

CHAPTER I

Photios on the Non-Synonymy of  
Substance: *Amphilochia* 138

*Börje Bydén*

It is only natural that the *Categories* is the Aristotelian work that spawned the greatest number of commentaries in antiquity, from the lost commentaries by Andronicus of Rhodes, Boethus of Sidon, and Ariston of Alexandria to the likewise lost commentary by Stephanus of Alexandria, who was appointed to a chair at Constantinople after Heraclius' accession in 610, and thus probably the last of the pre-iconoclastic commentators.<sup>1</sup> In the early seventh century the Greek-speaking world went into a rather steep cultural decline, and during the next 250 years very few and only very elementary Greek philosophical works saw the light, most notable among them perhaps the *Dialectica* by John of Damascus (c. 720). All these works rehashed material deriving ultimately from late antique commentaries on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories*.<sup>2</sup>

And so it is hardly surprising, either, that the first Aristotelian commentary produced in post-iconoclast Byzantium was also one on the *Categories*. This commentary is extant in two versions: (a) in the form of a few relatively extensive scholia transmitted together with Ammonius' commentary but attributed in the manuscripts to St. Photios the Great, patriarch of Constantinople (858–67 and 877–86);<sup>3</sup> and (b) as a continuous text carrying the title *Clear Summary of*

1. The first-century BC commentaries by the Peripatetics Andronicus, Boethus, and Ariston (as well as those by the Platonist Eudorus and the Stoic Athenodorus) are all mentioned by Simplicius, *In Cat.* 159.32. On Stephanus and his *Categories* commentary, see Wolska-Conus 1989 (esp. 9 n. 19).

2. On the philosophical works of this period, see Roueché 1974, 1980 and 1990.

3 There are also scholia on the *Isagoge* attributed to Photios; these were transcribed from Mon. gr. 222 and Par. gr. 1928 by Busse 1891: xx–xxii. The ones on the *Categories*

*the Ten Categories* and filling eleven chapters of some redactions of the *Amphilochia*, an unsystematic collection of essays by the selfsame Photios mostly on theological subjects.<sup>4</sup> Hergenröther (PG 101: 759–60) and Westerink (1986: 5: 140) drew the conclusion that the scholia must have been culled from a different –and probably earlier– version of the *Clear Summary*. The *Clear Summary* has been preserved in three Byzantine (and a few later) manuscripts.<sup>5</sup>

The title is really a misnomer. For in these eleven chapters, Photios deals with the antepredicaments and nine categories only; that is to say, he includes five of those categories that were not (or only very cursorily) treated by Aristotle, but omits that of ἔχειν or Having. In the present paper I have set myself the task of investigating whether it is possible to trace the influence on some later writers of what is after all the earliest surviving text of post-iconoclast Byzantine philosophy. One reason why one would want to do that is that it would be interesting to know more about the extent to which relatively early Byzantine philosophical works were actually used by relatively late Byzantine philosophical writers. For the most part, it is difficult to tell with any degree of certainty, since so much of the material in all Byzantine philosophical works derives from ancient works. And as a rule, Byzantine philosophical writers do not reveal their sources. So in order to carry out this kind of inquiry it is necessary to find an earlier work of some originality with which to compare the later ones.

In this respect, Photios' summary would seem like a promising choice. Chapter 145, on the category of Where (ποῦ), was discussed

---

are reported (from Mon. gr. 222) in the footnotes of Hergenröther's edition of the *Amphilochia* (PG 101: 757–812).

4 There are five different redactions of the *Amphilochia* (or *Ad Amphilochium Quaestiones*). The total number of essays in all five is 329. The redaction thought by Westerink to be Photios' original edition numbers 313 essays; the ones containing essays 314–24 and 325–29 also date back to the author's lifetime. Only two redactions (including the original edition) contain the *Clear Summary* (although it was inserted also in one MS of another redaction as early as the 14th century) (Westerink 1986: 4: v–xiv).

5 The Byzantine MSS are: Par. gr. 1228 (11th cent.); Vat. gr. 1923 (a descendant of the former, 13th cent.); Par. Coisl. gr. 270 (the relevant part dated to the 14th cent., the rest of the MS to the 11th cent.). An important later witness (representing a different redaction) is Par. gr. 1229 (17th cent.) (Westerink 1986: 4: v–xiv).

not so long ago in a couple of papers by Jacques Schamp, who did pose the question of originality, and answered it in the affirmative.<sup>6</sup> And it was noted quite recently by Katerina Ierodiakonou that in chapter 142 Photios offers a solution to a problem concerning the last six categories which has no precedent in the ancient tradition.<sup>7</sup> Less encouragingly, it also seems to have made no impact on the later Byzantine tradition. (The problem is that each of the last six categories seems to be compounded of Substance and one of the remaining three: e.g. Where seems to be compounded of Substance and Quantity, and thus reducible to these; Photios' solution is to insist that an entity can emerge as a result of the coming together of two other entities without being reducible to either or both of them: this, he says, is true e.g. of friendship.)

I have chosen to focus especially on chapter 138, which is on Substance.<sup>8</sup> In this chapter Aristotle comes in for some pretty heavy criticism, especially on account of one inadequacy, which Photios himself says that “most people have failed to notice”.<sup>9</sup> This inadequacy has to do with the lack of unity of the category of Substance, or differently put, with the non-synonymy of primary and secondary Substance.

To begin with, it may be useful to have a plan of the chapter. It appears to divide rather naturally into the following 14 sections:

1. Five irrelevant senses of ‘substance’ (2–25).
2. The relevant sense of ‘substance’ formulated: it is the self-existing thing (26–30).
3. Division of Substance (30–76).
4. Primary and secondary Substance according to Aristotle (77–91).
5. Criticism: non-synonymy of primary and secondary Substance (91–104).

---

6. Schamp 1996a and 1996b.

7. Ierodiakonou 2005: 24.

8. Anton 1994 discusses chapter 138 at some length, but his emphasis is not so much on a close analysis of the text, which is what I will attempt here, as on the theological context.

9. “μη λανθανέτω δὲ ἡμῶς ὅπερ σχεδόν τι τοὺς πλείστους διέλαθεν” (138.91–92).

6. Afterthought: the *infima species* or nature is a ninth sense of ‘substance’ (105–13).
7. Characteristics of Substance (1): not to be in a subject. True of all Substance, but not exclusively (114–20).
8. Characteristics of Substance (2): not to have a contrary. True of all Substance, but not exclusively (121–25).
9. Characteristics of Substance (3): not to admit of a more and a less. True of all Substance and nothing else (126–36).
10. Characteristics of Substance (4): to be numerically one and still be able to receive contraries. True of all Substance and nothing else (137–42).
11. Rebuttal of objection to (10), following Cat. 4a21–b12 (142–62).
12. Two remaining characteristics of Substance: (5) to signify a certain ‘this’ and (6) to be predicated synonymously. None of them true of all Substance (163–76).
13. Additional characteristics following from Aristotle’s account, confirming the non-synonymy of primary and secondary Substance (177–88).
14. Conclusion: Aristotle’s reasons for considering individuals to be more substances than universals are not sufficient for considering individuals—or genera—to be substances at all (188–208).

The relationship between this plan and version (a) of the commentary, i.e. the Photian scholia transmitted along with Ammonius’ commentary, will be briefly discussed below (pp 27–28).

It is common knowledge that most ancient Greek commentators from Porphyry onwards held that the proper subject matter of the *Categories*, being the first item on Aristotle’s logic syllabus, is simple, primary, and general words, insofar as they signify things, whereas the things (and concepts) that are signified by these are a subsidiary subject matter, insofar as they are signified by words.<sup>10</sup> But since

---

10. “... ἔστιν μὲν ὁ σκοπὸς οἰκείος τῇ λογικῇ πραγματεία περὶ τῶν ἁπλῶν καὶ πρώτων καὶ γενικῶν φωνῶν, καθὼ σημαντικαὶ τῶν ὄντων εἰσὶν, συνδιδάσκειται δὲ πάντως καὶ τὰ σημαινόμενα ὑπ’ αὐτῶν πράγματα καὶ τὰ νοήματα, καθὼ σημαίνεται τὰ πράγματα ὑπὸ τῶν φωνῶν” (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 13.12–15).

