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John P. Anton

University of South Florida

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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
IN SENATE

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JOHN F. MURPHY
Department of Philosophy
State University of New York
at Buffalo

ANCIENT INTERPRETATIONS OF ARISTOTLE'S DOCTRINE OF HOMONYMA

John P. Anton
State University of New York at Buffalo

I

The main purpose of this paper is to offer an exposition and a critical examination of the ancient interpretations of Aristotle's doctrine of homonyma. A circumlocution of what Aristotle means by homonyma things is given in Categories, ch. 1 1a. The ancient interpretations with which we are concerned in this paper are to be found in the extant commentaries of this treatise. Evidently, more commentaries had been written on the Categories than the vicissitudes of time allowed to survive, but we have only those of the following writers: Porphyrius (c.233-303), Dexippus (fl. c. 350), Ammonius (fl. c. 485), Philoponus (c. 490-530), Olympiodorus (fl. c. 535), Simplicius (fl. c. 533), Elias (fl. c. 550). One might add here the relevant writings of John Damascene (679-1079), Photius (820-891), and Michael Psellus (1018-1079), which are useful paraphrases rather than full commentaries. For that reason, the interpretations they support are not discussed in this paper.

The doctrine of homonymy 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 definition 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 Speucippus propounded proved to be quite influential in later times.¹ (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, attest 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 homonymy 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.² Now, what the commentators have to say on this issue constitutes strong indication of the degree in which they were able to understand and interpret correctly Aristotle's philosophy and his categorial theory, in particular.

The main body of this paper is given to a discussion of the interpretations which the ancient commentators offered and to an analysis of the assumptions which underlie them. It can be stated here in anticipation of what follows that the commentators often attached to Aristotle's meaning of homonyma aspects that were quite foreign to his views, and that by doing so these commentators were taking extensive liberties with the text at hand. As we hope to show, the commentators brought into their discussions of this particular portion of the Categories issues and views that were far more relevant to their own ontology and logical theories than to Aristotle's doctrines. In order to show how this is the case, we must first give an account of what we believe our text permits us to say about the meaning of homonyma, as given in the opening chapter of the Categories. Suffice it to add at this point that the interpretations of the doctrine of homonymy with which we are concerned here are only those that are discussed exclusively in the relevant commentaries on this work.

When we turn to the philosophical value of the commentaries themselves, three special problems deserve attention: (1) Whether each commentator shows sufficient awareness of the technical terminology in which the doctrine of homonymy is couched, and hence whether he phrases his interpretation of the doctrine in line with what seems to be the most acceptable reading of the text. (2) Given the way each commentator understands what is meant by homonymy things, it is imperative that we identify the implications each particular formulation has for a theory of substance and definition to which the commentators subscribe. (3) Since the miscellaneous materials which the commentators incorporate into their discussions are quite frequently alien to the issues at hand, and since their expositions cover grounds not intended by Aristotle's own theory of homonymy, this problem is actually one of identifying the intellectual affiliations of the commentators and uncovering the logical and ontological views they often seek to promote through Aristotle's authority.

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.³

The Stranger is addressing Theaetetus in this passage; the issue at hand 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 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 identifies 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 some 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 meanings for the same name 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 homonyma or one of synonyma. 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, say X, 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.⁴ It is an obstacle to attaining scientific knowledge.

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 homonyma.

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 deep 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 recorded by ancient authorities.⁶ We shall refer to them as V1 and V2:⁷

- V1. ὁμώνυμα λέγεται ὅν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὃ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα
 : λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος.⁸
 V2. ὁμώνυμα λέγεται ὅν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὃ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα
 : λόγος ἕτερος.

The difference between the two versions is that V2 omits the expression tes 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, and 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 circumlocution of the nature of homonyma demands that the expression tes ousias be kept in the text. Most of the commentators have argued in favor of the expression but for reasons that are invariably tied to questionable interpretations. Of the ancient authorities only two are reported to have advocated the exclusion of the expression: Andronicus and Boethus.⁹ In contrast, the defenders of V1 are: Nicostratus,¹⁰ Herminius,¹¹ Porphyry, Dexippus, Ammonius,¹² Philoponus, Simplicius, Olympiodorus and Elias. Before we proceed to examine in detail why most of the commentators defended the logos tes 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 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 tes 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 integral 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 homonymy, for homonymy also obtains in the case of the summa genera and 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 individual substances which 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. 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 on 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. Just the same, can we 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 tes ousias.

III

Let us sum up our main points. The position this paper takes is based on the textual tradition which was also highly favored by the leading ancient commentators. However, the interpretations they attached to the doctrine of homonymy were conceived, as we hope to show, in the light of a number of non-Aristotelian philosophical commitments and other alien considerations. The key expression in

Aristotle's definition of homonyma in the opening chapter of the Categories is logos tes ousias. This is further supported by the fact that the special meanings which the commentators attach to each word in this key expression and to the expression as a whole, determine their respective interpretations of the doctrine of homonyma.

Our own thesis rests on the hypothesis that the Categories offers an earlier version of Aristotle's ontology and that L of O in this context is part of a requisite terminological apparatus. Now, whatever else Aristotle might have meant by L of O, especially by ousia, he could not have meant any of the following: (i) first substance, (ii) summum genus, (iii) differentia, or (iv) 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.

The ancient commentators apparently failed to appreciate the full technical import of the expression L of O. The reasons for this failure seem to be many. One of them is the tendency to over-explicate not only each of the terms separately, but to do so also with the expression as a whole. When we turn to the non-Aristotelian considerations the commentators introduced in their discussions, we see that the outstanding example is that of making logos to mean both definition and description. Now, the latter is clearly an interpolation and is to be found nowhere in the Categories. However, by taking such liberties with the meaning of the term logos, they were able to change the meaning of the whole expression and to force it to appear non-technical. As a result, the denotation of the definiens "homonyma things" became so wide as to include anything from accidental properties and first substances to include highest genera, including the genera of predication. By repeatedly emphasizing this broad interpretation of homonyma, the commentators turned their back to the possibility that Aristotle could have intended the term in a limited sense and therefore given the expression L of O a technical meaning. Thus, when we leave the commentaries to return to Aristotle's own text we are hardly surprised to see that there was no plan on his part to discuss all types of homonyma things. Apparently Aristotle and the commentators were not doing the same thing.

Let us pursue this difference a step further. Clearly, the expression "homonyma things" is itself a case of homonymy. The expression is used for things substantially different: 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 homonyma, we would have to give in each case a different definition. But again, this is something the commentators knew quite well. But then so did Aristotle. If so, then it is difficult to understand why would Aristotle want to state something as obvious as that and, furthermore, introduce his categorial theory with a circumlocution of homonyma that would refer unqualifiedly to all cases of homonyma. It is more reasonable to suppose that rather than making a trite point, Aristotle 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 Categories.

Basic to the validity of our thesis is our view that the meaning of logos 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 Categories, from Porphyry to Photius. Logos in the sense of description must be rejected as non-Aristotelian, because when we do not do so the meaning of ousia becomes unduly broadened. The commentators missed the significance of this point. As we shall see in the next section of this paper, 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 attend the Aristotelian approach to the problem of definition. Given these bold deviations from standard aspects of Aristotle's philosophy, it is small wonder that certain details in the system, significant though they were, when not completely overlooked, were grossly mis-handled.

With these critical reservations in mind we may now turn to examine critically the diverse interpretations and find out where they erred.

