

ARETÉ (ἀρετή)—in ancient Greek a term describing a maximum of ability and potency for action (*optimum potentiae*); a man's effectiveness and skill in goodness. In the Polish language it corresponds to the term “cnota” (virtue) or “dzielność” (bravery). The problem of areté was one of the key ethical and pedagogical problems of antiquity (Jaeger); it is treated as the foundation of Platonic ontology (Kraemer); etymologically it is a noun without a subject: it comes from the word ἄριστος—the superlative degree of ἄγαθος [agathos]—good, and it can be most faithfully translated as “excellence” (the quality of being the best).

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ARETÉ— Heroic Arete. In Homer's poems the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the desire for areté or the possession of areté is a characteristic of the aristocracy. They lived in eminent families under the leadership of a local oligarchy described as ἄγαθος (good). In Homer the word applied to men capable of fighting—able warriors. They had to possess the best weapons, and their wealth guaranteed the quality of these weapons. The man capable of effectively defending the group united in themselves strength, courage, good birth, and martial skills. Moral or spiritual values were rarely mentioned. Areté primarily meant the strength and skill of a warrior or wrestler, and especially heroic virtue. It was inseparable from a spirit of competition and pride that involved a feeling of duty and responsibility toward the idea of areté. Over time the concept of areté was extended to prudence and cunning, advantageous traits in war. The desire to win the crown of areté is the essence of heroism.

Areté of mores. The *Odyssey* accents the mores and culture of the ordinary life, mentality, and way of life of “the best people”—ἄριστοι [aristoi]. They were aware of their privileged and exclusive position. They had refined manners and knew how to act in every situation. They showed great hospitality, composure in their response to unexpected situations, and were natural in ordinary life. They typically acted with irreproachable courtesy toward those who acted wickedly. Forbearance and admonitions always came before the meting out of just punishment. The role of the woman and the womanly areté was an essential element of their mores. Beauty was part of feminine areté, just as a man was judged according to his intellectual and physical virtues. A woman's areté was also measured by the purity of her manners, and provident economic management. This was connected with the social and legal status of women as mistresses of the home, the guardians of every good custom, and the teachers of tradition and culture.

The woman with her specific areté had a moderating influence on the ways of men.

Areté in work. Hesiod's *Works and Days* was a cultural supplement to Homer's aristocratic ideals and presented the life of the simple people. It focussed on the role of areté among people who did not possess the wealth that was necessary for the heroic kind of areté. In this poem, work occupies the key position as the only proper means leading to wealth. Instead of the ambitious competition of the knightly masculine virtues of aristocratic ethics, we see a quiet but determined competition in work. This is the only way to earn areté and so it is wrong to be ashamed of work. Idleness and considering dishonest ways of enrichment are shameful. True success demands that one should behave in accordance with the order that rules the world by the will of the gods (δική [dike]). Work at the right time and all the activities of the farmer are joined with the rhythm of nature.

Political areté. Besides aristocratic and feudal culture, town and city culture also had an apparent influence on the understanding of areté. The fact that the citizen's whole life was organized within the city-state—πολις [polis] was fundamental to the life and development of Ancient Greece. The city-state was the center of the citizen's political, economic, and social life in a general sense, and it was also the center of his spiritual life. According to Plato, the representative types of πολις containing the whole life and culture of a nation were the Spartan military state and the Ionian state of law.

In this context for the first time we see thought concerning the areté of the citizen. The fight for heroic areté earlier was a fight for personal glory, but with time it was replaced by the motive of heroic love of the fatherland. Fortitude understood as military skill became areté. The πολις and what was of benefit or harm to it was the measure of true areté. It was shameful and blameworthy for a man to refuse to sacrifice his health, property, or life for the fatherland. The ethics of the state replaced aristocratic ethics. This process became clearer yet as the conception of justice and the ideal of the state under the rule of law took shape.

