PETRUS VICTORIUS AND ARISTOTLE'S *EUDEMIAN ETHICS**

ABSTRACT

This article reassesses the contribution of the late Renaissance scholar and teacher Petrus Victorius (Pier Vettori) to the reconstruction of the text of Aristotle's Eudemian Ethics*, which has come down to us in what is often a highly corrupt form. It proposes an interpretation of certain abbreviations in the marginalia in one of Victorius's copies of the Aldine* Eudemian Ethics *which reveals them as recommending readings rather than recording them; it proposes that many more of those readings constitute his own conjectures than previously thought. The article goes on to suggest why Victorius never produced an edition of the* Eudemian Ethics *as he did of other Aristotelian works, despite returning repeatedly, over much of his life, to the task of improving this particular text. Victorius is revealed nonetheless as a highly creative—but also highly disciplined—textual critic, at least the equal of his nineteenth- and twentieth-century successors.*

Keywords: marginalia; abbreviations; conjectures; textual reconstruction; Petrus Victorius; Pier Vettori; Aristotle; manuscripts

For most of the past decade I have been engaged in producing a new critical edition of Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*.[1] This ethical treatise was long regarded as the poor relation of Aristotle's better known *Nicomachean Ethics*, but in the last half-century has enjoyed something of a change in its fortunes, some regarding it as at least the equal of the *Nicomachean*. This revival of interest depends at least in part on what is alleged to be the restoration of the *Eudemian*'s three apparently missing middle books—we have what are usually labelled as I–III, VII–VIII—from the *Nicomachean*. Books IV–VI of the *Eudemian* are in much of the tradition treated as identical to Books V–VII of the *Nicomachean*, and indeed as borrowed from there; statistical work done in the 1970s,[2] however, seemed to show that these books may in fact have a greater stylistic affinity to the *Eudemian* than to the *Nicomachean*. Translations have even begun including these books as part of the *Eudemian*,[3] and where both works are printed together, omitting them from the *Nicomachean*[4]—thus reversing a situation that appears to have existed for most of the past two millennia.

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[1] C. Rowe (ed.), *Aristotelis Ethica Eudemia* (Oxford, 2023), an Oxford Classical Text in the series *Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis*. Alongside the new edition there is a separate volume of studies: C. Rowe, *Aristotelica. Studies on the Text of Aristotle's Eudemian Ethics* (Oxford, 2023), which provides the background of and arguments for editorial decisions and choices made in the edition itself.

[2] A. Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethics: A Study of the Relationship between the* Eudemian *and* Nicomachean *Ethics of Aristotle* (Oxford 1978, 2016[2]). My long-standing acceptance of Kenny's conclusions has however recently been shaken by reports of new statistical work done by B. Waststedt.

[3] E.g. B. Inwood and R. Woolf (edd.), *Aristotle:* Eudemian Ethics (Cambridge, 2012).

[4] J. Barnes and A. Kenny (edd.), *Aristotle's Ethics: Writings from the Complete Works* (Princeton and Oxford, 2014), with *Eudemian* then naturally preceding *Nicomachean*.

This is a striking turnaround for a work that had apparently at some point been separated from the rest of the Aristotelian corpus and for up to a thousand years had depended, so far as we can tell, on the survival of a single copy.[5] That was the position, so far as we know, at around the beginning of the thirteenth century C.E. Byzantine Sicily and then Renaissance Italy saw a brief surge of interest in the work (as can be seen from the stemma), with that single copy giving birth, eventually, to twenty or so more, but it then again sank into obscurity, accompanied by doubts about its authenticity: the Teubner edition of 1884 was not alone in attributing it to Eudemus of Rhodes.[6] Because of the vicissitudes in its transmission, the text of the *Eudemian Ethics* is often in a poor

[5] See the *stemma codicum* below.

