

## THE ARISTOTELIAN DOCTRINE OF HOMONYMA IN THE CATEGORIES AND ITS PLATONIC ANTECEDENTS \*

### I

**The Aristotelian doctrine of homonyma** is of particular historical interest at least for the following reasons: (1) It appears that the meaning of homonyma was seriously debated in Aristotle's times and that his own formulation was but one among many others. Evidently, there were other platonizing thinkers in the Academy who had formulated their own variants. According to ancient testimonies, the definition which Speusippus propounded proved to be quite influential in later times<sup>1</sup>. (2) The fact that Aristotle chose to open the *Categories* with a discussion, brief as it is, on the meaning of homonyma, synonyma, and paronyma, attests to the significance he attached to this preliminary chapter. Furthermore, there is general agreement among all the commentators on the relevance of the first chapter of the *Categories* to the doctrine of the categories. (3) The corpus affords ample internal evidence that the doctrine of homonyma figures largely in Aristotle's various discussions on the nature of first principles and his method of metaphysical analysis. This being the case, it is clear that Aristotle considered this part of his logical theory to have applications beyond the limited scope of what is said in the *Categories*.

Since we do not know the actual order of Aristotle's writings it is next to the impossible to decide which formulation came first. It remains a fact that Aristotle discusses cases of homonyma and their causes as early as the *Sophistici*

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\* Τὸ παρὸν ἄρθρον ἐστάλη ὑπὸ τοῦ συγγραφέως, φίλου τοῦ ἀειμνήστου Κ. Δ. Γεωργούλη, ἵνα καταχωρισθῇ εἰς τὸν εἰς μνήμην αὐτοῦ τόμον. Ἐδημοσιεύθη συγχρόνως καὶ εἰς τὸ *Journal of the HISTORY of PHILOSOPHY*, Vol. VI, No 4, October 1968. Ἀποτελεῖ τὸ πρῶτον μέρος τῆς ὅλης μελέτης.

This is the first of a two part article.

1) See *De Speusippi Academici scriptis*, ed. P. Lang (Bonn, 1911), frag. 82. Simplicius comments that Speusippus defended this formulation and remarks that once the definition is granted, it could be shown that homonyma are also synonyma, and vice versa (In *Aristotelis Categoriae commentarium*, ed. C. Kalbfleisch, *Commentaria in Aristotelis Graeca*, VIII [Berlin, 1907] 29, 5—6).

Elenchi. Special mention of the cause of homonymy is made in the very first chapter of this work. We find it again in the Topics, de Interpretatione, the Analytics and the other logical treatises. He opens the Sophistici Elenchi with a general distinction between genuine and apparent reasonings and refutations, and then proceeds to explain why some refutations fail to reach their goal, that is, establish the contradictory of the given conclusion <sup>2</sup>.

## II

It would be an error to claim that Aristotle was the first to observe that homonymy constitutes a source of ambiguity. Plato had already made a diagnosis in the Sophist:

At present, you see, all that you and I possess in common is the name. The thing to which each of us gives that name we may perhaps have privately before our eyes, but it is always desirable to have reached an agreement about the thing itself by means of explicit statements rather than be content to use the same word without formulating what it means <sup>3</sup>.

The Stranger is addressing Theaetetus in this passage; the issue before them is to hunt down «the troublesome sort of creature» that the sophist is. Plato is suggesting here that when two people embark on a conversation and are using names whose meaning they suspect is not the same for both, it is imperative that they settle their differences and decide upon a common and acceptable meaning of

2) «It is impossible in a discussion to bring in the actual things discussed: we use their names as symbols instead of them; and, therefore, we suppose that what follows in the names, follows in the things as well, just as people who calculate suppose in regard to their counters. But the two cases (names and things) are not alike. For names are finite and so is the sum-total of formulae, while things are infinite in number. Inevitably, then, the same formulae, and a single name, have a number of meanings. Accordingly just as, in counting, those who are not clever in manipulating their counters are taken in by the experts, in the same way in arguments too those who are not well acquainted with the force of names misreason both in their own discussions and when they listen to others. For this reason, then, and for others to be mentioned later, there exists both reasoning and refutation that is apparent but not real» (165a 5—20, Oxford trans.).

3) At 218 b-c (Cornford's trans.). This passage is mentioned by Simplicius as evidence to support the claim that Plato had anticipated the problem (In Categ., 25, 103). Plato's text reads: *νῦν γάρ δὴ οὐ τε κἀγὼ τούτου περὶ τοῦνομα ἔχομεν κοινῇ, τὸ δὲ ἔργον, ἐφ' ᾧ καλοῦμεν ἑκάτερος τάχ' ἂν ἰδίᾳ παρ' ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς ἔχοιμεν· δεῖ δὲ δεῖ παντὸς περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ μᾶλλον διὰ λόγων ἢ τοῦνομα συνομολογήσασθαι χωρὶς λόγου.* Earlier in his commentary, Simplicius refers to Plato's Euthydemus (277e, 295d), where Plato draws attention to the need for a proper method to distinguish between the various uses of names in order to meet the Sophistic nuisance and also to remove doubt. Simplicius reports that the need to deal with double meanings of names was one of the main reasons that led to the development of dialectic (22, 10—13).

