

ARISTOTLE'S *NICOMACHEAN*  
*ETHICS* BOOK X

Accompanied by a new translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* X, this volume presents a hybrid between a traditional commentary and a scholarly monograph. Aristotle's text is divided into one hundred lemmata which not only explore comprehensively the content and strength of each of these units of thought, but also emphasise their continuity, showing how the smaller units feed into the larger structure. The Commentary illuminates *what* Aristotle thinks in each lemma (and why), and also shows *how* he thinks. In order to bring Aristotle alive as a thinker, it often explores several possible ways of reading the text to enable readers to make up their own minds about the best interpretation of a given passage. The relevant background in Plato's dialogues is discussed, and a substantial Introduction sets out the philosophical framework necessary for understanding Book X, the final and most arresting section of the *Ethics*.

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ARISTOTLE'S  
*NICOMACHEAN ETHICS*  
BOOK X

*Translation and Commentary*

JOACHIM AUFDERHEIDE  
*King's College London*



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## *Preface*

### **On Sources and Translation**

#### *Greek Text*

I translate the Greek printed in the Oxford Classical Text (OCT) edited by Bywater 1892. Occasionally I prefer Susemihl 1880. Notes on the translation indicate where it deviates from Bywater's text (or from both) in favour of single manuscript readings (those of K<sup>b</sup> and L<sup>b</sup>) or the most common reading of the manuscripts.

The ancient division of the EN into ten 'books' allows us to single out and refer to larger arguments (on dividing texts into books, see §6). Later editors further subdivided the books into 'chapters', which helped in locating important passages more precisely. However, because referring to chapters is often still too imprecise, scholars have since established the convention of referring to the so-called 'Bekker page' (after the edition of Immanuel Bekker, who produced the first complete critical modern edition of Aristotle's works between 1831 and 1837). While the Bekker page, the column, and the line number suffice to refer precisely and uniquely to a passage, scholars often add the book and chapter numbers to place the passage in context. For example, X.I.1172a19 refers to Book X, Chapter 1, line 1172a19. The Bekker page and line numbers given in the translation approximate those given in Bywater's text as closely as possible.

#### *Translations, Commentaries, and Other Scholarship*

There are numerous excellent English translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The translations I found most helpful are Ross 1954, Irwin 1985, and especially Rowe's in Broadie and Rowe 2002. I have learnt much from all of them. Translations from the EN and Aristotle's other works tend to be my own, except for the *Politics*, where I quote Reeve's excellent translation (Reeve 1998). Unlike, e.g., parts of the *Physics* or *Metaphysics*, EN X is

beautifully written. It also carries a certain pathos that most translations, including mine, fail to render. To my knowledge, the closest to convey it adequately is the German translation of Dirlmeier 1983.

In my translation I have primarily aimed at accuracy. In particular, where possible, I have tried to render the ambiguities in the Greek text neutrally. There are two exceptions. First, although I have largely refrained from inserting additions that make the text more readable, some additions seem unavoidable. I have put into angled brackets (<...>) uncontroversial additions that the Greek clearly implies. In other places I have added referents that the English obscures ([sc. ...]). But in a few places the text requires more controversial additions to make it intelligible. Those are placed in square brackets ([...]). Here I have opted for legibility over neutrality. The commentary on the relevant lemma usually explains the addition and considers further options.

Second, the Greek text Aristotle wrote did not contain any systematic punctuation or paragraphing. By adding punctuation marks, paragraphs, and chapters, editors take a stance on what they take to be the unit of thought conveyed by a sentence, paragraph, or chapter. These divisions are of course not arbitrary, but take their lead from Aristotle's use of particles (which I have translated where feasible). On the strength of Aristotle's use of the particles, but also taking into account Aristotle's reasoning, I have subdivided the text into units of thought, indicated through my paragraphing. All careful readers will no doubt have their own preferred way of carving up the text. But by dividing the text into relatively small chunks – I ended up with 100 – I hope to put the reader in a position further to subdivide or to cluster together larger units of thought.

Among the numerous excellent commentaries on the EN, I have relied most on the judicious, sometimes judgemental, French commentary by Gauthier and Jolif 1958, the German commentary by Dirlmeier 1983, which excels on the philological aspects, and especially the English commentary by Broadie in Broadie and Rowe 2002. I do, however, only occasionally refer to other commentaries in the lemmata, lest my commentary morphs into a meta-commentary. Similarly, I do not wish the discussion of scholarly literature to detract from engaging with the text itself. So, although my discussion stands on the shoulders of a wealth of excellent secondary literature, the main text of the lemmata does not usually engage directly with that literature. For similar reasons, I keep the work done in the footnotes to a minimum. Two works of scholarship from which I would have liked to benefit came too late: Walker

## Preface

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2018 and Dorothea Frede's commentary on the whole of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Frede 2020, replacing Dirlmeier 1983), which is only about to be published.

## Facts about the Ancient World

While the commentary focuses on the philosophical aspects of Book X, at times some historical background knowledge helps to understand those aspects better. Where possible, I have supplied such trivia as dates and careers from *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (see Hornblower, Spawforth, and Eidinow 2012).

## Acknowledgements

I started writing this book because I thought it needed to be written, and that I was ideally placed to write it. Working on the book made me more convinced of the need for a commentary on *Nicomachean Ethics* X, but less certain about my suitability as the ideal author. I could not have submitted the manuscript to the Press without the help of many others. Without M. M. McCabe's encouragement and enthusiasm for the project, I would probably not have started. I thank the Center for Hellenic Studies (CHS) in Washington, DC for electing me to a fellowship, and Bill Brewer for enabling me to take it up. Much of the book came together under the ideal conditions the CHS provided. I was fortunate enough to present some of the material to discerning audiences at Assos, Columbia University, Cornell University, the CHS, the King's staff seminar, the King's Greek Reading Group, the Yale–UCL workshop, and the Lyceum Society's work-in-progress seminar. I have learned much from all these occasions. I must single out Inés De Asis, Dorothea Frede, Anthony Price, Bryan Reece, and Raphael Woolf, all of whom were kind enough to read and comment on bulky and unwieldy swathes of text. Also, the readers for the Press helped me improve presentation and content at key passages. But I owe my deepest intellectual debt to Sarah Broadie. In addition to overseeing my *paideia* over the years, she read the first draft of my translation and saved me from more than one solecism. She also helped me with some particularly recalcitrant passages, and especially the ending of the book. Despite all the help I received, I am certain that many readers will not agree with everything I say. This is as it should be. Where they disagree because I made a mistake, that mistake should be attributed to me alone.