STEMMA CODICUM
(Harlfinger 1971, adapted)

[6] F. Susemihl (ed.), [*Aristotelis Ethica Eudemia*] *Eudemi Rhodii Ethica* ... (Leipzig, 1884, repr. Amsterdam, 1967).

state. For my new edition of 2023,[7] I made a fresh collation of the four main manuscripts (P, C, B and L in the stemma), one of which (B) was locked away in a private collection until the 1970s;[8] I have also looked at the descendants of these four, the majority in person. The result is a completely new Oxford edition of the text. It has been generally agreed for some time that existing editions, including not just the 1884 Teubner but an Oxford edition[9] as recent as 1991,[10] were inadequate, whether because founded either on an incomplete understanding of the manuscript tradition (in the case of the Teubner), or (in the case of the 1991 Oxford text, postdating Harlfinger[11]) on inaccurate and incomplete collations of the manuscripts,[12] or for other reasons.

The editions in question also underestimate the singular contribution made to the restoration of the text of the *Eudemian Ethics* by Petrus Victorius (1499–1585), the subject of the present paper (that is, Pier Vettori, hereafter simply 'Victorius'), one of the finest Hellenists of the late Italian Renaissance: according to Wilamowitz, the last 'great figure [from that period] in the domain of Greek studies […] primarily for his conscientious editing of the manuscripts put at his disposal by the Laurentian Library'.[13] Greek authors edited by Victorius included Aeschylus, Euripides and Plato; he also produced editions of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Rhetoric*, *Poetics* and *Politics*—no one, said a contemporary of his in a funerary *laudatio*, 'left Aristotle in a cleaner state (*purgatior*)'.[14] And this was his intention with the *Eudemian Ethics*, even though he never published an edition of the text. Instead, he wrote copious marginal annotations in one of his copies of the Aldine Aristotle,[15] the *editio princeps* of Aristotle's works that was printed not long after Victorius was born. Aldus Manutius and his colleagues somehow succeeded in sourcing texts of all

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[7] See n. 1 above.

[8] Originally at Thirlestaine House, Cheltenham, as part of the vast collection of incunabula assembled by Sir Thomas Phillips, Bt (1792–1872). The manuscript in question, unavailable to Harlfinger when he produced the stemma on which mine is based—see his ground-breaking essay 'Die Überlieferungsgeschichte der Eudemischen Ethik', in P. Moraux and D. Harlfinger (edd.), *Untersuchungen zur Eudemischen Ethik: Akten des 5. Symposium Aristotelicum* (Berlin, 1971), 1–50, at 3 n. 8, 40 n. 95—was sold at auction in 1976 and passed into the collection of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (hence my labelling it 'B'). Mine is the first full collation of the *Eudemian Ethics* in this manuscript, which Harlfinger himself had urged me to inspect; the collation established that it was not only one of the primary manuscripts but descended from a lost MS that was the parent of the source of the *gemelli* P and C, which had been treated as our main surviving witnesses along with L (Laurentianus 81.15).

[9] R.R. Walzer and J.M. Mingay (edd.), *Aristotelis Ethica Eudemia* (Oxford, 1991). Walzer did not live to see the publication of the edition, which was completed by Mingay; the latter was also responsible for the Preface.

[10] On the weaknesses of the 1991 edition see especially J. Barnes, 'An OCT of the *EE*', *CR* 42 (1992), 27–31.

[11] I.e. his 'Überlieferungsgeschichte' (n. 8).

[12] That is, even apart from the omission of manuscript B.

[13] U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (ed. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, transl. A. Harris), *History of Classical Scholarship* (London, 1982), 30–1, translated from *Geschichte der Philologie* (Berlin, 1921) 14; cited by D. Baldi Bellini, 'Pier Vettori (1499–1585): philologist and professor', in J. Davies and J. Monfasani (edd.), *Renaissance Politics and Culture: Essays in Honour of Robert Black* (Leiden, 2021), 165–97, at 165.

[14] Quoted from D. Baldi [sic], *Il greco a Firenze e Pier Vettori (1499–1585)* (Alessandria, 2014), 117.

[15] *Aristotelis Opera omnia* (Venice, 1495–8). Victorius had at least two copies, both of which are preserved—along with other parts of his personal library—in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich.

