

ASPASIUS ON *NICOMACHEAN*
ETHICS 7: AN ANCIENT EXAMPLE
OF ‘HIGHER CRITICISM’?

CARLO NATALI

1. Received opinions

IN *NE* 7. 14 Aristotle seems to identify pleasure and happiness:

Presumably it is even necessary, given that there are unimpeded activities of each state, and happiness is the activity of all of them or of one of them, that this activity, provided that it is unimpeded, is most desirable; but this is pleasure. (1153^b9–12)

On this passage, Aspasius notes in his commentary (*In NE* 151. 18–27 Heylbut):¹

διὰ μὲν οὖν τούτων δοκεῖ ταῦτόν ἀποφαίνεσθαι τἀγαθὸν καὶ τὴν ἡδονήν· οὐ μὴν οὕτως ἔχει, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς λέγοντας γένεσιν εἶναι ἢ φαύλας τινὰς τῶν ἡδονῶν, οἷς² καὶ δι’ αὐτὸ τὸ μὴ εἶναι αὐτὴν³ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐπιγίνεται [καὶ]⁴ ἐπιχειρεῖ ἐνδόξως ὡς ἐνὸν αὐτὴν τὸ ἄριστον λέγειν, ἐπεὶ ἔν γε τοῖς Νικομαχείοις, ἔνθα διείληπται καὶ περὶ ἡδονῆς Ἀριστοτέλης σαφῶς εἴρηκεν αὐτὴν μὴ ταῦτόν εἶναι τῇ εὐδαιμονίᾳ ἀλλὰ παρακολουθεῖν “ὡσπερ τοῖς ἀκμαίοις τὴν ὄραν”. σημειωτέον⁵ δὲ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι τοῦτ’ Ἀριστοτέλους ἀλλ’ Εὐδήμου τὸ ἐν τῷ⁶ λέγειν περὶ ἡδονῆς ὡς οὐδέπω περὶ αὐτῆς διειλεγμένου· πλὴν εἴτε Εὐδήμου ταῦτά ἐστιν εἴτε Ἀριστοτέλους,

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¹ References are to G. Heylbut, *Aspasia in Ethica Nicomachea quae supersunt commentaria* [Heylbut] (Berlin, 1889).

² οἷς Rose: ἄς codd.; del. Spengel.

³ αὐτὴν Spengel: αὐτὸ codd.

⁴ Secl. Hayduck.

⁵ σημειωτέον codd.: σημείον L. Spengel, ‘Über die unter den Namen des Aristoteles erhaltenen Ethischen Schriften’ [‘Ethische Schriften’], *Bayer. Ak. der Wiss., Sitzung phil.-hist. Kl.*, 24/4 (1841), 1–115 at 85, and all subsequent editors. I maintain the text of the manuscripts, on the basis of a similar passage in Olympiodorus (*In Cat.* 75. 11–12 Busse).

⁶ MS Z (Parisinus gr. 1903) has a lacuna here, supplemented with δεκάτω by Spengel and others; see Spengel, ‘Ethische Schriften’, 86.

ἐνδόξως εἴρηται· διὰ τοῦτο λέγεται τὸ ἄριστον ἡδονή, ὅτι σὺν τῷ ἀρίστῳ καὶ ἀχώριστον αὐτοῦ.⁷

With these words, then, he seems to say that the good and pleasure are one and the same. But this is not the case. Rather, against those who say that pleasure is a process or that some pleasures are base, for whom it also follows, for this reason, that pleasure is not the good, he argues on the basis of reputed opinion that it is possible to call pleasure the supreme good. For at least in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in the place where he does make distinctions on pleasure, he says clearly that pleasure is not the same thing as happiness, but accompanies it ‘as the bloom accompanies the cheek of youth’ [*NE* 1174^b33]. As evidence that this is not by Aristotle but by Eudemus one should cite the fact that in (book 10) he [=Aristotle] talks about pleasure as if he had not yet discussed it. But whether those words express Eudemus’ or Aristotle’s view, this is an argument drawn from reputed opinion; he says that pleasure is the supreme good for the following reason: it accompanies the supreme good and cannot be separated from it.

The passage attracted discussion in the nineteenth century, because it seems to attribute a section of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (τοῦτο, 151. 24) to Eudemus and not to Aristotle. Spengel maintained that Aspasius was still close enough to the rediscovery of Aristotle’s works to be able to discuss the attribution of books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and suggested that the passage presents its argument as ‘nur ein dialektischer Versuch’.⁸ But a bolder interpretation emerged in the twentieth century. According to Paul Moraux, Aspasius in this passage touches on a problem of interest to ‘higher criticism’, one concerned, that is, with the attribution of authorship—in this case, the question whether the so-called common books (*NE* 5–7 = *EE* 4–6) should be attributed to the *Nicomachean Ethics* or the *Eudemian Ethics*. He maintains that the author of the passage argues on the basis of common opinions (ἐνδόξως, 21 and 26), but also cites the *Nicomachean Ethics* as a work different from the one that contains

⁷ This section of Aspasius’ commentary (150. 31–151. 27) is very difficult and full of lacunae. It has been edited many times: by H. Hase, ‘*Aspasii scholiōn eis ta Ethica tou Aristotelous epitomē*’, *Classical Journal*, 28 (1823), 306–17, and 29 (1824), 104–18 at 117; Spengel, ‘Ethische Schriften’, 84–5; V. Rose, ‘Über die griechischen Commentäre zur Ethik des Aristoteles’, *Hermes*, 5 (1871), 61–113 at 107; and Heylbut. There is a modern translation only for the commentary on book 8, in D. Konstan, *Commentators on Aristotle on Friendship [Commentators]* (London, 2001) (Aspasius at 13–57). A complete translation of Aspasius’ commentary by Professor Konstan is in preparation. I would like to thank him very warmly for allowing me to read it in draft, and for many useful comments on a first version of the present article.

⁸ L. Spengel, ‘Ethische Schriften’, 84; ‘nich mehr als eine Conjectur’, he adds (85).

the present passage. Moraux takes lines 24–5 to mean that Aspasius is uncertain whether the common books belong to the *Eudemian* or *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁹ He adds that it is not certain whether Aspasius considered all the common books to belong to the *Eudemian Ethics*, or only the final chapters of book 7, 12–15.

