

# Ancient Commentators on Aristotle

GENERAL EDITOR: RICHARD SORABJI

## SIMPLICIUS: On Aristotle Categories 5–6

Translated by  
Frans A.J. de Haas & Barrie Fleet

B L O O M S B U R Y



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*On Aristotle Categories 5-6*

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Simplicius  
*On Aristotle*  
*Categories 5*

Frans A.J. de Haas

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## Introduction

Simplicius wrote his extensive commentaries on works of Aristotle after the year AD 532. He studied in Alexandria under Ammonius and in Athens under Damascius. In AD 529 the Neoplatonic School at Athens closed under the threat of Justinian's laws which prohibited the teaching of pagan philosophy. Damascius, Simplicius, Priscian and a number of other philosophers were forced to continue their work elsewhere. Recently Rainer Thiel<sup>1</sup> has argued anew that we may have some confidence in the story that after a disappointing visit to Chosroes, the Persian king, Simplicius settled in Carrhae (Harran) in present-day Turkey. Whatever his precise place of residence, we can be fairly certain that it was only after his return to the Roman Empire that Simplicius wrote his surviving commentaries, i.e. on Epictetus' *Enchiridion*,<sup>2</sup> and on Aristotle's *De Caelo*, *Physics* (after 538), and *Categories* (after the *Physics* commentary).<sup>3</sup>

In later centuries the commentary on the *Categories* was perhaps the most widely available one among Simplicius' works. In the Middle Ages William of Moerbeke provided a Latin translation of the *Categories* commentary (1271) which was later revised and printed by Paul of Geneçano (Venice 1516). Zacharias Kallierges edited the Greek text (Venice 1499) which served as the basis of a second Latin translation by Guillelmus Dorotheus (Venice 1540).<sup>4</sup> However, the question what impact (if any) Simplicius' commentary had on philosophy in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is an issue that remains largely to be investigated.

To the eyes of a modern beholder Simplicius' commentary on the *Categories* has rather surprising aims, which are defined at the beginning of his commentary (2,30-3,17). Iamblichus' commentary on the *Categories* (lost but for fragments in Dexippus and Simplicius) is literally Simplicius' source of inspiration. Simplicius regards the writing of his own commentary as a spiritual exercise, itself a means of obtaining the high level of understanding displayed in Iamblichus' work.<sup>5</sup> At the same time Simplicius aims at clarifying Iamblichus' work so as to make it more accessible to the less-gifted, as well as reducing the bulk of all available commentaries to a reasonable size. A small number of additions of his own, he claims, should be regarded as mere introductory material to Iamblichus' interpretation and to Porphyry's large commentary on the *Categories Ad Gedalium*<sup>6</sup> whose work Iamblichus 'followed right to the letter' (2,11). In this large commentary Porphyry is reported to have answered all tradi-

tional *aporiai* raised up to his date, notably those of Lucius and Nicostratus. Many of these *aporiai* had also been taken up and developed in Plotinus' *Enneads* 6.1-3, *On the Genera of Being*. In its turn, Plotinus' treatment is reflected in Dexippus' question-and-answer commentary on the *Categories*.<sup>7</sup> The more concise *Categories* commentaries of the Alexandrian school,<sup>8</sup> tailored to the level and needs of freshmen in philosophy, can be shown to have drawn mainly on Porphyry's work.

In addition to Porphyry's achievement, Iamblichus provided an integration of Aristotle's doctrine into the larger perspective of Neoplatonic metaphysics, the so-called 'intellective theory' (*noera theôria*).<sup>9</sup> Iamblichus also added numerous references to (Pseudo)-Archytas the Pythagorean's *On the Universal Logos* (or *Logoi*) which we now know to be a forgery.<sup>10</sup> However, Iamblichus and Simplicius regarded the work of Archytas as Aristotle's Pythagorean source and compared Aristotle's text and doctrine to those of Archytas in this spirit.<sup>11</sup> These dimensions of Simplicius' commentary have no counterpart in the Alexandrian commentaries, if only because they would surpass the level of freshmen (not of course because their authors did not share any of Iamblichus' Neoplatonic metaphysics or were less sophisticated philosophers).<sup>12</sup>

