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Section IV. 12. Aristotle's metaphysics

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Title of paper: "On the Omniscience of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover: A Note on *Metaphysics* Λ 4, 1070 b 34-35"

Abstract

This paper focuses on the final passage of *Metaphysics* Λ 4, which contains the first explicit mention of the unmoved mover in book Λ . The sentence is crucial for the problem of what, if anything, the Aristotelian god knows about the world. The author starts with a general enumeration of the main interpretations of the problem of the omniscience of god, which either admit a divine activity upon the world (Alexander of Aphrodisias, Thomas Aquinas), or that, by thinking himself, god thinks everything (Thomas Aquinas) or that, in knowing himself, he knows beings (Averroës), or, finally, state that god knows only himself (Schwegler, Bonitz, Zeller, Ross and many others). In this section the importance of *Metaphysics* Λ 9 has been stressed, which constitutes the only complete text on the topic which has come down to us, and where Aristotle, as it is well known, denies that god has knowledge of the world. Λ 9 is, therefore, an essential and necessary reference for any other passage which contains a mention of the matter in question. In the following section, the paper analyzes the context in which the final passage of Λ 4 is inserted. The attempt is to show that the reference to the unmoved movers in Λ 4 is not introduced abruptly, but rather that it fits perfectly in the discussion of the chapter. The third section contains the analysis of the passage. In particular, the suggestion proposed by R. George is considered, who, after having recalled F. Brentano's position, asserts that the sentence would imply that the first of all things contains within itself the formal principle of what it brings forth, and that, since the first mover moves all things, it actually *is* all things. This paper aims to show that the first cause of all things, whose mention follows the enumeration of the four causes – matter, form and privation as

immanent elements, and the moving cause of natural substance as external principle –, is not within the coincidence of formal and moving cause. Therefore the case of the proximate moving cause (for example the builder), which knows its effect (for example the form of the house), appears as different from the case of the first remote moving cause which moves all things, which does not seem to have knowledge of the world. This paper suggests that the coincidence between the formal and the moving cause may only work for natural substances and, therefore, for the moving cause in the weaker sense, while it does not apply to the remote moving cause. In this perspective the fact that the Aristotelian god cannot be a formal cause plays a fundamental role, being an external and separated principle. Consequently, the role of the mention of the unmoved mover in the final passage of Λ 4 does not appear as a reference which is completely detached from the rest of the text, but it seems to perfectly fit in it and indeed appears to play a central role in the entire chapter.

Key-words: unmoved mover; moving cause; formal cause; thinking of thinking; knowledge; world.

Text of the paper

1. Introduction

As is well known, the problem of Aristotle's first unmoved mover as thinking of thinking is mainly dealt with in the ninth chapter of *Metaphysics* Λ . The text takes a precise position in order to answer the question of what, if anything, Aristotle's prime mover knows about the world: if god only thinks himself, any other object of thought appears excluded from him. Since *Metaph.* Λ 9 contains the most complete exposition of the problem, it should be considered as the base of Aristotle's doctrine in question, and as the text with which scholars who deal with the issue should commit themselves¹. The clear and proven description of the unmoved mover as thinking of thinking stated there, prevents us from attributing any knowledge other than himself to the Aristotelian god. It is,

¹ I dealt with Aristotle's analysis of the unmoved mover as thinking of thinking in *Metaphysics* Λ 9 in R. Salis, "Aristotele, *Metafisica* Λ 9: il motore immobile come pensiero di pensiero", in G. Piaia e G. Zago, (a cura), *Pensiero e formazione. Studi in onore di Giuseppe Micheli*, Cleup, Padova, 2016, 143-156.

