Chapter 1 of Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* summarizes preceding material and appears to announce an organizational plan for what will follow:

"Since we turn out earlier to have said that one ought to choose the middle, not the excess nor the deficiency, and the middle is as the reason, the right <one>, says — let us analyze this. For in all the mentioned dispositions, just as in the others, there is a target looking to which the one who has the reason tenses or relaxes <his bow>, and there is a certain horos <standard, criterion, definition> of the middlenesses which — being in accordance with the right reason — we say are between the excess and the deficiency.

But while to say so is true, it is not at all clear; for even in the other concerns about such things as there is a science of, this is true to say — that one ought to strive and to relax neither more or less but in the middle way, and as the right reason <says>: but having this only one would not know further e.g. what sorts of things one ought to apply to the body, if someone should say that <it is> those such as the medical <art> and as one having this orders.

So also concerning the dispositions of the soul, not only ought this to be truly said, but also <it ought to be> delimited what is the right reason and what <the> horos of this."

The passage, both retrospective and anticipatory, uses a notion — the middle — conspicuous earlier in the treatise. It recalls a notion — the right reason — alluded to earlier with a promise (1103b32-34) of later exploration. It then raises two questions: What is right reason? and What is its horos? Alternative understandings for "horos" are "standard", "criterion", "definition", "limit".

The passage looks like a transitional one readying us for a new project
which will yield further progress in the statement of Aristotle's ethical views.

II. Reactions to the question what is the horos

The variety of the responses to the project apparently now announced is a sign of a puzzle.

Ackrill remarks of the question what is the horos or criterion: "Unfortunately he does not subsequently take up this question in any direct way."¹

"What is his <the man of practical wisdom's> final test or criterion of right action?" . . . The moral philosopher has an obligation to state what the aim or goal or criterion is, to which the <person of practical wisdom> looks in thinking out what should be done. Aristotle recognizes that he has this obligation, but it is not clear that he fulfills it."²

Ackrill finds "tempting to suggest"³ that "promoting eudaimonia <well-being throughout life>" is "the final objective of morality and the ultimate criterion of right action" but offers as logical and hence interpretative reason against the suggestion that it would be unexplanatory. According to Ackrill "good and wise action is what eudaimonia partly consists in." Hence "we cannot explain why a certain way of acting is good and wise by saying that it promotes eudaimonia."⁴

There is more to Ackrill's reaction, but mention of two main features suffices: Ackrill thinks that Aristotle has raised our hopes for more detailed statement here - "has an obligation to state" - and he thinks that Aristotle has failed to come through. The response of Cooper,⁵ different from Ackrill's in substantial details, may be grouped with it in having these two features. Similarly Cooper fears unexplanatoriness if the horos is eudaimonia.

³ Ackrill, ibid.
⁴ ibid.