This background is important for understanding the structure of Simplicius' commentary since each individual lemma may betray the course of the history of ancient scholarship as outlined in the previous section. The broad structure of Simplicius' commentary sometimes clearly reveals an underlying organization into *theôria* and *lexis*, i.e. doctrinal sections explaining the philosophical content, followed by close scrutiny of Aristotle's text, respectively.<sup>13</sup> The commentaries from the Alexandrian school exhibit this structure more clearly. It derives from a teaching practice in which Aristotle's text was cut into manageable blocks which are often still mirrored in our division of Aristotle's text. First the philosophical significance of such a unit was laid out to introduce the pupils to the 'correct' interpretation; then this interpretation was confirmed by means of an (almost) word by word commentary on the text. Simplicius specifies that particularly the harmonization between Aristotle and Plato is based on a balanced exegesis of both wording and philosophical content (7,29-32).

As a result of Simplicius' aim to bring together the entire tradition up to his day, his commentary is also a blend of two commentary formats. The surviving commentaries by Porphyry and Dexippus are lists of questions and answers that follow the sequence of Aristotle's text. In a direct way this format reflects the older tradition of raising and answering *aporiai* about both text and philosophical doctrine, which itself imitates Aristotle's aporetic mode of doing philosophy.<sup>14</sup> Substantial parts of Simplicius' commentary exhibit this structure, with hardly any transition between questions. However, this question-and-answer format is embedded in a format in which the commentary is organized by lemmata and reads as a continuous text. This format is already found in e.g. Alexander of Aphrodisias'

commentaries on Aristotle and in Athenian and Alexandrian commentaries on both Plato and Aristotle. Simplicius' magisterial command of his topic can be gleaned from the way in which he was capable of combining the two formats: his presentation of the *aporiai* (or his straightforward rejection of a view which can be shown to derive from the aporetic tradition) is often at the same time a clever device to explain a topic in more detail, or to proceed from one issue to another.<sup>15</sup>

In each of these two stages of *theôria* and *lexis* traditional *aporiai* could be raised, and solved either by drawing on the same tradition (Plotinus, Porphyry) and/or by having recourse to Iamblichus' intellectualive theory. However, Simplicius tends to refrain from Iamblichus' more lofty speculations, probably in order to remain faithful to the aims he set himself for his commentary.<sup>16</sup> However, the Neoplatonic commentary tradition on the *Categories* is less of a unity than Simplicius suggests. Plotinus and Porphyry restricted the scope of the *Categories* to the sensible world, whereas commentators from Iamblichus onwards strove to extend Aristotle's categories to the intelligible world by analogy.

Even more troublesome is the relation between Plotinus and Porphyry with respect to the *Categories*. Modern interpretations differ: the scholarly consensus claims that Plotinus, after a thorough critique of Aristotle's work, rejects it in order to replace it with a Platonic ontology which has Plato's five highest genera (Being, Motion, Rest, Sameness, Otherness) as the genera of intelligible being. For sensible being he more or less settles for categories of Substance, Quantity, Quality, and Relation (which have hardly more than their name in common with Aristotle's categories), together with Motion. Porphyry, the consensus view continues, opposed Plotinus in order to rescue the *Categories* for Neoplatonism. He restricted the scope of Aristotle's work to the sensible realm, and claimed that it was intended for beginners in philosophy so that the work (as well as his own commentaries) need not contain a sophisticated Platonic metaphysics.<sup>17</sup> He accepted all ten Aristotelian categories as genera that are truly predicable of the sensible realm. Moreover, he is said to have taken the trouble of refuting every *aporia* ever raised against the *Categories*.<sup>18</sup> This fundamental disagreement between Plotinus and Porphyry concerning the compatibility of the *Categories* and Platonic thought is even believed by some to have been the real motive for Porphyry's departure for Sicily from where he never returned to Plotinus, and where he probably wrote most of his work on the *Categories*.<sup>19</sup> On this theory the question remains why Plotinus would have trusted Porphyry to edit his work if they had parted long ago because of such a fundamental disagreement.

