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Energeia in the *Magna Moralia*

A New Case for Late Authorship

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Abstract

There is no clear consensus among scholars about the authenticity of the *Magna Moralia*. Here I present a new case for thinking that the work was composed by a later Peripatetic, and is not, either directly or indirectly, the work of Aristotle. My argument rests on an analysis of the author's usage of ἐνέργεια, which is a fruitful way to investigate the date of the work: the term was apparently coined by Aristotle but in later antiquity came to be used in ways inconsistent with Aristotle's own usage. I argue that in several passages from the *Magna Moralia* the term is used in this distinctively late sense and that it is not plausible to think that this innovation could have occurred in Aristotle's own lifetime or shortly thereafter.

Keywords

Aristotle – *Magna Moralia* – *energeia* – Hellenistic philosophy – Peripatetic ethics

1 Introduction

The authorship of the *Magna Moralia* (*MM*) is one of the great unsolved mysteries of the Aristotelian corpus. There is a variety of views about where the work came from, which can be roughly divided into two camps. The first, which I shall call the *early authorship view*, holds either that the work was written by Aristotle or one of his students, perhaps as notes from a lecture course. On this

view the *MM* is at least a fairly reliable source for Aristotle's own thought.¹ The second camp, which I shall call the *late authorship view*, holds that the work was written in the Hellenistic period, possibly long after Aristotle's death, by someone who had no personal acquaintance with Aristotle. In this case the work may either intentionally or unwittingly depart from Aristotle's views and is not a reliable source for insights into what Aristotle himself believed.

Both camps have many and illustrious representatives, and there is currently no clear consensus (despite occasional claims to the contrary).² On the one hand, the small body of recent work dealing specifically with the *MM* seems mostly to favor the late authorship view.³ On the other hand, if one looks through the literature on Aristotle's ethics more generally, one finds that it is not uncommon for scholars to treat the *MM* either as an indirect source for Aristotle's views⁴ or, somewhat less commonly, to attribute its contents directly to Aristotle without even acknowledging the controversy.⁵ Here I wish to call attention to some textual evidence that I hope will contribute toward breaking this stalemate in favor of the hypothesis of late authorship. My argument rests mainly on an analysis of the usage of the Aristotelian quasi-technical term ἐνέργεια in the work. The usage of ἐνέργεια is a fruitful way to investigate the date of the work because the term was apparently coined by Aristotle but in later antiquity came to be used in ways inconsistent with

- 1 So, on this view, the *MM* is 'authentic' (i.e. authentically Aristotelian) in the sense that it is a record of Aristotle's own thought, and not just the interpretation or synopsis.
- 2 For example, the status of consensus is claimed by Cooper 2012, 405 n. 11 for the early authorship view, while Inwood 2014, 129 n. 22 claims that the late authorship view is the consensus (although he acknowledges that "there are still some who champion the view that the *MM* is to some degree 'authentic'"). Simpson 2017 agrees with Inwood on this point, but thinks the consensus is wrong. This is an amusing example of a disagreement whose very existence proves that both parties are wrong. My own impression is that Cooper is closer to the truth, though, since the belief in late authorship seems to be mostly limited to the relatively few scholars who have taken an interest in the work (see below).
- 3 See Eliasson 2007, Inwood 2014, and Donini 2016 and, somewhat less recently, Donini 1965, Fahnenschmidt 1968, and Rowe 1975. There are, however, a number of recent works supporting the early authorship view: see Simpson 2017, Verlinsky 2015, Nielsen 2019, and Tarrant 2008 (who, however, doesn't take a firm position on the work's origin but suggests tentatively that it is early and reflects Speusippian influence). Kenny 2016 believes that the work is by a late student of Aristotle's but based on a course taught by Aristotle towards the end of his life; as a result he is claimed by proponents of the early authorship view and of the late authorship view.
- 4 Usually only citing Cooper 1973 as warrant to do so. There are too many examples of this to cite, but to give a few recent examples, see Baker 2017, 1843 n. 11; Lear 2004, 66 n. 1; Meyer 1994, 9.
- 5 See, for example, Zembaty 1993, Menn 1994, Hadreas 1995, Lisi 2000, Belfiore 2001, London 2001, Veltman 2004, Hitz 2011, and Finnegan 2015.

Aristotle's own usage. I argue that in several passages from the *MM* the term is used in this distinctively late sense and that it is not plausible to think that this innovation could have occurred in Aristotle's own lifetime or shortly thereafter. As a result, I conclude that the early authorship hypothesis is not tenable and scholars who treat the *MM* as a source of evidence for Aristotle's views are making a mistake. Moreover, the topic of the post-Aristotelian evolution of ἐνέργεια more generally is, I think, an interesting one and has not received the attention it deserves.⁶ Hence I hope that the interest of the present work extends beyond the question of the *MM*'s authenticity.

After some introductory comments, I will turn my attention to the usage of ἐνέργεια in four passages of the work. I will argue that these passages are best understood if we take ἐνέργεια to denote, roughly, the contrary of passivity (πάσχειν). I will conclude by arguing that this usage of ἐνέργεια is attributable to a semantic shift that the term underwent, probably in the Hellenistic era, and that as a result the hypothesis of early authorship is not tenable. I begin with a bit of background about the debate.

2 Background

The current stalemate about the authenticity of the *MM* seems to be a fairly recent development.⁷ From Spengel in the first half of the 19th century⁸ through the 1960s the dominant position was that the work is of late, probably Hellenistic origin.⁹ This near-consensus rested mainly on two sorts of considerations. First, there was stylistic or linguistic evidence which suggested both that the work is not Aristotle's (since it does not conform to Aristotle's

6 The only work that I was able to find which deals substantially with the post-Aristotelian usage of ἐνέργεια is Kalligas 2012.

7 For a summary of the history of the debates surrounding the authenticity of Aristotle's ethical works, see Simpson 2017, xi.

8 See Spengel 1841 (who, in turn, was responding to the silly view advanced by Schleiermacher 1817 that the *MM* was the *only* genuine work in the corpus). Nielsen 2019, 197–198 mistakenly suggests that doubts about the work's authenticity began in the 20th century with Jaeger.

9 Hence Deichgräber 1935, 105 writes: "Daß die Magna Moralia nicht Aristotelisch sind, darf heute als restlos gesichert gelten". Other proponents of the late authorship view of this approximate period include Trendelenburg 1867, Kapp 1927, Jaeger 1928, Walzer 1929, Brink 1933, Dirlmeier 1939, Zürcher 1952, Allan 1957, Gauthier and Jolif 1958, Donini 1965, and Rowe 1971. Hans von Arnim was an early dissenter, arguing for authenticity in his 1924 doctoral dissertation and elsewhere (see von Arnim 1924, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929a, 1929b and his student Gohlke's 1944).

standard style)¹⁰ and that the work is late (because it contained a number of terms alleged to be of Hellenistic origin).¹¹ Second, there were considerations having to do with the philosophical content of the work. The work contains little that is not also found in the corpus' other ethical works, diverging much less from the *Eudemian Ethics* (*EE*) than the latter diverges from the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*EN*). It is also philosophically more crude than Aristotle's canonical texts.¹² This crudeness suggested that it could not be composed by a mind as bright as Aristotle's, and the amount of overlap between the *EE* and the *MM* suggested that the author was working directly from the *EE* or perhaps from both the *EE* and the *EN*.¹³ The picture that emerged was that the work was composed perhaps as a compendium of Aristotelian ethics sometime in the Hellenistic era by a Peripatetic with a mediocre grasp of Aristotelian philosophy.

It wasn't until the second half of the 20th century that the early authorship view started to gain traction. Two works in particular bear special responsibility for this: Franz Dirlmeier's 1958 commentary and John Cooper's 1973 'The *Magna Moralia* and Aristotle's Moral Philosophy'.¹⁴ Dirlmeier's commentary made two main contributions. First, he argued compellingly that the stylistic divergences between the *MM* and Aristotle's canonical corpus do not rule out the possibility that the work is substantially authentic. These differences, he argues, can be explained by the intervention of a later editor.¹⁵ Second, he explains the philosophical crudeness of the work by means of a developmental hypothesis: the *MM* reflects the views of a young, philosophically immature Aristotle. Cooper follows Dirlmeier in rejecting the philological arguments in

10 For example, the author frequently uses the preposition ὑπέρ where one would expect περί, uses the first and second person, and uses the expression ὅλον or τὸ ὅλον to mean 'in general', which Aristotle generally expresses with ὅλως, among others. See Simpson 2017, xix for a more detailed list.

