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## THE CONCEPT OF ὉΠΟΣ BETWEEN ARISTOTLE'S TWO *ETHICS*\*

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One of the customary ways to formulate the possible difference between the *Eudemean Ethics* (*EE*) on the one hand and the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) on the other is in the terms of intellectualism.<sup>1</sup> Within the *ἔργον* argument in *EE* II,1 Aristotle defines “happiness” (εὐδαιμονία) as “the activity of perfect living in accordance with perfect virtue” (1219a38-39: ζῶης τελείας ἐνέργεια κατ’ ἀρετὴν τελείαν). The final passages of the *Eudemean Ethics* provide us with a clear definition and structure of the perfect virtue. The perfect virtue is καλοκἀγαθία (1249a16), a virtue comprising all of the particular virtues discussed thus far (1248b8-10). The καλοκἀγαθία is perfect in the sense of being complete and not lacking any part; furthermore, it is perfect, because, as will be demonstrated, it even adds something valuable to the natural goods such as health, wealth and honour.

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<sup>1</sup> For a valuable account of this term see KEYT 1978; for a summary of different approaches to the relation between the *Eudemean* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, cf. JOST 2014. The difference between the two *Ethics* phrased in intellectualistic terms is to be found in e.g. MONAN 1968; ROWE 1971, 35; COOPER 1975, 90-91, 118-119; KRAUT 1989, 251; BROADIE 1991, 374-375, 389; KENNY 1992, 5-6; REEVE 1992, 129; LEAR 2004, 5, 27; KENNY 2016<sup>2</sup>, 242-243.

The identification of the perfect virtue as *καλοκἀγαθία*, which includes the so-called practical virtues, has led to a general consensus that the *Eudemian Ethics* advocates a more inclusive and more complex notion of happiness than the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The lack of an analogous definition of the perfect virtue in the *Nicomachean Ethics* gives rise to conflicting interpretations of happiness. On the one hand, it can be read as an inclusive concept including practical virtues and other goods, quite similar to the account in the *Eudemian Ethics*. On the other hand, one could argue that happiness is the activity of *θεωρία* and other possible goods are excluded from its definition.<sup>2</sup>

I will argue that despite the fact that the *Eudemian Ethics* does not identify happiness with contemplation, the contemplation of god nevertheless plays a very important role as the *ὄρος* (standard) of our actions.<sup>3</sup> While examining this concept in *EE* VIII,3, I will show similarities with the usage of *ὄρος* in Aristotle's *Protrepticus*. On the other hand, I will argue that the *Nicomachean Ethics* does not entail this concept of *ὄρος* and in this respect it seems more particularistic than the *Protrepticus* or the *Eudemian Ethics*.<sup>4</sup>

I believe that this substantial difference is reflected in the methodological approaches in the two *Ethics* as well.<sup>5</sup> The *Eudemian Ethics* presents ethical inquiry in a rather scientific or even mathematical way compared to the *Nicomachean Ethics* which repeatedly questions the exactness and scientific character of ethics. I will start with these methodological differences and show how they relate to the substantial ethical discussion of *ὄρος* or its absence.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. BOBONICH 2006, 24–25; similarly in ROWE 1971, 33–36, yet Rowe leaves *καλοκἀγαθία* out of his interpretation.

<sup>3</sup> The first meaning of the term *ὄρος* listed by *LSJ* is “boundary” or “landmark”; I will discuss particular occurrences of the term and its meaning later in detail. For the purpose of this work the relevant meaning of this term is “standard” as “guideline” or “criterion”. One could see the relation to the first, traditional meaning of the term: the “boundary” or “landmark” functions as an orientation point which leads our steps and it can be even reached, i.e. it sets the goal for our steps or actions.

<sup>4</sup> On particularism see ENGBERG-PEDERSEN 1983 or LOUDEN 1986.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. BOBONICH 2006, 25–27 and INWOOD – WOOLF 2012, xviii for useful summary of these differences.

There are two most common explanations for the differences between the two *Ethics*: a difference in audience<sup>6</sup> and a change of mind on Aristotle's part.<sup>7</sup> If it were only for the methodological difference, i.e. presenting the same or similar subject matter in different ways or supported by a different sort of arguments, the explanation based on the difference in audience might be right. However, I will argue that the difference in methodology is closely related to a difference in Aristotle's substantive view of ethical matters which cannot be easily explained by reference to a different audience.

For the interpretation which follows it is helpful to mention another point from the discussion about the differences between the two *Ethics*. Allan in his classic discussion of the *Eudemean Ethics* introduced the notion of a "quasi-mathematical" method. This method consists in beginning with some true but vague propositions which will be refined by the philosopher so as to be rendered more precise and this process will reveal the relevant causes ("the why"). The precise result will then be confirmed from experience, i.e. from prevailing opinions. The entire scheme is, according to Allan, based on a mathematical pattern of deduction.<sup>8</sup> The *Nicomachean Ethics*, on the other hand, does not entail such strictness or exactness.

Despite the fact that Allan's account has been rightfully criticized,<sup>9</sup> its importance lies in highlighting that the *Eudemean Ethics* presupposes a much higher level of exactness and precision in ethics than the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Even if Allan is wrong concerning Aristotle's assumed inspiration by methods in geometry, it is still the case that the *Nicomachean Ethics* opposes any kind of mathematical method and exactness in ethics

<sup>6</sup> Cf. MILLER 2003; KENNY 2016<sup>2</sup>, 270 and SIMPSON 2013, xii. However see ROWE 2015, 224 against these interpretations. FREDE 2019, 112 concludes that "claims to the effect that the *EE* is better organized and philosophically more interesting at closer inspection turn out to be quite dubious".

<sup>7</sup> I am leaving aside Allan's somewhat critical remark that the difference might be – as far as I understand him – a difference of methodology, as in the case of Descartes' *Meditations* and *Principles of Philosophy*, ALLAN 1980, 318.

<sup>8</sup> ALLAN 1980, 307.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. JOST 1991, and recently KARBOWSKI 2015.

whereas the *Eudemian Ethics* does not exhibit any such hostility and its arguments are similar to mathematical proofs.<sup>10</sup>

Zingano further develops these complex differences in a clear way which can be supported by my interpretation that follows: “In a passage of *NE*, which has no parallel in *EE*, Aristotle writes that the virtuous man is the one who ‘judges correctly each action, and in each, the truth appears to him’ (3. 4, 1113a29–30). The virtuous man, once capable only of providing good opinions, now sees truth in each action. As soon as Aristotle makes such a change, he has to abandon the dialectical syllogism as the type of proof for ethics, for ethics is now in a place which opinion cannot systematically reach: the world of (practical) truth.”<sup>11</sup>

According to Zingano this means that the *Nicomachean Ethics* diminishes claims to accuracy in practical matters. The truth about practical matters does not belong to the domain of general principles or standards and is thus a part of the domain of perception.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Aristotle does not present induction as a tool for ascertaining a general standard in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. It is rather the state of our character which is responsible for how we judge practical matters:

“The good man judges each class of things rightly, and in each the truth appears to him; for each state of character has its own ideas of the noble and the pleasant, and perhaps the good man differs from others most by seeing the truth in each class of things, being as it were the norm and measure of them.”

ὁ σπουδαῖος γὰρ ἕκαστα κρίνει ὀρθῶς, καὶ ἐν ἑκάστοις τᾶληθές αὐτῷ φαίνεται. καθ’ ἑκάστην γὰρ ἔξιν ἰδίᾳ ἐστὶ καλὰ καὶ ἡδέα, καὶ διαφέρει πλείστον ἴσως ὁ σπουδαῖος τῷ τᾶληθές ἐν ἑκάστοις ὄρᾶν, ὥσπερ κανὼν καὶ μέτρον αὐτῶν ὄν. (*NE* III,4,1113a29–33)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. KARBOWSKI 2015, 112, 131–132.

<sup>11</sup> ZINGANO 2007, 314.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *NE* VI,8,1142a26–27: “practical wisdom is concerned with the ultimate particular, which is the object not of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) but of perception (αἴσθησις).”

<sup>13</sup> The translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are from BROWN – ROSS 2009, unless stated otherwise. The Greek text is from BYWATER 1890.

Similar claims are made in several instances in the special books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but nothing of the sort is to be found in the special books of the *Eudemian Ethics*, where ethical truth is modelled analogously to the truth of other sciences.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, as I will show later in the text, the *Protrepticus* groups ethical knowledge and philosophical expertise with all other knowledge and expertise which search for the proper natural ὄρος. Nothing like this is to be found in *NE* III,4,1113a29–33, where the norm (κανόν) and measure (μέτρον) is the practically wise man (φρόνιμος) or the excellent man (σπουδαῖος).