Recently, a number of scholars have emphasized that many of the *aporiai* which Plotinus raised were part of the commentary tradition of his day – which he discussed in his classes<sup>20</sup> – and therefore need not necessarily reflect his own opinion; that he often provides hints of answers to these *aporiai*; and that Porphyry and later commentators can be shown to

have taken up these hints in developing their own interpretation.<sup>21</sup> In this respect at least, the gap between Plotinus' and Porphyry's handling of the *Categories* is indeed less wide than was commonly believed.

However, on this interpretation the disagreement between Plotinus and Porphyry concerning the significance of the *Categories* for Platonism may well remain. For since later commentators (including Simplicius) also employ the earlier aporetic tradition while defending different views of the *Categories* as a whole, it seems that continuity in this respect does not exclude important disagreements elsewhere.

These and other considerations have led me to attempt a different approach to the problem which is based on a different reading of Plotinus *Enneads* 6.1-3. While relegating a careful analysis of Plotinus' work to a separate paper I am currently preparing, I shall here confine myself to a rough outline of my interpretation. First, any assessment of the reception of the *Categories* should take account of the fact that Plotinus wrote an ontological treatise on the genera of (real) being, not a commentary on the *Categories*, whereas Porphyry wrote an introduction (the famous *Isagoge*) and commentaries on the *Categories*. Moreover, in doing so Porphyry explicitly chose to start from Peripatetic doctrine, to write for beginning students, and to avoid strictly metaphysical issues as much as possible. In my view, the different aims of the writings of Plotinus and Porphyry already throw a different light on many of their so-called disagreements. Furthermore, it is striking that Plotinus' negative assessment of the *Categories* as an ontological work in *Enn.* 6.1.1 did not deter him from using it as a kind of sparring partner throughout the aporetic metaphysical explorations of *Enn.* 6.1-3. With respect to the four categories that he retains (albeit with extensive modifications), he ends his discussion with the statement that the characteristics by which Aristotle differentiates between his categories allow one to use the names (*katêgoriai*) 'substance', 'quantity', 'quality', and 'relation' to designate a collection of different kinds of sensible 'entities' – as long as one is clear that these terms do not signify proper genera of being, nor disclose anything of the true nature of such genera.<sup>22</sup> For instance matter, form, and the composite are all called 'substance' by Aristotle,<sup>23</sup> even though they differ essentially, even in the way in which characteristics like 'not being in a subject' and 'not being said of a subject' apply to them.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps, I venture to suggest, Porphyry simply started where Plotinus left the discussion of the *Categories*, i.e. with *katêgoriai* as predicates of sensible 'entities' without direct relevance (or threat) to Platonic metaphysics. It is common knowledge that Porphyry developed a semantics of his own on the basis of the *Categories* and Aristotle's theory of predication, and thus laid the foundations of Western logic.<sup>25</sup> If my reconstruction is in any way plausible, Plotinus' Platonic concerns forced a wedge between, on the one hand, the *Categories* as Aristotle's discussion of the language by which we refer to the sensible world, and Platonic ontology on the other.

Thus Plotinus set Porphyry on the track of exploring Aristotelian logic (almost) without metaphysical strings attached. If so, it was Plotinus, not Porphyry, who redefined the meaning and significance of Aristotle's categories so as to fit within the larger project of a Platonic ontology. Even if Porphyry's approach led him to ontological claims which Plotinus would not have endorsed, I believe their interpretation of the *Categories* as such had too much in common to speak of a fundamental disagreement.<sup>26</sup>

### Substance: Neoplatonic influences

Despite the ingenious treatment of Aristotle's *Categories* by Plotinus and later Neoplatonists there is every reason to suspect that especially the chapter on Substance raises considerable difficulties for a Platonist.<sup>27</sup> First and foremost the priority given to primary substances, i.e. sensible composites, is (and was meant to be) entirely at variance with any Platonic treatment of being. Indeed, Simplicius pays considerable attention to questions of ontological priority, often in rebutting Alexander's Peripatetic interpretation of the *Categories*.<sup>28</sup> It is not surprising to find that here Plotinus' guidelines turn out to be most powerful. From the angle of our common practice of predication sensible composite substances are indeed primary, and the predication of species and genera secondary. And if this semantical approach is inadequate Simplicius may rely on an achievement of Porphyry's who declared the *Categories* a work for beginners, to be prefaced by his own *Isagoge*.<sup>29</sup> After all, freshmen cannot be expected to absorb distinctions only more advanced students will be introduced to in other works of Aristotle and/or Plato.<sup>30</sup>