that name. In this particular case, the Stranger and Theaetetus happen to have private meanings on what it means to be a sophist. However, the Stranger suggests, the matter cannot be left to rest at this level of understanding. The discussion cannot continue and hope to bear some fruit unless an appropriate method is introduced to resolve the difference and affix with precision the meaning of the name in question. The warning is clear: one must not take it for granted that common names have common meanings. It is preferable to go on the assumption that two people who are using the same name actually have private meanings for it. The way to settle this matter and arrive at common meanings is by formulating explicit statements about the thing named. In the *Sophist*, Plato propounds the method of division. The main point here is that Plato identified the actual source of homonymy as follows: given a name which is commonly used by two persons, it is by no means certain that both entertain the same meaning. When we turn to Aristotle, the context of the discussion on the nature of homonymy changes. In the *Topics* and the *Sophistici Elenchi* the tone is more Platonic, but less so in the *Categories*. Let us explain. In the *Categories*, we see Aristotle starting out with the fact that things have names; they are the *legomena*. There is no direct resemblance here to the Platonic context of the *Sophist* in which mention is made of two individuals who are said to have private meaning for the same in their discussion. The first thing Aristotle mentions in this treatise is *things* that have common names. The issue that arises immediately is that of determining whether we have a case of *homonymy* or one of *synonymy*. The method to be followed here is not that of division as used by Plato in the *Sophist*, for it is not confused opinion about some subject that we wish to settle. Not our opinions, but how two things are related to a third thing whose name they have in common, is what must be clarified. Thus, the problem is not whether «sophist» means really this or that sort of thing to two different persons. The task is a new one; given that two things share the name of something else, we must ask by virtue of what pattern of relationships they come to share the name. The issue then is to find out whether the two things are essentially related to each other and to some third thing or not. What we are asked to do is to discover something about the claims things have to names of other things and by virtue of what properties. In the Aristotelian view we start out with things and with the natural fact of language whereby names of things happen to be common to certain other things. The ambiguities to be removed are not so much those of private opinion. The deeper issue has now become one whereby homonymy, if allowed to remain undetected, interferes with the validity of syllogistic thinking <sup>4</sup>. It is an obstacle to attaining scientific knowledge.

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4) David in his commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* remarks that *ὁφείλομεν μὲν τοίνυν διαστείλασθαι τὰ ὁμώνυμα πρὸς ἀναίρεσιν τῆς ἀμφιβολίας* (123, 14—15). Howe-

These two different approaches to homonymy point to the fact that Plato and Aristotle are not solving the same problem in their respective quests in the *Sophist* and the *Categories*, though it is true that both deal with some fundamental aspect of ambiguous talking. Just the same, one can readily notice how Aristotle is linguistically indebted to Plato for the formulation of his own definition of *homonymy*. Aristotle's formulation evidently owes much to Plato's choice of words. Compare for instance Aristotle's text in *Categories* 1a1—2, with Plato's wording of the issue when he says: *Τοῦνομα μόνον κοινῇ . . . συνομολογήσασθαι διὰ λόγων*. The Aristotelian text runs as follows: *\*Ομώνυμα λέγεται ὃν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος* <sup>5</sup>.

ver, the «removal of amphiboly» is only part of the issue. Unless homonymy is dealt with in all its aspects, the connection that is needed to tie the major to the minor term in a syllogism could remain in doubt. The scholiast David failed to see how the detection of *homonymy* is vital to the validity of syllogistic thinking. Hence, the discussion on *homonymy* has broader implications than what David mentions in this passage. It might be said that his remark is related to the way in which he interprets the denotation of *homonymy*. Looking at this matter from a strict Aristotelian point of view, we could say that once this notion is allowed to mean individual substances of the sort that David mentions in his examples, then its relation to terms in syllogistic thinking becomes questionable on the ground that the terms in syllogistic premises are universals, not individuals.

5) It should be remembered that Aristotle distinguishes between *ὁμωνυμία*, *τὰ δμῶνυμα*, and *ἀμφιβολία*. The first refers to the multiple use of a word (see *Topics*, esp. 106b 3—4, 106b 8, 107a 6, 107b 7); *ἀμφιβολία* refers to the multiple use of a sentence, *logos* (*Topics*, 129b 31—32. 130a 9). G.E.L. Owen, in a recent essay observes: «Commonly, though not always, he [Aristotle] uses 'homonymous' and 'synonymous' to describe not words but the things to which a word is applied. Thus in the *Categories* (1a 1—11) he explains that two things (or kinds of things) are called *synonymous* if they both answer to some such name as 'animal', and if the *logos* which corresponds to the name, i.e. the appropriate definition or paraphrase, is the same in each case. They are called *homonymous* if both answer to the same name, but the appropriate *logos* differs in the two cases. By *logos* in such context he plainly does mean a definition or paraphrase: this is shown by the many examples in his logic» («Aristotle on the Snares of Ontology», in *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle*, ed. R. Bambrough [London, 1865], p. 73). Owen correctly takes the view that *homonymy* is about things and not words. J. L. Ackrill, commenting on the opening chapter of the *Categories*, concurs and remarks that «it is important to recognize from the start that the *Categories* is not primarily or explicitly about names, but about the things that names signify» (*Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione*, trans. with notes and glossary, [Oxford, 1963], p. 71, scholium an Cat. 1a 1). Also compare M. Grene, *A Portrait of Aristotle* (Chicago, 1963) pp. 70—73, who agrees that the discussion is about things and not words or terms, but still uses the Latin nomenclature: «things equivocally named» and «things univocally named». The history of this nomenclature and the interpretations lurking in the background have been appropriately exposed in H. W. B. Joseph's *An Introduction to*

We must pursue the difference between Plato and Aristotle on the meaning of *homonyma* a step further. In the *Phaedo*, Plato uses this expression to cover cases which normally Aristotle brings under the term *synonyma* <sup>6</sup>. 'ὁμώνυμος, in other words, is regularly used by Plato to mean that which has not only the same name as something else but also shares with it the same formula of essence, *λόγος τῆς οὐσίας* <sup>7</sup>. Yet, it is of prime importance to note at this point that the expression *homonyma* did not receive in Plato's writings the full significance of a technical term. As A. E. Taylor has correctly remarked, «ὁμώνυμον is not, of course, used in the sense which had become technical in the next generation» <sup>8</sup>.