### The notion of ὄρος in the *Eudemian Ethics*

I will argue that the methodological differences have a counterpart in Aristotle's conception of the nature of moral affairs. This difference can be explicated by means of the example of the concept of ὄρος and its different usage in Aristotle's ethical works. The *Eudemian Ethics* discusses ὄρος at the very climax of the book, namely in the third chapter of Book VIII.

This chapter starts by revisiting past claims: Aristotle has already spoken of particular virtues (κατὰ μέρος ἀρετῆς) and their capacities. Now he will address the virtue that arises when they are combined: καλοκάγαθία (1248b7–11). Καλοκάγαθία is a perfect virtue in the sense of completeness;<sup>15</sup> someone who is καλός κάγαθός must have all particular virtues similarly as all body parts must be healthy for someone to be healthy. The specific task or work of καλοκάγαθία is to ensure that a person will use all of the natural goods in a noble way (1249a5–7). What does Aristotle mean by the term natural good? A natural good is for example health, strength, honour, good fortune and power. All of these things are naturally good, but can be harmful to those with bad character (ἐξίς, 1248b30). On the other hand, for a good person (ἀγαθός) – a person

<sup>14</sup> BOBONICH 2006, 26–27; DEVEREUX 2015, 146; KARBOWSKI 2019, 132; see e.g. *NE* IX,4,1166a12–13, X,5,1176a15–19 and X,6,1176b24–27.

<sup>15</sup> For a similar understanding of perfection as completeness cf. for example BROADIE 2010, 4.

with good character – these natural goods will be good (1248b26–27). Natural goods, however, are not noble in themselves because, Aristotle claims, they are not laudable or praiseworthy (ἐπαινετά, 1248b25). Natural goods are not praiseworthy precisely because they can be abused and are bad if the character of the person who possesses them is not good.

A noble person (καλὸς κἀγαθός) is someone who possesses noble goods and does noble deeds for their own sake (1248b34–36). Noble things are the virtues and their respective works (ἔργα). Since a noble person has noble motives and acts in a noble way, the natural goods are not only good for him (as in the case of a good person) but noble as well, since “things become noble when people’s motives in doing and choosing them are noble” (1249a5–6).<sup>16</sup>

Καλοκἀγαθία therefore ensures our correct treatment of the natural goods so that they are not only good for us but noble as well. But there seems to be an additional role of καλοκἀγαθία in relation to particular virtues. By the end of the discussion of natural goods and nobility, Aristotle adds that a person “who thinks that one should possess the virtues for the sake of external goods will do noble things only coincidentally” (1249a14–16). It is the Spartan character described a few lines earlier (1248b37–1249a6): someone who acknowledges the role of the virtues but considers them to be instrumentally good for the sake of the natural goods.<sup>17</sup> This means, for example, that he acknowledges the role of courage, justice and moderation but only as far as they contribute to e.g. honour, power and health. The virtues and their acts are not considered to be good in their own right; they are always good *for* something else, for an external good.<sup>18</sup> Such a person is a good person since the natural goods are good for him, but he is not καλὸς κἀγαθός, since his deeds and motives are not noble. It seems that καλοκἀγαθία thus positions the virtues in the right place as well. To be καλὸς κἀγαθός means

<sup>16</sup> On this interpretation of “noble” cf. Aristotle’s *Politics* (VII,13,1332a7–18) as well.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. SIMPSON 2013, 671–672.

<sup>18</sup> I believe that within this argument the “natural goods” and “external goods” are one and the same category. Cf. the general division of the goods at *EE* II,1,1218b32: one kind is in the soul (e.g. virtues), the other kind is external.

having virtues and doing virtuous things for their own sake, because they are virtuous.

How does a good person find the right path toward the natural goods so that they are not harmful for him?<sup>19</sup> Aristotle answers using the analogy of medicine: a doctor has a standard (ὄρος) by which he distinguishes a healthy body from a sick one. And at the same time, there is a standard for the degree to which something can be healthy and beyond which it can be harmful to health (1249a21–24), and further he adds:

“Similarly, in regard to actions and choices of things that by nature are good but not praiseworthy, the good man should have a standard of possession, choice, and avoidance concerning abundance and scarcity of wealth and other gifts of fortune.”

οὕτω καὶ τῷ σπουδαίῳ περὶ τὰς πράξεις καὶ αἰρέσεις τῶν φύσει μὲν ἀγαθῶν οὐκ ἐπαινετῶν δὲ δεῖ τινα εἶναι ὄρον καὶ τῆς ἕξεως καὶ τῆς αἰρέσεως καὶ περὶ φυγῆς χρημάτων πλήθους καὶ ὀλιγότητος καὶ τῶν εὐτυχημάτων. (*EE* VIII,3,1249a24–1249b3)<sup>20</sup>

Aristotle insists that the σπουδαῖος<sup>21</sup> must have a ὄρος according to which he judges the right amount of possession, in accordance with which he chooses and acts regarding the natural goods.<sup>22</sup> The doctor analogy says

<sup>19</sup> Since the noble man, καλὸς κἀγαθός, is at the same time a good man, the natural goods are good for him and moreover they are noble because of his καλοκἀγαθία, therefore, the following passage treating a good man's treatment of natural goods applies to the noble man as well.

<sup>20</sup> The translations of the *Eudemian Ethics* are from KENNY 2011, unless stated otherwise. The Greek text is from WALZER – MINGAY 1991.

<sup>21</sup> Kenny translates σπουδαῖος as “a good man” and presumably does not see a substantial difference between σπουδαῖος and ἀγαθός. Inwood and Woolf have “an excellent man”. The usage of σπουδαῖος here is not evidence that Aristotle refers to the noble man (καλὸς κἀγαθός) here as well, but it does make such an understanding possible.

<sup>22</sup> In opposition to ROWE (1971, 110) KENNY 2016<sup>2</sup>, 183 argues that the scope of this ὄρος is not limited to the natural goods; he shows that it does entail those virtues which deal with natural goods and generally the virtues of the lower part of the soul. BROADIE 2010, 5 interprets καλοκἀγαθία as “a general attitude to virtue as such” since according to her one can have all the virtues and not be καλὸς κἀγαθός.

that the doctor judges by reference to the ὄρος which is quite general since it covers “each thing”, and yet specific at the same time since it is the standard of more or less (ἐλαττον ἢ πλεόν, 1249a23) in these matters.<sup>23</sup>

The term ὄρος is used surprisingly little in the Hippocratic corpus, yet it is clear that a physician needs a standard for his actions. What can the medical analogy tell us? First, ὄρος is a distinguishing mark for the possibility of science. In *De arte* (V,22) we read “where the correct and incorrect have a proper ὄρος, surely there must be τέχνη”, i.e. wherever there is ὄρος for telling correct from incorrect we can establish an expertise and we do not have to be dependent on luck. Second, the ὄρος discussed in the Hippocratic corpus is a general standard which is looked for in particular cases so that the doctor knows how to proceed with diagnosis and treatment.<sup>24</sup>

What could be this ὄρος in the case of σπουδαῖος?<sup>25</sup> Aristotle’s first answer is that “one should conduct one’s living with reference to one’s superior (πρὸς τὸ ἄρχον ζῆν) and more specifically to the quality of one’s superior activity (πρὸς τὴν ἕξιν κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τὴν τοῦ ἄρχοντος)” (1249b6–8). What does he mean? I believe he refers back to the previous chapter (VIII,2), where the discussion of the origin (ἀρχή) of our thinking prompts Aristotle to write:

“As in the universe, so here, god moves everything. For in a manner the divine element in us moves everything. Reason is not the originator of reasoning, but something superior. But what can be superior to knowledge and to intelligence, except god? For virtue is an instrument of intelligence.”

<sup>23</sup> The sentence is ἐπεὶ δ’ ἐστὶ τις ὄρος καὶ τῷ ἱατρῷ, πρὸς ὃν ἀναφέρων κρίνει τὸ ὑγιεινὸν σώματι καὶ μὴ, καὶ πρὸς ὃν μέχρι ποσοῦ ποιητέον ἕκαστον καὶ εὖ ὑγιαίνον, εἰ δὲ ἐλαττον ἢ πλεόν, οὐκέτι (1249a21–24). The reference of ἕκαστον is not clear, yet the exact meaning is not crucial for my argument; for example, Rackham and Woods translate “each thing”, Kenny “each activity”.

<sup>24</sup> *De septimestri partu*, IX,26 talks about physicians using patients state on particular days (e.g. odd days or specific even days) as ὄρος for telling the crisis in the disease. *Epidemics*, VI,2,20–21 asks whether an appearance of a particularly sparse blood is not ὄρος for indicating empyema. The Hippocratic texts are read in the Loeb Classical Library edition. Cf. brief discussion in ANGIER 2010, 9–10.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. discussion in KENNY 2016<sup>2</sup>, 182–183 and BROADIE 2010.

ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ ὄλῳ θεός, [καί] κἀν ἐκείνῳ. κινεῖ γάρ πως πάντα τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν θεῖον· λόγου δ' ἀρχὴ οὐ λόγος, ἀλλὰ τι κρεῖττον· τί οὖν ἂν κρεῖττον καὶ ἐπιστήμης εἴη <καὶ νοῦ> πλὴν θεός; ἢ γὰρ ἀρετὴ τοῦ νοῦ ὄργανον. (EE VIII,2,1248a25–29)

God is the most superior element of all and the passage outlines a hierarchy of value: virtue is an instrument for intelligence (νοῦς) and intelligence with λόγος are inferior to god. The text is extremely condensed; however, it seems clear that the term “god” (θεός) at 1248a29 cannot refer to the divine in us but it points to the god that moves everything both in the universe as well as in the soul (1248a25–26) since θεός is contrasted with νοῦς which I believe is the divine in us. The νοῦς as the divine in us is the principle of movement in the soul, yet νοῦς itself has the origin of its movement in something superior (cf. 1248a18–20). The hierarchy between reason and god is laid out in terms of superiority. This is picked up by Aristotle's insistence that one's living should be organized and led in accordance with one's superior (ἄρχων) and the quality of his activity.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, a few lines later Aristotle says that the superior is god (1249b14) and thus concludes that:

“... whatever choice or possession of natural goods – bodily goods, wealth, friends, and the like – will most conduce to the contemplation of God is the best; this is the finest standard.”<sup>27</sup>

ἥτις οὖν αἴρεσις καὶ κτήσις τῶν φύσει ἀγαθῶν ποιήσει μάλιστα τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ θεωρίαν, ἢ σώματος ἢ χρημάτων ἢ φίλων ἢ τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθῶν, αὕτη ἀρίστη, καὶ οὗτος ὁ ὄρος κάλλιστος. (EE VIII,3,1249b16–19)

<sup>26</sup> The terminology indicates a possible relation between the god as the ἀρχή of thinking and at the same time the ἄρχων of our living; for the textual possibilities supporting this interpretation see DIRLMEIER 1984<sup>8</sup>, 499–500; I differ from Dirlmeier, since I accept that the ὁ θεός at 1249b14 refers to the god of the universe introduced at EE VIII,2,1248a22–29. See EJK 1989, 30–31 for a brief discussion of the relation to the *Metaphysics* XII and EJK 1989, 33–38 for a detailed commentary on this passage.

<sup>27</sup> For the sake of consistency, I have changed Kenny's choice of “criterion” for ὄρος at 1249b19 to “standard” as it was at 1249b1.

The ὄρος, the standard for natural goods, is the contemplation of god (τοῦ θεοῦ θεωρία). The meaning of the phrase τοῦ θεοῦ θεωρία is possibly controversial: is it the contemplation of god as the object of activity of our rational soul or is it the contemplation of the divine in us which is here called “god” and thus god is the subject of the activity of contemplation?<sup>28</sup> Dirlmeier argues for god as the subject of the activity, reading θεοῦ as a subjective genitive. He bases his interpretation on two passages where, according to him, Aristotle denotes νοῦς by the term θεός, these passages are *Politics*, III,16,1287a28–31 and *Protrepticus*, VIII,48,9–12.<sup>29</sup> However, Verdenius has shown that Dirlmeier’s understanding of these two passages is mistaken.<sup>30</sup> They confirm the relation between our νοῦς and the divine or god, but they do not suggest that θεός means νοῦς. Further, already Kenny saw that this interpretation is not credible: the previous passages used θεός solely for the god of the universe and, as we have seen, θεός was contrasted with νοῦς at 1248a28–29.<sup>31</sup>

I understand the phrase to take the god to be the object of contemplation which might even trigger the movement of intelligence itself (cf. 1248a25–29). Therefore, whatever the amount of natural goods, or whichever goods we choose, serves the contemplation of god, this amount or choice is thus good; on the other hand, when a given amount (either too much or too little) of the natural goods, or our choice, hinders or impedes the contemplation of god, the amount or choice is actually bad. In all practical matters regarding wealth, honour or health, the contemplation of god is the criterion which determines their goodness for us.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. overview in Woods 2005<sup>2</sup>, 193–198.

<sup>29</sup> DIRLMEIER 1984<sup>8</sup>, 499–500.

<sup>30</sup> VERDENIUS 1971, 289–290.

<sup>31</sup> KENNY 2016<sup>2</sup>, 175; Similarly Woods 2005<sup>2</sup>, 197 is sceptical about Dirlmeier’s interpretation.

Comparison with ὄρος in the *Protrepticus*

This conception of the contemplation of god as a ὄρος for our practical actions invites comparison with the concept of ὄρος in Aristotle's *Protrepticus*.<sup>32</sup> Although the dialogue *Protrepticus* was lost, the text has been reconstructed to an astonishing extent since the rediscovery of its fragments in the nineteenth century. Nowadays, Iamblichus's *Protrepticus* is the main source of the recovered text.<sup>33</sup>

Aristotle insisted in the *Protrepticus* that all expertise (τέχνη) including the lawgiver and philosopher must have standards (ὄροι) acquired from nature (X,55,1-2).<sup>34</sup> Unlike the other τέχνη, the philosopher takes his standards from the primary things themselves (ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν πρώτων, X,55,9) since he is a spectator (θεατής) of these precise things and not of their imitations. Philosopher's actions are then correct and noble (ὀρθαί καὶ καλά) since "he is the only one who lives looking toward nature and toward the divine".<sup>35</sup>

Aristotle lists several professions which acknowledge the importance of a natural ὄρος guiding their practice. Doctors and trainers of athletes

<sup>32</sup> VERDENIUS 1971, 289 discusses other possibly parallels between the *Protrepticus* and *EE* VIII,3. GAUTHIER – JOLIF 1970, 437–438 try to separate the concept of ὄρος in the *Protrepticus* from the usage in the *Eudemian Ethics*; however, their argumentation is based solely on the assumption that the *Protrepticus* belongs to the Platonic tradition, whereas the *Eudemian Ethics* is a peripatetic work, i.e. that these two works do not share the same philosophical framework.

<sup>33</sup> Therefore, all references to the *Protrepticus* are to PISTELLI 1888. For current discussion of the *Protrepticus* and its status within Aristotle's corpus see HUTCHINSON – JOHNSON 2005 and HUTCHINSON – JOHNSON 2018. Based on their findings I ascribe the views of the character Aristotle in the dialogue to Aristotle, the author.

<sup>34</sup> There are two occurrences of ὄρος within the preserved text of Aristotle's *Protrepticus*: VI,39,16 and the just quoted X,55,1-2. At VI,39,16–18 Aristotle writes: "what measure or what standard of good things is more precise than a practically wise man?" (ἔτι δὲ τίς ἡμῖν κανὼν ἢ τίς ὄρος ἀκριβέστερος τῶν ἀγαθῶν πλὴν ὁ φρόνιμος). The passage parallels *NE* III,7,1113a29–33 and X,5,1176a17–18; however, there is one difference to the *Nicomachean Ethics* which stresses that the practically wise man himself is the measure. As the subsequent sentence explains, the practically wise man is the measure and standard because of his knowledge (ἐπιστήμη, *Protrepticus*, VI,39,18–20). The nature of this knowledge will be explicated in the later passage around the second occurrence of ὄρος at X,55,1-2.

<sup>35</sup> *Protrepticus*, X,55,26–27: μόνος γὰρ πρὸς τὴν φύσιν βλέπων ζῆ καὶ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον.

agree that they must be knowledgeable about nature (φύσις) for the success of their practice (X,54,12–16). Aristotle adds that the legislator (νομοθέτης) must also be knowledgeable about nature. While the former professions are concerned with virtues of the body, he is concerned with virtues of the soul. However, both the body and soul belong to the sphere of nature. Moreover, the virtues of the soul are much more important for the success of the polis than the virtues of the body and therefore even a legislator must study nature, presumably in order to look for the natural ὄρος (X,54,16–22). Aristotle’s conviction that nature provides the correct ὄρος lies in that “everything that comes to be (or has come to be) in accordance with nature at any rate comes to be (or has come to be) well, since what is unnatural is inferior.”<sup>36</sup>

The science of living things belongs to the study of nature and therefore even the ὄρος of ethics and politics stems from this domain. One must look for proper natural ὄρος as it is not enough to proceed by copying others:<sup>37</sup>

“For just as in the other craftsmanlike skills the best of their tools were discovered on the basis of nature, in carpentry, for example, the carpenter’s line, the ruler, the string compass, <... missing line of the text ...> for some are acquired with water, or with light and beams of sunshine, and it is by reference to these that we put to the test what is to our senses adequately straight and smooth – similarly the statesman must have certain standards taken from the nature itself, i.e. from the truth, by reference to which he judges what is just, what is noble, and what is advantageous.”<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Protrepticus*, IX,50,16–19: καὶ τὸ μὲν γιγνόμενον γίγνεται, γέγονε δὲ τὸ γεγονὸς τό γε μὴν κατὰ φύσιν ἅπαν καλῶς, εἴτερ τὸ παρὰ φύσιν φαῦλον καὶ τῷ κατὰ φύσιν. Cf. *EE* II,10,1227a18–23 and *NE* I,9,1099b20–23 for the same claim that nature naturally ends in good; GEIS 2013, 297–298 provides a short interpretation of these passages. Moreover, in *EE* VII,6,1240b20–21 Aristotle claims that man is naturally good and being wicked is against nature.

