only the passive intellect is the one that belongs to the composite in the strict sense and is included in the phrase ὁ τῶν συνθέτων.²⁰

Now, let's examine the parenthetical passage. Ross translates it as follows: 'for it does not possess the good (τὸ εὔ) at this moment or at that, but its best (τὸ ἄριστον), being something *different* from it, is attained only in a whole period of time' (his emphasis). This sentence appears to provide an explanation for the preceding subordinate clause, which asserts that the human intellect achieves a certain state over a certain period of time (ἐν τινι χρόνῳ). The explanation states that the human intellect does not possess happiness (τὸ εὔ) at this moment or at that, but its best state (τὸ ἄριστον) is only achieved in an entire period of time. So far, it appears to be a mere restatement of the initial claim. To provide a genuine explanation, it adds: ὄν ἄλλο τι, being something different. Ross suggests that this phrase signifies that human intellect's *summum bonum* is distinct from human intellect itself because that state is actuality, while human intellect encompasses potentialities within itself, and this gap requires a certain period of time to be bridged (Ross [n. 1], 2.399).

In other words, the substance of human intellect is intellect (νοῦς), while its highest state is intellection (νόησις). Therefore, since its highest state is something different from its substance, it does not possess its highest state eternally.²¹ In contrast, according to R1, the substance of divine intellect is intellection, not intellect (1074b20–1, 28–9); hence there is no distinction between its substance and its perfection—they are identical. Therefore, divine intellect possesses happiness for all eternity.

The content of this comparison is reiterated and explicated in the opening lines of MP, which I suggest should be interpreted as a continuation of RW:

... and its passing of time is such as the best that we have for a short time (because for it, it is always thus; whereas for us, that is indeed impossible), since its activity is also pleasure (it is also because of this that waking, perception, and intellection are most pleasant, and hopes and memories because of these).

²⁰ While I don't believe that the possible interpretations of the active intellect should be limited to the five listed by Miller (F.D. Miller, 'Aristotle on the separability of mind', in C. Shields [ed.], *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle* [Oxford, 2012], 306–39, at 321), the depiction provided here mostly aligns with the first interpretation in that list, abbreviated as PMO.

²¹ The sudden replacement of τὸ εὔ with τὸ ἄριστον, despite their perceived equivalence, which has posed a challenge to some scholars (Elders [n. 1], 268), can be clarified by recognizing their distinct meanings: one denotes a subjective sense of well-being, while the other signifies an objective state of perfection. The shift from the former to the latter provides a rationale for the phrase ὄν ἄλλο τι. It suggests that the happiness of human intellect exists solely in its perfection, which differs from its substance, thus requiring time to attain.

διαγωγῆ²² δ' ἐστὶν οἷα ἡ ἀρίστη μικρὸν χρόνον ἡμῖν (οὔτω γὰρ ἀεὶ ἐκείνω:²³ ἡμῖν μὲν γὰρ ἀδύνατον), ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡδονὴ ἢ ἐνέργεια τούτου (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐγρήγοροις αἴσθησις νόησις ἤδιστον, ἐλπίδες δὲ καὶ μνήμαι διὰ ταῦτα).

1072b14–8

The term διαγωγῆ – translated here as 'passing of time' – reflects the subjective aspect of the experience of well-being (cf. *EN* X.7, 1177a26–7).²⁴ The passage suggests that divine intellect always experiences its well-being, while we experience it just for a limited time. Of course, this time is relatively long (cf. *EN* X.7, 1177a21–22), but in comparison to that of divine intellect, it should be considered a short time. The passage also includes the reason for that permanent subjective felicity, stating that its *permanent* activity is also pleasure.²⁵

From the beginning of RW up to this point, Aristotle has established that divine intellect has happiness and well-being, much more than human intellect does. Now, it is time to answer Quest. which asks about the source of this happiness. The forthcoming response takes the form of an analogy:

1. Both divine intellect and human intellect possess two aspects in their pleasant activity: intelligizing and being intelligized (the two intellects are analogous to one another).
2. The happiness of the human intellect stems from the aspect of intelligizing rather than being intelligized.
3. Therefore, the same applies to divine intellect.