Distinctive Neoplatonic concerns surface in Simplicius' treatment of (a) the epistemological status of Aristotle's treatment of each category from *Cat.* 5 onwards; (b) the order of the categories; (c) universals; and (d) the status of the differentia.

(a) Since the categories are supposed to be the *highest* genera it is impossible by definition to define them by stating their genus and differentia. Since this seems to rule out that Aristotle's treatment of them constitutes a definition *pur sang*, what is the purpose of the chapters starting with *Cat.* 5? Simplicius claims that highest genera can only be captured by a *description* (*hupographê*) that consists in a list of, first, the properties each category has in common with others (the pseudo-genus), followed by the property (or properties) that mark it off from the other categories (the pseudo-differentia(e)).<sup>31</sup> Such a description is sufficient because it is able to trigger our innate knowledge of being, i.e. to set in motion, under the instruction of a gifted teacher, the process of recollection that will lead students of philosophy to knowledge of the intelligible truth (see esp. 12,16-13,11; 159,9-12). Simplicius is convinced that Aristotle's *Categories* is perfectly capable of serving that goal.

(b) Another recurrent theme is the order in which Aristotle listed the

categories. All agree that substance should be listed first (75,31-76,12), but Archytas put quality second after substance, instead of quantity (120,27-122,30). Although Aristotle himself does not seem to have had a specific order (or number) of the categories in mind,<sup>32</sup> Simplicius explicitly opposes the notion of a random listing since this would destroy the mutual co-ordination of beings as well as the self-consistency of Aristotle's account (155,33-156,4). Consequently, it becomes important to identify the presuppositions of different orderings so as not to get confused about the true order of nature. In this context the Aristotelian distinction between 'prior to us' and 'prior by nature' may be helpful to distinguish the order of Aristotle's teaching in the *Categories* from the order of the true hierarchy of being (e.g. 156,5-8). In the case of the position of Quantity Simplicius remarks that an appeal to the perspective of the sensible substance does not help because the form of the composite, which is substance *par excellence* according to the *Metaphysics*, is akin to unextended quality rather than extended quantity. Therefore he has recourse to common parlance and general accessibility in order to explain the position of Quantity in the *Categories* (122,5-30).

(c) On more than one occasion Simplicius discusses a threefold division of universals, or rather 'common items' (*koina*) which enables him to locate in a consistent hierarchy all of Plato's Forms, their images, both innate in our minds and reflected in the Receptacle, and Aristotle's forms and acquired concepts (68,32-71,2; 82,35-83,16).<sup>33</sup> One should distinguish between (1) a common cause which transcends the individuals; (2) a common nature which resides in individuals as the effect of this cause, constituting them as members of a particular species; and (3) the concept corresponding to this common nature as established in our thought by means of abstraction and thus freed from the differentiation accrued to it in each individual. Platonic Forms, or rather their Neoplatonic descendants in Intellect, come under (1), all kinds of immanent forms under (2), and acquired concepts under (3).

This threefold division is called upon to sort out a number of difficulties concerning the *Categories*. Although many problems of priority have specific bearing on Neoplatonic concerns with the hierarchy of being, they often arise as problems of interpreting all of Aristotle's works as a coherent whole. For instance the ranking of primary vs. secondary substances in *Categories* 5 can be seen as contradicting *Metaphysics* 12.7, 1072a31-2, *Physics* 1.1, 184a23-4 (so 82,1-22), and *Posterior Analytics* 1.2, 72a1. However, *Categories* 5 deals with genera and species as common causes from the perspective of sensible substances; hence they are ranked secondary 'in relation to us'. *Metaphysics* 12.7, *Physics* 1.1, and *Posterior Analytics* 1.2 deal with common causes in their own right; hence they are ranked primary 'by nature'. As opposed to this interpretation, Alexander of Aphrodisias is reported to have claimed that individuals are prior to universals *by nature*. Of course Simplicius can only condone this interpre-