11 For example, the text uses many terms that do not occur elsewhere in Aristotle, some that do not occur in extant sources until the Hellenistic period, and some that some scholars have thought betrayed Stoic or Theophrastic influences. For a list of terms found only in the *MM*, see Dirlmeier 1939.

12 This seems to be one of the few things almost everyone who has written about the *MM* agrees on, which is why even proponents of the early authorship view generally attribute it to a young, philosophically immature Aristotle.

13 In general the *MM* closely mirrors the *EE*, but there are a couple of passages that seem to be directly taken from the *EN*. See Allan 1957 for discussion.

14 Other works arguing for authenticity include Gigon 1951, Hamburger 1951, Helms 1954, Masellis 1954, Trude 1955, and Düring 1961, who, however, mostly follows Dirlmeier. The early authorship view was so widespread by 1965 that Plebe asserts that it is 'l'opinione prevalente al giorno d'oggi' (vii, but contrast, Rowe 1971, 9 who asserts that "[Spengel's] rejection of the *MM*, if it has sometimes been disputed, is still the prevalent view").

15 Cf. Düring 1961, 557 who suggested they may be due to the editorship of Theophrastus.

favor of a late date of authorship and also thinks the work dates to an early part of Aristotle's career, but makes two innovations. First he offers an alternate explanation for why the work diverges from Aristotle's standard style, hypothesizing that the *MM* was the product of a student's lecture notes on a course taught by a young Aristotle. Second, and more importantly, Cooper claims to find evidence that the *MM* is genuine in the philosophical content of the work. This latter contribution is the most important, not only because his arguments were highly influential,¹⁶ but also because it represented a kind of shift in the scholarship: Cooper accepts that the text cannot be determined to be early or late on textual grounds, and hence endeavors to adjudicate the issue on philosophical grounds alone. This approach has since been adopted by other proponents of the early authorship view.¹⁷

It is not clear, however, that the influence that Cooper's article has had is well founded. In fact, I think that Christopher Rowe already decisively refuted Cooper's argument some two years after it was originally published.¹⁸ However, given the influence of Cooper's article, it is perhaps worthwhile to take a moment to recall its arguments and briefly discuss why they are not decisive. Cooper's argument centers on two passages: 1.1, 1182b6–1183b8 and 1.33, 1193b13–18. I begin with the latter. There the author distinguishes between universal and particular justice by reference to the idea that particular justice

16 It is hard to draw an estimate of the number of times the paper has been cited, in large part because the article was reprinted in Cooper's collection of essays *Reason and Emotion* (1999), and many (perhaps most) citations of the paper make reference to the reprinted version. As a result Google Scholar only lists 78 citations for the version that appears in the *American Journal of Philology*. *Reason and Emotion*, on the other hand, is listed as having 505 citations, but it is anyone's guess how many of those are to this particular paper.

17 Most recently Nielsen 2019 has argued, on the basis of a philosophical analysis of the author's understanding of deliberation and decision, that the work is genuine. She in fact goes a step further than either Dirlmeier or Cooper and denies that one must posit any intervention in the text by a third party, suggesting that the stylistic differences between the *MM* and Aristotle's canonical works can be explained by hypothesizing an early origin. The work's style, she muses, "reflects Aristotle's youth and (perhaps) Macedonian origins": "a recent immigrant to Athens, he may not have yet developed his trademark style" (200). Nielsen hypothesis is not, in my view, compelling. She does not provide evidence of Macedonian linguistic influence in the work. There is evidence of Ionian dialect and Stagira was established by Ionian settlers some 250 years before Aristotle's birth, but there is strong archeological evidence that in Macedonia during the classical period "there was no dominant written language but standard Attic" (Engels 2010, 94). So, the idea that the young Aristotle needed to find his voice in a foreign dialectic after coming to Athens requires an argument that Nielsen does not provide.

18 See Rowe 1975.

alone is other-regarding (πρὸς ἕτερον): with regard to universal justice, the author tells us:

ἔστιν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ὄντα δίκαιον εἶναι (ὁ γὰρ σώφρων καὶ ὁ ἀνδρεῖος καὶ ὁ ἐγκρατὴς καὶ αὐτὸς καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐστὶ τοιοῦτος)· ἀλλὰ τὸ δίκαιον τὸ πρὸς ἕτερον ἄλλο τοῦ εἰρημένου κατὰ νόμον δικαίου ἐστίν. οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς πρὸς ἕτερον δικαίοις οὖσιν καθ' αὐτὸν εἶναι δίκαιον. τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν ὃ ζητοῦμεν δίκαιον καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν περὶ ταῦτα.¹⁹

It is possible to be just when one is alone (for the temperate and the brave and the self-controlled is each of them so when alone), but what is just towards one's neighbour is different from the legal justice that we have spoken of. For in things just towards one's neighbor it is not possible to be just when alone. But it is the just in this sense of which we are in search, and the justice which has to do with these things.

Cooper points out that this is not how the *EN* account of justice spells out the distinction. In the *EN* we are specifically told that universal justice is other-regarding as well (1129b26-27). Cooper concludes that “[i]t is surely incredible that anyone writing a compendium of Aristotelian ethics knew the [*EN*] treatment should thus boldly contradict his source”.²⁰

This is not a compelling piece of evidence for the early authorship view for at least two reasons. First it is not true that the contradiction between the *MM* and the *EN* is as dramatic as Cooper presents it. The sense in which universal justice is other-regarding is fairly subtle and it is easy to see how a mediocre student might miss it and think that only particular justice is other regarding. Alternatively, we can equally well imagine that someone trying to present a popular exposition of Aristotelian ethics might find this an unnecessary detail and eliminate it for reasons of simplicity. But even if we grant Cooper's claim that this contradiction proves that the *MM* is not a mere compendium, this still does not constitute good evidence for early authorship. As Cooper himself acknowledges, almost no one who has carefully studied the work thinks that it is nothing more than a compendium.²¹ The more serious late author-

19 *MM* 1193b13-18.

20 Rowe 1975, 343.

21 Cooper 1973, 335: “no one who reads the *Magna Moralia* carefully and sensitively, noticing and understanding the points of divergence in form, organization, and argument can believe that it derives directly from the written text of either or both of these works” (Presumably what Cooper means here is that no one can believe that it *only* derives directly from the *EE* and the *EN*. Clearly the author could have drawn directly from the

ship hypothesis, as Allan already proposed in 1957, is that the work represents “an example of Peripatetic criticism of the master”.²² Cooper has provided no decisive reason for thinking that the contradiction between the *MM* and the *EN* about particular justice could only have come from Aristotle.

Cooper's second passage is somewhat more interesting, but ultimately no more compelling. It occurs in the discussion of candidates for what the highest good might be. In the *EE* and *EN* counterparts to that discussion (*EE* 1.8 and *EN* 1.6), Aristotle's main focus is on the Platonic Form of the Good. In the *MM* too the author discusses this, but also shows considerable interest in a possibility that gets short shrift in the *EE* and is not mentioned at all in the *EN*, namely that the highest good is τὸ κοινὸν ἀγαθόν, ‘the common good’. This is meant to be a distinct possibility from the Platonic Form of the Good—as Cooper puts it “good regarded as a proper universal instead of a Form”.²³ Not only is the level of interest that the author displays in this possibility greater in the *MM* than in the other two works, but the author seems to come to a different opinion about it than Aristotle does in the *EE*. Unlike the latter text, which denies that there can be a universal definition of the good, the *MM* seems to accept that a definition of the common good is possible, according to Cooper. Cooper asserts that there is evidence that the young Aristotle was concerned about the possibility of a non-Platonic κοινὸν ἀγαθόν,²⁴ whereas there is no evidence that this was a topic of controversy among Peripatetics of the Hellenistic era. He concludes from this that the only plausible explanation for the *MM*'s divergence from the *EN* and *EE* is that it dates to a period in Aristotle's career during which he was still exploring the possibility of a non-Platonic κοινὸν ἀγαθόν.

However, as Rowe shows,²⁵ the matter is, again, not nearly as clear as Cooper presents it. Among other things, it is not at all clear that when the author of the *MM* maintains that there is a ‘common good subsisting in all things’ he refers to the same thing that the *EE* denies. Rather, it is more plausible to suppose that the author of the *MM* understood the phrase ‘common good subsisting in all things’ as meaning that everything has an end or a good (not that there

EE and the *EN* while also incorporating his own views on certain points). This is accepted by Rowe 1975, 162 without inconsistency: “No one who maintains the usual view, that the *MM* is post-Aristotelian and who has read the *MM* together with the *EE* and the *NE* could seriously hold that the author was totally dependent on the Aristotelian texts.”