Further, Moraux quotes a comment by Aspasius on *NE* 8, 1155^b 13–16, which states: ‘Even things different in species admit of degree. We have discussed this matter [ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν] previously.’¹⁰ Aspasius’ comments:

ἔοικε δὲ εἰρησθαι ἐν τοῖς ἐκπεπτωκόσι τῶν Νικομαχείων. (In *NE* 161. 9–10)

It appears that they were discussed in the books that have fallen out of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Moraux thinks that Aspasius is here referring to the lacuna that must be admitted to exist between *NE* 4 and 8, if the common books are attributed to the *Eudemian Ethics*.

Moraux’s interpretation has been revived by Anthony Kenny, in an important book about the relationship between the *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹¹ Kenny claims, *inter alia*, that (i) the common books belong to the *Eudemian Ethics*, and (ii) before the second century AD, the *Eudemian Ethics* was preferred to the *Nicomachean Ethics* by ancient authors. According to Kenny, the situ-

⁹ P. Moraux, *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen*, ii. *Der Aristotelismus im I. und II. Jh. n. Chr.* [Aristotelismus] (Berlin and New York, 1984), 258–61.

¹⁰ Modern editions of the *Nicomachean Ethics* have ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν. This use of ὑπὲρ is quite rare in Aristotle, and for this reason Ramsauer, Grant, Stewart, Tricot, and Gauthier think that it is a spurious interpolation. But Aspasius’ text here has περὶ αὐτῶν. Regarding the point referred to, among those scholars who accept the passage as authentic Susemihl and Dirlmeier follow Aspasius, Irwin thinks that the allusion is to *Cat.* 6^b10–17 or to *NE* 2. 8, Burnet and Broadie just say that the reference is uncertain. E. Berti, ‘Amicizia e “Focal Meaning”’, in A. Alberti and R. W. Sharples (eds.), *Aspasius: The Earliest Extant Commentary on Aristotle’s Ethics* [Aspasius] (Berlin and New York, 1999), 176–90 at 178, thinks that the reference is to 1096^b8–16.

¹¹ A. Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethics* [Ethics] (Oxford, 1978), 29–36. Shorter or more prudent versions of the same interpretation can be found in C. Rowe, *The Eudemian and Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge, 1971); R. Bodeüs, ‘Contribution à l’histoire des œuvres morales d’Aristote: les testimonia’, *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 71 (1973), 451–67 at 452–3; H. B. Gottschalk, ‘Aristotelian Philosophy in the Roman World from the Time of Cicero to the End of the Second Century AD’ [‘Aristotelian Philosophy’], in W. Haase and F. Temporini (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, 2.36.2 [Aufstieg] (Berlin and New York, 1987), 1079–174 at 1158; F. Becchi, ‘Aspasio commentatore di Aristotele’ [‘Aspasio’], in Haase and Temporini (eds.), *Aufstieg*, 5365–96 at 5368; J. Barnes, ‘An Introduction to Aspasius’, in Alberti and Sharples (eds.), *Aspasius*, 1–50 at 19–21.

ation had radically changed by the time of Alexander of Aphrodisias, and since then the supremacy of the *Nicomachean* to the *Eudemean Ethics* has been taken for granted. In general, Kenny thinks (iii) that the *Eudemean Ethics* is the more important treatise, from both a philosophical and a historical point of view.

In this paper I shall discuss only Kenny's interpretation of the passage quoted above from Aspasius' commentary. Kenny mainly follows Moraux's interpretation, with just a few changes, and inserts it into his reconstruction of the history of the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemean Ethics* in the period between the fourth century BC and the second century AD. He writes:

In Aspasius' writing we find the situation with which we have been familiar for centuries: the *Nicomachean Ethics* is the undoubted treatise of Aristotle, the *Eudemean Ethics* is the problematic treatise whose attribution fluctuates, regarded now as authentic Aristotle, now as the work of his disciple Eudemos. But if Aspasius departs from the earlier tradition in his ranking the two *Ethics*, he is at one with it—as we shall see—in regarding the disputed books as belonging essentially to the Eudemean version. (29–30)

Kenny quotes the passage 151. 18–27, and follows Moraux's interpretation: Aspasius is in doubt as to whether this passage of *NE* 7, and by implication the common books in general, belongs to the *Nicomachean* or to the *Eudemean Ethics*. He repeats Moraux's argument according to which the phrase 'in the *Nicomachean Ethics*' (*ἐν τοῖς Νικομαχείοις*, 151. 21–2) implies that Aspasius takes himself to be commenting on a work different from the *Nicomachean Ethics*. But his reading of the text is more accurate than Moraux's and he sees the implications of the argument more clearly. First, he notes that the attribution of book 7 (and the others) to Eudemos is only one of the possible explanations considered by Aspasius; second, he points out that in his interpretation Aspasius attributes book 7 not to the *Eudemean Ethics* but to Eudemos himself. This implies that Aspasius thinks that Eudemos is the author of the *Eudemean Ethics*. But such a conjecture has damaging consequences for the unity of Aspasius' commentary itself. If *NE* 7 belongs to the *Eudemean Ethics* and that work is by Eudemos, how could the commentary on this book and the commentary on *NE* 1–4 and 8 be part of the same work? Kenny lists two possibilities. According to the first, we have fragments of two Aspasian commentaries, one on

the *Nicomachean Ethics*, to which the comments on books 1–4 and 8 belong, and one on the *Eudemian Ethics*, to which the fragment of the commentary on book 7 belongs. But Kenny thinks rather that, when commenting on *NE* 1–4, Aspasius found many forward references to the common books, and suggests that, since in his time there were copies of the *Eudemian Ethics* containing the common books, the following may be hypothesized:

In these circumstances Aspasius, having commented on books 1–4 of the *NE*, proceeded to comment on books 5–6 of the *Eudemian Ethics*, in order to have a full commentary on Aristotle's ethical system, in spite of the lacuna in the *Nicomachean* version. (32, cf. 33)

But how could Aspasius have produced such a 'full commentary on Aristotle's ethical system' by adding some Eudemian books to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, if he clearly thought that Eudemus and Aristotle had different ethical theories, at least on pleasure?

