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LATE HELLENISTIC "TEXTBOOK DEFINITIONS" OF PHILOSOPHY

Anton-Hermann CHROUST

DURING the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., in Alexandria, Athens and in other places, a large number of "Introductions to Philosophy" — *Isagogai, Prolegomena, Disdascalicoi* or, as we would say today, "textbooks" or "hornbooks" — were compiled and edited by Neo-Platonic authors and commentators, frequently in the form of commentaries or special treatises.[1] They were primarily addressed to novices or "students" in order to introduce the latter to, and acquaint them with, certain basic or traditional problems and definitions of philosophy.[2] In the main, these "textbooks" list six major (and some minor) or authoritative definitions of philosophy, namely, "the science (γνῶσις) of being *qua* being," "the knowledge, understanding or comprehension (γνῶσις) of things divine and human," "the concern (μελέτη) with death," "the becoming like (ὁμοίωσις) God as far as this is possible [for man]," "the art of arts and the science of sciences (or, of all forms of special knowledge)," and "the love of wisdom." The first two definitions are derived from the object of philosophy (ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου), the third and fourth from its purpose (ἐκ τοῦ τέλους), the fifth from its exaltedness (ἐκ τῆς ὑποροχῆς), and the sixth from its etymology. It is also interesting to note that some authors or commentators credit the first, second and sixth definition to Pythagoras, the third and fourth to Plato, and the fifth to Aristotle. These six definitions as they have been "canonized" by the Neo-Platonic School of Alexandria in particular, not only return with the regularity of steroetypes in the writings of Late Hellenistic authors, scholiasts and

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[1] See, for instance, AMMONIUS, *Comment. in Porphyrii Isagogen sive Quinque Voces*, CIAG IV. 3, p. 2, 22 ff.; DAVID, *Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen Comment.*, CIAG XVIII. 2, p. 3 ff., and *ibid.*, p. 23, 11 ff.; p. 26, 10 ff.; ELIAS (*olim DAVID*), *Comment in Porphyrii Isagogen et in Aristotelis Categorias*, CIAG XVIII. 1, p. 7, 25 ff., and *ibid.*, p. 8, 8 ff. See also some of the notes, *infra*.

[2] It is reasonable to surmise that the trend to produce "textbooks" in philosophy might go back to the Peripatetic School of Theophrastus or, perhaps, to such Early Academicians as Speusippus and Xenocrates.

commentators. They were also transmitted to the Middle Ages where they enjoyed great popularity and authority among theologians and philosophers.

Probably the first author to list all six authoritative definitions of philosophy is Ammonius, the scholarch of the Neo-Platonic School at Alexandria during the fifth century A.D. Ammonius, in turn, had a lasting and far-reaching influence not only on the Neo-Platonists of the sixth century — Damascius, Simplicius, Olympiodorus, Ioannes Philoponus, Asclepius and Theodoretus — but also on Elias and David as well as on Byzantine, Syriac, Arabic and Christian authors. In his *Commentary* to Porphyry's *Isagoge,*[3] Ammonius enumerates these six definitions, a list which subsequently was accepted by almost all scholars, commentators or scholiasts. According to Ammonius, these six definitions are subdivided into three major groups, namely, as regards the object of philosophy, as regards the purpose of philosophy, and as regards the "complex meaning" (*συναμφότερον*) of philosophy. Although Ammonius also mentions several other definitions of philosophy, he does not include them among his authoritative definitions.[4]

Ammonius six definitions of philosophy reappear in Elias' *In Porphyrii Isagogen et in Aristotelis Categories Commentaria.*[5] It is quite possible that Elias is here under the influence of Olympiodorus' lost *Isagoge.*[6] Like Ammonius before him, Elias subdivides his definitions of philosophy "analytically" into three groups. Moreover, he attempts to assign the authorship of these six definitions to different philosophers, claiming for Pythagoras no less than three definitions, namely, the "love and pursuit of wisdom," the "science of being *qua* being," and the "understanding and comprehension of things divine and human" — that is, those definitions which follow from the etymology as well as from the exalted position of philosophy. To Plato he assigns two definitions, namely, the "meditation about death" and the "becoming like God as far as this is possible [for man]" — that is, those definitions which deal with the purpose of philosophy. And finally, he credits Aristotle with the definition which calls philosophy the "art of all arts and the science of all sciences." The same definitions and the same reasons for listing them can also be found in David's *Prolegomena et in Prophyrii Isagogen Commentaria.*[7]

The first definition of philosophy recorded by the Neo-Platonic commentators calls it the *γνῶσις τῶν ὄντων ᾗ ὄντα*, the "science or knowledge of being *qua* being." Curiously enough, this definition, which is concerned with the object of

[3] AMMONIUS, *loc. cit. supra,* note 1. See also ELIAS, *loc. cit. supra,* note 1.

