INTRODUCTION

1. Aristotle's Life and Works

Aristotle was born in Stagira in Macedon (now part of northern Greece; see note to i 2.§8, v 7.§1) in 384 B.C. In his lifetime the kingdom of Macedon, first under Philip and then under his son Alexander ('the Great'), conquered the Greek cities in Europe and Asia, and then went on to conquer the Persian Empire. The Macedonian rulers made elaborate efforts to present themselves as Greeks; they were not entirely successful in these efforts, and many Greeks regarded them as foreign invaders. Though Aristotle spent much of his adult life in Athens, he was not an Athenian citizen; he was closely linked to the kings of Macedon (cf. note to vii 7.§6), and he was affected by the volatile relations between the Greek cities, especially Athens, and Macedon.

Aristotle was the son of Nicomachus, a doctor who had been attached to the Macedonian court. (See MEDICINE.[2]) In 367 B.C., Aristotle came to Athens and was a member of PLATO's Academy until the death of Plato in 347. Plato's successor as head of the Academy was his nephew SPEUSIPPUS. At that time, Aristotle left Athens, first for Assos (in Asia Minor), where the pro-Macedonian TYRANT Hermeias was a patron of philosophical studies. Aristotle married Pythias, a niece of Hermeias; they had a daughter, also called Pythias. After Hermeias was killed by the Persians, Aristotle traveled farther (cf. 1155a21–2); he moved on to Lesbos in the eastern Aegean (cf. note to v 10.§7), and then back to Macedon. He was a tutor of Alexander. In 334 he returned to Athens and founded his own school, the Lyceum. After the death of Pythias, Aristotle formed an attachment to Herpyllis, and they had a son Nicomachus (named, following the Greek custom, after his grandfather). In 323 Alexander died; in the resulting outbreak of anti-Macedonian feeling in Athens, Aristotle left for Chalcis, on the island of Euboea (cf. note to ix 6.§3), where he died in 322 B.C. In his will Aristotle directed that Pythias' bones were to be placed in his grave, in accordance with her wishes; he also made provision for the support of Herpyllis and Nicomachus.[3]

2. Words in SMALL CAPITALS refer to entries in the Glossary. Numbers in square brackets refer to items listed in Further Reading. For abbreviations, see the list of Abbreviations and Conventions.

3. Aristotle's will; see ROT, p. 2464.

2. Aristotle's Works

The nearly complete modern English translation of Aristotle's extant works (in ROT) fills about 2,450 pages. Many of his works, however, have been lost, and those that survive complete are quite different in character from many of the lost works.[4] Among the lost works are dialogues, probably similar in character to some of Plato's dialogues, and other treatises designed for publication. Aristotle may refer to some of the lost works when he speaks of his POPULAR writings.

The Aristotelian corpus, as we have it, largely consists of works that appear to be closely related to Aristotle's lectures. Sometimes he seems to refer (see note to ii 7.§1) to 'visual aids' of the sort that might be present in a classroom. Sometimes the grammatically incomplete sentences and compressed allusions suggest notes that a lecturer might expand.

We cannot tell how many of his treatises Aristotle regarded as finished. We probably ought not to treat them as finished literary works. They may be more like files that Aristotle revised, expanded, summarized, or combined, for different teaching purposes, or when new ideas struck him.

In the Greek manuscripts, the corpus is arranged as follows:[5]

1. *Catg., DI, APr, APo, Top.* These are traditionally known as the 'Organon' ('instrument') because they deal with logic (in Aristotle's broad sense), which is an instrument of philosophical thinking, not a discipline with its own specific subject matter.
2. *Phys., DC, GC, Metr., DA, PN, HA, PA, MA, IA, GA.* These belong to natural philosophy, dealing with different aspects of NATURE.
3. *Met.* This deals with 'first philosophy', the study of reality in general. (*EN* i 6 discusses metaphysical topics; cf. note to §13.)
4. *EN, MM, EE, Pol.* These belong to 'practical' philosophy, which deals with ACTION rather than PRODUCTION.
5. *Rhet., Poet.* These deal with PRODUCTION rather than ACTION.[6]

Aristotle presents ETHICS as a distinct discipline, relatively independent of other areas of philosophy (notes to i 6.§13, viii 1.§6; cf. *EE* 1216b35–1217a10). Nonetheless, he often refers to, or relies on, his other

4. Ancient lists of titles of Aristotle's works are printed in ROT, p. 2386.

5. This list excludes (a) works generally agreed to be spurious that have been included in the Aristotelian corpus; (b) the lost works; (c) the *Constitution of Athens* (probably not by Aristotle himself), which was discovered after the standard arrangement of Aristotle's works was established. All of (a) and (c), and some surviving fragments, or supposed fragments, of (b), are included in ROT.