The first step is supported by the following argument:

The intellection-by-itself is of the best-by-itself, and the most excellent of the most excellent. But the intellect intelligizes itself by participating in the intelligible, for it becomes intelligible when it touches and intelligizes, so that the intellect and the intelligible are the same, for that which is receptive of the intelligible and the substance is intellect, and it acts [while] having [the object].

ἡ δὲ νόησις ἢ καθ' αὐτὴν τοῦ καθ' αὐτὸ ἀρίστου, καὶ ἡ μάλιστα τοῦ μάλιστα. αὐτὸν δὲ νοεῖ ὁ νοῦς κατὰ μετάληψιν τοῦ νοητοῦ: νοητὸς γὰρ

²² I.e., ἡ διαγωγῆ (like ἡ νόησις of 1075a10) with its possessive definite article omitted.

²³ In dative case, with Alexandru (n. 11), instead of ἐκείνω of Bekker, Ross, and Jaeger. ἐκείνω (b15) as well as τούτου (b17) should be regarded masculine, rather than neuter words. They refer to divine intellect which was being referred to during ch.9 by masculine words (e.g., 1074b22, 33) according to τὸν νοῦν of 1074b15.

²⁴ Various translations for διαγωγῆ are suggested: life (Ross [Oxford's translation]); way of life (Judson [n. 1]); course of life (J. Sachs, *Aristotle's Metaphysics* [Santa Fe, 1999]); pastime (C.D.C. Reeve, *Aristotle: Metaphysics* [Indianapolis and Cambridge, 2016]); occupation (Laks [n. 8]); activity (H.G. Apostle, *Aristotle's Metaphysics* [Bloomington and London, 1966]). However, none of these options seems entirely plausible. A suitable translation should avoid explicit mention of 'life,' as the passage in 1072b26 suggests that divine intellect's life is not yet a certain idea. In Greek thought, 'life' is associated with the notion of soul, which divine intellect lacks (C. Cohoe, 'Living without a soul: why God and the heavenly movers fall outside of Aristotle's psychology', *Phronesis* 65 [2020], 281–323) or, at least, does not possess overtly (cf. Pl. *Soph.* 249a). Therefore, while its διαγωγῆ may be certain due to its intellection and consciousness, its 'life' remains uncertain. Aristotle's attribution of life to divine intellect in 1072b26 is actually an extension of the conventional meaning of 'life.' Consequently, translations explicitly mentioning 'life' are not suitable. On the other hand, the other translations lack any reference to the subjective aspect of experience. In contrast, 'passing of time,' which is Ross's translation of this word in *EN* X.7, 1177a26–7, appears to be a suitable choice as it meets both criteria.

²⁵ The subsequent sentence in the parentheses, 'it is also because of this...', aims to provide evidence for this claim. It suggests that it is because activity is pleasure that we find waking, perception, and intellection most pleasant. Thus, their enjoyable nature, coupled with their nature as activities, supports the assertion that activity is pleasure.

γίγνεται θιγγάνων καὶ νοῶν, ὥστε ταῦτόν νοῦς καὶ νοητόν: τὸ γὰρ
δεκτικὸν τοῦ νοητοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας νοῦς, ἐνεργεῖ δὲ ἔχων.

1072b18–23

Intellection-by-itself refers to the type of intellection that requires no external cause –including the object– other than itself, thus having itself as its own object.²⁶ This concept relates directly to the kind of intellection discussed in ch.9. This form of intellection is exclusive to the best being—not every being that is in its best state, but rather the being whose best state is intrinsic and essential (ἡ δὲ νόησις ἢ καθ’ αὐτήν τοῦ καθ’ αὐτὸ ἀρίστου).²⁷ Why is this so? Why does only the best-by-itself (i.e., divine intellect) possess intellection-by-itself? Because this form of intellection is the most excellent, and therefore, only the most excellent being can possess it (ἡ μάλιστα τοῦ μάλιστα).

