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**«UTRUM FIGURA DICTIONIS SIT FALLACIA IN DICTIONE.  
ET QUOD NON VIDETUR». A TAXONOMIC PUZZLE OR HOW  
MIEVEAL LOGICIANS CAME TO ACCOUNT FOR AN ODD  
QUESTION BY AN IMPOSSIBLE ANSWER**

*Steno Ebbesen magistro sapientissimo carissimoque*

## 1. Introduction

TAXONOMY MATTERS: ARISTOTLE. If the interest an author takes in a subject can be measured at all, the educated guess would be that it is commensurate with the attention he devotes to it. It thus seems a fair assessment to say that –when handling sophisticated topics– classificatory issues were a matter of great concern to Aristotle. For one thing, he discussed at length and eventually discarded at least one competing classification of fallacies according to which these are to be differentiated depending on whether they aim at the thought or at its verbal expression<sup>1</sup>. For another, he remarkably engineered his own taxonomy. An all-embracing genus, the ignorance of what a refutation is<sup>2</sup>, encompasses two comprehensive species –one dwelling

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<sup>1</sup> *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi*, Ed. by D. Ross, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1958, 10, 170b 12-16: «οὐκ ἔστι δὲ διαφορὰ τῶν λόγων ἢν λέγουσί τινες, τὸ εἶναι τοὺς μὲν πρὸς τοῦνομα λόγους, ἑτέρους δὲ πρὸς τὴν διάνοιαν· ἄτοπον γὰρ τὸ ὑπολαμβάνειν ἄλλους μὲν εἶναι πρὸς τοῦνομα λόγους, ἑτέρους δὲ πρὸς τὴν διάνοιαν, ἀλλ' οὐ τοὺς αὐτοὺς [contrary to what some say, there is no distinction between arguments aiming at the word and arguments that aim at the thought. In fact, it is absurd to think that arguments aim either at the word or at the thought and that they are not the same]». The issue is brilliantly discussed in M. HECQUET-DEVIEINNE, «La pensée et le mot dans les *Réfutations sophistiques*», *Revue philosophique*, 2 (1993) 179-196.

<sup>2</sup> *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 6, 169a 18-21: «πάντες οἱ τ<ρ>όποι πίπτουσιν εἰς τὴν τοῦ ἐλέγχου ἄγνωιαν, οἱ μὲν οὖν παρὰ τὴν λέξιν, ὅτι φαινομένη ἀντίφασις, ὅπερ ἦν ἴδιον τοῦ ἐλέγχου, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι παρὰ τὸν τοῦ συλλογισμοῦ ὄρον [all fallacies fall under the ignorance of what a refutation is. Those depending on expression because the contradiction –which is the distinctive feature of refutation– is apparent only; the others because they violate the definition of the deduction]». Cf. *Aristotelis*

on language, the other not<sup>3</sup> – whose twelve subsets<sup>4</sup> account for all kinds of failures to meet either one of the two requirements a refutation ought to meet in order to do its job, which is to establish a real contradiction by means of a genuine deduction<sup>5</sup>. Aristotle even set himself to prove (both by way of induction and deduction) that his sixfold division of fallacies which have to do with expression is exhaustive: no fallacy involving linguistic features has been neglected and none falls outside those he mentioned<sup>6</sup>.

*sophistici elenchi* 6, 168a 17-20: «ἢ δὴ οὕτως διαιρετέον τοὺς φαινομένους συλλογισμοὺς καὶ ἐλέγχους, ἢ πάντας ἀνακτέον εἰς τὴν τοῦ ἐλέγχου ἄγνοιαν, ἀρχὴν ταύτην ποιησαμένους· ἔστι γὰρ ἅπαντας ἀναλῦσαι τοὺς λεχθέντας τρόπους εἰς τὸν τοῦ ἐλέγχου διορισμόν [apparent deductions and refutations must be classified either the way we did or be reduced to the ignorance of what a refutation is, which we acknowledge as their origin. In fact, it is possible to show that all the aforesaid fallacies neglect one aspect <or another> of the definition of the deduction]».

<sup>3</sup> *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 4, 165b 23-24: «τρόποι δ' εἰσι τοῦ μὲν ἐλέγχειν δύο· οἱ μὲν γὰρ εἰσι παρὰ τὴν λέξιν, οἱ δ' ἔξω τῆς λέξεως [there are two ways of refuting: one has to do with expression, the other is independent of it]». As is well known, Aristotle's classification of fallacious reasoning rests upon the alternative whether linguistic features play a role or not. Here λέξις means everything that has to do with the way we talk about things: written or spoken words may be equivocal (homonymy, figure of speech and accent exploit their ambiguous features), turns of phrase may be equivocal too (amphiboly, composition and division –on the other hand– take advantage of their syntactical arrangements).

<sup>4</sup> Equally distributed within and outside verbal expression: «ὁμωνυμία, ἀμφιβολία, σύνθεσις, διαίρεσις, προσωδία, σχῆμα λέξεως [homonymy, amphiboly, composition, division, accent, form of expression]» (*Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 4, 165b 24-27) and «παρὰ τὸ συμβεβηκός, [...] τὸ ἀπλῶς ἢ μὴ ἀπλῶς ἀλλὰ πῆ ἢ ποῦ ἢ ποτὲ ἢ πρὸς τι λέγεσθαι, [...] τὸ παρὰ τὸ ἐπόμενον, [...] τὸ παρὰ τὸ <τὸ> ἐν ἀρχῇ λαμβάνειν, [...] τὸ <τὸ> μὴ αἴτιον ὡς αἴτιον τιθέναι, [...] τὸ τὰ πλείω ἐρωτήματα ἐν ποιεῖν [the fallacy of accident; the fallacy in which an expression is either said without qualification or not without qualification but with some qualification related to manner, place, time or relation; the fallacy of assuming the point to prove; the fallacy that states that something is cause without it being one; the fallacy that ask multiple questions as one]» (*Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 4, 166b 21-27) respectively.

<sup>5</sup> *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 1, 164b 27-165a 3: «ὁ μὲν [165a] γὰρ συλλογισμὸς ἐκ τινῶν ἔστι τεθέντων ὥστε λέγειν ἕτερον ἐξ ἀνάγκης τι τῶν κειμένων διὰ τῶν κειμένων, ἔλεγχος δὲ συλλογισμὸς μετ' ἀντιφάσεως τοῦ συμπεράσματος [deduction occurs when something new is necessarily involved by what has been previously stated. The refutation is a deduction which contradicts what has been presented as a conclusion]».

<sup>6</sup> *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 4, 165b 28-29: «τούτου δὲ πίστις ἢ τε διὰ τῆς ἐπαγωγῆς καὶ συλλογισμὸς [This can be proved by both induction and deduction]».

TAXONOMY MATTERS: ARISTOTLE'S COMMENTATORS. By Galen's time, the topic was popular enough for him to pride himself on having successfully dealt with the rationale behind Aristotle's claim for completeness whilst other interpreters had failed to explain it<sup>7</sup>. Commentators will not forget Galen's lesson and the issue will be addressed as a matter of routine by Byzantine and Latin scholars alike. Especially the latter placed considerable emphasis on the issue of exhaustiveness and spared no effort in order to describe in detail the architecture of Aristotle's classification. Actually, from the very start, Latin commentators stressed the fact that Aristotle's taxonomy is a coherent, principle-ruled, derivational system<sup>8</sup>. They also spent considerable time

<sup>7</sup> *Galenus de captionibus in dictione*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, *Commentators and Commentaries on Aristotle's Sophistici elenchi*, Brill, Leiden 1981, II, pp. 6.22-7.4: «τῶν οὖν ἐξηγησαμένων [7] αὐτὸν οἱ μὲν οὐδ' ἐπεχείρησαν ταύτ' ἀκριβῶσαι τὸν προσήκοντα τρόπον, οἱ δ' οὐκ ἔτυχον. ἡμεῖς δὲ πειραθῶμεν, οὐκ Ἀριστοτέλους ἔνεκεν οὐδ' ὡς τῷ λόγῳ βοήθειάν τινα πορίζοντες, ἀλλ' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν [some commentators did not even try to give a precise account of Aristotle's way, others did not succeed. Let's try, neither for Aristotle's sake nor for the sake of the text, but for ourselves]». Galen managed at best to keep only half of his promise. As far as I know, no one – Valentina di Lascio excepted – has ever fulfilled the other half and delivered the real McCoy, that is the key to understand Aristotle's « proof through syllogism ». That she did in a remarkable essay, namely «The Theoretical Rationale behind Aristotle's Classification of the Linguistic Fallacies in the Sophistical Refutations», *Logical analysis and history of philosophy*, 15 (2013) 55-89.