IV

1. Porphyry's interpretation: Porphyry begins his discussion by asking questions about the origin and function of homonyma and synonyma.¹⁴ According to his theory, each thing has (a) name, (b) definition, and (c) description. Now the relations that obtain between things and their names and definitions come under four types: (1) Things may have in common both the name and the definition of what the name signifies, and when they do so these things are called synonyma. (2) Things may share the name, but if they cannot claim the definition in question they are classified as homonyma. (3) When two things can actually claim a definition as common to both even if they do not have the same name, they are called polyonyma. (4) Things which have neither a name nor a definition in common are heteronyma. He also mentions a fifth type, paronyma, which refers to things whose names are the result of derivation; however, he considers it of little importance. Porphyry explains Aristotle's omission of (3) and (4) on the ground that he had no real use for either.

The next question he raises is addressed to the reason why Aristotle began the treatise with the statement on homonyma (61. 4ff). It should be noted that the explanation he gives finds no support in the Categories and must be regarded as Porphyry's own invention. In any event, Porphyry claims that Aristotle believed that the categories themselves, when predicated of things, are used homonymously. His explanation is prefaced with the remark that Aristotle taught that being (to on) is homonymous.¹⁵ Hence, Porphyry argues, Aristotle should have begun with the notion of homonymy rather than homonyma things.¹⁶ It is against this background that he proceeds with his support of VI (62. 35). He takes logos in the sense of definition (horistikos), and justified the inclusion of L of O by means of an argument. The term logos, he claims, has many meanings (definition, oral speech, reckoning, seminal reason, etc.), and if we fail to make ousia part of the expression, the real meaning of logos, i.e., in the sense of definition becomes obscure. (64. 28-65. 11) In a preceding comment on the inadmissibility of the elliptical variant logos heteros, vis-a-vis that of kata tounoma logos ... heteros, he correctly defends the fuller version (contra Speucippus?) by pointing out that the accuracy of meaning demands that it be made clear here that it is not the name

which is the referent, but something else in conjunction with the name.¹⁷ What he means is that only the fuller version expresses Aristotle's point: the denotation of a name used and the denotation of the definition of the substance named must be the same.¹⁸

The first sign of Porphyry's deviation from Aristotle's meaning appears with the listing the diverse uses of logos. It is obvious that some of them are totally foreign to Aristotle. But the initial suspicion we form that Porphyry is about to misinterpret the text is eventually confirmed when he proceeds to give the example which to illustrate, is discussion of the logic of homonymy. The point is that theory and example are incompatible. The illustration he mentions is two human beings with the same name: Ajax (son of Telamon) and Ajax (son of Oileus). The definition of "man" applies to both, and though they have the same (proper) name they are not the same entities. Still, the definition of the substance underlying the name "man" is true for both Ajaxes. Next, Porphyry tells us that the only way we can logically differentiate between the two is by resorting to different descriptions. By advocating this solution Porphyry abandons the strict approach to homonymia and in effect widens the term to denote also such things as the homonymous accidental properties. The terminology is shifted to accommodate a very special case: homonymous individuals.

If our thesis is correct, it follows that Aristotle's doctrine was not intended to cover homonymy due to proper names. If so, Porphyry is illicitly extending the initial use of the theory. The departure is so radical that it permits the term "homonymia" to refer to names species as well as individuals with proper names. Once the two views, Aristotle's and Porphyry's, are allowed to come under the formulation of homonymia as stated in the Categories, that formulation becomes at once imprecise and inconsistent; imprecise, on the ground that L of O is no longer a technical expression, and inconsistent because the term logos, in the sense of definition, is now taken to apply to both definable and non-definable things.

Porphyry's special scholium on L of O is quite revealing. He admits that in view of the many uses of logos the expression, tes ousias is needed in order to make it clear that it is the defining sense logos that concerns Aristotle. (64. 28-11) Thus, he infers, the defining logos (horistikos) which refers to the name, and logos which indicates substance (ousias delotikos) are the same thing, except in the case of homonymia things where the definition of substance must be different in each case. Two critical reservations must be made at this point. (a) Porphyry is simply assuming that Aristotle had in mind the problem of homonymy of the term logos and that ousia was made part of the expression primarily to avoid this particular ambiguity. Aside from the obvious anachronism about the Stoic seminal reason as one of the senses of logos, the list of meanings is too elementary if not irrelevant to the discussion. As a result, the explication appears contrived and the conclusions drawn far from acceptable. (b) Though Porphyry is correct in taking logos to mean definition, he is far from clear as to the meaning of pragmata. Strict Aristotelian doctrine would demand identification of pragmata with definable species. However, Porphyry shows no sign of having detected here that a real ontological issue arises when the emphasis is shifted from species to individuals, an issue touches on the very philosophical framework of syllogistic thinking. As we said in the previous section, the referents to "homonymia" and "synonymia" are substances which are both definable and predicable; they are the things which

serve as terms in the premises of the syllogism.

Just the same, confident that he has settled the problem of the meaning of homonyma, he proceeds next to consider the issue of their tropes. His list of tropes (65. 12ff) has many merits to it, but again it turns out that it is geared to the discussion on the homonymy which is due to proper names. He lists two main tropes,¹⁹ (a) homonyma by accident (apo tychēs), and (b) homonyma by intention (apo dianoias). The latter is further divided into four classes: from (i) similarity, (ii) analogy, (iii) unity to multiplicity, (iv) multiplicity to unity. Once again, the examples used to illustrate homonyma by accident,²⁰ leave no doubt that he was thinking of homonyma pragmata not in terms of Aristotelian secondary substances but in the light of the paradigmatic case of individuals with proper names. What he failed to realize here is that his proposed tropes, though theoretically interesting, were explained with the aid of illustrations that could not be accommodated within the strict Aristotelian context of L of O which, as Porphyry himself admits, requires that logos be taken in the sense of definition. It is the kind of examples he offers that leads us to conclude that Porphyry did not suspect he was actually taking liberties with the text before him and that he was expressing views that violated the intent of the Aristotelian doctrine. It seems really strange that he did not observe that his and Aristotle's paradigms were at odds.²¹ Nor for that reason did any of the subsequent commentators. They all repeated Porphyry's error. Throughout the history of the ancient commentary practice, the source of misinterpretation remained unidentified and the error was never removed, let alone suspected.

2. Dexippus' interpretation:²² He prefaces his comments on homonyma with a discussion on what can be legitimately considered a "category", and proposes that the following sorts of expressions be disqualified: (a) metaphors, (b) tropes, e.g., necessity, possibility, subsistence, and (c) modifiers, e.g., all, none, no one in particular, etc. The criterion he employs for rejecting such expressions is that the things they stand for have no determinate nature of their own (12. 20-25).²³ Next he proceeds to show why certain principles which cannot be subsumed under any of the categories are nevertheless highly relevant to categorial theory; since they have as many uses as there are categories, such principles are cases of homonymy.²⁴ The third problem he considers before presenting his interpretation of homonyma, is the reason why Aristotle chose to discuss homonyma, synonyma and paronyma rather than proceed directly with the theory of categories. In giving an answer to this question he allows the discussion to sidetrack to what turns out to be an interesting bit of linguistic theory.