After asserting that intellection-by-itself, which is self-intelligizing, is possessed by the best being, Aristotle declares that the intellect –that is, the capacity of intellect, whose substance is potentiality, as in the case of human intellect– also intelligizes itself, though not by itself (καθ’ αὐτὸ), but by participating in the intelligible (κατὰ μετάληψιν τοῦ νοητοῦ). But why does human intellect intelligize *itself* by participating in something else? It is because when human intellect encounters a substance and intelligizes it, it becomes identical with that substance. Therefore, by intelligizing that substance, it effectively intelligizes itself.²⁸

Now we can ask: why does human intellect, upon encountering a substance, become identical with it and thereby intelligize itself by intelligizing that substance? Aristotle answers that it is because human intellect is solely receptive (δεκτικὸν) of other substances (cf. 429a15–6), meaning it lacks any inherent form of its own (cf. *DA* III.4, 429a21–4). Therefore, once it receives a substance, it effectively becomes identical with that substance, because the latter becomes the intellect’s form (cf. III.4, 429b5–7; II.5, 417b5–9)—this is the state where Aristotle asserts that the intellect *has* that substance.²⁹ Therefore, its intelligizing of that substance, that is, its *activity*, occurs while *having* it and thus takes the form of intelligizing

²⁶ The phrase καθ’ αὐτήν is contrasted with κατὰ μετάληψιν τοῦ νοητοῦ. Therefore, it appears that the two (and even the three) occurrences of κατὰ in the passage, translated here as ‘by’, carry the same meaning, that of causality (cf. *Met.* X.18, 1022a19–20; 32–3). Hence, intellection-by-itself is that which requires no external cause, with the emphasis here placed on the object of intelligizing, as is evident from the context. Alternatively, a common interpretation of ‘intellection-by-itself,’ often translated as ‘thinking in itself,’ posits that it refers to a form of intellection free from influence by sensation or imagination (see, for example, Ross [n. 1], 2.379; Elders [n. 1], 186–7; DeFilippo [n. 8], 405; S. Herzberg, ‘God as pure thinking: an introduction of *Metaphysics* Λ 7, 1072b14–26’ in C. Horn [ed.], *Aristotle’s Metaphysics Lambda – New Essays* [Berlin, 2016], 157–80, at 167). However, there is no indication of this meaning in the text, and it appears to be entirely arbitrary.

²⁷ Reading the predicate genitive as subjective rather than objective.

²⁸ In Obj. and its answer, we learned that when intellect, including human intellect, intelligizes objects without matter, it doesn’t intelligize itself incidentally (ἐν παρεργῶ); rather, the intellect and the object are truly one and the same. Given this, how can Aristotle claim here that human intellect intelligizes itself only by participating (κατὰ μετάληψιν) in another substance? The answer is that there is a difference between these two notions: ‘incidentally’ and ‘by participating.’ Human intellect intelligizes itself by participating, but not incidentally. This means that it truly and directly intelligizes itself, rather than merely as a side effect of intelligizing something else (hence, not incidentally). However, this direct intelligizing occurs only when the intellect has participated in another substance (hence, by participating).

²⁹ For other instances of the verb ἔχειν used in a similar context, see *DA* II.5, 417a25; b5.

itself³⁰ (cf. III.4, 429b9–10).³¹

The first step of the analogy has been established: both human intellect and divine intellect possess two aspects in their activity—intelligizing and being intelligized. Now, it's time to demonstrate that human intellect derives happiness from the first aspect, namely intelligizing. This constitutes the second step of the analogical argument:

Therefore, it is the former rather than the latter that the intellect seems [or is thought] to have as divine, and contemplation is the most pleasant and happiest [act].

ὥστ' ἐκεῖνο μᾶλλον τοῦτου ὃ δοκεῖ ὁ νοῦς θεῖον ἔχειν, καὶ ἡ θεωρία τὸ ἥδιστον καὶ ἄριστον.

1072b23–4

Here, Aristotle addresses the notion of a divine aspect within human intellect, seeking to identify this aspect among the previously mentioned ones: receptivity (δεκτικόν), habituality (ἔχων), and actuality (ἐνεργεῖν). Clearly, the first stage cannot claim such an attribute. But which of the other two?