6. For Aristotle's own division of disciplines, see *PA* 640a1; *Met.* 982b11, 993b20, vi 1.

philosophical doctrines. See ACTIVITY, CAPACITY, CAUSE, ETHICS, FUNCTION, HUMAN BEING, SCIENCE, SOUL. Readers will read the *EN* with more understanding if they also read the most immediately relevant parts of Aristotle's other works. For a start, they might try: *Catg.* 1–9 (the doctrine of categories); *APo* i 1–3, ii 19 (on SCIENCE); *Top.* i (on the dialectical method practiced in ETHICS); *Phys.* ii, iii 1 (on NATURE, CAUSE, and MOVEMENT); *DA* i 1, ii 1–4 (on SOUL), ii 5–11 (on PERCEPTION), iii 4 (on UNDERSTANDING), iii 9–11 (on DESIRE and ACTION); *PA* i 1 (on NATURE); *MA* 7 (on practical INFERENCE); *Met.* i 1 (on SCIENCE), 6, 9 (on SOCRATES and PLATO), iv 1–2, ix 1–8 (on CAPACITY and ACTIVITY), xii (on GOD).

3. The Ethical Treatises

Aristotle's ethical theory is mostly contained in three treatises: the *MM*, the *EE*, and the *EN*. The titles of the last two works may reflect a tradition that Eudemus (a member of the Lyceum) and Nicomachus (the son of Aristotle and Herpyllis) edited Aristotle's lectures.

It is widely agreed that the *MM* was not written by Aristotle. But it may well be substantially authentic in content; perhaps it contains a student's notes on a course of lectures by Aristotle earlier than the courses underlying the other two treatises. The *EE* is now widely agreed to be authentic; it is usually (not universally) and reasonably taken to be earlier than the *EN*.

The three books *EN* v–vii are also, according to manuscripts of *EN* and *EE*, the three books *EE* iv–vi. The manuscripts do not say which treatise these three 'common' books originally belonged to, or how they came to belong to both treatises. Stylistic and doctrinal evidence links these books with the rest of the *EE*; but it does not follow that Aristotle did not also intend them to be part of the *EN*. If the *EE* is earlier than the *EN*, Aristotle may have used these books, perhaps revised, in his new course of lectures. A decision on this issue is related to a decision on the relative date of the two treatises. (See further the notes to vii 11.§1, x 6.§1.)

We should not infer, then, that the *EN* has reached us in exactly the form in which Aristotle intended to leave it. If it is unfinished, we can more easily understand the presence of two discussions of pleasure, and of two discussions of the VOLUNTARY in iii 1 and v 8 (a common book).

4. Outline of the *Ethics*

We can gain some idea of the contents and structure of the *EN* from this outline:

A. i 1–12. HAPPINESS, the ultimate human good.

B. i 13. Happiness requires VIRTUES of character and of thought.

C. ii 1–9. Virtue of character: the STATES of human beings that secure their happiness.

D. iii 1–5. Preconditions of virtue: VOLUNTARY action and responsibility.

E. iii 6 to v 11. The individual virtues of character.

F. vi 1–13. Virtues of thought.

G. vii 1–10. INCONTINENCE and related conditions.

H. vii 11–14. PLEASURE.

I. viii–ix. Friendship.

J. x 1–5. Pleasure.

K. x 6–8. Happiness and theoretical STUDY.

L. x 9. Ethics, moral education, and politics.

This outline suggests that in some places the standard division into books represents the natural divisions in Aristotle's argument, and in other places it does not. The division into books goes back to the early editors of Aristotle's works in antiquity. It was partly determined by the requirements of ancient book production; and so we should not be surprised if it fails to match the argument of the work.

This order is similar to the order of the *EE*, up to the end of H; shortly after H our manuscripts of the *EE* break off, and we do not know what, if anything, corresponded to J to L above. The *MM* is less similar in structure, but it covers these topics in more or less the same order up to I; it breaks off in the discussion of friendship. Hence the order of treatment in A through I is likely to be Aristotle's own order.

We can follow the development of Aristotle's argument if we examine the main themes. The following sections of this introduction briefly present the main themes, without considering all the relevant questions of interpretation; some of these questions are taken up in the Notes.