Since the Platonic expression *λόγος τῆς οὐσίας* figures dominantly in the Aristotelian formulation of *homonyma*, and since one of the principal issues defended in this paper is the view that the Aristotelian use of *logos tēs ousias* has a special meaning in the opening chapter of the *Categories*, we must pause to examine some of the locutions in the Platonic dialogues in which it occurs.

In the *Sophist* 246c, Plato speaks of *λαμβάνειν λόγον τῆς οὐσίας* in the sense of rendering an account of reality. It occurs in a statement the Stranger makes in the context of the celebrated epistemological battle between the Gods and the Giants, the Idealists and the Materialists, where the discussion the Stranger carries on with Theaetetus has reached the point where it has become necessary to «challenge each party in turn to render an account of the reality assert». This usage of *logos tēs ousias* is also to be found in the *Republic*

*Logic* (rev. 2nd ed.; Oxford, 1916, pp. 31, 46—47. The position we have adopted here understands the passage *L of O* not only in the sense that it refers to things, in this case, *homonyma* things, but also as intended to cover only special cases of *homonyma*, i.e., it has a restricted and technical application to *kinds* of things.

6) At 78e, *τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν ταῦτα ὁμώνυμα ὄντα ἐκείνοις*. For other passages where the sensible things are called *homonyma* with regard to the intelligible objects, the forms, *ὁμώνυμα τοῖς εἶδεσι*, see *Timaeus* 53a, *Parmenides* 133d. H. Cherniss observes: «This Platonic use of *ὁμώνυμον* is represented by Aristotle's *συνώνυμον* inasmuch as the ideas and particulars are understood to be 'specifically the same' (*Metaphysics* 1040b 32—84, 1059a 13—14, 1086b 10—11), although for Plato *ὁμώνυμος* when used of the relationship of sensibles and ideas meant not merely 'synonymous' in Aristotle's sense. The particular is *ὁμώνυμον τῷ εἶδει*, not *vice versa*, because it has its name and nature *derivatively* from the idea..., but apart from the relation of sensibles and ideas Plato uses the word of several things which, though more or less different, have the same name and belong to the same class» (*Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* [Baltimore, 1944], p. 178, n. 102).

7) See *Timaeus* 41c, *Parmenides* 133d 2, *Sophist* 234b 7.

8) A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (Oxford, 1928), p. 342, schol. on 52a 5.

where Plato employs it to identify the task of dialectic, that is, to explore and articulate the nature of what he conceives to be the really real <sup>9</sup>. Comparably in the *Phaedo*:

Then let us return to the same examples which we were discussing before. Does this absolute reality which we define in our discussions remain always constant and invariable, or not? Does absolute equality or beauty or any other independent entity which really exists (*αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν, τὸ ὄν*) ever admit chance of any kind? <sup>10</sup>

Another key passage occurs in the *Laws*, where the Athenian says;

You will grant, I presume, that there are three points to be noted about anything . . . I mean, for one, the reality of the thing, what it is, for another, the definition of this reality, for another, its name <sup>11</sup>.

The crucial point in this passage is the fact that Plato uses the term *logos* in the sense of definition, thus setting a precedent which will establish the context for subsequent formulations of the notion of *homonymia* so that the expression *logos tēs ousias*, especially in its Aristotelian usage, can take on terminological fixity. The ultimate object of the defining process will not change from Plato to Aristotle, that is, it will still be an *ousia*, but the fact that Plato meant by it the Forms and Aristotle restricted its definable denotation to the essences of things, must always be kept in mind in discussions of this sort. When we turn to *Epistle VII* we find another important passage that further illustrates the view we have taken here that *logos tēs ousias* has already received in Plato's writing a central doctrinal meaning. This passage leaves no doubt that *logos* means definition and that what is being defined is something which is an ideal object of knowledge, an *ousia*, *γνωστόν τε καὶ ἀληθῶς ἔστιν ὄν*:

For every real being, there are three things that are necessary if knowledge of it is to be acquired: first, the name; second, the definition; third, the image; knowledge comes fourth and in fifth place we must put the object itself, the knowable and truly real being. <sup>12</sup>

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9) *Republic* III 534b: *Ἡ καὶ διαλεκτικὸν καλεῖς τὸν λόγον ἕκαστον λαμβάνοντα τῆς οὐσίας* («And by master of dialectic do you also mean one who demands an account of the essence of each thing» [Cornford's trans.]). There is no doubt that Plato means by «each thing» the Forms.