[4] AMMONIUS, *op. cit.,* p. 2, 16 ff. See also DAVID, *op. cit. supra,* note 1, p. 25, 25 ff.

[5] CIAG XVIII. 1, p. 7, 25 ff., and *ibid.,* p. 8, 8 ff.

[6] David, *op. cit. supra,* note 1, p. 16, 3 ff., and *ibid.,* p. 31, 34 ; p. 64, 32 ff., actually quotes Olympiodorus. Olympiodorus was the disciple of Ammonius and the teacher of Elias.

[7] CIAG XVIII. 2, p. 20, 25 ff. In his *In Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias, CIAG.* 1, p. 7, 26, Elias justifies his view that there are six authoritative definitions of philosophy by ascribing magic qualities to the number six. See here also PORPHYRY, *De Vita Plotini* 24 ; THEON OF SMYRNA, *Expositio Rerum Mathematicarum ad Legendum Platonem Utilium* (ed. Hiller) 45.

philosophy, is also ascribed to Pythagoras,[8] although it appears to be a sort of "summary statement" of Aristotle's basic concept of philosophy.[9] According to Aristotle, the "first philosophy" or the "philosopher's philosophy" [10] deals exclusively with being *qua* being : [11] "The science of the philosopher — the 'philosopher's philosophy' — is concerned with being *qua* being universally and not merely with a part of it." [12] It alone has for its true object everything that is. But in everything that is, it investigates only the first principles or causes. Accordingly, this first philosophy, which among all the branches of human knowledge is the most sublime form of knowledge, is also wisdom in the strictest and highest sense of the term.[13] In brief, "there is a science of being *qua* being which is capable of existing apart [from all other sciences]." [14] As such it "deals with things that both exist and are immovable" [15] and, hence, "investigates the first principles and causes." [16] This being so, "there actually exists a science which inquires into the nature of being ... and ... this is not the same as any of the other so-called special sciences. For none of these other sciences treats universally of being *qua* being." [17] And it is above all the philosopher who studies these fundamental issues. [18] In brief, the science which concentrates on being *qua* being, that is, the most universal science, [19] is indeed the "philosopher's philosophy." [20]

The second "canonical" definition of philosophy is that of γνῶσις (or, κατάληψις) θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων — the "knowledge, understanding or comprehension of things divine and human." Undoubtedly, this definition, which is concerned with the purpose of philosophy, is of Stoic origin.[21] The Stoics, especially the Later Stoics, considered philosophy to be the cultivation or practice

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[8] See, for instance, AMMONIUS, *op. cit.*, p. 9, 7 ff. ; DAVID, *op. cit.*, p. 46, 6, and *ibid.*, p. 8, 19 ; p. 25, 26 ; ELIAS, *op. cit.*, p. 8, 15.

[9] See, for instance, ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics* 1003 *a* 20 ff., and *ibid.*, 1026 *a* 24 ff. ; 1060 *b* 31 ff. ; etc.

[10] *Ibid.*, 1004 *a* 31 ; 1005 *a* 21 ; 1060 *b* 32.

[11] *Ibid.*, 1003 *a* 20 ; 1005 *a* 15 ; 1026 *a* 31 ; 1060 *b* 32 ; 1061 *b* 26 ; etc.

[12] *Ibid.*, 1060 *a* 32. See also notes 9–11, *supra*.

[13] See also *ibid.*, 982 *a* 24, where we are told that "the most exact of all the sciences are those which deal with first principles. Those sciences which use fewer principles are more exact than those which use additional principles."

[14] *Ibid.*, 1064 *a* 28.

[15] *Ibid.*, 1026 *a* 15.

[16] *Ibid.*, 982 *b* 9.

[17] *Ibid.*, 1003 *a* 20 ; 1061 *b* 32 ; 1026 *a* 27.

[18] *Ibid.*, 1061 *b* 11.

[19] *Ibid.*, 1064 *b* 7.

[20] *Ibid.*, 1061 *b* 5 ; 1025 *b* 1 ; 1003 *b* 14 ff. ; 1003 *b* 21.