tation if here ‘universals’ refers to (3) concepts which are neither (1) common causes nor (2) common natures. But in that case Alexander cannot hold – as Simplicius claims he did – that the individuals are *constituted* out of the common item plus differences. Nor is it acceptable to claim with Alexander that the Intellect is an individual substance on a par with the sensible ones. Moreover, Simplicius objects to Alexander’s division of Substance into corporeal and incorporeal as two equivalent branches. Only if Alexander would be ready to agree to the priority of incorporeal over corporeal substance as part of a series of ever-declining effects (*en tēi huphesei*)<sup>34</sup> of Substance as a common cause, can his division be accepted. Simplicius characteristically adds a reference to Plato’s *Parmenides* 144b1-c8 in support of his position.<sup>35</sup> In short, Simplicius uses the threefold division of ‘common item’ to sort out apparent contradictions between Aristotle’s works, to harmonize different interpretations of the *Categories*, as well as to align recalcitrant interpretations with Neoplatonic emanatist metaphysics.

A.C. Lloyd<sup>36</sup> has drawn attention to the fact that the Neoplatonists stretched the notion of ‘genus’ to include the intelligible cause. Simplicius is clearly aware of the difference between the logical genus and the causal genus (cf. 77,1-4.12-14), which instantiate the third and first universal of his division respectively. This ‘enriched’ genus breaks away from the Academic restriction embraced by Aristotle<sup>37</sup> that if members of a class exhibit a hierarchical order the class will not be a genus. E.g. ‘soul’ cannot be predicated of each different kind of soul without equivocation – and therefore not as a genus – because ‘soul’ is different in each.<sup>38</sup> For such cases Aristotle developed his theory of focal meaning in terms of which the Neoplatonists shaped their causal genera.<sup>39</sup> Simplicius discusses the restriction as a traditional problem for the genus of Quantity which is supposed to range over the discrete and the continuous, the former of which is prior to the latter.<sup>40</sup> The equally traditional answer is that immediate participation of both in the causal genus is sufficient to warrant Aristotle’s wording, even if Quantity is not a logical genus (126,6-127,11).

(d) Finally, the presence of Neoplatonism is obvious in the state-of-the-art discussion of the categorial status of the differentia (97,24-102,10) which perhaps deserves to be regarded as a *Corollarium* on a par with the famous corollaries on Place and Time in Simplicius’ *Physics* commentary.<sup>41</sup> The ‘Essay on the differentia’ as I have called it, addresses the status of differentiae in general, not just differentiae of substances.<sup>42</sup> Although in Aristotle the term ‘differentia’ denotes a predicate and a part of the definition, not a kind of being, the ancient commentators were troubled as to its categorial status. Does the differentia belong to Substance because it helps constitute a composite substance, or does it belong to Quality because it somehow ‘qualifies’ a species? With Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Dexippus, Simplicius settles for the hybrid notion of a ‘substantial quality’ which, so he believes, satisfies nature’s need for intermediates. Judging

from his arguments Simplicius seems to have a slight preference for the option that a ‘substantial quality’ is an entity that participates in both categories,<sup>43</sup> not a *tertium quid* next to Substance and Quality – which was vehemently denied by Ammonius and his school as introducing an eleventh category.<sup>44</sup>

### Simplicius’ contribution

As Simplicius led us to expect in his introduction (3,10-17), some passages in his commentary have flown from his own ingenuity, e.g. ‘an *aporia* of some value or a noteworthy articulation of the argument’ (3,12-13). A combination of both seems to be present in the division of positions concerning the categorial status of the differentia discussed above. We have seen that Simplicius opts for the position that the differentia is a ‘substantial quality’. But then Simplicius can no longer agree with Iamblichus’ reply to the question how the differentia, itself a quality, can nevertheless be predicated synonymously of a substance (*Cat.* 3a17-28). For Iamblichus criticizes the question as resting on the confusion of regarding the differentia *both* as part of the substance *and* as a quality in its own right. In order to escape this criticism, Simplicius must reject Iamblichus’ solution. He rephrases the problem and provides the solution that since the differentia is not merely a quality but a *substantial* quality, and therefore *essentially* part of a substance, the definition of the differentia *qua* quality is simply irrelevant to the discussion. Fortunately Simplicius suggests that this solution can be confirmed from later remarks in Iamblichus so that this departure from his master is not too obvious.<sup>45</sup>

