§5 Since the proper pleasure makes an activity more / exact, longer, and better, but an alien pleasure damages it, clearly the two pleasures differ widely. For an alien pleasure does virtually what a proper pain does; for a proper pain destroys activity. If, for instance, writing or rational calculation has no pleasure and is in fact painful for us, we do not write or calculate, since the activity / is painful. Hence the proper pleasures and pains have contrary effects on an activity; and the proper ones are those that arise from the activity in its own right. And as has been said, the effect of alien pleasures is similar to the effect of pain, since they ruin the activity, though not in the same way as pain.

§6 Since activities differ in degrees of decency and badness, / and some are choiceworthy, some to be avoided, some neither, the same is true of pleasures; for each activity has its own proper pleasure. Hence the pleasure proper to an excellent activity is decent, and the one that is proper to a base activity is vicious; for, similarly, appetites for fine things are praiseworthy, and appetites for shameful things are blameworthy. / And in fact the pleasure in an activity is more proper to it than the desire for it. For the desire is distinguished from it in time and in nature; but the pleasure is close to the activity, and so little distinguished from it that disputes arise about whether the activity is the same as the pleasure.

§7 Nonetheless, pleasure would seem to be neither thought nor perception; / for that would be strange. Rather, it is because <pleasure and activity> are not separated that to some people they appear the same. / Hence, just as activities differ, so do the pleasures. Sight differs from touch in purity, as hearing and smell do from taste; hence the pleasures also differ in the same way. So also do the pleasures of thought differ from these <pleasures of sense>; and both sorts have different kinds within them.

§8 Each <species of> animal seems to have its own proper pleasure, just as it has its own proper function; for the proper pleasure will be the one that corresponds to its activity. / This is apparent if we also study each kind; for a horse, a dog, and a human being have different pleasures, and, as Heraclitus says, an ass would choose chaff over gold, since asses find food pleasant than gold. / Hence animals that differ in species also have pleasures that differ in species; and it would be reasonable for animals of the same species to have the same pleasures also.

§9 / In fact, however, the pleasures differ quite a lot, in human beings at any rate. For the same things delight some people, and cause pain to others; and while some find them painful and hateful, others find them pleasant and lovable. The same is true of sweet things. For the same things do not seem sweet to a feverish and to a healthy person, or hot to an enfeebled and to a vigorous person; and the same is true of other things.

§10 But in all such cases it seems that what is really so is what appears so to the excellent person. If this is right, as it seems to be, and virtue, i.e., the good person insofar as he is good, is the measure of each thing, then what appear pleasures to him will also really be pleasures, and what is pleasant will be what he enjoys.

/ And if what he finds objectionable appears pleasant to someone, that is not at all surprising; for human beings suffer many sorts of corruption and damage. It is not pleasant, however, except to these people in these conditions. §11 Clearly, then, we should say that the pleasures agreed to be shameful are not pleasures at all, except to corrupted people.

But what about those pleasures that seem to be decent? / Of these, what sort, or what particular pleasure, should we take to be the pleasure of a human being? Surely it will be clear from the activities, since the pleasures are consequences of these. Hence the pleasures that complete the activities of the complete and blessedly happy man, whether he has one activity or more than one, will be called the fully human pleasures. The other pleasures will be human in secondary or even more remote ways, corresponding to the character of the activities.

[Happiness: further discussion]

6
[Conditions for happiness]

[c6] / We have now finished our discussion of the types of virtue, of friendship, and of pleasure. / It remains for us to discuss happiness in outline, since we take this to be the end of human aims. Our discussion will be shorter if we first take up again what we said before.

§2 We said, then, that happiness is not a state. For if it were, someone might have it and yet be asleep for his whole life, / living the life of a plant, or suffer the greatest misfortunes. / If we do not approve of this, we count happiness as an activity rather than a state, as was said in the previous discussions.
Some activities are necessary, and, choiceworthy for some other end, while others are choiceworthy in their own right. Clearly, then, we should count happiness as one of those / that are choiceworthy in their own right, not as one of those that are choiceworthy for some other end. For happiness lacks nothing, but is self-sufficient. An activity is choiceworthy in its own right if nothing further apart from it is sought from it. This seems to be the character of actions that are in accord with virtue; for doing fine and excellent actions is choiceworthy for itself.