‘simple, primary, and general’ words primarily signify sensible individuals, it is only reasonable on this view that Aristotle in the *Categories* assigns priority to individuals over universals.<sup>11</sup>

It is not immediately clear what Photios thought was the proper subject matter of the *Categories*. He reports Aristotle as saying that individual substances (e.g. ‘Socrates’) are more indicative of the thing under discussion than are universal substances (e.g. ‘man’ or ‘animal’); perhaps we can infer from this that he considered the word ‘substance’ in this context to refer to words rather than things.<sup>12</sup> But evidently he did not align himself with the tradition, starting not with Porphyry, but long before him (Ps.-Archytas, Boethus), that understood the range of things signified by the words discussed in the *Categories* as being limited to the sensible realm. It is true that he begins chapter 138 by putting to one side a number of senses of the word ‘substance’ which he claims are not relevant to logic (this is section 1 in the plan above). To begin with, transcendent and causative substance is the subject matter of First Philosophy (presumably understood as apophatic theology: cf. *Amphil.* 180.17–21), whereas form and matter are concepts of natural philosophy. ‘Substance’ can also mean ‘property’, but this, says Photios, is political rather than philosophical usage; and ‘existence’, in which case it indicates all things homonymously. The only thing which is eligible to be called ‘substance’ in the categorial sense is, according to the somewhat tautological formula endorsed by Photios, the “self-existing thing, which does not require anything else for its existence” (sect. 2).<sup>13</sup> But some of the examples he proceeds to offer of the categorial sense of ‘substance’ are incorporeal and thus immaterial things: the nature of angels and intellect, whose operation is instantaneous, and soul, whose operation in-

11. “... ἐπειπερὶ λέξεων σημαντικῶν ἢ πρόθεσις, αἱ δὲ λέξεις πρώτως ἐπὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ ἐτέθησαν ... εἰκότως ἂν ταῖς λέξεσι πρώτα κατονομάσθῃ (ἔστι δὲ τὰ αἰσθητὰ καὶ τὰ ἄτομα), πρώτως οὐσίας ἔθετο” (Porphyry, *In Cat.* 91.19–23).

12. “... διότι μάλιστα, φησίν, ἢ ἄτομος οὐσία φανερώτερον ποιεῖ τὸ ζητούμενον ἢ καθόλου οὐσία. ὁ γὰρ εἰπὼν Σωκράτην ἐπίδηλον μᾶλλον ἐποίησεν τὸν ἐν Ἀθήναις εἰ τύχοι φιλόσοφον παρὰ τὸν εἰπόντα ὅτι ἄνθρωπος ἢ ζῷον” (138.193–97).

13. “πρῶγμα ... αὐθύπαρκτον, μὴ δεόμενον ἑτέρου πρὸς ὑπαρξιν” (138.27–28).

volves movement (sect. 3).<sup>14</sup> In consequence, the category of Substance *cannot* according to Photios be limited to the sensible realm, although it is limited to the boundaries of Creation.<sup>15</sup>

What did Photios understand by a ‘category’? There are some indications that he understood a highest genus in the strict sense. I take it to be characteristic of a genus in the strict sense that it is always predicated synonymously, i.e. according to the same name and definition, of all its species and of all the individuals subsumed under these.<sup>16</sup> One indication that this is what Photios understood by a ‘category’ is his very attempt to provide a universal formula of Substance, as well as an exhaustive division, running all the way from corporeal and incorporeal substances down to a few representative *infimae species*. The formula is borrowed from John of Damascus, who expressly discusses the categories in terms of the highest genera of being.<sup>17</sup> The division, on the other hand, is imported from a different context, namely that of Porphyry’s *Isagoge* and commen-

---

14. “καὶ ταύτης ἢ μὲν κατὰ ἐπιβολὴν καὶ ἀθρόον ἐνεργεῖ, ὡς ἀγγέλων φύσις, εἶτα δὲ καὶ νοῦς ἢ δὲ μετὰ τινος κινήσεως τὰς ἐνεργείας ἔχει προαγομένας, ὡς ψυχὴ. ὄν εἰ καὶ διάφορος ἢ ἐνεργεῖα καὶ ἢ ὑπαρξίς, ἀλλ’ οὖν κοινὸν αὐτοῖς τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ καλεῖσθαι ἀσώματα· ὅσα γὰρ τῆς ὕλης καὶ τοῦ ἐνύλου εἶδους ἀνακεχώρηκεν, εἰς τὸν τοῦ ἀσώματου λόγον μεταβέβηκεν. κἄν γὰρ πρὸς τὸ κυρίως καὶ πρῶτως ὄν ἀσώματόν τε καὶ ὑπερούσιον ἀγαπῶσι ταῦτα σῶμά γε καὶ εἶναι καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι, ἀλλ’ οὖν τὴν ἐνυλον καὶ σωματικὴν διαφυγόντα παχύτητα τῆ τοῦ ἀόλου φύσει συνοικεῖοῦται καὶ τὸ ἀσώματον” (138.33–41).

15. When Photios says, at 138.41–42, that “this belongs to another, more profound discussion”, Anton 1994: 172 takes him to mean that “the type of discourse that deals with sensible reality cannot cover the whole of *ousia*”. It seems to me more likely that the question referred by Photios to another discussion is one prompted by what he says in the immediately preceding lines (see note 14), namely how to conceive of the exact relation of the nature of angels, intellect and soul to the strict incorporeality and immateriality of God on the one hand, and the coarse materiality and corporeality of sensible things on the other. At any rate, it is perfectly clear from 138.30–33 that the nature of angels, intellect and soul are all subsumed by Photios under categorial Substance, which is what is discussed in Aristotle’s *Categories*.

16. Cf. Aristotle, *Top.* 2.2, 109b4–7: “ἀπ’ οὐδενὸς γὰρ γένους παρωνόμως ἡ κατηγορία κατὰ τοῦ εἶδους λέγεται, ἀλλὰ πάντα συνωνόμως τὰ γένη τῶν εἰδῶν κατηγορεῖται· καὶ γὰρ τοῦνομα καὶ τὸν λόγον ἐπιδέχεται τὸν τῶν γενῶν τὰ εἶδη.”

17. “Ορίζονται δὲ τὴν μὲν οὐσίαν οὕτως· Οὐσία ἐστὶ πρῶγμα αὐθόπαρκτον καὶ μὴ δεόμενον ἑτέρου πρὸς ὑπαρξίν” (*Dialectica*, rec. fus., 4.61–64). A similar but not identical formula is given by the Damascene in a number of other places. Other early occurrences of similar formulae include *Doctrina Patrum* 40.25–26 and Meletius, *De nat. hom.* 154.9–11.

taries on that work. And indeed, Porphyry in the *Isagoge* does talk of Substance as a highest genus.<sup>18</sup> So Photios may well have been influenced by these two sources to take a similar view. — It may be worth noting, in passing, that John of Damascus refers to the formula as a current definition (ὀρίζοντα), notwithstanding the fact that a highest genus cannot strictly speaking be defined.<sup>19</sup> A definition is also what Photios calls it in version (a) of the commentary, but in the *Clear Summary* itself the words ‘define’ and ‘definition’ are carefully avoided. That their absence is not coincidental is strongly suggested by Photios’ distinction in the preceding chapter (137.7–9) between definitive and descriptive formulae.<sup>20</sup>

Another, admittedly not very strong, indication that what Photios understood by a ‘category’ was a highest genus in the strict sense is his emphasis on the ‘difference’, as he puts it, between category and homonymy (although he never says they are contrary terms).<sup>21</sup> What seems to me to be decisive, however, is that his criticisms of Aristotle’s account of Substance suggest that he thought its deficiency lay in its failure to meet the requirements for an account of a genus. Especially, he contends (in sect. 5) that primary substances, i.e. individuals, and secondary substances, i.e. universals, did not obtain the name of Substance synonymously, whether in relation to each other or in relation to the <generic> Substance of which the formula and the division were given. Surely, if they are called substances by virtue of the common definition of generic Substance, they have their name synonymously with each other as well as with the latter.<sup>22</sup>

The formula and the division of generic Substance referred to here are the ones given in sections 2 and 3 according to the plan

18. *Isag.* 4.21–27.