He remarks that things and names of things, considered as quantitative collections, are not commensurable. In some cases we have more words for the same thing, whereas in others we have more things than names available for them. Hence, in considering any given simple or non-composite word, it is necessary to determine under which of the categories it should be classified. It is on account of this peculiar relationship between words and things that, according to De Aristotle prefaced his treatise with a brief analysis on homonyma and synonyma. Unfortunately, Dexippus does not discuss the issue in any detail. Instead, he returns to his previous point and offers the peculiar hypothesis that the real reason Aristotle opened the Categories with a formulation of the nature of homonyma is because the ten categories are themselves instances of homonyma (17. 25-29). His point is that each category is predicated synonymously of the species subsumed

under it, and that the categories, if taken absolutely, are used homonymously. Ignoring for a moment Dexippus' numerous irrelevancies, we must pause to mention that, like Porphyry, he also gives serious attention to homonyma in the context of individual substances with the same proper name. This is readily seen in his paradigm of the two Ajaxes. Notwithstanding his uncritical adoption of Porphyry's interpretation, it should be noted that Dexippus was quicker in accepting the implications of that approach for the total widening of the denotation of homonyma pragmata. Thus, Dexippus promptly included the accidental properties. Evidently, this is in agreement with the theory that homonymy is obtainable in all the categories. However, what is not clear from his discussion is the extent to which he was aware of the liberties he was taking with the text.

Though Dexippus defends the reading L of O, he does not hesitate to interfere with the Aristotelian way of phrasing the nature of homonyma. He does so when he asks why it is that Aristotle did not say: ὁ δὲ κατὰ τοῦ νομα ὅρος ὁ αὐτός. No doubt, he knows that logos is a wider term than horos. According to his explanation, Aristotle wrote logos tēs ousias rather than horos tēs ousias simply because not all things are signified through definitions: some are signified only through descriptions (20. 28-31). The explanation assumes that Aristotle was actually interested in all types of homonyma. Though it has an ingenious side to it, the explanation is not really original. It simply states the Porphyrian thesis in a fresh way. Since he knows that individuals are undefinable and, like Porphyry, insists in including them in ousia, the only way to meet the difficulty which the term horos poses is by (i) saying that Aristotle never meant to use horos, and (ii) arguing that logos means both definition (horos) and description (hypographē) and that Aristotle intended logos in this inclusive way. What is simply amazing about all this is that the term hypographē, description, is to be found nowhere in the Categories. Just the same, he criticizes Aristotle for phrasing elliptically, i.e., not saying hypographē tōn homonymōn. His argument is that since Aristotle knew that homonymy obtains in the case of genera as well as in the other categories, he should not have said "logos tēs ousias".

He suggests that a good way out of this problem would be a textual reading like that of Boethius and Andronicus which omits tēs ousias. But this will not really do for a number of reasons, chiefly because the term logos is itself a homonymous expression and has different senses. It is at this point that Dexippus states his main reason for defending the acceptability of L of O: it is the only adequate way of showing that all things can be homonyma, for when we speak of logos we think of beings, such as substances and genera, and when we speak of ousia know we can signify through this term individuals and their accidents (21. 11-29). All that can be said about the argument is that while it is a good attempt to defend V1, it fails completely as interpretation to recapture Aristotle thought.

3. Ammonius' interpretation: Ammonius is deeply indebted to Porphyry for his views on the subject. It is also evident that he was familiar with Dexippus' commentary. He has worked out, on his own, two formulations of homonyma, neither of which compares favorably to Aristotle's for brevity or precision.²⁵ Like his predecessors he defends the reading L of O, and offers extensive comments on each of these key terms: (a) He contends that Aristotle used logos and not horismos because he knew that all things cannot be defined, as for instance in the case of the highest genera (20. 15-16). Since individuals are not exempted from being

homonyma nor are they capable of being defined, but only described, Aristotle had to use the term logos in order to cover all cases. The argument is a familiar one. It assumes that Aristotle intended to include in his theory homonymous individuals, and also that logos meant for Aristotle both definition and description. (b) In his special comment on ousia, he argues for its textual adoption in a way that pushes Dexippus' position a step further but in the wrong direction. First, he says, we must ask whether homonymy applies to accidental properties. Evidently, such is the case, for we do say "sharp taste" and "sharp knife." This being so and because of the fact that accidents subsist in beings, Aristotle must have used the term ousia to show that he meant to include both substances and their accidents in the denotation of homonyma. The surprising element in Ammonius' argument is the facility with which he abuses the meaning of ousia and ignores its restricted categorial sense.²⁶ In effect, he mistakes ousia for onta.

However, when Ammonius is not speculating or following another commentator, he shows good judgment. For instance, despite the fact that he took logos to mean both definition and description, in his discussion on Ia 4 he equates it exclusively with definition. Logos means horismos. He interprets the passage correctly and suggests that homonyma things refers to species.

Our discussion on Ammonius could have ended on this happy note if it were not for the fact that his treatment of homonymy appears in two different works, his commentary on the Categories and in his treatise On Porphyry's Introduction. Our account would have been pronouncedly incomplete without at least some elementary effort to correlate what is said in these two works. The respective treatments on homonyma are connected by means of an extensive discussion on the relationship between definition and description. We have already seen what he said in the commentary on the Categories. Before turning to his analysis of Porphyry's Isagoge, we must point out that we are confronted here with a special difficulty since we are dealing with a commentary on another highly interpretive commentary. For this reason it is often a most cumbersome task to decide whose views it is that Ammonius is expounding. However, the fact that he is exploring the relationship between definition and description as two uses of logos, is sufficient to alert us that he is working with a Porphyrian issue. The key to his understanding of Aristotle's views on this matter lies in what he has to say on definition. He begins by explaining that things are signified in two ways, (i) name, (ii) definition (54.5ff).²⁷ Discourse which is indicative of things (logos sēmantikos), is of two kinds: (a) with reference to what things are according to essence, and (b) with reference to accidental properties. The former gives us the definition, the latter the description. However, he argues, accidents accompany the essential nature, say, of man, even if they do not complement the essence. Next he explains what description is. It is hypographē, a sort of drawing, an imitation of likeness which succeeds in signifying something without articulating it with precision. The analogy he uses is interesting. Definition is to description what life-like painting is to drawing.

So far he has said nothing to justify the relevance of the discussion on description to Aristotle's text. What controls the analysis is Porphyry's insistence that description is part of the meaning of logos. One suspects here that Ammonius is accommodating Aristotle to Porphyry's theories rather than the reverse. He quotes Porphyry's dictum to the effect that "Things we cannot signify through definition we like to indicate through description" (55. 12-13). No sooner do we ask what are the things to which Porphyry's dictum refers than we discover that

included in class of such "undefinables" are, next to the accidental properties, the highest genera. Hence, Ammonius agrees with Porphyry, they are accessible only through description. But the point of real interest is that he explains the undefinability of highest genera on the familiar grounds that (a) there is no genus which higher to them and (b) they are cases of homonyma (56. 1). The syllogism is clear: Since all homonyma are undefinable, and highest genera are homonyma, all such genera are undefinable.²⁸ But the significant thing here is that the undefinability of all homonyma was never defended by Aristotle. The only alternative is to conclude that Ammonius is expounding on Porphyry's doctrines. If the thesis claims to cover Aristotle's view on homonyma as well, the consequence is that it degenerates into a contradictory explanation of two incompatible theories. It is unfortunate that Ammonius neglected to state the difference between Porphyry's and Aristotle's respective approaches to homonyma. There are other special features in Ammonius' theory of description, but they cannot be included in this study. Had this been done we could have shown how Ammonius' neoplatonic idealism prevented him from cutting through the maze of Porphyry's philosophical assumptions to determine for himself whether Aristotle's text permitted the expansions of the meaning of homonyma to suit Porphyry's non-Aristotelian ontology.

