

# INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS FROM ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIAE

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**Abstract:** *The research of Aristotle's categories represent a brave intellectual act, because it claims a metaphysical as well as logical approach, highlighting the complexity of "Stagirite" thinking.*

**Keywords:** *substance, quantity, quality, relation, space, time, position, possession, action, passion.*

## a) HOMONYMS, SYNONYMS, PARONYMS

Aristotle's *Categoriae* has 15 chapters. Among these, the majority refers to one of the ten categories, that is: substance, quantity, quality, relation, space, time, position, possession, action, and passion. The first three chapters and the fifth chapter, on substance, are highly important for the present paper.

Firstly, Aristotle speaks about homonyms, synonyms, and paronyms. These are determinations of objects related to the *name* (*onoma*) and the *notion* (*logos*) of the name, according or corresponding to the name (*kata tonoma*).

The term *logos* is larger than that of notion or simple thought (*noema*), which Aristotle will use as such in his future work<sup>1</sup>. It has the general meaning of *logical form*, and thus corresponds to judgement and syllogism, too. In this context, since one speaks about mere thoughts, which are neither true, nor false, as we shall see, to which isolated and unrelated words correspond, it is obvious that *logos* can have no other meaning except *notion*. Moreover, Aristotle uses the expression *logos tes ousias*, i. e. *logos* of the substance, with the clear meaning of notion, that is *essence* of the substance, which justifies the frequent translations by *definitio substantiae* (definition of the substance), although the commentators proved that *logos* is not entirely suitable with *horismos* (definition)<sup>2</sup>. For *logos*, one can use here the term *reason*, as the Romanian translator did, which used "the reason to be" for *logos tes ousias*<sup>3</sup>. One of Aristotle's examples which refers to *to einai zoo*, in which *to einai* (being, the fact of being) appears instead of *ho logos*, rather suggests a translation like "being of the substance", and respectively "essence". In every way, *logos tes ousias* refers to *what substance is*, unlike *onoma* which refers to its *name* only.

From the beginning, we insist upon the distinction *onoma-logos*, as it will prove itself most important. For the time being, we note that *onoma* is perfectly translated by *name*, but *logos* has no adequate correspondent. In this context, it means notion, but also essence, being, definition and reason, terms with superposed meanings.

To simplify the approach, but also due to modern interpretations, we will nevertheless translate *logos* by "notion".

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<sup>1</sup> *De Int.* 1, 16 a, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ammonius, (1968), *Prolegomene la cele zece categorii* [*Prolegomena to the Ten Categories*], in Porphyrius, Dexip, Ammonius, *Comentarii la Categoriile lui Aristotel* [*Commentaries to Aristotle's Categories*], Bucharest, p. 238-238.

<sup>3</sup> See C. Noica's translation, from Porphyrius, Dexip, Ammonius, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

The relation among notion, definition, and essence needs no further explanation, the first being often considered a short definition that explains the essence of an individual thing<sup>4</sup>. However, Hermann Bonitz translates *logos tes ousias* by *notio substantialis*<sup>5</sup>.

The term *logos*, derived from *legein*, clearly has a verbal meaning. Nevertheless, as a notion, or mere thought, for which Aristotle uses the term *noema*, it subsists *in mente*<sup>6</sup> and is not identified with the name, since the last subsists *in voce*, and is the sign or symbol for it<sup>7</sup>. Because of this, Aristotle distinguishes here the name from the notion that corresponds to the name. So, as Porphyrius remarks when he refers to this fragment<sup>8</sup>, each and every thing has both name and notion, but these are not identical, and so either both, or just one, or none can be suitable for the thing.

In the context of the first chapter from *Categoriae*, *notio* or *definitio substantiae* are identified with the proximate genus. Two individual things, composed from different substances, whose proximate genus is then different, can have the same name. Aristotle notes that we say *living-being* both for the living man and for the painted one, although their substantial notions are different, one of them being living-being in its own right, so both the name of living-being and the substantial notion corresponding to the name are suitable for it, the other being just an image of the living-being, so just the name of living-being is suitable for it, and the substantial notion corresponding to the name is unusable. Both are *homonyms*.

If both name and notion of the substance that corresponds to the name are identical, then the respective individual things are *synonyms* (the man and the horse are living-beings at the same extent). However, *paronyms* are the individual things whose designation is based on the name only, so without the notion of the substance that corresponds to the name, not in the initial form of the name, but by transforming the ending<sup>9</sup>. About a thing, one cannot say that it is *colour*, but it is *coloured*, and the same for Achilles, one says he is *courageous*, which paronymically derives from *courage*.