5. Happiness

Aristotle conceives ETHICS as a part of POLITICAL SCIENCE; he treats the *EN* and the *Politics* as parts of a single inquiry (*EN* x 9; cf. note to i 2.§9). Ethics seeks to discover the good for an individual and a community (*EN* i 2), and so it begins with an examination of happiness. Happiness is the right starting point for an ethical theory because, in Aristotle's view, rational agents necessarily choose and deliberate with a view to their ultimate good, which is happiness; it is the ultimate end, since we want it for its own sake, and we want other things for its sake. If it is to be the ultimate end, happiness must be COMPLETE.

To find a more definite account of happiness, Aristotle argues from the human FUNCTION, the characteristic activity that is essential to a human being, in the same way as a purely nutritive life is essential to a plant, and a life guided by sense perception and desire is essential to an animal (see notes to i 7.§12–13). Since a human being is essentially a rational agent, the function of a human being is a life guided by practical reason. The good life for a human being must be good for a being with the function of a human being; hence it must be a good life guided by practical reason, and hence it must be a life in accordance with the VIRTUE that is needed for achieving one's good. The human good, therefore, is an ACTIVITY of the SOUL in accordance with complete virtue in a complete life.

Aristotle believes that this outline of happiness (1098a20–2) is definite enough to rule out three serious errors and to point us in the right direction. He develops these points in i 5, 8–12. (1) We must reject the life devoted purely to pleasure (1095b19–20), for reasons that Aristotle makes clear only in x 2–5. This life is incomplete because it allows no essential role to rational activity; and mere pleasure without rational activity is not the good for a rational agent (cf. 1174a1–4). Since a life of pleasure can be improved on in this way, pleasure cannot be the good (1172b28–32). Hence Aristotle rejects hedonism. (2) SOCRATES' view that virtue is sufficient for happiness conflicts with common beliefs (1096a2). Virtue alone does not constitute a complete and self-sufficient life. For external misfortunes impede rational activity (1100b29–30, 1153b14–25), and therefore preclude happiness (1100a5–9). (3) Still, no matter what we have to lose as a result of being virtuous, we have better reason to choose virtue than we have to choose any combination of other goods that are incompatible with it (1100b30–1101a8). Hence Aristotle claims that virtuous activity CONTROLS happiness.

6. Virtue of Character

If virtuous activity controls happiness, we need to know what the relevant virtues are to secure happiness (i 13). Since Aristotle recognizes both rational and nonrational DESIRES, he argues that the excellent and virtuous condition of the soul will include virtues of both the rational and the nonrational parts. The virtues of the rational part are the virtues of thought, discussed in Book vi. The virtues of character are the various ways in which the nonrational elements cooperate with reason, so that human beings fulfill their function well and in accordance with complete virtue. Aristotle discusses these virtues in Books ii–v.

He defines a virtue of character as a STATE, in order to distinguish a virtue from a CAPACITY and from a FEELING (ii 5). I may have a capacity without using it properly on the right occasions; for instance, I may have medical skill even if I do not bother to use it at all, or if I use it to poison my patients. Similarly, I may have a feeling (of sympathy, hatred, anger,

etc.) without guiding it properly to the right objects. To be a generous person, I must not only know how to give money on the right occasions, and have generous impulses; I must also direct my capacities and feelings to the right goals, so that I act from the right desires, for the right reasons, and on the right occasions (cf. *Met.* 1025a1–13).

Aristotle does not treat virtues as simply means to virtuous action. Actions may be virtuous even though they are not done for the virtuous person's reasons (1105a26–b9, 1144a11–20). But agents are not virtuous unless they do the virtuous action because they have decided to do it for its own sake. Aristotle assumes that in praising and valuing virtuous people we do not value simply their reliable tendency to produce virtuous actions; we also value the state of character that they display in their actions. The discussion of VOLUNTARY action shows us the circumstances in which the praiseworthy state is displayed in actions.

In arguing that a virtue of character must be a 'mean' or an 'intermediate' state, Aristotle does not recommend moderation in actions or in feelings for its own sake. He does not suggest, for instance, that if we achieve the mean in relation to anger, we will never be more than moderately angry; on the contrary, the virtuous person will be extremely angry on the occasions when extreme anger is called for. (He discusses anger more fully in iv 5.) Still, Aristotle's doctrine is more than the trivial advice that we should do what is appropriate to the occasion. For in claiming that a mean state in relation to nonrational impulses and appetites is possible and desirable, he rejects other views about the desirable condition of FEELINGS. The views he rejects include these: (1) Virtue consists in indulgence of nonrational impulses, leaving them completely unchecked. (2) Virtue requires suppression of nonrational impulses (1104b24–6). (3) Virtue is nothing more than control of nonrational impulses by rational desire. (cf. 1102b13–20). In Aristotle's view, (3) is closest to being right, but is nonetheless mistaken, because it confuses virtue with continence (see INCONTINENCE). Contrary to (3), virtue also demands harmony and agreement between the nonrational and the rational part, under the guidance of the rational part.