<sup>8</sup> Four texts from early Latin literature will illustrate the point. 1. «ignorantia elenchi dicitur esse principium et origo omnium fallaciarum, [...]. Ad quam quidem ignorantiam omnes redargutionis species rediguntur [we say that the ignorance of what a refutation is is the principle and the origin of all fallacies [...]. In fact, all their species come down to the ignorance of what a refutation is]» (*Anonymi summa sophisticorum elenchorum*, Ed. by L. M. DE RIJK, *Logica Modernorum*, vol. I, Van Gorcum, Assen 1962, p. 416.16-18). 2. *Anonymi Aurelianensis I commentarium in Sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin (CIMAGL)*, 34 (1979) 162.27-163.6: «convenienter facta est superius fallaciarum divisio, ergo aut sic est dividendum apparentes syllogismos, ut supra divisimus, aut reducendum omnes in ignorantiam elenchi, ut scilicet dicamus quod in omni paralogismo est ignorantia elenchi et omnes fallacia sub illa specie est coartandum. [163] Non autem dico quod illi qui primam tenent divisionem sic debeant dividere, sed his, id est ab his, est reducendum omnes fallacias sub ignorantia elenchi. Vel his, id est secundum hos, qui faciunt hanc, id est constituunt ignorantiam elenchi principium omnium fallaciarum, id est quasi genus omnium [the division Aristotle introduced by the words "ONE MUST EITHER DIVIDE APPARENT SYLLOGISMS THIS WAY" has been correctly established as we did. "OR ONE MUST SUBSUME THEM ALL UNDER THE IGNORANCE OF WHAT

trying both to single out each acknowledged kind of fallacious reasoning and to list its various moods or subsets. Accordingly, the question «in how many varieties a given fallacy comes (quot modis varietur)» received at least as

REFUTATION IS”, that is: as if we said that every paralogism has to do with the ignorance of what a refutation is and that one must subsume every fallacy under ignorance as one of its species. I do not claim that those who accept the first classification have to make a division according to the second classification, but “THOSE”, that is: they must subsume every fallacy under the ignorance of what a refutation is; or “THOSE”, that is: for those “WHO DO THAT”, that is: those who make the ignorance of what a refutation is the principle of all fallacies altogether, as if it were the genus of them all]». 3. *Anonymi Aurelianensis II de paralogismis*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, *CIMAGL*, 16 (1976) 77.20-21: «omnia genera fallaciarum ad hanc tamquam ad unum genus reduci possunt [all the kinds of fallacy may be reduced to the fallacy of the ignorance of what a refutation is as if it were their only genus]». 4. *Anonymi fallacie londinenses*, Ed. by L. M. DE RIJK, *Logica modernorum*, vol. II, Van Gorcum, Assen 1967, p. 672.4-8: «fallacia secundum ignorantiam elenchi est deceptio proveniens ex obmissione aliquorum quae observanda sunt in descriptione elenchi. Et secundum hoc non aliqua tresdecim fallaciarum. Unde Aristoteles docet reducere omnes alias fallacias ad hanc fallaciam [the fallacy of the ignorance of what a refutation is is a deception that arises when one of the requirements to be satisfied according to the refutation’s definition has been neglected. In this respect, the ignorance of what a fallacy is does not belong to Aristotle’s thirteen kinds of fallacies. This is why Aristotle advises that all other fallacies be reduced to the fallacy of the ignorance of what a refutation is]». That being said, taxonomic expediency did not prevent Latin authors from raising problems about the fact that *ignorantia elenchi* seems to be both inclusive of and included in the distinction between fallacies that dwell on verbal expression and fallacies who do not, in so far as Aristotle ranked it amongst the latter. Peter of Spain, for instance, felt the need to address the issue: «fieri quidem solet duplex distinctio ignorantie elenchi, secundum quod est una specialis de tresdecim fallaciis, et secundum quod est generalis ad quam omnes tresdecim fallacie reducuntur [as far as ignorance of what a refutation is is concerned, a double distinction is usually made, according to which ignorance of what a refutation is is both particular and general. Particular in so far as it is one of the thirteen fallacies and general in so far as it is the fallacy to which all others may be reduced]» (*Petri hispani portugalensis tractatus*, Ed. by L. M. DE RIJK, *Peter of Spain (Petrus Hispanus Portugalensis)*. Tractatus called afterwards *Summule logicales*, Van Gorcum, Assen 1972, VII, p. 180.5-7). As did the anonymous author of the *Fallaciae ad modum Oxoniae*, Ed. by C. R. KOPP, Köln Universität, Köln 1985, p. 128, Albert the Great (*Alberti magni expositio sophisticorum elenchorum*, Ed. by P. JAMMY, C. Prost, Lyon 1651, p. 887a), Giles of Rome in his *Expositio super libros elenchorum*, Venetiis per Bonetum Locatellum, 1496, 18vb 28-34 and *Anonymus agdavenensis* in his *Quaestiones super Sophisticos elenchus*, Ms Anger, Bibliothèque municipale, 418 (405), f. 180ra 24-25.

much attention as the question «what the fallacy itself is (quid sit)»<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, Westerners resorted to specific devices in order to solve classificatory puzzles. Besides the inherited opposition between Form and Matter which was much used to tell apart sophisms whose mistake is to jeopardize either the identity of their subject matter or the compelling form of their entailment<sup>10</sup>, the most sophisticated tool –and the more innovative too– they developed along the way was the distinction to be made between the way an argument goes wrong and the way it fools us. On that ground, they differentiated between what they called a *causa apparentiae* (what gives an argument a respectable appearance) and a *causa defectus* or *non existentiae* (the reason why –despite looking good– it is defective or fails to imply its conclusion)<sup>11</sup>. All of which

<sup>9</sup> In fact, more often than not, the two questions went hand in hand, as is illustrated time and again by the use of formulaic repetitions. Cf. e.g. Anonymi Cantabrigiensis commentarium in Aristotelis sophisticos elenchos, Ms Cambridge, St John's D.12, f. 85rb («dicatur quid sit aequivocatio, quid fallacia secundum aequivocationem, quot modis habeat fieri [it ought to be explained what homonymy is, what the fallacy of homonymy is and in how many varieties it comes]»), f. 86rb («circa hanc fallaciam considerandum quid sit amphibologia, quid fallacia secundum amphibologiam, et quot modis habeat fieri [about this fallacy one must take into account what amphiboly is, what the fallacy that dwells on amphiboly is and in how many varieties it comes]»), f. 87va («videndum est ergo quid sit compositio, quid divisio, quid fallacia compositionis, quid fallacia divisionis, quot modis fiant istae fallaciae [we have to consider what composition is, what division is, what the fallacy of composition is, what the fallacy of division is and in how many varieties they come]»), f. 88vb («circa hanc fallaciam considerandum erit quid sit figura dictionis, quid fallacia secundum figuram dictionis, et quot sunt huius fallaciae modi [about this fallacy one must take into account what figure of speech is, what the fallacy that dwells on figure of speech is and in how many varieties it comes]»), f. 89va («videndum est quid sit accidens, quid fallacia secundum accidens, quot modi paralogismorum fiant secundum hanc fallaciam [we have to consider what accident is, what the fallacy of accident is and how many kinds of paralogisms occur according to it]»).

<sup>10</sup> The literature on «logical form» vs. «logical matter» is both extensive in quantity and varied in quality. Besides J. BARNES, «Logical Form and Logical Matter», in A. ALBERTI (ed.), *Logica, Mente e Persona*, Olschki, Firenze 1990, pp. 16-39, which is quoted at every turn, a sensible introduction to the problem is to be found in S. EBBESEN, «The Way Fallacies were Treated in Scholastic Logic», *CIMAGL*, 55 (1987) 107-134.