For Aristotle, unlikely the current and linguistic use of these terms, (homonym, synonym, paronym), they have just an *ontic* meaning. Aristotle speaks about the homonymy of individual things (objects, beings), not of words. Indeed, he does not use the word “thing”, but this, according to the examples, must always be implied<sup>10</sup>. So, the intervention of the commentator Philoponus in Aristotle’s text is indeed justified. He proposes instead “those for which only the name is common”<sup>11</sup>, expression with which the chapter starts, “the things for which only the name is common”<sup>12</sup>. However, all along the chapter one can clearly deduce the fact that the goal of the entire work is to treat about individual things unless in function of their name and substantial notion. The goal of *Categoriae*, as Ammonius would say, is “to treat about the *words* that signify *things* by means of *thoughts*”<sup>13</sup>.

The beginning of the second chapter brings along a completion regarding the way in which words will be looked on. From those that are uttered, one is furthermore

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<sup>4</sup> In Aristotle’s works we often meet cases in which *logos* means definition and is linked to substance and essence (*Metaph.*, D, 8, 1017 b, 21-22).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. H. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus*, 434 b, 14 sq.

<sup>6</sup> *De Int.*, 1, 16 a, 9-10.

<sup>7</sup> *De Int.*, 1, 16 a, 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Porphyrius, *Comentarii la Categoriae lui Aristotel* [*Commentaries of Aristotle’s Categories*], in Porphyrius, Dexip, Ammonius, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>9</sup> *Categ.*, 1, 1 a, 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> J.L. Ackrill introduces the term *thing* all along the translation of the respective chapter (Cf. Aristotle, *A Collection of Critical Essays*, London, 1968, p. 90).

<sup>11</sup> *Categ.*, 1, 1 a, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Philoponus, (1898), *In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, Berlin, p. 17, 27.

<sup>13</sup> Ammonius, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

interested in the words that are unboundedly uttered<sup>14</sup>. “Unbounded” means isolated words as “man”, “runs”, “defeats”, which are different from the bounded ones: “the man runs”, “the man defeats”. The same thing is mentioned in the fourth chapter, after the enumeration of the ten categories. None of those – says Aristotle – in itself and for itself (*auto kath’auto*) is not uttered through affirmation or negation, because affirmation and negation are produced by means of bounding. In the next sentence, Aristotle adds the fact that every affirmation or negation seems (*dokei*) to be true or false. (We do not insist on this “seems”<sup>15</sup>). Nevertheless, none of those that are unboundedly uttered is either true, or false; and Aristotle repeats the examples given in the first chapter: “man”, “runs”, “defeats”, different from “the man runs” and “the man defeats”.

In the perspective of traditional logic, in the first case we deal with notions, and in the second case – with judgements<sup>16</sup>. Based on the data from the first chapter, a presentation of the relations among the three kinds of entities – things, thought, words – should follow. On a conceptualist direction, the isolated words are to be reduced to notions, on the nominalist direction, the notions are to be reduced to words. At the end, these (notions or words) are to be related to things in order to establish the sphere and content or the reference and meaning. On the basis of the sphere, the notions-words are to be separated into species, genera and supreme genera. The last ones, also named categories or predicaments, are to be separated in ten, thus obtaining the structure of Aristotle’s work. Finally, based on content, the notions are to reveal the proper and the difference. The proximate genus and the specific difference would precisely represent *definitio substantiae*. It is obvious that Aristotle’s work refers to all these problems; moreover, this very work is the origin of the problems themselves. It is indeed named the Aristotelian treaty on notions in their large significance, the logical-linguistic one.

In spite of all these, the following part of the second chapter, the third chapter and an important part of the fifth chapter cannot suit the traditional logic’s framework, that is the field of the theory of notions. We refer to what was preserved in the scholastic logic (from Albertus Magnus) under the name of antepredicaments.

## b) ANTEPREDICAMENTS

Among those that exist (*ton onton*), says Aristotle, thus comprising the entire sphere of discussion, those that exist as being *in re* (things), *in mente* (thoughts) or *in voce* (words), some of them (1) *are uttered about a subject, but are in no subject*; some other (2) *are in a subject, but are not uttered about any subject*; others (3) *are uttered about a subject and are in a subject* and, finally, others (4) *are in no subject and are not uttered about any subject*<sup>17</sup>.