The feeling of law gradually extended to other areas of life apart from material goods. There arose a definition of a character trait whereby a man avoids offences and stays within the bounds of the social order: δικαιοσυνή [dikaiosyne]—justice, which became a new general areté. The law of custom and law established in permanent form provided an objective measure of what is good and evil. Justice consisted in obedience to the laws of the state. Earlier ideas were also embodied in their structure. This new political areté enabled the citizen to work together with others in the πολις harmoniously and rationally. Besides private life and the skills necessary for it, civil life became permanent with the community in the context of the political order. Πλεονεξία [pleonexia] described the will of the individual who satisfied his desires without considering social order and became something blameworthy. The ideals of the older culture were revived: “be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds”—these two abilities became indispensable in the course of political life (W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, Wwa 1962, I 130–133).

Individual areté. The expanding role of the πολις and its growing influence on the life of the individual produced a natural reaction: creativity appeared as it emphasized the experience of the individual and set this in confrontation with the ideals of the civil virtues. In the writings of Archilochus the prose of ordinary life and the demands of nature were opposed to ideals: even the most tragic experiences must yield in the end to the pressure of such things as ordinary hunger. The poet praised temperance and self-mastery, and he warned against yielding too much to the feelings of pain and joy. He called upon the reader to recognize “rhythm” in a general sense as something that provides order, structure, and limits. For the first time a form of personal culture raised its voice, a culture based on the recognition of inviolable and ultimate laws that come from nature and rule human life. The iambic verse of Simonides of Amorgos and Mimnermos of Colophon was similar in content.

Civil areté. Solon's poetry joined the sphere of civil life with individual life and showed how they influenced each other. His poems warn against unjust acquisition of wealth and against violation of the principles of the rule of law. The result is not sterility or pestilence (as in Hesiod) understood as punishment from the gods, but a disturbance in the functioning of the organism of the πολις. There are quarrels between parties and civil war, violence, and injustice rule over the gatherings of the people. Crowds of paupers sold into slavery for debts must leave the fatherland. No one can isolate himself from this state of affairs. Sooner or later the effects of these misdeeds will reach the perpetrators. The fall of a city is not

something ordained by the gods. The citizens themselves cause a city to perish by their foolish conduct. Solon refused to look passively upon the dictates of faith and he summoned the citizens to act responsibly.

Areté of noble people. With economic growth the connection of areté with wealth became meaningless. Wealth quickly passed from one man to another. Wealth was easily acquired and easily lost. True areté cannot so easily be lost. Yet without the possession of wealth it is impossible to practice certain virtues. An important reason for the association of areté with wealth was a social attitude that measured the value of the individual according to his ability to make a contribution to public life and war. Yet the poet Theognis who fought for the perpetuation of the old ideals separated wealth from areté. In his famous quatrain he declared that piety and a few goods are better than unjustly acquired wealth, and that the whole of virtue is contained in justice. Conversely, anyone who is just may be rightly regarded as an aristocrat. True nobility is what is left when we remove wealth from the idea of areté: nobility of spirit.

Divinified areté. The poetry of Simonides of Cos presents areté in a divine perspective: only a god is perfect and can permanently possess areté. True areté involves the whole man, the spiritual sphere and the bodily sphere, and therefore the way to areté is extremely arduous, and inevitable misfortunes often make the attainment of perfection impossible. The grace of the gods and their influence can help a man in adversity. Avoiding wickedness is the basic condition for obtaining areté: the just are pleasing to the gods.

The poet Pindar wrote that just as the statues of sportsmen who were victorious in the games embody the model of the ideal masculine form, so poetry presents the ideal of man. Hymns in honor of Olympic champions are the glorious reward for a hero who by his victory has revealed the highest divine areté. Great deeds are of divine origin, as are happiness, the success of the tribe, and areté. Although many things separate men from gods, men may become like the gods, if only for a time.