Aristotle's works (the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* were printed a few years after the rest): an astonishing achievement, involving as it did collaboration with scholars in different parts of Italy and outside Italy. What is more, the Aldine itself made significant improvements to those texts in the process of printing. But at the same time the typesetting introduced multiple new errors, often—in the case of the *Eudemian Ethics*—corrected by Victorius without comment.[16]

To judge by the variations in his hand, the less neat and tidy marginal notes perhaps being naturally associated with increasing years, he kept coming back to the text of this work over much of his life. He states his ambition late on in his voluminous *Variae lectiones*:[17]

It is to be regretted that the books about ethics (*mores*) that Aristotle sent to Eudemus of Cyprus have come down to us in such a maimed and corrupt state. I have devoted myself at certain times (*quondam*) with the aid of ancient books (*ope antiquorum librorum*) to remove the stains that have attached themselves to their remains (*reliquiis ipsorum*). But to tell the truth, I have not been of as much use to them as I was hoping, not just wishing. Yet neither do I regret that labour of mine; it was labour well applied, and to clean up some part, even if not a great part, of so fine a work is no light achievement.[18]

Victorius is not referring here to the mundane correction of simple typographical errors, but to his attempts to 'clean up' what is agreed by everyone to be—at least in many parts—a highly corrupt text, 'with the aid of ancient books'.

There can be little doubt that at least some of the 'ancient books' in question are manuscripts that Victorius found in the Medici library, in so far as we know from some of his Latin editions that he had full access to the Medici collection long before the formal opening of what we call the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in 1571. But editors have been slow to accept this. Susemihl divides the alternative readings noted in the margins in Victorius's Aldine[19] into (a) those readings either marked 'l.' or 'm.l.' or 'l.m.' or 'm.', together with 'paene omnia, quibus nullam eiusmodi notam praemisit', all of which he claimed to be derived from an otherwise unknown manuscript that he labelled *codex Victori*; (b) conjectures by *viri illius temporis docti*, marked γρ (written typically as a compendium);[20] and (c) Victorius's own conjectures, a much smaller number, marked with a 'fort[asse]'. Confirming Susemihl's own description of the supposed *codex Victori*, Harlfinger narrowed the *codex Victori* down to either Laurentianus plut. 81.20 or Laurentianus plut. 81.4, both of which appear to switch from one side of the tradition to the other (that is, from the *recensio 'Messanensis'*[21] to the *recensio Contantinopolitana*: see stemma) in a way that is consistent with Susemihl's description of Victorius's annotations;[22] '[d]ie restlichen Randbemerkungen',

Harlfinger says, '[…] sind fast ausschliesslich eigene Konjekturen'. Walzer and Mingay, in the 1991 Oxford text, followed Harlfinger in eliminating category (b) and Susemihl's anonymous 'learned men of the [that is, Victorius's] time', but apparently rowed back from Harlfinger's proposal that 'almost all' the remaining marginal readings were Victorius's by marking items in both category (b) and category (c) as 'fort. V'.[23]

Several questions arise. (1) Why the insistence on a single *codex Victori*? If Victorius had access to all the Laurentian codices, there appears no reason why we should in principle rule out any of the four such codices, that is, the four Laurentiani containing the *Eudemian Ethics*, as *Rezenzionsexemplare*. (2) What is indicated by 'l.', 'm.l.', 'l.m.' and 'm.'? (3) What does γρ indicate? I address each of these in turn.

QUESTION 1: WHY ONE *CODEX VICTORI*?

The restriction to a single *codex Victori* stems in the first instance from Susemihl, who evidently did not know of Victorius's reference to *antiqui libri*, plural, and might therefore not have seen any good reason to postulate more than a single missing manuscript. But if Victorius's marginal corrections appear to shift their allegiance, as it were, from one *recensio* to the other, and Victorius did indeed have access to all the relevant manuscripts, that is consistent with Victorius's using *both* 81.20 and 81.4 as much as with his using just one of them. It also does not rule out his having at other times used 81.15 itself (L, the hyparchetype for the Constantinopolitani). This is likely to be less visible in so far as the Aldine, which Victorius was emending and annotating, is itself a descendant of L, but in the large number of cases where he notes what are in fact L's readings, for example in the more corrupt *EE* VII/IV,[24] the *Rezensionsexemplar* could as well have been L itself as either 81.20[25] or 81.4—or indeed 81.12.[26] Laur. 81.12 is excluded by Harlfinger only because he is looking for a single manuscript, and there is no positive indication in Victorius's annotations of its individual profile (the first four Bekker pages or so from the *recensio 'Messanensis'*, the remaining thirty-five from the other *recensio*). Maybe Victorius missed it: its cover, after all,[27] announces it as Ἀριστοτέλους ἠθικὰ μεγάλα/ *Aristotelis: magna moralia*, without reference to its second, longer part, the *Eudemian Ethics*. (Not so the later inscription on the end of the 'pluteus', the extended writing desk.)[28] I wonder, too, how long a philologist of Victorius's calibre would have dallied with Laur. 81.4, which is full of the most elementary mistakes, for example even