The task of moral education, therefore, is not merely to subject the nonrational part of the soul to practical reason. Virtuous people allow reasonable satisfaction to their appetites; they do not suppress all their fears; they do not disregard all their feelings of pride or shame or resentment (1126a3–8), or their desire for other people's good opinion. Brave people are appropriately afraid of serious danger (1115b10–20), and if the cause is not worth the danger they withdraw; but when the cause justifies their standing firm, their fear is not so strong that they have to struggle against it.

In claiming that the virtuous person makes a DECISION (iii 2–3) to do the virtuous action for its own sake, Aristotle implies that a certain pattern of

desire and deliberation (1113a2–12, 1139a21–b5) is characteristic of the virtuous person.

In claiming that the mean is determined by the PRUDENT person, he refers to the intellectual virtue that is responsible for good deliberation (1140a24–31). These aspects of his definition of virtue of character imply that it is inseparable from virtue of intellect.

Aristotle illustrates and explains these different aspects of virtue of character in Books iii–vii.

7. Voluntary Action and Responsibility

Aristotle discusses VOLUNTARY action and conditions for moral responsibility (iii 1–5), because he wants to show how his account of the nature of virtue supports the common belief that we are justly praised and blamed both for virtuous and vicious actions and for being virtuous and vicious people. He agrees that the proper objects of praise and blame are the things that we ourselves, rather than necessity or fortune, are responsible for (see CAUSE; *EE* 1223a9–15); he tries to show that we are responsible for our virtuous and vicious actions and characters.

He claims that we are open to praise and blame for our voluntary actions, and that voluntary actions are those that are caused neither by force nor ignorance, but have their 'PRINCIPLE in us', insofar as we know the particular circumstances of the action (1111a22–4). These actions are the appropriate objects of praise and blame.

According to Aristotle, these criteria for voluntary action imply that nonrational animals also act voluntarily (1111a24–6). These nonrational agents, however, are not open to praise or blame. Ordinary human voluntary action is open to praise and blame, because its principle is 'in us' (1110a17–18, 1111a22–4, 1113b20–1) as rational agents. (That is why a mere bodily process, such as aging, over which we have no rational control, has no principle in us; cf. v 8.§3 and note.) Voluntary action is in our control as rational agents; hence we are justly praised and blamed for it.

It follows that we are held responsible for our actions insofar as they reflect our character, decisions, and hence (given Aristotle's analysis of DECISION in ii 2–3) our deliberation about the good. For similar reasons, Aristotle believes that our character and outlook are also open to justified and effective criticism, since we are responsible for our characters. He appeals to the process of acquisition of the virtues to show that we are responsible for becoming virtuous or vicious (iii 5). He implies that it is in our rational control (when, presumably, we pass beyond the pure habituation of early childhood, discussed in Book ii; see note to iii 5.§10) to affect the way our character develops; and insofar as this is in our rational control, we are justly held responsible for the resulting state of our character.

8. Prudence and Virtue

Why does Aristotle take prudence to be necessary for virtue of character? (See 6, Virtue of Character, above; notes to vi 12.§6, 8; 13.§2, 7.) If correct decision and prudence are expressed in action on good deliberation, then the special role of practical reason in virtue seems to be its role in deliberation. But in Aristotle deliberation seems to have a rather narrow scope, insofar as it is concerned with what 'promotes' an end (see DECISION). If 'x promotes y' is interpreted as 'x is an instrumental means to y', Aristotle claims that deliberation and prudence are concerned only with instrumental means to ends. In that case, they tell us how to find the means to happiness, but they do not tell us anything about what happiness is.

Aristotle need not, however, restrict the scope of practical reason in this way, if 'x promotes y' is not confined to instrumental means. If he allows deliberation about components of ends, prudence finds the actions that promote happiness insofar as they are parts of the happy life. Such actions are (a) to be chosen for their own sake, as being their own end, rather than (b) to be chosen simply as instrumental means to some further end. See ACTION (3), note to vi 5.§1.