19. Elsewhere, the Damascene seems to agree that a definition must contain both genus and constitutive differentia: *Dial.*, rec. fus., 8.16–18; 8.90–93.

20. Cf. Anton 1994: 171.

21. “διέστηκε δὲ πολλῶν κατηγορία καὶ ὁμωνυμία” (138.24–25).

22. “... τὰ ἄτομα, πρῶται οὐσίαι λεγόμεναι, καὶ τὰ καθόλου, δευτέρα οὐσίαι λεγόμεναι, οὐχὶ συνωνύμως οὔτε πρὸς ἑαυτὰς οὔτε πρὸς τὴν οὐσίαν ἧς ὅ τε λόγος καὶ ἡ διαίρεσις ἀποδέδοται τὸ τῆς οὐσίας ὄνομα ἀπηνέγκαντο· τῷ μέντοι κοινῷ λόγῳ τῆς γενικῆς οὐσίας οὐσίαι καλούμεναι ἑαυταῖς τε κάκεινῃ συνωνύμως ὀνομάζονται” (138.93–96).

above. Aristotle obviously does not mention any generic Substance of which primary and secondary Substance are supposed to be two different species; and the characteristics (the so-called pseudo-differentiae) of Substance that he offers in lieu of a definition do seem in some cases to belong exclusively to either primary or secondary Substance (and in some cases to belong also to other categories). Photios in fact allows that two of these characteristics are properties in the strict sense (such that for every *x*, if and only if *x* is a substance, the property belongs to *x*), namely (a) to be numerically one and still be able to receive contraries (sects. 10–11), and, more importantly, as we shall see below, (b) not to admit of a more and a less (sect. 9). But all his emphasis is on the failure of the other four to be at the same time a necessary and a sufficient condition for substantiality: only primary substances signify a certain ‘this’, and only secondary substances (along with differentiae and all the other categories) are synonymously predicated (since primary substances cannot be predicated at all) (sect. 12);<sup>23</sup> on the other hand, it is not only substances that are not in a subject—also substantial differentiae are not—(sect. 7) and that have no contraries—also quantities do not—(sect. 8).<sup>24</sup>

It is understandable if considerations like these give rise to doubts as to whether there are really any grounds for thinking that

---

23. “Ὁ μέντοι γε Ἀριστοτέλης προχειρότερον, ἵνα μὴ λέγω ῥαθυμότερον, περὶ οὐσίας διαλαβόν, καὶ ἕτερα δύο ἴδια τίθῃσιν οὐσίας· ἐν μὲν τὸ τόδε τι σημαίνειν, ὅπερ εἶη ἂν ἴδιον οὐ τῆς ἀπλῶς οὐσίας, τῆς δὲ παρ’ αὐτοῦ κληθείσης πρώτης οὐσίας· καὶ ἕτερον πάλιν τὸ συνωνύμως κατηγορεῖσθαι, εἶη δ’ ἂν καὶ τοῦτο ἴδιον τῆς παρ’ αὐτοῦ κληθείσης δευτέρας οὐσίας, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν τόδε τι σημαίνειν μόνῃς ἐστὶ τῆς πρώτης οὐσίας· μόνῃ γὰρ ἢ μερικῇ οὐσία, χειρὶ δεικνυμένη ἢ ἑτέρῳ τινὶ τοιοῦτῳ, τόδε τι λέγεται εἶναι· τὸ δὲ συνωνύμως κατηγορεῖσθαι οὐκ ἔστιν μόνῃς τῆς δευτέρας οὐσίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑτέρον πολλῶν...” (138.163–71).

24. “Ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων ἀκριβέστερον ἐν ἄλλοις, ἢ δὲ γε οὐσία ἧς ὁ τε λόγος καὶ ἡ διαίρεσις ἀποδέδοται, ἥτις καὶ δύναται ἂν τὴν τε τῆς κατηγορίας ἔννοιαν καὶ τὴν κλησὶν ἐπιδέξασθαι, ἔχει ἴδια, πρῶτον μὲν τὸ μὴ εἶναι αὐτὴν ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ· τοῦτο δὲ τὸ ἴδιον παντὶ μὲν τῷ εἶδει τῆς οὐσίας ὑπάρχει, οὐ μόνῳ δέ, πρόσσεσι γὰρ καὶ ταῖς οὐσιώδεσι διαφοραῖς· αὗται γὰρ, οἷον τὸ λογικὸν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, δηλὸν ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ, οὐδὲ γὰρ συμβεβηκότα δύναται εἶναι. Δεύτερον ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας τὸ μηδὲν αὐτῇ ἐναντίον εἶναι· καὶ τοῦτο δὲ τὸ ἴδιον καὶ παντὶ τῷ εἶδει τῆς οὐσίας ἀρμόζει καὶ οὐ μόνῳ· οὐδεμία μὲν γὰρ οὐσία καθὼς ἐστὶν οὐσία ἔχει τὸ ἀντικείμενον αὐτῇ ἐναντίον· οὐ μὴν δὲ ἀλλὰ γε καὶ τῷ ποσῷ οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἐναντίον, τοῖς γὰρ δέκα ἢ τοῖς ἐπτά ἢ τοῖς ὁμοίοις φανερόν ὅτι οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἐναντίον” (138.114–25).



‘substance’ is predicated of both individuals and universals in the same sense. And in that case, one may go on to wonder whether it is really true that, as Aristotle claims (*Cat.* 3b4–5), if the subject is an individual, everything that is said of the predicate will also be said of the subject; but if this is in doubt, the whole theory of syllogism will rest on a shaky foundation. To solve this problem in a satisfactory way I guess one needs to have recourse to something like a theory of supposition. Photios showed in another chapter in the *Amphilochia* (ch. 77) that he was completely innocent of any such theory: there we find him grappling with the problem whether the incorporeality of secondary substances such as *man* would not entail the incorporeality of primary substances such as Socrates. His solution is to allow for secondary substances to be in a sense incorporeal, namely insofar as they lack the properties of bodies, and in a sense corporeal, namely insofar as they are significant of bodies. And thus, he thinks, the transitivity of predication can be saved.<sup>25</sup>

To return to chapter 138. Photios regards the very fact that Aristotle does not speak of individuals and universals simply as ‘substances’, but adds an ordinal number, as sufficient proof of their non-synonymy (although he says he could adduce many more).<sup>26</sup> One may suspect that he does so on the strength of the rule, endorsed by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* B 3,<sup>27</sup> that “in the case of things in

25. “Τίς οὖν ὁ λόγος ὁ ταύτας πάσας διαφεύγων τὰς λαβὰς; εἴρηται μὲν ἐμφατικώτερον ἴσως καὶ πρόσθεν, καὶ νῦν δὲ τρανότερον λεγέσθω. σωματικά μὲν ἐστί τὰ γένη καὶ εἶδη τῶν σωμάτων, οὐ σώματα δέ, καὶ δηλωτικά τῶν ὑποκειμένων, οὐ δηλούμενα δέ, καὶ ἀναπτύσσοντα τὴν ὑπαρξίν τούτων, οὐχ ὑφιστάμενα δέ, καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς μερῶν τὴν οὐσίωσιν ἀπαγγέλλοντα, οὐ παρέχοντα δέ, καὶ ὀνόματα καταλλήλοις νοήμασι καὶ οἰκείοις τῶν ὑποκειμένων τὰς ὑποστάσεις σημαίνοντα, οὐ τοῖς οὐσι καὶ αὐταρκεσιτάτοις ὅν μὴ δέονται ταῦτα δι’ ἑαυτῶν παρεχόμενα ὡς περ δὴ καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ σοφὸν καὶ δίκαιον καὶ φιλόανθρωπον καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα κατηγορήματα, εἰ καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐνέργειαν ἢ πάθος τοῦ ὑποκειμένου δηλοῖ, τὰ δὲ τὴν ὑπαρξίν καὶ οὐσίωσιν ἢ τὰ πάθη καὶ τὰς ἐνεργείας” (77.177–87).