Philoponus' interpretation: He opens his discussion on homonyma with a pious bit of theological epistemology. Had we been blessed, he remarks, with the being only naked souls have, and were free from the bondage of our bodies, we would be able to signify everything by means of concepts only. However, bodies act like clouds, cover the intelligibles and intervene with our seeing them directly. This is the reason why we need names (In Categ. 14. 1 ff). Since it is not given to us to signify through concepts we enlist the help of names and definitions (horismoi). Next he proceeds to give a brief account of homonyma, synonyma, polyonyma and heteronyma, and states that he means by homonyma things which "share the name but differ according to the definition." He makes an effort to explain why Aristotle did not refer to all four kinds of signified things. The answer he gives is that Aristotle "potentially" spoke of the other two as well, because to know a homonymon, for instance, is to know potentially its opposite, the polyonymon (14. 24ff). He also has an answer to the much discussed question why Aristotle decided to begin this work with a statement on homonyma. These things, he informs us, are actually the simplest sort, for they share one aspect only, the name; therefore, they are by nature (physei) prior to the synonyma. In fact, being (to on) is predicated of the categories homonymously, not synonymously.

Philoponus, following the example of the preceding commentators, is asking questions for which he has pat answers. The explanations he provides are at once debatable and irrelevant. Philoponus' explanation is not the only one that can be given to the last question, and more significantly, it is not basically related to the logical context of Aristotle's formulation of homonyma. One can not escape the impression that Philoponus is misled into believing that Aristotle is referring indiscriminately to all instances of homonyma, including "being" as a homonymos legomenon. Be that as it may, Philoponus burdens his discussion with a number of trivial themes (15. 11ff), only to tell us what the real meaning of the opening lines is: "Let it be understood that Aristotle tells us directly in the opening statement what the purpose of the book is. He says 'homonyma legatai..' What he means by homonyma is things, and by legatai, significant sounds (phonai). We know things with the aid of conceptual meanings (noēmata)."²⁹ That Philoponus is straining the intent of the passage is evident from his insistence upon making the

homonymy of a concept, including the concept of homonymy, a foremost and necessary part of the formulation of homonyma pragmata. If we keep in mind that it is this interest that dominates his itemized kind of commentary, we are in a better position to understand why he takes special pain to explicate homonymon as being itself a homonymous expression.³⁰

More pertinent to our discussion is his comment on "legatai". His interpretation is that the subject of the verb is pragmata. The point is that Aristotle is actually referring to things, not concepts. Aside from the problem Philoponus has in tying this pointed explication to his previous tangential remarks on homonymy in general, he falls into the serious and repeated error of offering the Ajax paradigm (17. 26ff), and to make matters worse, he tries to support it through a remarkable showpiece of irrelevant erudition: a line from Plato's Phaedrus.³¹ Since most of the comments on the itemized expressions are rather trivial, it is best that we give some attention to what is basic to our theme, his understanding of pragmata. Once again, the paradigm is individuals with the same proper name. The discussion is tied to the reasons he gives for preserving in the text the expression kata tounoma. The reading is justified, he thinks, because certain things which are homonyma with regard to one name are not so with regard to another name. Since two things may have more than one name in common, such things may turn out to be now homonyma, now synonyma. Hence, it should be plain, Philoponus argues, that Aristotle specifically meant to alert us to the need for restricting the definition called for only to that common name by virtue of which the things are homonyma and not any other. It would be tedious to give here the details of his analysis of the example of the two Ajaxes. What matters really is the nature of the paradigm. Aside from his questionable interpretation of the intent of the aforementioned part of the total expression, there is the further issue of the paradigm. It is here where Philoponus misunderstands the meaning of the passage. What strikes the reader is Philoponus' reluctance to as much as mention Aristotle's own examples. Instead he follows the previous commentators and supplies illicit example of individuals with the same proper name. We have already seen what consequences follow from this sort of interpretation of pragmata. What we should look for next is the inconsistent view Philoponus is inadvertently forced to adopt. This matter hinges on his understanding of logos.

Like the other commentators, Philoponus' answer is part of his broader treatment of L of O. He defends the expression but interprets it as follows. Aristotle said logos and not horismos in order to cover cases of homonyma which are beyond proper definitions (19. 21ff). He repeats the familiar theory of descriptions as the only avenue to signification of summa genera and accidental properties. In short logos means here definition and description of substance. He argues that since Aristotle used "substance" to mean something self-existent, in contrast to accidents, and also any "absolutely existing entity," the accidents are thereby part of the meaning of "ousia" in the passage. The surprising aspect of his discussion comes with his comment on Cat. 1a 4., for he gives there the impression he has forgotten what was already said about logos, and unaware of the inconsistency into which he is about to fall, he declares that Aristotle is asking in this passage for the definition of the species. In this respect he is doing nothing substantially different from what Ammonius did before him. What is of real interest, however, is that fact that he did not perceive the inconsistency in his interpretation, an inconsistency which would have been easier for him to detect since it did not originate with him. For all these reasons, Philoponus' commentary on the problem of homonyma is pronouncedly inferior to that of Ammonius.

Olympiodorus' interpretation: What he says on the subject is not radically different from any previous treatment of homonyma, but his commentary is interesting as a variant misinterpretation. He also defends the reading L of O and comparably takes logos to mean both definition and description. In a general introductory comment (26. 5ff.), he tells us that homonyma arise from the fact that each thing is at once one and many; as unity it has a name, as plurality it is signified through logos, which is of two kinds. By combining name and logos, we arrive at four classes of things: homonyma, synonyma, heteronyma, polyonyma. His treatment of homonyma presents no novel features and the illustrations are the standard one of the two Ajaxes (27. 10-20). What is of particular interest is the facility with which he ignores his own terminology. For instance, after mentioning his example of the two Ajaxes as cases of homonyma he does not hesitate to use the term definition (horismos), despite the fact that these are individuals. He seems convinced that he is actually giving definitions when he says for instance of Ajax, son of Telamon: "from Salamis, who fought a duel with Hector and committed suicide. For his answer why Aristotle treated only homonyma and synonyma but began with the former, he borrows heavily from Philoponus (27. 25ff). His main points are that the categories are the most inclusive genera (genikōtata), that the species which come under them are all synonyma, and that "being" is predicated homonymously of all the categories. There are two sorts of confusion in this portion of Olympiodorus commentary: (i) While emphasizing the synonymous character of the kinds of things subsumed under each category, he loses sight of the real differences between the sub-categorical sets. The grammarian has evidently misled the ontologist. (ii) Like the others he also assumes that Aristotle's starting point and main concern of the chapter is "being" as pollachōs legomenon.³²

Beginning with 31.5, Olympiodorus offers a general treatment of the Aristotelian formulation as a whole. What he says there presents an aspect of particular interest. His first question is whether the formulation contains superfluous expressions, especially in view of Aristotle's love for brevity. He draws attention to the importance of each word for the sake of clarity (saphēneias heneka), and also to the fact that Aristotle means to be technical: ὡς τεχνικὸς Ἀριστοτέλης τοῦτο πεποιήκεν (31. 15). Olympiodorus' justification of his claim is not without disappointments. He says that the real reason why Aristotle did not confine his definients to ὅν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν was to prevent us from attributing to him the view that all homonyma are also in some sense non-homonyma and all synonyma, non-synonyma. Consider how Plato and Alcibiades, not being synonyma become so when "man" is predicated of both. Again, if Aristotle had limited his formulation only to "things whose definition is different" then it would be possible to show that it permits us to say absurd things. Consider for instance, the following: Since genera are predicated synonymously of subordinate species, and since we can give two distinctive accounts of the same individual, say Socrates, (i) "S. animal logical and mortal," (ii) "S. bald-headed, philosopher with a protruding belly," it would turn out that by virtue of the first account Socrates and Alcibiades are synonymous, and homonymous by force of the second.