22 Allan 1957, 11 (also cited by Rowe 1975, 162).

23 Cooper 1973, 338.

24 The texts he cites rather show that there was interest in non-Platonic κοινά, but there is no reference to a κοινὸν ἀγαθόν specifically, where this is understood as a non-Platonic metaphysical universal (as Rowe 1975, 166 points out).

25 *Ibid.*, 164-165.

is one end or good shared by all things). Hence, far from being a piece of evidence for early authorship this seems to be yet another example of a clumsy misreading of Aristotle.

There is of course much more that could be said about these texts, but whatever the merits of Cooper's discussion, his claim that these passages settle the issue is much overstated. I think, though, that if the debate does not seem to have progressed much since that article's publication, this has much to do with the fact that scholars, both on the early and late-authorship camps, generally seem to agree with Dirlmeier and Cooper that the stylistic and linguistic aspects of the text are inconclusive about the date (if there were clear textual evidence for late date then philosophical arguments to the contrary would be otiose). Since it is extremely difficult to decide between the early and late authorship hypotheses using the text's philosophical content alone,²⁶ the result has largely been stagnation. I think, however, that there is strong textual evidence that points to a late date which has not yet been acknowledged. I turn to that evidence now.

3 Ἐνέργεια in the *MM*

My argument rests on a distinction between two uses of ἐνέργεια. The first use corresponds to a common use of the English word 'activity.' According to this use, 'activity' is the opposite of 'passivity.' The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines this meaning as "the quality or condition of being an agent or of performing an action or operation; the exertion of energy, force, or influence."²⁷ Notice on this meaning, it would be quite strange to call the process of being moved an activity of the thing moved: the thing moved is not active (it does not *do* anything); it merely is acted upon. Activity in this sense is something like an action. It is something that one does. I shall call activities in this sense A-activities (instead of the awkward 'action-activities' or 'active-activities'). Sometimes the Greek ἐνέργεια and cognates are used in such a way as specifically to pick out A-activities (as, for example, when ἐνεργεῖν is presented as the opposite of πάσχειν). When the term is used in this way I shall say it is used to mean A-activity, which should be understood to mean that it *only* refers to A-activity.

This brings me to the second use. Ἐνέργεια does not always refer to A-activities. According to the standard Aristotelian usages of ἐνέργεια, the

26 In some ways I am understating my case here. I do think that the work of Elliasson, Inwood and others does provide strong support for the late authorship hypothesis.

27 *Oxford English Dictionary* s.v. 'activity', 2.a.

contrary is a δύναμις, a capacity.²⁸ Hence, although this usage of ἐνέργεια may perhaps be best translated as ‘activity’ it is important to note that activity in this sense does not rule out passivity. There are both active activities (lifting, pushing, etc.) and passive activities (being lifted, being pushed, etc.), and corresponding active and passive capacities.²⁹ An episode of sense-perception, for example, is for Aristotle both an ἐνέργεια and an instance of πάσχειν, passivity or being-affected.³⁰ My aim in this section is to show that the author of the *MM* repeatedly uses the language of ἐνέργεια not in the standard Aristotelian way, but specifically to mean A-activities. A-activities, of course, according to standard Aristotelian doctrine, are ἐνέργειαι, but in these passages the author uses ἐνέργεια to include *only* A-activities. Having established this, my aim in the next section will be to show that this usage is inconsistent with the work’s being early (although I imagine many readers will not require an argument to be convinced of this).

I will focus in particular on four passages. I am not convinced that these are the only passages in which ἐνέργεια is used to mean A-activity exclusively,³¹ but I do not wish to take up the reader’s time discussing passages that are unclear in this regard. The four passages that I will discuss are those that I consider clearest and most interesting.

3.1 *Passage 1: MM 1210b3-8*

I start with a passage from the discussion of friendship in 2.11. When the author considers friendships between unequals, a puzzle arises about whether it is better to be the beneficiary in such relationships, as is commonly thought, or the benefactor:

Οἱ δ' ἐν ἀνισότητι φίλοι ὄντες, οἱ μὲν ὑπερέχοντες πλούτῳ ἢ ἄλλῳ τινὶ τοιούτῳ οὐκ οἴονται δεῖν αὐτοὶ φιλεῖν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῶν ἐνδεεστέρων οἴονται δεῖν αὐτοὶ φιλεῖσθαι· ἔστιν δὲ βέλτιον τὸ φιλεῖν ἢ τὸ φιλεῖσθαι. —τὸ μὲν γὰρ φιλεῖν ἐνέργειά τις ἡδονῆς καὶ ἀγαθόν, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ φιλεῖσθαι οὐδεμίᾳ τῷ φιλουμένῳ ἐνέργεια γίνεται.³²

28 This includes, prominently, ἔξεις, ‘states’.

29 See, for example, *Metaph.* 4.15, 1021a14-19, where Aristotle says that just as there are ‘active (ποιητικὴν) and passive (παθητικὴν)’ capacities, there are corresponding active and passive ἐνέργειαι.

30 See, e.g., *De an.* 1.5, 410a25-26 and 2.5, 416b32-34.

31 Other passages which I considered discussing include, for example, 1185a9-12 (in which I suspect that ζῆν κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν means something like ‘an active life’ or ‘a life of action’).

32 *MM* 2.11, 1210b3-8, my translation.

When friends are unequals, those who are superior either in wealth or in some other such thing do not think that they themselves need to love but they think that they should be loved by their inferiors. But loving is better than being loved. For loving is a certain pleasant and good activity, but from being loved, no activity comes about to the person loved.

One could hardly ask for a clearer text with which to show that the author understands by ἐνέργεια something active as opposed to passive. Being loved (φιλεῖσθαι) is the passive counterpart to loving (φιλεῖν), and it is for this reason alone that the author denies that there is an ἐνέργεια associated with being loved. By Aristotle's standard usage, of course, being loved is every bit as much an ἐνέργεια as loving. It is clear, then, that the author understands ἐνέργεια differently than how Aristotle typically does. Moreover, since the operative difference between loving and being loved is that the one is something active and the other something passive, it is equally clear that the author of Passage 1 is using ἐνέργεια to mean A-activity.

If there should remain any doubt about this one need only look to the parallel discussion in the *EN*, where we find very similar considerations, but where Aristotle uses πράξις where the author of the *MM* has used ἐνέργεια. In *EN* 9.7, Aristotle writes:

Καὶ ἡ μὲν φίλῃσις ποιήσῃ ἔοικεν, τὸ φιλεῖσθαι δὲ τῷ πάσχειν· τοῖς ὑπερέχουσι δὲ περὶ τὴν πράξιν ἔπεται τὸ φιλεῖν καὶ τὰ φιλικά.³³

Moreover, loving is like production, while being loved is like being acted on; and the benefactor's love and friendliness are the result of his greater action.

Here, like in Passage 1, Aristotle makes the point that the benefactor is more active than the beneficiary, but he does so in his usual way, by using the language of ποιεῖν and πάσχειν and πράξις.³⁴ The concept of ἐνέργεια does not figure at all. Elsewhere in the discussion of the benefactor-beneficiary relationship in both the *EE* and the *EN*, Aristotle does employ the concept of ἐνέργεια, but he does so in a very different way than the author of Passage 1. It is instructive to contrast the two cases.

33 *EN* 9.7, 1168b19-21, Irwin's translation.

34 See, for example, *Cat.* 4, 1b27, *Top.* 1.9, 103a23, and *Metaph.* 4.7, 1017a26; 4.15, 1021a14-19 (cited above) *et passim*.

EN 9.7 starts out by noting that ‘benefactors seem to love their beneficiaries more than the beneficiaries love them in return’ (1167b17-18) and that this is viewed as unreasonable because being a benefactor in these cases is viewed as analogous to being a creditor, where the beneficiary is the debtor. It would be strange for the creditor to love the debtor more than vice versa, so it is viewed as strange that the benefactor loves the beneficiary more than vice versa. Aristotle goes on to point out that the problem with this puzzle is that a benefactor-beneficiary relationship is not analogous to a creditor-debtor relationship. The relationship of the benefactor to the beneficiary is closer to the relationship between an artist and their artwork. Whereas creditors only love their debtors because of the prospect of future repayment, ‘benefactors ... love and like their beneficiaries even if they are of no present or future use to them’ (1167b31-33). The love that the benefactor has for the beneficiary is closer to the love that the craftsperson has for their handiwork, or the love that a poet has for their poems (1168a1-3). Aristotle goes on to explain this as follows:

Τοιούτῳ δὴ ἔοικε καὶ τὸ τῶν εὐεργετῶν· τὸ γὰρ εὖ πεπονθὸς ἔργον ἐστὶν αὐτῶν· τοῦτο δὴ ἀγαπῶσι μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ ἔργον τὸν ποιήσαντα. Τούτου δ’ αἴτιον ὅτι τὸ εἶναι πᾶσιν αἰρετὸν καὶ φιλητόν, ἐσμέν δ’ ἐνεργεῖα (τῷ ζῆν γὰρ καὶ πράττειν), ἐνεργεῖα δὲ ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔργον ἔστι πως· στέργει δὴ τὸ ἔργον, διότι καὶ τὸ εἶναι. Τοῦτο δὲ φυσικόν· ὁ γὰρ ἐστὶ δυνάμει, τοῦτο ἐνεργεῖα τὸ ἔργον μὴνύει.³⁵

This then is what the case of the benefactors resembles. Here the beneficiary is his product and hence he likes him more than the product likes its producer. The reason for this is that being is choiceworthy and lovable for all, and we are insofar as we are in ἐνέργεια, since we are insofar as we live and act. Now the product is, in a way, the producer in his actualization; hence the producer is fond of the product, because he loves his own being. This is natural, since what he is potentially is what the product indicates in actualization.

