

## "Aristotle's Priorities in the Metaphysics"

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Aristotle argues in *Metaphysics* Theta 8 for two sets of claims about priority that are importantly philosophically different from one another. Aristotle himself seems to recognize their philosophical differences: he offers different arguments for each set of priority claims. Why then does Aristotle think these are all cases of priority? This paper argues that a causal account of priority in being has the resources to give a principled answer to this question. In particular, I argue that it opens up a new possibility for explaining why Aristotle accepts these cases: he does so because of their differences, not in spite of them. Aristotle, I argue, thinks that eternal substances cannot be the only causes of being for perishable substances: they cannot explain distinctive features of perishable being like the fact that perishable things come to be and pass away. This motivates the inclusion of certain entities within the perishable world as additional causes of being for perishable things. Because they are introduced to do causal work that the previous set of prior items could not do, we should not be surprised that their relationship to the items to which they are posterior will be importantly different from the relationship between the previous set of prior and posterior items. On this account, then, rather than being mysteriously disjunctive, the kind of disunity we see in Aristotle's account of priority is philosophically interesting and well-motivated.