Concerning a problem involved in essential predication Simplicius’ dissatisfaction with existing solutions gives rise to an interesting compromise (79,22-80,8). The problem was put that ‘human being’ is *said of* Socrates this would mean that ‘human being’ is *in* Socrates and thereby an accident – which is obviously absurd. Porphyry and Iamblichus claimed that in such cases the non-coordinated (*akatatakton*) human being (either the concept or the cause) is *said of* the coordinated (*katatakton*) nature of human being which is present *in* Socrates. This solution nicely preserves the distinction in Aristotle’s vocabulary between ‘said of’ and ‘in’. At the same time it shows why essential predication is not a tautology, and how Neoplatonic metaphysics ties in with each act of predication. However, Simplicius suggests that this solution should be further refined in order to meet more clearly the problem of identity and difference involved in essential predication, thus developing a hint of Iamblichus in a related context (cf. 53,9-18). In contrast to his predecessors Simplicius prefers to regard the *coordinated* nature of human being as the predicate<sup>46</sup> but only *in virtue of* the likeness to its transcendent cause which it is able to display by participation. In other words, Simplicius creates a distinction *within* the individual substance (between the likeness displayed by the image and

the image as a whole) in order to solve the initial problem. This focus is more in line with the framework of common parlance about sensible objects to which the problematic in Aristotle's *Categories* is supposed to be confined, and still emphasizes (though in a different way) the causal relation between transcendent causes and immanent natures.

Finally, Simplicius seems to raise a new problem in response to Iamblichus' claim that if one considers speech only by its length and vocal utterance one does not appear to reveal any order (138,25-139,10). Is it not clear to everyone that there is order in the word, that nobody would speak the name 'Socrates' by pronouncing the syllable 'cra' first? If, then, order is accepted in the case of speech too, *all* quantities lacking position (time, number, and speech) will have order in terms of prior and posterior instead. In this way Simplicius deftly removes an incongruity from Iamblichus' interpretation of Aristotle and at the same time provides Aristotle with an even more coherent account. Thus Simplicius' own additions may serve to confirm once again the ingenuity of his strategy in demonstrating the coherence of Aristotle's *Categories* and its harmony with the whole tradition of ancient philosophy as a unique mode of knowledge which was believed to derive ultimately from Pythagorean wisdom.

### Notes

1. Rainer Thiel, 'Simplikios und das Ende der neuplatonischen Schule in Athen', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz. Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse*, no. 8, 1999 provides an extensive reappraisal of the issue, with a full bibliography. I am grateful to him for putting his publications (see also n. 18) at my disposal.

2. cf. I. Hadot, *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d'Épictète*, Leiden, 1996.

3. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis De Caelo Commentaria*, ed. I.L. Heiberg, CAG 7, Berlin, 1894; id., *In Aristotelis Physicorum libros quattuor priores commentaria*, ed. H. Diels, CAG 9, Berlin, 1882; id., *In Aristotelis Physicorum libros quattuor posteriores commentaria*, ed. H. Diels, CAG 10, Berlin, 1895; id., *In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, ed. C. Kalbfleisch, CAG 8, Berlin, 1907. Two volumes of a French translation of *Simpl. in Cat.* with elaborate commentary have been published under the direction of Mme Ilsetraut Hadot (1990); for a review see De Haas, *Mnemosyne* 47.5, 1994, 698-702. A volume containing a translation of *Cat.* 5 by Mme Hadot with commentary by Concetta Luna is currently in preparation. In the present series Simplicius' commentary is translated with introduction and notes in four volumes by Michael Chase (*Simpl. in Cat.* chs 1-4), Frans de Haas & Barrie Fleet (chs 5-6), Barrie Fleet (chs 7-8) and Richard Gaskin (chs 9-15) respectively.