The line of thought here is, obviously, both novel and very different than the one found in Passage 1. The thought is that the benefactor’s love for the beneficiary is, somehow, derived from or an instance of the benefactor’s love for themselves. This is supposed to be analogous to the way in which the craftsperson loves the product of their craft. As Aristotle tells us elsewhere the τέλος of the craft is also the ἐνέργεια of the craft. The point Aristotle is making then, is that, in a certain way, the love that a craftsperson has for the product of their craft

35 *EN* 9.7, 1168a3-9, Ross’ translation.

is a love for their own being (τὸ εἶναι, a5) since the ἐνέργεια of the craft just is the product. How exactly the beneficiary is supposed to be the analogue of the product is somewhat unclear, but what matters for our purposes is the fact that ἐνέργεια enters into consideration here as being-in-ἐνέργεια, not ἐνέργεια as any kind of action. The notion of being-in-ἐνέργεια is completely absent both in the corresponding discussion in the *MM* and, indeed, in that work as a whole.³⁶

3.2 *Passage 2: 1185a26-35*

My next passage is from *MM* 1.4. It occurs in the context of formulating an initial definition of happiness. After concluding that happiness is ‘a life based on the virtues’ (1184b35-36), the author takes up the question of what parts of the soul contribute to happiness and answers, in part, by excluding the nutritive part from consideration.

Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἔστιν ἀρετὴ τούτου ἢ μὴ ἔστιν, ἄλλος λόγος· εἰ δ' ἄρα ἔστιν, οὐκ ἔστιν ταύτης ἐνέργεια. ὦν γὰρ μὴ ἔστιν ὁρμή, οὐδ' ἐνέργεια τούτων ἔσται· οὐκ ἔοικεν δὲ εἶναι ὁρμή ἐν τῷ μορίῳ τούτῳ, ἀλλ' ὅμοιον ἔοικεν εἶναι τῷ πυρί. καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνο ὃ τι ἂν ἐμβάλης καταναλώσει, κἂν μὴ ἐμβάλης, οὐκ ἔχει ὁρμὴν πρὸς τὸ λαβεῖν. οὕτω καὶ τοῦτο τὸ μόριον τῆς ψυχῆς ἔχει· ἂν μὲν γὰρ ἐμβάλης τροφήν, τρέφει, ἂν δὲ μὴ ἐμβάλης τροφήν, οὐκ ἔχει ὁρμὴν τοῦ τρέφειν. διὸ οὐδὲ ἐνέργεια οὐ μὴδὲ ὁρμή. ὥστ' οὐδὲν συνεργεῖ τὸ μόριον τοῦτο πρὸς τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν.³⁷

Well then, whether or not there is a virtue of this part is another discussion. But if there is, there is no activity of it. For of those things which do not have impulse, there will be no activity of them. And it would not seem that there is an impulse in this part but it would seem to be similar to fire. For that also will consume whatever you throw in, and if you do not throw something in, then it has no impulse to take it. So it is also with this part of the soul; for, if you throw in food, it nourishes, but if you do not throw in food, it has no impulse to nourish. Hence it has no activity, lacking impulse. So that this part in no way co-operates towards happiness.

This passage has several noteworthy characteristics. First, the fact that the author seems to doubt whether the vegetative part has a virtue is somewhat surprising. Aristotle displays no similar hesitance in the *NE* or the *EE* and it is unclear why he should. After all, if the nutritive part has a work that can be

36 I will come back to the being-in-ἐνέργεια vs. ἐνέργεια as activity distinction both in Passage 4 below and in section 4 when I discuss the proposal from Menn 1994.

37 *MM* 1.4, 1185a26-35, my translation.

done well or badly, then, it would seem that it has a virtue. Second, there is the connection drawn between having an activity (ἐνέργεια) and having impulse (ὁρμή). This thought also has no precedent anywhere else in Aristotle.³⁸ Finally, we have the (related) denial that there is any activity (ἐνέργεια) associated with the nutritive part of the soul. While each of these characteristics is intriguing, it is this last one that I will focus on here.

I do not think that much needs to be said in order to show that the idea that the nutritive part has no ἐνέργεια is inconsistent with Aristotle's views as represented in his canonical texts.³⁹ Every part of the soul by definition has some ἐνέργεια and there is no mystery about what the ἐνέργεια of the nutritive part are. In fact, the nutritive part is in constant ἐνέργεια(ι) throughout the life of the animal.⁴⁰ I will not linger, then, on the question of whether this passage is inconsistent with standard Aristotelian doctrine—it clearly is.

So if our author does not mean by ἐνέργεια what Aristotle usually means by it, what does the term mean here? We need to think about the analogy with fire. When the author claims that fire has no impulse to consume fuel but merely consumes what is 'thrown in' they seem to mean that it merely passively accepts fuel rather than actively seeking it out. This suggests that the key to understanding the author's denial of ἐνέργεια to the nutritive part of the soul is the idea that the work of this part of the soul is merely passive. This would imply that when the author uses ἐνέργεια, they are using it not in the standard Aristotelian way, but rather to refer specifically to A-activity.

This interpretation finds support from a passage from the *EE* that occurs in the same relative part of Aristotle's discussion (i.e., in the midst of Aristotle's attempt to define human virtue, shortly after the ἔργον argument). Here too Aristotle considers the question of whether the nutritive part of the soul contributes to human virtue, and answers that question in a substantially similar way. After pointing out that the parts of the soul that are relevant for human

38 The author's interest in ὁρμή here and elsewhere (there are no less than 28 mentions of ὁρμή in the work, compared to 3 in the *EN* and 11 in the *EE*) has led some commentators (as far back as Trendelenburg 1866) to perceive Stoic influence in the work. This is not unreasonable, in my opinion, but I will not pursue this line of speculation here.

39 On this I agree with Donini 1965, 52–60.

40 For this reason it does not seem plausible to suppose that when the author denies that the nutritive part has ἐνέργεια he means to be claiming that it has κίνησις instead (a possibility raised by the distinction between ἐνέργεια and κίνησις in the notoriously difficult *Metaph.* 8.6—a suggestion I owe to an anonymous referee). The activity of the nutritive part is also an ἐνέργεια on the *Metaph.* 8.6 sense. There Aristotle even uses living as an example of an ἐνέργεια (1048b27) and this presumably includes the living that is the ἐνέργεια of the nutritive part.

virtue are those that partake in reason in some way, he goes on to set aside the vegetative part, writing:

ἀφίρηται δὲ καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο ἔστι μέρος ψυχῆς, οἷον τὸ φυτικόν. ἀνθρωπίνης γὰρ ψυχῆς τὰ εἰρημένα μόρια ἴδια⁴¹. διὸ οὐδ' αἱ ἀρεταὶ αἱ τοῦ θρεπτικοῦ καὶ αὐξητικοῦ ἀνθρώπου· δεῖ γὰρ, εἰ <ἀνθρώπου>⁴² ἢ ἄνθρωπος, λογισμὸν ἐνεῖναι ὥς⁴³ ἀρχὴν καὶ πράξιν.⁴⁴

Any other part of the soul, for example the vegetative, has been excluded. But the parts we have mentioned are peculiar to the human soul. Hence the virtues of the nutritive and generative part are not human virtues. For if virtues belong to a human being qua human being, it necessarily includes reasoning as a starting-point and action.