But pleasant amusements also <see to be choiceworthy in their own right>. For people choose them, not because of / other things— for they actually cause more harm than benefit, by causing neglect of our bodies and possessions. Moreover, most of those who are con- gratulated for their happiness resort to these sorts of pastimes. That is why people who are witty participants in them have a good reputation / with tyrants, since they offer themselves as pleasant <partners> in the tyrant’s aims, and these are the sort of people the tyrant requires. And so these amusements seem to have the character of happiness because people in supreme power spend their leisure in them.

§4 Such people, however, are presumably no evidence. For virtue and understanding, the sources of excellent activities, do not depend on holding supreme power. Further, / these powerful people have had no taste of pure and civilized pleasure, and so they resort to bodily pleasures. But that is no reason to think these pleasures are most choiceworthy, since boys also think that the things they honour are best. Hence, just as different things appear honourable to boys and to men, it is reasonable that in the same way different things appear honourable to base and to decent people.

§5 / As we have often said, then, what is honourable and pleasant is what is so to the excellent person. To each type of person the activity that accords with his own proper state is most choiceworthy; hence the activity in accord with virtue is most choiceworthy to the excellent person.

§6 Happiness, then, is not found in amusements; for it would be strange if the end were amusements, and our lifelong efforts / and sufferings aimed at amusing ourselves. For we choose practically everything for some other end—except for happiness, since it is the end; but serious work and toil aimed at amusement appears stupid and excessively childish. Rather, it seems correct to amuse ourselves so that we can do something serious, as Anacharsis says; for amusement would seem to be relaxation, and it is because we cannot / toil continuously that we require relaxation. Relaxation, then, is not <the> end; for we pursue it <to prepare> for / activity. But the happy life seems to be a life in accord with virtue, which is a life involving serious actions, and not consisting in amusement.

§7 Besides, we say that things to be taken seriously are better than funny things that provide amusement, and that in / each case the activity of the better part and the better person is more serious and excellent; and the activity of what is better is superior, and thereby has more the character of happiness.

§8 Besides, anyone at all, even a slave, no less than the best person, might enjoy bodily pleasures; but no one would allow that a slave shares in happiness, if one does not <also allow that the slave shares in the sort of> life <that is needed for happiness>. For happiness is found not in these pastimes, but / in the activities in accord with virtue, as we also said previously.

7

[Happiness and theoretical study]

[c7] If happiness is activity in accord with virtue, it is reasonable for it to be in accord with the supreme virtue, which will be the virtue of the best thing. The best is understanding, or whatever else seems to be / the natural ruler and leader, and to understand what is fine and divine, by being itself either divine or the most divine element in us. Hence complete happiness will be its activity in accord with the proper virtue; and it has been said that this activity is an activity of study.

§2 This seems to agree with what has been said before, and also with the truth. / For this activity is supreme, since understanding is the supreme element in us, and the objects of understanding are the supreme objects of knowledge.

Further, it is the most continuous activity, since we are more capable of continuous study than any continuous action.

§3 Besides, we think pleasure must be mixed into happiness; and it is agreed that the activity in accord with wisdom is the pleasantest / of the activities in accord with virtue. Certainly, philosophy seems to have remarkably pure and firm pleasures, and it is reasonable that
those who have knowledge spend their lives more pleasantly than those who seek it.

§ 4 Moreover, the self-sufficiency that is spoken of will be found in study most of all. Admittedly the wise person, no less than the just person, and the other virtuous people, needs the good things that are necessary for / life. Once these are adequately supplied, however, the just person still needs other people as partners and recipients of his just actions; and the same is true of the temperate person, the brave person, and each of the others. But the wise person is able, and more able the wiser he is, to study even by himself. Though, presumably, he does / it better with colleagues, even so he is more self-sufficient than any other <virtuous person>.

§ 5 Besides, study would seem to be liked because of itself alone, since it has no result beyond having studied. But from the virtues concerned with action we gain, to a greater or lesser extent, something beyond the action itself.

