The Relative Dating of the Accounts of Pleasure in Aristotle's Ethics

PHILIP WEBB

(i) The Usual View

In EN there are two separated accounts of pleasure, (A) H 11-14 and (B) K 1-5. The orthodox opinion nowadays — developed most fully by Festugière, who has persuaded Lieberg, Gauthier & Jolif and others — is that B is later and better than A. This view may have a superficial plausibility, but I shall contend in this paper that a closer examination of the evidence together with more precisely formulated arguments leads one to a different conclusion, and that the evidence clearly favors the view that A is in fact later than B. More precisely I shall suggest that it was Aristotle's intention to make

1 For brevity I adopt the following symbols based on those of Bonitz: A Analytics, Ai De Sensu, B De Vita, EE Eudorean Ethics, EN Nicomachean Ethics, M Metaphysics, Ph Physics, Pn De Juventute, Respiratio etc, Ps De Anima, R Rhetoric, Zh De Motu, Zm De Partibus; also Bz Bonitz, LS Liddell & Scott, GJ Gauthier & Jolif.
3 R. A. Gauthier & J. Y. Jolif, L'Ethique à Nicomaque (Louvain 1958) 778; G. Lieberg, Die Lehre von der Lust in den Ethiken des Aristoteles (Munich 1958) 2; D. J. Allan, Quasi-Mathematical Method in the Eudorean Ethics (in Aristote et les Problemes de Methode, Louvain 1960 303-18) 306, 316; J. O. Urmson, Aristotle on Pleasure (in Aristotle, ed. Moravcsik, New York 1967 323-33) 323; W. F. R. Hardie, Aristotle's Ethical Theory (Oxford 1968) 294-6, 300; J. D. Monan, Moral Knowledge & its Methodology in Aristotle (Oxford 1968) 40; C. J. Rowe, The Eudorean & Nicomachean Ethics (Cambridge 1971) 108; G. E. L. Owen, Aristotelian Pleasures (PAS 1971/2 135-52) 145, 151; J. Rist, Pleasure 360-300 BC (Phoenix 1974 167-79) 177-9; it was held earlier by F. Susemihl, in the Teubner text of EE (1884) n 7, and Spengel. Rist says B is "certainly" the EN account, but runs into a major problem as a result, for he cannot explain to his own satisfaction why Epicurus, who was in Athens in 322, apparently knew A but not B. Allan points out that two works employing different methods might be contemporary, but he does not apply this suggestion directly to A and B, nor does anything in his paper imply that EE and EN were contemporary: he gives no hint who were the different but contemporary audiences to which Aristotle might have been addressing his two versions of the Ethics, and in fact seems to conclude 317 that EE was a more precisely argued development of EN; in any case I am no more convinced that there is a basic difference of methodology between EE and EN than were the critics Allan mentions at the end of his paper.
A part of *EN*, while B does not belong with the rest of the treatise, being rather a separate monograph from the period between *EE* and *EN*, and that as regards doctrine A, not B, is the more satisfactory.

Before embarking we had best agree that we are in fact dealing with two quite separate pieces, for Joachim and apparently Burnet treat them as segments of the same discussion. The following arguments may be offered: (1) they are divided without evident cause by the long account of friendship, and make no reference to one another; (2) as Festugiére shows at length, they are parallel in structure; (3) two of the principal common opinions are included in both accounts; (4) Aristotle's own theory is different in each account (see sect. (v)); (5) a number of minor points occur in both pieces; (6) finally there is one snippet of evidence which is conclusive, but which seems to have been overlooked, namely K 1 1172 a 26-7:

and it seems that we should least of all pass over such things (i.e. pleasure and pain), especially as they involve much disagreement.

Aristotle could not have written this if B were intended to be part of a work already containing A. Having shown that Aristotle did not want both pieces to be read in *EN*, we may now take up the topic of this paper, to determine which account belongs to *EN* and whether the other represents a less or more developed version.

(ii) The Arguments for the Usual View

Of those forming the consensus only Festugiére offers a detailed justification for his position: the others all refer their readers to his work. Let us start therefore by examining carefully his arguments. Unfortunately he does not list these arguments in an easily manage-

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5-20; first a few general remarks, then the common opinions followed by Aristotle's criticisms of them, next Aristotle's own theory, and last some miscellaneous matters.
6 The distinction between καθ' αὐτό (φόσει) κατὰ συμβεβηκός pleasure (H 12, 14, K 3), that extraneous pleasures interfere with the ἐνέργεια (H 12, K 5), that we do not enjoy the same things continually (H 14, K 4).
7 Susenmhl n 7 *init.* may be referring to this remark, but seems rather to be thinking of the broader fact that Aristotle repeats his reasons for discussing pleasure.
8 5-42.