6. **The Introduction of the Treatise**

*Summary.* We now focus on the introductory section of the treatise, *praef.*, together with the first three chapters of Book I. We argue that if the chapter headings are mentally eliminated, this section amounts to the kind of introduction typical of treatises dealing with a specific discipline. The subject is defined in 1.1, and a short history provided in 1.3, including a reference to its first practitioner and a relative chronology. The discipline at issue here is the physical part of philosophy, which just as its ethical part is a problem-oriented venture. To define physics we have to define *physis*, the author says in 1.1. The definition given is Aristotelian, with the somewhat surprising proviso that what comes to be through chance, or necessity, or is divine, is excluded. It is certainly true that the account provided in the treatise is not determinist, as well as being remarkably secular. Ch. 1.2, on the difference between principle and element, prefaces the account of the principles, or elements, given in 1.3.

The division of the introductory section of A Book I into the proem of the whole work at P 1. *Praef.* and the first chapter of the first book at P 1.1 (with a heading: ‘What is *physis*?’) obscures the fact that what we have here is a part of a standard introduction of a work, or manual, dealing with a particular scientific or scholarly discipline, a *Περὶ τέκνης*. We believe that this introduction also includes A at P 1.2, with the heading ‘In what respect do principle and element differ?’, as well as the explicit points about the Successions distributed over A 1.3, viz. A at P 1.3.1 (paralleled, as we shall see, at S 1.10.12), A at P 1.3.6 (paralleled even according to Diels at S 1.10.12), A at P 1.3.7, and A at P 1.3.7a Mau (= P 1.3.7 *ad fin.*, A 1.3.9 Diels), all under the chapter heading ‘On principles, what they are’. The description of the principles in A 1.3 can also be regarded as belonging with this introductory material, since principles are what everything else is based upon.

The chapter headings of A 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, already more than usually unhelpful as a description of contents, constitute an epistemological obstacle preventing one to see the cento consisting of the proem plus 1.1–2 plus parts (at least) of 1.3 as a continuous whole.

A work Περὶ τέκνης more often than not begins with a definition of the subject and its parts including their designations, an account of its origins, a short history of the (parts of) the discipline listing inven-
tors and other illustrious workers in the field, differences between individuals and schools, and/or various views concerned with its nature and importance.\textsuperscript{116} For philosophy one may refer to the second part of the proem of Diogenes Laërtius, \textit{1.13–21}, where all these topics are to be found, and (from a much later period) to the \textit{Introductions to Philosophy} written by the Neoplatonists David and Elias. The introductory section of the \textit{Philosophical Inquiry} compiled by the confessedly unoriginal G is also relevant. Here we find the tripartition of philosophy and description of the parts (ch. 1; also ch. 6, with heading: ‘How many parts there are of philosophy’, πόσα μέρη τῆς φιλοσοφίας), a paragraph on the definition of philosophy (ch. 4, with heading ‘How they defined philosophy’, πώς τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ὥρισαν), a detailed, unfortunately much disturbed account of the Successions with Thales as the first philosopher according to the majority and including brief bits on the Italian and Eleatic lines (ch. 3, no heading), a paragraph on the Sects (ch. 7, with heading περὶ αἱρέσεων), and one on the beginnings/causes of philosophy (ch. 8, also with a heading: τίς ἀρκετή φιλοσοφίας).\textsuperscript{117}

An equally suggestive parallel from a related discipline is the proem to Celsus’ \textit{De Medicina}. This treatise is earlier than A’s work, Celsus being a contemporary of Tiberius, A at the earliest a contemporary of Titus. Celsus moreover will have been familiar with arrangements found in Greek treatises now lost. In Celsus we first have a brief descriptive definition of the subject (§1, ‘medicine promises health to the sick’, sanitatem aegris medicinam promittit), followed by a potted history of medicine (§§1–12). Hippocrates is said to have been the first (primus ex omnibus memoria dignus) to have really practised medicine, having separated the discipline from philosophy (§8). The three parts of medicine are mentioned and described (§9), important names and relative dates are provided, and the concept of Succession is used explic-