26. “ὅτι δὲ δευτέραι οὐσίαι καὶ πρῶται οὐσίαι ταῦτα λεγόμενα οὐχὶ συνωνύμως οὔτε ἑαυταῖς οὔτε τῇ γενικῇ οὐσίᾳ λέγονται, πολλὰ λέγειν ἔχων, ἐκεῖνο τέως διὰ τὸ φιλοσύντομον ἔρω, ὡς αὐτὸ δὴ τοῦτο τὸ μὴ ἀπλῶς αὐτὰς καλεῖσθαι οὐσίαις, ἀλλὰ μετὰ προσθήκης, τὴν μὲν πρῶτην, τὴν δὲ δευτέραν, σαφῆς ἀπόδειξις ἐστὶν ὅτι μὴ κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ἑκατέρα τούτων κέκληται οὐσία, καὶ πολλῶ πλέον τι καθ’ ἑτέραν πάλιν ἢ γενικῇ” (138.97–102).

27. And cf. *De an.* 2.3, 414b20–22; *Pol.* 3.1, 1275a34–38. On the rule, see in general the classic paper by Lloyd 1962.

which the distinction of prior and posterior is present, that which is predicable of these things cannot be something apart from them” (trans. Ross).<sup>28</sup> The examples given by Aristotle are those of number and geometrical figure: there cannot be a generic number or figure over and above the specific ones. If this rule were to be applied to substance, as one may suspect it is by Photios, the result would seem to be that there cannot be a generic substance over and above the individuals and the universals.

This suspicion is in some measure reinforced by Photios’ discussion (in sect. 9) of what he calls the ‘third characteristic’ of substance (in the standard order it is the fifth), namely that it does not allow of a more and a less. In contrast to Aristotle, who takes care to point out that this characteristic is not meant to imply that there can be no substance which is more a substance than another one, as e.g. a species is more a substance than its genus (3b33–36; cf. 2b7–8), Photios insists that

according to the very formula of Substance without qualification, no substance could be said to be more a substance or less a substance than another substance, whether one compares particulars to particulars or universals to universals, *nor if one compares particulars to universals*.<sup>29</sup>

In other words, he accepts the characteristic as valid for generic Substance; but if generic Substance encompasses both individuals and universals this seems to imply that no individuals or universals can possess a lower or higher degree of substantiality than any other substances. In order to see how this conundrum is dealt with by Photios, we must examine what he thinks Aristotle means by “higher and lower degree of substantiality”. Photios addresses this question especially in section 14. Aristotle, he says, holds that individuals have a higher degree of substantiality than universals, especially

28. “ἔτι ἐν οἷς τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὑστερόν ἐστιν, οὐχ οἷον τε τὸ ἐπὶ τούτων εἶναι τι παρὰ ταῦτα” (999a6–8).

29. “οὐδεμία γὰρ οὐσία τινὸς οὐσίας ὅλως κατὰ γε αὐτὸν τὸν τῆς ἀπλῶς οὐσίας λόγον οὐκ ἂν ῥηθεῖν οὔτε μᾶλλον οὐσία οὔτε ἥττον, οὔτε ἂν μερικὰ λαβὼν μερικοῖς συγκρίνοις, οὔτε ἂν καθολικοῖς καθολικά, ἀλλ’ οὔτε ἂν μερικὰ πρὸς τὰ καθόλου” (138.127–30).

on the ground that they *are more indicative* of the thing under discussion.<sup>30</sup> (It has to be said that this is a blatant misrepresentation of Aristotle's view, which is that individuals are pre-eminently substantial on account of being the subjects of everything else: 2b15-17.) The same is true, Photios continues, in the case of universals: the species is thought to have a higher degree of substantiality than the genus because it is closer to and more indicative of the individual.<sup>31</sup> 'Consequently', he says,

from what Aristotle advances we are allowed to infer that he calls the substance which is more expressive and indicative of the thing proposed 'more a substance' than that which is lacking in this respect. But it does not fall within the purview of the present work to examine critically how that which is more expressive and indicative of the thing proposed can be conceived of as more a substance, or indeed as a substance at all. So far so much on substance.<sup>32</sup>

If I interpret this correctly, what Photios suggests in sections 9 and 14 is not that Aristotle is wrong in making "the distinction of prior and posterior" between individuals and universals, and that all substances really have an equal degree of substantiality; what he suggests is that this distinction *is* present in individuals and universals, in as much as they are more and less indicative of the thing proposed, and that consequently either individuals or universals have to be eliminated from the category of Substance, for otherwise some substances will have more substantiality than others, and this is im-

---

30. "ἀξιοὶ δὲ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης διὰ τοῦτο τὴν μερικὴν οὐσίαν τῆς καθόλου μᾶλλον εἶναι οὐσίαν, διότι μάλιστα, φησίν, ἢ ἄτομος οὐσία φανερώτερον ποιεῖ τὸ ζητούμενον ἢ περ ἢ καθόλου οὐσία" (138.193-95).

31. "ὥσαύτως δὲ καὶ τῆς καθόλου οὐσίας μᾶλλον οὐσία τὸ εἶδος τοῦ γένους, ἐν μὲν διότι ἐγγύτερον ἐστὶ τῆς μάλιστα οὐσίας, ἢ τοῦ ἀτόμου, τὸ εἶδος παρὰ τὸ γένος, δευτερον δὲ ὅτι καὶ ὁ εἰπὼν τὸ εἶδος μᾶλλον δηλοῖ τὸν Σωκράτην ἢ ὁ εἰπὼν τὸ γένος ..." (138.198-202).

32. "ὥστε ἐξ ὧν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐπιχειρεῖ διδῶσιν ἡμῖν συμβαλεῖν ὡς μᾶλλον οὐσίαν καλεῖ τὴν μᾶλλον οὐσίαν ἐξαγγελτικὴν καὶ ἐρμηνευτικὴν τοῦ προκειμένου παρὰ [retaining Hergentöther's text] τὴν ἐνδεῶς πράττουσαν τοῦτο. πῶς δὲ τὸ μᾶλλον ἐρμηνευτικὸν καὶ ἐξαγγελτικὸν τοῦ προκειμένου ἢ ὅλως οὐσία δύνανται ἐννοηθῆναι ἢ μᾶλλον οὐσία, οὐ τοῦ παρόντος σκοποῦ διελέγχειν" (138.203-7).

possible. The question is, then, which of the two Photios wants to eliminate. His phrasing may seem to suggest that he wants to eliminate “that which is more expressive”, i.e. individuals. One problem with this is, of course, that if individuals are eliminated, some universals (species) will still have more substantiality than others (genera); and this is, again, impossible. In addition, it may seem a priori reasonable to eliminate those items in the category which differ by defect rather than those which differ by excess, and individuals are after all held by Aristotle to be pre-eminently substantial. So there seems to be some reason to think that Photios wants to eliminate universals.