10) *Phaedo* 78c (The Last Days of Socrates, trans. [with intro.] Hugh Tredennick [Penguin Classics, 1954]): *ἴωμεν δὴ, ἔφη . . . αὐτὴ ἡ οὐσία ἥς λόγον δίδομεν τοῦ εἶναι . . .*

11) *Laws* X 895d (The Laws of Plato, trans. A. E. Taylor [London and New York, 1934]): *ἐν μὲν οὐσίᾳ, ἐν δὲ τῆς οὐσίας τὸν λόγον, ἐν δὲ τὸ ὄνομα.*

12) *Epistle VII* 342 a—b (Plato's Epistles, trans. [with critical essays and notes] Glenn R. Morrow [The Liberal Arts Press, 1962]). In his «Introduction», Morrow makes a comment which supports our position. He states that «the

The examination of the textual evidence we have presented shows that the Platonic antecedents of the theme under consideration are as follows: (1) Plato had made use of the linguistic elements that figure in Aristotle's formulation of *homonyma*, viz. the expressions «*homonyma*», «*koinos*», and «*logos tēs ousias*», (2) he had employed the technical expression «*logos tēs ousias*» for logical, epistemological and metaphysical purposes, in a word, to convey specific philosophical convictions; and (3) Plato himself did not work out an explicit view of *homonyma* that seems to have called for a technical formulation of their logical properties. This last task and the debate over alternative ways of solving this problem were left to the next generation. The work was actually done by two of Plato's brightest students, Speusippus and Aristotle.

### III

Speusippus discussed *homonyma* and distinguished between words which express «the *logos* of an essence» and words which function simply as names. According to Speusippus, homonymous expressions do not stand for a common essence, whereas synonymous ones do so. Simplicius quotes Speusippus' version as follows: *Σπεύσιππος δέ, ὡς φασίν, ἤρκειτο λέγειν ὁ δὲ λόγος ἕτερος*<sup>13</sup>. The Speusippean notion, as H. Cherniss has aptly summarized it, is that «a name is *ὁμώνυμον* if it refers to several different concept and *συνώνυμον* if it refers to one single and undifferentiated concept»<sup>14</sup>. It is an established fact that Speusippus' formulation was essentially different from Aristotle's and also that the difference reflects the seriousness with which the attendant philosophical issues were debated. Cherniss has carefully discussed the doctrinal differences concerning homonymous names in the context of division as this methodological procedure was practiced by Speusippus and Aristotle<sup>15</sup>. The applications of this doctrine for settling questions of ambiguity also reflects

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list of things which we attempt to know by means of names, definition and image, is strongly suggestive of objects to which the theory of Ideas is applied in the dialogues» (p. 76). I should like to add here that though Plato does not use in the text of the passage quoted the more familiar words *idea*, *eidos*, and *ousia*, he leaves no doubt as to the kinds of objects he intends. The phrase «knowable and truly real being», makes the meaning quite clear. The other passage from the *Laws* X 895, where *ousia*, *logos*, and *onoma* are kept together as basic ingredients in any discussion of reality, corroborates and substantiates our proposed interpretation.

13) Lang, frag. 32.

14) Pp. 58—59, n. 47.

15) P. 57.

the difference in the two formulations <sup>16</sup>. According to Hambruch, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that *Topics* A, Ch. 15, is closely related to issues discussed in a Speusippean treatise. Cherniss also cites relevant evidence to show that Aristotle responds to a Speusippean thesis in a much discussed passage of the *Sophistici Elenchi* <sup>17</sup>. Speusippus' mathematical conceptualism provided the appropriate framework within which he could formulate his doctrine of *homonyma* and the ontology where this doctrine could find application without residual problems. But once the Speusippean view is taken out of its initial context and is generalized to assist in the removal of ambiguities as these arise in discourse no longer governed by Speusippus' metaphysical assumptions, the thesis collapses for lack of elucidating efficacy. It has not been our purpose to debate here the logical merits of the Speusippean view of *homonyma vis-a-vis* that of Aristotle's, but simply to show that the issue was debated between the rival schools and that, as a result of such controversy, we find in the writings of these philosophers not only the first attempts to offer technical formulations of *homonyma* but also different conceptions of their status which were preserved in the copies of the commentators and often allowed to cause discrepancies in the textual traditions.

#### IV

The first issue that confronts us when we turn to an examination of Aristotle's theory is a serious textual problem. In fact the philosophical aspects of this theory cannot be decided unless the textual problem is successfully solved. Ancient and modern commentators, including editors, have expressed considerable disagreement over the opening lines of the text in *Categories*, Ch. 1. Two substantially different versions of this passage, both claimed as genuine, have been

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16) E. Hambruch, *Logische Regeln der platonischen Schule in der aristotelischen Topik* (Wissenschaftliche Beilage zum Jahresbericht des Askanischen Gymnasiums zu Berlin, 1904), pp. 27—29. Note the Speusippean usage in *Topics* 107b 4 and 17

17) P. 58, n. 47. It is Speusippus to whom Aristotle refers when he denies that all refutations are *παρὰ τὸ διπλὸν καθάπερ τινὲς φασιν*. See *Sophistici Elenchi* 177b 7—9. It was E. Poste (see his edition: *Sophistici Elenchi* [text, translation and commentary; London, 1866], p. 151) who made the first, not completely successful, effort to identify the opponent against whom Aristotle argues in *Sophistici Elenchi*, 170b 12—171b 2 as one who divided arguments into two classes *πρὸς τὸ νόμον* and *πρὸς τὴν διάνοιαν*, the basis, as we have seen, for Speusippus' formulation of *homonyma* and *synonyma*. However, Cherniss corrected Poste's erroneous conclusion that this opponent was Plato by showing why Poste's conclusion fits only Speusippus.

recorded by ancient authorities<sup>18</sup>. We shall refer to them as V1 and V2<sup>19</sup>. V1. *Ὁμώνυμα λέγεται ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοῦτομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος*<sup>20</sup>.