§ 6 / Besides, happiness seems to be found in leisure; for we deny ourselves leisure so that we can be at leisure, and fight wars so that we can be at peace. Now the virtues that are concerned with action have their activity in politics or war, and actions in these areas seem to deny us leisure. This seems completely true for actions in war, since no one chooses to fight a war, and no one prepares it, for the / sake of fighting a war—for someone would have to be a complete murderer if he made his friends his enemies in order to have battles and killings. But the actions of the politician also deny us leisure; apart from political activities themselves, those actions seek positions of power and honours, or at any rate they seek happiness for the politician himself and for his fellow-citizens, which / is something different from political science itself, and clearly is sought on the assumption that it is different.

§ 7 Hence among actions in accord with the virtues those in politics and war are preeminently fine and great; but they require trouble, aim at some <further> end, and are choiceworthy for something other than themselves. But the activity of understanding, it seems, is superior / in excellence because it is the activity of study, aims at no end apart from itself, and has its own proper pleasure, which increases the activity. Further, self-sufficiency, leisure, unwearied activity (as far as is possible for a human being), and any other features ascribed to the blessed person, are evidently in accord with this activity. / Hence a human being's complete happiness will be this activity, if it receives a complete span of life, since nothing incomplete is proper to happiness.

§ 8 Such a life would be superior to the human level. For someone will live it not insofar as he is a human being, but insofar as he has some divine element in him. And the activity of this divine element is as much superior to the activity in accord with the rest of virtue as this element is superior to / the compound. Hence if understanding is something divine in comparison with a human being, so also will the life in accord with understanding be divine in comparison with human life. We ought not to follow those who exhort us to 'think human, since you are human', or 'think mortal, since you are mortal.' Rather, as far as we can, we ought to be pro-immortal, and go to all lengths to live a life in accord with / our supreme element; for however much this element may lack in bulk, by much more it surpasses everything in power and value.

§ 9 Moreover, this <supreme element> seems to be the person, if the controlling and better element <is the person>. It would be absurd, then, if he were to choose not his own life, but something else's. / And what we have said previously will also apply now. For what is proper to each thing's nature is supremely best and pleasantest for it; and hence for a human being the life in accord with understanding will be supremely best and pleasantest, if understanding, most of all, is the human being. This life, then, will also be happiest.

8 [Theoretical study and the other virtues]

[c8] But the life in accord with the other kind of virtue <i.e., the kind concerned with action> <is happiest> in a secondary way, because / the activities in this virtue are human. For we do just and brave actions, and the other actions in accord with the virtues, in relation to one another, by maintaining what is fitting for each person in contracts, services, all types of actions, and also in feelings; and all these appear to be human conditions.

§ 2 / Moreover, virtue of character in some aspects seems to arise from the body, and in many <aspects> seems to be adapted to feelings.

§ 3 Besides, prudence is inseparable from virtue of character, and virtue of character from prudence. For the principles of prudence accord with the virtues of character; and correctness in virtues of
character accords with prudence. And since these virtues are also connected to feelings, they are about the compound. Now the virtues of the compound are human virtues; hence the life and the happiness in accord with these virtues are also human.

The virtue of understanding, however, is separated from the compound for this much has been said about it, since an exact account would be too large a task for our present project.

§4 Moreover, it seems to need external supplies very little, or at any rate less than virtue of character needs them. For let us grant that they both need necessary goods, and to the same extent; for there will be only a very small difference, even though the politician labours more about the body and suchlike. Still, there will be a large difference in what is needed for the proper activities of each type of virtue. For the generous person will need money for generous actions; and the just person will need it for paying debts, since wishes are not clear, and some people who are not just pretend to wish to do justice. Similarly, the brave person will need enough power, and the temperate person will need freedom to do temperate actions, if they are to achieve anything that the virtue requires. For how else will they, or any other virtuous people, make their virtue clear?

§5 Moreover, it is disputed whether decision or action is more in control of virtue, on the assumption that virtue consists in both. Well, certainly it is clear that the complete good consists in both, but for actions many external goods are needed, and the greater and finer the actions the more numerous are the external goods needed.