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[23] At most, a few conjectures might properly be labelled 'Victorius cum nota "fort."'. See further below.

[24] For the double numbering, see my opening paragraph above.

[25] And yet, e.g. the ὁ before ἄνθρωπος in 1244b10 (my line-numbering) that Victorius inserts in the margin, with no mark (like l., or γρ. …; he is noting a reading, not recommending it [see below]), surely links him with 81.20 there.

[26] I propose the same in the preface to the new Oxford edition, but on mistaken grounds, namely that he would have found the four codices on the very same pluteus, i.e., extended, Michelangelo-designed desk (i.e. number 81), and indeed announced on the end of the pluteus by the aisle. But the dating is wrong, as I should have known. Even if the plutei had been installed by 1571, the present lettering on the ends of the plutei dates from a full two centuries later, and the more temporary indications of the manuscripts on the pluteus that preceded that lettering were not introduced until after Victorius's death.

[27] If it was already then in its present binding.

[28] Victorius's προϊέναι (marked with an 'l.') in the margin at 1215b19 is—so far as I know—only

mistaking instances of psi for phi.[29] So: just 81.20 and 81.15 (L)? But we cannot defini-
tively rule out any of the four Laurentiani.

Were we still to insist on one of the four (and 81.20 has the most going for it), then
a second 'ancient book'[30] from which Victorius might have drawn is the *Liber de bona
fortuna*, a translation by William of Moerbeke (1215–86) of *Eudemian Ethics* VIII/V.2,
preceded by his translation of the corresponding section of the *Magna Moralia*. (*Magna
Moralia* is a work now generally accepted as spurious,[31] but in the Renaissance and in
Byzantium it was regarded as genuine, and indeed preferred to the *Eudemian Ethics*,
being usually copied before it where both works were copied together.)[32] Since the
nineteenth century we have known that this translation was of a Greek text somewhat
less corrupt than any of those still extant, and it has been of considerable use in the
restoration of this one chapter, chapter 2, of a book (VIII/V) of the *Eudemian Ethics*
that is probably the most corrupted of all in our manuscripts. The *Liber* was widely
distributed: even now we have between five and six times as many mediaeval copies
of it than we do of the *Eudemian Ethics* itself, so that it would not be at all surprising
if it had been known to Victorius. What is more, Victorius himself tells us, in the preface
to his edition of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, that he had used William's translation there,
though he did not know the identity of the translator:

> But I have also [in working on the *Rhetoric*] used […] an old translation […]. From reading it I
> was able to understand what the author of the translation read in his Greek manuscript. The
> translator was clearly a rude individual devoid of all cultural refinement [!]; yet he did his
> work conscientiously. So much so that, when I held that barbarous translation in my hands,
> it seemed to me to be the same as having the Greek manuscript […]; the translator in fact
> never even changes the word order, he translates literally and frequently even uses Greek
> words when he does not understand their meaning or does not see how to render them with
> a single word. But since the translation was put together many centuries ago, Aristotle's
> books then were less incomplete and in better shape (*emendatiores*). But I have found that
> translation for the most part in agreement with [another manuscript spoken of earlier, which
> Victorius has found superior].[33]

(Victorius also similarly used William of Moerbeke's translation when editing
Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*.) He is unnecessarily impolite in the
passage just quoted about the translator, William, whose aim was precisely to reproduce
the Greek in Latin, however 'barbarous' the result. But the fact that the Latin reproduces
the Greek so well does make it extraordinarily useful for the textual critic attempting to
restore a Greek original, as in the case of *Eudemian Ethics* VIII/V.2; like others, I have
made extensive use of the *Liber de bona fortuna* for that chapter in my new edition.
There is, however, insufficient evidence that Victorius used it. Harlfinger[34] suggests
that two outstanding corrections by Victorius[35] derive from the *Liber*, but if he really