however, equally known that in other works of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* we can find a large number of passages from which it is possible to draw elements in favour of the opposite thesis, according to which Aristotle admits a relation between god and world. For example, in *Metaph. A 2* Aristotle defines wisdom as science that investigates the first principles and causes², and affirms that such a science either god alone can have, or god above all others³. The assignment of the knowledge of the causes of existing things to god makes the passage inconsistent with *Metaph. A 9*, unless, as with Ross, we maintain that Aristotle, in *Metaph. A 2* «is speaking of God⁴ as commonly conceived»⁵. Perhaps we can put forward the same explanation about the passage in *Eth. Nic. X 9*, where Aristotle reports that gods are thought to have care for human affairs⁶, and about the assertion in *Eth. Eud. VIII 2*, according to which the lucky seems to succeed owing to god⁷. At any rate, these, and a large number of other passages, impose an accurate analysis of the context in which they are inserted, and the risk of coming to a total incompatibility with the main Aristotelian exposition of the doctrine of the unmoved mover as thinking of thinking exposed in *Metaph. A 9* arises.

Among one of the most difficult passages that requires particular attention, let us consider the final passage of *Metaph. A 4*, where Aristotle states that, besides the causes just considered, as we will see, there is something further, i.e. that which, as the first of all things, moves all things. The sentence was taken into account by the commentary tradition in order to contribute towards giving a possible answer to the problem of what Aristotle's god knows about the world⁸. Alexander of Aphrodisias, the Exegete κατ' ἐξοχήν, dealing in *Quaest. 2.3* with θεία δύναμις, concedes that the divine power exerts a providential influence on the causes of earthly matters and especially on

² Cf. Aristot. *Metaph. A 2*, 982 b 9-10.

³ Cf. Aristot. *Metaph. A 3*, 983 a 9-10.

⁴ Cf. *infra*, n. 17.

⁵ Cf. W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics. A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. II, Reprint Sandpiper Books, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, 123.

⁶ Cf. Aristot. *Eth. Nic. X 9*, 1179 a 24-25.

⁷ Cf. Aristot. *Eth. Eud. VIII 2*, 1248 b 4.

⁸ For a history of the problem of the activity of Aristotelian god see K. Elser, *Lehre des Aristoteles über das Wirken Gottes*, Ascendorff, Münster i. W., 1893, 19-31.

the origin of psychicality⁹. Paul Moraux supposed that the *Quaestio* was part of Alexander's response to Atticus' charges that Aristotle, despite having recognized nature as a principle, did not identify it with the world-soul, as Plato did, and that he destroyed the unity of the universe and denied providence by adopting different principles for the heavens and the sublunary world¹⁰. But what Alexander says in our *Quaestio* goes beyond the position he assumed in his commentaries on Aristotle's works. In particular, in his commentary on *Metaphysics* he just follows Aristotle in *De Generatione et Corruptione* II.10, saying that nature is called a divine art not in the sense that god is employing this art, but because, being a power from god, it is capable of preserving the right order of movement, because it is from the gods¹¹.

Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, maintained that Aristotle's god, by thinking himself, thinks everything¹², and held that Aristotle conceived of god as exercising a providential action upon the world, also leading the Aristotelian doctrine of causality back to the divine providence¹³. By contrast, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Λ, Averroës asserts that god's knowledge is different from ours and therefore his knowledge can neither be described as universal, nor as particular, but, at the same time, he doesn't want to claim that god is ignorant of things of the world. Therefore, Averroës' solution is to say that, by knowing himself, god knows

⁹ Cf. Alexandri Aphrodisiensis *praeter Commentaria Scripta Minora: Quaestiones*, edidit I. Bruns, Reimer, Berolini, 1892 (CAG 2 Suppl.), 47. 33-50, 27 (cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Quaestiones 1.1-2.15*, transl. by R. W. Sharples, Duckworth, London, 1992, *ad loc.*). Cf. also Alexandri Aphrodisiensis *in Aristotelis Meteorologicorum libros Commentaria*, edidit M. Hayduck, Reimer, Berolini, 1899 (CAG 3.2), 7. 9-14. See P. Donini, "Θεία δύναμις in Alessandro di Afrodizia", in M. Bonazzi, (ed), *Commentary and Tradition. Aristotelianism, Platonism, and Post-Hellenistic Philosophy*, De Gruyter, Berlin - New York, 2011, 125-138.