[21] SEXTUS EMPIRICUS *Adversus Mathematicos* IX. 13 ; AETIUS, *Placita Philosophorum* I, prooem 2 ; PSEUDO-GALEN, *Hist. Philos.* 5. It will be noted that this definition of philosophy found a prominent place in JUSTINIAN'S *Corpus Juris, Digest (Pandects)* I. 1. 1. 1. 10. 2, and *Institutes* (GAIUS) I. 1. 1 : *"Jurisprudentia est divinarum et humanarum rerum notitia."*

of wisdom, and wisdom the understanding of things divine and human — the *"rerum ... divinarum et humanarum scientia."* [22] This understanding, in turn, constitutes the ultimate and, as a matter of fact, the sole foundation of all intellectual and intelligent endeavors to attain to the "good life" and become a "good man." Accordingly, Seneca points out that the ancient philosophers *"[s]apientiam quidam ita finierunt ut dicerent eam divinarum et humanarum rerum scientiam esse. Quidam ita: Sapientia est nosse divina et humana et horum causas."* [23]

Aristobulus [24] and Albinus [25] likewise call philosophy the "knowledge and understanding of things divine and human." This definition, it will be noted, also implies the universalistic meaning of philosophy. With the Neo-Platonists and their essentially religious or mystic inclinations, the ultimate significance of philosophy consists in man's intellectual and spiritual communion with God. To them the highest object of philosophy consists in showing us the way to the spiritual visualization of the Ineffable One. This attitude towards, or interpretation of, philosophy in all likelihood is the Neo-Platonic version and application of the Stoic definition of philosophy which is also listed by Ammonius, David and Elias. For some unknown reason the latter credit this definition to Pythagoras.[26]

The third definition calls philosophy the μελέτη θανάτου or μελέτη τοῦ ἀποθνήσκειν — the "concern with death." This definition, which focuses on the object or purpose of philosophy, in all likelihood is Platonic. [27] The affinity of the true philosopher with God [28] — a theme which permeates the whole of Plato's philosophy — compels Plato to proclaim that only in "the world beyond" can the philosopher "find philosophic wisdom in its purest form." [29] For this very reason the philosopher is always concerned with death. "Any man who possesses the spirit of philosophy is willing to die." [30] Hence, "we should fly away from this earth as quickly as we can." [31] This flight holds out to the philosopher the greatest of rewards : Philosophy is really the purification and release from evil and painful "banishment." [32] For "only in the world beyond can man worthily enjoy philosophic wisdom ... and there, and there alone, can he find wisdom in its purest and most exalted form." [33] This being so, the true philosopher must be deeply

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[22] CICERO, *De Officiis* I. 43. 153.

[23] SENECA, *Epistola* LXXXIX. 5.

[24] See EUSEBIUS, *Praeparatio Evangelica* XIII. 12. 12.

[25] ALBINUS, *Isagoge* 1. (p. 152, ed. Hermann).

[26] See note 6, *supra.*

[27] See, for instance, PLATO, *Phaedo* 64A ff., and *ibid.*, 61B ; 64E ; 67E ff., 80E ; 81A ; *et passim.*

[28] See *infra.*

[29] PLATO, *Phaedo* 68A.

[30] *Ibid.*, 61B ; 64E ff. ; PLATO, *Republic* 486A.

[31] PLATO, *Theaetetus* 176B.

[32] PLATO, *Phaedo* 82D.

[33] *Ibid.*, 68A.

concerned with the problem of death,[34] and "any man who possesses the spirit of philosophy is willing to die." [35] In other words — and this is perhaps the dominant message of the Platonic *Phaedo* and *Crito* — death is really liberation from "earthly incarceration," and philosophy, by its contempt for all earthly things, is in fact the road or flight back to man's original and heavenly abode from which he has been banished for some grave failings. In this sense philosophy is also concern with death.[36]

The definition of philosophy as the concern with death, among other philosophers, was also used by Plutarch. [37] With some authors it was elaborated to mean the "release of the soul from its incarceration in the body" [38] — a thoroughly Platonic notion. In this latter sense, philosophy would also be concerned with the salvation of the soul. To the Late Stoics, for instance, one of the basic tasks of philosophy is to give intellectual and spiritual strength to all those who seek lasting peace and mental comfort. As a matter of fact, this definition, especially the notion that philosophy is the release of the soul from its incarceration, was readily used by the Stoics in general who relied on it in order to justify their views on suicide. Cicero, it appears, introduced it into the Latin world when he maintains that *"tota enim philosophorum vita . . . commentatio mortis est."* [39] Apuleius likewise calls philosophy the *"mortis affectum consuetudinemque moriendi,"* [40] while Albinus defines it as the "soul's liberation from, and rising above, the body." [41] Seneca states that *"egregia res est mortem condiscere . . . hoc est ipsum quare meditari debeamus."* [42]

The fourth definition of philosophy is that of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ (κατὰ τὸ δύνατον [ἀνθρώπῳ]) — the "becoming like God (as far as this is possible [to man])." This definition, which is concerned with the purpose or end of philosophy, probably goes back to Plato.[43] Plato insists that "the eye of the philosopher is

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[34] *Ibid.*, 67C.