The fascinating thing about all this is that Olympiodorus should call Aristotle formulation systematic and technical for reasons so foreign to Aristotle's logic and theory of definition. It did not occur to Olympiodorus that Aristotle perhaps to include as part of his denotation of homonyma the commentators' individuals and their accidental properties. Furthermore, it is evident that Olympiodorus did not

see that it was only his loose talking about ousia that permitted an indiscriminate passing back and forth from logos as definition to logos as description. He is simply committing an error typical of the rest of the commentators. He is on better grounds when he argues in favor of keeping the tēs ousias in the expression. Without it, he points out, Aristotle would have compromised precision and the reader would not have been able to say whether the passage is about things or words. Thus, in order to avoid any misunderstanding Aristotle distinguishes between words and their definitions on the one hand, and things signified by words and the definitions of such substantive things, on the other (32. 2ff). Olympiodorus' point is well taken but for one item: his implication that Aristotle is talking about all things in general; for to say so is to cancel the possibility that Aristotle's formulation has a technical side to it. But to return to his defense of L of O, we must admit it is subtle and ingenious but brings to the foreground issues which even if not irrelevant to the broader aspects of the problem, cannot be shown to have figured originally in Aristotle's discussion. Finally, it must be recognized that his comment on Categories, Ia 4, indicates that for once he understood correctly the intent of the formulation (37. 16-30). Suddenly in this comment all the grammatical trivia, the preoccupation with individuals, proper names, accidental properties, theory of description and other such notions, withdraw to make room for a pointed answer to the real problem. He responds to Aristotle's own illustrations and offers appropriate essential definitions for the kinds of things that are homonyma. Correct though he is on this point, it cannot be said that his approach, when seen as a whole, is either unaffected by misconceptions or free from non-Aristotelian preconceptions.

Simplicius' interpretation: Simplicius opens his valuable and in many ways highly informative commentary with a remark on the importance of making appropriate distinctions that enable us to classify things signified by words under the right category. Since it is often the case that two different things may share the same signifying word, we need criteria to distinguish one from the other and to focus attention to the kinds of words that give rise to ambiguity (In Categ. 21. 1-10). He observes that if each thing had only one name, then it would come under only one category. But, had this been the case, there would have to be as many categories as there are things. However, we know that one and the same name is frequently used to signify a number of substantially different things. Hence the need for categorial classifications arises. He mentions as an example the name "animal" and points out how it is used to signify a man and a horse, or again, Socrates and a painting of Socrates. The manner in which Simplicius discusses the examples is quite significant. He prefers to start with homonymously predicated names rather than homonyma pragmata. Thus, since man and horse partake in the substance of animal, the substance is predicated synonymously and the two things are brought under the same category. But since Socrates and his portrait do not partake of the same substance, Socrates must come under the category of substance, whereas his portrait under that of quality. In order to account for such cases, Simplicius insists, Aristotle found it necessary to begin his treatise with homonyma.³³ Three things must be pointed out here. First, the readiness with which he substitutes his own examples of individual substances for Aristotle's specific ones. Second, his interesting speculation about homonyma as the key to categorial ambiguity and how this was considered by Aristotle an item of priority. Third, his diagnostic treatment of the categorial identity of the two homonyma, particularly his prompt classification of the portrait of Socrates under the category of quality, despite the fact that Aristotle's text does not permit such inferences. Evidently, by placing the portrait example under quality, Simplicius gives the impression that he is presupposing that Aristotle is using (a) homonyma

in the broadest sense, hence non-technically, and (b) ousia in a very loose sense to mean anything from substance to accidental properties. It is not certain whether Simplicius would have openly endorsed these implications. Regardless of what his reaction would have been, the point is that his treatment of the subject allows such inferences.

When Simplicius turns to examine "the nature of homonyma" (22. 14ff), he repeats the well known views of his predecessors how each thing can be signified through either name or logos, and how the latter means either definition or description. Since names in their symbolic capacity can symbolize substantially different things for which different logoi can be given, and since things which are essentially the same can have a variety of names, we arrive at five types of things; Aristotle, however, treated only three: homonyma, synonyma, paronyma. The other two, polyonyma and heteronyma, were omitted for two reasons: (i) knowledge of them is easily attained as opposites of the first two types; (ii) Aristotle actually had in mind the preparation for speech-making (lectika), rather than an inventory of real things. In offering the second explanation, Simplicius admits he is following Syrianus. His endorsement of that position is intimately related to a more basic issue. He tells us that he agrees with Iamblichus who taught that Aristotle opened the Categories with the homonyma, not only because these are the simplest of expressions, but primarily because the expression "category" is homonymously predicated of the categories (23. 25-24.5). One begins to suspect here that the neoplatonic concern for the stratification of species and genera, with the highest genera at the top, is at the back of Simplicius' explanation. What seems also to be true is his interest in pointing out that Aristotle did not assign any reality to the expression "category" or to "being." By doing so, Simplicius, like Iamblichus from whom he derives this approach, is able to contrast Aristotle's ontology from the neoplatonic theory of Being.

Faithful to the tradition he follows, Simplicius interprets L of O not in the strict sense of definition of ousia. He speculates that Aristotle purposely used the term logos, a broader term, to include in his formulation both the summa genera and the individuals. Only by means of description can we render the property of some substance (29. 16-24). We have already seen how this has become the standard treatment of L of O; hence it would only surprise us to read in Simplicius' account something different on the subject. But in view of his unusual erudition and familiarity with the Categories, we wonder why it never occurred to him to peruse the text merely for the sake of discovering the passages to which he could have appealed for his support of the interpolated meaning of logos as description. Nor did he realize that in order to accommodate this meaning, he was simply following the other commentators when he supplied the very examples which alone could make logos, in the sense of description, applicable to this non-Aristotelian situation. True, Simplicius defends the reading L of O, but he does so for reasons of his own. He appeals to such authorities as Porphyry, Herminus, and "the majority of scholars," but instead of arguing on his own he quotes Porphyry's full approval.³⁴

Even more disappointing is the comment on an aporia that was raised by Nicostratus and Atticus, and has to do with the claim that all synonyma are homonyma, and vice versa. Consider, for instance, the fact that there is a sense in which we can say that all homonyma have in common the name by virtue which they are homonyma, and the definition of the homonymous name. Thus, they are homonyma in that sense. But in so far as they are essentially different things, they are also synonyma. Simplicius informs us that Porphyry resolved the difficulty by

pointing out that there is nothing paradoxical about things being synonyma in some context and homonyma in another. Against this background, conspicuously unrelated to Aristotle's major theme, Simplicius proceeds to discuss Porphyry's answer by using the two Ajaxes example. Even later in the next comment, where the opportunity presents itself to focus attention on Aristotle's own examples and identify them correctly as Ammonius and Olympiodorus at least were able to do, he forgoes it in favor of rehashing such commonplaces of the tropes of homonyma. All he is able to offer there is to explain why he thinks the Aristotelian examples come under the class of "intended" homonyma due to similarity (31. 22-32). Simplicius is not even original when he misinterprets Aristotle. Aside from depending blindly on Porphyry and repeating characteristic neoplatonic misrepresentations of Aristotle's views he shows no signs whatever of having suspected the extent to which the doctrine of homonyma was strained to suit the commentators' own intellectual loyalties.