¹⁰ Cf. P. Moraux, "Alexander von Aphrodisias *Quaest.* 2.3", *Hermes*, 95 (1967), 159-169; *id.*, *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen von Andronikos bis Alexander von Aphrodisias*, Bd. II: *Der Aristotelismus im I. und II. Jh. n. Chr.*, De Gruyter, Berlin - New York, 1984, 45-47. Cf. Atticus, fr. 8.3, 66, 17-19; 8.4, 67, 25-26 des Places.

¹¹ Cf. Alexandri Aphrodisiensis *in Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, edidit M. Hayduck, Reimer, Berolini, 1891 (CAG 1), 104. 7-10.

¹² Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, editio iam M. R. Cathala et R. M. Spiazzi, Marietti, Taurini - Romae, 1964, L. XII, l. XI, n° 2614: *Nec tamen sequitur quod omnia alia a se sint ei ignota; nam intelligendo se, intelligit omnia alia.*

¹³ Cf. Thom. *in Metaph.*, L. VI, l. III, n° 1222.

beings through the existence which is the cause of their existence¹⁴. Finally, the most common view still denies that the Aristotelian god knows something other than himself. Since Aristotle's god is thinking of thinking, he only knows himself and nothing of the world. This point of view has been supported, for example, by Schwegler, Bonitz, Zeller, Ross, Cherniss, Oehler and many others.

The Aristotelian passage we are going to examine has recently been taken into account by Rolf George¹⁵, who has paid attention to a reading of the last sentence of *Metaph.* Λ 4, suggested by Franz Brentano in his *Psychologie des Aristoteles*¹⁶. The analysis of our passage leads George to conclude that, according to Aristotle, in god¹⁷ moving and formal cause coincide so that not only does Aristotle's god know the world, but, in that he knows all things, he is all things. In the final passage of *Metaph.* Λ 4, George finds an analogous of the section in *Metaph.* A 2, where Aristotle, saying that «knowing all things must belong to him who has universal knowledge in the highest degree», and that «such a science either god alone can have, or god above all others»¹⁸, would state that god *is* all things¹⁹.

2. The Context

After having started his research on the principles of substance, announced in ch. 1 as the aim of the book, showing that the causes and the principles are three – form, matter and privation – (ch. 2), then adding the moving cause and showing that neither the proximate matter nor the form comes to be (ch. 3), Aristotle establishes that the causes and principles are, in a sense,

¹⁴ Cf. Averroès, *Grand commentaire de la Métaphysique d'Aristote (Tafsir ma ba'd at-tabi'at). Livre Lambda traduit de l'arabe et annoté*, texte arabe inedit établi par M. Bouyges, vol. III: *Livres Ya' et Lam et index alphabetiques des trois volumes*, Imprimerie catholique Paris, Beirouth, 1948, 1707-1708 (transl. C. Genequand, in *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics. A Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rush's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lām*, Brill, Leiden, 1986, *ad loc.*). See T.-A. Druart, "Averroes on God's Knowledge of Being Qua Being", *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes*, 4 (1993), 39-57.

¹⁵ Cf. R. George, "An Argument for Divine Omniscience in Aristotle", *Apeiron*, 22 (1989), 61-74.

¹⁶ F. Brentano, *Die Psychologie des Aristoteles insbesondere seine Lehre vom ΝΟΥΣ ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΟΣ*, Kirchheim, Mainz, 1867.

¹⁷ Unlike George and many others scholars, who capitalize 'God', I prefer to translate the greek term θεός with the small letter, to avoid confusion between Aristotle's god and other conception of the divine, first of all the Christian God.

¹⁸ Cf. Aristot. *Metaph.* A 2, 982 a 22-983 a 9.

¹⁹ Cf. George, "An Argument for Divine Omniscience in Aristotle", 63-64.

different for the different things, but that, in another sense, if we speak universally and analogically, they are the same for all things (ch. 4).