[35] *Ibid.*, 61B.

[36] This notion, for instance, also underlies the statement of Marcus Aurelius that philosophy consists in "accepting death with a cheerful mind." See MARCUS AURELIUS, *Thoughts* II, 17.

[37] PLUTARCH, *De Sera Numinis Vindicta* 18 ff. (*Moralia* 560F ff.)

[38] See, for instance, ALBINUS, *Isagoge* 1 (p. 152, ed. Hermann) ; MARCUS AURELIUS, *Thoughts* IX. 3, and *ibid.*, III. 3.

[39] CICERO, *Tusculanae Disputationes* I. 30. 74. See also *ibid.*, I. 31. 75 : "*. . . secernere autem a corpore animun ecquid aliquid est quam mori discere ?*"

[40] APULEIUS, *De Platone* et *Eius Dogmate* 277.

[41] ALBINUS, *Isagoge* 1 (p. 152, ed. Hermann).

[42] SENECA, *Epistola* XII. 25.

[43] PLATO, *Theaetetus* 176B. See also PLATO, *Paedo* 62B, and *ibid.*, 66B ; 67A ; PLATO, *Republic* 613B, and *ibid.*, 500C, *et passim ;* PLATO, *Laws* 716CD ; DIOGENES LAERTIUS III. 78 ff. According to Eudorus of Alexandria (in : STOBAEUS, *Eclogues* II. 49. 8 ff.), this definition allegedly goes back to both Plato and Pythagoras. Diogenes Laertius VI. 72, and *ibid.*, VI. 37 ; VI. 51, reports that Diogenes of Sinope had insisted that "the wise man is . . . a friend of his like" ; that "the gods are the friends of the wise" ; that "the wise are friends of the gods" ; and that "good men are images of the gods."

forever directed towards things immutable and eternal . . . These he imitates and to these he will conform as far as this is possible." [44] In other words, the philosopher attempts to "make the ways of man agreeable to the ways of God as far as this is possible." [45] Philosophy, then, is really purification and release from evil or imperfection ; [46] and the philosopher, by "holding conversation with the divine or divine order becomes himself . . . divine as far as the nature of man permits." [47] For only the philosopher "is most like God." [48] Obviously, philosophy to Plato is a "flight" from this world of deception and misery and, hence, the "road to God" — a notion which permeates the Platonic *Republic,* the *Theaetetus* and, especially, the *Phaedo.*

Theon of Smyrna, we know, recommended the study of philosophy because the latter makes us like God as far as this is possible,[49] a position which was also taken by Eudorus of Alexandria,[50] Gaius,[51] Plutarch,[52] Albinus,[53] Juncus,[54] Plotinus,[55] Philo of Alexandria,[56] Julian the Apostate,[57] Themistius [58] and others. Traces of this definition might also be detected in St. Paul,[59] as well as in a number of early Christian authors. It will be noted that Ammonius,[60] and after him David [61] and Elias [62] added to the original Platonic definition (*Theaetetus* 176B) the "as far as this is possible *to man.*"[63] It is reasonable to assume that this particular addition is fully in keeping with the ultimate effort of the Neo-

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[44] PLATO, *Republic* 500C.

[45] *Ibid.,* 501C ff.

[46] PLATO, *Phaedo* 82D. See also SENECA, *Ad Helviam Matrem de Consolatione* XI. 7 ; SENECA, *Epistola* CII. 26.

[47] PLATO, *Republic* 500C ff., and *ibid.,* 613A. See also PLATO, *Laws* 716CD.

[48] PLATO, *Theaetetus* 176B.

[49] THEON OF SMYRNA, *Philosophici Platonici Expositio Rerum Mathematicarum ad Legendum Platonem Utilium* (ed. Hiller) XIV. 8, and *ibid.,* XIV. 18 ff. ; XVI. 16.

[50] See STOBAEUS, *Eclogues* II. 49. 8 ff.

[51] ALBINUS, *Isagoge* 28 (p. 181, ed. Hermann).

[52] PLUTARCH, *De Sera Numinis Vindicta* 5 (*Moralia* 550D). Plutarch also offers several different interpretations of this definition.

[53] ALBINUS, *Isagoge* 28. See also ALBINUS, *Prologue* 6.

[54] In STOBAEUS, *Eclogues* CXVII. 95.