18) According to Philoponus, there had been two different Aristotelian treatises on the same subject and with the same title: *C a t e g o r i e s*. It is further reported that they resemble each other in almost every respect, including the introductory chapter. Philoponus quotes the opening sentence of the alternate «edition» which reads as follows: *τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν ὁμώνυμά ἐστι, τὰ δὲ συνώνυμα*. He appeals to this information as evidence to support his defense of the authenticity of the treatise (*In C a t e g.* 12.34—13.5). See also n. 20 below.

19) The available English translations of this passage are far from being in agreement; nor do they seem free from interpretation. A careful examination of the way in which they render the passage would lead one to infer that Aristotle did not intend it in a technical sense. Consider, for instance, how the following five different translations leave undecided the question of the exact meaning of the passage: (1) «... the definition (of substance according to name) is different» (O. F. Owen, trans., *The Organon, or Logical Treatises of Aristotle*, with the Introduction of Porphyry [2 vols.; London, 1882]); (2) «... the definition corresponding with the name differs in each case» (E. M. Edghill, trans., *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. W. D. Ross, Vol. I [Oxford, 1928]); (3) «... the definition (or statement of essence) corresponding with the name being different» (H. P. Cooke, trans., *The Organon* [Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb, 1938]); (4) «... the definition given for the name in each case is different» (LeRoy F. Smith, trans., *Aristotle, Categories and Interpretation* [Fresno, Calif.: Academy Guild Press, 1959]); and (5) «... the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different» (J. L. Ackrill, trans., *Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione* [Oxford, 1963]).

What partly explains the disagreements in these translations is the fact that they are based on different textual traditions. Even those that follow the same tradition do not derive the same meaning from the text. For a fuller explanation of the cause of such disagreements one would have to identify the interpretations that the translators bring with them when they try to render Aristotle's text in their own language. Another factor that should not be ignored is the availability of adequate terminological expressions in the translator's own language. In view of the difficulties attending the existing translations it is better not to supply one of your own. The meaning of the passage is discussed later in this paper.

20) Boethius claims this version to be the one which Aristotle truly authored. See Simplicius, *In C a t e g.* 29, 30—31, 1. Comparably, Andronicus, paraphrasing Aristotle, gives the following version: *τῶν ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς λεγομένων, ὁμώνυμα μὲν λέγεται ὧν ὄνομα μόνον ταῦτόν, ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοῦτομα λόγος ἕτερος*. That Andronicus is taking liberties with the text should be evident from the following: (a) He introduces *ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς* well in advance of its actual place in our critically established text; doctrinally, there is no reason for such departure from the text since *τὰ λεγόμενα* clearly refers to named things. (b) Andronicus incorrectly substitutes his expression *μόνον ταῦτόν* for Aristotle's *κοινόν*: by doing so he apparently assumes the equivalence of the two expressions, but neglects to discuss the grounds on which this is permissible. The text followed in this paper is the most recent, L. Minio-Paluello's *Categoriae et Liber de Interpretatione* (Oxford Classical Text Series; Oxford, 1949, with corrections 1956).

V 2. Ὁμώνυμα λέγεται ὃν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὃ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος ἕτερος. The difference between the two versions is that V2 omits the expression *tēs ousias*. Close discussion on this issue must be postponed until later. Suffice it to say here that once the expression is omitted, the entire passage takes on a different meaning, one that compromises its claims to terminological precision. But the real danger lies in the fact that without the expression the very doctrine which the passage is purported to convey lapses into doubtful Aristotelian theory. If so, then the intended meaning of the circumlocution of the nature of *homonyma* demands that the expression *tēs ousias* be kept in the text. Most of the commentators have argued for the inclusion of the expression, but for reasons that are invariably tied to their own favored interpretations. Of the ancient authorities only two are reported to have advocated the exclusion of the expression: Andronicus and Boethus. The commentator Dexippus mentions that Andronicus and Boethus omit the *tēs ousias* part and insists that the expression is found in most manuscripts (*para tois pleistois*). In his opinion, Aristotle was right in stating the matter as given in V1 <sup>21</sup>. Andronicus and Boethus are also mentioned by name in Ammonius' commentary as the ones whose copies (or editions) of the *Categories* omit *tēs ousias*, but there is also reference to others who did the same. Ammonius hastens to add that most manuscripts included the debatable expression. Simplicius reports that Porphyry, who had also discussed this matter, was of the opinion that Boethus was wrong to insist that *tēs ousias* did not appear in Aristotle's original text, even if Boethus had on his side no less an authority than that of his teacher Andronicus <sup>22</sup>.

In contrast, the defenders of V1 are: Nicostratus <sup>23</sup>, Herminius <sup>24</sup>, Porphyry, Dexippus, Ammonius <sup>25</sup>, Philoponus, Simplicius, Olympiodorus and Elias. Before

21) In *Categ.* 21, 18—22.

22) In *Categ.* 30, 3—5. Simplicius also informs us that the expression does not occur in all the copies he had examined and mentions again those of Boethus and Andronicus. It seems difficult to believe that Simplicius, a writer in the sixth century, had actually inspected the personal copies of Boethus and Andronicus. Rather, we must think of editions based on the versions of text which were used by those men in their teaching and writing.