Michel Crubellier emphasizes that the question of the identity or diversity of the first principles is crucial for the very possibility of a first philosophy, and emphasizes the similarity with the aporiai of *Metaphysics B*. The lack of a reference in $\Lambda 4$ to the aporiai of *B* is explained by Crubellier with the reminder of the fact that the discussions in *B* usually presuppose that there is in fact an identity of principles, so that the question in $\Lambda 4$ appears more basic. According to Crubellier, in $\Lambda 4$ Aristotle would be objecting to the Platonic view that there can be one science able to grasp the principles of all existing things and all possible knowledge, for this kind of solution would clash with Aristotle's thesis of the plurality of being²⁰. These observations are very important to verify the role of the final passage in $\Lambda 4$ and its meaning in the wider context of the object of the divine thought. The different form of identity of principles can appear pointless in comparison with the stronger form of identity given by the first mover²¹. Therefore, seeing which kind of relation subsists between the different kinds of identity of principles, in particular those analyzed in $\Lambda 4$, may help us answer our question. Let us now examine the text.

The thesis that causes and principles are individually different but analogically the same, will be proved through a dialectical inquiry, and is placed, as usual, at the beginning of the chapter. The thesis is firstly shown referring to the elements, i.e. referring to the immanent principles of things. Aristotle rewrites the sentence in a more restricted way and asserts that one might raise the question whether the principles and elements are different or the same for substances and for relatives²², and in a similar way in the case of each of the other categories. The thesis is refuted by two arguments. (1) The first one says that, if the elements were the same for all things, then from the same elements will proceed relatives and substances. But, since the element is prior to the

²⁰ Cf. M. Crubellier, "Metaphysics $\Lambda 4$ ", in M. Frede and D. Charles, (eds), *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda. Symposium Aristotelicum*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2000, 137-160, exp. 138.

²¹ Cf. Crubellier, "Metaphysics $\Lambda 4$ ", 141.

²² I think we should agree with Crubellier, who asserts that the choice of pair 'substance + relative' may be explained by the fact that $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \tau\iota$ is the remotest category from substance. See Crubellier, "Metaphysics $\Lambda 4$ ", 145 n. 14.

thing of which it is an element, the common element should be prior to the categories. Nevertheless, the substance and the other categories are the supreme genres of the being, thus nothing can exist prior to them. The conclusion is therefore that the common element were one of the categories but, says Aristotle, «substance is not an element of relatives, nor is any of these an element of substance»²³. (2) Furthermore, all things cannot have the same elements for none of the elements can be the same as the thing which is composed of the elements. If so, indeed, none of the elements would be either a substance or a relative, but it must be one or other of the categories. (2_a) Aristotle refers briefly to intelligibles, e.g. 'one' and 'being': none of them can be the common element for they are predicable of each of the compounds as well, and the elements cannot be identical with the compound of which they are elements²⁴. This incidental reference to intelligibles seems to mean that, for them, what has been described for the sensible objects applies, so that they incur in the same refutation: if 'one' and 'being' can be predicated of any object, they cannot be the elements of things. This point may confirm the Aristotelian polemic against the Platonic doctrine of the principle according to which the first principles are 'elements', and may advise us that Aristotle's aim is not to stand to any physical doctrine²⁵. His purpose in ch. 4 appears to anticipate, as in a compendium, the result of the research on the substance, announced in ch. 1 as the aim of the whole book and which finds its ultimate step in the brief reference to the first mover in the final passage, which is also his first explicit mention in book Λ.

Aristotle goes on to show that the elements are analogically the same through three examples which refer to the genesis of sensible, material objects (τῶν αἰσθητῶν σωμάτων)²⁶. Nevertheless, he considers items which do not immediately seem to refer to sensible substances: in the case of the elements of perceptible bodies, we can distinguish, as form, the hot, and in another sense, as privation, the cold; and, as matter, that which in virtue of itself, and not of a

²³ Cf. Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 a 33-b 4.

²⁴ Cf. Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 b 4-10.

²⁵ Cf. Crubellier, "*Metaphysics* Λ 4", 147-148.