This is a rather difficult passage, in part because the text appears to be corrupt,⁴⁵ but at least it is clear that Aristotle is explaining the exclusion of the nutritive part from his consideration because the nutritive part makes no contribution to action, πράξις. Why exactly this is remains a bit unclear. My own preferred interpretation is that it has to do with the fact that, on the *EE* conception, πράξις is a rational activity⁴⁶ and the nutritive part has no share of reasoning. An alternative view which one can easily imagine someone taking is that it has to do with the fact that the nutritive part is merely passive, reacting only to what nutriment is ‘thrown in’ and having no active impulse of its own—something which might plausibly be thought necessary for contributing to action. At any rate, the fact that Aristotle here explains the irrelevance of the nutritive part by reference to πράξις supports my interpretation of the *MM* passage. The main difference, other than that the *MM* passage offers an explanation for the nutritive part’s lack of ἐνέργεια in terms of ὁρμή, has to do with the terminology that the two texts use: where the *EE* passage denies that there is any πράξις associated with the nutritive part, the *MM* passage speaks of ἐνέργεια, where this clearly is meant to be understood as something active (as opposed

41 Rejecting Ross’s conjecture of οὐκ before ἴδια, followed by the OCT.

42 Following the OCT in reading Dodds’ conjecture of ἀνθρώπου.

43 Following the OCT in reading Susemihl’s conjecture of ὥς in place of the mss. καί.

44 *EE* 2.1, 1219b36–1220a1, Inwood and Woolf’s translation with minor modifications.

45 Hence the apparent need for emendation (see preceding notes).

46 See *EE* 2.6, where we are told that humans alone among animals are capable of πράξις and Wolt 2019 for commentary.

to passive).⁴⁷ So, comparing these two passages, it looks as though the author of the *MM* meant to capture the same point as Aristotle in the *EE*, but did so using ἐνέργεια as interchangeable with πράξις—something highly unusual by Aristotelian standards. So, it appears that the same odd equivocation between πράξις and ἐνέργεια that I found in Passage 1 occurs here in Passage 2.

3.3 *Passage 3: η90α34-37*

My next passage is not so much a case in which ἐνέργεια is clearly used to denote an A-activity exclusively, but rather a case in which the hypothesis that the author (often) uses ἐνέργεια to denote A-activities allows us to make good sense of an otherwise odd passage. So, although I grant that there are other possible interpretations of the passage, I still think the ease with which the passage is explained under my hypothesis constitutes evidence for my hypothesis. It occurs at the end of the discussion of decision (προαίρεσις) in 1.18-19, in a passage which resembles but differs in important and puzzling ways from a passage in the corresponding part of the *EE*. I'll turn my attention to the *EE* passage in a moment, but let us begin by taking a look at the *MM* passage.

The *MM* passage follows closely upon a discussion of whether virtue 'aims at the end or at what contributes to the end' (πρὸς τὸ τέλος, η90α9-10). The author immediately goes on to resolve this into the question of whether virtue is of the noble or the things that are towards the noble.⁴⁸ After concluding in favor of the latter alternative, the author raises a puzzle which he sees as somehow arising from this conclusion:

Διὰ τί οὖν, ἂν τις εἴποι, πρότερον μὲν ἐλέγομεν τὴν ἐνέργειαν κρεῖττον εἶναι ἢ τὴν ἔξιν τὴν αὐτήν, νῦν δὲ οὐκ ἔξ οὗ ἡ ἐνέργεια, τοῦτο τῇ ἀρετῇ ἀποδίδομεν ὥς κάλλιον, ἀλλ' ἐν ᾧ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐνέργεια;⁴⁹

47 As far as I can tell this is at least roughly in agreement with Simpson 2017 *ad loc.*, who interprets the text as meaning not that the nutritive part has no "exercising" (Simpson's translation of ἐνέργεια), but that it has no "moral exercising"—i.e., no exercise relevant morally. Simpson, however, does not find this problematic, and suggests that this unusual usage of ἐνέργεια is due to the exoteric nature of the work—a suggestion that I will come back to in section 4.

48 The line reads: πότερον τοῦ τέλους ἢ τῶν πρὸς τὸ τέλος, οἷον πότερον τοῦ καλοῦ ἢ τῶν πρὸς τὸ καλόν. Stock, Dirlmeier, Simpson, and Plebe all translate οἷον as 'for example' or equivalent, but it is also possible that it has explanatory force (see LSJ s.v. οἷος V.e, which cites *PA* 639b6 and *GC* 333a11). This seems to be a better way of construing it since later, after concluding that virtue selects the end, the author immediately concludes also that virtue aims at the noble (η90α28-29).

49 *MM* 1.19, η90α34-37.

Why then, one might say, did we say previously that the activity is better than its state, but now we are putting forward as finer, not the material for the activity but that in which there is no activity?⁵⁰

The puzzle raised here bears a superficial resemblance to one that comes up in the corresponding section *EE* 2.9, but it is in fact quite different. In the *EE* it is specifically about praise and blame and is formulated in terms of a contrast between the decision that motivates an action and the action itself.

ἔτι πάντας ἐπαινοῦμεν καὶ ψέγομεν εἰς τὴν προαίρεσιν βλέποντες μᾶλλον ἢ εἰς τὰ ἔργα· καίτοι αἰρετώτερον ἢ ἐνέργεια τῆς ἀρετῆς, ὅτι πράττουσι μὲν φαῦλα καὶ ἀναγκαζόμενοι, προαιρεῖται δ' οὐδεὶς. ἔτι διὰ τὸ μὴ ῥᾶδιον εἶναι ἰδεῖν τὴν προαίρεσιν ὅποια τις, διὰ ταῦτα ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἀναγκαζόμεθα κρίνειν ποῖός τις. Αἰρετώτερον μὲν οὖν ἢ ἐνέργεια, ἐπαινετώτερον δ' ἢ προαίρεσις. ἔκ τε τῶν κειμένων οὖν συμβαίνει ταῦτα, καὶ ἔτι ὁμολογεῖται τοῖς φαινομένοις.⁵¹

Further, it is in reference to the decision rather than to the deed that we bestow praise and blame on all (even though the activity of virtue is more choiceworthy than virtue itself), since people do bad things also when compelled to but no one decides under compulsion. And, further, it is because of the difficulty of discerning the character of the decision that we are compelled to judge a person's character on the basis of their deeds. So, activity is more choiceworthy but decision is more praiseworthy. This follows from what we have posited, and moreover agrees with the appearances.

Back in the *MM* passage, however, the contrast is not between decision and the action that is decided on, but rather between virtue and the activity that it produces. Moreover, in the *EE* passage, there is no direct connection between the puzzle and the discussion that came before about whether virtue makes the τέλος right or only what is πρὸς τὸ τέλος. Rather, the puzzle about praise and blame is presented simply as one of a handful of concluding thoughts—short miscellaneous discussions, issues that are worth discussing but which don't fit neatly into the main body of the preceding chapters.

⁵⁰ I follow Stock in my translation of lines 34-37 (οὐκ ἔξ ... ἐνέργεια). Cf. Dirlmeier's translation. I am, frankly, unsure if this is right (the text strikes me as rather odd) but I don't think it worthwhile to go into all the textual questions here. What is clear about the passage, I think, is that when the author talks about ἐν ᾧ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐνέργεια, he is referring to virtue. That's the key point for my purposes.

⁵¹ *EE* 2.9, 1228a11-19, Inwood and Woolf's translation with minor modifications.

So, if the *MM* passage isn't about the same thing as the *EE* passage, what is it about? Here I wish to call attention to the final line in which the author asserts that there is no activity in the state. If one is determined to make this consistent with Aristotle's canonical texts, one may choose to interpret this loosely as meaning something like that merely having the state does not imply having activity. But this is not the most obvious, or, in my opinion, even a very plausible way of interpreting the passage in context. While the author does make clear that he thinks that virtue is in a way responsible both for virtuous actions and for aiming at the noble (*καλόν*) he makes it clear that he thinks that what is more characteristic of virtue is aiming at the *καλόν*. And what he goes on to say in solution to the puzzle raised in our passage suggests that this is the key to understanding why the author asserts that there is no *ἐνέργεια* in the state:

ναί, ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν φαμεν τοῦτο ὁμοίως, τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς ἔξεως βέλτιον εἶναι. οἱ γὰρ ἄλλοι ἄνθρωποι τὸν σπουδαῖον θεωροῦντες κρίνουσιν ἐκ τοῦ πράττειν, διὰ τὸ μὴ δυνατόν εἶναι δηλῶσαι τὴν ἐκάστου προαίρεσιν ἣν ἔχει, ἐπεὶ εἰ ἦν εἰδέναι τὴν ἐκάστου γνώμην, ὥς ἔχει πρὸς τὸ καλόν, καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ πράττειν σπουδαῖος ἂν ἐδόκει εἶναι.⁵²

Yes, but we are now also saying the same thing, that the activity is better than the state. For the other people, when they view the good person, judge him from his acting, because it is not possible to make clear the decision that each person has, since if it were possible to know the intention of each person, i.e. how he stands with regard to the noble, he would be thought good even without acting.