The entities corresponding to these four situations were named *antepredicaments*. Aristotle gives them no special denomination, since they are, nevertheless, able to be integrated *in re*, *in mente* or *in voce*, for the last the denomination of “antepredicaments” being, of course, unsuitable. But it can be maintained as a technical term to designate not each and every entity, but their totality considered from the perspective of the four situations. In this sense, but also to lighten the discussion, although we will come back to them, one has to previously give special denominations for each of the four antepredicaments. The antique commentators of *Categoriae* used the following denominations:

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<sup>14</sup> *Categ.*, 2, 1 a.

<sup>15</sup> See Ammonius’ comments, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>16</sup> Or sentences, as Porphyrius remarks (*op. cit.*, p. 81): “Because by itself no category is a sentence, but only through a certain bound it becomes one”.

<sup>17</sup> *Categ.*, 2, 1 a, 20-1 b, 6.

(1) universal substance; (2) particular accident; (3) universal accident; (4) particular substance<sup>18</sup>.

(1) *Universal substance*, i. e. that which is uttered about a subject, but is in no subject, is exemplified by Aristotle through the word *man*. *Man*, says Aristotle, is uttered about a subject, about a *certain man*. Here, the word *subject* (*hypokeimenon*) has the initial significance of *sub-sistent*, from *hypo-keimai* (*sub-sistere*), of an existent in its own right, and not that of a grammar or logical subject, which we are acquainted with. Aristotle associates the subject with *matter* (*hyle*)<sup>19</sup> and *substance* (*ousia*)<sup>20</sup>. In this sense, even the precise man, as an individual being which lives and feels, is subject<sup>21</sup>. “Man” is uttered (*legetai=dicitur*) about this one without “man” being in (*en einai=in esse*) it.

Thus the universal substance is the entity that is uttered about the subsistent without being in this one. The subsistent is an individual thing, an *in re* entity, and the universal substance is a word, an *in voce* entity. Thus the relation “to be uttered about” (*dicitur de*) takes place between two heterogeneous entities, an individual thing and a word. The individual thing being ineffable (*individuum ineffabile*), the word is unboundedly uttered about it, thus without creating a sentence (judgement) which is true or false.

Thus, to be uttered about a subsistent means to name or denominate it. The relation between a subsistent and a word that is said about it is of nomination or denomination. I see the subsistent (an object or a being) and I utter its name or denomination. One can imagine numerous situations in which this happens. The mere calling by his name of somebody, or appeal, is such a relation. The reading of student’s list or of a list of names, the inventorying of goods, products, etc. are relations of the same kind. The baptising, the establishing of a name for an object, a person, a form of relief, (toponym, horonym, hydronym, etc.), a locality, *et al.*, the granting with a certain title or degree, the nicknaming or mere curse through an insulting word, are typical relations of denomination. Finally, one must remind the well-known situation for the linguistics of the taking over or borrowing of words from a linguistic community to another, at the same time with the object they denominate. This is the so-called *Wort-Sache* relation. The objects are not travelling among human communities unless together with their denominations. The *barter*, the natural exchange of goods, product in exchange for product, was and remained an exchange of words. Without knowing the other’s language, the primitive showed the object destined to be changed, and pronounced its denomination. If the object were unknown for the other, then this one would pronounce himself the denomination, more or less accurate, and would take it along with the object. The *Wort-Sache* relation is of mere uttering about (denomination), without the creation of a statement, of a true or false sentence.

It often happens that the *Wort-Sache* relation be more complicated. Let us say that, occurring between two linguistic communities only, the barter presupposes the exchange of some objects that are ordinary for both, and which have different denominations in each of them. The *Wort-Sache* relation shows up in this case, too, but divided, that is someone calls the object one way, someone else differently. It is obvious that none of the two relations is either true or false. Because the denomination is uttered about the object, without being in the object. This is why the well-known situations appear: both

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<sup>18</sup> See the denominations grouped by Elias, (1900), *In Porphyrii Isogogen et Aristotelis Categoriae commentaria*, Berlin, p. 145, 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> *Metaph.*, D, 28, 1024 b, 9.

<sup>20</sup> *Metaph.*, A, 4, 985 b, 10.