§6 But someone who is studying needs none of these goods, for that activity at least; indeed, for study at least, we might say they are even hindrances. Insofar as he is a human being, however, and lives together with a number of other human beings, he chooses to do the actions that accord with virtue. Hence he will need the sorts of external goods that are needed for the virtues, for living a human life.

§7 In another way also it appears that complete happiness is some activity of study. For we traditionally suppose that the gods more than anyone are blessed and happy; but what sorts of actions ought we to ascribe to them? Just actions? Surely they will appear ridiculous making contracts, returning deposits and so on. Brave actions? Do they endure what frightening and endure dangers because it is fine? Generous actions? Whom will they give to? And surely it would be strange if they actually had currency or anything like that. And what would their temperate actions be? Surely it is vulgar praise to say that they do not have base appetites. When we go through them, all the things that concern actions appear trivial and unworthy of the gods. Nonetheless, we all traditionally suppose that they are alive and hence active, since surely not asleep like Endymion. Then if someone is alive, and action is excluded, and production even more, what is left but study? Hence the god’s activity, being superior in blessedness, will be an activity of study. And so the human activity that is most akin to this activity will, more than any others, have the character of happiness.

§8 A sign of this is also the fact that other animals have no share in happiness, being completely deprived of this activity of study. For the whole life of the gods is blessed, and human life is blessed to the extent that it has something resembling this sort of activity; but none of the other animals is happy, because none of them shares in study at all. Hence happiness extends just as far as study extends, and the more someone studies, the happier he is, not coincidentally but insofar as he studies, since study is valuable in itself. And so happiness will be some kind of study.

[c9] §9 But we will need external prosperity also, since we are human beings; for our nature is not self-sufficient for study, but we need a healthy body, and need to have food and the other services provided. Still, even though no one can be blessedly happy without external goods, we must not think that to be happy we will need many large goods. For self-sufficiency, discrimination, and action do not depend on excess, but we can do fine actions even if we do not rule earth and sea; for even from moderate resources we can do the actions that accord with virtue. This is evident to see, since private citizens seem to do decent actions no less than people in power do—even more, in fact. It is enough if moderate resources are provided; for the life of someone whose activity accords with virtue will be happy.

§11 And Solon presumably described happy people well, when he said they had been moderately supplied with external goods, had done what he regarded as the finest actions, and had lived their lives temperately. For it is possible to have moderate possessions and still to do the right actions. And Anaxagoras too would seem to have
supposed that the happy person was neither rich nor powerful, since
he said / he would not be surprised if the happy person appeared a
strange absurd sort of person to the many.21 For the many judge by
externals, since these are all they notice. §12 Hence the beliefs of
the wise would seem to accord with our arguments.22

These considerations too, then, produce some confidence. But the
truth in questions about action is judged from / what we do and
how we live, since these are what control <the answers to such ques-
tions>. Hence we ought to examine what has been said by applying
it to what we do and how we live;23 and if it harmonizes with what we
do, we should accept it, but if it conflicts we should count it <mere>
words.

§13 The person whose activity accords with understanding and
who takes care of understanding and is in the best condition would
seem to be most loved by the gods.24 For if the gods / pay some atten-
tion to human affairs, as they seem to, it would be reasonable for
them to take pleasure in what is best and most akin to them, namely
understanding; and reasonable for them to benefit in return those
who most of all like and honour understanding, on the assumption
that these people attend to what is beloved by the gods, and act cor-
rectly and finely. / Clearly, all these things are true of the wise person
more than anyone else; hence he is most loved by the gods. And it is
likely that this same person will be happiest; hence, by this argument
also, the wise person, more than anyone else, will be happy.

[From ethics to politics]

[9]

[Moral education]

c[110] We have now said enough in outlines about these things and
about the virtues, and about friendship and pleasure also.1 Should / we,
then, think that our decision <to study these> has achieved / its
end? On the contrary, the aim of studies about action, as we say, is
surely not to study and know about a given thing, but rather to act
on our knowledge.2 §2 Hence knowing about virtue is not enough,
but we must also try to possess and exercise virtue, or become good
in any other way.