Kenny recalls Moraux's observation on the passage 161. 9–10 and discusses the cross-references between the parts of the commentary in order to find some difference between the way in which Aspasius quotes the common books and his commentary on the undisputed *Nicomachean Ethics* books (34–5). This is a point we shall discuss later.¹²

At the end of his discussion, however, Kenny remarks that Aspasius is not certain whether the common books are by Eudemus, and notes that there are passages of the commentary where Aspasius refers to some of the common books as the work of Aristotle, whereas in other passages he attributes them to Eudemus (35).

There should be a simpler way to interpret this passage. In my view, (1) in lines 151. 24 and 26 the pronouns 'this' (*τοῦτο*) and 'these' (*ταῦτα*) refer not to the passage, or to the entire seventh book, let alone to the three common books, but only to the specific argument of *NE* 1153^b7–12. Aspasius is not saying that the text he is commenting on was written by Eudemus; rather he is saying that here Aristotle is not speaking in his own name but is reporting someone else's argument, namely Eudemus'. (2) In the remaining parts of Aspasius' commentary there is no indication that he takes

¹² Becchi, 'Aspasio', 5369, sees the weakness of the hypothesis and maintains rightly that the passage 161. 9–10 could be interpreted as a reference to a lost passage or section of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and not to an entire book, as Kenny suggests (*Ethics*, 34).

the common books to belong to a treatise different from the *Nicomachean Ethics* or not to be by Aristotle. (3) An examination of his comments on the first two arguments of 7. 14 (150. 3–151. 27) can help to explain why Aspasius thinks that Aristotle is here quoting someone else's opinion.

To argue in favour of these three claims, I shall first examine some external and general features of the whole commentary, and then discuss the passage 150. 3–151. 27 in detail.

2. The authorship of the books commented on by Aspasius

Let us consider the passage in which Aspasius' comments occur, and his view on the authorship and constitution of Aristotle's ethical treatise. In the manuscripts the commentary has a title for every book. They always say: 'Aspasius' comments on book . . . of Aristotle's *Ethics*',¹³ but in two cases there is a variant reading: 'Aspasius on book 7 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle' and 'Aspasius scholia on book 8 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*'.¹⁴ To be sure, the evidence is weak because these titles could be late. But perhaps the commentary itself provides better clues.

There is some evidence that Aspasius took all the material he was commenting on to be by Aristotle, including book 7. He often says in his comments: 'Aristotle says/adds/wants/does not say', etc. The name of Aristotle as author of the relevant material appears in his commentaries on all of the books: seven times in the commentary on book 1, three times on book 2, seven times on book 3, twelve times on book 4, and three times on book 8.¹⁵ This applies also to book 7, where Aspasius quotes Aristotle as the author of the sections on *akrasia* (133. 15–16; 19–20; 136. 7–8; 138. 19–20; 139. 12–13) and on pleasure (150. 5; 154. 20–1). It is impossible to interpret the above-quoted passage, 151. 18–27, as indicating that some part of

¹³ Book 1, 'Aspasius' scholia on Aristotle's *Ethics*' (1. 1); book 2, 'On book 2 of Aristotle's *Ethics*' (37. 1), or 'On the second of Aristotle's ethical books' (in app., p. 37 Heylbut); book 3, 'On book 3 of Aristotle's *Ethics*' (58. 1); book 4, 'The scholia of the philosopher Aspasius on book 4 of Aristotle's *Ethics*' (95. 1); book 7, 'Aspasius on book 7 of Aristotle's *Ethics*' (127. 1); book 8, 'Aspasius on book 8 of Aristotle's *Ethics*' (158. 1).

¹⁴ According to Heylbut's apparatus, the variant title for book 7 is to be found in MS Z. In fact it is in Parisinus gr. 1902 (sec. xvi, very close to Z), fo. 115^v; the variant title for book 8 is in the Aldine edition (1536).

¹⁵ See the references in Heylbut's *Index nominum* s.n. Ἀριστοτέλης.

book 7, or the entire book, is by Eudemus. In fact, three pages later, commenting on 1154^a15–16, Aspasius tells us that ‘*Aristotle* says in general that all the goods of the body have an excess [καθόλου δέ φησιν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης σωματικῶν ἀγαθῶν πάντων εἶναι ὑπερβολήν]’ (154. 20–1). He clearly considers Aristotle to be the author of the entire book.

3. Cross-references in Aspasius

There is, it seems, enough evidence to show that Aspasius considers the *Ethics* on which he is commenting to form a continuous whole, composed of books 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, (9), and 10. This is clear from his way of citing the other books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* when he is commenting on one of them. The most quoted book is 6, which is referred to in his surviving comments on all the other books except book 8. This preference is understandable because book 6 contains many of the central doctrines of Aristotle’s ethics and many definitions which are needed to explain the doctrines of the other books. But Aspasius seems to have used book 6 in a systematic way, as the key to understanding the meaning of Aristotle’s expressions in other books, disregarding the nuances that arise from the usage of a term in books other than 6. The most important element absent from Aspasius’ commentary is the progression implicit in Aristotle’s analysis. Aristotle starts in the first pages of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by using terms in their more common meaning, and refines them as the discussion proceeds. Aspasius, on the contrary, takes the results of the analysis for granted already at the beginning, and so imposes on Aristotle’s procedures a systematic aspect that is far from the dialectical and rhetorical procedures of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

But let us confine ourselves to the raw data. Book 6 is cited eight times in the commentary on the other books, books 1 and 10 five times, books 2 and 5 four times, and book 3 just once.¹⁶ The commentaries on books 7 and 8 have internal citations but are not cited in the commentaries on the other books. They do, however, often quote the other books: the commentary on book 7 has nine citations,¹⁷ that on book 8 five citations,¹⁸ that on book 1 seven,

¹⁶ See the list of passages on p. 243^a of Heylbut’s edition.

¹⁷ Two of book 1 (141. 26–7; 146. 15–16), one of book 2 (123. 2–3), one of book 3 [See next page for n. 17 cont. and n. 18

that on book 2 only two, that on book 3 none, and that on book 4 four. This adds up to a network of reciprocal references, with some gaps (Table 1).