Elias' interpretation: There is hardly anything in Elias' treatment of homonyma that has not been said by one of the previous commentators. He shares most of their misconceptions about Aristotle and repeats the same standard errors. Like the others, he defends the reading L of O and assumes that logos means both definition and description. He begins his commentary by saying why he thinks Aristotle was right in distinguishing between homonyma and synonyma. He argues against certain unnamed thinkers who claimed that all cases of homonyma are reducible to synonyma. He appears familiar with Simplicius' work and echoes new emphasis that this old Porphyrian problem was given by Simplicius. In fact he offers two arguments against the "reductionists" but they present little philosophical interest and have nothing to do with Aristotle's logical views. More interesting is the way in which he understands the Categories. He writes: "Since the main objective is to discuss the categories, and since homonyma is predicated of them, whereas each category is predicated synonymously of the species which come under it in the manner of the genus, ... for these reasons Aristotle begins his treatise with the doctrine of homonyma and synonyma. If he gives priority to the former, this is because unity precedes duality" (In Categ. 135. 3-7). His comments abound in speculations of the sort. His is a pat explanation, typically neoplatonic and altogether unoriginal. He also ignores Aristotle's examples of homonyma and replaces by the celebrated ones of the two Ajaxes. But instead of discussing any further the repetitious character of his misinterpretation we may conclude this account with a note on Elias' original inconsistency.

Elsewhere, viz., in his In Porphyrii Isogogen (56. 11-14 and 4. 5-11), he explains in the familiar clichés the difference between definition and description: the former is done with reference to substance, the latter, to accidental properties and is therefore inferior to definition. His discussion of the example of the two Ajaxes as instances of homonymous substances is peculiar, to say the least. He is presumably talking about individual substances, knows that in such cases we cannot have definitions, yet uses the terms description and definition interchangeably as if there was no problem at all (138. 19-139.6). The same careless use of terminology we find in his comment on Aristotle's examples. He has just admitted that logos in Aristotle's text means definition, and yet writes the following: "The real man is living substance endowed with sensation whereas the portrayed man is not substance but symbebēkos, not living but lifeless, not sensing but lacking in such faculty; the latter is called 'alive' in the sense of being a representation of a living and sensing substance" (139. 25-28). Why the portrait is not a substance but an accidental thing and why it is that he prefers to ignore Aristotle's text which leaves no doubt that only definitions should be given for both homonyma mentio

Elias' commentary offers no explanation. The inconsistency remained unnoticed.

V

When we view in retrospect the tradition of Aristotle's interpreters, starting from Elias and going back to the earlier commentators, certain major themes begin to stand out even more pronounced than when we look at these thinkers in the normal chronological order. It seems that these commentators honestly believed they were discussing and logically extending Aristotelian doctrines even after they had seriously departed from Aristotle's thoughts and had in essence abandoned some of his principal views. Whether these thinkers could have developed their philosophies without the use of the method of expounding through commentaries on major texts of the classical period is something that need not be considered here. What has been of concern was the correctness of their interpretation of an Aristotelian issue.

In general, the commentators we discussed were all Platonizing thinkers and, on the whole, well-known professors and teachers. Some of them, like Elias, taught Aristotle as a preliminary to Plato (123. 9-11).³⁵ Common to all the commentators on the Categories is the noted discrepancy between their ardent defense of the fuller version of the Aristotelian formulation of the nature of homonyma, one which preserves the L of O textual reading, and their misunderstanding of the intent of the passage. What is striking about the entire tradition that goes back to Porphyry, if not to others before him, is a common and serious effort to extend Aristotle's views and, in this particular case, to promote the belief that logos meant for Aristotle something more than definition. The persistent preoccupation with meaning of logos in the sense of description calls for an explanation.

The new meaning the term took was appended to Aristotle's logos with a facility that leads one to infer that the commentators were less interested in correctness and more in using some significant text in order to bring to the foreground of their exposition certain concepts of their own. One might venture here the opinion that even more important than the extended meaning of logos was their eagerness to assert the view that would permit ousia, in the sense of individual substances, to become an object of "knowledge" even if admittedly undefinable in terms of Aristotle's logic. This view was asserted, as we saw, by means of an interpretation that rested on certain liberties the commentators took with Aristotle's text. It is difficult to know whether the commentators had actually realized the significance Aristotle had apparently attached to his way of formulating the nature of homonyma. The fact is that we are allowed to infer that they either ignored or suppressed the ontological and logical aspects of the doctrine and by the same token overlooked the possibility that Aristotle had actually stated his case through the aid of technical expressions.

It is not easy to say what it was that led the commentators to insist upon treating the two concepts, ousia and logos, in a so obvious non-Aristotelian manner. A fuller explanation of this treatment might eventually reveal that what we have here is doctrinal innovation in late Hellenistic logical theory and comparable developments in ontology. However, all we are permitted to say at this point is that no matter what new views the commentators had developed on their own it is still a fact that they failed to distinguish their own concepts from what their texts permitted.

The interpretation that takes ousia, as it occurs in the first chapter of the Categories, to mean individual substances and that such substances, if they happen to have the same proper name, are cases of homonyma pragmata, goes back, as far as our documents permit us to tell, to the writings of Porphyry and his pupil Iamblichus. We have no extant commentary on the Categories that antedates that of Porphyry. If we had the commentaries from which he was able to draw we might have been in a position to trace the origins of this misinterpretation of Aristotle's text. The way matters now stand all we can say is that the available evidence point to the fact that the misinterpretation originates with the early neoplatonists, it is transmitted through neoplatonic writers, and becomes an established approach which is shared by all the commentators whose neoplatonic affiliations cannot be doubted. Perhaps the long interpretive tradition from Porphyry to Photius and Psellus which preserved a correct textual readings only to distort its meaning and allow an error to go unnoticed for centuries, is as curious an phenomenon as is the fact that the only commentaries we have on Aristotle's Categories are those that were written by neoplatonists.

NOTES

¹ See P. Lang. De Speucippi Academici scriptis (Bonn, 1911). Speucippus discussed homonyma and synonyma (fr. 32a), and distinguished between words which express "the logos of an essence" and words which function simply as names. According to Speucippus, homonymous expressions do not stand for a common essence, whereas synonymous ones do so. Simplicius quotes Speucippus' version as follows: Σπεύσιππος δέ, ὡς φασιν, ἠρκεῖτο λέγειν 'ὁ δὲ λόγος ἕτερος' (In. Categ. 29. 5-6). Simplicius comments that Speucippus defended this formulation and remarks that once the definition is granted it could be shown that homonyma and also synonyma, and vice versa.

² 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 Elenchi. Special mention of the cause of homonyma 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. He says: "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 to 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" (164b 5-20).