Since the term 'divine' (θεῖον) signifies fineness (τὸ καλόν),³² which is associated with actuality and perfection (ἐντελέχεια), it is evident that the activity (ἐνεργεῖν)—which involves progressing towards perfection (εἰς αὐτὸ... ἢ ἐπίδοσις καὶ εἰς ἐντελέχειαν, *DA* II.5, 417b6–7)—is more divine and perfect than mere possession (ἔχειν). Consequently, Aristotle states that the divine element within human intellect resides in the former (ἐνεργεῖν) rather than the latter (ἔχειν).³³

³⁰ The expression ἐνεργεῖ δὲ ἔχων can mean one of two things: 1. that whenever the intellect has the object, it is active, or 2. that the intellect acts within the time it has the object, but can be in the state of having without activity as well (see W.W. Goodwin, *A Greek Grammar* [Boston, 1900], No. 1563, 1st and 8th meaning, for this double sense of the participle). The first meaning is not what Aristotle declares in *DA*, so the second is what is intended here as well.

³¹ The three levels of human intellect are mentioned here in an extraordinarily brief style, either because the nature of *Met.* XII, as fragmentary notes, demands it, or, as conjectured by Herzberg (Herzberg [n. 26], 170), because the reader is already familiar with *DA* III.4.

³² The adjective θεῖος means 'related or similar to gods.' This similarity, however, can pertain to immortality and eternity (e.g., *GA* 731b24) or to fineness and perfection (e.g., 732a3). The first meaning cannot be intended here, as is evident.

³³ Therefore, there is no need for emendation in 1072b23, as the word 'acts' precedes 'having' in the Greek text. Ross and Jaeger reject the reading of the manuscripts, ὥστ' ἐκεῖνο μᾶλλον τοῦτου, and amend it to ὥστ' ἐκείνου μᾶλλον τοῦτο. Ross prefers the meaning: 'so that this (actuality) rather than that (potentiality) is what reason is thought to have of the divine' (Ross [n. 1], 2.381; so, with some slight qualifications, Herzberg [n. 26], 173 and Blyth [n. 9], 146). He is troubled by the fact that the word ἐκεῖνο (ἐκείνου) should refer back to the more remote term, while τοῦτου (τοῦτο) refers to the nearer one. His interpretation, however, is not relevant to the argument at hand. Aristotle's intention is not to compare the actuality of intellect with its potentiality, but rather to compare the actuality with the habituality. Anyway, there are scholars who choose not to emend the text. For example, Judson renders the passage as follows: 'it is the activity of thinking (this is, I think, 'the former' at b23) rather than the object of thought ('the latter') that makes the intellect have something divine about it' (Judson [n. 1], 231; compare with M. Bordt, 'Why Aristotle's God is not the unmoved mover', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 40 [2011], 91–109, at 100, who *does* emend the text, but interprets it in a similar manner). Laks also refrains from emending the text but offers a peculiar approach by interpreting ἐκεῖνο as referring to the nearer term and τοῦτου as referring to the more remote one, which contradicts the typical Greek usage. Furthermore, Laks interprets the text differently, comparing the self-thinking of human intellect with its grasp of the intelligible (Laks [n. 8], 235 n. 72).

Indeed, Quest. pertained to happiness (τὸ εὖ) (the subjective aspect of the experience), not fineness (τὸ καλόν) (an objective reality). However, Aristotle likely holds the belief that a finer state can potentially bring about more pleasure than a less fine one. Consequently, he introduces the statement ἡ θεωρία τὸ ἥδιστον καὶ ἄριστον. The term ἄριστον, which is the superlative of ἀγαθόν, unlike previous usages, should be understood in relation to the meaning of the substantiated adverb τὸ εὖ that Aristotle employs to signify happiness, rather than in relation to the meaning of τὸ καλόν.³⁴ Consequently, contemplation (the activity of intelligizing) is deemed the most pleasant and *happiest* act.

Up to this point, the argument has established that the happiness of human intellect lies in its *activity* of intelligizing, rather than in its *possession* of knowledge. Quest., however, was whether *intelligizing* or *being intelligized* is the basis for happiness in the intellect. Aristotle probably thinks that the argument presented is sufficient to demonstrate that it is the act of intelligizing, rather than being intelligized, that grants happiness to human intellect as the phrase νοῦς ἐνεργεῖ denotes the intellect engaging in the activity of intelligizing, not being passively intelligized.