The wide scope of deliberation makes it clearer why decision is an essential element in virtue and why Aristotle claims—surprisingly at first sight—that we can decide on an action for its own sake, even though decision is always about what promotes an end. For the virtuous person's decision is the result of deliberation about the composition of happiness; and this deliberation results in specific claims about which actions are noninstrumentally good components of happiness. These are the actions that the virtuous person decides on, both for their own sakes and for the sake of happiness (cf. notes to i 7.§5, vi 9.§7).

In claiming that prudence involves deliberation, Aristotle also emphasizes the importance of its grasping the relevant features of a particular situation, since this is necessary if deliberation is to result in a correct decision about what to do here and now. The right moral choice requires experience of particular situations, since general rules cannot be applied mechanically to particular situations (see notes to ix 2). The relevant aspect of prudence is a sort of PERCEPTION or intuitive UNDERSTANDING of the right aspects of particular situations (see notes to vi 8.§9, 11.§5).

9. Incontinence

After describing the virtues of character and thought, Aristotle discusses the problem of incontinence (vii 1–10). Incontinence (or 'weakness of will') is usually taken to consist in knowing that x is better than y, but choosing y nonetheless. SOCRATES, as Aristotle understands him, denies the possibility of incontinence and explains apparently incontinent behavior as the result of ignorance of the good. In i 13 and iii 2, Aristotle

suggests an account of incontinence much closer to the one that Plato offers in *Republic* iv: Incontinence results when an agent's nonrational desires are stronger than his rational desire and overcome it. His full account of incontinence, however, includes both Socratic and Platonic elements in a rather puzzling combination. This is one of the most difficult parts of the *EN*; the notes on vii 3 try to set out some of the questions of interpretation.

It is clear, at any rate, that Aristotle rejects Socrates' position; he takes it to go wrong in treating the allegedly incontinent person's error as simple ignorance about what is better and worse. Contrary to Socrates' view, the incontinent person makes the right DECISION and draws the right conclusion from his practical inference. His nonrational desires cause him to choose what will satisfy these desires, and to act against his correct decision.[7]

Nonetheless, Aristotle accepts part of the Socratic account, because he thinks incontinent action must be explained by some sort of ignorance. The relevant sort of ignorance is caused by disordered nonrational desires; it is not ignorance of general principles (that we ought not to steal, for example), but of the application of these principles to particular cases. Aristotle seems to suggest that the incontinent is someone who agrees that he ought not to overindulge his appetites, agrees that eating these six cakes would be overindulgence, and hence makes the correct decision not to eat them, but nonetheless, when he eats them, fails to recognize that this is really a case of overindulgence.

One might reasonably ask (i) whether this is a satisfactory account of incontinence; (ii) why Aristotle believes that a true account ought to attribute some role to ignorance; and (iii) whether he has identified a plausible type of ignorance.

10. Pleasure

Aristotle's demand for the virtuous person to decide on the virtuous action for its own sake is connected with two further claims. (1) The virtuous person must take pleasure in virtuous action as such (1099a7–21, 1104b3–11). (2) In doing so, the virtuous person has the most pleasant life. In these claims Aristotle relies on his views about the nature of pleasure and its role in happiness.

To begin with, Aristotle identifies the life of pleasure with the life devoted to the life of rather gross sensual pleasures (i 5; see 5, Happiness, above). Books vii and x, however, contain quite elaborate discussions of the nature of pleasure and the different values of different types of pleasure (see end of 3, The Ethical Treatises, above). Aristotle believes that true judgments about pleasure imply that the virtuous person's life is also

7. On the use of pronouns, and of 'man' and 'person', see PERSON.

the most pleasant life. (On some apparent differences between the two discussions, see notes to x 3.§11, 5.§7.)

He rejects the view that pleasure is some uniform sensation to which different kinds of pleasant action are connected only causally and externally (in the way that reading many boring books might induce the same feeling of boredom). Instead he argues that the specific pleasure taken in x rather than y is internally related to doing x rather than y, and essentially depends on pursuing x for x's own sake. In that case, different pleasures—for instance, the pleasure of lying on the beach in the sun and the pleasure of solving a crossword puzzle—are not two instances of the same sensation that just happen to have different causes. The two different objects (i.e., the activities we take the pleasure in) are essential to the character of the pleasures themselves.