<sup>37</sup> “The craft imitates nature” is a famous Aristotelian dictum (*Physics*, II,2,194a13ff., II,8,199a8ff.). In the *Protrepticus* Aristotle speculates that the craft cannot properly proceed by copying another craft, as it actually *needs* to be guided by nature in order to succeed. Cf. interpretation in MONAN 1968, 20–21.

<sup>38</sup> All translations of *Protrepticus* are from HUTCHINSON – JOHNSON 2017 unless stated otherwise. The only general exception is using “standard” for ὄρος instead of their “guideline”.

καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις τέχναις ταῖς δημιουργικαῖς ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως εὕρηται τὰ βέλτιστα τῶν ὀργάνων, οἷον ἐν τεκτονικῇ στάθμῃ καὶ κανὼν καὶ τόρνος <...> τὰ μὲν ὕδατι καὶ φωτὶ καὶ ταῖς ἀυγαῖς τῶν ἀκτίνων ληφθέντων, πρὸς ἃ κρίνοντες τὸ κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν ἰκανῶς εὐθὺ καὶ λεῖον βασανίζομεν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὸν πολιτικὸν ἔχειν τινὰς ὄρους δεῖ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως αὐτῆς καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, πρὸς οὓς κρινεῖ τί δίκαιον καὶ τί καλὸν καὶ τί συμφέρον. (*Protrepticus*, X,54,22-55,3)

The good house-builder uses such ὄρος as well, namely rulers and such like, and does not build merely by comparison with already completed houses (X,55,14-17). Similarly, a good lawgiver or politician does not merely imitate the institutions and constitutions of other states such as Sparta or Crete (X,55,17-21), but must have certain standards taken from nature itself.<sup>39</sup> Here, nature is called “truth” and the politician judges according to these natural standards what is “just, what is good, and what is advantageous” (X,55,1-3).<sup>40</sup> Therefore, all the crafts value their tools discovered on the basis of nature (ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως, X,54,22-24) and the standard for practical matters is taken from nature and truth itself (X,55,2). The phrase “what is just, what is noble, and what is advantageous” suggests that the judgment based on ὄρος should be made in a wide practical domain and it is not limited to natural sciences or crafts such as house-building or carpentry.

Aristotle writes that in skills other than philosophy the tools and the most precise thoughts are not acquired “from the primary things themselves” but rather rely on experience (οὐκ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν τῶν πρώτων ... ἕξ

<sup>39</sup> If the *Protrepticus* was written around the same time as Plato composed his *Laws* (suggested by HUTCHINSON - JOHNSON 2014, 385), this could signal a connection to the opening sequence of the *Laws*, where the Visitor enquires about the origins of the laws in Sparta and Crete. This connection could work both ways: either the young Aristotle is jesting at his teacher or Plato is indicating that Aristotle might be too hasty in turning down possible inspiration from these two city-states.

<sup>40</sup> Notice the three values of political life mentioned by Aristotle: a politician judges what is just (δίκαιον), noble (καλόν) and beneficial (συμφέρον). Aristotle does not discuss whether all three are always present at the same time, though all three are judged based on the standards or guidelines taken from nature itself.

ἐμπεριρίας, X,55,9–12).<sup>41</sup> The philosopher, on the other hand, “is a spectator of these very things, not of imitations” (X,55,13–14: αὐτῶν γὰρ ἐστὶ θεατῆς, ἀλλ’ οὐ μιμημάτων). Aristotle employs Platonic language hardly to be found anywhere else in his writings: all others, except the philosophers, must imitate (presumably in their crafts and lives) imperfect imitations.<sup>42</sup> These imitations are neither beautiful nor divine nor stable. Therefore, their imitations (the products and actions of non-philosophers) cannot be beautiful, stable and divine either. On the other hand:

“[...] the philosopher is the only craftsman to have both laws that are stable and actions that are correct and beautiful. For he is the only one who lives looking toward nature and toward the divine and, just as if he were some good navigator who hitches the first principles of his way of life onto things that are eternal and steadfast, he moors his ship and lives life on his own terms.”

[...] ἀλλὰ μόνον ὅτι μόνου τῶν δημιουργῶν τοῦ φιλοσόφου καὶ νόμοι βέβαιοι καὶ πράξεις εἰσὶν ὀρθαὶ καὶ καλαί. μόνος γὰρ πρὸς τὴν φύσιν βλέπων ζῆ καὶ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον, καὶ καθάπερ ἂν εἰ κυβερνήτης τις ἀγαθὸς ἐξ αἰδίων καὶ μονίμων ἀναψάμενος τοῦ βίου τὰς ἀρχὰς ὀρμεῖ καὶ ζῆ καθ’ ἑαυτόν. (*Protrepticus*, X,55,24–56,2)

The poetic language yields an important conclusion: the philosopher is the only one whose actions are correct and beautiful. As Aristotle writes later in the *Protrepticus*, his living is perfect. The reason for this is that he obtains his standards from looking directly into nature and the divine.<sup>43</sup> The philosopher is likened to a ship-captain who finds a safe haven where

<sup>41</sup> MOST 1992, 202 adds that poets could be another example of craftsman oriented towards transcendent truth.

<sup>42</sup> JAEGER 1923, 91, note 3 sees this as proof of Aristotle’s Platonism; Düring answers him at length in DÜRING 1960, 44–49. I agree with Düring that this does not seem evidence enough that Aristotle is championing the theory of Forms at his point.

<sup>43</sup> Concerning the look into the divine the two obvious parallels with Plato’s dialogues are the *Phaedrus*, 253a–e and *Alcibiades I*, 133c4–6.

he can moor his ship and live on his own terms (ζῆν καθ' ἑαυτόν).<sup>44</sup> This “living on his own terms” means that the captain lives in accordance with his nature and therefore he lives more and lives better than anyone not living on his own terms.

The *Eudemian Ethics* as well as the *Protrepticus* use the concept of ὄρος as a principle, standard or a guideline for our action. According to the *Protrepticus* the philosopher acts correctly and nobly, since he looks towards nature and the divine. According to the *Eudemian Ethics*, a good person as well as a noble person has a standard for their practical actions concerning the natural goods: the contemplation of god. The natural or external components of καλοκἀγαθία are good in so far as they promote the contemplation of god and they should be considered bad when they endanger or hinder this contemplation. Therefore, the goodness of the natural components of the complex concept of καλοκἀγαθία is dependent upon an intellectualistic principle. For good and noble people alike the contemplation of the divine is the criterion of correct choice and action.

### The occurrence of ὄρος in the first chapter of the common book on intellectual virtues

The concept of ὄρος in the *Eudemian Ethics* does not only appear in the closing chapter. It also appears at the beginning of the Book V, i.e. one of the common books shared with the *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>45</sup> In the remaining part of the article I will argue that the concept of ὄρος as found in the *Protrepticus* and *EE* VIII,3 cannot be a part of the exposition in the

<sup>44</sup> Plato in the *Republic* (VI,487e–489e) uses this simile to highlight the stratification within the state and to support the role of knowledge in guiding the polis. The good, knowledgeable captain in the *Republic* is attacked for being a “star-gazer” and good for nothing since he would spend time studying the heaven and stars. Yet, it is exactly this knowledge of nature which is necessary for a safe voyage on the sea.

<sup>45</sup> BONASIO 2019, 17 argues that the ὄρος passage in *EE* V,1 should be read in tandem with *EE* VIII,3.

*Nicomachean Ethics*. The question is why it occurs twice within the first chapter of one of the books common to both *EE* and *EN*?

It is well known that the *Eudemian Ethics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* share the so-called “common books”. We have separate books *EE* I-III and VII-VIII and *NE* I-IV and VIII-X; the middle books are common to both treatises as they have been delivered to us through the centuries (*EE* IV-VI = *NE* V-VII).<sup>46</sup> It is an open question where, i.e. within which of the *Ethics*, these common books originated. The debate thus far has sought the origin or the intended home of these books either in the *Eudemian Ethics* or *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>47</sup>

However, it is important to note that these are not the only two options. Beresford has recently suggested an alternative approach to this issue.<sup>48</sup> As Kenny notes, the common books are replete with repetitions – long repetitions of almost identical sentences and topics.<sup>49</sup> This repetitive style does not appear anywhere else in the remaining books of the *Eudemian Ethics* or *Nicomachean Ethics* and characterises only the common books.