Areté as moral beauty. With the great tragedians, the conception of a model or ideal of man was further refined. The times of Sophocles and Pericles gave rise to the Athenian ideal of the morally perfect man—καλογαθία [kalogathia]. Its basic features were rightness, appropriateness, and an intellectual element that coincided with these traits and enabled a man to recognize the proper objects of desire, the right measure, and moderation, the lack of which is the most common and major cause of all evil. The perfect man is characterized by his self-mastery in all he does. For Sophocles the source of these abilities was the order of things: the justice inherent in things themselves. Moderation in poetry appears in sound and rhythm, and it should also appear in a man's deeds. Then human life would not only be good but also capable of making an impression like that which arises when we encounter beauty in nature or in works of art. The original unity of the good and the beautiful, and better yet, the unity of the beautiful good, found its form in the word καλογαθία.

Areté as health of soul. Greek medicine was one of the elements of general education. It was higher than a simple craft and under the influence of the Ionian philosophy it became a scientific discipline. As the model of the arts it provided in its turn methods of cognition and investigation to philosophy. The object of philosophy was man's "psychic" nature—the ψυχή [psyche]. This conception arose under the influence of the medical sciences. Just as the health of the body has its own science, so the existence of an analogous science concerning the health of the psyche became necessary. Plato's and Aristotle's doctrines on man, the

physician's knowledge of the right therapy for the body, and Socrates' doctrine on the proper nurturing of the soul formed a whole of a higher order: human areté included abilities of body and soul. Plato made medicine an integral part of his anthropology: he associated three perfections of the body—health, strength, and beauty—with perfections of the soul—piety, fortitude, temperance, and justice as the general choir proclaiming the harmony of the universe. The Greek man of culture is identified with the man who is healthy in every way.

Democratic areté. At the time of Socrates Athens was ruled by direct democracy. Certain offices were given by lottery, and in theory each citizen had an opportunity to hold office. The Athenians were also interested in skills that could assure success in this area: rhetoric, which was helpful in persuading people at public gatherings, and certain abilities that were traditionally called political areté. The idea of teaching areté and placing it on intellectual foundations came from the Sophists. The Sophists provided the knowledge necessary to take an active role in political life. However, they neglected questions of theory and fact, leaving that to their students who were future politicians. In this way they opened themselves to accusations of skepticism and relativism because they didn't say what is truly good and just. They were accused of teaching attitudes of criticism, impiety, and questioning the social order, all for immediate gain. In the opinion of the Sophists, the law had lost its divine sanction and was instead based on the will of the majority. Frequent contacts with other lands provided confirmation for legal pluralism. This led to the question: which system of government proposes the best resolutions? If this question went unanswered or it was impossible, the ultimate result would be an arbitrary choice among the variety of opinions, and this would subvert the very foundations of the rational order. If reason is lacking, only blind desire remains, and it is easily manipulated in many ways. Students could learn the proper techniques and ways to navigate in this planned chaos from the Sophists for a set fee.

Moral areté. Socrates responded to the morally and politically destructive activity of the Sophists by showing the foundations of the rational order of reality. He spoke of the human soul, gave it essential significance for human life, and transferred the cosmic order of life in the polis into the internal sphere of man's life. Socrates' work was primarily aimed at unmasking illusions of knowledge and areté. He wanted to learn the essence of knowledge in itself and of true areté as an operation of the soul. The soul is something divine in man: in his soul a man may hear the voice of the daimon, the messenger of the gods. He thought that care for one's soul is a divine mission. In the soul we discover the truth, and knowledge of the good gives meaning to all other goods. The primacy of the soul bore fruit in the postulate that the soul should rule over bodily nature. A new conception appeared of inner freedom that makes rational life, i.e., the mastery of impulses and reactions, possible.

Socrates considered areté and knowledge to be the same thing. He analyzed the concept of knowledge in itself, and knowledge in relation to moral questions. The question of good action may be reduced to the question of knowledge of the good. Life as a whole depends upon recognizing and seeking the good as the end of all rational actions. This should be the end of education as aiming at forming citizens capable of the good life in the *πολις* and so also capable of renewing the life of the state. Order in the *πολις* is in fact the effect of the inner order of the citizens themselves.