While there is much that is interesting about this passage and its attempt to solve the problem, the key point for us is that it makes clear that the foregoing distinction between the state and the activity is a distinction between forming an intention or aim and performing the resulting action.

So, when the author says that there is no *ἐνέργεια* in the state, what he means is that the state merely formulates the aim or the decision and does not actually execute it. By the standard meaning of *ἐνέργεια* this wouldn't make sense. When the virtuous person formulates a decision, that is itself an *ἐνέργεια* of virtue. But we can quite easily make sense of this passage if, once again, we interpret *ἐνέργεια* at a37 to mean not 'activity' in the standard Aristotelian sense, but specifically an A-activity. When he says it has no *ἐνέργεια* he means that it does not itself participate in actions (*πράξεις*). This also coheres well with the

52 *MM* 1.19, 1190a37-b6, my translation.

way the author seems to understand virtue of character. He seems to think that virtue of character has to do with emotion,⁵³ and only indirectly contributes to action—a significant departure from standard Aristotelian doctrine. This is why he defines the virtues simply as mean states of emotions (πάθη).⁵⁴

3.4 *Passage 4: 1197a3-15*

My final passage is somewhat more difficult than the preceding three. It is nonetheless quite interesting and worth discussing. The passage occurs in the context of the discussion of the intellectual virtues in *MM* 1.34. There the author uses the concept of ἐνέργεια to explain the distinction between crafts (τέχναι)—which aim at production—and φρόνησις which is a state that aims at action:

Ἔστιν δὴ τῶν ποιουμένων καὶ πραττομένων οὐ ταὐτὸ τὸ ποιητικὸν καὶ πρακτικόν. τῶν μὲν γὰρ ποιητικῶν ἐστὶ τι παρὰ τὴν ποίησιν ἄλλο τέλος, οἷον παρὰ τὴν οἰκοδομικὴν, ἐπειδὴ ἐστὶν ποιητικὴ οἰκίας, οἰκία αὐτῆς τὸ τέλος παρὰ τὴν ποίησιν, ὁμοίως ἐπὶ τεκτονικῆς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ποιητικῶν· ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν πρακτικῶν οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο οὐθὲν τέλος παρ' αὐτὴν τὴν πράξιν, οἷον παρὰ τὸ καθαρίζειν οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο τέλος οὐθὲν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο τέλος, ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἡ πράξις. περὶ μὲν οὖν τὴν πράξιν καὶ τὰ πρακτὰ ἡ φρόνησις, περὶ δὲ τὴν ποίησιν καὶ τὰ ποιητὰ ἡ τέχνη· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ποιητοῖς μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν τοῖς πρακτοῖς ἐστὶ τὸ τεχνάζειν.⁵⁵

So, when things are made and done that which makes and that which does are not the same. For in the case of things made there is some other end beyond the making. For example, beyond housebuilding, since that is productive of a house, a house is the end of it beyond the making. Likewise, in the case of carpentry and all the other things that produce. But in the case of action there is no end aside from the action. For example, beyond playing the kithara there is no other end, but this is itself the end, the activity and the action. Practical wisdom, then, is concerned with doing and things done, but art with making and things made; for it is in things made rather than things done that artistic skill is displayed.

The division between production and πράξις is, of course, Aristotelian and is discussed in *EN* 6. The way that the author of Passage 4 fills out this distinction

53 As Inwood 2014, 31 notices as well.

54 See 1.22, 1191b25-29.

55 *MM* 1.34, 1197a3-15, my translation.

is also similar to the way that Aristotle does so. In *EN* 6.2, Aristotle writes that although every instance of production aims at some further goal, the same is not true of *πρᾶξις* (1139b1–4).⁵⁶ However, here in Passage 4 we find an idea that is not found either in the *EN* discussion of the *πρᾶξις/ποίησις* distinction nor anywhere else in Aristotle, namely that playing the kithara is not a *τέχνη* because it aims at action rather than production.⁵⁷ This idea ought to strike students of Aristotle as very odd indeed, as should the corresponding, if implicit, idea that playing the kithara falls within the domain of practical wisdom. After all, playing the kithara is a paradigmatic example of a *τέχνη* for Aristotle.⁵⁸ Moreover, many of Aristotle's other paradigmatic examples of *τέχνη* also do not involve the manufacturing of some product—for example, the art of navigation (*κυβερνητική*),⁵⁹ rhetoric,⁶⁰ and warfare (*στρατηγία*),⁶¹ to name a few.

The reason that the author of Passage 4 denies that kithara-playing is a *τέχνη* is not hard to see: the author clearly understands *ποίησις* in such a way that all (complete) exercises of *ποίησις* issue in some product that lasts beyond the activity of production itself, whereas practical expertise simply aims at some activity. But I think it is clear that this is not how Aristotle intends the distinction as we find it in *EN* 6.⁶² The distinction between *πρᾶξις* and *ποίησις* has to do with their teleological structure. What distinguishes instances of production as a whole from instances of *πρᾶξις* is that instances of *πρᾶξις* include both episodes of activities that are valuable for their own sake as well as some that

56 The Greek reads: ἔνεκα γὰρ του ποιεῖ πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν, καὶ οὐ τέλος ἀπλῶς (ἀλλὰ πρὸς τι καὶ τινός) τὸ ποιητόν, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρακτόν· ἡ γὰρ εὐπραξία τέλος, ἡ δ' ὄρεξις τούτου. The details of the text are tricky, but I won't discuss them here. Irwin translates: "for every producer in his production aims at some [further] goal, and the unqualified goal is not the product, which is only the [qualified] goal of some [production], and aims at some [further] goal. [An unqualified goal is] what we achieve in action, since acting well is the goal, and desire is for the goal".

57 Interestingly, this idea is repeated, however, in *Divisiones Aristoteleae*, ch. 5. The balance of scholarly opinion on the *Divisiones* is that it is late (which, if true, is more grist for my mill); see Mansfeld 1993 and Dorandi 1996, both of whom consider it a scholastic handbook. There are, however, proponents of authenticity as well, see Gigon 1987 and Rossitto 2005.

58 See, *EN* 2.1, 1103b8 (cf. *Metaph.* 1049b31), *Pol.* 7.13, 1332a26–7, 8.6, 1341a18–19, *Metaph.* 8.1049b29–34 (where he calls it an *ἐπιστήμη* but lumps it together with *οἰκοδομική*). *κίθαρις* is also a stock example of a *τέχνη* in Plato (see *La.* 194e6, *Euthd.* 289c3, *Grg.* 501e5, *Ion* 540e7, and *R.* 333b8).

59 See *EN* 1104a10, 112b5, *EE* 1220b24, 1247a6. Curiously enough, the author of the *MM* also uses this as an example of a *τέχνη* at 1183a13.

60 See, e.g., *EN* 1094b3, *Rh.* 1359b5, 1402a27.

61 See *EN* 1094a9, 1096a32, 1097a17, *EE* 1247a6, *Pol.* 1258a11.

62 On this I agree with Ebert 1976, 16–17 and Hübner 2008, 48.

are not, while instances of production are by their very nature always for the sake of something else. But the ‘for the sake of something else’ need not imply that there is some product that survives the activity itself. Take another paradigmatic case of τέχνη for Aristotle, the art of navigation. An exercise of the art of navigation is only valuable if and to the extent that the particular activity of sailing is valuable. Similarly, an exercise of the art of kithara-playing is only valuable if and to the extent that the music that the kithara-playing produces is valuable. In this respect, the art of navigation, the art of kithara-playing, and all other arts differ from the virtues, like courage. An exercise of the δύναμις that is courage is valuable for its own sake (although the consequences might be valuable as well). And this seems to be at least roughly the point that Aristotle wishes to make when he introduces the πράξις/ποίησις distinction in *EN* 6.

But this isn’t the only point of divergence between Passage 4 and standard Aristotelian doctrine. Notice also that in line a12 the author suggests that what distinguishes τέχνη from practical fields of expertise is that the latter aims at ἐνέργεια καὶ πράξις. The suggestion is that the τέλος of τέχνη is not an ἐνέργεια. But this is not Aristotle’s standard view. Aristotle is clear that even in the case of τέχνη which aim at producing some product, the product can be regarded as the ἐνέργεια or ἐντελέχεια of the τέχνη. This is why Aristotle never characterizes the difference between practical and productive arts in terms of ἐνέργεια.