[55] PLOTINUS, *Enneads* I. 2. 1 ff., and *ibid.,* V. 8. 11 ; I. 2. 3, *et passim.*

[56] PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *De Opificio Mundi* 50. 144 ; *De Caritate* (or. *De Humanitate)* XXIII. 168.

[57] JULIAN THE APOSTATE, *Oratio* VI. 184 (p. 238, ed. Hertlein).

[58] THEMISTIUS, *Oratio* II. 32 (p. 39, ed. Dindorf) ; *Oratio* XXXIV (p. 471, ed. Dindorf).

[59] ST. PAUL, *Romans* VIII : 29 : ". . . to be conformed to the image of the Son . . ." See also *ibid.,* VI : 5 ; *Ephesians* IV : 24.

[60] AMMONIUS, *Comment. in Porphyrii Isagogen sive Quinque Voces,* CIAG IV. 3, p. 3, 14-15, and *ibid.,* p. 4, 5-6.

[61] DAVID, *Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen Comment.* CIAG XVIII. 2, p. 20 ; 29 ff.

[62] ELIAS, *Comment. in Porphyrii Isagogen et in Aristotelis Categorias,* CIAG XVIII. 1, p. 16, 10, and *ibid.,* p. 18, 3.

[63] See, however, PLATO, *Republic* 613A.

Platonists to pronounce and, at the same time, to bridge, "as far as this is possible to man," the infinite chasm which separates man from God. Hence, the ὁμοίωσις can be achieved only on the level of religious exstasy or mystic contemplation. For only by renouncing this world, by purification and by reverting to spiritual and mystic contemplation can man communicate with the Ineffable One.

The fifth definition of philosophy calls it the τέχνη τεχνῶν καὶ ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστημῶν — the "art of arts (or the system of systems) and the knowledge of all forms of knowledge." [64] This definition, which stresses the "matrix position" or exaltedness of philosophy,[65] and which enjoyed much popularity among the Neo-Platonic authors and commentators, has generally been credited to Aristotle. It might be interesting to speculate whether it is indeed by Aristotle and, if so, where it might have been stated by the Stagirite. Ammonius maintains that "there is also a definition of philosophy devised by Aristotle — a definition, that is, which is derived from the pre-eminence which philosophy holds as regards the other arts and sciences." [66] Elias, the disciple of Ammonius and Olympiodorus, insists that "according to Aristotle, the fifth definition of philosophy . . . [is] that of τέχνη τεχνῶν καὶ ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστημῶν. For in the *Metaphysics,* which is also called Theology, [67] he defines it as such on account of its pre-eminence." [68] Assuming, then, that this definition or, at least, a statement to this effect was actually contained in some "editions" (or commentaries) of Aristotle's *Metaphysics,*[69] it might be reasonable to conjecture that it was part of Book I, chapter 2 of the *Metaphysics,* and that at about 982 *b* 7ff. of this work it followed the statement that "the science which knows to what end each thing must be done, is the most authoritative or sovereign science among all sciences . . ." This particular section of the Aristotelian *Metaphysics* has frequently been cited, or relied upon, by Aristotle's commentators and by scholiasts to explain, justify and confirm the pre-eminence (ὑπεροχὴ) of philosophy in general.

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[64] In his *Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen Comment.,* CIAG XVIII. 2, p. 21, 12 ff., David calls philosophy "the mother (μήτηρ) of all arts and of all forms of knowledge . . . with the help of which we are able to derive the first principles and the methods and the various forms of knowledge." See here also ELIAS, *Comment. in Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias,* CIAG XVIII. 1, p. 20, 31 ff ; CICERO, *Tusculanae Disputationes* I. 26. 64 ; Ammonius (*loc. cit.,* p. 2, 12 ff.) and David (*loc. cit.* and *ibid.,* p. 40, 13 ff.) also make an attempt to set off philosophy against all other forms of intellectual pursuits with the help of this definition. See also PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia* XXVI, 146 (vol. III, p. 102, ed. Cohn-Wendland).

[65] CICERO, *loc. cit. supra,* note 64. The same was taught by Posidonius (see SENECA, *Epistola* LXXXVIII. 21 ff., and *ibid.,* 28 ff. ; *Epistola* XC. 7). Chicago calls philosophy the "mother of all arts and sciences."

[66] AMMONIUS, *Comment. in Porphyrii Isagogen sive Quinque Voces,* CIAG IV. 3, p. 6, 25 ff. See also PORPHYRY, *Isagoge* III. 6. 25.