<sup>11</sup> The early *Dialectica monacensis* makes the distinction very clearly when tackling the fallacy of figure of speech: «fallacia autem figurae <dictionis> est deceptio proveniens ex similitudine dictionis cum dictione, vel etiam ex diversitate significatorum vel consignificatorum. Haec enim sunt causae ipsius moventis, scilicet

makes perfect sense, notably for two reasons: first of all, Aristotle makes it

causa apparentiae ex parte signi et causa falsitatis ex parte significati vel consignificati [the fallacy of figure of speech arises because of the similarity between expressions and the diversity between the things these signify or cosignify. Two are, in fact, the causes that bring about fallacies of this kind, that is: a cause which accounts for their deceptive appearance, which has to do with words, and a cause which accounts for their falsehood, which has to do with the things these words signify or cosignify]» (*Tractatus de sophistica argumentatione (Dialectica monacensis)*, Ed. by DE RIJK, *Logica Modernorum*, II, p. 579.9-13). Along the same lines, Peter of Spain established two sets of synonymous expressions, which will become pretty standard in later literature: «principium autem motivium sive causa apparentiae in qualibet fallacia est quod movet ad credendum quod non est. Principium vero defectus sive causa falsitatis est quod facit creditum esse falsum [the cause or the principle which produces the deceptive appearance in every fallacy is what leads someone to believe what is not the case. The principle of the flaw or the cause which accounts for the fallacy's falsehood is what is actually responsible for the falsehood of what one is led to believe]» (*Petri hispani portugalensis tractatus VII*, p. 98.13-16); further, in a digression, he shrewdly remarks: «in aequivocatione principium motivum ab unitate dictionis sumitur et principium defectus a parte rerum significatarum [in the case of fallacies of homonymy, the principle that accounts for the deception has to do with single words which mean more than one thing, whereas the principle of the flaw has to do with the things the ambiguous word signify or cosignify]» (p. 122.5-7; cf. p. 128.13-15 for a similar point concerning the fallacy of accent). The distinction itself will be successful enough to serve as a structuring factor in commentators' questioning, as is most clearly the case in the *Summa Lamberti*, Ed. by F. ALESSIO, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1971, VII, where the very same questions are asked about any given family of fallacies, namely what are its *causa apparentiae*, its *causa defectus* and its *modi*: cf. e.g. «sequitur de fallacia accentus circa quam videndum est quid sit accentus, et quid fallacia accentus, quae causa apparentiae, quae causa falsitatis in ipsa, et quot sunt modi paralogizandi in ipsa [the fallacy of accent is discussed next and one must consider what accent is, what the fallacy of accent is, what causes its deceptive appearance, what accounts for its falsity and in how many ways it leads to draw a false inference]» (p. 166.1-4); «sequitur de fallacia figurae dictionis circa quam videndum [169] est quid sit figura dictionis et quid fallacia figurae dictionis, quae causa apparentiae, quae causa falsitatis et quot modi paralogizandi sunt in illa fallacia [the fallacy of figure of speech is discussed next and one must consider what figure of speech is, what the fallacy of figure of speech is, what causes its deceptive appearance, what accounts for its falsity and in how many ways it leads to draw a false inference]» (pp. 168.43-169.3); «in paralogismis qui fiunt secundum accidens semper oportet tria reperiri: secundum rem, substantiam et accidens assignatum vel attributum, ideo videamus prius quis terminus debeat dici generaliter res subiecta, quis accidens et quis attributum et per hoc videbitur quid sit accidens; postea videndum est quid sit fallacia accidentis, quae causa apparentiae, quae causa falsitatis et quot modi paralogizandi sunt in ea [in fallacies of accident one always need to find

clear from the start<sup>12</sup> that his main concern with sophistic arguments is not so much that they are poor arguments but rather that they manage not to appear so<sup>13</sup>. Secondly and foremost, their place in Aristotle's classification depends on the way this illusion works: for instance, «homonymy», «amphiboly» and

out three things: what is ascribed or attributed according to the thing, the substance and the accident. Therefore, let's consider first which term generally deserves to be called a subject, which one deserves to be called an accident or an attribute. This way, we will ascertain what accident means here. One has to consider next what the fallacy of accident is, what causes its deceptive appearance, what accounts for its falsity and in how many ways it leads to draw a false inference]» (p. 173.28-35); «sequitur de fallacia consequentis, circa quam videndum est quid sit consequens, quid fallacia consequentis, quae causa apparentiae, quae causa falsitatis et quot sunt modi paralogizandi in ea [the fallacy of consequent is discussed next and one must consider what consequent is, what the fallacy of consequent is, what causes its deceptive appearance, what accounts for its falsity and in how many ways it leads to draw a false inference]» (p. 195.8-11).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 1, 164a 20-26: «περὶ δὲ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων καὶ τῶν φαινομένων μὲν ἐλέγχων, ὄντων δὲ παραλογισμῶν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐλέγχων, λέγωμεν ἀρξάμενοι κατὰ φύσιν ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων. ὅτι μὲν οὖν οἱ μὲν εἰσὶ συλλογισμοί, οἱ δ' οὐκ ὄντες δοκοῦσι, φανερόν. ὥσπερ γὰρ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων τοῦτο γίνεται διὰ τινος ὁμοιότητος, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν λόγων ὡσαύτως ἔχει [we will discuss the sophistic refutations, that is, refutations which appear to be so while they are not, being paralogisms instead. As befits the natural order, we will begin with what come first. That some deductions are really what they seem to be, while others only looks like deductions, is evident. As it happens in other matters, this arises from similarity. And this is the case with arguments as well]».

<sup>13</sup> Albert the Great will stress the fact that where there is no such appearance there's no fallacy involved either: «si causam apparentiae non haberet, non deciperet [where nothing produces a deceptive appearance, there is no deception either]» (*Alberti magni expositio sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 850b 52-53). A similar point is made by Giles of Rome: if a bad argument does not appear to be sound, it is not a fallacy (cf. *Aegidii romani expositio super libros elenchorum* 58vb 47-48: «dubitaret forte aliquis, quia videtur hic nullam esse fallaciam, nullam enim videtur habere apparentiam [one might be perplexed, for no fallacy seems involved here, since there is no deception]»). Simon of Faversham will do the same: «paralogismus enim secundum quamlibet fallacia debet apparere bonus syllogismus, aliter non falleret; ergo oportet quod quaelibet fallacia habeat aliquid quod faciat ipsam apparere esse bonum syllogismum [whatever the fallacy involved, a paralogism has to look like a sound deduction, otherwise it would not be deceitful. Therefore, any fallacy whatsoever needs something that makes it look like a sound deduction]» (*Simonis de Faverisham quaestiones novae super libro elenchorum*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN – T. IZBICKI – J. LONGEWAY – F. DEL PUNTA – E. SERENE – E. STUMP, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 1984, q. 10, p. 128.122-124).

«figure of speech» all involve a double meaning<sup>14</sup>, but they are not deceitful in the same way<sup>15</sup>. And this is indeed why they are distinct fallacies: they may well share the same *causa defectus*, but –their *causa apparentiae* being different– they are different. This is of course a pretty strong claim, but it is not at all an unusual one in medieval literature<sup>16</sup>. A typical example is to be found in the views of *Anonymus salmaticensis-florentinus*, who is strongly committed to the idea that the reason why a fallacy does not look like one

<sup>14</sup> This is openly stated in *Aristotelis sophisticis elenchi* 6, 168a 23-25: «τῶν μὲν γὰρ ἐν τῇ λέξει οἱ μὲν εἰσι παρὰ τὸ διπτόν, οἷον ἢ τε ὁμωνυμία καὶ ὁ λόγος καὶ ἡ ὁμοιοσημοσύνη [some fallacies that have to do with expression depend on a double meaning, as –for instance– homonymy, amphiboly and figure of speech]».