Therefore, as Beresford quite plausibly suggests, the repetitions are the result of a later collation of two separate texts on the same issues. At some point, an editor tried to collate the two texts on ethics into one single treatment. This effort was successful in passages where the content was rather similar. Conversely, the work was left unfinished in sections

<sup>46</sup> The latest assessment of the manuscript tradition is in FREDE 2019, 88–89; her conclusion is that while the evidence suggests that the common books belong to the manuscript tradition of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, this says nothing about the state of the works in antiquity. VERDENIUS 1971 shows that the common books are transmitted in some manuscripts of the *Eudemian Ethics* as well.

<sup>47</sup> For the distinction between the question concerning the origin of the common books and their intended home see NIELSEN 2018.

<sup>48</sup> ADAM BERESFORD, Talk on the Editing of Book 5 of the *NE*, 14. 10. 2017, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C..

<sup>49</sup> KENNY 2016<sup>2</sup>, 242. Kenny does not list any examples, but cf. 1130a16–24 with 1130a28–1130b1 on particular injustice with several repetitions in these short parts of the text or the two examples of the shoemaker and the builder on the one hand and the shoemaker and the farmer on the other, both illustrating the same problem: the proportional equalisation of their goods and the invention of currency.

where the differences were too great for the text to be consolidated. The so-called “common books” which we now possess are the product of this editorial endeavour. It would thus be misguided to ask which of the *Ethics* they originally belonged to, as the entire hypothesis presupposes two complete treatises on ethics (perhaps lecture notes) from two different periods of Aristotle’s career.

Beresford’s suggestion – if developed and backed up by further research – might help to solve the problem why the current text of the *Nicomachean Ethics* mentions ὄρος and raises hopes that it will explain it. If his hypothesis is correct, then the double appearance of ὄρος at the opening of the *NE* VI,1 is not an act of carelessness on Aristotle’s part. Indeed, it seems that Aristotle is promising to provide an account of ὄρος which he never does within the *Nicomachean Ethics*. But it is only because the promise might be originally taken from the *Eudemean Ethics* where it is fulfilled in the Book VIII, chapter 3.<sup>50</sup> The editor collating the two *Ethics* into one (and thus creating the common books) took this passage from the *Eudemean* original but did not collate the later books because of their divergence. Therefore, we find the account of ὄρος only in *EE* VIII,3 and not in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. I will propose – based on Beresford’s hypothesis and the interpretation of the differences between the moral theory developed above – that the concept of ὄρος used in the *Protrepticus* and *Eudemean Ethics* is foreign to the *Nicomachean Ethics* as such.

Let us return to *EE* V,1 = *EN* VI,1. At the beginning of the chapter Aristotle says that he is about to give an explanation of his earlier claims that one ought always to choose the mean which is set by correct

<sup>50</sup> Cf. STEWART 1892, 1 who notes that the Book VI starts as if with two introductions. The appearance of ὄρος in the *Nicomachean Ethics* was already confusing for RAMSAUER 1879, 372 who refers to the *Eudemean Ethics* because of similar terminology. BURNET 1904, 250–251 considers the term ὄρος to be a sign of an “Eudemean touch”. Similarly, STEWART 1892, 3–4 interprets this passage as pointing to *EE* VIII,3. GAUTHIER – JOLIF 1970, 439 suggest the *Eudemean* origin of the passage, yet according to them it was properly reworked into the *Nicomachean* version. FREDE 2020, 660 briefly suggests Aristotle left this passage from the *Eudemean Ethics*. On the other hand, KRAUT 1989, 327–338 interprets the passage without any reference to the *Eudemean Ethics*. My own interpretation backs the *Eudemean* aspect of this passage with a doctrinal interpretation.

reason (ὀρθὸς λόγος).<sup>51</sup> The discussion of the mean and correct reason is a natural part of both *EE* and *EN*. However, I believe that the concept of ὄρος used in *EE* V,1 = *EN* VI,1 fits only into the *Eudemian Ethics* which shares this concept with the *Protrepticus*. Aristotle starts his explanation saying that:

“In all the states of character we have mentioned, as in all other matters, there is a mark to which the man who has reason looks, and heightens or relaxes his activity accordingly, and there is a standard which determines the mean states which we say are intermediate between excess and defect, being in accordance with correct reason.”

ἐν πάσαις γὰρ ταῖς εἰρημέναις ἕξεσι, καθάπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ἔστι τις σκοπὸς πρὸς ὃν ἀποβλέπων ὁ τὸν λόγον ἔχων ἐπιτείνει καὶ ἀνίησιν, καὶ τις ἔστιν ὄρος τῶν μεσοτήτων, ὡς μεταξὺ φαμεν εἶναι τῆς ὑπερβολῆς καὶ τῆς ἐλλείψεως, οὕσας κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον. (*EE* V,1 = *NE* VI,1,1138b21–25)

The mark (σκοπός) which we should look at is what we aim at in virtuous action.<sup>52</sup> The standard (ὄρος) determines or settles where the mean is. It is clear that this ὄρος is not limited to the action and choices regarding the natural goods, but rather encompasses all states of character and all matters. Aristotle further adds that this concerns “all other pursuits which are objects of knowledge” (1138b26–27: ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπιμελείαις, περὶ ὅσας ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη).<sup>53</sup> Moreover, it is clear that Aristotle assumes that σκοπός and ὄρος are two different concepts with different functions.<sup>54</sup> Aristotle concludes:

<sup>51</sup> The numbering and the Greek text will be from the *Nicomachean Ethics* since the common books are left out from modern editions of the *Eudemian Ethics*; I use the translation from BROWN – ROSS 2009; the translation of the passage from KENNY 2011 supports my understanding of ὄρος as “standard” as well.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *NE* I,2,1094a23–24: “Shall we not, like archers who have a mark (στόχος) to aim at, be more likely to hit upon what is right?” The σκοπός is set right by a virtue (VI,13,1144a8).

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Protrepticus*, IX,54,22–23: καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις τέχναις.

<sup>54</sup> I believe TUOZZO 1995, 138 is wrong in equating σκοπός and ὄρος, since the text does not support the identification; further ROWE 1971, 111 argues against identifying σκοπός with ὄρος.

“Hence it is necessary with regard to the states of the soul also, not only that this true statement should be made, but also that it should be determined what correct reason is and what is the standard which it [i.e. correct reason] uses.”<sup>55</sup>

διὸ δεῖ καὶ περὶ τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς ἕξεις μὴ μόνον ἀληθῶς εἶναι τοῦτ' εἰρημένον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διωρισμένον τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος καὶ τούτου τίς ὄρος. (*EE* V,1 = *NE* VI,1,1138b32-35)

The correct reason recognizes the ὄρος and it is because of this recognition that it is called correct. The reason is correct if it recognizes the ὄρος, the standard of a mean between excess and deficiency.

The back reference at the beginning of the chapter fits both *EE* and *EN*. Within the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the fact that virtue finds and chooses the mean is mentioned at II,6,1107a5-6 and it is said that virtue “hits” the mean (II,6,1106b27-29). The need for the definitional discussion of correct reason was announced at II,2,1103b31-34 and this passage points to Book six which is under discussion.<sup>56</sup> However, when later in the last chapter of the same book we come to the promised account of correct reason, which is here – with regard to practical matters – identified with φρόνησις, the concept of ὄρος is not mentioned.<sup>57</sup>

Similarly, one finds earlier passages on the mean and correct reason in the separate books of the *Eudemian Ethics* as well. Kenny refers to II,5,1222a6-10 and II,5,1222b7-8.<sup>58</sup> The first passage claims that what is the best and greatest is in accordance with correct reasoning. Aristotle further specifies that this good is the mean between excess and defect. This excess or defect can be either absolute (ἀπλῶς) or in relation to some standard (πρὸς τινα ὄρον, *EE* II,5,1222a16-17). The second passage is a promise of further investigation of correct reason, similar to *EN* II,2,1103b31-34, however Aristotle in this case specifies that he is

<sup>55</sup> Translation slightly altered, I am thankful to Matěj Novotný for this suggestion.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. FREDE 2020, 656.

<sup>57</sup> *EE* V,13 = *EN* VI,13,1144b26-28: ἔστι γὰρ οὐ μόνον ἡ κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον, ἀλλ' ἢ μετὰ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου ἕξις ἀρετῆς ἐστίν· ὀρθὸς δὲ λόγος περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἡ φρόνησις ἐστίν. Cf. commentary in FREDE 2020, 711-712.