²⁶ Cf. Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 b 11.

concomitant²⁷, is potentially hot and cold. But in the next sentence Aristotle points out that both these, the principles (i.e. matter, form and privation) and the things which are composed of these (prime matter, a certain form, e.g. heat, the privation of the form, e.g. cold)²⁸, and of which these are the principles, are substances. Aristotle's clarification appears less applicable to the privation, but it is possible to explain the references to 'hot' and 'cold' as a dialectical hypothesis²⁹. Be that as it may, the example does not constitute a problem for the understanding of the passage. Aristotle gives the example of the unity which is produced out of the hot and cold, e.g. flesh or bone, because the product must be different from the element. Therefore, the principles and the elements of different things are analogically the same; i.e. one might say that there are three principles – the form, the privation and the matter –, but they are different in the different things. Two other examples follow: Aristotle reports that, in colour, white is form, black is privation and surface is matter, and that in the case of day and night, light is form, darkness is privation and air is matter³⁰.

After having dealt with the immanent elements, Aristotle adds the external (ἐκτός) principle, i.e. the moving cause. The term 'element', indeed, here does not have the usual meaning of «that into which a thing is divided and which is present in it as matter»³¹, stated in *Metaphysics* Z 17, but it is equivalent to the 'inner' principles, as opposed to the external one, i.e. the moving cause which acts from outside³². As Crubellier notes, this special use of στοιχείον cannot be found in any other part of the Aristotelian *Corpus*. He stresses that the use of the term is an *ad hoc* conceptual device, by which Aristotle would reshape Plato's doctrines in order to refute them with more efficacy³³, but we can also recognize another function in Aristotle's calling 'element' form, matter

²⁷ Cf. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 360.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

²⁹ Cf. Crubellier, "*Metaphysics* Λ 4", 150.

³⁰ Cf. Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 b 10-21.

³¹ Aristot. *Metaph.* Z 17, 1041 b 31-32 (transl. W. D. Ross, in J. Barnes, (ed), *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol. II, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1985, *ad loc.*).

³² Cf. Crubellier, "*Metaphysics* Λ 4", 144.

³³ Cf. *ibid.*

and privation. The necessity of the introduction of a fourth principle is indeed also due to the insufficiency of the immanent principle to explain the reality. The necessity to introduce an external cause to explain the process of coming-to-be determines the introduction of the distinction between ‘principle’ (ἀρχή) and ‘element’ (στοιχείον). Both are causes, i.e. both are required for the explanation of coming-to-be, but the moving cause, as it is something external, is a principle too, but not an element³⁴.

The next step in Aristotle’s argumentation consists of the application of the doctrine of the analogy of causes and principles, and their individual differences, to the external principle. The result is that analogically there are three elements – matter, form and privation – and four causes and principles, as the moving cause is a cause and a principle, but not an element, while the three elements are different in the different things and the primary (πρῶτον) moving cause is different for different things. Aristotle explains the point saying that regarding health, disease and body, the moving cause is the medical art, and if we take form, disorder of a particular kind and bricks, the moving cause is the building art³⁵. Aristotle states that, in the chain of moving causes which produce an event, there must be a beginning, i.e. a ‘first moving cause’ from which the process of moving causality starts and which conveys a form, as we are going to see. In the final passage Aristotle mentions the second kind of first mover, i.e. the first unmoved mover. Nevertheless, as we will see later, the reference to the primary moving cause in 1070 b 27 does not include the first moving cause which moves all things, whose existence has yet to be proved³⁶.

3. *The Text*

The introduction of the external cause, due, as we have detailed above, to the insufficiency of the internal principles in order to explain the natural world, also suggests the idea that, for there is only one principle which is not an element, i.e. the moving cause, there may be some principle

³⁴ Cf. Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 b 22-25.

³⁵ Cf. Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 b 25-29.