<sup>15</sup> This is precisely the way *Anonymus cordubensis* explains why the three are different fallacies, that is, on account of their different *principia apparentiae*. Since «fallaciae distinguuntur penes principia apparentiae, ipsarum fallaciarum diversarum necesse est esse diversa principia [fallacies are told apart mostly by the principles that account for their deceptive appearance, for different fallacies must have different principles]» (*Anonymi Cordubensis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, *Incertorum auctorum quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, G.E.C. Gad, Copenhagen 1977, q. 820, p. 306.10-11), «ad hoc dicitur quod principium apparentiae proprium aequivocationis per quod distinguitur a quolibet loco sophistico est unitas vocis incomplexae secundum materiam et formam. Ex hoc enim patet distinctio eius a fallacia amphiboliae quoniam in amphibolia est unitas vocis complexae, hic autem vocis incomplexae [...]. Distinguitur autem a figura dictionis quoniam in figura dictionis non est unitas vocis incomplexae secundum substantiam vocis, sed solum secundum similitudinem terminationum [The answer to that is: the principle which both accounts for the deception peculiarly associated with homonymy and allows to tell homonymy apart from any other fallacy is the material and formal unity of the single word which happens to be ambiguous. It is thereby evident why the fallacy of homonymy differs from the fallacy of amphiboly, in so far as the unity involved is alternatively the unity of a single expression (homonymy) or the unity of a complex expression (amphiboly) [...]. The fallacy of homonymy also differs from the fallacy of figure of speech, for in the latter the unity involved is not the unity of a single expression according to its substance, but rather the unity according to the similarity between words because of their ending]» (*Anonymi Cordubensis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, q. 820, p. 307.24-35).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. e.g. *Thomae de Aquino (?) de fallaciis*, Ed. by H. F. DONDAINE, Editori di San Tommaso, Roma 1976, p. 405a 16-48 and p. 405b 1-30. *Anonymi C&G 611-II quaestiones in sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, «Texts on Equivocation. Part II. Ca. 1250 - ca. 1310», *CIMAGL*, 68 (1998) 183.17-20. *Radulphi britonis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, *CIMAGL*, 53 (1986) 122.15-19 and 123.15-19.

is both its most important and its most distinctive feature<sup>17</sup>. Another good example is Simon of Faversham, for whom what produces the illusion that a fallacy is a sound argument is the very thing that makes it the fallacy it is. In Simon of Faversham's words, the *causa apparentiae* is to perform a double function, that is, on the one hand, it makes it possible to tell good arguments from bad ones and, on the other hand, it sets any given fallacy apart from any other<sup>18</sup>.

WHEN TAXONOMY FAILS: A CASE STUDY. Sure enough, Aristotle and medieval commentators alike allowed for occasional overlaps between families of fallacies<sup>19</sup>. After all, no stretch of imagination is required to

<sup>17</sup> It is plain that, in the Anonymous' eyes, sophisticated appearances are not only utterly important but that they also make all the difference in taxonomical matters: *Anonymi salmaticensis-florentini quaestiones super Sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, *Incertorum auctorum quaestiones super Sophisticos elenchos*, q. 82, p. 189.25-33: «in fallacia nihil est prius causa apparentiae, cum ex ipsa ratio fallaciae accipitur [...]; a causa enim apparentiae sumitur ratio fallaciae in se et distinctio eius ab omnibus aliis [in a fallacy nothing takes precedence over the cause that accounts for its deceptive appearance, since it is the very thing that makes a given fallacy the fallacy it is [...]; as a matter of fact, the cause that accounts for a fallacy's deceptive appearance accounts also for both its being the fallacy it is and the way it differs from any other fallacy]».

<sup>18</sup> *Simonis de Faverisham quaestiones novae super libro elenchorum*, q. 20, p. 151.27-29: «illud est causa apparentiae in aliqua fallacia quod facit ipsam esse fallaciam et quod facit ipsam esse distinctam ab omnibus aliis [in any fallacy the cause that accounts for its deceptive appearance is the very thing that makes it a fallacy and makes it differ from any other fallacy]». Furthermore, Simon of Faversham will identify the *causa apparentiae* with the formal principle of the fallacy itself: «sicut entia distinguuntur per suas formas ita distinguuntur fallaciae per suas causas apparentiae. Causa enim apparentiae in qualibet fallacia est quid formale. Et ideo fallacia quae habet causam apparentiae distinctam est fallacia distincta [just as things differ because of their forms, fallacies too differ because of the causes that account for their deceptive appearance. In fact, such causes are their formal element. Therefore, two fallacies that have not the same cause that account for their deceptive appearance are different]» (*Simonis de Faverisham quaestiones novae super libro elenchorum*, q. 33, p. 189.22-25).

<sup>19</sup> *Aristotelis sophisticus elenchi* 24, 179b 17: «οὐδὲν δὲ κωλύει τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον πλείους μοχθηρίας ἔχειν [nothing prevents the same argument from having multiple flaws]». Cf. *Anonymi summa sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 417.22-24; *Fallaciae vindobonenses*, Ed. by DE RUIK, *Logica Modernorum*, I, p. 525.26-27; *Anonymi monacensis commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by L. GAZZIERO, «The Latin "Third Man". A Survey and Edition of Texts from the XIII<sup>th</sup> Century», *CIMAGL*, 81 (2012) 42.12-15; *Roberti <Kilwardby> commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, *ibid.*,

fancy nasty quibblers trying more than one trick at a time or clumsy people rambling when reasoning in their heads. But such trespasses are so gross that they are not much of a threat to the integrity of Aristotle's division. That being said, other entanglements are of a more serious nature and may possibly lead to the conclusion that a structural revision of Aristotle's taxonomy is in order, but –then again– such crossings are vouched for by Aristotle himself: the first examples that spring to mind are –of course– the inclusion of the fallacy of consequent within the fallacy of accident and the symmetry between the fallacies of composition and division<sup>20</sup>. Medieval authors provided nice, even funny examples of fallacies open to more than one interpretation<sup>21</sup>. Still, some crossovers are neither trivial nor supported by the text. The one I wish to investigate will turn out to be both disruptive and ill inspired.

p. 52.3-22; *Nicholai parisiensis notulae super librum elenchorum*, *ibid.*, pp. 54.25-55.8; *Roberti codicis veneti commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, *ibid.*, p. 60.6-14; *Roberti de Aucumpno commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, *ibid.*, p. 78.1-14; *Alberti magni expositio sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 938b.

<sup>20</sup> *Aristotelis sophisticorum elenchi* 6, 168b 27-28: «οἱ δὲ παρὰ τὸ ἐπόμενον μέρος εἰσὶ τοῦ συμβεβηκότος [the fallacies of consequent are a subset of those of accident]» (cf. 7, 169b 6-7 et 8, 170a 4-5); 23, 179a 13-15: «παρὰ σύνθεσιν ὁ λόγος, ἢ λύσις διελόντι, εἰ δὲ παρὰ διαίρεσιν, συνθέντι [when arguments turn on composition, they are to be solved by means of a division; when they turn on division, then they are to be solved by means of a composition]» (cf. *Aristotelis ars rhetorica*, Ed. by R. KASSEL, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1976, II, 24, 1401a 25-26 where Aristotle mentions both as one fallacy rather than two: «ἄλλος τὸ <τὸ> δηρημένον συντιθέντα λέγειν ἢ τὸ συγκείμενον διαιροῦντα [another fallacy consists in asserting conjointly what is separated and separately what is conjoined]»).

<sup>21</sup> Medieval humor is not for all tastes, nor are medieval logicians' examples (cf., e.g., those Abelard peppered his gloses on Aristotle's *Peri hermeneias* with, edited by Y. IWAKUMA, «Pierre Abélard et Guillaume de Champeaux dans les premières années du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Une étude préliminaire», in J. BIARD (ed.), *Langage, sciences, philosophie au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Vrin, Paris 1999, p. 95). The argument they usually brought up in order to illustrate fallacies open to more than one solution should be to everybody's liking: «quicumque sunt episcopi sunt sacerdotes; isti asini sunt episcopi; ergo isti asini sunt sacerdotes [all bishops are priests; these asses are bishops (these asses belong to the bishop); therefore, these asses are priests]». Cf. *Tractatus de sophistica argumentatione (Dialectica monacensis)*, p. 562.10-12; *Petri hispani portugalensis tractatus* VII, p. 108.19-20; *Introductiones magistri Guillelmi de Shyrowode in logicam*, Ed. by C. KANN – W. BRANDS, Meiner, Hamburg 1995, VI, p. 172.73-74; *Summa Lamberti*, VII, p. 152.7-28 and pp. 154.28-155.4; *Thomae de Aquino (?) de fallaciis* IV, p. 407a 56-58; *Rogeri Baconi Compendium studii theologiae*, Ed. by T. S. MALONEY, Brill, Leiden 1988, p. 139, 116.22-23.