TABLE 1

Comm.:	1	2	3	4	7	8	TOTAL
Book							
1	×			×	×	×	5
2				×	×	×(?)	4
3					×		1
4							0
5	×(?)					×	4
6	×	×		×	×		8
7							0
8							0
9							0
10	×	×			×		5
TOTAL	7	2	0	4	9	5	

As might be expected, the commentaries on the first books often cite the subsequent books with expressions meaning ‘later’, and those on the later books cite the earlier ones with expressions meaning ‘before’ or ‘at the beginning’. When commenting on book 1, Aspasius cites book 10 with the words ‘on which he will speak later’ (*περὶ ἧς ὕστερον ἐρεῖ*)¹⁹ or ‘he will be more specific about it

(152. 22–7, the only citation of this book in the commentary outside the commentary to book 3 itself), three of book 6 (136. 28–137. 3; 140. 23–7 and 29–31), and three of book 10 (141. 24–6; 151. 18–19).

¹⁸ Three of them, understandably, of book 5 on justice, because friendship and justice are closely connected subjects (160. 11–12; 175. 3–4; 178. 19–22), one of book 1 (162. 1–6), and one of book 2 (158. 5–11).

¹⁹ There is a problem in this passage: at 19. 2–3, having quoted *NE* 1098^a 17–18, Aspasius adds: ‘that is, the virtue of contemplation, concerning which he will speak later—the presence of complete virtue clearly being presupposed’ (*περὶ ἧς ὕστερον ἐρεῖ, προϋπαρχούσης δηλονότι τῆς καλοκαγαθίας*). Here the mention of *kalokagathia* seems to be a reference to *EE* 8. 3 and not only to *NE* 10. 7. But in any case *NE* 10. 7 is clearly being cited, because it would not be accurate to say that in *EE* 8. 3 there is an analysis of ἀρετὴ θεωρητικὴ. It seems that, while Aspasius was providing a forward reference to *NE* 10. 7. *EE* 8. 3 also came into his mind.

later’ (ὕστερον δὲ ἀκριβώσσει περὶ αὐτῆς: 19. 2; 23. 28–9). Regarding book 6, some of the citations we find in book 1 are only implicit (6. 27), and others limit themselves to quoting the text of book 6 verbatim, without reference to its position. For example:

ἰδίως δὲ καλεῖν εἰώθασιν τέχνην τὴν ποιητικὴν. ἀποδίδωσι δὲ αὐτῷ λόγον ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης λέγων “τέχνη ἐστὶν ἕξις μετὰ λόγου ποιητικῆ” (2. 23–5)

In the strict sense people are accustomed to call the productive art *technē*. Aristotle provides it with a definition, when he says ‘art is the productive habit, involving reasoning’—

the reference being to *NE* 1140^a10. But there is also a passage of the commentary on book 1 where Aspasius cites book 6 thus:

ἀλλὰ ταύτην γε λύει τὴν ἀπορίαν προϊῶν· φησὶ γὰρ τὸ μηδὲν κωλύειν τὴν ἐλάττω προστάσσειν περὶ τῶν κρείττωνων, οἷον (προστάσσει) ἢ πολιτικῆ καὶ ναοὺς θεῶν κατασκευάζεσθαι καὶ σέβειν αὐτούς (8. 32–4)

But he solves that *aporia* later: for he says that nothing prevents the inferior from giving orders about the superior: for instance politics (enjoins) that temples of the gods be built and that people worship them—

the reference being to book 6, 1145^a6–11.

From these passages we can infer that the commentary on book 1 does not discriminate between book 10, an undisputed part of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and book 6, one of the common books. Both texts alike are ones that the reader will encounter ‘later’. There is no sign that Aspasius considers *NE* 6 to be part of another work or its commentary to be distinct from the commentary on book 1.

This suggestion is confirmed by Aspasius’ commentary on book 2, where book 6 is again referred to as a text that will be read ‘later’. He finds a passage where Aristotle refers forward to chapters 1 and 13 of book 6, and paraphrases it by saying:

τίς δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος ὕστερον ῥηθήσεται καὶ πῶς ἔχει πρὸς τὰς ἄλλας ἀρετάς (40. 7–8)

It will be said *later* what right reason is and how it is related to other virtues.²⁰

Aristotle himself in book 2 refers to *NE* 6. 1 and 13 as something

²⁰ Cf. *NE* 1103^b32–4: ῥηθήσεται δ’ ὕστερον . . . τί ἐστὶν ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος, καὶ πῶς ἔχει πρὸς τὰς ἄλλας ἀρετάς. Ramsauer, Dirlmeier, Gauthier, and Tricot think that the reference is to 6. 1 and 13. Stewart and Broadie refer to book 6 or to ‘what may have corresponded to it in the original *NE* treatise’. Bywater and Burnet delete the passage.

which will come later, and Aspasius picks up this indication without expressing any doubt about Aristotle's authorship.

The commentary on book 4 refers back to books 1 and 2 as something already read. At 120. 25–6 Aspasius paraphrases Aristotle again, and refers back to book 1, calling it 'the first discussions':

ἔλεγε δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις λόγοις ὅτι περὶ τῶν πρακτῶν τύπων μὲν ἔστι λέγειν.

He said in the first discussions as well that in practical matters you can give an approximate account.²¹

Later, at 121. 15–16, he quotes the list of virtues in book 2, 1108^a26–9, saying:

πρότερον μὲν γὰρ ἐν τῇ διαγραφῇ κοινότερον αὐτὴν φιλίαν εἶπε.

Earlier, in the diagram, he has called it 'friendship' using the term in a general way.

Book 1 is indicated as the beginning of the entire ethical work, and book 2 as something that precedes book 4.

Later, in the commentary on books 7–8, both book 1 and book 2 are indicated with phrases such as 'at the beginning', and book 6 is mentioned as something which comes 'earlier'. In fact, the commentary on book 7 refers to book 2 as 'in the first discussions' and to book 6 as 'before' or 'in the previous discussion'. Let us examine the passages.

Citation of book 2

. . . ὃν ἐν τοῖς κατ' ἀρχὰς λόγοις ἀναίσθητον ἔλεγε. (132. 2–3, referring to 1104^a2, ἀναίσθητός τις)

. . . whom in the first discussions he called 'insentient'.

Citations of book 6

ὡσπερ καὶ πρότερον ἔλεγεν, ἠθικὴ ἀρετὴ τίθεται ἐνίοτε μὲν ἢ φυσικῇ, ἔστι δὲ ὅτε ἢ ἐκ τοῦ ἔθους (136. 31–2 referring to 1144^b2 + 1144^a6–7)

But, as he said also before, sometimes it is natural virtue that is posited as ethical virtue, but also sometimes the virtue derived from habituation.