³⁶ On this point I disagree with Crubellier, “*Metaphysics* Λ 4”, 153, who thinks that the passage considers both kinds of first mover.

common to all things, which cannot be an element. And since the unique cause with this feature is the first unmoved mover, the correct description of the first principle has to be ‘cause’ and not ‘element’³⁷. As we have just seen above regarding Aristotle’s reference to intelligibles³⁸, the distinction of different kinds of principles works to clarify Aristotle’s aim in Λ 4, i.e. to show, in contrast to Plato, that there is a principle, common to all things, which is not an element but a cause. Since the moving cause, being an external principle, is free from the limitations imposed by the theory of the equivocity of being, the principles conceived as elements, being a material constituent part or a universal term in the notion of the object, cannot be common to all things. One and the same moving cause, indeed, may produce several effects in a series of objects, and, similarly, a moving cause could be the cause of all things, granting the unity of the whole world³⁹. We have to agree with Crubellier, when he says that, for this reason, Aristotle has to show that the moving cause is a principle⁴⁰. And the same necessity to find a starting point in the series of the causes appears to justify the mention of the primary moving cause, which is the beginning of the process of causality. But, for Aristotle, things are different, and the peculiarity of everything is given precisely by its form, which indeed is ‘what makes a thing what it actually is’. This is the crucial point for my argument: if what happens in the case of natural things also happens in the case of the moving cause which ‘as first of all things, moves all things’, this may give us a very strong argument in favour of the omniscience of the Aristotelian unmoved movers. But let us verify this suggestion by analyzing our text. The passage which immediately precedes the final sentence of Λ 4 is the following:

ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ κινουῦν ἐν μὲν τοῖς φυσικοῖς ἀνθρώπῳ ἄνθρωπος, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἀπὸ διανοίας τὸ εἶδος ἢ τὸ ἐναντίον, τρόπον τινὰ τρία αἴτια ἂν εἴη, ὡδὶ δὲ τέτταρα. ὑγεία γάρ πως ἢ ἰατρική, καὶ οἰκίας εἶδος ἢ οἰκοδομική, καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπον γεννᾷ.

³⁷ Cf. Crubellier, “*Metaphysics* Λ 4”, 142.

³⁸ Cf. Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 b 7-10.

³⁹ Cf. Crubellier, “*Metaphysics* Λ 4”, 152-153.

⁴⁰ Cf. Crubellier, “*Metaphysics* Λ 4”, 153.

And since the moving cause in the case of natural things is, for man, for instance, man, and in the products of thought it is the form or its contrary, there are in a sense three causes, while in a sense there are four. For the medical art is in some sense health, and the building art is the form of the house, and man begets man⁴¹.

The sentence still concerns the moving cause of natural substances. Aristotle states that there is a sense in which the moving cause coincides with the form. As Aristotle has shown in Λ 3, just as the moving cause is, for example, man for natural substances, so is the moving cause the form, or its opposite, for products of thought⁴². Therefore, only since the moving cause is in some sense the form, in a sense there are three causes, but since the causes remains different, the causes are four. So, if we take the case of health and of the form of the house cited above⁴³, in some sense the medical art is health, and the building art is the form of the house. Crubellier is absolutely right in recalling *Phys.* II 7, where Aristotle, in a similar way, states that the four causes may be reduced to two, the form often being identical with the end, and the moving cause specifically identical with the mover, since they have the same form⁴⁴. Nevertheless, Aristotle's aim here does not seem to show that one may come to ignore the mover, as Crubellier thinks⁴⁵, but the sentence may imply that the moving cause, e.g. the medical art, being specifically identical with the form, i.e. with 'what makes a thing what it actually is', also knows the object which it produces. Aristotle seems therefore to point out that, concerning natural substances, their external cause is, in a sense, the same as their form, since the two causes are specifically identical, having the same form. But from this it follows that between moving cause and form there is also a relation of knowledge, in the sense that the moving cause, *in qua* form of its product, also knows it. This is the case of the moving cause of natural substances: the medical art belongs to the doctor who knows health, just as the building art belongs to the builder who knows the form of the house. Aristotle's

⁴¹ Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 b 30-34. (transl. Ross, with some few changes).

⁴² Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 3, 1070 a 4-9.

⁴³ Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 b 28-29.