<sup>21</sup> *Metaph.*, Z, 12, 1037 b, 16-17.

denominations are kept in both communities; in a community both are maintained, in the other just one; in a community the local denomination is kept, in the other the foreign one; during a period one denomination dominates, during another the other denomination, a. s. o. The *Wort-Sache* relation is flexible and depends of many exterior factors.

So far one can make the following observations: (a) since it is about an entity that is not in the subsistent, but *is uttered* about this one, the entity is obviously *in voce*, it is a word; (b) being a word, the denomination *substance* is not suited for it, since this one signifies something *in re* (at least in the usual meaning of the word); (c) but then, according to the first two observations, the respective entity can no longer be called *antepredicament* (*man*, from Aristotle's example, is *species*, that is a classical *predicable*); (d) the determinant "universal", given to the assumed "substance", shows itself as unsuitable as that, since the respective entity can be indeed uttered about many individual things, if it is a *denomination*, but, if it is a *proper name*, it will be uttered about a single person, being, etc. Or, from its mere characterisation, (*dicitur de subiecto*) it does not follow that the entity should be a denomination without being able to be a name. On the contrary, *ti* from the original expression (*kath'hypokeimenon tinos legetai*) suggests that one would more likely refer to a proper name, which the determinant "singular" would at most suit.

Finally, the last and the most important observation, (e), refers to the aspect of the relation between the subsistent and the name-denomination. Even from a terminological point of view, through the use of the word *hypokeimenon*, which means both *subsistent* (substratum, etc.) and *subject* (grammatical and logical), about which something is uttered, the relation is analogous to a judicative one, between a subject and a predicate, the predicate being uttered about the subject. It is obvious that one does not refer to a judicative relation: one of the terms, that is the subsistent (the one analogous to the logical subject), is an individual thing. Or, keeping sight of the fact that *individuum ineffabile*, the relation has just one verbal term, which is the one analogous to the predicate. But what kind of predicate can be an ordinary word (name or denomination, like *Socrates* or *man*) that firstly: *is uttered about a subsistent* and not about a subject, secondly: *has no verbal form*, but a substantive one, and thirdly: *is uttered without any kind of relation* with another word, thus creating a relation that can be considered neither true nor false? On the other side, here one does not elaborate a study of the isolated word as such, as is the case for the noun in grammar or the notion in logic. However, it is a relation that *resembles* the judicative one, that assumes *two terms* and the *expression* of one *about* the other. Moreover, one deals here with a relation that is *presupposed* by the judicative one. Indeed, in order to say "Socrates is a man" I must *be able* to primarily utter "Socrates" *about* a man and "man" *about* that man in general, *without* "Socrates" *being in* that man or "man" *in* men (as required by the conditions: *dicitur de; non est in*). Since it is *presupposed* by and *anterior* to the judicative one, the relation *subsistent-word* (*Wort-Sache*) can be named *prejudicative* or *antepredicative* although the entity, characterised through *dicitur de* and *non est in*, cannot be named *antepredicament* but in a conventional manner. This is not saying that the relation *would be itself anterior as such* in relation to predicaments, but just that Aristotle refers to it *before* referring to predicaments (categories).

(2) *Particular accident*, characterised as being in the subsistent, but being uttered about no subsistent at all, thus contains, just like the first antepredicamental entity, two determinations: one affirmative (*est in subiecto*), and another negative (*non dicitur de subiecto*). In both cases, the affirmative one is essential, since it implies the negative one. In the preceding case, the entity (universal substance), being *in voce*, cannot be *in re*. In the second case, being *in re*, it cannot be *in voce* and thus *non dicitur de subiecto*. This

means that in the second case the accent must be placed on the relation of the entity with the subsistent on the basis of the relation “being in” (*in esse*). It is what Aristotle tries, feeling the need to point at the significance of “being in a subsistent”. “I call being in a subsistent – says Aristotle – something that, since it subsists (*hyparchon*) – is in something else, but not as a part – it is impossible to be separated from what it is in”<sup>22</sup>. He refers here to a relation of immanence, of intrinsic belonging, different from the mere inclusion, belonging, framing, etc.

This time Aristotle gives *two* examples. “Such as a certain grammar knowledge is in a subsistent, in the soul, but can be uttered about no subsistent at all, and a certain nuance of white is in a subsistent, in the body, since any colour is in a body, but is uttered about no subsistent at all”<sup>23</sup>.