But there is more reason to think that he does not. For even if Photios concedes to Aristotle that the distinction of prior and posterior is present in individuals and universals, it is far from clear that he agrees on their relative order. He tantalisingly says that he has dealt with the question as to whether Aristotle was right or wrong in calling the individual primary and the universal secondary in another work,<sup>33</sup> but his repeated emphasis on the fact that these are *Aristotle's* terms suggests that he thought he was wrong. And even if the original problem would remain unsolved in a category consisting of universals on different levels of universality, there is also the option of retaining only universals *on a certain level*. Why not, for instance, only *infimae species*? Photios ends his first discussion of the non-synonymy of primary and secondary substance in section 5 by telling us that

each of these are called ‘substance’ in accordance with different concepts, and generic Substance is much rather <called ‘substance’> in accordance with *yet another* <concept>.<sup>34</sup>

A couple of lines later (in sect. 6) he tries to explain what he has in mind:

---

33. “εἰ δὲ καλῶς ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης ἢ μὴ τὴν μὲν πρώτην οὐσίαν, τὴν δὲ δευτέραν ἐκάλεσεν, ἐν ἄλλοις ἡμῖν οὐ παρέργως εἴρηται” (138.103–4).

34. “... ὅτι μὴ κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ἑκατέρα τούτων κέκληται οὐσία, καὶ πολλῶν πλέον τι καθ’ ἑτέραν πάλιν ἢ γενικῇ” (138.101–2).

It is necessary to know the following, which I almost overlooked: there is *another thing* ready to use besides the enumerated significations of ‘substance’, and this is the species proximate to the individuals, according to which this human being as well as this horse, although they are same-substantial with respect to the common definition of the substance, all the same we know them to be and call them other-substantial when referring them to this signification. The latter we are also wont to call ‘nature’. According to this concept, then, we affirm Socrates and Plato to be same-natured, but any particular human being to be other-natured than his horse. Thus, the significations of substance hitherto reviewed would be nine in number.<sup>35</sup>

This is exactly the sense in which Photios uses ‘substance’ also in *Amphilochia* 77.61–63,<sup>36</sup> and no doubt in other passages too. It is a sense which he is likely to have conceived of as specifically Christian. For that is how it is described in John of Damascus’ *Dialectica* 31. According to John, the distinction made by the pagan philosophers between substance and nature was not upheld by the Holy Fathers. They, in contrast, used the words ‘substance’, ‘nature’, and ‘form’ (μορφή) interchangeably for the most specific species, i.e. *angel, man, horse* and the like. Particular entities, such as Peter and Paul, they called ‘individual’, ‘person’, and ‘hypostasis’. The hypostasis, as described by the Damascene, “is such as to have substance with accidents, to subsist independently, and to be envisaged by sense-perception, i.e. in actuality”.<sup>37</sup>

35. “Εκείνο δὲ εἶδέναι χρὴ, ὃ μικροῦ παρεδραμεν ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἔστιν ἕτερόν τι παρὰ τὰ κατηριθμημένα σημαίνόμενα οὐσίας πρόχειρον ἐν τῇ χρήσει, τοῦτο δὲ ἔστι τὸ προσεχέστατον τοῖς ἀτόμοις εἶδος, καθ’ ὃ καὶ τόνδε τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τόνδε τὸν ἵππον, ὁμοουσίους ὄντας τῷ κοινῷ τῆς οὐσίας λόγῳ, ὅμως εἰς ἐκεῖνο ἀναφέροντες τὸ σημαίνόμενον ἑτεροουσίους ἴσμεν τε καὶ ὀνομάζομεν. τοῦτο δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ φύσιν εἰθίσμεθα λέγειν· καθ’ ἣν ἔννοιαν καὶ Σωκράτην μὲν Πλάτωνι ὁμοφυῆ φαμεν εἶναι, τὸν δεῖνα δὲ ἄνθρωπον τοῦ ἵππου ἑτεροφυᾶ. ὥστε ἐννεᾶ τὸν ἀριθμὸν εἶη ἂν τὰ ἀνακύψαντα τέως τῆς οὐσίας σημαίνόμενα” (138.105–113).

36. “Ὁ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος τυχὸν σωματικὸν μὲν, ὅτι τὸν Σωκράτην ἢ τὸν Πλάτωνα σῶμα ὄντα ὀνομάζει, καὶ τὴν αὐτῶν οὐσίαν ἀναπτύσσει τῶν ὁμογενῶν τῇ κλήσει διαστέλλει.”

37. “Ὅτι μὲν ἔξω φιλόσοφοι κατὰ τὸν προλελεγμένον λόγον διαφορὰν εἶπον οὐσίας καὶ φύσεως .... Οἱ δὲ ἄγιοι πατέρες παρεάσαντες τὰς πολλὰς ἐρεσχελίας τὸ μὲν κοινὸν καὶ κατὰ πολλῶν λεγόμενον ἦγον τὸ εἰδικώτατον εἶδος οὐσίαν καὶ φύσιν καὶ μορφήν ἐκάλεσαν, οἷον ἄγγελον, ἄνθρωπον, ἵππον, κῦνα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα .... Τὸ δὲ μερικὸν ἐκάλεσαν ἄτομον καὶ πρόσωπον καὶ

I think this is most probably the sense of ‘substance’ that Photios wished to reserve for the category of Substance. At any rate this seems to be the hypothesis that best accords with the quoted passages from sections 5 and 6, at the same time as it charitably credits Photios with an account of Substance which escapes his own criticism of Aristotle’s account. Thus I think he equated the self-existing thing with the *infima species*. This appears to commit him to the view that an *infima species* could in principle exist independently, without individuating matter or accidents. Such a view may seem exceedingly strange; yet the equation is borne out by Photios’ first examples of self-existing thing, namely “*man, ox, fire, earth and the like*” (138.28–29). Possibly the awkwardness can be mitigated by the assumption that Photios considers ‘substance’ in this context to refer to words signifying things rather than the things themselves. In that case the formula in section 2 might be taken not as a formula of Substance, but quite literally of that which is said to be a substance (λέγεται οὐσία: 138.26), i.e. the subject of substantial predication. Nothing prevented Photios from identifying this as the individual, even if he denied that it itself was a substance; and Substance would then simply be anything which is substantially predicated of the self-existing thing.

The above-quoted passage from John of Damascus also furnishes a clue as to what sort of entity Photios thought individuals were, if they were not substances. Most probably, he thought they were hypostases. And most probably he had an ulterior motive for trying to put hypostases and substances in different categories, namely to harmonize Aristotelian logic with Orthodox Christian theology, but it would lead us too far to embark on that discussion here.<sup>38</sup>

As for the higher-level universals that he also (if my interpretation is correct) wants to eliminate from the category of Substance, there is little point in speculating about what destiny Photios has in mind for them. If he believes, as I have argued, that the categories

---

ὑπόστασιν οἷον Πέτρος, Παῦλος. Ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις θέλει ἔχειν οὐσίαν μετὰ συμβεβηκότων καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν ὑφίστασθαι καὶ αἰσθήσει ἡγουν ἐνεργεῖα θεωρεῖσθαι” (*Dialectica* 31).

38. The relation of Photios’ Aristotelianism to his ‘philosophical theology’ is the subject of Anton 1994.

are strictly speaking the highest genera of being, then obviously the higher-level universals either have to be pressed into one or more of the nine categories already existing alongside Substance (presumably Quality), or else a category of Genus must be specially established. In either case, since the higher-level universals are of varying degrees of universality (or generality), the number of categories will multiply. Which is anyway a necessary consequence of the view that I have ascribed to Photios, since there are individuals and universals in all the categories. But as I said, there is little point in speculating.