Aristotle tries to express this relation of a pleasure to the activity that is its object by describing the pleasure as a 'consequent end' (see note to x 4.§8) resulting from an ACTION or ACTIVITY, not from a PRODUCTION or process (see MOVEMENT), as such. The value of this pleasure depends on the value of the activity on which the pleasure follows (see notes to x 5). The virtuous person has the most pleasant life; but this life cannot be devoted exclusively to the pursuit of pleasure.

11. The Scope of the Virtues

Aristotle's Greek for 'virtue of character', *ēthikē aretē*, rendered into Latin as 'virtus moralis', is the origin of the English 'moral virtue'. Some readers, however, suggest that the Aristotelian virtues described in Books iii, iv, and v are not really moral virtues at all. If we assume that morality and moral virtue are essentially concerned with the good of others, we might think Aristotle is relatively unconcerned with morality. Some of the virtues seem to be largely self-regarding (e.g., temperance, magnanimity); some seem to involve good manners or good taste rather than strictly moral qualities (e.g., magnificence, truthfulness, wit), and only some seem to deal with the good of others (bravery, mildness, generosity). Only one virtue—justice (in its general form)—is clearly focused on the good of others in its own right (1129b25–1130a5).

This description of the virtues, however, underestimates ways in which the virtues of character as a whole display the impartial concern for others that is often ascribed to morality. The virtuous person decides on the virtuous action because it is FINE; indeed, fine action is the action that achieves the mean (see notes to iv 1.§7, 2.§7). The fine systematically promotes the good of others. This is why Aristotle takes general justice to be nothing more than the exercise of the other virtues of character (see note to v 1.§20).

Happiness, as Aristotle conceives it, requires activity in accordance with complete virtue (see note to i 7.§15). Why should complete virtue

require concern for the good of others? In Aristotle's view, a human being is a political animal insofar as human capacities and aims are completely fulfilled only in a community; the individual's happiness must involve the good of fellow members of a community (1097b8–11, 1169b16–19).

Aristotle defends this claim in his discussion of FRIENDSHIP. All three of the main types of friendship (for pleasure, for advantage, and for the good) are concerned with the good of the other person; but only the best sort of friendship—friendship for the good between virtuous people—involves A's concern for B's good for B's own sake and for B's essential character (see notes to viii 3.§1–6).

In the best sort of friendship the friend is 'another himself', so that if A and B are friends, A takes the attitudes to B that A also takes to A. Aristotle uses this feature of friendship to explain why friendship is part of a complete and self-sufficient life (see ix 9 and notes). Friendship involves 'living together' (i.e., sharing the activities one counts as especially important in one's life; see note to viii 5.§3), and especially the sharing of reasoning and thinking. Friends cooperate in deliberation, decision, and action; and the thoughts and actions of each provide reasons for the future thoughts and actions of the other. If A regards B as another self, then A will be concerned about B's aims and plans, and pleased by B's successes no less than by A's own. The cooperative aspects of friendship with B more fully realize A's own capacities as a rational agent, and so promote A's happiness more fully.

For this reason Aristotle thinks that the full development of a human being requires concern for the good of others. He defends his claim initially for friendship between individuals, but also for the type of friendship that forms a CITY, the 'complete COMMUNITY' (*Pol.* 1252a1–7, b27–30) that achieves the complete life that is identified with happiness.

12. Two Conceptions of Happiness?

In x 6–8, Aristotle returns to the discussion of happiness. He argues that the human FUNCTION is especially realized by the pure intellectual activity of STUDY—the contemplation of scientific and philosophical truths, apart from any attempt to apply them to practice. Since human happiness consists in the fulfillment of the human function, study is a supremely important element in happiness. For it is the highest fulfillment of our nature as rational beings; it is the sort of rational activity that we share with the gods, who are rational beings with no need to apply reason to practice. Aristotle infers that study is the happiest life available to us, insofar as we have the rational intellects we share with the gods (see notes to x 7).

One might conclude that Aristotle actually identifies study with happiness: Study is the only noninstrumental good that is part of happiness, and the moral virtues are to be valued, from the point of view of

happiness, simply as means to study. It is natural to take x 6–8 in this way; if one does, it is tempting to understand the argument in i 7 from the human FUNCTION as an argument to show that happiness is to be identified with the theoretical reasoning involved in study (see, especially, x 7.§9, 8.§8, and notes).

If this is Aristotle's view, however, two difficulties arise. (1) It is difficult to see how the purely instrumental status that seems to be ascribed to virtue of character in x 6–8 is compatible with Aristotle's repeated claims in the rest of the *EN* that virtues and virtuous actions are to be chosen for their own sake. (2) It is even difficult to see how the virtues of character are even the best instrumental means to happiness. Even if some virtuous actions are instrumental means to study, the motives demanded of the virtuous person do not seem useful for those who aim at study.