δέδεικται γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν λόγοις (140. 23, referring to 1145^a1–2)

It has been demonstrated in the previous discussions.

But in his commentary on book 7, as Kenny noticed, Aspasius quotes book 2 with the expression 'elsewhere':

²¹ See *NE* 1126^a31–2: *ὁ δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς πρότερον εἴρηται κατλ.*, the reference being to 1094^b24.

ἰδίως δὲ νῦν τὸν χαῦνον εἶπεν εὐκέναι τῷ ἐλευθερίῳ, ἐν ἄλλοις εἰπὼν τὸν ἄσωτον αὐτῷ ὅμοιον εἶναι κατὰ τὴν φαντασίαν. (138. 22–3, referring to 2, 1108^b22)

In a peculiar sense he says now that the vain resemble the liberal, *elsewhere* he says that it is the spendthrift that resembles them in appearance.

According to Kenny, Aspasius here cites book 2 as if it were part of a different work. Kenny also says that the passage of the commentary on (*NE*) book 8, 178. 19–22, where Aspasius refers to the (common) book 5 with the expression ‘elsewhere’, indicates the same relationship between the two sets of books:

λέγει δὲ ἐν ἄλλοις ἴσον τὸ κατ’ ἀριθμόν.

Elsewhere he calls ‘equal’ that which is equal according to number—

the reference being to 5, 1134^a28. In Kenny’s view the commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics* books and those on the common books each refer to books of the other group as belonging to a different work. But his conclusion is not necessary. It is true that in Aristotle the expression ‘elsewhere’ (ἐν ἄλλοις) usually means ‘in another work’,²² but this does not apply to Aspasius, who uses the expression in a freer way. For instance, in the commentary on book 1 he uses it to refer to another part of that same book:

ἐν ἄλλοις δὲ τὸ ὡς πεφυκος πείθεσθαι ἄλογον καλεῖ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ἴδιον λόγον. (18. 6–9, referring to 1, 1102^b25–34)

Elsewhere he calls that which can be persuaded (by reason) ‘irrational’ because it does not possess its own reasoning capacity.

I turn now to the commentary on book 8. Aspasius there cites book 1 by means of the expression ‘at the beginning’:

... ὥσπερ καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατ’ ἀρχὰς λόγοις ἔλεγε. (162. 2–3, referring to 1096^a6)²³
... as he said in the discussions at the beginning.

At 158. 9–14 he refers back to *NE* 2. 7, 1108^a26–30, and 4. 12, 1126^b10–20, without any explicit indication. But the commentary on book 8 refers most to book 5, because of their similarity of content and the connection between the concepts of ‘friendship’ and ‘justice’: cf. 175. 3–4, where the phrase ‘equality according to

²² Cf. M. Burnyeat, *A Map of Metaphysics Z* (Pittsburgh, 2001), 29. But there are exceptions in Aristotle as well: *Metaph.* 1017^b9, 1046^a6, 1055^b7, 1056^b35.

²³ The passage is quoted verbatim immediately after.

proportion' (ἡ κατὰ ἀναλογίαν ἰσότης, cf. *NE* 5, 1134^a5–6) is cited. It is true that at 160. 11 Aspasius refers to *NE* 5, 1134^b9–19, with the words 'in the (discussions) on justice':

πολλὰ γὰρ εἶδη τοῦ δικαίου, καθάπερ ἐλέχθη ἐν τοῖς περὶ δικαιοσύνης.

For there are many kinds of just thing, as was said in the (discussions) on justice—

the reference being to *NE* 5, 1134^b9–19. But the expression 'in the (discussions) on justice' does not necessarily indicate that Aspasius is referring to book 5 as another work. It is simply a different way of referring to a preceding book, used for *variatio*. Further, in his commentary on *NE* 2. 7, when Aspasius encounters a phrase by which Aristotle refers to the common books 5 and 6 as later parts of the same work,²⁴ he is not surprised and paraphrases it without any problem:

περὶ δὲ δικαιοσύνης ὕστερον εἶρεῖν ἐπαγγέλλεται καὶ περὶ τῶν λογικῶν ἀρετῶν. (55. 27–8)

About justice he promises to speak later, and about the rational virtues.

In modern times many have doubted the authenticity of this passage, but Aspasius has no problems with it and, when commenting on book 2, he quotes books 5 and 6 as belonging to the same work. He finds it natural that the discussions about justice and rational virtue in books 5 and 6 should follow the discussion of particular virtues in book 4.

In sum, in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* we have a series of references which indicate that Aspasius considers all the different books to be on the same level and to belong to the same work.²⁵ In his comments on the first books he often cites the last books as something that will come later, and in the comments on the last books he cites the first and second as something already read, or read at the beginning. To be sure, the network of quotations is

²⁴ 'With regard to justice, since it has more than one meaning, *we shall distinguish* those meanings *and say* how each one is a mean, after describing the other states; and we shall do the same also with regard to the rational virtues' (περὶ δὲ δικαιοσύνης, ἐπεὶ οὐχ ἁπλῶς λέγεται, μετὰ ταῦτα διελόμενοι περὶ ἑκατέρας ἐροῦμεν πῶς μεσότητες εἰσὶν ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν λογικῶν ἀρετῶν, 1108^b8–10). Grant, Ramsauer, Stewart, Burnet, and Gauthier consider the *Nicomachean Ethics* passage interpolated, because for Aristotle the rational virtues are not μεσότητες. Dirlmeier, Tricot, Rackham, Irwin, and Broadie and Rowe accept the received text.

²⁵ Cf. Becchi, 'Aspasio', 5368.

not complete. There are books never cited in the commentary on some other book (for instance, that on book 1 never refers to book 2) or never cited at all (9). There are books with plenty of citations (7, 8) and books whose commentaries scarcely cite others at all (2). There are books much cited (6) and books scarcely referred to. The commentary on book 3 never cites other books and book 3 itself is cited only in the commentary on book 7. This evidently depends partly on the content, and partly on the necessity Aspasius felt to refer to some parts of the *Nicomachean Ethics* more than to others. It is not an indication of the situation of the text in his time.

It is extremely unlikely that Aspasius wanted to attribute to Eudemus either book 7 or the entire group of books 5–7. But what did he want to say in the passage I quoted at the beginning? An analysis of the context may provide an answer.