⁴⁴ Cf. Aristot. *Phys.* II 7, 198 a 22-35. Cf. Crubellier, "*Metaphysics* Λ 4", 156.

⁴⁵ Cf. Crubellier, "*Metaphysics* Λ 4", 156.

discussion would therefore mean that the specific identity between moving cause and form implies that the moving cause has knowledge of the form of its product.

Actually, a similar interpretation is justified by *Phys.* II 7. The passage quoted by Crubellier states, indeed, that the form, the mover and the end often coincide, for the essence and the end are one, and the primary source of motion is the same as these in species. However, Aristotle says that this does not happen ‘always’, but ‘often’, and the exception is actually given by the things which are not the kind of things that move by being moved. Things that are not of this kind are no longer inside the province of physics, since they produce movement without being moved themselves, and so these belongs to a different branch of study⁴⁶.

In this perspective the mention of the first cause which moves all things does not appear to be introduced abruptly. Rather the first introduction of the unmoved mover in book Λ appears to refer to the *remote* moving cause. The passage (with Bonitz’s conjecture, τὸ ὡς for ὡς τό) is the following:

ἔτι παρὰ ταῦτα τὸ ὡς πρῶτον πάντων κινεῖν πάντα.

Further, besides these there is that which as first of all things moves all things⁴⁷.

Elders suggests that Aristotle seems to intimate that the causality of the first mover of all things is of a different class, and that it appears to introduce the theme of the next chapter⁴⁸, but we have to agree with George in noting that the first mover is not the theme of Λ 5⁴⁹. According to P. Aubenque, then, the final passage would be a later addition⁵⁰. A continuation of the list of the causes and a disanalogy with the other cases was by contrast admitted by Alexander of Aphrodisias, whose analysis we can read in Averroës. Alexander maintains that the last sentence

⁴⁶ Cf. Aristot. *Phys.* II 7, 198 a 24-31.

⁴⁷ Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 4, 1070 b 34-35.

⁴⁸ Cf. L. Elders, *Aristotle’s Theology. A Commentary on Book Λ of the Metaphysics*, Van Gorcum, Assen, 1972, 121-122.

⁴⁹ Cf. George, “An Argument for Divine Omniscience in Aristotle”, 67.

⁵⁰ Cf. P. Aubenque, *Le problème de l’être chez Aristote. Essai sur la problématique aristotélésienne*, PUF, Paris, 2013 (6th ed), 398.

of chapter 4 was added to make it known that there is another principle, distinct from movable things, which is common to all movable. Insofar as it is common, this principle would not have to be synonymous, since it is common and ultimate⁵¹. Therefore, according to Alexander, god, contrary to the other causes, moves the world non-synonymously, and he does not contain within himself the formal principle of his effects. George objects to this point that whether an agent has brought about one thing or many depends on one's point of view. He explains that in designing the house the architect also designs its roof, its doors and windows, so that from the viewpoint of the workers the architect has designed many things, but from the architect's point of view he has produced chiefly *one* thing, with a plurality of coordinated parts⁵². We can agree with George, but pointing out the fact that his argument actually holds for the *proximate* moving cause, and not for the first unmoved mover. In my view, the strongest objection to George's arguments remains that, if in the first cause of all things formal and moving principle were to be identical, the first cause would be the form of things, which would seriously contrast with the immanence of the Aristotelian form.

This point is also raised in George's own interpretation of our passage. Indeed, he recalls Brentano's interpretation of the passage, according to which the sentence becomes:

(a) Besides these, [i.e. besides medical art being health, etc.], there is the way in which that which is the first moving principle among all *is all things*⁵³.

Such a lecture implies that in the first mover formal cause coincides with moving cause, from which it follows that the unmoved mover knows the world, at least in the sense of nomological knowledge. George asserts that from (a) follows:

(b) Besides these, [i.e., besides medical art, building art and man], there is that which as first of all things moves all things,

⁵¹ Cf. Averroës, *Tafsīr*, 1529.

⁵² Cf. George, "An Argument for Divine Omniscience in Aristotle", 67-69.