In the light of these difficulties, some readers who are convinced that x 6–8 identify happiness with study have inferred that Books i through ix defend a 'comprehensive' conception of happiness (as explained in notes to i 7.§3–8), and that x 6–8 defend an incompatible conception of happiness as study. One might argue that these are two alternative conceptions of happiness. Perhaps happiness as study is for those who are capable of it and in the conditions that allow single-minded devotion to it, and happiness as the exercise of the virtues of character is the best that is available to those who are less well endowed, or who are in less favorable circumstances.

Before we embrace any of these views about Aristotle's eventual conception of happiness, we ought to ask whether it is really certain that in x 6–8 he identifies happiness with study. The notes on these chapters suggest some grounds for uncertainty. One might take Aristotle to mean that study is the best component of happiness, but not the whole of happiness. If we were pure intellects with no other desires and no bodies, study would be the whole of our good. Since, however, we are not in fact merely intellects, our good is the good of the whole human being. Since study is not the complete good for a human being (see note to x 8.§6), it is not our complete good. Though study is the single most self-sufficient activity (insofar as it is the single activity that comes closest to being self-sufficient; see note to x 7.§4), this degree of self-sufficiency does not justify the identification of study with happiness. For Aristotle has argued that happiness must be complete, and for this reason he argues that neither virtue alone nor pleasure alone can be happiness. He should not, then, agree that study is happiness just because it is invulnerable and self-contained.

If this is Aristotle's view, study fits the account of happiness that we seem to find in the rest of the *EN*. According to this account, the virtues of character, and the actions that accord with them, deserve to be chosen for their own sakes as components of happiness. In the virtuous person, they regulate the choice of other goods, and so they also regulate choices about study. Admittedly, Aristotle does not explain how we should decide on

particular occasions whether to pursue study or to prefer one of the other components of happiness; but he does not seem to retreat from his conception of happiness as a compound of rational activities that assigns a central and dominant place to the moral virtues. The *Politics* may be taken to develop this conception of happiness, since it sets study in the context of a social order regulated by the virtues of character (see, especially, *Pol.* vii 3–4, 9, 13).

13. This Edition

Modern editions of the Greek text of the *EN* are based on Greek manuscripts copied in the Byzantine period (from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries)[8] from manuscripts derived indirectly from the edition of Aristotle's works produced by Andronicus in the first century B.C. Like every other editor and translator, I deviate from, or add to, the transmitted text in various ways. Readers, especially those unused to Greek and Latin texts, should bear these points in mind:

1. The transmitted text is usually fairly sound; but numerous variations and imperfections in the manuscripts require decisions by editors and translators. I have taken the OCT (see Further Reading [8]) as the basis of the translation, and have tried to mention deviations (on points other than punctuation) in the Notes. These deviations express different judgments (a) about which reading is to be preferred in cases where the manuscripts differ, or (b) about how to emend the manuscript reading, in cases where it does not seem to give satisfactory sense, or (c) about whether some words are intrusions into the manuscripts, not part of what Aristotle actually wrote, or (d) about whether something has fallen out of the manuscripts and needs to be supplied, or (e) about whether the manuscripts have the text in the right order.

2. Readers do not always realize that the division of books into chapters does not go back to antiquity, still less to Aristotle; it inevitably reflects the views of interpreters. This is especially clear in the case of the *EN*, since modern editions of the Greek text actually print two capitulations (both of medieval origin). I have included the first (marked by Roman figures in OCT) for reference. Where the other capitulation differs, I have left an extra space.

3. Modern editions also print the division of chapters (according to the first numeration) into sections (which go back at least to the edition by Carl Zell in 1820). I have also reproduced these sections (marked

8. On ancient manuscripts, see OCD, s.v. 'Books, Greek and Roman', 'Palaeography', 'Textual criticism'.

by §), since they reflect a generally sensible view of the structure of Aristotle's argument. In cases where I do not agree with them (where my paragraphs diverge from Zell's sections), it may be useful to readers to consider the alternative interpretation implied by Zell's division. The marginal line numbering is derived from Immanuel Bekker's edition of Aristotle (1831).[9] The Notes refer to Zell sections (so that 'i 7.§3' refers to Book i, chapter 7, section 3). References are given to Zell sections (or to Bekker lines, for greater precision).

4. The headings to each chapter, book, and section are mine and have no authority in the manuscripts; these titles are enclosed in square brackets.