4. Aspasius' comments on *NE* 1153^b1–12

To understand Aspasius' commentary on 1153^b1–12, where the section quoted at the beginning of this article is to be found, we must bear in mind that his general interpretation is different from ours, and that he takes many unsound positions in his commentary on the last part of *NE* 7. According to Aspasius, the defender of the thesis that pleasure is not a good is Antisthenes (142. 9) and not Speusippus. He thinks that Speusippus is a hedonist, and that Aristotle agrees with him but wants to replace one of his arguments with a better one in the first lines of *NE* 7. 14.

On Aspasius' interpretation, the argument of *NE* 1153^b1–7 is to be reconstructed as follows:

- (1) People say that Speusippus maintained that the opposite of *evil* is good; but pain is an evil; so its opposite, pleasure, is a good (150. 3–4).
- (2) Aristotle corrects Speusippus' argument and says: the opposite of *what is to be avoided* is good; pain is to be avoided; pleasure is not an evil and it is the opposite of pain; therefore pleasure is good (150. 4–8).
- (3) The preceding argument is against those who maintain that pleasure is neither a good nor an evil (150. 8–9).

By contrast, at the beginning of *NE* 7. 14, according to modern interpretations,

- (1') Aristotle accepts the common opinion that pain is an evil, absolutely or because it is an obstacle (1153^b1-3).
- (2') Aristotle, following an argument by Eudoxus,²⁶ affirms that the opposite of what is evil is good; necessarily, then, pleasure is a good (^b3-4).
- (3') Aristotle quotes Speusippus as being opposed to point (2'), saying that one excess is opposed to the other excess and to the right intermediate (Speusippus' point seems to be that there is more than one opposite: pleasure and pain are two excesses, to which the right intermediate, absence of both pleasure and pain, is equally opposed, ^b4-6). This solution, adds Aristotle, does not work: in fact not even Speusippus could admit that pleasure is an evil (^b6-7).²⁷

Aspasius attributes to Aristotle a version of Speusippus' double opposition theory, whereby to an evil both another evil and a good are opposite. To confirm this, he quotes the example of an ethical virtue, where two bad states are opposed to the right intermediate: 'For example, not only is courage, which is a good thing, the opposite of rashness, but so too is a bad thing, cowardice' (150. 23-4). To arrive at his conclusion Aristotle must assume both that pleasure is opposed to pain and that pleasure is not an evil (150. 25-30).

Aspasius attributes to common opinion what Aristotle attributes to Speusippus, and takes as subject of the phrase 'for [he] would not have said that pleasure is something <essentially evil>' (*NE* 1153^b6-7) not Speusippus, but 'anybody' (*οὐδείς*, 150. 7). The premiss, which appears to be *ad hominem* against Speusippus, becomes an endoxic premiss which applies universally. Therefore, if the contrary of pain, which is an evil, is either an evil or a good and if pleasure is the contrary of pain and is not an evil, necessarily pleasure is a good.

The controversy between Speusippus and Aristotle does not depend on an opposition between theories (pleasure is good/pleasure

²⁶ Cf. *NE* 10, 1172^b18-20: 'He [Eudoxus] believed that the same conclusion followed with the same clarity from the contraries: because pain *per se* is a thing to be avoided for everybody, in the same way its contrary [pleasure] is choiceworthy for all.'

²⁷ I follow the interpretation given by J. Burnet, *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1900), 336, and others.

is bad), but becomes merely a difference in their ways of arguing, Aristotle's argument being judged by Aspasius more effective than Speusippus'. This is Aspasius' strange interpretation of the first argument. It is paradoxical that Aspasius, who knows *NE* 10. 1–5 and quotes it verbatim a few pages later, did not realize that argument (2') is not by Speusippus but by Eudoxus. Evidently he took the reference to Speusippus at 1153^b5 to refer to the preceding lines.

In his analysis of Aristotle's second argument Aspasius fares no better. The text of his commentary here is full of lacunae and difficult to understand. Editors have tried to amend it by conjecture, but the results are uncertain.

Aspasius finds a difficulty in the argument of lines 1153^b7–12: he thinks that the argument proves too much, namely, not only that pleasure is a good, but also that some pleasure is the supreme good, i.e. happiness. He is not alone in thinking this. It is possible to interpret the argument, taken literally, in this way. However, since such an interpretation is fully hedonistic and conflicts with the theory of *NE* 10. 1–5, nearly all interpreters reject it.²⁸ They take the passage to mean simply that the supreme good is pleasant, and not that some pleasure is the supreme good.²⁹ But let us return to Aspasius.

The opposing parties in this dispute are not, according to Aspasius, Aristotle and those who maintain that pleasure is an evil (as in chapter 13),³⁰ nor two groups of philosophers who think that pleasure is a good but defend this position with different arguments (as at 1153^b1–7). They are, on the one side, those who deny that pleasure is the supreme good, and on the other those hedonists, not to be identified with Aristotle, who allow that it is.

The hedonist's argument is against a view which is not in the list of anti-hedonist positions catalogued at 142. 29–33:

ἀλλ' οὖν τοῖς μὲν δοκεῖ μηδεμία ἡδονὴ εἶναι ἀγαθόν, τοῖς δὲ μία μὲν ἀγαθή, αἱ δὲ πολλὰ φαῦλαι, τοῖς δὲ εἰ καὶ πάσαι ἀγαθὸν ὅμως μὴ εἶναι τὴν ἡδονὴν τὸ ἄριστον, τουτέστιν μὴ εἶναι εὐδαιμονίαν, οἷς ἐναντιοῦνται οἱ λέγοντες τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἡδονὴν εἶναι.

²⁸ See e.g. the discussion by F. Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles: Nikomachische Ethik* (Berlin, 1956), 503.

²⁹ This is the opinion of Stewart, Gauthier, Irwin, and Broadie. Burnet thinks that it is only an *ad hominem* argument against the anti-hedonists.

³⁰ Aspasius takes Aristotle to be the opponent of the anti-hedonists at 148. 2, 15, 23, 30; 149. 8, 20, 28.