This provides a clue as to why the author of Passage 4 diverges from Aristotle on the πράξις/ποίησις distinction. If the author conceives of ἐνέργεια as A-activities, then they will not be able to make sense of the idea that the product of a productive craft is an ἐνέργεια. The author is therefore more likely to identify the ἐνέργεια of the craft simply as the use of the τέχνη.⁶³ And if one thinks about the ἐνέργεια of the craft in this way it is easy to see why one would be tempted to analyze the πράξις/ποίησις distinction in this way. The house-builder doesn’t aim merely to use the craft of housebuilding—she may use it, for example, without completing a house. She aims at something beyond the ἐνέργεια—namely, a completed house. The musician, however, has already completed his task once he has begun exercising his skill.

There are, of course, other explanations that one might provide for this passage that are consistent with the author being Aristotle. Stephen Menn, for

63 This is supported by another passage in *MM* 2.12, where the author explains that the end of friendship is the activity itself: ‘What I mean is that in some [of the sciences (ἐπιστήμας)] the end and the activity (ἐνέργεια) are the same and there is no end aside from the activity. For example, for flute-playing the activity is the same as the end (for playing the flute is the end and the activity of it), but not for house-building (for there is also a different end aside from the activity). Friendship, then is a certain activity, and there is nothing aside from the activity of loving, but this is it.’ (1211b26–33).

example, although he does not comment on Passage 4, suggests that the author of the *MM*⁶⁴ understands ἐνέργεια in terms of χρήσις, ‘use’, and suggests that this is because the author was a young Aristotle, picking up on an idea in Plato. If ἐνέργεια in Passage 4 just means χρήσις, this might explain why the author would not be able to make sense of the idea that the τέλος of housebuilding is also an ἐνέργεια (the house may be an ἐνέργεια in the standard Aristotelian sense, but it is clearly not a χρήσις). So, this hypothesis might explain this passage just as well as my hypothesis that the author links ἐνέργεια with χρήσις specifically because they tend to think of ἐνέργεια as A-activities. But in the next section, I will provide independent reasons for preferring my hypothesis over the Menn-style one.

4 Hypotheses

With this I rest my case that at least sometimes the author of the *MM* uses ἐνέργεια to mean not ‘activity’ in the Aristotelian sense, but A-activity. One might perhaps disagree with my interpretation of one or two of these passages,⁶⁵ but I do not think that one can reasonably deny that this usage is found in *any* of these passages. The question that I wish to turn my attention to now is whether this finding can be made consistent with the idea that the work originated with Aristotle himself. After all, the *MM* is indisputably full of terms that are not used by Aristotle elsewhere in the corpus and this has not stopped many from claiming the work is attributable (in some way) to Aristotle. Why should it be harder to believe that a genuinely Aristotelian work contains an unusual usage of ἐνέργεια than, say, believing that a genuinely Aristotelian work contains a variety of terms, the earliest uncontroversial occurrences of which date to the Hellenistic era?

I think that the case of ἐνέργεια is different. To show this, I will begin by looking at the ways in which defenders of the early authorship view explain the already acknowledged divergences in language between the *MM* and Aristotle’s canonical works. I will then argue that none of these explanations work for the case of the atypical usage of ἐνέργεια that I have found in the foregoing passages.

64 Who he assumes, without either argument or the customary citation of Cooper 1973, to be a young Aristotle.

65 I will shortly discuss an alternative way of interpreting Passage 4, for example.

4.1 *Editorial Intervention*

As noted above, Dirlmeier's preferred way of explaining the linguistic and stylistic idiosyncrasies of the *MM* is to suppose that they are the work of a later editor who intervened in the texts at a variety of points. As also pointed out, this view is implausible in itself since, as Cooper notes, this would have us believe that, for example, an editor went through and consistently changed all instances of *περί* to *ὑπέρ*. In this case I think the hypothesis is even less plausible still. In all the passages that I have listed the understanding of *ἐνέργεια* as A-activity is central to the argument. Consider Passage 2, for example. The whole surrounding discussion only makes sense if we understand *ἐνέργεια* to mean A-activity. So, a minimal intervention from an editor could not explain the occurrence of this usage. Either the whole passage comes from Aristotle or the whole passage does not. One might, of course, suppose that the passage was written by someone interpreting in their own way the *EE* passage that I cited, but once you accept that view, you have essentially accepted that the passage is not the work of Aristotle, but rather someone interpreting Aristotle which is, roughly, my view.

4.2 *Regional Dialect*

As I also noted above, there is some reason to believe that the work's stylistic peculiarities are at least partially the result of regional dialect. Cooper has a ready explanation for this that is able to preserve the early authorship hypothesis, namely that the work is the product of lecture notes—perhaps by an Ionian who came to Athens to study with Aristotle.

This might be plausible as an explanation of some of the linguistic oddities of the work, but it will not do in the case at hand. Here the quasi-technical nature of *ἐνέργεια* language is important. *ἐνέργεια* is a term whose earliest uses occur in Aristotle and which was either coined as a technical term by Aristotle himself or by a contemporary of his (most likely the former).⁶⁶ It is therefore not plausible to suppose that a student's regional dialect would impact how he or she would understand such a term, since they probably would have been introduced to the term by Aristotle himself, just like any Athenian student.

4.3 *Exoteric Language Use*

Similar considerations apply to a hypothesis advanced by Simpson for the text's linguistic and philosophical oddities: that the work was written by Aristotle specifically for the general public, as opposed to a philosophically

66 See Menn 1994, 75.

adept audience that most his treatises are aimed at.⁶⁷ The reason the language of the *MM* frequently resembles koine, on this view, is that koine resembles the language as it would have been used in daily conversation in the Classical Period. This is also why the *MM* frequently lacks the philosophical nuance of the *EE* and the *EN*.⁶⁸

Simpson's argument will not do in this case. Presumably the term ἐνέργεια would not have been one in common usage during Aristotle's day. There presumably would not have been an ordinary, untechnical understanding of the term outside of the Aristotelian, technical meaning. Moreover, since the usage of ἐνέργεια in at least some of these passages corresponds very closely to the meaning of πράξις, it is very unlikely that someone intentionally altering their style to suit a general audience would choose to use the neologism ἐνέργεια in place of the familiar πράξις. If anything, one would expect that it would be the other way around.

4.4 *Development in Aristotle's Own Usage*

This hypothesis is inspired by a developmental story told by Stephen Menn about the origin of the ἐνέργεια/δύναμις distinction in Aristotle. Menn argues that in early Aristotle—specifically in the *Protrepticus*, *Eudemian Ethics*, *Topics*, and the *MM*—ἐνέργεια is used essentially interchangeably with χρήσις, 'use', and this is because the concept of ἐνέργεια was originally introduced as "an explanatory synonym or alternative for χρήσις before coming to displace it."⁶⁹ According to Menn, the development of the concept of being-in-ἐνέργεια and the sense of the term ἐνέργεια corresponding to 'actuality' is only a later development in Aristotle's thought. If this is true, then it might go some way towards explaining the usages mentioned above. This proposal would be that there is a usage of ἐνέργεια in this work distinct from the standard Aristotelian one, but this is not (as I will suggest) a product of the work's late date, but

67 See Simpson 2014, 167 and Simpson 2017, xxi-xxii. A similar hypothesis was advanced by Helms 1954, xii-xiii and discussed by a few others (for which see Simpson 2017, xxxiii n. 17).

68 Simpson 2014 also provides a highly general methodological argument according to which 'literary' and philosophical considerations can never defeat the hypothesis of Aristotelian authorship. On this basis he concludes that the *MM* and, surprisingly, the *Virtues and Vices* are both authentic (his view also implies that almost everything else ever attributed to Aristotle is also authentic, which some might think is a *reductio*). I do not think this argument merits much discussion, but, for what it's worth, even if that argument were sound it would not affect my argument here since I am not relying on 'literary' (i.e. stylistic) considerations in his sense. This argument would fall under the heading of 'historical' considerations, which Simpson does permit.

69 *Ibid.*, 79.

rather its early date and the tacit connection between ἐνέργεια and χρήσις. This might make sense in connection to Passage 4. As I already pointed out, although Menn does not discuss that passage, it is not hard to see how the idea that the author simply identifies ἐνέργεια with χρήσις would help explain it.