FUNCTIONS OF ARETÉ—Areté in the conception of the philosophers. Human action (*ἔργασια* [ergasia]) may be of three kinds: purely cognitive, contemplative, and theoretical (*θεωρεω* [theoreo]—I behold); active or practical (*πραττω* [pratto]—I do); creative or productive, called in ancient times poietic (*ποιεω* [poieo]—I make), and today this would

be called artistic and technical. In turn, practical activity may be individual or personal (that is, moral action, from ἠθος [ethos]—Cicero, *De fato*, 1, 1); domestic, or economic (οἶκος [oikos]); municipal or political (πολις). These domains are completed by religion as a sort of focal point of culture. Human areté will be expressed in these domains as the best actions of which man is capable. Natural areté is the same as health and is ascribed to physiological functions. The problem of areté may be reduced to the question of a man who acts in a human manner and is cultured in the full sense of the word: he is cultivated and has developed skills. The possession of areté sets the man who acts well apart from the man who acts by chance.

Socrates and Plato provided a general meaning of areté (ἀρετή ἀνθρωπεία [areté anthropéia]): this mean good traits in man as such, effectiveness and ability in human living. It consisted in performing the proper action (function—ἴδιον ἔργον [idion ergon]): a man performs it in the best and most perfect way possible. Philosophy focussed on the best possible life that man could achieve. The philosophers showed from the start that one cannot be effective and skillful in life without regard for the requirements of justice, fortitude, and prudence, which were traditionally regarded as components of areté.

The role of areté in cognition. A human life is a rational life. Rationality is achieved primarily in the domain of theoretical cognition. It consists in knowledge for the sake of knowledge, the disinterested contemplation of reality, understanding and explaining reality by showing the ultimate reasons for its existence and configuration. The three other domains depend on theoretical knowledge: the practical, which is needed to act rightly and effectively; the poietic, connected with the production of things; and the religious or mystical domain associated with religion which for the ancients was very close to theory.

For Plato and Aristotle the operation of contemplative theoretical (scientific) cognition was the most perfect human operation. It was divine (a god does not need to act or produce anything: he possesses every perfection and his life consists in contemplation), and so they saw in this the essence of man's happiness. Only in this way can man approach the state of happiness that is the permanent possession of the gods. "That which is best and most pleasant for each creature is that which is proper to the nature of each; accordingly the life of the intellect is the best and the pleasantest life for man, inasmuch as the intellect more than anything else is man; therefore this life will be the happiest." (*E. nic.*, 1178 a 5).

Aristotle taught, however, that a life of uninterrupted theory would be a life according to the measure of what is divine in us, but our nature is composite, and to live only in a divine way exceeds man's powers. Man must live according to another areté—κατα τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν [kata ten allen areten] (*ibid.*, 1178 a 8)— which is called ethical areté. It is achieved in practical living and in action. It is the second in the hierarchy and is subordinate to the first, the theoretical, which is the end of all practical endeavors (*Polit.*, 1338 a 4). Hence in both philosophers we find an esteem for practical life, and they are concerned in particular with matters of education and politics. These matters decide the entire course of a man's life and are the daily context of his life. The cognitive moment, however, is constantly present in life—here, practical life—but the character of cognition is different: according to Aristotle, man in his action uses practical cognition which demands a particular skill, just as scientific cognition, for example, is a refinement of one's natural ability to investigate and study things.

The role of areté in action. The road to full areté begins very early for man, even before birth (with the mother living in the right way—*ibid.*, 1335 b 12), and it runs its course in two contexts: education and social structures. Education has a social structure, and its organization becomes the basic task of the polis (*ibid.*, 1337 a 5). This becomes particularly clear upon the background of Platonic political conceptions where the state should be—contrary to what it became in the case of Socrates—a space that enables man to lead a true life as a lover of wisdom, a true philosopher. The evil system of government that led to the condemnation and death of Socrates, “the best of men”, should be avoided, and in its place there should be system that fosters the education, development, and life of the spirit, because in his essence man is a spirit who lives in the world. Only a true philosopher, one who knows man’s final destiny, can plan the proper order for life in the πολις. The political system and legislation should serve victory over matter, and the rational organization of man’s life according to the measure of his true essence. People should be subjected to education—“an ascending road” that leads them from a cavern of fallacious opinions and gloom toward the light of true knowledge. By sharing in rationally organized political life people can now live rationally even if they are not yet true philosophers.