[67] See also ELIAS, *Comment. in Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias,* CIAG XVIII. 1, p. 20, 19 ; ASCLEPIUS, *Comment. in Aristotelis Metaphysicorum Libros,* CIAG VI. 2, p. 1, 18, and *ibid.,* p. 4, 1 ; p. 56, 23 ff ; p. 136, 22 ff.

[68] ELIAS, *Comment. in Porphyrii Isagogen et in Aristotelis Categorias,* CIAG XVIII. 1, p. 20, 18 ff. See also ASCLEPIUS, *loc. cit. supra,* note 67.

[69] This might also be inferred from Elias, *op. cit. supra,* note 68, p. 23, 10 ff.

While Elias specifically assigns this definition of philosophy to Aristotle, Ammonius, [70] Simplicius, [71] Asclepius [72] and Eustratius [73] regard this definition as part of a more general and more widely accepted philosophic tradition. Isidore of Pelusium, for instance, relates that "other philosophers are of the opinion that philosophy is the art of all arts and the science of all sciences . . ." [74] David, again, calls philosophy the "mother (μήτηρ) of all arts and of all sciences . . . from which we may derive a true understanding of first principles (ἀρχαί) and of the 'basic methods' (τέχναι), as well as an understanding of all the special forms of knowledge (ἐπιστήμαι)." [75] By this very formulation David emphasizes the pre-eminence (ὑπεροχή) of philosophy among all other "particular," "detailed" or "specialized" sciences. [76] For "the art of arts must be above and beyond [ordinary] art . . . [Hence,] philosophy, which instructs all other arts, should be referred to as the art of all arts." [77]

It might be pointed out that the definition calling philosophy the mother or matrix of all arts and sciences can, among others, also be found in Posidonius,[78] whose great learning as well as many writings had a lasting influence on subsequent authors. Posidonius, in turn, might have been under the direct influence of Aristotle. Cicero probably follows Posidonius when he insists that philosophy is "the mother of all arts" ; [79] and Marcus Aurelius might possibly echo the same notion when he admonishes his readers to "let philosophy be thy foster-mother and mother." [80] The Stoics, as a matter of fact, point out that philosophy ranks above all other human endeavors. [81] The remark of Philo of Alexandria (that it is impossible to discover within the several special sciences as such "first principles" or the "roots of things", and that only philosophy can supply us with such "first principles,"),[82] seems to be Aristotelian in spirit. So too is probably the observation made by Ammonius that "philosophy [as the science of all

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[70] AMMONIUS, *Comment. in Aristotelis Analyticorum Librorum Liber I,* CIAG IV. 6, p. 10, 18-19.

[71] See, for instance, SIMPLICIUS, *Comment. in Aristotelis Physicorum Libros I–IV,* CIAG IX, p. 47, 31.

[72] ASCLEPIUS, *Comment. in Aristotelis Metaphysicorum Libros* A–Z, CIAG VI. 2, p. 74, 5 ff.

[73] EUSTRATIUS, *Comment. in Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea,* CIAG XX, p. 322, 12.

[74] MIGNE, PG LXXVIII. 1637.

[75] DAVID, *Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen Comment.,* CIAG XVIII. 2, p. 2, 12 ff.

[76] *Ibid.* See also *ibid.,* p. 40, 13 ff. ; AMMONIUS, *Comment. in Porphyrii Isagogen sive Quinque Voces,* CIAG IV. 3, p. 6, 25 ff.

[77] ELIAS, *op. cit. supra,* note 68, p. 23, 10 ff.

[78] See, for instance, SENECA, *Epistola* LXXXVIII. 21 ff., and *ibid.,* 28 ff. ; *Epistola* XC. 7, and *ibid.,* 23 ; *Epistola* XXXIX. 5. See note 65, *supra.*

[79] CICERO, *Tusculanae Disputationes* I. 26. 64.

[80] MARCUS AURELIUS, *Thoughts* VI. 12.

[81] AETIUS, *Placita Philosophorum* I, prooem. 2 ; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* IX. 13.