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found in 81.12. That may be a coincidence, with both the copyist of that manuscript and Victorius
trying to make sense of a sentence that certainly needs emendation, but it may also not be.
   [29] Even an inferior copy, however, can spark off important new corrections and emendations, a
point that is confirmed, in its way, by the Aldine (with its typographical errors) in Victorius's hands.
   [30] Given Victorius's use of the plural, we should evidently be looking for at least two.
   [31] Although it continues to have committed and distinguished defenders (e.g. the late J. Cooper).
   [32] As in Laur. 81.12.
   [33] From the preface to Victorius's edition of Aristotle, *Rhetoric*; I use Baldi Bellini's translation of
the Latin (n. 13), 173, slightly modified.
   [34] n. 8, ibid.
   [35] On which see further below.

had this Latin source in front of him we would expect to see rather more evidence of it; those two corrections stand out in a veritable sea of corruption, a much greater proportion of which is addressable—as the last two centuries have shown—with the help of this 'barbarous' translation.[36] I conclude that Victorius's 'antiqui libri' were restricted to the Laurentian manuscripts: possibly just one of them, rather more likely (I think) more than one.[37] So the answer to my Question 1 ('why one *codex Victori*?') is that there is more than enough reason to suppose that there was more than one.

QUESTION 2: WHAT IS INDICATED BY VICTORIUS'S ABBREVIATIONS 'L.', 'M.L.', 'L.M.' AND 'M.'?

'On the assumption that they represent Latin expressions of some kind one might hazard that l. = *legendum*, m.l. = *melius legere* (or *melior lectio*), l.m. = *lectio melior*, and m. perhaps just "*melius*"', wrote Christopher Strachan (in correspondence) in response to an appeal to explain abbreviations that neither Susemihl, whose edition contained them, nor anyone else explained, although (I added) they all seemed to be a way of saying 'fortasse'. I am now certain that Strachan was right.[38] An alternative, which I now regret preferring in a footnote in my new edition of the *Eudemian Ethics*, is to take them as 'l(aurentianus, *sc.* codex)', 'm(anuscriptus) l(aurentianus)', etc., that is, as referring on each occasion just to *a* Laurentian manuscript without picking it out specifically.[39] The chief reason for rejecting this alternative is that we do not know when exactly the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana was first called 'Laurentian' as opposed to just 'Medicea' (certainly rather later).[40] In any case, 'to be read', etc., fits Victorius's actual use of the abbreviations much better, particularly in so far as he notes so many alternative readings undoubtedly from one or another Laurentian that are *not* so marked, if they are marked at all. The difference between those marked 'l.', etc. and those not so marked is that Victorius is expressing a preference for the marked ones, merely recording the others.

[36] Since the 1960s, a separate and much less widely distributed translation by William of the following, and final, chapter of the *Eudemian Ethics* has been used in a similar way; I find no indication that Victorius knew of this translation.

[37] Harlfinger (n. 8), 11 observes, rightly, that the copyist responsible for the second half of 81.20 (from 1232a3) works with particular care, which makes it even more difficult to decide whether Victorius is using it or its antigraph (i.e. 81.15).

[38] Subsequently to the seminar at which I presented the first version of the present paper M.D. Reeve independently suggested 'melior lectio' for 'm.l.'. It may be that Susemihl spelled out the abbreviations himself in *De recognoscendis Magnis Moralibus et Ethicis Eudemiis dissertatio* (Greifswald, 1882), to which he refers us for the details of what I have called his category (a) annotations; I have not (yet) checked (there is evidently a copy of the dissertation in Trinity College Library, Cambridge), but as C. Strachan also remarked to me, editors have historically not been averse to leaving abbreviations unexplained as if their meaning ought to be known by or anyway clear to anyone.