3 At 218 B. C. (Cornford's translation). This passage is also mentioned by Simplicius as evidence to support the claim that Plato had anticipated the problem (*In Categ.* 25. 103). Plato's text reads: νῦν γὰρ δὴ σὺ τε καὶ ἐγὼ τοῦ-
του περὶ τοῦνομα μόνον ἔχομεν κοινῇ, τὸ δὲ ἔργον, ἐφ' ᾧ καλοῦμεν
ἐκάτερος τὰς ἑῶν ἰδίᾳ παρ' ἡμῶν αὐτοῖς ἔχομεν· δεῖ δὲ αἰεὶ παντὸς
περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ μᾶλλον διὰ λόγων ἢ τοῦνομα μόνον συναμολογῆ-
σθαι 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 Sophi-
stic 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).

4 David in his commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* remarks that ὀφείλομεν
τοῖνυν διαστείλασθαι τὰ ὁμώνυμα πρὸς ἀναίρεσιν τῆς ἀμφιβολίας
(123. 14-15). However, 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 scho-
liast David failed to see how the detection of *homonyma* is vital to the validity
of syllogistic thinking. Hence, the discussion on *homonyma* has broader implications
than what David mentions in this passage. It might be said that his remark is re-
lated to the way in which he interprets the denotation of *homonyma*. 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, than its relation to terms in syllogistic thinking becomes ques-
tionable on the ground that the terms in syllogistic premises are *universals*,
not individuals.

5 Aristotle's formulation evidently owes much to Plato's choice of words.
Compare Aristotle's expression with Plato's wording of the issue: τοῦνομα
μόνον κοινῇ... συναμολογῆσθαι διὰ λόγον.

6 According to Philoponus, there had been two different Aristotelian treatises
on the same subject and with the same title: *Categories*. It is further reported
that they resembled 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 ὁμώνυμα ἔστι, τὰ δὲ συνώνυμα. He
appeals to this information as evidence to support his defense of the authenticity
of the treatise (*In Categ.* 12.34-13.5). See also note 8.

7 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. In view of the difficulty attending the
existing translations it is better not to supply one of our own. The meaning of
the passage is discussed later in this paper.

8 Boethius claims this version to be the one which Aristotle truly authored.
See Simplicii, *In Categ.* 29.30-30.1. Comparably, Andronicus, paraphrasing Aristo-
tle, gives the following version: τῶν ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς λεγομένων, ὁμώνυμα
μὲν λέγεται ὡς ὄνομα μόνον ταῦτόν, ὃ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος ἕτερος.

That Andronicus is taking liberties with the text should be evident from the following: (a) He introduces ὅθεν 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 ta legomena clearly refers to named things. (b) Andronicus incorrectly substitutes his expression monon tauton for Aristotle's koinon; by doing so he is apparently assuming the equivalent character of the two expressions, but neglects to discuss the grounds on which this is permissible.

9 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 VI (In Categ. 21. 18-22.) 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 (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.

10 Simplicii, In Categ. 29. 25.

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

12 Ammonius' views of this issue present a difficulty through by no means unsurmountable. In his Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge, the word ousia is not mentioned in the discussion on homonymy and onta (84. 6-23). The omission is rather curious, especially in view of the fact that Porphyry is the most ardent defender of VI. 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. 14-21.2).

13 The isomorphic relationship between these parallel passages is the theme of a paper "The Meaning of Ho Logos Tes Ousias in Aristotle's Categories," presented at the meetings of The American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, December, 1965.

14 In Categ., beginning with 60.11.

15 Comp. Porphyry's remark in the Isagoge (6. 5-11): "...being is not the common genus of all things, nor, as Aristotle says, are all things of the same genus with respect to one summum genus. Still, let the first ten genera be arranged, as in the Categories, as ten first principles, and even if a person should call all things beings, yet he will call them, as he says, equivocally, but not synonymously, for if being were the one common genus of all things, all things

would be synonymously styled beings, but the first principles being ten, the community is in name only, yet not in the definition also belonging to the name: there are then ten most generic genera." The Organon, or Logical Treatises of Aristotle (with Porphyry's Introduction) transl. O. F. Owen (London, 1883), Vol. II, pp. 615-6. Dexippus is in complete agreement with Porphyry (In Categ. 13. 3). Of special interest is also the fact that Ammonius has constructed an argument of his own to support Porphyry's thesis. See Ammonii, In Porph. Isag. 81. 16ff.

16 Porphyry's explanation is interesting to be sure but not so relevant to the context of the Categories as he thinks it is. Beginning with line 13, he proceeds to explain his views which may be summarized as follows: Since there is a distinction between homonymy as a notion (phonē) and things (pragmata) which are homonyma, we cannot really talk about homonymy unless the claim can be made that we already know that things are ordered in a variety of ways and that all do not partake in the same definition. The cause of homonymy, then, lies in the fact that things are found to be different and that they are such that do not share the same name. Without this sort of knowledge, Porphyry remarks, we cannot conceive of homonymy.

17 Comp. Simplicii, In Categ. 30. 7.

18 Porphyry offers the following examples of the two definitions of the substance denoted by the name "man":

Df.1: ἄνθρωπος ζῷον λογικὸν θνητόν.

Df.2: ἄνθρωπος οὐσία ἐνψυχος αἰσθητική.

The problem now becomes one of determining whether the two definitions have the same denotation. Since Df.2 denotes not only men but also other things such as oxen and the like, the equivalence is cancelled and one of the two definitions is declared too wide. Porphyry's rule is that a term is correctly rendered not only when properly named but also when defined in conjunction with the proper denotation of the name.

19 The same division is adopted by Olympiodorus (In. Categ. 34 ff).

20 An example of accidental homonyma is the case of two unrelated individuals who have been given the same proper name but without any design or planning on the part of those who gave them the name. Consider, for instance, the case of two Alexanders: Alexander, the son Priamus, and Alexander, the son of Philippus.

21 Porphyry's illustrations of each type within the trope of intentional homonyma are particularly suited to his classifications. The type of intentional trope which is of special interest to Porphyry is that from similarity. According to his interpretation, Aristotle's own examples mentioned in Categories, 1a, are based on the trope from similarity (66. 22-8). Man and painting of man are homonyma by virtue of the fact that both are called "living", except that the painting of man is called so from similarity. This is also reflected in the language in which Porphyry couched the definitions of these homonyma things: ζῷον, (α) ἄνθρωπος, οὐσία ἐνψυχος αἰσθητική, (β) γεγραμμένον, ὁμοίωμα οὐσίας ἐνψύχου αἰσθητικῆς.

22 Simplicius expresses serious reservations about the originality of Dexippus' commentary (In Categ. 2. 25-9). He remarks that the problem which Dexippus raises had been anticipated by Plotinus, and that his solutions offer nothing beyond what Porphyry and Iamblichus had already said on the subject.

23 οὐδὲν...ἔχει ἀφορισμένην ἰδίαν πραγμάτων φύσιν.

24 He emphasizes the following principles: being (on), one (hen), plurality (plēthos), non-being (mē on), essence (ti esti), identity (tauton), otherness (heteron), category (katēgoria), property (idiotēs), definition (horos), genus (genos) and difference (diaphora) (In Categ. 13.3-15.13).