23) Simplicius, In *Categ.* 29, 25.

24) Simplicius reports that Porphyry agreed with a certain Herminius and with «most of the others» who defended the view that *tēs ousias* appeared originally in the text (In *Categ.* 30, 7). Herminius flourished around the time of Adrian and is mentioned as the teacher of Alexander of Aphrodisias.

25) Ammonius' views of this issue present a difficulty, though by no means an unsurmountable one. In his *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, the word *ousia* is not mentioned in the discussion on *homonyma* and *onta* (84, 6—23). The omission is rather curious, especially in view of the fact that Porphyry is the most ardent defender of V1. However, when we turn to Ammonius' commentary on the *Categories*, we note that he quotes fully the text and includes the expression as integral to the formulation (In *Categ.* 20.21.2).

we proceed to examine in detail why most of the commentators defended the *logos tēs ousias* (abbreviated hereafter as *L of O*) as essential to an adequate formulation of the nature of *homonyma*, and what meaning they assigned to the entire passage, we must first look closer into certain philosophical issues the passage raises and also state in advance what we believe to be the doctrine Aristotle intended.

Given the definition of *homonyma* as stated in V1, we must ask whether it is a good definition, and if so whether the expression *L of O* is a requisite part of the circumlocution and with a technical meaning to it. Since the issue seems to depend largely on what *L of O* means, part of our problem is to determine the exact denotation of *ousia*. If it is true that the term *logos* is used technically here to mean *definition*, then the denotation of *ousia* has to be restricted to secondary substances on the ground that only these are at once *definable* and *predicable*. It is important here that we do not include the *summa genera*, despite the fact that these also constitute cases of *homonyma*. Be this as it may, our proposed meaning of *ousia* is not without problems. More specifically:

(1) We still have to answer the question why there is an alternate reading of the text, which as a matter of fact omits the *tēs ousias* part. In other words, there cannot be a conclusive defense of V1 unless it can be shown that if V2 is not the genuine text it would not have been possible for Aristotle to state an *integrat* part of his doctrine for lack of adequate terminology.

(2) Since it is a fact that Aristotle was aware of the wider range of application of *homonyma*, for *homonyma* range from *summa genera* to the accidental properties (*symbebēcota*), and since he seems to propose in this passage of the *Categories* a restricted use of the term, an explanation must be given for this phenomenon.

(3) There is the further problem of having to explain why it must be the case that Aristotle could not have meant to include in the meaning of *homonyma* the case of individual substances that have the same proper name. The examples of *homonyma* things he gives constitute irrefutable evidence that such is the case. However, this turns out to be a serious problem because all the extant commentaries interpret Aristotle's formulation of *homonyma* as designed to cover, above all else, the case of homonymous individuals with the same proper name. The fact that all the commentators discuss at considerable length this special case of *homonyma* seems to militate strongly against our own interpretation.

(4) Since such things as *principle*, *genus*, *logos*, *one*, *common*, *being*, *element*, and the like, as *πολλαχῶς λεγόμενα* are instances of homonymy, there is again the problem of how they relate to the passage of *homonyma* things in the *Categories*. The issue here is to decide whether the definition of *homonyma* is designed to cover the case of

abstract principles and concepts. Even the term *category*, as the commentators correctly saw, is open to homonymy. Whereas substance, quality, quantity, relation, etc., have the name «category» in common, they do not stand for the same sort of thing. It cannot be denied that Aristotle was aware of this peculiarity. Similarly, we cannot afford to ignore the possibility that the formulation of *homonyma* is intended in some technical sense. Evidently, then, this and the other problems mentioned above depend for their solution on the answers that are given to the question of the meaning of *logos tēs ousias*.

V

The position we have taken in this paper is based on the textual tradition which was highly favored by the leading commentators. There are philosophical reasons why it is necessary that we should retain the entire expression *L of O*, reasons which are not discussed by the ancient commentators. To argue in favor of adopting V2 on the ground that it is doctrinally equivalent to V1 would lead to two serious and equally undesirable consequences: (1) It would make the Aristotelian position not only indistinguishable from other available formulations of the nature of *homonyma* but, even worse, it would lead to a surrender to the views of Speusippus and the pythagoreanizing Platonists<sup>26</sup>. (2) It would make the passage in *Categories* la so imprecise as to render the distinction between *homonyma* and *synonyma* superfluous and even make it possible, especially when *tēs ousias* part is omitted, to widen the denotation of *homonyma* beyond the point of usefulness. Curiously enough the ancient commentators did precisely something comparable to the second abuse of the passage without even omitting the *L of O* expression. The interpretations which the ancient commentators attached to the Aristotelian doctrine of *homonyma* were conceived in the light of a number of non-Aristotelian assumptions and commitments. The examination of this topic has been undertaken in a separate paper which will appear as sequel to the present. However, the fact that the ancient commentators preserved the passage as given in V1, even if they misinterpreted its intent, can still be construed as positive evi-

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26) Simplicius, who defended the *L of O* reading, argued also against those who deleted it, especially Boethus of Sidon who was, after all, a peripatetic. What is of special interest here is not only that he chides Boethus but also that he argues against the Speusippean approach to homonymy. The argument goes like this: if Speusippus is right, then the distinction between *homonyma* and *synonyma* breaks down on the ground that on that definition all *synonyma* are *homonyma* and vice versa; evidently, Simplicius remarks, Speusippus not only omitted *tēs ousias* but went as far as to reduce the definition to just *ὁ δὲ λόγος ἕτερος*. If Simplicius' testimony is reliable historical report, it would seem that the definition and theoretical explanation of *homonyma* were issues of considerable philosophic debate. The fact that Aristotle discusses many aspects of *homonyma* in his *Topics* should be regarded as additional evidence that such was the case

dence in favor of this version. More recent classical scholarship, again, has given unqualified preference to V1 over V2 <sup>27</sup>.