Plato saw in man three component spirits or souls: a rational soul (this soul is strongest in the philosopher-rulers); an irascible soul (guardians and soldiers); and a concupiscible soul (craftsmen and producers). Particular human types and characters mark the course of events and the shape of political systems in real political states. The ideal is a man who is in harmony within himself. He is characterized by unity in his actions and order among the three major factors in the soul, and other factors as they occur. The beauty of internal order shows itself in his conduct. In Plato, human areté is a reflection of τάξις [*taxis*]—the order that reigns in the universe or cosmos. The cosmos is the harmonious and well-proportioned composition of the forces and elements within it and is thereby beautiful. It is constructed according to the model of the eternal ideas (*Tim*, 29 a). As the philosopher-statesman recognizes it and reflects it in his action, it should then serve as a model in a sensible order πολις, and finally also in the human soul. A man who is in harmony within himself becomes not only a good citizen and a friend of others, but a favorite of the gods, and by justice he becomes truly pious and religious (*Euthyphro* 11 e).

Aristotle remarked that the πολις is a necessary moment in human existence, and the final stage in the perfection of human existence. Man is a being with a variety of potentialities and as such he needs realization in all the aspects of his being. The good is that whereby his potentialities are actualized or realized. Like any other being, man is assigned to many goods that are necessary for life and which perfect his life in various ways. Happiness—εὐδαιμονία—will consist in attaining the highest of these goods. Man’s chief task is to recognize rightly his own nature and the goods that complete it. Then he must lead his life in such a way as to achieve the highest good which is the end of his entire life. He does this by choosing the right means and particular actions ordered to this end.

To realize the highest rational human capabilities, in accordance with the nature of the divine element in us, a man needs various goods as necessary means. As a being with unrealized potentialities who is thus limited by various needs, man does not possess these goods of himself. He needs other people as the natural and necessary context of life, the people who first gave him life (the family), who then maintain and form him to become capable of living on his own. Because the family, and even the village as a local community of families, are insufficient to meet all needs, people need a community of a higher order, the polis, which has at its disposal all the means that all its members need to lead a good life, i.e., a happy

life. This man appears as a being who is social by nature (‘ο ἄνθρωπος φυσικῶς πολιτικὸν ζῷον [ho anthropos physei politikon zoon], *Polit.*, 1253 a 2), a being who for his full development (i.e., for the realization of his potentialities) needs the permanent presence of others. This is not merely any kind of presence but its highest form—friendship. Perfect friendship is mutual good-will where each party desires the good of the other and they help each other to be resolute in a good and beautiful life. It consists in a life in accordance with areté.

The definition of areté. The character of each activity of man results from his structure as a being. This structure is potential and so it needs to be refined or perfected if his action is to be the best and in accordance with areté. Only then does his action enable him to achieve all goods. Good action is the result of the possession of a right disposition (ἕξις [hexis]—“state, acquisition”, that which a man acquires for himself). The natural end of all acquired skills is to perform the right actions which by these skills or habits are performed as well as possible. Aristotle writes that areté may exist as a ἕξις—a possessed stable disposition, or ἐνεργεῖα [energeia]—an act or action (*E. nic.*, 1098 b 31).

A stable disposition (ἕξις) is the foundation for defining areté and indicates a kind singled out from among “the three that exist in the soul” beside passion (πάθη [pathe]) and abilities (δυνάμεις [dynameis]). Areté is one of the permanent dispositions which are that whereby “we are well or ill disposed in respect of the emotions; for instance, we have a bad disposition in regard to anger if we are disposed to get angry too violently, or not violently enough, a good disposition if we habitually feel a moderate amount of anger; and similarly in respect of other emotions.” (ibid., 1105 b 25).