To sum up, then, Photios criticizes Aristotle's account of Substance for bringing together two different things, which cannot belong to the same genus in the strict sense. "For how", he exclaims,

can the name be synonymous or the formula of the essence be one and the same of things which have ... completely unrelated and conflicting characteristics?<sup>39</sup>

His central argument seems to be that in order for all substances to belong to the same genus, they cannot, as Aristotle claims, have different degrees of substantiality. This would create a hierarchy or an ordered series, and an ordered series cannot constitute a genus. Their degree of substantiality, according to Aristotle, is in inverse proportion to their level of universality. Either, then, (a) all universals on all levels have to be put on a par with individuals, or (b) all universals on all levels have to be eliminated (leaving only the so-called primary substances in the category of Substance), or (c) the individuals *plus* all universals on all levels *but one* must be eliminated. But (a) is impossible, since individuals and universals on different levels are after all not equally expressive. In the choice between (b) and (c) it seems that Photios, on the authority of the Fathers, opts for (c), and more specifically, for the view that the category of Substance really consists exclusively of *infimae species*.

---

39. "ὅν γὰρ τὰ ἴδια κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν εἶναι μάλιστα κοινὸν ὄνομα παντελῶς ἐστὶν ἕνα καὶ ἡλλοτριωμένα, τούτων πῶς ἂν εἴη συνώνυμος ἢ ὀνομασία ἢ εἰς καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ὁ τῆς οὐσίας λόγος;" (138.190-93)

Is this criticism valid to any extent? I think it should be granted to Photios that, *assuming* that Aristotle thinks of the category of Substance as a highest genus in the strict sense, he might be hard pressed to say what it is that entitles us to subsume both individuals and universals under it. It seems very doubtful, however, that Aristotle really would have thought of his categories in this way. Apart from everything else (such as the fact that most pseudo-differentiae of Substance are either not necessary or not sufficient conditions for substantiality), the first remark of *Categories* 8 is that Quality is a homonym, which seems to suggest that it is not strictly speaking a genus; and the final remark of the same chapter, if authentic, even opens up the possibility for things to belong to more than one category (incidentally and problematically called ‘genus’ in this context).<sup>40</sup>

But regardless of its merits or demerits, what we want to know is whether there is anything original about Photios’ criticism. So is there? Yes and no. There seem to be no extant Greek ancient commentaries (or any other texts) in which similar criticism is actually levelled against Aristotle. That should be enough for our present purposes, since, in order to ascertain whether Photios’ criticism was influential with later writers, we only need to be able to exclude the possibility that any later writers who respond to his arguments, be it positively or negatively, draw on earlier sources. But it deserves to be noted anyway that there *are* ancient passages in which similar criticism forms part of the background against which Aristotle’s account is discussed—and for the most part defended. Most important among these is Plotinus’ famous discussion of the genera of being in *Ennead* 6.1–3.<sup>41</sup>

In the beginning of this discussion, Plotinus raises a problem, which is likely to originate from the Middle Platonist Nicostratus:<sup>42</sup> (1) is it possible to conceive of Substance as one single genus? For if, Plotinus says (6.1.2), this genus is supposed to cover both the

---

40. On this remark, see the classic discussion in Frede 1987.

41. My interpretation of Plotinus is much indebted to de Haas 2001. See also Strange 1987.

42. Simplicius, *In Cat.* 76.13–14.



intelligible and the sensible realms, it will be predicated of both intelligible and sensible substances; but since intelligible substances are prior to sensible ones, this will violate the rule that there can be no genus of an ordered series.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the genus will be neither corporeal nor incorporeal, which is impossible. Plotinus then proceeds to investigate (2) the possibility of a genus of sensible Substance only. But the result is again negative, for on the one hand (2a) form, matter and their compound are all said to be substances, but not in the same degree; on the other hand, (2b) so-called secondary Substance cannot have anything in common with primary Substance, since it derives the name of ‘substance’ from it. That is to say, the different kinds of sensible Substance, too, constitute ordered series. Plotinus’ conclusion is that even though it may be possible to give characteristics of Substance, it cannot be said *what* it is. That is to say, ‘substance’ cannot be defined, not for the trivial reason that Substance is a highest genus, but because it is strictly speaking not a genus at all. Indeed, Plotinus even casts doubt on whether one of the two characteristics recognized by Photios to be properties in the strict sense, namely, to be numerically one and still be able to receive contraries, will be applicable to all substances. In 6.1.3 he goes on to suggest that an Aristotelian category must be a different type of collection, with a looser kind of unity than a genus: such, for instance, that all its members share some important characteristics with all or some of its other members, even if not a definition or formula of the essence. No doubt he is right.

Plotinus’ discussion obviously played a role in the history of the interpretation of Aristotle’s *Categories*. This is amply testified by Dexippus’ and Simplicius’ commentaries, both of which are heavily indebted (directly or indirectly) to Porphyry’s reaction to it (in his *Commentary to Gedalios*).<sup>44</sup> As Plotinus hinted, the impossibility of a genus including both intelligible and sensible substances told

43. “ἄτοπον τὸ αὐτὸ σημαίνειν τὴν οὐσίαν ἐπὶ τε τῶν πρώτως ὄντων καὶ τῶν ὑστέρον οὐκ ὄντος γένους κοινοῦ ἐν οἷς τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον” (6.1.1.26–28).

44. Dexippus, *In Cat.* 40.13–41.3; Simplicius, *In Cat.* 76.13–78.3. Hadot (1990) argued that Dexippus followed Porphyry and Simplicius followed Iamblichus in these parallel passages; Iamblichus, on the other hand, “for the most part copied Porphyry’s commentary to the very letter” (Simplicius, *In Cat.* 2.10–11).

strongly in favour of the traditional view (Ps.-Archytas, Boethus) that Aristotle's account was only concerned with the sensible realm. Most later commentators saw no problem with this. All that was needed was an explanation as to why it should be thus restricted, and this was provided by Porphyry's theory that the proper subject matter of the *Categories* was significant words.

Both Dexippus and Simplicius seem to consider Porphyry's theory sufficient to dispose of Plotinus' first problem. But neither acknowledges the fact that Plotinus had already examined the hypothesis of a genus of sensible Substance only and arrived at a negative conclusion, on the ground that the different kinds of sensible Substance, too, be they compound, form, and matter, or universals and individuals, constitute ordered series, and there can be no genus of an ordered series. Perhaps this indicates that Porphyry, too, passed over this part of Plotinus' discussion in silence.

It is not clear whether the problem of the synonymy of primary and secondary substances antedates Plotinus. It seems to have left no traces in the commentary tradition between Plotinus and Photios. However, if Photios was convinced of its urgency by his reading of Plotinus, he apparently was not too impressed by Plotinus' solution: it is his insistence on the understanding of a category as a highest genus in the strict sense which makes it necessary for him to eliminate universals from the category of Substance.

In sum, then, if we find any later responses to this problem, we may be fairly certain that they were provoked by the reading of Photios. So do we? Before I try to answer this question, I think it may be useful to summarize briefly the fortuna of Aristotle's *Categories* in Byzantium. Fortunately, this can be done without much effort, thanks to the recent publication of a very handy and to all appearances reliable account of 'The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's *Categories*' by Katerina Ierodiakonou (2005), on which I will draw heavily for the next few paragraphs. I shall only make a couple of insignificant corrections and additions of my own.

Most of the relevant texts can be divided into three genres: (1) sets or collections of scholia; (2) summaries or compendia; (3) treatises on particular topics related to the *Categories*. In addition to these, there are three works that stand out as being on a larger scale

than the rest, namely (a) Sophonias' hybrid paraphrase, composed around 1300 (edited by Hayduck 1883); (b) George Pachymeres' long commentary on the *Organon* (unedited: not to be confused with Book I of his *Philosophia*, which belongs to genre 2);<sup>45</sup> and (c) George Scholarios' (the later patriarch Gennadios II) even longer commentary on the *Ars vetus*, from the early to mid-1430s (edited by Jugie & al. 1936). I will briefly return to Scholarios' commentary towards the end of the paper.