4. Recently reprinted by Charles Lohr (1999).

5. cf. the prayer at the end of the commentary, 438,33-6.

6. Michael Chase is preparing a full edition and commentary of the fragments that remain of this illustrious commentary, many of them deriving from *Simpl. in Cat.* Porphyry's short question-and-answer commentary was translated for this series by Steven Strange (1992).

7. Translated by John Dillon (1990).

8. See in the present series Cohen & Matthews (1991). Philoponus' *in Cat.*, ed. Busse 1898, CAG 13.1, reflects the same lectures by Ammonius, albeit in a more elaborate and sometimes more critical mode.

9. See John Dillon, 'Iamblichus' *Noera Theôria* of Aristotle's *Categories*', in H.J. Blumenthal and J.F. Finamore (eds), *Iamblichus: the philosopher*, Iowa City, 1997, 65-77. Iamblichus discussed the status of this mode of knowledge at *Myst.* 1.2, 16-22; 2.9, 5-7.

10. Szlezák (1972) 14 dates this text between the second half of the first century BC and Hippolytus of Rome, with preference for a date early in this period.

11. This gives rise to bogus questions as to why Aristotle omitted pieces of Archytas (e.g. 78,31-79,5) or deviated from the order of categories Archytas had laid down (91,14-33), but also why Aristotle discusses topics Archytas omitted (40,5-13).

12. See e.g. E. Tempelis, *The School of Ammonius, Son of Hermias, on Knowledge of the Divine*, Athens, 1998 for a sufficient antidote to such assumptions.

13. See e.g. 22,15; 68,32-3; 80,13-14; 159,9; 165,31; 208,22-3; 211,5; 228,1-3; 286,4; 381,31-3; 387,17.

14. Simplicius also finds this feature in the *Categories*, see e.g. 118,3: 'Let us see which problems Aristotle adds to what has been said.'

15. See e.g. *Simpl. in Cat.* 87,1-88,23; 103,8-104,18; 123,29-126,5; 141,16-143,8.

16. This is especially clear at the start of his own evaluation of Iamblichus' doctrine of Place at 364,7-8 which echoes 3,7.

17. There are indications that the *Ad Gedalium* contained some digressions on metaphysics, notably an attempt to harmonize Plotinus' metaphysics with *Metaphysica* Lambda; cf. Hadot (1990) 132ff. Porphyry's question-and-answer commentary is concerned with ontology only indirectly, in so far as the significant terms which are the proper subject of the *Categories* signify genera of being, Porph. *in Cat.* 57,19-59,33.

18. cf. *Simpl. in Cat.* 2,5-8.

19. See Chr. Evangeliou, *Aristotle's Categories and Porphyry*, Leiden, 1988, 3-5; his suggestion was taken up by H.D. Saffrey, 'Pourquoi Porphyre a-t-il édité Plotin?' in Porphyre *La Vie de Plotin*, edited by Luc Brisson et al., vol. 2, Paris, 1992, 43-4 and Porphyre *Isagoge: texte grec et latin*, translated by Alain de Libera and Alain-Philippe Segonds, introduction and notes by A. de Libera, Paris, 1998, pp. viii-x. Contrast Porph. *Vita Plotini* §11, 11-19, saying he acted on Plotinus' advice in order to cure the suicidal inclinations from which he suffered. From §5, 51-64 we may infer that Plotinus finished *Enneads* 6.1-3 shortly before Porphyry left for Sicily.

20. See Porph. *Vita Plotini* §14, with Goulet-Cazé (1992).

21. See S. Strange (1987); and R. Thiel, *Introduction to Simplicius. Commentarium in decem Categorias Aristotelis*, translated by Guillelmus Dorotheus (1540). Reprint edition by Charles Lohr. Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt, 1999, pp. viii-xiv. This introduction contains the gist of Thiel's unpublished 1997 Marburg Habilitationsschrift *Aristoteles' Kategorienschrift in ihrer antiken Kommentierung*, which he kindly put at my disposal.