Our own thesis rests on the hypothesis that the *Catēgoriēs* offers an earlier version of Aristotle's ontology and that *L of O* in this context is part of a requisite terminological apparatus; furthermore, part of the background here is the issues involved in the controversy between Aristotle and Speusippus in their respective efforts to institute ways of dealing with problems that arise in the use of names and the effort to remove instances of ambiguity. It is further contended here that the first chapter of the *Catēgoriēs* is not merely a place where Aristotle introduces distinctions which will prove to be useful in the subsequent discussion on substance, predication and the other categories, but that he is presenting his distinctions in formulations that are best understood as offering a distinctive alternative to the doctrine advanced by Speusippus and his followers.

Now, whatever else Aristotle might have meant by *L of O*, especially by *ousia*, he could not have meant any of the following: first substance, *summum genus*, *differentia*, or accidental properties. The doctrinal meaning of *logos* in this passage demands that we interpret *ousia* in the light of the restricted sense of *homonyma*, that is, to mean only secondary substances which alone are both predicable and definable. Corroborative evidence in support of our thesis will be found in a parallel expression in *Topics*, A, Ch. 15, 107b 20: *ἕτερος γὰρ ὁ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος αὐτῶν*, where *αὐτῶν* refers to things that are evidently definable genera, viz. species as secondary substances. Thus, it would be correct to mean the passage to read: *αὐτῶν τῶν οὐσιῶν*. But let us examine closer this piece of evidence. To begin with, Aristotle has repeatedly stated that the *homonyma* are not comparable (*ousymblēta*) <sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, he has made a careful analysis of *legomena* that have many senses and are therefore *homonyma*. For instance, «the good» and other such expressions are treated in what seems to be a basic chapter in the *Topics* <sup>29</sup>. He tells us there to look at the classes of predicates signified by a term and determine whether they are the same in all cases, and if not the same, to conclude that term involved is a *homonymon*. Another advice he gives to the same effect is this: look to discover whether the genera that come under the same are at once different and not subaltern: *τὰ γένη τῶν ὑπὸ τὸ αὐτὸ ὄνομα, εἰ ἕτερα καὶ μὴ ὕπ' ἄλληλα*. The corroborative evidence comes at this juncture.

27) See n. 20 above. However, see *Aristotelis Organon Graece*, ed. (with commentary) Th. Waitz (2 vols.; Leipzig, (1844—1846); cf. the scholia in I, 269—271).

28) *Physics* 248a 9—17, 249a 4, 248a 11; *Topics* 107b 17; *Metaphysics* 1080a 20, 1018a 5; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1133a 19.

29) *Top.* A 15, 106a 9ff.

It should be noted that the example in the *C a t e g o r i e s* parallels the one in the *T o p i c s*. Thus, the *T o p i c s* (A 15, 107a, 18–23) :

... as (e.g.) 'donkey', which denotes both animal and te engine. For the definition of them that corresponds to the name is different : for the one will be declared to be animal of a certain kind, and the other to be an engine of a certain kind. If, however, the genera be subaltern, there is no necessity for the definitions to be different <sup>30</sup>.

Once again he mentions in this example two sorts of things, one living and one artificial <sup>31</sup>. However, two difficulties must be removed before it can be claimed that the evidence cited supports our interpretation.

(1) In the *C a t e g o r i e s* the *h o m o n y m a* things are man and portraits of man ; the common name is «animal» or «living». In the *T o p i c s*, they are given as animal and engine, and the common name is «donkey». The difference is that in the *C a t e g o r i e s* example the class animal includes man, whereas in the *T o p i c s* the class donkey is included in animal. But this is not a real problem since homonymy does not depend on class inclusion but on mutual categorial exclusion of the sorts of things sharing a given name. In the *G a t e g o r i e s* example, *z o o n* is shared by living things and artifacts, hence their respective definitions must differ. The *T o p i c s* example uses «donkey» as the name that applies to both a sort of animal and a sort of artifact. The two sorts demand two different definitions. Actually, then, there is no logical difference between the *C a t e g o r i e s* and the *T o p i c s* examples. Aristotle could have used the *T o p i c s* example in the *C a t e g o r i e s* with the same results, though we must concede that the *C a t e g o r i e s* example provides for better contrast in the discussion of the difference between *h o m o n y m a* and *s y n o n y m a* there. In any event, the examples are logically identical.

(2) In the *C a t e g o r i e s* and the *T o p i c s* respectively, we have the following formulations of *h o m o n y m a* :

ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος (Cat. 1a 1—2.)

ἕτερος γὰρ ὁ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος αὐτῶν (Top. 107b 20.)

The *T o p i c s* formulation is somewhat deceiving and hence might be regarded as supporting the Boethus - Waitz reading of the *C a t e g o r i e s* which omits *t ē s o u s i a s*. But, as we saw, unless this expression is retained in the text of the *C a t e g o r i e s* the danger of misunderstanding the intent is unavoi-

30) Oxford translation. The Greek text reads : οἶον ὄνος τό τε ζῶον καὶ τὸ σκεῦος. ἕτερος γὰρ ὁ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος αὐτῶν· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ζῶον ποιόν τι ῥηθήσεται, τὸ δὲ σκεῦος ποιόν τι. ἐὰν δὲ ὑπ' ἄλληλα τὰ γένη ᾗ, οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον ἑτέρους τοὺς λόγους εἶναι.