[39] See S. Martinelli Tempesta, *La tradizione testuale del* Liside *di Platone* (Florence, 1997), interpreting the same abbreviations in Victorius's Aldine *Lysis*. In her review of Martinelli Tempesta's book, A. Porro, *Aevum* 73 (1999), 220–1, at 221, says this would be 'contrario alla consuetudine vettoriana', according to which each letter designates a separate manuscript; and why, she asks, would Victorius need to abbreviate 'manuscriptus', given the space available in the margin? But the 'consuetudine vettoriana', if it is such, demonstrably cannot apply in the present case (and probably, given the overwhelming evidence here, does not in the case of the *Lysis* either).

[40] As Reeve kindly points out.

QUESTION 3: WHAT DOES VICTORIUS'S ΓΡ INDICATE?

The same applies equally, I propose, to the mark γρ; that is, it too marks a preference for the reading in question, and stands for γραπτέον,[41] not γράφεται. The abbreviation is of course standardly employed for γράφεται. But the problem with so interpreting it in the present case is that rather few of the marginal readings with this marking in Victorius's Aldine text of the *Eudemian Ethics* are in fact written/found in the extant manuscripts. Susemihl attributed his category (b) marginal readings (γρ readings) to unknown learned men just because he assumed γρ = γράφεται. But this must be wrong.

Take for example the two signal emendations in *Eudemian Ethics* VIII/V.2 picked out by Harlfinger as evidence that Victorius was using the *Liber de bona fortuna*: 1247a18 πλέων Victorius, πλέον PCBL[42], navigans *Liber*; a20 ἐν οἷς Victorius, ἐνίοις PCBL, in quibus *Liber*. Both Victorius's readings are preceded by γρ and are not found anywhere in the tradition (i.e. except in the presumed Greek source of the *Liber de bona fortuna,* which I have argued Victorius was not using). Given both that no one denies that Victorius is capable of making independent conjectures, and that πλέων and ἐν οἷς are conjectures by somebody, their absence from our manuscripts makes it more economical to attribute the readings to Victorius than to postulate otherwise unknown scholars as their inventors.[43]

If the evidential value of two examples in question is slightly undermined by the very existence of the *Liber*, there are many other examples of γρ in the margins of the *Eudemian Ethics* in Victorius's Aldine marking conjectures: 1215a1, 10, 1216b31, 1218a15, 1218b19, and so on—enough to mean either that the *viri docti* were fairly busy or that there were quite a number of them, and to make it surprising that none of them has left any other trace. In a significant number of cases, as with 1247a20 (for which see above), Victorius—if it is he, as I suppose—is as a matter of fact anticipated, particularly by an anonymous hand in P, but again he would have had no way of knowing that. In short, there is overwhelming evidence that γρ indicates γραπτέον, and where a given reading does not appear anywhere in the tradition, it will stem from Victorius himself. γρ is in fact no different from l. = *legendum* and the other Latin variants, and functions as an alternative to these, for as well as commending readings that are not conjectures, they too can introduce conjectures:[44] thus 1216b2 λόγου (also Ravennensis, Biblioteca Classense 210) is marked 'l.', as is 1217b32 κοινῶς (not actually an improvement); 1235a18 ἔχει (a proposed, wrong, insertion) is marked 'm.l.';[45] … But sometimes, too, a conjecture appears in the margin with no mark at all: so, for example, at 1241a38 (συμβαίνειν, also found, as it happens,

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[41] Another possibility is γράφε. But the impersonal γραπτέον seems the better, since Victorius is recording a judgement rather than addressing an audience; his annotations are for his own consumption.

[42] I.e. all the primary manuscripts.

[43] In the second case Bessarion got there before Victorius, in Parisinus gr. 2042, so that for once a(nother) *vir doctus* is in play, but Victorius would not have been aware of it.

[44] That is, readings that are not found in our extant manuscripts (leaving aside corrections in any of these to which Victorius had no access) and are therefore reasonably to be taken as conjectures.

[45] The incidence of the various abbreviations varies from book to book of the text; thus, e.g., 'l.' dominates in Book I, 'm.l.' in Book VII/IV. This is further evidence both of the lack of system in Victorius's markings, and of the fact that he made them over a long period of time, as he happened to return to the *Eudemian Ethics*.

in B, for συμβαίνει).[46] We should, then, read γρ in Victorius's marginal annotations to the *Eudemian Ethics* as standing for γραπτέον (not for γράφεται).