The first example changes somehow the problem’s data. In the case of universal substance, the subsistent was the individual thing, the respective entity being unable to be in this one, i. e. *in re*. This time the entity proves itself to be *in mente*, (“soul” having here the precise meaning of *mens* = mind, thinking). It is of course the soul or mind of a *certain individual*, i.e. an individual soul. Keeping sight of Aristotle’s substantial significance of the soul<sup>24</sup>, inextricably linked to the body, one cannot doubt its quality of subsistent. Moreover, the report between soul and body is precisely a kind of *in esse* relation, it is in the body, but not as a part, it subsists in it and cannot be separated from what it is in. On the other hand, the body – clearly affirms Aristotle in *De anima* (*loc. cit.*) – is not among those that are uttered about a subsistent, but is itself just like the subsistent and matter<sup>25</sup>. Aristotle names the soul even prime substance in some places<sup>26</sup> which, in this context, although distinguished from the body, is enough for the soul to be considered as subsistent.

But it is more difficult to clarify the significance of the entity which is *in* this subsistent, since some being *in mente* (a certain grammar knowledge, a certain grammar, as Aristotle says, or even a science, like in *De anima*<sup>27</sup>) is *different* from something being *in re*, like a certain nuance of white, a certain white in a body. The first one is *intelligible*, the second one is *sensible*. Alternatively, no matter the subsistent it is in, what is *in* cannot be in both situations *one* and the same entity as in the case of universal substance.

A first remark is thus related to the fact that, following Aristotle’s examples, the particular accident is composed from two *different entities*, one *in mente* and the other on *in re*.

The next remark refers to the fact that both entities have a *strictly individual* character. Only a *certain* knowledge, science, etc. can subsist in the mind or body, respectively, of a *certain* man, and in a *certain* body, no matter how similar it is with the others, can subsist just one *singular* nuance of white, even if it is difficult to distinguish it by means of human eye. But then, the denomination of “particular accident” is no longer suitable. One should say “*individual* accident”.

Finally, related to the denomination of “accident” that Aristotle did not use in this context, one can now say that at least for the second entity (a certain white) it is more suitable to use *feature* or *property*, the complete denomination being “individual property”. One can call the first entity, in an analogous manner, *individual notion*, which is a term with a psychological significance, or *individual knowledge* or *science*, respectively. The grammar of a language is the same, but each of us knows it at a certain

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<sup>22</sup> *Categ.*, 2, 1, 24-25.

<sup>23</sup> *Categ.*, 2, 1, 25-29.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *De anima*, II, 1, 412 a.

<sup>25</sup> A modern translator of this paragraph (Cf. Aristoteles, *Über die Seele*, München, 1968) understands *hypokeimenon* as *Unterlage* and *Substratum* (p. 35).

<sup>26</sup> *Metaph.*, Z, 11, 1037 a, 5.

<sup>27</sup> *De anima*, II, 1, 412 a, 24.

extent, in each and everybody's mind thus being a *certain* knowledge of grammar, each of us has an *individual* grammar, although it is sometimes very difficult to notice this. If this were not the case, then we would all speak and write the same way.

(3) *Universal accident*, characterised through the fact that it is *uttered about* a subsistent and is *in* a subsistent<sup>28</sup>, turns upside down both the present perspective of prejudicative relations, and that of antepredicamental entities. Indeed, from the perspective of prejudicative relations we talked about, *dicitur de* (the relation of denomination) presupposes an *individual thing* and a name (or denomination), that is a *word*, which is *not* and *cannot be in* otherwise except *in voce*, i. e. in speaking. Here the situation of division cannot occur, as in the case of the antepredicament particular accident, since the determinative *is uttered about* automatically places the entity *in voce*, if we accept case (1). On the other side, if we accept case (2), then *inesse* places the referred entity either *in mente*, or *in re*, granting it the determination of strict individuality and thus the ineffability. In other words, if it is *uttered about*, then it *cannot be in*, and if it is *in*, then it is *not uttered about*.

