

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSIGNMENT REPORT  
T.D. Roche

I received a Professional Development Assignment for the fall semester of 2013 in order to conduct research in my area of study, ancient Greek philosophy. The main focus of my research involved work on a book entitled *Aristotle's Nicomachean Conception of Happiness*. This book aims at providing a defense of a unique interpretation of Aristotle's theory of complete happiness or complete well-being (*teleia eudaimonia*) primarily as it is expounded in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*), but also as it is discussed in the *Politics* and *Eudemian Ethics*. The conclusions to be defended in the book are contrary to a number of recent scholarly attempts at interpreting Aristotle's moral philosophy and tracing its development. My arguments are intended, first, to challenge recent 'intellectualist' interpretations of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (e.g., those provided by C.D.C. Reeve, Gabriel Richardson-Lear, John Cooper, Anthony Kenny, Richard Kraut, Robert Heinaman and others), and second to rebut Kenny's proposal regarding the chronology of the compositions of the books of the *Eudemian Ethics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. An intellectualist interpretation holds that *eudaimonia*, for Aristotle, consists in theoretical activity alone. But this view appears to be inconsistent with Aristotle's frequent indications in the majority of the books of the *NE* that the exercise of moral, social, and political virtues are important components of happiness. I maintain that the apparent equation of the complete happiness with excellent theoretical activity in *NE* 10 is just that, merely apparent. The position Aristotle actually defends is that the primary component of complete well-being is excellent theoretical activity. But morally virtuous activities and certain "external goods", such as friends, honor, and political rights and privileges are also included in his notion of complete happiness. After showing that this *non*-intellectualist interpretation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is more plausible than an intellectualist interpretation, I argue that this result undermines Kenny's primary argument for rejecting the traditional ordering of Aristotle's ethical treatises, the ordering according to which the *Eudemian Ethics* is the later and more philosophically sound treatise. We have strong reasons to believe that neither the *Eudemian* nor the *Nicomachean Ethics* offers an intellectualist conception of the ideal life and that there is no compelling evidence that the *Eudemian Ethics* is the later and more philosophically acceptable treatise.

During my Professional Development assignment, I was able to complete drafts of two chapters of the book and plan to complete the remaining three chapters over the summer of 2015. The research also enabled me to complete a paper that represents an important section of one of the book's chapters. This paper, entitled "The Alleged Distinction Between *Makariotēs* and *Eudaimonia* in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: Happiness, the Goods of Fortune, and Solon's Maxim," has been submitted to the journal *Classical Quarterly*. The research also allowed me to work on two other papers also related to a section of the book. The papers are nearly complete and will be submitted for publication. These papers are "*Agathoi* and *Kalokagathoi* in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*" (which will be submitted to the journal *Ancient Philosophy*), and "The Ugly, the Lonely, and the Lowly: Reply to Professor Cashen on Aristotle's view of the Relation Between *Eudaimonia* and *Ta Ektos Agatha*" (to be submitted to *History of Philosophy Quarterly*). In addition to these writings, my research also prepared me better for two presentations I gave during 2014. One was a joint presentation with graduate student Daniel Larkin given at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Philosophical Collaborations Conference at Southern Illinois University on March 20, 2014. The paper we presented was entitled "Aristotle's Good Spartans." The other presentation was at an Invited Workshop of Aristotle scholars held at Ave Maria University at Ave Maria, Florida on February 28, 2014. The work focused on the virtues of courage and moderation in *NE* iii 6-12.