Now then, some believe (*a*) that no pleasure is a good, others (*b*) that one is good but many are base, and still others that (*c*) though all pleasures are a good, nevertheless pleasure is not the best, that is, it is not well-being, while (*d*) those who say that well-being is pleasure are opposed to these last.³¹

The anti-hedonist in question says (*e*) that pleasure is not the best thing and the supreme good because some pleasures are base—a very weak position, it seems to me. After setting out their position Aspasius seems to refer to an argument in favour of (*e*), but in the text there is at least one lacuna, and the argument itself is unintelligible.³²

That the argument in these lines is one in favour of those who support (*e*) and not against them is demonstrated by the fact that some unknown hedonists object to this very argument by introducing another. They say (*ἐνίστανται*, 151. 1–2), (*f*):

τί γὰρ κωλύει φαύλων ἡδονῶν οὐσῶν εἶναι τινα ἡδονὴν τὸ ἄριστον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἀγαθῶν, ὡσπερ καὶ ἐπιστήμη τίς ἐστὶν ἢ ἀρίστη τῶν ὄντων, οἶον ἢ σοφία, καίτοι πολλῶν τεχνῶν φαύλων οὐσῶν, οἶον τῶν βαναύσων; (151. 2–4)

For even though there are base pleasures, what prevents some pleasure from being the best among human goods?—just as a certain kind of knowledge is best of those that exist, for example wisdom, even though there are many base arts, such as the artisanal ones.³³

Here Aspasius paraphrases *NE* 1153^b7–9 without attributing it to Aristotle.

Instead, Aspasius attributes to Aristotle the position expressed in the following lines, 1153^b9–12, but seems to have doubts as to whether Aristotle is right:

ἂ δ' ἐξῆς ἐπιφέρει, τάχα ἂν τῷ δόξειεν ἀληθῆ ἀποφανόμενα τὸ μέγιστον καὶ ἄριστον τὴν ἡδονὴν. λέγει γὰρ ἴσως δὲ καὶ ἀναγκαῖον αἰρετώτατον εἶναι, δηλονότι τὴν ἡδονὴν, τὸ δὲ αἰρετώτατόν τι εἶναι ἐπὶ τέλει ἐστὶ τοῦ λόγου καὶ συνηγορεῖται τῷ λόγῳ πάντων αἰρετώτατον εἶναι τὴν ἡδονὴν λέγοντι. (151. 6–10)

What he [Aristotle] adduces next may perhaps seem to someone to be true,

³¹ This repeats what Aristotle says at *NE* 1152^b8–12, with the addition of the last position (*ἐναντιοῦνται*, 32).

³² ὅσον γὰρ ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ ἔστι τινὰ ἡδονὴν * ἡγείται τὸ ἄριστον [τὸ ἄριστον N; ἄριστον Parisinus gr. 1902, fo. 116^r] καὶ ταῦτόν τῃ εὐδαιμονίᾳ (150. 33–151. 1).

³³ The example of the bad type of science, the arts of manual workers, although not found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is present in *MM* 1205^a32. However, direct influence of *Magna moralia* on Aspasius seems not to be possible, because in *Magna moralia* the argument tends to show only that pleasure is a good thing, whereas in the *Nicomachean Ethics* the thesis is that pleasure is the supreme good.

affirming that pleasure is the greatest and the best thing. For he says that ‘perhaps it is also necessary’ [1153^b9] that it—pleasure, obviously—be the most choiceworthy thing.

The argument for this is given in lines 10–15, according to Aspasius (*g*):

- if ‘unimpeded activities’ of the best states occur when there is nothing impeding them,
- if happiness is the unimpeded activity of all the habitual states or of one of them,
- and if pleasure is the unimpeded activity of some habitual state,
- then it is clear that some pleasure would be the supreme good, i.e. happiness.

Next, at 151. 16–18 Aspasius concludes:

ἔστι δέ, ὡς φησι, τὰ ἐξῆς τῆς φράσεως· ἴσως δὲ ἀναγκαῖον αἰρετωτάτην εἶναι τὴν ἡδονήν, εἴπερ ἐκάστης ἕξεως καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς· διὰ μὲν οὖν τούτων δοκεῖ ταῦτόν ἀποφαίνεσθαι τὰγαθόν. (151. 16–18)

This is the rest of the sentence, as he says: ‘perhaps it is necessary’ that pleasure be most choiceworthy, ‘if in fact for each habitual state’ etc. With these words, then, he seems to say that the good and pleasure are one and the same.

We have, in effect, three positions, the anti-hedonists’ (*e*), the hedonists’ (*f*), and Aristotle’s argument (*g*), which seems to support (*f*). But Aspasius sees a danger in attributing to Aristotle the theory that ‘it is evident that some pleasure would be the best and the most final good, even if it happens that there are bad pleasures’.³⁴ And it is at this point that he makes the comments quoted at the beginning of the paper. Having attributed 1153^b7–9 to an unknown hedonist, Aspasius here goes on to inform us that Aristotle’s argument is only one from reputed opinion (*endoxa*), and is perhaps not endorsed by Aristotle himself. In saying (151. 26) that ‘whether those words [ταῦτα] express Eudemus’ or Aristotle’s view, this is an argument drawn from reputed opinion’, it is clear that he can only be referring to argument (*f*), and not to the whole passage or to the whole of book 7.³⁵ There is no hypothesis here about the authorship of book 7, still less of the three common books. Aspasius says:

³⁴ 151. 15: φανερόν ὡς ἂν εἴη τις ἡδονὴ τὸ ἄριστον καὶ τελειότατον τῶν ἀγαθῶν, εἰ οὕτως ἔτυχεν φαύλων οὐδῶν ἡδονῶν.

³⁵ Kenny, *Ethics*, 30–1 and n. 2; Gottschalk, ‘Aristotelian Philosophy’, 1158.

in *NE* 10, where his true doctrine of pleasure is set out, Aristotle discusses pleasure as if he had never before discussed it. If so, all the discussion of pleasure in 7. 12–15 might in fact have been seen as purely endoxical, but there is no sign in the preceding part of his commentary of any such interpretation. His interpretation seems to be confined to the argument at *NE* 1153^b9–12 (referred to by *τοῦτο*, 151. 24, and *ταῦτα*, 151. 26).