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

My overall conclusion, then, is that γρ, l., m.l., l.m. and m. all indicate the same thing: 'this is to be read'. That is the only outcome that is consistent with the evidence. Another more general argument supports this conclusion: we know, because Victorius tells us (see above), that his aim was to 'clean up' the text of the *Eudemian Ethics*. If γρ is γράφεται, and l., m.l., etc. were (impossibly) to indicate the manuscript source of a reading, then there would be nothing in Victorius's annotations to indicate his preferences at all; so how would he be improving anything, even if it was all (so far) for his own benefit? There are plenty of cases where he records, without any mark, a reading that is plainly wrong, for example, one that we find in the L tradition when the Aldine diverges from and improves on that. If we ask whether its wrongness was necessarily plain to Victorius, he so often corrects mistakes in the Aldine itself, sometimes in the body of the text, that it is beyond doubt that his Greek is very good. Where he needs to record a preference, he does so, using one or other of the marks available to him. The variations in the use of those perhaps merely reflect the fact that he returned to the text many times over, and used whichever mark occurred to him.[47] Some instances of γρ, I hazard, belong to his later attempts to improve the Aldine, because they are about as far removed as they could be from the neatness of most of the annotations; were his faculties by this point beginning to fail him?[48]

Victorius's creativity and inventiveness as a textual critic—his ability to see just what is needed to heal a corrupt sentence, here and now—have been consistently underestimated, from Susemihl onwards. Susemihl had a partial reason, that is, his reading of Victorius's γρ. But others underestimate the degree of Victorius's interventions for no good reason: Walzer and Mingay in the 1991 OCT constitute a good example. An anonymous reader of my new edition for Oxford University Press roundly claimed that Victorius 'mostly emends *ope codicum* and *emendationes ope ingenii* are very rare', citing a comment by Martinelli Tempesta relating to

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[46] V. Annunziata reassures me, through Reeve, that the interpretation of γρ as γραπτέον is not so outlandish, referring me to G. Grandi, 'Angelo Poliziano and the *graphetai* symbol in his notes on Catullus', *HumLov* 68 (2019), 211–27. Grandi, relying on N.G. Wilson, 'An ambiguous compendium', *SIFC* 20 (2002), 242–3, and 'More about γράφεται variants', *AAntHung* 48 (2008), 79–81, allows that in Greek and Byzantine manuscripts γρ can sometimes stand for γραπτέον (or γράφε) and introduce a conjecture by the scribe; he suggests that Angelo Poliziano learned the use of the compendium from there, and that it is not 'possible precisely to define whether in [Poliziano]'s mind it stood for γράφεται or γράφε/γραπτέον' in his notes on Catullus (214). If Poliziano did sometimes use γρ for γραπτέον (or even might be so understood), then given Victorius's evident attachment to Poliziano and his methods (see Baldi [n. 14], 41, 43) it would be no great surprise to find him following the great Poliziano in this too. (In any case, as an anonymous reviewer points out, Victorius himself would have been so familiar with the habits of scribes that there would be no reason not to suppose him capable of adopting this one—γρ for γραπτέον—quite on his own initiative.)

[47] Occasionally also 'fort.', which might be expected to indicate a greater element of doubt, and maybe does: perhaps, if Victorius had printed an edition of the *Eudemian Ethics*, conjectures so marked might have been excluded from the text. But in general I sense no great divide even between readings marked 'fort.' and those marked γρ(απτέον).

[48] Examples: 1238a9 γρ κώλυει, κωλύειν PCBL Ald., 1241a22 γρ ταυτὰ (= ταὐτὰ), ταῦτα Ald.; both written in a scrawl.