Of (1) sets or collections of scholia, the oldest is of course version (a) of Photios' commentary, which still awaits its first critical edition (see n. 3 above). As I have already mentioned, both Hergenröther and Westerink believed that version (a) had been excerpted not from the *Clear Summary* but from an older commentary ('commentariolus', Westerink; 'compendium', Hergenröther). The only reason for thinking that there has been such an older commentary seems to be that Photios occasionally in the *Clear Summary* claims to have dealt with a question in more detail elsewhere.<sup>46</sup> These claims may of course refer to other independent essays rather than to another commentary (indeed, if these questions were considered by Photios to merit discussion in a commentary on the *Categories*, there is no reason why he would omit them in the *Clear Summary*). Apart from that, it should be noted how different the two versions are not only in length but especially in orientation. Most of those sections of the *Clear Summary* which are not also included in version (a) either express criticism (sects. 5, 13–14) or present material which is not strictly Aristotelian (sects. 1–3, 6). The only exception is sect. 11. Those sections which *are* also included in version (a) have in some cases been adapted in such a way as to lend support to the critical argument (sects. 9 and 12), or at least facilitate its flow (thus the sections on the characteristics of Substance have been rearranged: in version (a) they naturally follow the Aristotelian order). Conversely, version (a) contains only quite neutral explanatory material. Especially, it entirely lacks any discussion of the non-synonymy of Substance—the closest it gets is when Photios points up the contrast

---

45. See Golitsis 2007: 54–56.

46. *Amph.* 138.104; 138.114; 141.22–23; 146.35–36.

between the general scope of John of Damascus' definition and the applicability of Aristotle's pseudo-differentiae (which are also called 'definitions') only to individual and universal substance respectively (771–72 n. 28). In sum, my impression is that Hergenröther and Westerink were very probably right in thinking that the *Clear Summary* is more recent than version (a); but the hypothesis that version (a) stems from a continuous commentary or compendium seems unfounded and superfluous.

In the generation after Photios we find Arethas of Patras (d. after 932), later archbishop of Caesarea, filling the margin of his personal copy of Aristotle's *Organon*, preserved to us as Vaticanus Urbinas graecus 35, with annotations on the *Isagoge* and *Categories* 1–5. These were edited in 1994 by Michael Share. Then we have, from the late 12th or early 13th century, Leon Magentenos' scholia, which cover the whole *Organon*, and are provided with prefaces for each Aristotelian work: of the *Categories* scholia only two specimens have been edited, by Sten Ebbesen (1975: 383–384; 1981: 2: 278–279). And finally, a single autograph manuscript dated to 1393/94 (Angelicus graecus 30) preserves the Cretan monk (Joseph) Philagrios' contribution to the genre.

(2) Summaries of the *Categories* are in some cases part of more comprehensive compendia, such as the so-called Anonymus Heiberg's *Logica et Quadrivium* of 1007 (ed. Heiberg 1929). Other examples include Nikephoros Blemmydes' *Epitome logica* from the mid-13th century (ed. Wegelin, in Migne: PG 142), and George Pachymeres' *Philosophia* from around 1300 (last edition of Book 1 on the *Organon*: Oxford 1666). Three works relating to the *Categories* are printed by John Duffy among the *incerta et spuria* in Michael Psellos' *Philosophica minora*, one (opusc. 52) being a short compendium of the *Categories*, the *De interpretatione* and the first seven chapters of the *Prior Analytics*, the second (opusc. 50) an even shorter one of the *Isagoge* and the *Categories*, and the third (opusc. 51) something more like a running commentary on the two last-mentioned works (middle-distance track, I guess, since it runs, in fact, to about 750 lines).

(3) Among the genuine works of Psellos we find a handful of short treatises on particular topics related to the *Categories* (ed. Duffy, opusc. 6–9); similar treatises were also composed by Psellos' pupil

and successor John Italos (*Quaestiones quodlibetales* 25–27, 35, 72 Joannou). Then, in one of his letters, Theodore Prodromos in the mid-12th century advanced a series of arguments against Aristotle's views in *Categories* 6 that *large* and *small* are (a) relatives and (b) not contraries. This text was edited by Paul Tannery in 1887.

There, I think I have mentioned practically all the works that we have on the *Categories* written in Greek from the ninth century to the fall of Constantinople. Obviously, their quantity, in number and in bulk, is not very impressive; on the whole I think the same could be said of their quality. So is it possible to trace any Photian influence on the account of substance in any of these texts? Many of them do in fact reproduce the definition of John of Damascus, and some of them immediately add a Porphyrian tree in the same way that Photios did. I do not know of any earlier works that follow exactly the same pattern, so it may be the case that Photios set an example in this respect. However, if one looks carefully at the wording of the definition, one will find that it nearly always exhibits a variant reading, which is found in other passages in John of Damascus, but not in Photios.<sup>47</sup> So obviously Photios is not the source of that.<sup>48</sup>

And it never really goes beyond this formal and imperfect resemblance. I have browsed through most of the printed works included in the list above in search of a discussion of the non-synonymy of substance that might seem to bear some relation to that of Photios, but my results have been very poor indeed. One has to go beyond the pale of works primarily and properly dealing with the *Categories*, namely to the great controversy over the relative merits of Plato and Aristotle in the mid-fifteenth century, in order to find some discussion at least of the relative order of individuals and universals; but the only thing that emerges clearly from this discussion is that some authors, notably George Gemistos Plethon, now chose to ignore

---

47. Instead of ὑπαρξιν (n. 17 above) they have οὐσιασιν. This is true of all the edited works on the *Categories*. The only texts in TLG corresponding exactly to Photios are *Suda*, ο 961.15; Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historia Romana*, vol. 2, 952.12; vol. 3, 309.13; *Antirrhetika priora* 2.6, 325.5–6; 333.23–24.

48. Both Anonymus Heiberg and Psellos discuss the Damascene's definition: see Ierodiakonou 2005: 26–27.

one basic lesson taught by most ancient Greek commentators, namely that the secondary substances in the *Categories* were not Platonic Forms.<sup>49</sup>

Both Plethon and his most formidable adversary, George Scholarios, were well aware of the rule that there can be no genus of an ordered series. Plethon denied its validity: neither primary and secondary bodies, nor different numbers nor indeed being things in general, he maintained, are said to be what they are (i.e. bodies, numbers, and being) homonymously (*De differentiis* 323.5–324.27). To this Scholarios replied, in his *Defence of Aristotle*, that the postulate of a highest genus of being synonymously predicated of all being things is both impossible and unnecessary: Aristotle was right in thinking that being is predicated analogically of all being things with reference to a single ultimate cause, which is God (Jugie: 4.44.21–54.24). However, neither Plethon nor Scholarios discusses the application of the rule to primary and secondary Substance.

The level of discussion was not always very high. An example is Plethon's suggestion (*De differentiis* 325.16–23) that assigning a higher degree of being to particulars (τὸ κατὰ μέρος) than to universals (τὸ καθόλου) is tantamount to admitting that a part (τὸ μέρος) can be larger than a whole (τὸ ὅλον). This was attacked by Theodore of Gaza, who pointed out that there is a difference between size and degree of substance (*Adversus Plethonem* 3.2). Plethon was already dead by then, but Michael Apostoles responded on his behalf, denying any relevant difference in meaning between the words μάλλον and μᾶλλον, and maintaining that anyone who affirmed such a difference must be deluded by the Western scholars, who try to philosophize without even mastering the language (*Ad Theodori Gazae* 6.1–3).