The understanding of ἕξις is fundamental and is based on a discussion in the *Categories*: “[...] there is another sense of ‘having’ which means a disposition, in virtue of which the thing which is disposed is disposed well or badly, and either independently or in relation to something else. E.g., health is a state, since it is a disposition of the kind described. Further, any part of such a disposition is called a state; and hence the areté of the parts is a kind of state.” (*Met.*, 1022 b 10–12).

“Disposition” itself (διθεσις) “means arrangement of that which has parts, either in space or in potentiality or in form. It must be a kind of position, as indeed is clear from the word, ‘dispositio’” (ibid., 1022 b 1–2). Habits and dispositions as types of qualities differ in that “the former (habits) are unlike the latter in being more lasting and stable [...] Dispositions, however, are qualities easy to move or to change, such as heat, cold, disease, health, and so on” (*Cat.*, 8 b 27).

We may therefore think of a disposition that is the basis of areté as a kind of “internal disposition of man” (a Platonic ταξις). It is such that it makes it possible for one to perform one’s proper function in the best way thanks to a fitting structure of “elements”, thanks to the disposition of the powers of spirit and psyche: “All areté has a twofold effect on the thing to which it belongs: it not only renders the thing itself good, but it also causes it to perform its function well. [...] excellence or virtue in a man will be the disposition which renders him a good man and also which will cause him to perform his function well.” (*E. nic.*, 1106 a 15).

Areté enables a man to relate properly to the passions he undergoes and to act properly: “Again, if the virtues have to do with actions and feelings, and every feeling and every action is attended with pleasure or pain, this too shows that virtue has to do with pleasure

and pain.” (ibid., 1104 b 14). This would be the basis for acting rightly, as pleasure often becomes a reason for evil deeds, and pain may be a reason for abstaining from beautiful deeds, because “as Plato points out, it is important that one should be trained from childhood to like and dislike the proper things” (ibid.).

Areté in realization. A man’s conscious efforts play an essential role in his achievement of areté. By nature we are capable of acquiring permanent dispositions and developing them in ourselves by habituation. These dispositions are not innate. We only possess predispositions to acquire them because natural operations are not subject to change by habituation, “we acquire the virtues by first having actually practiced them, just as we do the arts” (ibid. 1003 a 31).

It is especially important that “the actions from or through which any virtue is produced are the same as those through which it also is destroyed”. Therefore, “we must control the character of our activities, since on the quality of these depends the quality of our dispositions” (ibid., 1003 b 23). It is necessary to practise all the virtues: “no one can have the remotest chance of becoming good without doing good actions” (ibid., 1105 b 11).

Of course, a person may also acquire the wrong dispositions called vices. These are permanent dispositions to evil actions that arise when someone commits evil acts. We have no direct influence on the appearance and formation of dispositions within us. We cannot call them forth or liquidate them at will, but we have influence on our own actions.

Here we may suspect a vicious circle in reasoning. If we acquire dispositions to act well, we may ask where the “first” action comes from, i.e., where the process begins. Ultimately, the beginning (in the genetic order) of all actions is imitation, for according to Aristotle man has an innate ability to imitate (*Poet.*, 1148 b 5–10). He further mentions: (1) the principle of the mean between extremes that is generally applied in medicine; and (2) the ability of right estimation (ὀρθος λόγος [orthos logos]) with respect to ὀρθή δοξα [orthē doxa] mentioned in *Men.*, 98 b). The difference between them is that δοξα indicates the subjective character of the criterion, while λόγος indicates the objective character of the criterion. He also mentions (3) the fact that pleasure or pain accompany stable dispositions during the performance of their respective actions (*E. Nic.*, 1104 b 3). These inform us of the character of the one who is acting. To keep balance, Aristotle presents the rule that we should act against the direction that we are inclined by the passion that accompanies action and situations.