§3 / Now if arguments were sufficient by themselves to make
people decent, the rewards they would command would justifiably
have been many and large, as Theognis says,3 and these ought to be
provided.4 In fact, however, arguments seem to have enough influ-
ence to turn and inspire the civilized ones among the young people,
and to make virtue take possession of a well-born character that truly
loves what is / fine; but they seem unable to turn the many towards
being fine and good.

§4 For the many naturally obey fear, not shame; they avoid what is
base because of the penalties, not because it is disgraceful. For since
they live by their feelings, they pursue their proper pleasures and the
sources of them, and avoid / the opposed pains, and have not even
a notion of what is fine and <hence> truly pleasant, since they have
had no taste of it. §5 What argument, then, could reform people
like these? For it is impossible, or not easy, to alter by argument what
has long been absorbed as a result of people’s characters.5 But, pre-
sumably, we should be satisfied to achieve some share in virtue if we
already have what we seem to need to become decent.6

§6 / Now some think it is nature that makes people good; some
think it is habit; some that it is teaching. The <contribution> of nature
clearly is not up to us, but results from some divine causes in the truly
fortunate ones.7 Arguments and teaching surely do not prevail in
everyone, / but the soul of the student needs to have been prepared
by habits for enjoying and hating finely, like ground that is to nourish
seed.8 §7 For someone who lives in accord with his feelings would
not even listen to an argument turning him away, or comprehend it <if
he did listen>; and in that state how could he be persuaded to change?
And in general feelings seem to yield to force, not to argument. §8 /
Hence we must already in some way have a character suitable for
virtue, fond of what is fine and objecting to what is shameful.

It is difficult, however, for someone to be trained correctly for
virtue from his youth if he has not been brought up under correct
laws; for the many, especially the young, do not find it pleasant to live
in a temperate and resistant way.9 That is why / laws must prescribe
their upbringing and practices; for they will not find these things
painful when they get used to them.

§9 / Presumably, however, it is not enough if they get the correct
upbringing and attention when they are young. Rather, they must
continue the same practices and be habituated to them when they
become men. Hence we need laws concerned with these things also,
and in general with all of life. For the many / yield to compulsion
more than to argument, and to sanctions more than to the fine.10
§10 That is why legislators must, in some people's view, urge people towards virtue and exhort them to aim at the fine—on the assumption that anyone whose good habits have prepared him decently will listen to them—but must impose corrective treatments and penalties on anyone who disobeys or lacks / the right nature, and must completely expel an incurable. For the decent person, it is assumed, will attend to reason because his life aims at the fine, whereas the base person, since he desires pleasure, has to receive corrective treatment by pain, like a beast of burden. That is why it is said that the pains imposed must be those most contrary to the pleasures he likes.

§11 As we have said, then, someone who is to be good must be finely brought up and habituated, and then must live in decent practices, doing base actions neither willingly nor unwillingly. And this will be true if his life follows some sort of understanding and correct order that prevails on him.

§12 Now a father's instructions lack this power to prevail and compel; and so in general do the instructions of an individual man, unless he is a king or someone like that. Law, however, has the power that compels; and law is reason that proceeds from a sort of prudence and understanding. Besides, people become hostile to an individual human being who opposes their impulses, even if he is correct in opposing them, whereas a law's prescription of what is decent is not burdensome.

§13 And yet, it is only in / Sparta, or in a few other cities as well, that the legislator seems to have attended to upbringing and practices. In most other cities they are neglected, and an individual lives as he wishes, 'laying down the rules for his children and wife', like a Cyclops.

§14 It is best, then, if the community attends to upbringing, / and attends correctly. But if the community neglects it, it seems fitting for each individual to promote the virtue of his children and his friends—to be able to do it, or at least to decide to do it. From what we have said, however, it seems he will be better able to do it if he acquires legislative science. For, clearly, attention by the community works through laws, and decent attention works through excellent laws; and whether the laws are written or unwritten, for the education of one or of many, seems unimportant, as it is in music, gymnastics and other practices. For just as in a city the provisions of law and the types of character / found in that city / have influence, / so also in a household a father's words and habits have influence, and all the more because of kinship and because of the benefits he does; for his children are already fond of him and naturally ready to obey.

