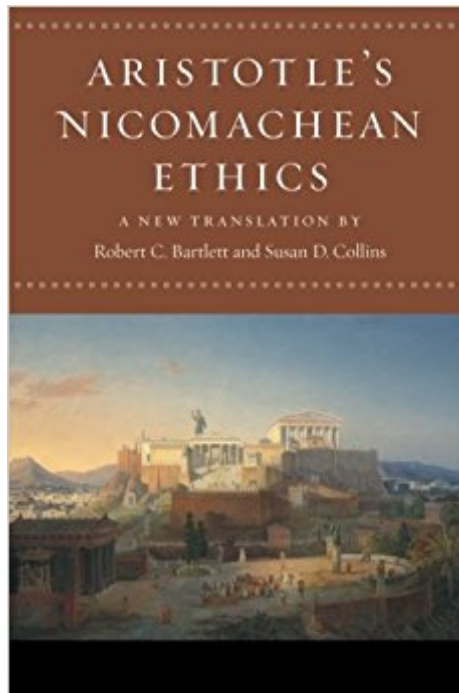




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# **Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics**



## Synopsis

The *Nicomachean Ethics* is one of Aristotle's most widely read and influential works. Ideas central to ethics—that happiness is the end of human endeavor, that moral virtue is formed through action and habituation, and that good action requires prudence—found their most powerful proponent in the person medieval scholars simply called “the Philosopher.” Drawing on their intimate knowledge of Aristotle's thought, Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins have produced here an English-language translation of the *Ethics* that is as remarkably faithful to the original as it is graceful in its rendering. Aristotle is well known for the precision with which he chooses his words, and in this elegant translation his work has found its ideal match. Bartlett and Collins provide copious notes and a glossary providing context and further explanation for students, as well as an introduction and a substantial interpretive essay that sketch central arguments of the work and the seminal place of Aristotle's *Ethics* in his political philosophy as a whole. The *Nicomachean Ethics* has engaged the serious interest of readers across centuries and civilizations of peoples ancient, medieval, and modern; pagan, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish—and this new edition will take its place as the standard English-language translation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“[This volume] is much more than a translation. The translators, Robert C. Bartlett . . . and Susan D. Collins . . . have provided helpful aids. . . . [They have] supplied an informative introduction, as well as a Note on the Translation, a bibliography and an outline of the work. All this precedes the main text. Afterward comes a brief Overview of the

Moral Virtues and Vices, a very extensive and invaluable glossary, a list of Key Greek Terms, an index of proper names and at last a detailed general index. Together these bring the original text within the compass of every intelligent reader. . . . Brilliant and readable. (Harry V. Jaffa New York Times Book Review) "This is the only English translation of the Ethics for those who want or need to know precisely, not just roughly, what Aristotle says. Readers now can behold the splendor of his conception of moral virtue and engage with its subtleties as well. The translation is accompanied by excellent notes, an interpretive essay, indices, and a highly useful glossary. (Harvey C. Mansfield, Harvard University) "There are several good editions of the Nicomachean Ethics currently available, but the Bartlett and Collins version is superior in several decisive respects—philological, philosophical, and pedagogical. The translation itself is consistently faithful to the text without lapsing into obscurity or awkwardness, with lots of helpful discussion (in just the right number of notes conveniently placed at the bottom of the page) of alternative possibilities at key points. Best of all, the thoughtful and well-crafted surrounding material—notes, glossary, introduction, and interpretive essay—supplies a marvelous guide to Aristotle's unique way of presenting the central questions of ethics and politics. This is the version I will use when next I teach the Nicomachean Ethics. (Stephen G. Salkever, Bryn Mawr College) "This translation will easily be the best available English version of the Nicomachean Ethics. (Michael Davis, Sarah Lawrence College) "Bartlett and Collins's translation of the Nicomachean Ethics is the best in English that I have read. It nicely couples a consistent faithfulness to Aristotle's Greek with a high degree of readability. This will be a real service to scholars and students. (Gerald M. Mara, Georgetown University) "[A] readable, careful, and unusually reliable translation. (E. M. Macierowski Choice) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Robert C. Bartlett is the Behrakis Professor in Hellenic Political Studies at Boston College. Susan D. Collins is associate professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame.