If we keep in mind the above three rules, we can change and shape our dispositions and states. The rule of the mean is the basic rule, and Aristotle distinguishes between the mean with respect to the object, and the mean for us. The first mean is the same for all and may be precisely defined and calculated. The “mean for us” is described as that which is neither “too much or too little”. Here he recalls the medical principle of proper nutrition, that one amount of food is suitable for an athlete and another for a beginner in gymnastics. Both excess and shortfall are harmful. In our quest for the mean we should stay away from what is most opposed to the mean because of the two extremes one will be more harmful than the other. Concrete cases are the objects of sensation (αἴσθησις [aisthesis]—also “perception” or “intuition”). Aristotle based his classification of the virtues on the theory of the mean. He presented the virtues in the context of the corresponding vices that arise as a result of excess or shortcoming, e.g., in the area of fear and hope, on the one hand cowardice is wrong, and on the other hand recklessness and bravado are wrong. What we desire is courage as an effect of areté that empowers action in this field—fortitude. Every action and area of life has



its own specific kind of areté.

Areté in the function of refining practical knowledge. The final kind of areté was defined by Aristotle as 'εξις προαιρετική [hexis proairetiké]—a state (a permanent disposition) in making choices or decisions in which we preserve the mean for us. The mean is defined by the λογος as a prudent man would define it: the mean between two extremes—between too much and too little in action and in passions. An exception would be those actions which do not admit a middle measure and are evil in themselves: jealousy, murder, and adultery. Analogously goods such as the love of God, parents, or country in themselves do not admit a mean of action.

Prudence, the trait of prudent people, is a disposition, associated with true judgment, to act correctly and effectively in that which is good and beneficial for them. Prudence primarily concerns the core of practical cognition—deliberation which serves the choice of means leading to an end. It does not concern individual facts, since we are informed of these by perception ('αισθησιμασφ:) “We deliberate about things that are in our control and are attainable by action”. Deliberation serves the choice (προαιρεσις) of certain things and the rejection of other things (*E. Nic.*, 1112 a 16).

One consequence of this definition of areté is that it is impossible without prudence. Prudence unites the dianoetic virtues, those associated with cognition and thought, with the ethical virtues associated with action. Aristotle also stated that there was a converse dependence: there is no prudence without areté. The idea that happiness can only become fully real in the presence of the transcendent good, God, was revolutionary compared to the ancient conception of happiness. St. Thomas Aquinas created a great synthesis of the ancient conception of areté and Christian doctrine. He incorporated into his system the inheritance of great ancient conceptions (Aristotelian, Stoic, and neo-Platonic) and the content of Christian revelation.

W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, I–II, B 1934, 1959<sup>4</sup> (*Paideia*, I–II, Wwa 1962); W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers: from Thales to Aristotle*, Lo 1950 (*Filozofowie greccy od Tales do Arystoteles*) [Greek philosophers from Thales to Aristotle], Kr 1996); H. J. Krämer, *Arete bei Platon und Aristoteles*, Hei 1959; J. Kalinowski, *Teoria poznania praktycznego* [Theory of practical cognition], Lb 1960; E. Fink, *Metaphysik der Erziehung im Weltverständnis von Plato und Aristoteles*, F 1970; A. W. H. Adkins, *Moral Values and Political Behavior in Ancient Greece*, Lo 1972; A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Lo 1981, 1985<sup>2</sup> (*Dziedzictwo cnoty* [Heritage of virtue], Wwa 1996); D. S. Hutchinson, *The Virtues of Aristotle*, Lo 1986; R. Spaemann, *Glück und Wohlwollen*, St 1987 (*Szczęście a życzliwość* [Happiness and benevolence], Lb 1997); F. Wehrli, *Ethik und Medizin*, in: *Schriften zur Aristotelischen Ethik*, Hi 1988; K. Albert, *O platońskim rozumieniu filozofii* [On the Platonic understanding of philosophy], Wwa 1991; Krapiec Dz. [Works] XV; W. Prior, *Virtue and Knowledge*; Plato, *Biesiada* [Banquet], Kr 1993; Arystoteles [Aristotle], *Dziela wszystkie* [Complete works], i–V, VII, Wwa 1996–; Plato, *Dialogi* [Dialogues.], Kęty 1999.

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