§15 Further, education adapted to an individual is different from / a common education for everyone, just as individualized medical treatment is different. For though generally a feverish patient benefits from rest and starvation, presumably / some patient does not; nor does the boxing instructor impose the same way of fighting on everyone. Hence it seems that treatment in particular cases is more exactly right when each person gets special attention, since he then more often gets the suitable treatment.

Nonetheless a doctor, a gymnastics trainer, and everyone else will give the best individual attention if they also know / universally what is good for all, or for these sorts. For sciences are said to be, and are, of what is common / to many particular cases. Admittedly someone without scientific knowledge may well attend properly to a single person, if his experience has allowed him to take exact note of what happens in a given case, just as some people seem to be their own best doctors, though / unable to help anyone else at all. Nonetheless, presumably, it seems that someone who wants to be an expert in a craft and a branch of study should progress to the universal, and come to know that, as far as possible; for that, as we have said, is what the sciences are about.

§17 Then perhaps also someone who wishes to make people better by his attention, many people or few, should try to / acquire legislative science, if laws are a means to make us good. For not just anyone can improve the condition of just anyone, or the person presented to him; but if someone can, it is the person with knowledge, just as in medical science and the others that require attention and prudence.

§18 Next, then, should we examine whence and how someone / might acquire legislative science? Just as in other cases / we go to the practitioner>, should we go to the politicians, since, as we saw, legislative science seems to be a part of political science. Or does the case of political science appear different from the other sciences and capacities? For evidently, in the other cases, the same people, such as doctors or painters, who transmit the capacity to others actively practise it themselves. / By contrast, it is the sophists who advertise that / they teach politics but none of them practises it. Instead, those who
practise it are the political activists, and they seem to act on some sort of capacity and experience rather than thought.  

For evidently they neither write nor speak on such questions, though presumably it would be finer to do this than to compose speeches for the law courts or the Assembly; nor have they made politicians out of their own sons or any other friends of theirs.  

But it would be reasonable for them to do this if they were able; for there is nothing better than the political capacity that they could leave to their cities, and nothing better that they could decide to produce in themselves, or, therefore, in their closest friends.  

Nonetheless, experience would seem to contribute quite a lot; otherwise people would not have become better politicians by familiarity with politics. That is why those who aim to know about political science would seem to need experience as well.  

By contrast, those of the sophists who advertise that they teach political science appear to be a long way from teaching; for they are altogether ignorant about the sort of thing political science is, and the sorts of things it is about. For if they had known what it is, they would not have taken it to be the same as rhetoric, or something inferior to it, or thought it an easy task to assemble the laws with good reputations and then legislate. For they think they can select the best laws, as though the selection itself did not require comprehension, and as though correct judgment were not the most important thing, as it is in music.  

They are wrong; for those with experience in each area judge the products correctly and comprehend the ways and means of completing them, and what fits with what; for if we lack experience, we must be satisfied with noticing that the product is well or badly made, as with painting. Now laws would seem to be the products of political science; how, then, could someone acquire legislative science, or judge which laws are best, from laws alone?  

For neither do we appear to become experts in medicine by reading textbooks. And yet doctors not only try to describe the recognized treatments, but also distinguish different bodily states, and try to say how each type of patient might be cured and must be treated. And what they say seems to be useful to the experienced, though useless to the ignorant. Similarly, then, collections of laws and political systems might also, presumably, be most useful if we are capable of studying them and of judging what is done finely or in the contrary way, and what sorts of elements fit with what. Those who lack the proper state of experience when they go through these collections will not manage to judge finely, unless they can do it all by themselves without training, though they might come to comprehend them better by going through them.  

Since, then, our predecessors have left the area of legislation uncharted, it is presumably better to examine it ourselves instead, and indeed to examine political systems in general, and so to complete the philosophy of human affairs, as far as we are able.  

First, then, let us try to review any sound remarks our predecessors have made on particular topics. Then let us study the collected political systems, to see from them what sorts of things preserve and destroy cities, and political systems of different types; and what causes some cities to conduct politics well, and some badly. For when we have studied these questions, we will perhaps grasp better what sort of political system is best; how each political system should be organized so as to be best; and what laws and habits it should employ.  

Let us discuss this, then, having made a start.