31) Compare also the example given in Nic. Eth. 2, 1129a 30. δμωνύμως καλεῖται ἡ κλεῖς ἥ τε ὑπὸ τὸν ἀνχένα τῶν ζώων καὶ ἡ τὰς θύρας κλείουσιν.

dable. Since the *Topics* passage leaves no doubt that the things referred to are definable genera and sorts, it follows that it corresponds in both language and meaning to the *Categories* passage, which this paper interprets to mean secondary substances as definable via *genus-differentia*.

Now, whereas the doctrine in the *Topics* A Ch. 15 is clearly stated, this is not so when we read the opening of the *Categories*. Hence, to omit *tēs ousias* is to make *logos* somewhat ambiguous, for if nothing else it might be taken to mean the definition of the name rather than the entities named. Since the word *ἀπὸ τῶν* in the *Topics* formulation is absent from its parallel one in *Categories*, and since what it refers to is clearly genera of sorts, we are permitted to conclude that the two passages are genuinely parallel in doctrine. The close examination of the *Topics* passage we have offered is not intended as definitive but primarily as illustrative of the comparable passages in other Aristotelian treatises that could be cited in favor of our interpretation<sup>32</sup>. However, one of the main reasons the *Topics* passage was singled out for commentary and citation as evidence is because of the apparent doctrinal affinity between this work and the *Categories*. If it can be maintained, for instance, that Aristotle had formed at the time he composed the *Topics* certain views which lead him to explicit questioning of certain fundamental beliefs of the Platonic Academy, such could also be the case with the *Categories*. Cherniss has shown that by the time Aristotle had put forth the distinction between *homonyma* and *synonyma*, as this can be clearly gleaned through the relevant passages in the *Topics*, he had manifestly developed his attack upon the theory of ideas. He has also argued convincingly that Aristotle had maintained in the *Topics* that the Platonists cannot avoid certain difficulties unless they would grant that «the ideas and the particulars are not *συνώνυμα* but *ὁμώνυμα* in Aristotle's sense»<sup>33</sup>. In the light, then, of the direct and indirect evidence we have presented, the following conclusions obtain: (1) the formulation of the meaning of *homonyma*, as defended in its VI edition, contains no superfluities; (2) the statement is a technical one and meant positively to assist in the exposition of the ontology that supports Aristotle's categorial theory; and (3) the doctrine is purported as part of the logical apparatus through which Aristotle could criticize his Platonizing opponents and Speusippus, in particular.

32) *Cat.* 2a 19–34; *Top.* 13b 25–28, where the *logos* which gives the *ousia* is compared with the *logos* that states the property, the former being parallel to the *L of O* in *Cat.* one a, hence *L of O* does not refer to the definition of properties; *De Gen. An.* 715a 5 where *L of O* is used in sense of formal cause, and also *De Part. An.* 685b 12–16, *Met.* 1064a 22, 1028a 35, 1018a 10, 1054a 35 where *L of O* is the sense of essence and *to ti en einai*.

33) Aristotle's Criticism (see n. 6 above), pp. 178–179, n. 102: the following Aristotelian passages are given by Cherniss: «(99a 5–0, 1079a 36–b 3, *Topics* 154a 16–20 [cf. 148a 14–22])».

Before closing, we must pursue one final point. Clearly, the expression «h o m o m y m a things» is itself a case of homonymy. The expression can be used for things substantially different: species and individuals, accidents and genera, principles and concepts. According to the Aristotelian rule, it can be shown that if we were to give the definition of the sorts of things that are presumably called h o m o n y m a, we would have to give in each case a different definition. The point is by now so obvious that it tends to lapse into a triviality. If so, then it is difficult to understand why Aristotle would want to state something as obvious as that and, furthermore, introduce his categorial theory with a circumlocation of h o m o n y m a that would refer unqualifiedly to all cases of h o m o n y m a. It is more reasonable to suppose that Aristotle, rather than making a trite point, was concentrating on a restricted application of the term for the purpose of bringing together certain aspects relevant to both his theory of syllogistic thinking and his ontology, especially in the form in which the latter is given in the C a t e g o r i e s.

Basic to our thesis is our view that the meaning of l o g o s must be understood in the strict sense of definition. Though this has not been a point of dispute among modern scholars, such was not the case with Aristotle's ancient interpreters. This pertains to all the commentators on the C a t e g o r i e s, from Porphyry to Photius. L o g o s in the sense of d e s c r i p t i o n, which they insisted was part of what Aristotle meant by L o g o s, must be rejected as non-Aristotelian, because failure to do so permits the meaning of o u s i a to become unduly broadened. The commentators missed the significance of this point. As we shall see in the sequel to this paper, «Ancient Interpretations of Aristotle's Doctrine of H o m o n y m a», most of them were more interested in displaying their own special kind of erudition than in the relevance of their learning to the finer aspects of the doctrines under examination. Quite frequently they even ignored the strict theoretical issues that attended the Aristotelian approach to the problem of definition. Given their bold deviations from standard aspects of Aristotele's philosophy, it is small wonder that certain details in the system, significant though they were, when not completely overlooked, were grossly mishandled.

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