NOTES ON THE VIIITH AND IXTH BOOKS
OF ARISTOTLE'S NICOMACHEAN ETHICS

BY

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Aristotle opens his discussion of friendship with the proposition that it is to be found in the sphere of the καλόν (ἀρετή τις ἡ μετ’ ἀρετῆς) and, moreover, is ἀναγκαίωταν εἰς τὸν βίον. The latter part of the proposition is first elaborated, whereas τὸ καλὸν is

1) The following works are quoted by author's name only, or by abbreviated title:
I. Bywater, Contributions to the Textual Criticism of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, Oxford 1892.
F. Dirlmeier, Aristoteles, Nikomachische Ethik, übersetzt, Darmstadt 1956.
G. Percival, Aristotle on Friendship, Cambridge 1940.
J. A. Stewart, Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle, Oxford 1892.

When criticism of these books is offered time and again, we do not intend to belittle our indebtedness towards them. On the other hand, when passing their translations, interpretations or corrections in silence, we do not admit agreement with them.

Mnemosyne, XIII
discussed in a 29 ff. The two parts are not in opposition. For what does ἀναγκαῖον mean here? Is it necessary in the sense of indispensability, or in the sense of inevitability? There is no doubt that the addition of the words εἰς τὸν βότον and the following elaboration point to indispensability, though in φύσει τε ἐνυπάρχοντα κ.τ.λ. (a 16) an element of inevitability might be present. These lines are followed by a passage in which Aristotle again refers to friendship as an indispensable constituent of life. So the meaning “indispensable” seems to prevail, and there is no opposition between ἀναγκαῖον and ethical good: the ἀναγκαῖον here certainly is within the moral sphere.

Dirlmeier, in discussing this passage (p. 510), takes ἀναγκαῖον too exclusively in the sense of inevitableness (Determination). Therefore he refers to Plato, Rep. 493 b-c, where the opposition between καλόν and ἀναγκαῖον is brought out. In Plato, indeed, ἀνάγκη and ἀναγκαῖον point to inevitableness; the words denote “blind” necessity, without any ethical import, and are so used in opposition to the καλόν. Dirlmeier’s reference to Plato, therefore, is not right. Tricot (ad locum) makes the same mistake.

I155 a 12-14.

In this sentence the main source of difficulty is the reading βοηθείας, accepted by Bywater and Burnet in their editions, and the question connected with this reading, what is to be taken as the subject of the sentence. The construction is awkward indeed. Many editors and commentators —Susemihl-Apelt and Rackham a.o.— have tried to simplify it by adopting the reading of Mb, βοηθεία, which might be a predicate of φιλία, to be supplied from the previous sentence. Dirlmeier, Gauthier-Jolif and Thuis have followed this line.

The reading βοηθεία, however, has no very strong manuscript support; still weaker is the support given by the tradition to Bekker’s βοηθεῖ and the emendation βοηθεῖν, proposed by Stewart (II, p. 266).

The manuscript tradition is unmistakeably in favour of the lectio difficilior βοηθείας. Retaining it, however, implies an obligation to answer the question, mentioned above, of the function of βοηθείας.