This is the time to come back to the term *logos* (notion) from the first chapter. We stressed that, coming from *legein* (to say, to tell), it has a verbal significance, usually meaning even *word* or *speaking*, not just notion, reason, essence or definition. As different from the name, as it appears in the first chapter, and as ineffable, having its residence in the soul (*en te psyche*), as it appears in relation with the particular accident, we would expect it kept its mental meaning. Nevertheless, playing games with the meanings of the term *logos* is a characteristic of the entire Aristotelian thought. This is not just interior (*eso logos*), having its residence in the soul, but also exterior (*exo logos*)<sup>29</sup>, having its residence *in voce* (*en te phone*), this tradition being also mentioned in the classical logic, where the notion is often identified with the word that expresses it, and the nominalists even reduce it to the word. Following an essential direction, being both reason and definition the notion-*logos* is related to the *universal*, that, at its turn, is polysemantic<sup>30</sup>, having at least *three* different meanings for Aristotle: as notion in its own right, having its residence in the soul<sup>31</sup>, that is *in mente*, but, on the other hand, necessary belonging to individual things<sup>32</sup>, since it is the term through which Aristotle characterizes the *inesse* relation<sup>33</sup>, thus subsisting *in re*, and, at the same time, always saying about a certain subsistent<sup>34</sup>, thus being *in voce*.

All these determinations of the universal belong to the notion, too (*ho logos ho katholou*)<sup>35</sup>, since this one only is universal and is able to take the role of any entity. Therefore, only the notion – unless it has such a meaning – could correspond to the two above-mentioned determinations (*dicitur de* and *inesse*) that are mutually exclusive. Aristotle's example follows this direction. For *inesse* he chooses the *in mente* determination of the notion, and for *dicitur de* the *in voce* determination of it. The

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<sup>28</sup> *Categ.*, 1, 1 a, 29 – 1 b, 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Anal. Post.*, A, 10, 76 b, 23-28.

<sup>30</sup> For further reference see Athanase Joja, *Studii de logică* [Studies of Logic], vol. IV, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 1976, p. 29-43 and p. 94-117 (and *idem*, *Istoria gândirii antice* [The History of Ancient Thought], vol. II, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 1982, p. 72-104).

<sup>31</sup> *Anal. Post.*, B, 19, 100 a, 5.

<sup>32</sup> *Anal. Post.*, A, 4, 73 b, 27.

<sup>33</sup> *Categ.*, 2, 1 a, 24-25.

<sup>34</sup> *Metaph.*, Z, 13, 1038, 16.

<sup>35</sup> *Polit.*, C, 15, 1286 a, 17.

referred notion is *science* about which Aristotle says that it is in a subsistent, in a soul, and is uttered about a subsistent, that is *grammar*<sup>36</sup>.

The example needs further comments. The *science* is, indeed, a universal or general notion, which justifies the use of the denomination “*universal accident*”. However, if it is in the soul (*in mente*), are we not in the same situation as in the case of individual notion? Being in the soul, it must be in *somebody’s* soul, in an individual one; but then is this still the notion of *science*, or just a *certain* notion of science? If we refer to the notion of science in general, then it can no longer be placed in a certain person’s mind, but is a result of the individual notions of science. Therefore, one can doubt its positioning in an individual subsistent. On the other side, if one accepts this, either by admitting the notion in general is in somebody’s mind, Socrates for instance, or by widely interpreting the subsistent, then it is obvious that *every* notion, being *in mente*, is implicitly in the subsistent, too. Then how can it be uttered about something when Aristotle himself affirms that the universal notion persists, remains still and fixed in the soul<sup>37</sup>? Moreover, what is it uttered about? About *grammar*, this is also a universal notion. If one admitted that a *certain grammar* subsists in the soul, can one also admit that *grammar in general* subsists, but these individual or universal “grammars” are indeed authentic *subsistents*, just like the individual soul? If the answer is yes, then any genus notion, since it is a notion, it is in the soul and at the same time is uttered about the subordinate species (so *grammar* is for *science* what *man* is for *living being*). Now it is easy to notice that even case (1), that of the universal substance, is found here. As a general notion, *man* from Aristotle’s example is *in* the soul and, at the same time, is *uttered about* a certain man. On the contrary, in case (1), Aristotle was saying that *man is in no subsistent*.

Keeping sight of the fact that *dicitur de* and *inesse* are not raising any problems, the result is that either the perspective over the subsistent, or that over the antepredicament are to be blamed for the occurring of these contradictory situations. Indeed, if we admit that the subsistent must be an individual thing, which effectively is *in re*, then neither its name, nor the notion of the substance that corresponds to its name *can be in it*, even if the name is *in voce* and the notion *in mente*, precisely *because they are in mente and in voce*, respectively. Consequently, there is a game-playing with the meanings of the subsistent, face to which the *same* antepredicament, respecting the definition of *inesse*, is *in* or *is not in*. Let us say that *man* is in question. If the subsistent is *in re*, *man is not in* the subsistent. The same thing goes for *living being*, *grammar*, *science*, etc. All these happen since one refers to the *inesse* relation.