This translation is intended for readers who want to understand the *EN* in detail, and not merely to acquire a general impression of it. Any translator who wants to be reasonably accurate in details that matter to the philosophical reader has to face some difficulties presented by the *EN*:

1. Aristotle's writing is often compressed and allusive; to convey in English the impression made by Aristotle's Greek, a translator would have to produce a version that would be hard to understand without a detailed commentary. If, however, translators set out to make Aristotle readily intelligible to the English reader, they will have to expand, interpret, and paraphrase to an extent that intrudes on the commentator's role. I have used bracketed supplements in cases where it seemed reasonable to point out to the reader that no precise equivalent for the bracketed words appears in the Greek text. Readers should by no means suppose that everything not enclosed in brackets uncontroversially corresponds to something in Aristotle's text. If they consult the Notes, they should be able to discover cases where my rendering is free or controversial.

2. Some of Aristotle's central philosophical terms cannot easily be translated uniformly; it is difficult, for instance, to translate *archē* (see PRINCIPLE) and *logos* (see REASON) by the same English term wherever they occur. But one's choice of rendering often requires a decision about the course of the argument. (See, e.g., notes to i 4.§5–7, 7.§20.)

3. Aristotle has come to us through medieval Latin philosophy, and some English equivalents of Latin terms (such as 'substance', 'essence', 'incontinence') have come to be standard renderings for

9. For instance, '1094a10' refers to line 10 of the left-hand column of page 1094 of Bekker's edition. Since Bekker's pagination is continuous, a Bekker page and line uniquely identify a particular passage. These Bekker pages and lines are standardly used to refer to passages in Aristotle. Since they refer to pages and lines of the Greek text, they correspond only roughly to an English translation.

some of Aristotle's Greek terms. These English terms, however, no longer convey in modern English what the medieval Latin terms conveyed, and so they may be misleading. Still, an attempt to purge a translation of these terms derived from Latin would conceal an important thread in the history of philosophy. (See PRUDENCE, VOLUNTARY.) I have been reluctant to discard these traditional renderings (though sometimes I have overcome this reluctance); though they may mislead readers who do not study the terms in their context (with the help of the Glossary), they are probably no more misleading than the superficially more contemporary renderings that one might choose instead.

4. Greek tolerates longer sentences than English; hypotactic constructions (with several long subordinate clauses) are common. The paratactic character of modern English often encourages the translator to break one complex Greek sentence into two or more English sentences. Sometimes, however, the structure of an argument can be more clearly expressed in a long sentence forming a logical unit; that is why some sentences in the translation are more complex than a contemporary English sentence would normally be (see, e.g., ix 9.§5).

5. It is characteristic of Greek to begin sentences with connecting particles. Concern for English style would require omitting many of these particles in a translation. Omission of them, however, may remove important information. When Aristotle connects two clauses or sentences with 'for', he normally indicates that the second clause gives some reason for what has been said in the first clause; such information about the structure of the argument is useful to the philosophical reader. Hence the translation includes more connectives ('for', 'but', 'however', and so on) than are usual in contemporary English, and also marks Aristotle's repeated use of a given connective with a special force (see note to i 1.§1 on 'that is why', and note to vii 2.§6 on 'further').

The Notes and Glossary are essential adjuncts to the translation. The Notes list textual variations from the OCT and give the sources for Aristotle's references to other authors. They suggest alternative translations (in some important passages), or more literal translations (in cases where expansion or paraphrase is needed for the sake of intelligibility; see, e.g., note to i 7.§8). The Notes also contain some very selective discussion of the course of Aristotle's argument, and some help in understanding passages that seem both difficult and important. In particular, they seek to help readers who are trying to grasp the connection of thought between one sentence and the next.

The Notes contain only a few comments on historical events, proper names (for example, Priam, Thales, Sparta), and so on. Readers must be

prepared to look these up in reference books, among which OCD is especially useful. A few references to OCD are included.

The Glossary indicates the correspondence between Greek terms and their English renderings. It also tries to explain some of Aristotle's terms and to sketch some of the philosophical doctrines and assumptions that they convey. A word in small capital letters in the Notes directs the reader to the relevant entry in the Glossary. One way to understand Aristotle better is to look up the passages cited in the entries in the Glossary and to examine them in their context.

An asterisk (*) in the translation marks the last word of a passage discussed in the Notes. Aristotle's works are cited throughout by the abbreviated titles given earlier in the list of Abbreviations and Conventions.