Let us take stock. In this section of the commentary Aspasius has discussed first (150. 3–30) what he takes to be two arguments against the anti-hedonists, one by Speusippus and one by Aristotle, and has observed that the second is the better. Next (150. 31–151. 18) he has discussed argument (*f*), which seems to identify pleasure with the supreme good and happiness. He finds that Aristotle appears to agree with (*f*), to back it with (*g*), and to consider its conclusions ‘necessary’. At this point, however, he refuses to accept Aristotle’s words at face value, and looks for a way out of the problem. His solution consists in saying that

- (1) the argument (*g*) which supports (*f*) is based on popular opinion;
- (2) in *NE* 10 Aristotle says the opposite, and there is no reference in that book to this argument, or in general to the book 7 discussion;
- (3) perhaps (*g*) is by Eudemos, not Aristotle, and is anyway based only on ‘popular opinion’;
- (4) ‘Some pleasure is the supreme good’ in reality means ‘Pleasure accompanies the supreme good and cannot be separated from it.’

Why refer (*g*) to Eudemos, and not to Eudoxus? This remains unclear, but the preceding mistake about Speusippus’ position at lines 150. 3–4 implies that Aspasius’ information about the position of Aristotle’s associates and the Academics is thoroughly confused. The source of his information is unknown (cf. ‘they say’, 150. 3), as is the reason why at some point he attributes (*g*), with some hesitation, to Eudemos. But at all events, his choice is to all appearances unrelated to the fact that in our manuscripts book 7 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is identical to book 6 of the *Eudemean Ethics*.

There are other puzzling attributions in this section of Aspasius’ commentary. Later, when commenting on chapter 15, he quotes a

passage from *NE* 7, 1154^b13–14, as if it were part of Theophrastus' *Ethics*:

καὶ τὸν Ἀναξαγόραν αἰτιᾶται Θεόφραστος ἐν Ἡθικοῖς λέγων ὅτι ἐξελαύνει ἡδονὴ
λύπην ἢ γὰρ ἐναντία. (156. 16–17)

Theophrastus too, in his *Ethics*, criticizes Anaxagoras, saying that '*pleasure, or at least the opposite pleasure, drives out pain*'.³⁶

Aspasius' ways of citing other philosophers deserve to be studied more carefully. He often quotes Plato, and does so with great precision, but when he refers to other philosophers—Pythagoreans, Anaxagoras, the Socratics, Xenophon, Theophrastus, Eudemus, Andronicus, Boethus, the early Peripatetics, the Stoics—he fails to maintain the same level of precision in every citation.³⁷ His commentary on the last part of book 7 seems somewhat negligent. Perhaps Konstan is right to say that at the end of his work Aspasius appears to have been a little tired.³⁸

The only puzzling point that remains to be explained in 151. 18–26 is the references there to book 10. In the commentary on book 1, book 10 is referred to simply with a 'later' (*ὕστερον*, 19. 2 and 23. 28–9). In the commentary on book 7 there is another implicit reference to book 10, when Aspasius says that 'the politician is the guide as to how happiness could come into being';³⁹ this refers to *NE* 1177^b12–14:

ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἡ τοῦ πολιτικοῦ ἄσχιος, καὶ παρ' αὐτὸ τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι περιποιου-
μένη δυναστείας καὶ τιμᾶς ἢ τὴν γὰρ εὐδαιμονίαν αὐτῷ καὶ τοῖς πολίταις.

The life of the politician is also unpleasurable, and, apart from the governing itself, procures power, honour and at least happiness for himself and the other citizens.

There is no indication here that the thesis is being derived from

³⁶ The italicized clause is identical to *NE* 1154^b13–14. Diels in app. corrects to ὡς Θεόφραστος. W. W. Fortenbaugh, *Quellen zur Ethik Theophrasts* (Amsterdam, 1984), 79 and 309, and in his edition of Theophrastus' fragments, places a lacuna after λέγων ὅτι (see W. W. Fortenbaugh *et al.*, *Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought and Influence* (Leiden, 1992), 555), which would mean that the verbatim quotation from Theophrastus' *Ethics* has been lost. Likewise Moraux, *Aristotelismus*, 266; Gauthier, 'Introduction', in R. A. Gauthier and J. Y. Jolif (trans. and comm.), *Aristote: Éthique à Nicomaque*, 2nd edn. (Louvain and Paris, 1970), 92, thinks that Theophrastus repeated Aristotle's expression word for word. But those are *ad hoc* solutions.

³⁷ See Heylbut's *Index nominum*, 242–5.

³⁸ Konstan, *Commentators*, 9.

³⁹ 141. 25–6: ὁ δὲ πολιτικὸς ὑφηγείται ὅπως ἂν γένοιτο εὐδαιμονία.

a work other than the *Nicomachean Ethics*, especially as another internal citation, this time of book 6, immediately follows:

ἔτι φρόνησις ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ λέγεται, διότι τὸν λόγον παρέχει ταῖς ἠθικαῖς ἀρεταῖς.
(141. 26–7)

Furthermore, prudence is called architectonic because it endows the ethical virtues with reason.⁴⁰

The commentary on book 7 seems here to be referring to *NE* 10 and to another common book, 6, in just the same way, as if they were parts of the same work.

How, then, are we to interpret the expression ‘in the *Nicomachean Ethics*’ (151. 21–2)? It may simply be an example of stylistic *variatio*, like ‘in the discussions concerning justice’ (ἐν τοῖς περὶ δικαιοσύνης, 160. 11), which we met earlier. It does not necessarily indicate that Aspasius is referring to the *Nicomachean Ethics* as a work which is different from the one on which he is here commenting. This is confirmed by the fact that in the commentary on book 8, which is an undisputed part of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aspasius refers to some lost part of the same *Nicomachean Ethics* with the expression ‘in the parts of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that have fallen out’ (ἐν τοῖς ἐκπεπτωκόσι τῶν Νικομαχείων, 161. 9–10). If so, Moraux’s claim, that when commenting on the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aspasius could not refer to another part of the same work with the words ‘in the *Nicomacheans*’, loses its apparent basis. For if Aspasius at 161. 9–10 refers to other parts of the *Nicomachean Ethics* with this very expression, ‘in the parts of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that have fallen out’, he can very well use the expression ‘in the *Nicomachean Ethics*’ at 151. 21–2 to refer to another passage of that work. It is strange that this passage has been used to support an argument to the contrary.

Università di Venezia ‘Ca’ Foscari

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⁴⁰ The reference is to 1141^b22–3.

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