## 2. Anomalies and random variables

STATING THE PROBLEM: A STRANGE QUESTION AND AN EVEN STRANGER ANSWER. When Medieval Latin commentators asked an odd question, this is usually the sign that either they lacked a piece of information or they were facing an anomaly in processing available data. When their answer proves to be at odds with the basic tenets of a theory they otherwise seem to grasp pretty well, one had better start looking for both. The question I'll be using as a Freudian slip of sorts is very odd indeed and it took the form of a dilemma: «whether the fallacy of figure of speech is a linguistic fallacy or not». The answer is even more telling, since no reader in his right mind would admit, let alone accept that a sophism depending on the shape of words may be independent from expression rather than related to it. And yet this is precisely the claim whose grounds I am going to discuss. For once, the deficit in information is not directly related to the status of the Aristotelian corpus bequeathed to the Latins over the centuries. It has more to do with the fact that no ancient scholium or excerpt had been handed down –via Boethius, James of Venice or the Arabs– about the most thought-provoking piece of argument Aristotle introduced in order to illustrate what figure of speech is and how it works, namely the so called «Third Man». The anomaly is an occasional (albeit very widespread) mismatch between fallacies of accident and fallacies of figure of speech, which easily qualifies as one of the most peculiar episodes in the history of Aristotle's Latin exegesis.

THE FALLACY OF ACCIDENT VS THE FALLACY OF FIGURE OF SPEECH. As a number of interpreters, both ancient and modern, have suggested<sup>22</sup>, the

<sup>22</sup> *Anonymi glosae in Aristotelis Sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by DE RIJK, *Logica Modernorum*, I, p. 214.20-22: «notandum quod “accidens” dicitur hic predicatum, sive de se tantum sive de alio predicetur, sive sit substantiale sive accidentale [it should be noted that “accidens” means here predicate, whether it is predicated of itself or of something else, whether it is essential or accidental]»; cf. p. 214.10: «secundum accidens, idest secundum praedicatum [“secundum accidens”, that is to say predicate related]». *Anonymi summa sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 356.7-10: «“accidens” enim ibi largo modo accipitur, scilicet pro quolibet predicato, sive accidentale sit sive substantiale [“accident” is taken here in a broad sense and means any predicate, whether accidental or essential]». *Anonymi parisiensis compendium sophisticorum elenchorum*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN – Y. IWAKUMA, *CIMAGL*, 60 (1990) 88.19-22: «accidens autem hic appellat Aristoteles praedicatum: cum enim subiectum et accidens relativa sunt, et quod in propositione subicitur subiectum dicatur, non debet mirum videri si eius

fallacy of accident's name does not imply that only accidental features are involved. As it is the case elsewhere in Aristotle's corpus<sup>23</sup> and as it is demonstrated by his own choice of examples<sup>24</sup>, «accidens» means here much the same as «predicate» tout court, that is: without restriction. As its definition goes<sup>25</sup>, the fallacy of accident leads to believe that what is said

praedicatum accidens appelletur [Aristotle calls here “accidens” the predicate. Since the subject and the accident are relative and the subject is said to be underlying, it does not come as a surprise that its predicate is called “accidens”]. *Anonymi cantabrigiensis commentarium in Aristotelis sophisticos elenchos*, 89vb 17-18: «accidens in hac iunctura locutionis “fallacia secundum accidens” dicitur praedicatum sive ipsum sit accidentale praedicabile sive substantiale [“accidens” within the expression “fallacia secundum accidens” means predicate, whether it is something predicated accidentally or essentially]»; cf. 89vb 4-5: «dicitur accidens omne praedicabile sive accidentale sive quod non <est> accidentale sive substantiale [we call “accidens” everything that may be predicated, either accidental or non-accidental, that is to say essential]». *Anonymi fallacie londinenses*, p. 669.4-5: «accidens prout hic accipitur idem est quod praedicatum [the way “accidens” is understood here, it means the same as predicate]». *Guillelmi de Montibus (?) fallaciae*, Ed. by Y. IWAKUMA, «The *Fallaciae* and *Loci* of William de Montibus. An Edition», *Journal of Fukui Prefectural University*, 2 (1993) 15.17-18: «secundum accidens dicitur quasi secundum praedicatum [“secundum accidens” means pretty much the same as “predicate related”]». *Anonymi fallaciae lemovicenses*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN – Y. IWAKUMA, *CIMAGL*, 63 (1993) 30.29: «prout hic dicitur accidens idem est quod praedicatus [what is called here “accidens” is the same as “predicate”]». Modern scholars who hold the same view are, amongst others, M. MIGNUCCI, «Puzzles about Identity. Aristotle and His Greek Commentators», in J. WIESNER (ed.), *Aristoteles. Werk und Wirkung*, W. de Gruyter, Berlin 1985, I, p. 75, D. Zaslavsky, «Le sophisme comme anomalie», in B. CASSIN (ed.), *Le plaisir de parler. Études de sophistique comparée*, Editions de Minuit, Paris 1986, p. 192, and L.-A. DORION, *Aristote. Les réfutations sophistiques*, Presses de l'Université Laval – Vrin, Montréal – Paris 1995, p. 233, note 57.

<sup>23</sup> συμβαίνω and κατηγορέω are synonyms in *Aristotelis topica*, Ed. by J. BRUNSCHWIG, *Les Belles Lettres*, Paris 2007, VII, 1, 152a 33-37 and 152b 25-29, as well as in *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 7, 169b 4-6. Likewise, συμβεβηκός and κατηγορούμενον are synonyms in *Aristotelis analytica posteriora*, Ed. by W. D. Ross, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1949, I, 4, 73b 8-10.

<sup>24</sup> There can be no doubt that being a man is an essential feature of the individual man (cf. *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi*, 5, 166b 33-36) or that being a figure is an essential feature of any given figure, a triangle for instance (cf. *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 6, 168a 40 - 168b 4).

<sup>25</sup> *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 5, 166b 28-32: «note 25: οἱ μὲν οὖν παρὰ τὸ συμβεβηκὸς παραλογισμοὶ εἰσιν ὅταν ὁμοίως ὀτιοῦν ἀξιωθῆ τῷ πράγματι καὶ τῷ συμβεβηκῶτι ὑπάρχειν. ἐπεὶ γὰρ τῷ αὐτῷ πολλὰ συμβέβηκεν, οὐκ ἀνάγκη

of a predicate may be also said of its subject and vice versa<sup>26</sup>. As a result, fallacies of accident occur when one is unable to determine beforehand what belongs to both (the subject and the predicate) and what belongs

πάσι τοῖς κατηγορουμένοις καὶ καθ' οὗ κατηγορεῖται ταῦτά πάντα ὑπάρχειν [fallacies of “accident” occur when a predicate whatsoever is believed to belong in the same way to a thing and to something that is predicated of it. Since many attributes are predicated of the same thing, it is not necessary that all the attributes belong both to the thing and to all of its predicates]».

<sup>26</sup> Medievals acknowledged that the fallacy of accident goes both ways, as the following five examples make it pretty clear. *Anonymi summa sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 356.1-8: «secundum accidens ergo fiunt paralogismi, ut dicit Aristoteles, quando quodlibet similiter fuerit assignatum inesse rei subiectae et accidenti, id est praedicato, et e converso, id est quando idem assignatur convenire accidenti sive praedicato, quod inest et rei subiectae [as Aristotle says, fallacies of accident occur when something whatsoever is similarly said to belong both to the underlying thing and to the accident, that is to say to the predicate, or – the other way round – when it is said to fit the accident, that is to say the predicate, to which it belongs, and the underlying thing]». *Anonymi cantabrigiensis commentarium in Aristotelis sophisticos elenchos*, 89vb 19-21: «ut dicatur fallacia secundum accidens deceptio proveniens ex omissione \habitudinis/ unius praedicabilis ad aliud sive praedicati ad subiectum sive subiecti ad praedicatum [what we call the fallacy of accident is a deception which arises from disregarding the relation of one predicate to the other, whether this relation is the predicate’s relation to the subject or the subject’s relation to the predicate]». *Anonymi fallacie londonenses*, p. 669.6-9: «fallacia secundum accidens est deceptio proveniens ex obmissa habitudine praedicati ad subiectum, vel e converso, quia haec fallacia provenit tam ex obmissa habitudine subiecti ad praedicatum quam ex obmissa habitudine praedicati ad subiectum [the fallacy of accident is a deception which arises from disregarding the relation either of the predicate to the subject or of the subject to the predicate, for such a fallacy arises as much from a neglected relation of the subject to the predicate than from a neglected relation of the predicate to the subject]». *Guillelmi de Montibus (?) fallaciae*, p. 16.1-7: «incidit autem haec fallacia in argumentatione quandoque aliquid assignatur subiecto quod non potest assignari praedicato vel e converso. Est enim fallacia secundum accidens deceptio proveniens ex ommissa habitudine praedicati ad subiectum vel e converso [such a fallacy occurs in arguments which ascribe to the subject what cannot be ascribed to the predicate and vice versa. As a matter of fact, the fallacy of accident is a deception which arises from disregarding the relation either of the predicate to the subject or of the subject to the predicate]». *Anonymi salmaticensis-florentini quaestiones super Sophisticos elenchos*, q. 84, p. 194.24-31: «accidens est aliquo modo idem subiecto de quo dicitur et aliquo modo non, et sic sumitur accidens in fallacia accidentis, ut dicit Commentator, et secundum hoc dicit modos accidentis: uno modo ex eo quod aliquid quod inest praedicato denotatur inesse subiecto, ut “homo est animal, sed animal est