<sup>58</sup> KENNY 2011, 167.

interested in correct reason and in the standard we should look at while defining the mean (*EE* II,5,1222b7–8: τίς δ' ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος, καὶ πρὸς τίνα δεῖ ὄρον ἀποβλέποντας λέγειν τὸ μέσον, ὕστερον ἐπισκεπτέον).

While the *Nicomachean Ethics* offers no explanation of ὄρος which was promised in *EE* V,1 = *EN* VI,1, we have such a definitional account in the *Eudemian Ethics*. According to the *EE* VIII,3 this ὄρος is the contemplation of god;<sup>59</sup> it has been elucidated that too much or too little of the natural goods can hinder the contemplation of god and that whatever hinders the contemplation of god is not correct and is thus bad. Correct reason recognizes this and commands that our action and choices maximise our contemplation of god.

This, of course, is the *Eudemian* version of the story; nothing of the sort is to be found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Not only does Aristotle not define the perfect virtue, nor does he discuss ὄρος anywhere else other than in these opening lines of the book on the intellectual virtues, i.e. Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (= Book V of the *Eudemian Ethics*).

Before proceeding further, I should clarify my understanding of ὄρος in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. One could object that ὄρος in the opening lines of Book VI does not mean “standard” as in Book VIII of the *Eudemian Ethics* but that it is a “definition”.<sup>60</sup> The term ὄρος appears in the two passages quoted above (1138b23 and b34). Within the first passage it would be unintelligible to translate ὄρος as definition. No definition can determine the mean states which are intermediate between excess and defect. The mean state can be – perhaps – explicated in a definition but it is determined by a standard. The ὄρος in 1138b34 could be translated as definition, however the exposition between both occurrences makes it highly unlikely since the term ὄρος at b34 picks up the earlier sentence at b21–25. Moreover, if ὄρος means standard at 1138b23 while at 1138b34 it means definition, Aristotle would use one important term in two different meanings within eleven lines, which I find unlikely.<sup>61</sup> Further, the

<sup>59</sup> BROADIE 2010, 24 argues that this ὄρος is not limited to the natural goods, but extends to the goodness of the soul in general, cf. *EE* VIII,3,1249b21–3.

<sup>60</sup> This could be based on Eustratius' interpretation, cf. ROWE 1971, 110–111.

<sup>61</sup> Similarly ROWE 1971, 111, cf. PETERSON 1988, 242–243.

text suggests ὄρος has a role within the account of good conduct. The role of a standard is to determine the mean states and actions. The possible role of a definition is unclear. And, finally, there is no occurrence of ὄρος in the rest of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where “definition” would be a suitable translation.<sup>62</sup>

### The impropriety of ὄρος in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

Despite the fact that the passages 1138b21–25 and 1138b32–35 quoted above look like the promise of further investigation, the *Nicomachean Ethics* never discusses the concept of ὄρος.<sup>63</sup> The meaning of ὄρος is thus left open and its role in the argumentation is unclear.

<sup>62</sup> The only occurrence of the term ὄρος in the books specific to *NE* is in I,7,1097b13 in the discussion of self-sufficiency where it means “limit” or “boundary”: we are naturally social living beings, our conception of a happy life includes family, friends and social relations. Yet, there has to be a certain *limit* for how many can be included. – Further, within the common books, the term is used in a mathematical sense to describe a ratio or proportion (*NE* V,3,1131b5, b9, b16 = *EE* IV,3) or as a logical term of a proposition (*NE* VI,9,1142b24 = *EE* V,9; *NE* VI,11,1143a36, b2 = *EE* V,11 and *NE* VII,3,1147b14 = *EE* VI,3). At *NE* VII,5,1149a1 (= *EE* VI,5) it means boundary. The other occurrences of ὄρος in the common books are in *NE* VI,8,1142a26 (= *EE* V,8) and VII,13,1153b25 (= *EE* VI,13). However, even here, there is no account of what ὄρος is or how it works. First, within the discussion of the differences between reason and practical wisdom it is said that reason concerns ὄρος which is without λόγος whereas practical wisdom concerns what comes last, i.e. particulars (ὁ μὲν γὰρ νοῦς τῶν ὄρων, ὃν οὐκ ἔστι λόγος, ἢ δὲ τοῦ ἐσχάτου, 1142a25–26). Understanding of the sentence among the interpreters is far from certain. The relation between reason and practical wisdom suggests that ὄρος means “term” or “general term” in opposition to particulars. BROADIE – ROWE 2002, 183 translate τῶν ὄρων at 1142a26 as “definitions”, at the crucial passage 1138b34 they understand ὄρος, curiously, as “determining mark”. Interpretation of this complicated sentence opens the discussion about the distinct objects of νοῦς and φρόνησις; whatever the conclusion of such discussion, I would be reluctant to say that while φρόνησις generally concerns particulars νοῦς concerns definitions. It seems to me better to side with the majority of translations and opt for understanding ὄρος here as “general term”. Finally, in the context of “good luck” (εὐτυχία), it is said that the ὄρος of good luck is fixed by reference to εὐδαιμονία (1153b25), i.e. ὄρος here is a limit beyond which good luck cannot be called the same because it is not “good” anymore since it goes against happiness.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. ROWE 1971, 112 or KRAUT 1989, 330 complaining that “unfortunately, Aristotle does not spell out any answer to these questions”. See further references to the frustrations of modern interpreters in PETERSON 1988, 234–236.

Ackrill suggests that “promoting εὐδαιμονία” could be such a ὄρος.<sup>64</sup> This suggestion is plausible when informed by the meaning of ὄρος in the *Eudemian Ethics*, presupposing that the *Nicomachean Ethics* considers εὐδαιμονία to be a kind of θεωρία (*NE* X,8,1178b33, cf. X,7,1177b19). Since θεωρία is the prime activity (ἐνέργεια) of god (*NE* X,8,1178b21–22) and the *Eudemian Ethics* claims that “one should conduct one’s living with reference to one’s superior, and more specifically to the quality (ἕξις) of one’s superior activity (ἐνέργεια)” (*EE* VIII,3,1249b7–8), this comprehensive interpretation makes sense.<sup>65</sup> However, it mixes accounts from two different treatises and Ackrill is right to acknowledge that nothing in this vein is suggested anywhere in the *Nicomachean Ethics* itself.<sup>66</sup>

Rowe thinks that the ὄρος concerns “particular cases”<sup>67</sup> but immediately suggests that there is “no detailed criterion possible” within Aristotle’s ethical system and that “there is no reason why Aristotle should not answer the question by saying, in effect, that no such [sc. ὄρος] exists”.<sup>68</sup>

Peterson in her study of ὄρος and its relation to “right” or “correct” reason (ὀρθὸς λόγος) offers four possible answers to Aristotle’s question which she rephrases as follows: “what is the line or border between too much and the intermediate and between too little and the intermediate that the right reason of the person of practical wisdom marks off?”<sup>69</sup> The terms “line” and “border” imply a certain level of exactitude. Yet, none of the four answers proposed by Peterson operate with any level of exactness

<sup>64</sup> ACKRILL 1980, 138.

<sup>65</sup> This is the strategy of Reeve who tries to reconcile both *Ethics* and argues that the ὄρος has the same meaning in both treatises, namely it is the contemplation of god, cf. REEVE 2012, 134–140. Reeve’s attempt to identify the same ὄρος in both *Ethics* encounters two problems: the meaning of ὄρος allegedly employed in *NE* is said to be derived from *EE* and the *Protrepticus*, despite their possible incongruences with *NE*; second, the conclusion of his synthesizing analysis, which conversely draws on *NE*, contradicts the conclusion concerning ὄρος explicitly posed in *EE*.

<sup>66</sup> ACKRILL 1980, 138. Cf. similarly COOPER 1975, 101–103; as Peterson remarks Cooper differs from Ackrill in taking the ὄρος to determine the mean state, whereas Ackrill takes it as a general criterion or standard of what has to be done; cf. PETERSON 1988, 235.

<sup>67</sup> ROWE 1971, 111.

<sup>68</sup> ROWE 1971, 112; cf. BROADIE – ROWE 2002, 358–360.

<sup>69</sup> PETERSON 1988, 242; cf. KRAUT 1989, 327–334.

which might correspond to (a) the methodological remarks made in the *Eudemian Ethics* which call for proper explanation of the causes and possible congruence of different opinions using rational argumentation or (b) Aristotle's concept of ὄρος in *EE* VIII,3 interpreted above. I am inspired by Peterson's approach, though I will argue that the answers she suggests do not qualify as possible candidates for ὄρος. I will list them in order to clarify the difference between the conceptualization of the ethics in the *Eudemian Ethics* on the one hand and in the *Nicomachean Ethics* on the other.