Victorius's work on Plato's *Lysis*.[49] But there is an important difference between the two cases. The text of Plato, the *Lysis* included, has come down to us in astonishingly good condition. One of Victorius's own principles, in which he followed his predecessor and spiritual mentor Politian, was to emend only in extreme cases: 'I think it important (*magnum*) to safeguard the integrity of ancient authors, and as far as possible to hand them down to posterity pure and uncorrupted'.[50] But the *Eudemian Ethics* is already thoroughly corrupted: its text is 'in a vile state—hideous corruption on every page', wrote Barnes in 1992.[51] Given his conservatism as a textual critic,[52] this may be why Victorius never produced an edition of the *Eudemian Ethics*, as he did of other Aristotelian works. But thirty or so of his emendations are in my apparatus, and there is roughly the same number of other mentions of him; not infrequently, his interventions are anticipated by correcting hands in manuscripts unavailable to him. In the case of the *Eudemian Ethics*, his use of his own *ingenium* is far from rare. That he never published an edition of it is no doubt just because of his awareness that he had not made as much progress with it as he says he 'not just hoped but wished', that is, intended.[53] His judgement is more than equal to that of his nineteenth-century German and British successors, about some of whose rewriting of what the surviving manuscripts do give us he would have been scathing. Here, with the *Eudemian Ethics*, at the end of the Renaissance, we find another textual critic—I think here especially of Politian—who offered a model of textual criticism that has rarely even now been surpassed.

I suspect, however, that he would not have approved of mine. My question, in dire circumstances, is always: how could Aristotle have got from *a* to *f*, say, where *f* is accompanied by a 'therefore', given that *b* to *e*, the steps in between the first premise and the conclusion (I here simplify), are muddied and corrupted in the text as handed down to us? This is the kind of leap that Victorius refuses to make, restricting himself almost entirely to replacements of single words or phrases—and unable, because of that, to produce a fully readable text.[54] This is not the same as the procedure followed by most German and British critics working on the *Eudemian Ethics* from the nineteenth to the present centuries, which is mainly a matter of—as they see it—restoring Aristotle's Greek, typically without reference to the argument. (That is usually, even

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[49] *Letter* 3.21; S. Martinelli Tempesta, 'La versione latina di Pier Vettori del *Liside* platonico', *AATC* 65 (2000), 111–71, at 115 n. 1.

[50] Quoted by Baldi (n. 14), 42 (my translation from the Latin).

[51] Barnes (n. 10), 28.

[52] 'I prefer to err in company with the ancient books than to emend this or that locus from an excessive love of myself (*mearum rerum*) and a certain sort of arrogance', *Letter* 7.16 (from Baldi [n. 14], ibid.).

[53] See text to n. 18 above.

[54] As Raphaële Mouren commented at the original seminar in New York, 'Vettori was not a philosopher but a philologist, with Poliziano as model'. The same anonymous reviewer for *CQ* referred to above objects that while 'it is true that [Victorius] was not a professional philosopher, but a philologist […], these are categories that can mislead a modern reader. Let us not forget that [Victorius] himself, in addition to publishing editions of philosophical texts, also published comments on philosophical texts, certainly not of little relevance; see, for example, the commentary on [the] *Nicomachean Ethics*.' I respond that Victorius typically chooses improving (that is, ethico-political) Aristotelian treatises to edit and to comment on (the *Poetics* belong broadly under the same description); neither that nor his broad, and deep, familiarity with Aristotelian style (which can be markedly different, as I go on to note, in the *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics*) is a substitute for the kind of attention to the structure of Aristotelian arguments that I take to be the basis of a proper 'philosophical' understanding of the text.

now, understood to be a strict division between textual experts and philosophers.) The assumption is that Aristotle would have written proper Greek: after all, as everyone knows, no less an authority than Cicero admired him for his style. But not only is this hardly justifiable from the evidence of his treatises; it also happens that much of the *Eudemian Ethics*, unlike the *Nicomachean*, is written in an extraordinarily cramped, staccato style.[55]

Three choices present themselves: (1) we may concentrate on improving Aristotle's Greek (while getting rid of as much obvious corruption as we can); or (2) we may be more attentive to the fact that Aristotle constructs arguments (and usually decent ones); or else (3) like Victorius, we may content ourselves just with getting rid of the obvious textual errors, which sometimes involves real insight and understanding of the microscopic (but not the macroscopic) context. This last option, however, will leave us with a text that is in quite a few places literally unreadable, and not one that an editor and textual critic of the purity of a Victorius could bring himself to bring out in print.

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[55] Despite the best efforts especially of nineteenth-century editors and critics to make it less so.