25 Ammonius' two definitions of homonyma will be found in (a) In Porph. Isag. 6. 8ff, and (b) In Categ. 17. 6-7.

26 It is clear that Ammonius is convinced that in this context Aristotle did not mean substance in the sense in which it is contrasted to accidents (οὐ τὴν ἀντιδιαστελλομένην πρὸς τὰ συμβεβηκότα), but rather in the wider sense that would permit us to include particular existents, that is, primary ousiai. It follows from this, his argument goes, that Aristotle's view of homonyma must be understood as designed to cover the accidental properties as well. If Aristotle did not mean his theory to cover that case, he would have said phusēōs hekastou kath' hēn hyphestēken, rather than tēs ousias. Ammonius' speculations receive no support from the text. We are dealing here with a strained interpretation but one that enables Ammonius to make logos to mean hypographe, description, and ousia to stand for accidental properties as well.

27 The definition of man, which is the illustration he uses, is taken word by word from Porphyry as given in In Categ. 60. 17-8.

28 It is reasonable to conclude that Ammonius did not see that the position which he took in his In Porph. Isag. contradicted what he said in the In Categ. In the Isagoge he asserted the undefinability of all homonyma, and this, he insisted, holds true of Aristotle's own categorial theory where it deals with homonyma. If so, then he should have said that logos, since it refers to homonyma pragmata, can mean only description. In other words, Ammonius commits a contradiction when on the one hand he asserts the undefinability of all homonyma and, on the other, that logos in the context of the Categories can mean both description and definition. He states in the Isagoge: τῶν δὲ ὁμωνύμων οὐκ ἔστι ὅρους ἀποδοῦναι...ὁ δὲ ὁρισμὸς οὐσίαν σημαίνει· ὧν δὲ οἱ ὁρισμοὶ οἱ αὐτοί, τούτων καὶ τὰ πράγματα τὰ αὐτά· οὐκ ἄρα ἐνδέχεται τῶν ὁμωνύμων ἓνα κοινὸν ὁρισμὸν ἀποδοῦναι (56. 2-6).

29 Philoponi, In Categ. 16. 15-8.

30 The point is that Philoponus purports to alert his reader to the fact that the term "homonymon" has many senses. He adopts Porphyry's two main tropes of homonyma and introduces certain minor changes in the types of intentional homonyma. Actually, all he does is to replace Porphyry's class of homonyma from similarity with two sub-classes, each related to a different underlying motive: (i) intention to commemorate, viz., a father who names his son after himself, and (ii) intention to indicate expectation, viz., a man who names his son after Plato (In Categ. 16.20-17.25).

31 At 206A: ἴσον θυμὸν ἔχοντες ὁμώνυμοι.

32 The reason, he says, Aristotle begins with the homonyma is because they are the simplest things, meaning that they have only one thing in common, unlike the synonyma which have two. This, he argues, is as it should be, for the simple must always precede the complex. Furthermore, it just so happens that the most general thing is itself a homonymon: "I speak here of to on (17), ..., / hence / the theory of homonyma must have priority" (28. 8ff). Olympiodorus abounds in such irrelevancies and speculations. For his comment on the phrase "homonyma legatai," he borrows heavily, according to his own admission, from Iamblichus' lost commentary. More often than not, Olympiodorus fails to keep his discussion within the boundaries of basic issues. His irrelevancies run the gamut from a Homeric verse to Attic syntax.

33 Simplicius never doubts the usefulness of the discussion on homonyma. He quotes from Iamblichus and Plato's Euthydemus to show the seriousness of the subject (22. 1-9). Plato, according to Simplicius had to deal with ambiguity which is due to the lack of proper distinctions in the use of names (22. 9-13). The important thing is that Simplicius depends rather heavily on Iamblichus' lost commentary (In Categ. Proemium, 2. 10f), and also to Porphyry's work which had already exerted considerable influence on Iamblichus. Simplicius credits Iamblichus for being the first to observe that to katēgorein is homonymously predicated of the ten categories and that they have the name "category" in common only as a homonymously predicated name. Iamblichus is further reported to have taught that it was only proper for Aristotle to open the Categories with a brief discussion on the nature of homonyma. Simplicius is also eager to inform us that there were certain commentators, like Nicostratus and his followers, who had expressed serious reservations about the relevance of the first chapter of the Categories to the main doctrine presented in this treatise. Since we have no reason to doubt the historical accuracy of this information it is reasonable to say that we can speak with certainty about the existence of two schools opposing each other on the issue of the relevance of the doctrine of homonyma to the rest of Aristotle's categorial theory: the school of Nicostratus on the negative side and the neoplatonists Porphyry and Iamblichus defending the other.

34 The quotation is most likely from Porphyry's lost work "Tois pros Gedaleion." Porphyry argues that Aristotle added tes ousias in order to leave no doubt about the exact meaning of logos: i.e., definition and description. Without ousia, logos might have also been taken to mean such things as eduction, syllogism, an affirmation or a denial.

35 Elias states that it is necessary for the exegete of Aristotle to πάντα εἰδέναι τὰ Πλάτωνος, ἵνα σύμφωνον ἑαυτῷ τὸν Πλάτωνα ἀποδείξῃ τὰ Ἀριστοτέλους τῶν Πλάτωνος εἰσαγωγὴν ποιούμενος (cf. 110 28-30). See L. G. Westerink, Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy. (Amsterdam, 1962), p. xx.

24
ERRATA SHEET

page	line	Correct to:
1	10	Correction: John Damascene's dates are: 676-770
1	21	read: "attests" in place of "attest"
2	36	insert "have" after "actually"
2	45	omit "some"
3	38	insert "the" after "meaning of"
4	19	insert comma after "term"
4	30	underline "common", "being", "element."
4	38	read "we cannot" in place of "can we"
5	25	read "definiendum" in place of "definiens"
5	27	omit "include"
6	41	read "justifies" in place of "justified"
6	45	insert comma after "definition."
7	6	insert "of" after "listing"
7	9	read "illustrates his discussion" in place of "to illustrate, is discussion"
7	31	omit comma after "expression"
7	32	insert "of" after "sense"
7	37	insert "the" after "problem of"
7	47	insert "that" after "an issue"
8	14	insert comma after " <u>L of O.</u> "
8	26	read "be" in place of "by"
8	26	read "metaphors" instead of "methaphors"
8	43	write "Dexippus," at the end of line
9	37	insert "we" after " <u>ousia</u> "
11	5	read "above" in place of "higher to"
11	17	read "expansion" in place of "expansions"
11	43	read "homonymōs" in place of "homonymos"
12	29	insert "the" after "supplies"
12	39	insert comma after "short"
13	9	read "illustration is" in place of "illustrations are"
13	15	quotes after "suicide" (end of line)
13	45	read "Aristotle's" in place of "Aristotle"
13	48	insert at beginning of line "did not mean"
14	17	comma after "trivia"
14	28	read "category" in place of "catetory."
15	10	read "essentially" in place of "essentiall"
15	36	read "appealed" in place of "appeale"
16	11	read "Aristotle" in place of "Aristole"
16	15	read " <u>homonyma</u> " in place of "homonym"
16	22	insert "the" after "echoes"
16	33	add "them" after "replaces"
16	35	insert comma after "misinterpretation."
16	52	(last line) line ends as follows: "mentioned,"
17	23	insert "the" after "with" and underline "logos"
18	25	read "are" in place of "and"
19	8	underline "Euthydemus"
19	36	underline "In. Categ."
20	19	read "Boethus" for Be oethus"
20	29	read "on" in place of "of"
22	1	read "reservations" in place of "reser ation"
22	8	read (<u>idiotēs</u>) in place of (<u>iodiotēs</u>)