First, Aristotle cannot actually define ὄρος because the nature of practical matters – as understood in the *Nicomachean Ethics* – does not allow it. Finding the mean is not easy and is not a matter of reasoning:

“for it is not easy to determine both how and with whom and on what provocation and how long one should be angry [...] up to what point and to what extent a man must deviate before he becomes blameworthy it is not easy to determine by reasoning, any more than anything else that is perceived by the senses.”

οὐ γὰρ ῥᾴδιον διορίσαι καὶ πῶς καὶ τίσι καὶ ἐπὶ ποίοις καὶ πόσον χρόνον ὀργιστέον [...] ὁ δὲ μέχρι τίνος καὶ ἐπὶ πόσον ψεκτὸς οὐ ῥᾴδιον τῷ λόγῳ ἀφορίσαι· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλο οὐδὲν τῶν αἰσθητῶν. (*NE* II,9,1109b14–22)<sup>70</sup>

Our practical decisions (at least in the moral domain) are based on our trained moral sensibility and not on any general principle or standard.<sup>71</sup> When Aristotle pairs decision-making with perception (1109b23), he makes clear that virtues allow us to *see* what is good and what is not.<sup>72</sup> The proper objects of perception are particulars, not abstract entities or principles or standards.<sup>73</sup> Aristotle is therefore incapable of defining

<sup>70</sup> Cf. similarly in *NE* II,3,1104a8–10 or IV,4,1126b1–4.

<sup>71</sup> On the difficulty of finding the mean cf. KRAUT 1989, 328 and the even more explicit statement in LONDON 2001, 582: “Aristotle says that with respect to a given action or emotion as such, there is no single fixed point that is always right (*NE* II,6,1106a29–32).”

<sup>72</sup> Cf. ENGBERG-PEDERSEN 1983, 202 on φρόνησις as a form of perception.

<sup>73</sup> NATALI 2010, 94–95 accepts that “the judgement of particular situations is left by him to moral perception, *aisthēsis*, both in intellectual and in moral knowledge,” though

or even articulating any ὄρος, he can merely introduce particular examples, just as if one were to explain what the colour red is. This seems to be Rowe's solution to the problem: there is no general and abstract answer to the question "What should I do?" or "What is good to do?"<sup>74</sup>

Second, Aristotle suggests that even if there were some general truths, one could not know them in advance. We do not deliberate and make choices concerning necessary things, nor about the things outside of our power.

"Deliberation is concerned with things that happen in a certain way for the most part, but in which the outcome is obscure, and with things in which it is indeterminate."

τὸ βουλευέσθαι δὲ ἐν τοῖς ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ, ἀδήλοις δὲ πῶς ἀποβήσεται, καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀδιόριστον. (*NE* III,3,1112b8-9)

As Peterson puts it, "often what is true to say will be clear at the moment of action".<sup>75</sup> Human deliberation is problematic and difficult, as the outcome is uncertain and indeterminate – if this were not the case, we would have no reason to deliberate.

Third, even if there were some general principles and standards, recording them in an ethical treatise would be practically useless as they would lack an appropriate audience. Experienced people with good character do not need these standards as it is their good character that leads them to act well. Conversely, those who are not experienced cannot make proper use of such standards due to their lack of experience:

he is right to warn against scepticism concerning the general ideas presented in Aristotle's ethics, "the very possibility of knowing the particular depends on the possession of the universal, as (sc. Aristotle) says both in the *Analytics* and in the *Metaphysics*, because, as we saw at the beginning, the particular always falls under an universal that explains it (981a22)." However, this importance of universals still does not establish the necessity or even possibility of a general standard in ethical judgements.

<sup>74</sup> BROADIE – ROWE 2002, 359. Cf. GRANT 1885, 514 commenting on this passage: "Aristotle meant that general rules are often inapplicable to particular cases, which must then be decided by a kind of 'intuition' or 'tact', not derived from philosophy, but natural."

<sup>75</sup> PETERSON 1988, 245; she is referring to Aristotle's claim that "the decision rests with perception" (ἐν τῇ αἰσθήσει ἢ κρῖσις, *NE* II,9,1109b22-23).

“Even medical men do not seem to be made by a study of textbooks. Yet people try, at any rate, to state not only the treatments, but also how particular classes of people can be cured and should be treated – distinguishing the various habits of body; but while this seems useful to experienced people, to the inexperienced it is valueless.”

οὐ γὰρ φαίνονται οὐδ' ἰατρικοὶ ἐκ τῶν συγγραμμάτων γίνεσθαι. καίτοι πειρῶνται γε λέγειν οὐ μόνον τὰ θεραπεύματα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἰαθεῖεν ἂν καὶ ὡς δεῖ θεραπεύειν ἑκάστους, διελόμενοι τὰς ἕξεις· ταῦτα δὲ τοῖς μὲν ἐμπείροις ὠφέλιμα εἶναι δοκεῖ, τοῖς δ' ἀνεπιστήμοισιν ἀχρεῖα. (*EN X,9,1181b2-6*)

At the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defines the goal of ethical studies to be action instead of knowledge (*NE I,3,1095a5-6*: ἐπειδὴ τὸ τέλος ἐστὶν οὐ γνῶσις ἀλλὰ πράξις). Therefore, the inexperienced and young are not suited to study the science of politics, since it is derived from action and is about action. In order to understand ethics properly and effectively, Aristotle claims that one needs to experience the actions that it entails (*1095a2-6*). This means that a theoretical knowledge of rules and standards will not suffice.

Fourth, ὄρος might be a superfluous concept, as it has been established that of the utmost importance is the character of a good man coupled with practical wisdom, which allows for the correct choice to be made in a particular situation.<sup>76</sup> Aristotle's definition of a moral virtue says that it is “a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by reason, and by that reason by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it” (*NE II,6,1106b36-1107a2*: ἔστιν ἄρα ἡ ἀρετὴ ἕξις προαιρετικὴ, ἐν μεσότητι οὕσα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὠρισιμένη λόγῳ καὶ ᾧ ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὀρίσειεν).<sup>77</sup> The mean here is determined by λόγος, which is not an eternal standard but the reason of a practically wise man.<sup>78</sup> The concept of moral virtue in

<sup>76</sup> PETERSON 1988, 246–247.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. LONDON 2001, 571.

<sup>78</sup> Recently a line of interpretation has emerged which understands λόγος in the definition of virtue as a principle or rule, cf. TUOZZO 1995 and CURZER 2016; even this

the *Nicomachean Ethics* does not entail anything that resembles the ὄρος found in the *Protrepticus* and *Eudemian Ethics*. The concept of ὄρος is simply obsolete in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Whereas the *Eudemian Ethics* and *Protrepticus* look for the right ὄρος in practical matters (i.e. the matters concerning natural goods according to the narrow interpretation of καλοκάγαθία) and they settle this ὄρος with reference to the nature or to the divine, the closest thing to a standard which the *Nicomachean Ethics* can offer is the σπουδαῖος, the outstanding person, which is said to be the “norm and measure” (κανὼν καὶ μέτρον, 1113a29–33):

“The man who is without qualification good at deliberating is the man who is capable of aiming in accordance with calculation at the best for man of things attainable by action.”

ὁ δ' ἀπλῶς εὖβουλος ὁ τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀνθρώπου τῶν πρακτῶν στοχαστικὸς κατὰ τὸν λογισμὸν. (*NE* VI,7,1141b12–15)

Such a man must be a virtuous man, since virtue aims at the mean (στοχαστικὴ τοῦ μέσου). However, even here there is not a single mention of ὄρος that would in any way inform the process of finding and choosing the mean in emotions and actions (1109a20–5; and cf. 1107a2–6).<sup>79</sup> Now it seems that the concept of aiming or hitting,<sup>80</sup> and the capacity of a virtue to “hit” upon a mean, is used, instead of looking to a ὄρος that would settle the question of right action and choice. I believe this change to be one of the main differences between the two *Ethics*. Instead of looking for a general ὄρος which one is supposed to find in each and every relevant situation, the idea seems to be that virtue is the character state which enables us to “hit” the mean, the right spot, the right course of action. As Aristotle says, a good decision-maker in the general sense

understanding of λόγος does not threaten my interpretation of ὄρος and its role in the Aristotle's two *Ethics*. The interpretation of λόγος does not have to affect understanding or the role of ὄρος.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. LONDON 2001, 572–574 on this passage.

<sup>80</sup> On these concepts cf. ENGBERG-PEDERSEN 1983, 189–190; BOUDON-MILLOT 2005, 96–99.

is good at aiming at or hitting on the highest goods (*NE* 1141b12-14, quoted above). The verb “to aim/hit” (στοχάζεσθαι) or the derived adjective “skilful in aiming at / able to hit” (στοχαστικός) is used both in general explanations of how virtues work (e.g. at 1106b16, 1106b28, 1109a22) as well as in descriptions of how individual virtues or vices work (cf. 1126b29 and 1128a6).<sup>81</sup> Neither of the words is used within the *Eudemian Ethics* and here virtue is not understood as a character state which aims or hits on something.