On the other hand, no matter how the subsistent is, *in re* or *in mente*, the antepredicament has its own game: if it is admitted only as *in mente*, then it is *not uttered*; if it is admitted as *in voce*, then it is *uttered*. The polysemy of the terms *logos* and *katholou* is in question. In this context, Aristotle does not use the *in re* meaning of the universal *logos*.

To clear the case of universal accident, without stepping out of the context of the chapters in question and without anticipating the following chapters, we can consider – comparing case (1) and (3) starting from the distinction between *name* and *notion of the substance that corresponds to the name* – that in case (1) one referred to the name only, while in case (3) one refers to both name and notion, such as *dicitur de* engages the name, and *inesse* engages the notion. One can therefore conclude: (a) “universal accident” cannot exist as an independent entity; (b) since *it is uttered about*, it is an entity *in voce*, which *can no longer be in*, and therefore is subordinate to the case (1); (c) since *it is in*, *in mente* respectively (but it could also be *in re*), *it is not uttered about* and

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<sup>36</sup> *Categ.*, 2, 1 b, 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> *Anal. Post.*, B, 19, 100 a, 6-7.



therefore is subordinate to case (2) but without being identified with individual property. We could find a name for it, but we have not enough *Aristotelian* data for the act of denomination.

(4) *Particular substance*, characterised as *being in no* subsistent and *not uttering about* any subsistent, is exemplified by Aristotle through *a certain man* and *a certain horse*, since none of those is in any subsistent and is not uttered about any subsistent<sup>38</sup>.

In general, closes Aristotle, those that are individuals (*ta atoma*) and numerically one (*hen arithmo*) are uttered about no subsistent, but nothing is against them being in a subsistent, as a certain grammar is in a subsistent but is uttered about no subsistent at all<sup>39</sup>.

Without this final addition, the characterisation and examples would have been perfectly clear for case (4), by merely replacing of “particular” with “individual”, since *the certain man* and *certain horse* are indeed corporeal substances, individual things (along with beings, objects such as: *a certain shield*, Achilles’ for instance, could have been enumerated). In the modern sense, so to be more precise, one would have said “individual” instead of “particular” substance. The addition no longer allows this. It is clear that the individual and unique ones (*unica*, numerically one) are uttered about no subsistent at all. But this is obvious precisely because the *individual ones* are usually considered *individual things*, and thus ineffable, being themselves authentic subsistents, about which the other entities are uttered. But then how can they be in a subsistent? To be honest, Aristotle says neither that *all of them* are in a subsistent, nor that it is *necessary* they be, but just that *nothing is against* some of them being in a subsistent. He offers again the example of *a certain grammar*, which is *in*, but is *not uttered about*, this meaning a coming back to case (2).

Thus, even in case (4) we cannot unrestrictedly speak about the same entity. After all, that “nothing is against” does not refer to individual *things*, but to *those* that are generally individuals, which also comprise the individual *notions*, that are individual and unique, but are not subsistent, just because they are in something else, respectively in the soul.

This means that the entity characterised through *is not uttered about* and *is not in* must be named “individual thing.”

It is obvious that the presentation of the first two chapters of Aristotle’s *Categoriae* – appealing only to the data comprised here and to their explanation – is far from representing also the solution of the numerous problems that it raises. Indeed, the text proves itself difficult, but not erroneous; inconsistent, but not incoherent. The difficulties and inconsistencies can be justified, can prove their reason to be, but accepting them as such, as most commentators did, leads to mangling their initial significance. For instance, accepting the four antepredicaments on the basis of the strict interpretation of the first two chapters, thus with no amendment, unreserved, is not even suitable for a separate analysis of each situation. This hermeneutic rigidity does correspond neither to Aristotle’s nuanced way of thinking, nor to the synthetic spirit of Greek thought. Fortunately, Aristotle often comes back to many of the unsolved problems from the first two chapters. It is thus recommendable that before issuing verdicts, to follow their references. Some will be, of course, clarifying, others – as Dexippus says – will increase our puzzlement.

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<sup>38</sup> *Categ.*, 2, 1 b, 3-6.

<sup>39</sup> *Categ.*, 1 b, 6-9.