[82] PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia* XXVI. 146 (p. 102, 15, vol. III, ed. Cohn-Wendland).

sciences] alone is concerned with everything that is or exists," [83] thus combining the definition which calls philosophy the "art of all arts and the science of all sciences" with the definition which defines it as the "science of being *qua* being." [84] In accordance with what appears to have been Aristotle's definition of the πρώτη φιλοσοφία,[85] Ammonius seems merely to restate the notion that philosophy, properly understood, is the "knowledge of being *qua* being." [86]

The sixth definition of philosophy, which is an etymological explanation of the term, calls it the φιλία τῆς σοφίας — the "love and pursuit of wisdom." This definition, which has also been credited to Pythagoras,[87] in all likelihood goes back to Plato.[88] Aelius Aristides, we know, refers to philosophy as the "love or pursuit of the beautiful and the dedicated study of what is rational — a love or pursuit which is not just a passing fancy or fashionable hobby, but rather an all-encompassing erudition." [89] In the course of the late fifth or early fourth century B.C., philosophy came to mean the inquiry into the nature of truth as well as into the essence of things — the reasoning about, or pondering over, a definite problem. In this sense it came to mean the love of factual knowledge and the pursuit of real wisdom on the basis of rational argument and consistent methodology.[90] Accordingly, philosophy is also the road to true wisdom. "The true philosopher," Plato maintains, "is a lover, not of a part of wisdom only, but of the whole" ; [91] and the purpose of philosophy is to submit to the dictates of reason (properly employed) by engaging in pure and unadulterated contemplation or visualization of what is objectively true : "The minds of the philosophers always have a knowledge of a sort which shows them the eternal nature not varying from generation or corruption." [92] Those who love the truth in each thing

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[83] AMMONIUS, *op. cit. supra,* note 66, p. 2, 15 ff.

[84] See notes 8–20, *supra,* and the corresponding text.

[85] See, for instance, ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics* 1003 *a* 21 – 1005 *a* 17, and *ibid.*, 1026 *a* 24 ff. ; 1026 *a* 30 ff. ; 1060 *b* 31 – 1061 *b* 34 ; etc. ; ARISTOTLE, *Physics* 194 *b* 15 ; ARISTOTLE, *De Caelo* 277 *b* 10.

[86] AMMONIUS, *loc. cit. supra,* note 83.

[87] See, for instance, AMMONIUS, *op. cit.*, p. 9, 7 ff. ; DAVID, *op. cit.*, p. 8, 19, and *ibid.*, p. 25, 26 ff ; ELIAS, *op. cit.*, p. 8, 15. See also CICERO, *Tusculanae Disputationes* V. 3. 8–10 ; IAMBLICHUS, *Vita Pythagorae* XII. 58 (31, 20–32, 22, ed. Deubner) ; ARISTOTLE, *Protrepticus,* frag. 11, Walzer ; frag. 11, Ross ; frag. 18, Düring ; frag. 16, Chroust (Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* 51-10, ed. Pistelli) ; HERMIAS OF ALEXANDRIA, *In Platonis Phaedrum Scholia* (ed. Couvreur) 264, 10 ff. ; Diogenes Laertius VII. 8, and *ibid.*, I, prooem. See also note 8, *supra.*

[88] See, for instance, PLATO, *Republic* 475B, and *ibid.*, 480A ; 484D ; 485B ; 490A ; 494B ; 502C ff. ; 521A ; etc. ; PLATO, *Sophist* 268D ; PLATO, *Symposium* 218A ; PLATO, *Phaedo* 64D ; PLATO, *Gorgias* 526 ; etc., etc.

[89] ÆLIUS ARISTIDES, *Oratio* XLVI. 311, 518 (ed. Dindorf, pp. 407-408).

[90] See, for instance, PLATO, *Gorgias* 526D ; PLATO, *Euthydemus* 307B.

[91] PLATO, *Republic* 475C.

[92] *Ibid.*, 485AB. See also *ibid.*, 484A ff. ; 486E ; 490A ff., 500C ; *et passim ;* PLATO, *Phaedrus* 249A ff. ; PLATO, *Phaedo* 65C ; PLATO, *Theaetetus* 173E ; PLATO, *Sophist* 249D, and *ibid.*, 254A.

"are to be called philosophers, that is, lovers of wisdom." [93] In other words, philosophy is a kind of "madness or passion in man's longing for wisdom and understanding." [94] According to Plato, true, that is, flawless and objective wisdom (σοφία) is reserved to God, and to Him alone. Man, on the other hand, must be content with yearning for and loving truth and wisdom. It is yearning for love of wisdom and objective knowledge which constitutes for Plato the stepping stone from earthliness to the heavenly beatitude of absolute truth and absolute beauty. The philosopher can attain to his ultimate aim and achieve his exalted position by gradually and longingly ascending the several levels of specialized scientific or philosophic learning. [95] This ascendancy starts with a feeling of love and wonder. For "wonder is the feeling of the philosopher, and philosophy starts in wonder." [96]