exclusively to either one (alternatively the subject or the predicate)<sup>27</sup>. As far as such determination depends rather on states of affairs than on names, one may safely assume that fallacies of accident have little –if anything at all– to do with linguistic considerations. Moreover, even when such considerations have been forced upon them, fallacies of accident verged on homonymy rather than on figure of speech<sup>28</sup>. Which is one

genus, ergo homo est genus”; alio modo ex eo quod illud quod inest subiecto denotatur inesse praedicato, ut “Socrates est homo, Socrates est individuum, ergo homo est individuum”; et sic duo modi principales sunt [the “accident” is, in a way, the same as the thing it is predicated of and, in another way, it is not. As the Commentator has it, this is how “accident” has to be understood in the fallacy of the same name and how its moods have to be assigned therein. One arises from the fact that what is attributed to the predicate is meant to be predicated of the subject as well, as in: “man is an animal, but animal is a genus, therefore man is a genus”. Another arises from the fact that what is attributed to the subject is attributed to the predicate as well, as in: “Socrates is a man, Socrates is an individual, therefore man is an individual”. This is why there are two main moods of the fallacy of accident]».

<sup>27</sup> *Aristotelis sophisticis elenchi* 7, 169b 3-6: «<169a 22: ἡ δ' ἀπάτη γίνεται> τῶν δὲ παρὰ τὸ συμβεβηκὸς διὰ τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι διακρίνειν τὸ ταῦτὸν καὶ τὸ ἕτερον, καὶ ἓν καὶ πολλά, μηδὲ τοῖς ποίοις τῶν κατηγορημάτων πάντα ταῦτα καὶ τῷ πράγματι συμβέβηκεν [in fallacies of accident the deception arises from the incapacity to distinguish what is the same and what is different, what is one and what is many, as well as from the incapacity to tell which predicates have the same attributes as their subjects]».

<sup>28</sup> Although they should have known better –and some of them actually did, as argued at length in a forthcoming paper in *Acta philosophica: «Exempla docent. How to Make Sense of Aristotle’s Examples of the Fallacy of Accident (Doxography Matters)»*– Latins brought the fallacy of accident and the fallacy of homonymy together on the grounds of a variation in the supposition of the middle term observed in tokens of both types. Cf. *Anonymi summa sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 294.10-16 and pp. 357.25-358.4; *Anonymi fallaciae vindobonenses*, p. 527.11-29; *Anonymi tractatus de sophistica argumentatione (dialectica monacensis)*, p. 585.23-34; *Petri hispani portugalis tractatus VII*, pp. 106, 148.19-293; *Anonymi monacensis commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, p. 42; *Rogeri Baconi summulae dialectices*, Ed. by A. DE LIBERA, *Archives d’Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 54 (1987) 261, 627-629; *Summa Lamberti VII*, pp. 181.28-182.11; *Thomae de Aquino (?) de fallaciis IX*, p. 411a 75-88; *Anonymi salmaticensis-florentini quaestiones super Sophisticos elenchos*, q. 83, p. 192.20-35; *Aegidii romani expositio super libros elenchorum 17ra 40-45*; *Ioannis Duns Scoti quaestiones super librum elenchorum Aristotelis*, Ed. by R. ANDREWS – O. BYCHKOV – S. EBBESEN – G. ETZKORN – G. GAL – R. GREEN – T. NOONE – R. PLEVANO – A. TRAVER, The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure NY 2004, q. 44, p. 471.1-4; *Ioannis Buridani*

more reason Latin commentators should have kept them apart, since they ordinarily took very seriously the difference between homonymy and form of expression, whose «actual» and «imaginary» polysemy they opposed in line with a tradition that –under «Alexander»’s patronage– goes back to Galen through Michael of Ephesus and James of Venice<sup>29</sup>. To make a (very) long story short, homonymy is tantamount to using one word with multiple meanings<sup>30</sup>, while figure of speech occurs when using different

*quaestiones elenchorum*, Ed. by R. VAN DER LECQ – H. A. G. BRAAKHUIS, Ingenium, Nijmegen 1994, q. 14, 73.138-143.

<sup>29</sup> In this connection, *Anonymus digbeianus*, *Anonymus salmaticensis-florentinus*, Simon of Faversham, *Anonymus C&G 611-II*, Duns Scotus and Radulphus Brito especially deserve to be mentioned, for they emphatically underscored such a difference. For the sake of brevity, I will only quote Simon of Faversham’s *Quaestiones veteres super libro elenchorum*: «specialiter distinguitur <fallacia aequivocationis> a figura dictionis, [80] quia in figura dictionis sub unitate vocis secundum substantiam non latent plura significata, sed magis sub similitudine vocis, et quia ibidem non latent plura significata secundum substantiam vocis, ideo dicimus quod ibi est phantastica multiplicitas [the fallacy of homonymy especially differs from the fallacy of figure of speech, for the multiple meanings are not dissimulated by a single word but by a similarity between words. In so far as the multiple meanings involved in figure of speech are not dissimulated by one word only, we call its multiplicity “phantasised”]» (*Simonis de Faverisham quaestiones veteres super libro elenchorum*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN – T. IZBICKI – J. LONGEWAY – F. DEL PUNTA – E. SERENE – E. STUMP, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 1984, q. 19, pp. 79.20-80.25; cf. q. 10, p. 126.59-63. As for the others, cf. *Anonymi digbeiani in sophisticos elenchos*, S. EBBESEN (ed.), *CIMAGL*, 53 (1986) 121.17-22; *Anonymi salmaticensis-florentini quaestiones super Sophisticos elenchos*, qu. 80, 179.1-3 and 179.21-181.59; *Anonymi C&G 611-II quaestiones in sophisticos elenchos*, p. 183.17-30; *Ioannis Duns Scoti quaestiones super librum elenchorum Aristotelis*, q. 42, pp. 465.7-12 and 19-20; *Radulphi britonis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, p. 120.34-36, p. 121.33-34 and p. 125.13-17. The origin and history of the distinction between *multiplex actuale, potentiale et phantasticum* has been meticulously reconstructed by S. EBBESEN, whose «Philoponus, “Alexander” and the Origins of Medieval Logic», in R. SORABJI (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, Duckworth, London 1990, pp. 445-462 is the best place to start looking.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii de divisione liber*, Ed. by J. MAGEE, Brill, Leiden 1998, p. 8.16-30. *Anonymi aurelianensis I commentarium in Sophisticos elenchos*, p. 85 and p. 95. *Fallaciae vindobonenses*, p. 499.3-4. Cf. *Guillelmi de Montibus (?) fallaciae*, p. 6.1-3. *Petri hispani portugalensis tractatus VII*, p. 98.25-26. *Fallaciae ad modum Oxoniae*, p. 20, particularly the Q version. *Roberti Kilwardby (?) commentarium in Sophisticos Elenchos*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, «An Inventory of Texts about Equivocation», *CIMAGL*, 67 (1997) 161.28-30. *Introductiones magistri*

words whose morphological resemblance conveys the illusion that they signify the same thing or the same kind of things<sup>31</sup>. The latter is indeed the sort of quandaries Aristotle had in mind defining fallacies that depend on the form of expression<sup>32</sup>: when things that are not the same are said in