### Conclusion

Most authors articulate the main difference between the two *Ethics* in terms of intellectualism: the outcome of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is much more intellectualistic compared to the *Eudemian* version. The *Eudemian Ethics* defines εὐδαιμονία with the reference to the complex καλοκἀγαθία, which also subsumes the practical virtues.

This seemingly well-founded general view was recently called into question by Broadie who rehabilitates theoretical reason and its activity (θεωρία) in the *Eudemian Ethics*.<sup>82</sup> According to her, Aristotle claims that theoretical reason is ruled by god just as “health” rules the medical art: it does not rule by prescriptions but as a goal to be reached (1249a13). Aristotle states that analogously to orders being issued for the sake of health in the medical art, the practical wisdom issues orders for the sake of god (cf. 1249b14-15). The god described here is clearly the cosmic god, the origin of all motion and reasoning (1248a25-29). Broadie concludes: “God is the object studied in theoretical activity, and practical wisdom (in the *kalos k’agathos* who is involved with theoretical activity) acts so as to maintain whatever disposition or dispositions underlie

<sup>81</sup> Cf. KRAUT 1989, 329, who is led from analysing the sentences about hitting the mean at II,6,1106b28 to considering the concept of ὄρος at VI,1 and finally complains that Aristotle does not give answer to the question of ὄρος in ethics.

<sup>82</sup> BROADIE 2010, 22-24. Similarly, DIRLMEIER 1984<sup>8</sup>, 498 stresses the priority of τὸ θεωρητικόν at *EE* VIII,3,1249a21-b29.

*theoria*. Practical wisdom is concerned with any such disposition as basis for theoretical activity.”<sup>83</sup> Practical wisdom is presented here as inferior both to god and to the *θεωρία* for the sake of which it gives commands.

I accept Broadie’s reconciliation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Eudemian Ethics* in one respect: they both have an important role for *θεωρία*. However, the main point of my argument remains, both texts differ in the respect of the role of *ὄρος*.

Broadie’s conclusion resembles the result of the comparison between practical wisdom (*φρόνησις*) and theoretical wisdom (*σοφία*) in the final lines of Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle says about practical wisdom:

“But again it is not supreme over philosophic wisdom, i.e. over the superior part of us, any more than the art of medicine is over health; for it does not use it but provides for its coming into being; it issues orders, then, for its sake, but not to it.”

ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ κυρία γ’ ἐστὶ τῆς σοφίας οὐδὲ τοῦ βελτίονος μορίου, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τῆς ὑγείας ἢ ἰατρικῆ· οὐ γὰρ χρῆται αὐτῇ, ἀλλ’ ὄρα ὅπως γένηται ἐκείνης οὗν ἕνεκα ἐπιτάττει, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐκείνην.  
(*NE* VI,13,1145a6–10 = *EE* V,13)

In both treatises, *φρόνησις* provides for *σοφία* and its activity; the comparison is in both cases illuminated by the example of medicine and health and in both cases the relation is expressed as “giving orders”. These passages clearly exhibit similar features and, moreover, if Broadie’s interpretation is correct, even the *Eudemian Ethics* suggests that practical wisdom is subservient to theoretical activity.

The last point of Broadie’s interpretation examines the final lines of the argument concerning *ὄρος* as the *θεωρία* of god:

“And this applies to the soul, and it is the best *ὄρος* for the soul when one is least aware of the irrational part of the soul as such.”

<sup>83</sup> BROADIE 2010, 23.

ἔχει δὲ τοῦτο τῆ ψυχῆ, καὶ οὗτος τῆς ψυχῆς ὄρος ἄριστος τὸ ἥκιστα αἰσθάνεσθαι τοῦ ἀλόγου μέρους τῆς ψυχῆς, ἣ τοιοῦτον.  
(*EE* VIII,3,1249b21–23; transl. Inwood and Woolf)<sup>84</sup>

The best ὄρος for the amount and usage of natural goods is said to be the ὄρος of the soul as well. The entire soul is in good shape when it supports the contemplation of god and is in bad shape when it hinders and obstructs the contemplation of god.<sup>85</sup> This means that the virtuous soul – i.e. a soul that is in good shape – supports the activity of contemplation. This could explain the earlier claim that virtue is an instrument or tool of intellect (νοῦς) and that god is superior (κρείττων) to knowledge and intellect (*EE* VIII,2,1248a25–29 quoted above, p. 14–15). The virtues are “instruments” in the sense that they provide for the contemplative activity which must be originated by god as an external ἀρχή. This is the same god, which is the object of the contemplation in question.

One might compare the passage from *NE* X,7 on σχολή, where the practical virtues have a similar position:

“And happiness is thought to depend on leisure; for we are busy that we may have leisure, and make war that we may live in peace. Now the activity of the practical virtues is exhibited in political or military affairs, but the actions concerned with these seem to be unlesurely.”

δοκεῖ τε ἡ εὐδαιμονία ἐν τῇ σχολῇ εἶναι ἀσχολούμεθα γὰρ ἵνα σχολάζωμεν, καὶ πολεμοῦμεν ἵν' εἰρήνην ἄγωμεν. τῶν μὲν οὖν πρακτικῶν ἀρετῶν ἐν τοῖς πολιτικοῖς ἢ ἐν τοῖς πολεμικοῖς ἢ ἐνέργεια, αἱ δὲ περὶ ταῦτα πράξεις δοκοῦσιν ἀσχοιοι εἶναι, αἱ μὲν πολεμικαὶ καὶ παντελῶς. (*NE* X,7,1177b4–8)

Similarly, as in the *Eudemian Ethics*, the practical virtues exhibited in political and military affairs act so as to maintain or achieve σχολή which in

<sup>84</sup> Here I use the translation of Inwood and Woolf, since it is closer to Broadie's understanding of the text. The Greek here is unclear and any interpretation borders on speculation; for the discussion of the textual issues cf. DIRLMEIER 1984<sup>8</sup>, 504; TUOZZO 1995, 142 and BROADIE 2010, 24.

<sup>85</sup> BROADIE 2010, 24.

turn is necessary for θεωρία. Therefore, the idea that the practical virtues – which might be good in themselves as well – are also subservient to some higher goal, namely intellectual or theoretical activity, is to be found in both *Ethics*.<sup>86</sup>

To conclude, I consider the *Nicomachean Ethics* to be rather complex and not as unequivocally intellectualistic as, for example, Monan and many others have claimed. On the other hand, I understand the climax of the *Eudemian Ethics* to be more intellectualistic and contemplative. I have argued that the intellectualism or the primacy of θεωρία is present in both writings in a structurally similar fashion. However, Monan is right in noticing that this intellectualistic aspect is far more developed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* compared to the discussion in the closing lines of the *Eudemian Ethics*.

One of the major differences between the two texts lies in how the goodness of our actions is measured. Whereas the *Eudemian Ethics* (together with the *Protrepticus*)<sup>87</sup> works with the concept of ὄρος, which is the standard of goodness of our actions and choices, the *Nicomachean Ethics* does not deem practical matters capable of such precision nor does it recognize a general standard of good acting and choosing. Why is the concept of ὄρος missing from the *Nicomachean Ethics* (apart from the occurrences in the common books)? I have argued that the concept of ὄρος is rendered obsolete if not quite out of place in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. I have presented four reasons which suggest that Aristotle actually abandoned the notion of a general ὄρος for ethical matters in favour of the concept of aiming at or hitting the right mean by way of our virtuous character.

<sup>86</sup> STEWART 1892, 9 even claims that there is “no difference” between *NE* X,6-7 and *EE* VIII,3 with regard to the ultimate standard.

<sup>87</sup> The similar use of φρόνησις in the *Eudemian Ethics* (I-II) and the *Protrepticus* (VII, XII) is a further reason to examine these two works in relation.

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## Summary

### THE CONCEPT OF ὄΡΟΣ BETWEEN ARISTOTLE'S TWO *ETHICS*

The article shows a difference in Aristotle's ethical theory between the *Protrepticus* and *Eudemian Ethics* on the one hand and the *Nicomachean Ethics* on the other. The difference is explicated by means of the interpretation of the concept of ὄρος (standard) in these writings. The *Protrepticus* and *Eudemian Ethics* present ethical theory as an expertise which – together with other sciences – has a standard for decisions and actions taken from nature and the divine. The ethical theory presented in the *Nicomachean Ethics* does not entail such a strong concept of ὄρος and it treats ethics in contrast to other, more exact, sciences. Finally, the article presents a tentative suggestion as to why it seems that the *Nicomachean Ethics* VI,1 raises hopes that it will provide a detailed account of ὄρος when in fact there is no discussion of it.

Keywords: Aristotle; morality; *horos*; *Nicomachean Ethics*; *Eudemian Ethics*; *Protrepticus*

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