⁵³ Brentano, *Die Psychologie des Aristoteles*, 190: «[...] hiezu kommt noch die Weise, in welcher das, was unter allen das erste bewegende Princip ist, Alles ist».

and that another reading results from taking back Bonitz's change:

(c) Besides these, [i.e., besides medical art being health, the building art being the house and man begetting man], there is the way in which the first of all things moves all things.

According to George, (b) and (c) imply, although not in an explicit way, that the first of all things contains within itself the formal principle of what it brings forth, in the same way as medical art, architecture, and man⁵⁴. However, such a lecture, which requires a narrower reference of ταῦτα and does not consider the final passage as linked to all the chapter, but only to the previous sentence, reaches a conclusion which is precisely what Aristotle, on the other hand, seems to deny.

Crubellier notes that in Λ 5 Aristotle refers to 'the sun and the oblique circle' in the same position and with the same expression, mentioning the external cause as a further (ἔτι) principle, after the immanent causes⁵⁵. Hence he observes that if, at the end of Λ 4, Aristotle only needed an example of a moving cause which is 'not of the same form', he could have recalled the sun, and he adds that perhaps Aristotle could have felt that it was important, at the end of the discussion on elements and causes, to underline that the first cause of all things was a moving cause and not an element⁵⁶. However Crubellier recognizes that Aristotle distinguishes the unmoved mover from other causes by saying that the first moving cause does not have the form of its product as, conversely, does happen in the case of the ordinary moving cause. In my view, this is exactly the point. The first introduction of the unmoved mover in book Λ appears to refer to the second kind of moving cause, i.e. the remote first cause. This kind of moving cause, unlike the proximate moving cause, does not coincide with the form of its effects. So in 1070 b 34 it appears plausible that the term ἔτι introduces a sentence which is not completely independent from the rest of the chapter, and with the term ταῦτα, Aristotle is referring to the immanent principles and to the moving cause in

⁵⁴ Cf. George, "An Argument for Divine Omniscience in Aristotle", 66.

⁵⁵ Aristot. *Metaph.* Λ 5, 1071 a 13-17: [...] ἀνθρώπου αίτιον τά τε στοιχεία, πῦρ καί γῆ ὡς ὕλη καί τὸ ἴδιον εἶδος, καί ἔτι τι ἄλλο ἔξω οἶον ὁ πατήρ, καί παρὰ ταῦτα ὁ ἥλιος καί ὁ λοξὸς κύκλος, οὔτε ὕλη ὄντα οὔτ' εἶδος οὔτε στέρησις οὔτε ὁμοειδὲς ἀλλὰ κινουῦντα.

⁵⁶ Cf. Crubellier, "*Metaphysics* Λ 4", 158-159.

the weaker sense. Therefore, the meaning of the sentence appears to be that, in addition to the causes explicitly mentioned above, i.e. the immanent principle and the external cause in the weaker sense, there is the first and remote moving cause, which moves all things. For the first mover of all things, the identity of moving cause and form does not work, and therefore it does not belong to physics.

In conclusion, in the final passage of Λ 4 Aristotle distinguishes the remote moving cause from the proximate moving cause. They are both common principles, but in the first case the coincidence between formal and efficient cause does not occur. The impossibility for god to be the formal cause of beings, is given by its being separated from his effects. If we admit that god is a formal cause, then we attribute a characteristic to him which belongs to the Platonic tradition, and that is actually the element which most distinguishes it from the Aristotelian philosophical system. Plato's Idea is a separate formal cause of substances, a παράδειγμα; Aristotle's god is not the παράδειγμα of substances; in fact, he is not their form as he is separate from them. According to Aristotle his effects don't possess any common character with god. This means that divine thought is not part of what Aristotle says with regards to the moving cause in the weaker sense, which implies that the moving cause *knows* the form of its products. Therefore the mention of the unmoved mover in Λ 4 is not detached from the rest of the chapter; on the contrary, it fits in totally and is completely in agreement with Λ 9, telling us that the first unmoved mover does not know the world.

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