*Guillelmi de Shyrewode in logicam*, VI, p. 170.64 and pp. 172.94-174.102. *Anonymi e Musaeo 133 commentarium in Aristotelis sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, «An Inventory», op. cit., p. 165.12-13 and pp. 165.30-166.3. *Nicholai parisiensis notulae super librum elenchorum*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, «An Inventory», op. cit., p. 170.9-11. *Nicholai parisiensis de fallaciis (summae metenses)*, pp. 474.15-475.3. *Roberti codicis veneti commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, p. 66.13-14. *Summa Lamberti*, VII, p. 148.28-30. *Roberti de Aucumpno commentarium in Sophisticos Elenchos*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, «An Inventory», op. cit., p. 184.14-16, p. 185.10-11 and p. 188.17-19. *Alberti magni expositio sophisticorum elenchorum*, pp. 847b.56-848a.2 and p. 850b.56-59. *Anonymi Basileensis quaestiones in Aristotelis Categorias*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, «Texts on Equivocation. Part II. Ca. 1250 - ca. 1310», *CIMAGL*, 68 (1998) 113.5-11. *Thomae de Aquino (?) de fallaciis*, pp. 405b 32-406a 10. *Anonymi digbeiani in sophisticos elenchos*, pp. 108.28-109.2. *Aegidii romani expositio super libros elenchorum*, 10rb 3-6. *Anonymi Cordubensis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, q. 827, p. 329.43-46. *Anonymi tres quaestiones de aequivocatione*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, «Texts on Equivocation. Part II», p. 129.10-11 and p. 137.8. *Anonymi pragensis quaestiones super Aristotelis sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by D. MURÈ, «Anonymus Pragensis on Equivocation», *CIMAGL*, 68 (1998) 74.2-21 and p. 92.11-13. *Thomae de Wýk fallaciae*, Ed. by S. EBBESEN, «Texts on Equivocation», p. 139.9-14. *Anonymi C&G 611-II quaestiones in sophisticos elenchos*, p. 144.18-22, p. 145.9-10 and 16-30. *Radulphi britonis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, pp. 192.23 - 193.15 and 193.6-7.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Anonymi aurelianensis I Commentarium in Sophisticos elenchos*, p. 124.31-33; *Anonymi Cantabrigiensis Commentarium in Aristotelis sophisticos elenchos*, 88vb; *Fallaciae vindobonenses*, p. 515.4-12; *Fallaciae parvipontanae*, Ed. by DE RIJK, *Logica Modernorum*, I, p. 586.24-26; *Guillelmi de Montibus (?) fallaciae*, p. 13.26-28; *Anonymi tractatus de sophistica argumentatione (dialectica monacensis)*, p. 578.34-35; *Petri hispani portugalensis tractatus VII*, p. 135.11-25; *Fallaciae ad modum Oxoniae*, p. 97-98; *Introductiones magistri Guillelmi de Shyrewode in logicam VI*, p. 188.288-290; *Rogeri baconi summulae dialectices*, p. 254.28-29 and p. 258.6-259.2; *Summa Lamberti VII*, p. 169.5-22; *Alberti magni expositio sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 859.33-43; *Thomae de Aquino (?) de fallaciis*, p. 410b 2-17; *Anonymi digbeiani in sophisticos elenchos*, p. 63.1-4; *Anonymi Cordubensis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, q. 838, pp. 365.100-366.127; *Simonis de Faverisham quaestiones novae super libro elenchorum*, q. 10, p. 128.117-119; *Radulphi britoni quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos* 121-125 (in particular 123.9-19).

<sup>32</sup> *Aristotelis aristoteli elenchi* 4, 166b 10-15: «οἱ δὲ παρὰ τὸ σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως συμβαίνουσιν ὅταν τὸ μὴ ταὐτὸ ὡσαύτως ἐρμηνεύηται, οἷον τὸ

pretty much the same way, this is likely to confuse people about what those things are and how they stand with respect to each other.

STATING THE PROGRAM. After addressing the problem of why the fallacies of accident and of figure of speech do not belong together, we may turn our attention to the rather fortuitous chain of events that brought the two together. In other words, it is time to ask the question: if fallacies of figure of speech depend on linguistic features to such an extent that there is no point in assuming that they do not resort to language itself one way or another, how come then medieval authors repeatedly asked themselves «*utrum figura dictionis sit fallacia in dictione*», which I'll translate without much concern for literality: «whether or not the form of expression, as a source of fallacious reasoning, depends on expression»? *Anonymus salmaticensis-florentinus*<sup>33</sup>,

ἄρρεν θήλυ ἢ τὸ θήλυ ἄρρεν ἢ τὸ μεταξὺ θάτερον τούτων, ἢ πάλιν τὸ ποιὸν ποσὸν ἢ τὸ ποσὸν ποιόν, ἢ τὸ ποιὸν πάσχον ἢ τὸ διακείμενον ποιούν, καὶ τᾶλλα δ' ὡς διήρηται πρότερον [fallacies of figure of speech occur when what is not the same is said in the same way; for instance, when something masculine is designated by means of an expression which is rather feminine, or when something feminine is designated by means of an expression which is rather masculine, or when something neuter is said by means of an expression which is alternatively rather masculine or feminine; or –again– when a quality is said by means of an expression which looks like a term for a quantity or when a quantity is said by means of an expression which looks like a term for a quality; or –again– when an action is said by means of an expression which looks like a term for an affection or when a state is said by means of an expression which looks like a term for an action; and so forth according to the division previously made]». *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi* 7, 169a 29-35: «τῶν δὲ παρὰ τὸ σχῆμα διὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῆς λέξεως. χαλεπὸν γὰρ διελεῖν ποῖα ὡσαύτως καὶ ποῖα ὡς ἑτέρως λέγεται (σχεδὸν γὰρ ὁ τοῦτο δυνάμενος ποιεῖν ἐγγύς ἐστι τοῦ θεωρεῖν τᾶληθές, μάλιστα δ' ἐπίσταται συνεπινεύειν), ὅτι πᾶν τὸ κατηγορούμενόν τινος ὑπολαμβάνομεν τόδε τι, καὶ ὡς ἐν ὑπακούομεν [as far as fallacies of figure of speech are concerned, the deception arises from the similarity among expressions. In fact, it is difficult to tell apart things said in the same way and things said differently (he who is able to do this is almost on the verge of discovering the truth, all the more so will he be able to answer advisedly), for we trust everything predicated of something else to be an individual thing and we understand it as being one]». This is a very strong philosophical point in its own right and a very wise lesson at that: as a matter of course, language by itself teaches us next to nothing about how the world is. Since we talk about different realities as if they were just the same, we simply cannot trust words to tell them apart.

<sup>33</sup> *Anonymi salmaticensis-florentini quaestiones super Sophisticos elenchos*, q. 75, pp. 170.1-172.27.

*Anonymus pragensis*<sup>34</sup>, Duns Scotus<sup>35</sup>, Radulphus Brito<sup>36</sup>, John Buridan<sup>37</sup> and Marsilius of Inghen<sup>38</sup> even devoted entire questions of their commentaries to the problem. How they came to think of the question as a sensible one to ask is a puzzle worth solving. Sten Ebbesen<sup>39</sup>, Irène Rosier-Catach<sup>40</sup> and Andrea Tabarroni<sup>41</sup> have gone a long way in helping us understand more about the

<sup>34</sup> *Anonymi pragensis*, q. 28, pp. 64.8-66.14 asks the question in a slightly different form: «consequenter quaeritur utrum fallacia figurae dictionis habeat principium apparentiae ex parte vocis [the question arises next whether the origin of the fallacy of figure of speech has to do with verbal expression]».

<sup>35</sup> *Ioannis Duns Scoti quaestiones super librum elenchorum Aristotelis*, q. 37, pp. 437.1-443.6: «utrum figura dictionis sit locus in dictione [whether the fallacy of form of expression is a fallacy depending on expression]».

<sup>36</sup> Not only Radulphus Brito asked the question, but he came as close as one can get to give the right answer: «cum dicitur “illa fallacia non est in dictione cuius causa apparentiae sumitur ex parte rei”, verum est. Et cum dicitur quod fallacia figurae dictionis est huiusmodi, falsum est, immo sumitur ex similitudine dictionis cum dictione, vel in modo appellandi vel in concretione vocum. Et cum dicitur quod ista fit quando unum praedicamentum commutatur in aliud, verum est; sed hoc non est per similitudinem sumptam ex parte rei, sed [119] per similitudinem dictionis cum dictione, quae sumpta est ex parte vocis; et si commutatur unum praedicamentum in aliud per similitudinem sumptam ex parte rei, tunc magis habet esse fallacia accidentis [it is true to say that when the cause accounting for a fallacy’s deceptive appearance has to do with how things are, then the fallacy at hand is not a fallacy depending on expression. Nevertheless, if one says that such is the case of form of expression, he is wrong. On the contrary, what causes its deception has to do with the similarity among expressions, either through the way these expressions designate things or through their verbal morphology. Besides, if one says that the fallacy of form of expression occurs when a shift between categories occurs, he is right, but this does not happen because of a similarity between things, rather because of a similarity between expressions. If the shift between two categories is brought about by a similarity between things, then such an argument is rather a fallacy of accident]» (*Radulphi britonis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, qu. 32, pp. 118.38-119.4).

