

‘The Reception of Aristotle’s *Categories*, c. 80 BC to AD 220’

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Greek and Latin Language and Literature (Classics)

30 March 2009

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Abstract Submitted for the D.Phil.

This thesis focuses on the ancient reception of the *Categories* of Aristotle, a work which served continuously, from late antiquity into the early modern period (Frede 1987), as the student’s introduction to philosophy. There had previously been no comprehensive study of the reception of the *Categories* during the age of the first philosophical commentaries (c. 80 BC to AD 220). In this study, I have collected, assigned, and analyzed the relevant fragments of commentary belonging to this period, including some that were previously undocumented or inexplicit in the source texts, and sought to establish and characterize the influence of the early commentators’ activity on the subsequent Peripatetic tradition. In particular, I trace the early evolution of criticism and defense of the text through competing accounts of its aim (*skopos*), which would ultimately lead Stoic and Platonic philosophers to a partial acceptance of the *Categories* and frame its role in the later Neo-Platonic curriculum.

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Preface

This thesis is offered towards the requirements of the Doctorate of Philosophy in Classics (Greek and Latin) at the University of Oxford. It was completed between October 2006 and February 2009, through the generous support of the Scholarships and Fellowships Commission of the Commonwealth of Nations and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The thesis includes a substantial ‘Appendix’ of Primary Texts. This Appendix collects, mainly in Greek and Latin and in translation, the fragments and testimonia of Andronicus of Rhodes, the Platonists Lucius and Nicostratus, the Stoics Athenodorus and L. Annaeus Cornutus, Boethus of Sidon and Herminus. It also collects a more selective sample of the fragments of Eudorus of Alexandria and Ariston of Alexandria. The appendix is organized to correspond to the chapter numeration of the main body of the text. Frequent reference is made to the appendix throughout this study, in the following form:

Strabo, *Geographica* 14.2.13 = Andronicus **T1**.

The number **T1** refers to the first fragment or testimonium under the chapter heading ‘Andronicus’ in the Appendix. In a case where a single source generates a large number of fragments and testimonies, I often give the source a single number and distinguish each fragment by a lowercase Latin letter, as follows:

Simplicius, *in Cat.* 13,16 = Herminus **T6d**.

Currently the numeration is limited to correspond to each chapter (for instance, Andronicus **T1** is not Boethus **T1**), and the appendix is simply provided as a convenience to the reader. In the future I intend to renumber and organize the fragmenta and testimonia in the appendix to stand on its own, as a more comprehensive resource.¹ Nevertheless, I hope that it serves as a useful aid in its current form for uniting the main sources in one place.

¹ With a view to this eventual end, several of the more important testimonies have been distinguished as **A B C** texts in the appendix (using an upper case, sans serif font), thus following the familiar practice of Diels-Kranz signifying testimonies, true fragmenta, and imitations.

The General Introduction discusses my methodology, and sources. I will merely stress here that my approach has been necessarily selective in several respects, chiefly for reasons of space and scope. For example, I have often been able to touch only briefly on very complex philosophical issues relating to the interpretation of the *Categories* itself and the validity or value of various ancient views expressed about it; I hope to delve deeper into the issues raised by this study in future work. Moreover, while I believe that I have included nearly all of the important personae and textual sources in Greek and Latin for my topic, and many of the lesser-known personae and sources, neither the text nor the appendix are exhaustive. In particular, I have been reliant on existing translations and commentaries for Arabic sources (which have been useful, for example, in the chapters on Andronicus and Herminus), and I hope to gain direct access to Arabic sources in the future. Also, I have not yet been able to come into contact with exciting (but presently confidential) new evidence for the *Categories* commentary in the Archimedes Palimpsest, which may be the work of Alexander of Aphrodisias.² I look forward to incorporating such evidence into further research on this topic as it is disclosed and published.

English translations of the later ancient commentators are almost invariably drawn from the *Ancient Commentators on Aristotle* series under the general editorship of Prof. Richard Sorabji, unless otherwise noted; the individual translations are cited in the general introduction below, and again in the Bibliography. I discuss my reliance on secondary literature in the General Introduction, but I should note here a broad point of practice in dealing with texts from the Neoplatonic commentators, who provide the bulk of the sources. I have often given Greek texts, English translations, and (brief) discussion of the most important fragments in two places, in the main body of the text and in the appendix. This has led to some unnecessary duplication, but I hope that it has simplified the task of the reader.

I am indebted to numerous individuals for discussions and advice leading to the improvement of this treatment. I have benefited in particular from fruitful conversations with my doctoral supervisor, Prof. Tobias Reinhardt. I am also grateful to my doctoral examiners, Prof. Richard Sorabji and Dr Peter Adamson, for their very valuable comments and recommendations for the improvement of the text. (For its remaining infelicities, I remain, of course, wholly responsible!) In addition, this thesis owes its existence to Prof. Michael

² I am grateful to Robert Sharples for personal communications about the palimpsest, and for the material made available on the project website at www.archimedespalimpsest.org.

Frede, who suggested this topic in 2005 and encouraged me to pursue it. Last but not least, I was inspired to study the intellectual history of the early Roman Empire in the first place by the pioneering work of a fellow Oriensis, Prof. John Dillon's *The Middle Platonists* (1977), and I am delighted to contribute a link to the chain of ancient philosophy at Oriel.

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Selected Abbreviations

- CAG** *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin.
- Cat.** *Categories*.
- Dillon, MP** Dillon, J. 1977. *The Middle Platonists*. Ithaca: Cornell. Revised 1996.
- Morau I** Moraux, P. 1973. *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen von Andronikos bis Alexander von Aphrodisias*. I. Berlin-NY.
- Morau II** Moraux, P. 1984. *Der Aristotelismus im I. und II. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* II. Berlin-NY.
- OSAP** *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*.
- Prantl I etc.** Prantl, C. 1855 and 1861 (repr. 1925). *Geschichte der Logik im Abendland*. Leipzig.
- Sourcebook** Sorabji, R. 2005. *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD. A Sourcebook. Volume 1: Psychology. Volume 2: Physics. Volume 3: Logic and Metaphysics*. London/Ithaca.
- SVF** Von Arnim, H. F. A. 1903-24. *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*. Leipzig.
- T1, T2, etc.** Reference to texts under chapter headings in the Appendix of Texts.
- Zeller** Zeller, E. 1844-52. *Die Philosophie Der Griechen In Ihrer Geschichtlichen Entwicklung*. Repr. 1990.