With the second step of the analogy now taken, Aristotle does not explicitly address the third step, leaving it to the reader to deduce that the happiness of divine intellect, like that of human intellect, is derived from the act of intelligizing rather than being intelligized. Thus, Quest. is answered. He concludes his discussion with a statement about divine intellect's happy διαγωγῆ, expressing his amazement about it:

If, then, God is always in such a happy state that we are sometimes, that is wondrous; and if more, that is still more wondrous. But he is so.

εἰ οὖν οὕτως εὖ ἔχει, ὡς ἡμεῖς ποτέ, ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ, θαυμαστόν: εἰ δὲ μᾶλλον, ἔτι θαυμασιώτερον. ἔχει δὲ ὧδε.

1072b24–6

The remainder of MP does not pertain to Quest. and its exposition will not significantly bolster our main thesis concerning a misplacement. Therefore, it can be excluded from our present discussion.

CONCLUSION

Thanks to the new positioning of MP, we now understand why and in which context διαγωγῆ and pleasure are mentioned (b14–8), what the concept of intellection-by-itself refers to (b18–9), why the discussion suddenly shifts to human intellect (b20–3), and for what purpose contemplation is declared as the most pleasant act (b24). All of these were difficult to comprehend, considering that MP was located in the midst of ch.7.

The repositioning also rescued ch.7 from a challenging and inconsistent passage within it, and helped finalize the unfinished ch.9 by providing an answer to the question posed in 1074b36–8 and making good sense of the last words of the chapter.

These seem to be sufficient grounds to assert a misplacement. However, to render this assertion more plausible, a discussion about how this misplacement could have occurred in the first place should also be included.

While many misplacements are claimed throughout the corpus, the one concerning *Met.* VII.4,

³⁴ This is indicated not only by its companion, ἥδιστον, but also by εὖ ἔχει in the subsequent sentence, as well as by the overall context.

1029b3–12, is particularly noteworthy. Bonitz suggests that it should be read after 1029a34 (see Ross [n. 1], 2.166). In explaining this misplacement, Jaeger asserts that the whole passage (1029a33–4 plus b3–12) is a later addition. He proposes that ‘[T]he first words of the insertion were written between the lines of the old manuscript, and hence occur in their proper place in our copies. The rest, for which there was no room, was written on a separate sheet,’³⁵ and therefore was misplaced by a later scribe.

In the case we are dealing with, if we consider the possibility of a later addition, we must determine the extent of this addition. MP alone is not an independent text, as it complements RW. Thus, MP cannot be a good candidate for a later addition. But what about RW plus MP, comprising the entire answer to Quest.? This assumption also seems implausible because one might legitimately question how the answer to Quest. could be a later addition when Quest. itself is not and cannot be, due to its position preceding the answer to Obj.

Perhaps it would be reasonable to claim that the entire epilogue of ch.9, i.e., 1074b35–1075a10 plus MP, is a later addition. This assumption would seem sensible if we consider Jaeger’s thesis³⁶ that different parts of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, except possibly the first part of Book XII, were composed as school *logoi*, transcribed by students rather than Aristotle himself. In this case, the epilogue likely consists of questions by the students and responses by the master, occurring in a separate session from the main speech. Accordingly, it may have been recorded on two separate sheets rather than the main scroll papyrus, with the first sheet positioned correctly by a later scribe, while the second was already erroneously placed in ch.7.³⁷ We cannot assume a single sheet in this case, as with the misplacement of 1029b3–12, because the properly placed part is too large to be written between the lines of the previous manuscript.³⁸

³⁵ W. Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development* (London, 1934), 199 n. 1

³⁶ See a summary of this thesis in J. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto, 1978³), 73–6

³⁷ It’s worth noting that the first part of the epilogue, 1074b35–1075a10, comprises about 600 characters, while the second part, MP, contains about 700 characters. This aligns with the typical length of a column in papyri; cf. G. Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus: Cosmology, Theology and Interpretation* (Cambridge, 2004), 60, and it is safe to assume a separate sheet large enough to accommodate at least one column.

³⁸ Indeed, a single sheet scenario is conceivable if we reject the idea of a later addition and instead posit that the writer concluded their scroll at 1075a10 and preserved MP on a separate sheet which was subsequently misplaced by a later scribe. However, under this assumption, we must consider ch.10 as not originally part of Book XII, a proposition that requires independent substantiation.