Seneca maintains that some Stoics considered philosophy the pursuit of wisdom — the *"sapientiae amor et affectatio."* [97] Chrysippus, again, saw in philosophy the pursuit and practice of wisdom,[98] the only sure road leading to wisdom and virtue, philosophy.[99] Albinus, in turn, calls philosophy the "longing (ὄρεξις) after wisdom," [100] while the Neo-Pythagoreans consider it not merely a striving after wisdom, knowledge and understanding, but also the "road to God as well as a communion with God." [101] And finally, Boëthius defines philosophy as the *"amor et studium et amicitia quodammodo sapientiae."* [102]

These six basic "textbook definitions" of philosophy, it must be conceded, already had become authoritative definitions some time before they were restated and "canonized" by Late Hellenistic commentators or authors of "Introductions" to philosophy or the study of philosophy. Thanks to the efforts of Cassiodorus,[103]

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[93] PLATO, *Republic* 480A.

[94] PLATO, *Symposium* 218A.

[95] PLATO, *Republic* 498A ff.

[96] *Ibid.*, 475C; PLATO, *Theaetetus* 155D. ARISTOTLE, in *Metaphysics* 982 *b* 12 ff., likewise insists that philosophy starts in wonder.

[97] SENECA, *Epistola* LXXIX. 5, and *ibid.*, 7-8.

[98] SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *Adversus Mathematicos* IX. 13; AETIUS, *Placita Philosophorum* I, prooem. 2.

[99] MUSONIUS, in: STOBAEUS, *Eclogues* II. 13. 123. Similar notion can be found in MARCUS AURELIUS, *Thoughts* V. 9.

[100] ALBINUS, *Isagoge* 1 (p. 152, ed. Hermann).

[101] See STOBAEUS, *Eclogues* XLIX. 20.

[102] BOËTHIUS, *In Isagogen Prophyrii Comment.*, PL LXI, 10.

[103] CASSIODORUS, *De Artibus ac Disciplinis Liberalium Litterarum* (PL LXX). Cassiodorus quotes only four authoritative definitions of philosophy: *Divinarum humanarumque rerum inquanta est possibilis scientia; ars artium et disciplina disciplinarum; meditatio mortis;* and *assimilatio Deo secundum quod possibile est homini.*

Isidore of Seville, [104] Dominicus Gundissalinus [105] and other writers of philosophic *compendia,* they were transmitted to mediæval theologians and philosophers. In this manner they became an essential part or aspect of Christian intellectual and spiritual life. Thus, the fifth definition, for instance, which calls philosophy "the art of arts and the science of sciences," among other matters, was also referred to in order to explain, justify and exalt the pastoral functions of priesthood. Moreover, they gradually replaced the traditional system of early mediæval instruction, which was essentially based on the *trivium* and *quatrivium,* and thus brought about far-reaching innovations in theological and philosophical studies.

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[104] ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, *Etymologiae* II. 24. 1, and *ibid.*, II. 24. 2 ; II. 24. 9. Isidore quoted five definitions of philosophy, namely, the *rerum humanarum divinarumque cognitio cum studio bene vivendi coniuncta ;* the *amor sapientiae ;* the *divinarum humanarumque rerum inquantum homini possibile est probabilis scientia ;* the *ars artium et disciplina disciplinarum ;* and the *meditatio mortis.* Isidore's first definition, which can also be found in Gundissalinus (see note 105, *infra*), is a combination of borrowings from the Old Stoa, from Cicero and from Seneca. In *Etymologiae* II. 23. 2, Isidore (who quoted here Cassiodorus) relates that *"consuetudo itaque est doctoribus philosophiae antequam ad Isagogen veniant exponendam divisionem philosophiae paucis."* This remark would indicate that Cassiodorus was familiar with some of the writings of the Alexandrian Neo-Platonic commentaries or *Prolegomena Philosophiae.*

[105] GUNDISSALINUS, *De Divisione Philosophiae* (ed. Baur), *passim.* Gundissalinus probably found his definitions in Isodore's *Etymologiae* or, perhaps, in the *De Definitionibus* of Isaak ben Salomon Israeli, translated by Gerhard of Cremona. See A.-H. CHROUST, « The Definitions of Philosophy in the *De Divisione Philosophiae* of Dominicus Gundissalinus », *The New Scholasticism,* vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 263–281 (1951). Gundissalinus, it will be noted, cites an additional definition of philosophy : *"Philosophia est integra cognitio hominis de se ipso."* Baur, 7, 17. This definition goes back to the Socratic dictum, γνῶθι σεαυτόν. See PLATO, *Apology* 28C ; PLATO, *Charmides* 164D ; PLATO, *Phaedrus* 229E ; XENOPHON, *Memorabilia* IV. 2. 24 ff. ; XENOPHON, *Symposium* I. 5 ; etc.