

The Argument from the Sciences

“They [sc. the Platonists] made further use of the sciences in establishing the Ideas, and in more ways than one, as he [sc. Aristotle] says in the first book of *On Ideas*; and the arguments he seems to have in mind at the present moment [i.e. in the *Metaphysics*] are the following sort. If every science performs its task by referring to some one and the same thing and not to any of the particulars, then there will be with respect to each science something different apart from perceptible individuals, eternal and a pattern for the things produced in each science; and such a thing is the Idea. Again, the things of which there are sciences exist; the sciences are of certain different things apart from particulars (for the latter are infinite and indeterminate, while the sciences are of determinate things); so there are certain things apart from particulars, and these are the Ideas. Again, if medicine is not a science of this particular health but of health simply, there will be a certain health-itself; and if geometry is not a science of this particular equal and this particular commensurate, but of equal simply and the commensurate simply, there will be a certain equal-itself and a commensurate-itself; and these are the Ideas” (Alexander, *in Ar. Met.* 79.3-88.2).