Since the history of the *Categories* in Byzantium is bookended by two famous patriarchs, it would of course be especially nice to find some traces of Photios' discussion in the commentary by George Scholarios (which is after all the most extensive *Categories* commentary written in Byzantium). Some of Scholarios' questions (ζητήματα) inevitably touch upon matters having to do with the unity of Sub-

---

49. See Plethon, *De differentiis* 324.28–325.23 and George Scholarios' reply (Jugie: 4.60.1–63.6). See also Woodhouse 1986, 195–96; 253).

stance as a category, but never in a way which reveals the influence of his illustrious predecessor. For instance, Scholarios replies to the question why Aristotle does not start with generic substance, defining and dividing this as he does with all the other categories, by saying that this is precisely what he does: the distinction between one kind of substance ‘neither being said of nor being in a subject’ and another kind of substance ‘being said of but not being in a subject’ is the first division of substance generally (Jugie: 7.140.27–35). By implication, then, ‘not being in a subject (but having existence *per se*)’ is the common formula of substance (cf. Jugie: 7.153.6–7). But he never quotes the definition of John of Damascus.

Also, Scholarios attributes to Porphyry (cf. *Isagoge* 4.21–25) the view that “substance is a genus of material and immaterial substances.” He himself agrees with this view, but adds that they are only in the same logical genus (since they have a common formula apart from the formula of the differentiae, which is to have existence *per se*), not in the same physical genus, since they do not have a common matter (Jugie: 7.139.17–24).

I suspect that these replies owe more to the ‘Western scholars’ than to the Byzantine tradition. I have not made any attempt to track down their sources, but it was shown by Sten Ebbesen and Jan Pinborg that a very large proportion of the material in all parts of Scholarios’ *Ars vetus* commentary derives from Radulphus Brito’s *Quaestiones super Artem veterem*.<sup>50</sup> This may well be the case also with his questions on Substance. They do not show any influence from Photios, that much is clear.

To conclude our investigation: even if the possibility must be left open that the results presented here will be contradicted by new findings in one or other of the unedited Byzantine works on the *Categories*, it seems as though Photios’ treatment of Substance on chap. 138 of the *Amphilochia* met with the same fate as his discussions of other categories in *Amphilochia* 142 and 145. It was ignored by posterity. One might be tempted to speculate that this had something to do with precisely the fact that his discussions do display more than a modicum of originality; but of course it might also have been

---

50. See Ebbesen & Pinborg 1981–82.

simply because they were buried in a mainly theological miscellany that few if any later authors would think of consulting when writing an Aristotelian commentary or compendium.

#### PRIMARY LITERATURE

- Anonymi *Logica et Quadrivium, cum scholiis antiquis*, ed. J. L. Heiberg, Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser 15:1, Copenhagen: Det Kgl. Danske Videnskaberne Selskab, 1929.
- Arethas of Caesarea, *Scholias on Porphyry's Isagoge and Aristotle's Categories (Codex Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus 35)*, ed. M. Share, Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi: Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina 1, Athens: Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 1994.
- Dexippus, *In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, ed. A. Busse, CAG 4: 2, Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1888.
- George Gemistos (Plethon), *De differentiis = Περὶ ὧν Ἀριστοτέλης πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαφέρεται*, ed. B. Lagarde, in: 'Le « De differentiis » de Pléthon d'après l'autographe de la Marcienne', Byzantion 43 (1973), 312-343.
- George (Gennadios) Scholarios, *Œuvres complètes de Gennade Scholarios*, ed. L. Petit, M. Jugie & X. A. Sidéridès, Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1928-36. 8 vols.
- John of Damascus, *Dialectica*, ed. B. Kotter, in: *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. 1, Patristische Texte und Studien 7, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969.
- Michael Apostoles, *Ad Theodori Gazae pro Aristotele de substantia adversus Plethonem obiectiones*, ed. L. Mohler, in: *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann: Funde und Forschungen*, Band 3, *Aus Bessarions Gelehrtenkreis*, 161-169, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1942.
- Michael Psellos, *Philosophica minora*, vol. 1, ed. J. Duffy, Stuttgart & Leipzig: Teubner, 1989.
- Photios, *Amphilochia*. Ed. L. G. Westerink. In Westerink (1986).
- Porphyry, *Isagoge et in Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, ed. A. Busse, CAG 4: 1, Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1887.
- Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, ed. C. Kalbfleisch, CAG 8, Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1907.
- Sophonias, *In libros Aristotelis De Anima paraphrasis*, ed. M. Hayduck, CAG 23: 1, Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1883.
- Theodore of Gaza, *Adversus Plethonem pro Aristotele de substantia*, ed. L. Mohler, in: *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann: Funde und Forschungen*, Band 3, *Aus Bessarions Gelehrtenkreis*, 153-158. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1942.



Theodore Prodromos, *Sur le grand et le petit (à Italicos)*, ed. P. Tannery, *Mémoires scientifiques*, publiées par J. L. Heiberg, Vol. 4, *Sciences exactes chez les Byzantins (1884-1919)*, Toulouse & Paris: E. Privat, 1920.

## SECONDARY LITERATURE

- Anton, J. P. 1994. 'The Aristotelianism of Photius's Philosophical Theology', in Schrenk 1994: 158–83.
- Billerbeck, M. & Schamp, J. (eds.) 1996. *Kaivotoμία. Le renouvellement de la tradition hellénique*. Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions universitaires.
- Busse (1891) = Ammonius, *In Porphyrii Isagogen sive Quinque voces*, ed. A. Busse, *CAG* 4: 3, Berlin: Georg Reimer.
- de Haas, F. A. J. 2001. 'Did Plotinus and Porphyry disagree on Aristotle's *Categories*?' *Phronesis* 46: 492–526.
- Ebbesen, S. 1975–76. 'Hoc aliquid—quale quid and the Signification of Appellatives', *Φιλοσοφία* 5–6: 370–92.
- 1981. *Commentators and Commentaries on Aristotle's Sophistici Elenchi: A Study of Post-Aristotelian Ancient and Medieval Writings on Fallacies*, 3 vols, Leiden: Brill.
- & Pinborg, J. 1981–82. 'Gennadios and Western Scholasticism: Radulphus Brito's *Ars Vetus* in Greek Translation', *Classica et Mediaevalia* 33: 263–319.
- Golitsis, P. 2007. 'Georges Pachymère comme didascale: essai pour une reconstitution de sa carrière et de son enseignement philosophique', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 58: 53–68.
- Ierodiakonou, K. 2005. 'The Byzantine Reception of Aristotle's *Categories*', *Synthesis philosophica* 39: 7–31.
- Lloyd, A. C. 1962. 'Genus, species, and ordered series in Aristotle', *Phronesis* 7: 67–90.
- Motte, A. & Denoos, J. (eds.) 1996. *Aristotelica Secunda. Mélanges offerts à Christian Rutten*, Liège: C.I.P.L.
- Roueché, M. 1974. 'Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century', *JÖB* 23: 61–76.
- 1980. 'A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology', *JÖB* 29: 71–98.
- 1990. 'The Definitions of Philosophy and a New Fragment of Stephanus the Philosopher', *JÖB* 40: 107–28.
- Schamp, J. 1996a. 'Photios aristotélisant? Remarques critiques', in: Billerbeck & Schamp 1996: 1–17.
- 1996b. 'La 'localisation' chez Photios. Traduction commentée de *Questions à Amphilochios* 145', in Motte & Denoos 1996: 265–79
- Schrenk, L. P. 1994. *Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, Studies in Philosophy and the

- History of Philosophy 27, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Strange, S. K. 1987. "Plotinus, Porphyry, and the Neoplatonic Interpretation of the 'Categories' ", in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 2: 36: 2: 955-974.
- Westerink (1986) = *Photius, Epistulae et Amphilochia*, Vols. 4-5. Leipzig: Teubner.
- Wolska-Conus, W. 1989. 'Stéphanos d'Athènes et Stéphanos d'Alexandrie. Essai d'identification et de biographie', *REB* 47: 5-89.
- Woodhouse, C. M. 1986. *Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes*, Oxford: OUP.