22. cf. Plot. *Enn.* 6.1.3.19-23; 6.1.5.22-6; 6.1.9.27-30; 6.1.10.40-2.

23. Arist. *Metaph.* 8.2, 1043a26-8; *DA* 412a6-11, 414a14-16.

24. cf. Plot. *Enn.* 6.3.5.36-9; 6.3.8.9-12.

25. For a survey of Porphyry's contribution to logic which emphasizes the a-metaphysical nature of Porphyry's enterprise see Sten Ebbesen, 'Porphyry's Legacy to Logic: a reconstruction', in *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, edited by R.R.K. Sorabji, London, 1990, 141-71.

26. Of course neither Plotinus nor Porphyry interpreted the *Categories* in a way that should be acceptable to us today. Here I have been concerned only with an assessment of the compatibility or incompatibility between their views of the *Categories* and the role they see for this work in the whole of their philosophy.

27. cf. Strange (1987) 957-8.

28. cf. 82,6-10; 82,22-35; 83,16-20; 85,5-9; 90,31-3.

29. In this Porphyry followed the Peripatetic Herminus, Porph. *in Cat.* 59,21-2.

30. cf. 67,9-12; 110,24-5; 133,35-134,4; 194,3-11; 264,1-4; 268,24-5; 278,5-7; 295,6-16; 317,27-9; 346,18-20; 387,23-4; 411,5-6; 418,24-8; 426,34-427,2; 427,25-8; 428,5-13.

31. cf. 92,3-13; 141,12-15.

32. Compare the *Categories* and *Top.* 1.9, 103b20-29 with e.g. *Metaph.* 5.7, 1017a24-30; 5.28, 1024b12-15; 6.2, 1026a33-b2; 7.1, 1028a10-13; *EN* 1.6, 1096a19-29. Contrast Simplicius' claim at *in Cat.* 12,3-16.

33. For a general appraisal of this division in relation to its medieval developments see Alain de Libera, *La querelle des universaux. De Platon à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Paris 1996, 103-5.

34. P. Hadot (1990) 130 notes the first application of this principle of degradation under the name of *huphesis* throughout Porphyry's *Sententiae*, esp. 11.3.5 (Mommert).

35. For similar appeals to Plato cf. 76,25; 104,25; 108,15.

36. cf. A.C. Lloyd (1990), ch. 3. For the contrast see e.g. Plot. *Enn.* 6.2.2., 10-14.

37. cf. *Metaph.* 3.3, 999a6-14.

38. For the application to soul cf. the clear discussions by Simpl. *in DA* 81,12-26; 106,33-107,14.

39. For Aristotle's conception of *aph' henos kai pros hen* predication see *Metaph.* 4.2; for its fate in the hands of the Platonists, see P. Hadot (1990), and P. Aubenque, 'Plotin et Dexippe, exégètes des catégories d'Aristote', in *Aristotelica. Mélanges offerts à M. De Corte*, edited by Christiaan Rutten and A. Motte, Bruxelles-Liège, 1985, 7-40.

40. cf. Plot. *Enn.* 6.3.13,12-15, *Dex. in Cat.* 67,8-68,11.

41. Translated for this series by J.O. Urmson, *Simplicius: Corollaries on Place and Time*, London and Ithaca NY, 1992.

42. For a detailed discussion of this problem in the ancient commentators see De Haas (1997) 180-250.

43. Compare the position of paronyms as participating in both homonyms and synonyms without sharing all features of both at 37,3-4.

44. cf. Amm. *in Cat.* 46,18-19; Philop. *in Cat.* 66,6-12. The possibility of an eleventh category was already discussed and rejected by Alexander in his *De differentiis specificis* preserved in Arabic; see further De Haas (1997) 214-19.

45. Other deviations from Iamblichus occur at 41,21-4 (Iamblichus misquoted Alexander); 99,6-10; 100,3-12; 101,34-102,6; 138,16-24; 139,5-10; 147,1-22.

46. Here Simplicius remains close to at least the wording of Plotinus, cf. *Enn.* 6.1.3, 17-18.