But while it is true that the *MM* does often link ἐνέργεια with χρήσις, it is not true that the author consistently uses ἐνέργεια synonymously with χρήσις and, moreover, this hypothesis will not do to explain all the passages that I have discussed. In Passage 2, for example, the idea that there is no χρήσις associated with the nutritive part looks every bit as strange as the idea that there is no ἐνέργεια associated with it. Similarly, the idea in Passage 1 that greater ἐνέργεια accrues to the benefactor than the beneficiary in a friendship does not make any sense at all if we replace ἐνέργεια with χρήσις. Hence, although Menn's view about ἐνέργεια in these works is interesting it does not seem to be correct as far as the *MM* goes and it cannot explain the passages under consideration.⁷⁰

4.5 *A Student's Misunderstanding*

One way of trying to save the Cooper-style view that the work is the notes of a student of Aristotle's would be to suppose that the student had simply incorrectly grasped Aristotle's concept and inadvertently introduced a distinct usage.⁷¹

While this might be impossible to rule out, I think that it is improbable. The concept of ἐνέργεια is central to Aristotle's philosophical enterprise. There is virtually no area of Aristotle's philosophy where the concept does not play an important (if not central) role. This makes it unlikely that someone who was embedded in the philosophical milieu of Aristotle himself would clumsily misunderstand such a concept.⁷² It would be easier to accept, perhaps, if there

⁷⁰ It is also worth pointing out that while it may be true that one thing that the *MM* has in common with early works like the *Protrepticus* is the frequent usage of χρήσις in connection with ἐνέργεια, this can hardly be thought to be much of a consideration in favor of supposing that the *MM* belongs among Aristotle's early works. For if one looks at Arius Didymus' *Epitome of Peripatetic Ethics*—a work which is indisputably late—one finds the very same connection, in some cases even a more prominent role attributed to χρήσις. There, for example, happiness is defined as 'the χρήσις, of the primary sort, of complete virtue in a complete life' and 'unimpeded χρήσις of virtue in things that are in agreement with nature' (130.15). (I should add that Menn does not explicitly suggest that the occurrence of the ἐνέργεια/χρήσις identification in the *MM* is evidence for its early authorship—this because he shows no interest in the question of the work's authenticity at all and merely assumes it throughout.)

⁷¹ I thank an anonymous referee for this suggestion.

⁷² It is also worth noting that it would significantly undercut the motivation for the Cooper-style view. Cooper thinks that the *MM* is a reliable source for insight into

were evidence from around Aristotle's own lifetime that ἐνέργεια had already started to be used to exclusively pick out A-activities, but as I shall discuss shortly, no such evidence exists.⁷³

The real question, though, is not whether this hypothesis is possible, but whether it is the most probable hypothesis, given the rest of our information. I turn now to my own hypothesis, which I think is much more likely given our knowledge of the history of the language of ἐνέργεια in later antiquity.

4.6 *My Proposal: Late Authorship*

According to my hypothesis, these atypical uses of ἐνέργεια are attributable to the fact that the term underwent a semantic change in later antiquity, such that ἐνέργεια came to refer not to activities in Aristotle's sense, but specifically to A-activities. The most plausible explanation for how this usage came to be found in the *MM* is that the author of the *MM* composed it at a time at which that semantic shift had already taken place, and thus, perhaps unwittingly, distorted certain ideas found in Aristotle by using a different understanding of ἐνέργεια.

That such a semantic change took place is quite clear. In later ancient Greek, ἐνέργεια and ἐνεργεῖν are frequently opposed to πάθος and πάσχειν. This occurs frequently in Galen (2nd-3rd c. CE),⁷⁴ pseudo-Archytas (1st c. BCE-1st c. CE),⁷⁵ Artemidorus (2nd c. CE),⁷⁶ Athenagoras (2nd c. CE),⁷⁷ Alexander of

Aristotle's thought. If the student who composed the *MM* was so inept as to misunderstand the central concept of ἐνέργεια, and, moreover, this misunderstanding is reflected in whole arguments, that suggests that it is not a reliable source for Aristotle's views at all (compare why Xenophon is generally not considered a reliable source for information about Socrates' views).

73 Consider an analogy: introductory philosophy students often misunderstand what it means to call an argument 'logically valid' because 'valid' has a distinct usage in ordinary English where it means 'legitimate' or 'effective' *vel sim*. Philosophical jargon that has no counterpart in ordinary language is usually somewhat easier for students to master.

74 For example, *PHP* 6.1.4.3: πότερον ἐνεργείας ἢ πάθη προσαγορευτέον ἐστὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν καὶ τὸν θυμὸν ὅσα τ' ἄλλα τοιαῦτα. Cf. *Temp.* 3.680.17 K, *Caus. Symp.* 3.119.13; *MM* 14.46.5; *SMT* 11.650.7; 668.1.

75 E.g. *Fragmenta* 5.20-22: καὶ λέγεται τοῦ δὲ ποῦ περιοχά, τοῦ δὲ πότε τὸ μὴ διαμένειν, τοῦ δὲ ποεῖν ἢ ἐνέργεια, τοῦ δὲ πάσχειν τὸ πάθος, τοῦ δὲ κείσθαι ἢ ἐπίθεσις, τοῦ ἔχειν δὲ ἢ περίθεσις. Cf. 4.15; 5.28; 25.18.

76 E.g., *Onir.* 1.2.50: τοὺς δὲ ἀλλοτρίους, ἐν οἷς ἂν ἄλλον δοκῇ ἐνεργεῖν ἢ πάσχειν.

77 E.g., *De res.* 12.8.2: δεῖ σφύζεσθαι πάντως καὶ τὸ γινόμενον ζῶον, ἐνεργοῦν τε καὶ πάσχον ἃ πέφυκεν.

Aphrodisias (2nd-3rd c. CE),⁷⁸ Origen (2nd-3rd c. CE),⁷⁹ and others. So, that this usage is common in late antiquity and entirely absent in the canonical works of Aristotle suggests that a plausible explanation for how this usage came to be present in the work is that the scholars who have found (independent) evidence of Hellenistic provenance in the *MM* were right. But I think it is possible to go a step further still. I think that it is most likely given the historical record that the term ἐνέργεια was simply not used to mean A-activity during Aristotle's lifetime or shortly thereafter, and hence my four texts from section 3 could not have originated during that period. The earliest text that I have been able to find which uses ἐνέργεια to mean A-activity is the *Ars grammatica* attributed to Dionysius Thrax in which ἐνέργεια is used to denote the active voice in contrast to πάθος for the passive voice.⁸⁰ If this text was composed by Dionysius Thrax, that would place its date of authorship somewhere in the late 2nd century BCE, some 200 years after Aristotle's death. However, the authorship of the work is highly uncertain and, in fact, there is excellent reason to believe that it was composed much later.⁸¹ But even if the attribution to Dionysius Thrax is right, 200 years is a long time. This makes the hypothesis that the novel (by Aristotelian standards) usage of ἐνέργεια was introduced by a confused student seem very unlikely. The most natural conclusion to draw would be that the text was composed around the same time that these other texts which use the term ἐνέργεια in this non-Aristotelian way were composed.

5 Conclusion

I think that the textual evidence that I have called attention to in this essay constitutes very strong reason to believe that the old view, dating back to Spengel and accepted by most scholars at least until Dirlmeier (and many

78 E.g., *Pr.* 1.89.10-17: εἰ τοίνυν περὶ τὸ πάσχον καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ποιεῖν ἀδύνατον καὶ ἡμετέραν ψυχὴν μὲν εὐσεβείαις ὀπλίσαντας. Cf. *In Metaph.* 576.27: τὰς δ' ἄνευ λόγου δυνάμεις εἴτε τοῦ ἐνεργεῖν εἴτε καὶ τοῦ πάσχειν οὐκ ἀνάγκη ἐστὶ προενεργῆσαι.

79 E.g., *Philocalia* 23.3.4: τὸ πάθος καὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῶν πεπονθότων ἢ ἐνεργηκῶτων θεασάμενοι.

80 See 637.29 *et passim*. Cf. Apollonius Dyskolos *Synt.* 9.9.

81 The earliest extant direct quotations from the *Ars grammatica* date to the 5th c. CE and doubts about the work's authenticity were already raised by scholiasts in the 6th c. CE. In the modern era, the view that the work is spurious was revived by Di Benedetto 1958. Di Benedetto's work was highly influential and is followed by many scholars today (see, e.g., Law and Sluiter's 1995 edited volume, most of whose contributors conclude that the work is spurious), although there remain some who maintain the work's authenticity, and many who are undecided.

since) was correct: the *MM* is a late work,⁸² written by someone who was himself interpreting Aristotle's texts (in many cases poorly). I am even inclined to say that the evidence I have presented is decisive. At the very least it constitutes another reason to resist the common practice of using the *MM* as a source of evidence for Aristotle's own views.⁸³

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82 I have not specified *how* late the work is for a simple reason: I do not know. But providing a date for the work was not my object. My aim was simply to show that it was most likely not written around Aristotle's own lifetime.

83 I am grateful to Tim Stoll and two anonymous referees for *Mnemosyne* for comments on drafts of this paper.

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