Not a book to be read but to be studied. Points and counterpoints. Much deep analysis that requires one's own analysis to comprehend. Some statements that are truly classic.

This book is good because it has an interpretive essay by the translators. A good thing to do after you get used it for a while, is to go to the back of the book and see the Chapter "Overview of the

Moral Virtues and Vices." This gives the "mean between the extremes." My teacher in a church Religion and morals class talks a lot about the Mean being the most virtuous. The "extremes" at both ends are the vices.

A perfect book, obviously, so the translation's all I'm going to talk about. I think the 'literalness' of the translation is a bit overstated, though it seems to be the best one available (better than Reeve's recent translation, certainly.) But expect a manifestly strong

Straussian influence, and this goes too far for the 65 page interpretive essay accompanying the text. The essay is thought provoking if sometimes pretty under-motivated in its use of evidence; it doesn't seem like Straussianism is quite as conducive to Aristotle as to Plato (hence, one would think, Strauss's relative dearth of commentaries on the former). Anyway, the assimilation of Aristotelian terms of art in the body of the translation to the terms employed in Bloom's translation of Plato's Republic is both interesting and possibly misleading. Nevertheless, this seems to me to be the best translation available.

Superb translation. Indispensable for students and teachers who want to know, as well as is possible in English, what Aristotle actually said. No other translation comes close.

Easily the best translation I've seen in years of looking at this material. Strongly endorsed.

Masterpiece! Good for all who reflect on the big questions! Not a light read.

ARISTOTLE'S NICOMACHEAN ETHICS includes an introduction, a note on the translation, a bibliography of works consulted, an outline of the text, the new translation by Robert C. Bartlett of Boston College and Susan D. Collins of the University of Houston, learned footnotes at the foot of the pages of the text, a lengthy interpretive essay, an overview of the moral virtues and vices, an English-Greek glossary, a listing of key Greek terms and brief translations of each, an index of proper names, and a general index. Apart from possibly giving the Greek text on one page and the English translation on the facing page, what more could you want? Because we Americans celebrate the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, I should mention that Aristotle discussed happiness in detail in his NICOMACHEAN ETHICS centuries before the pursuit of happiness was mentioned in the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. In his 1961 inaugural address President John F.

Kennedy famously urged Americans not to ask what their country can do for them but what they can do for their country. In this way, he urged the American citizens to be the aristocrats for their country. At one point in their interpretive essay, Bartlett (born 1964) and Collins (born 1960) seems to echo President Kennedy's wording when they say that "justice and friendship are said to exist also to the extent to which each member seeks not or not only his own advantage but also the advantage of the community as a whole" (page 290). The lengthy interpretive essay (pages 237-302) is accessible and informative. But I do have an admittedly small objection to one paragraph (pages 257-258). Bartlett and Collins start the paragraph by saying that they are going "to speak now more explicitly than Aristotle does" about a certain difficulty they see with maintaining that in the case of courage the same action is both noble and good. On the one hand, I suspect that Aristotle does not speak more explicitly about this matter because he understands the warrior's heroic code. On the other hand, I suspect that Bartlett and Collins do not understand the warrior's heroic code because they have been habituated to the anti-hero in modern literature. Later on (pages 292-293), however, Bartlett and Collins supply a paragraph that answers the difficulty they saw earlier but that Aristotle had not spoken about in the earlier text. They point out that "the serious man is a self-lover, [and] his noble action contributes to the good of another and the common good. His preference for noble action over all other goods explains his extraordinary choice in certain circumstances even to forsake his life in behalf of his friends or city; it explains, as well, his preference `to feel pleasure intensely for a short time over feeling it mildly for a long time, to live nobly for one year over living in a haphazard way for many years, and to do one great and noble action over many small ones' (1169a22-25). His noble action thus makes him a good friend and citizen, even though he is a self-lover in this way and not as the many are." In any event, Aristotle's NICOMACHEAN ETHICS is one of the most thought-provoking works ever written, and Bartlett and Collins have provided us with a fine translation of it.

Great read.

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