<sup>37</sup> *Ioannis Buridani quaestiones elenchorum*, q. 13, pp. 63-68.

<sup>38</sup> *Marsilii de Inghen quaestiones elenchorum*, Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 5342, qu. 24, ff. 43ra-44vb; Venezia, Marciana, Latina VI. 146 (coll. 2658), qu. 23, f. 143r.

<sup>39</sup> EBBESEN, *Commentators and Commentaries*, I, pp. 197-223.

<sup>40</sup> I. ROSIER, «Évolution des notions d’*equivocatio* et *univocatio* au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle», in I. ROSIER (ed.), *L’ambiguïté*, Presses Universitaires de Lille, Lille 1988, pp. 103-166.

<sup>41</sup> A. TABARRONI, «Figure of Speech and Aristotle’s Division of Fallacies», in C. CELLUCCI – M. C. DI MAIO – G. RONCAGLIA (eds.), *Logica e filosofia della scienza*, ETS, Pisa 1994, pp. 15-24.

problem and related issues (namely, the shifting association of the Boethian inherited fallacy of univocation and –in turn– homonymy, figure of speech and accident). As for today, I would like to add a new element to the picture. In order to do so I will follow a promising thread in an early –possibly the earliest– collection of *quaestiones* on *Sophistici elenchi*, whose author –a Parisian master of the 1270s– S. Ebbesen dubbed *Anonymous cordubensis* after the cordovan library where survives the only manuscript of his work.

### 3. Anonymus C

SACRA PAGINA. *Anonymi cordubensis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, q. 834, 352.14-353.28: «Consequenter quaeritur utrum figura dictionis sit fallacia in dictione. Et quod non videtur: omnis fallacia cuius principium apparentiae est a parte [353] rei et non a parte vocis est fallacia extra dictionem et non in dictione; figura dictionis est huiusmodi; quare et cetera. Maior patet, quia secundum Alexandrum ex hoc dicuntur fallaciae in dictione quia principium apparentiae habent a parte vocis, et fallaciae extra dictionem quia principium apparentiae habent a parte rei. Minor declaratur, nam ex eo quo ratio fallaciae sumitur ex sua causa apparentiae, et in quolibet modo fallaciae manet ratio fallaciae, necesse est in quolibet modo cuiuscumque fallaciae manere eandem causam apparentiae. Nunc in tertio modo figurae dictionis non est principium apparentiae a parte vocis, ut patet ibi: “Coriscus est alter ab homine, ergo est alter a se”, “Coriscus” enim et “homo” nullam convenientiam habent. Quare ibi causa apparentiae erit a parte rei [next the question arises whether the form of expression, as a source of fallacious reasoning, depends on expression. This appears not to be the case. Any fallacy whose appearance has factual rather than verbal grounds is a fallacy independent of expression rather than a fallacy depending on it<sup>[a]</sup>. Such is the case of <the fallacy of> form of expression. This is why, etc. The major premise is obvious, since – according to «Alexander»<sup>[b]</sup>– fallacies, which depend on expression, are so called because of the verbal nature of what produces their illusion; on the other hand, fallacies, which do not depend on expression, are so called because of the factual nature of what produces their illusion. The minor premise is thus to be explained: since a fallacy is what it is on account of what produces its illusion and what makes it the fallacy it is remains the same throughout its modes<sup>[c]</sup>, it is necessary that what produces its illusion remains the same in whichever variety a given fallacy comes.

Now, in the third mode of fallacies that depend on form of expression<sup>[d]</sup>, what produces the illusion does not depend on words, as it becomes clear through this example<sup>[e]</sup>: “Coriscus is other than man; thus he is other than himself”<sup>[f]</sup>. As a matter of fact, the expressions “Coriscus” and “man” have no resemblance at all. This is why what produces here the illusion will be factual in nature]».

Notulae. [a] «OMNIS FALLACIA CUIUS PRINCIPIUM APPARENTIAE EST A PARTE REI ET NON A PARTE VOCIS EST FALLACIA EXTRA DITIONEM ET NON IN DITIONE». I.e. any fallacy whose illusion or (deceptive) appearance depends on the things we say rather than on the way we talk about them falls outside expression. *Anonymus cordubensis* holds fast to what was at that time a commonplace. As a matter of fact, as early as the *Anonymi glosae in Aristotelis Sophisticos elenchos*, p. 205.7-9 and p. 213.27-29 the association between *in dictione* and *a parte vocis*, on the one hand, and *extra ditionem* and *a parte rei*, on the other hand, appears to be taken for granted. As it will be afterwards: cf. *Anonymi summa sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 286.19-21 and p. 353.14-16. *Anonymi parisiensis compendium sophisticorum*, p. 73.2-5. *Anonymi compendiosus tractatus de fallaciis ex codice parisino latino 6674*, Ed. by S. Ebbesen, *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin*, 34 (1979) 186.48-187.1. *Anonymi Aurelianensis I commentarium in Sophisticos elenchos*, pp. 132.29-133.2. *Anonymi Aurelianensis II tractatus de paralogismis*, pp. 51.28-52.2 and p. 157.16-19. *Fallaciae parvipontanae*, p. 551.10-27, p. 552.1-2 and p. 592.5-16. *Anonymi fallacie londinenses*, p. 647.6-8. *Guillelmi de Montibus (?) fallaciae*, p. 15.21-23. *Tractatus de sophistica argumentatione (Dialectica monacensis)*, p. 558.25-27, p. 559.4-6 and p. 584.22-25. *Petri hispani portugalensis tractatus VII*, p. 145.22-25. *Fallaciae ad modum Oxoniae*, 16. *Introductiones magistri Guillelmi de Shyrewode in logicam VI*, p. 168.38-44. *Nicholai parisiensis notulae super librum elenchorum*, Praha Knihovna Metropolitni Kapituli, L.76 (1322), p. 61vb. *Nicholai parisiensis de fallaciis (summae metenses)*, p. 474.1-10. *Rogeri baconi summulae dialectices*, pp. 239.26 - 240.9. *Summa Lamberti VII*, p. 146.20-36. *Alberti magni expositio sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 846b 33-46. *Thomae de Aquino (?) de fallaciis IV*, pp. 405a 44 - 405b 6 and p. 411a 1 - 411b 11. *Anonymi salmaticensis-florentini quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, q. 35, p. 65.9-10. *Aegidii romani expositio super libros elenchorum 27va 17-24 and 49rb 62 - 62va 15*. *Simonis de Faverisham quaestiones novae super libro elenchorum*, q. 1, p. 106.95-

99. *Anonymi pragensis*, q. 28, p. 64.13-15. *Radulphi britonis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, p. 118.7-10 and p. 122.3-4.

[b] «SECUNDUM ALEXANDRUM». As he already did in *quaestio* 820 (p. 306.4-9) on this very issue, *Anonymus C* appeals here to the authority of what was believed to be Alexander of Aphrodisias' exegesis of Aristotle's *Sophistici elenchi*. The reference made to «Alexander» is merely a way of reproducing the traditional alternative, with a peculiar twist nonetheless, for the Anonymous is about to misapply it in his attempt to show –against Aristotle<sup>42</sup> and, one might add, against exegetical common sense– that «form of expression» is a sophistic trick which does not depend on linguistic expression rather than one which exploits it to its advantage.

[c] «IN QUOLIBET MODO FALLACIAE MANET RATIO FALLACIAE». Such continuity is quite understandable and reflects the fact that –as a general rule– fallacies related to the same family are to be solved in one and the same way<sup>43</sup>. It is nonetheless about to backfire and become a rather strong argument against *Anonymus cordubensis* view. As a matter of fact, the same consideration may be put forward to prove the opposite, as an interesting development in a relatively close text is to show: «sed illud non videtur omnino esse verum, quia ratio fallaciae sumitur a principio apparentiae. Si igitur sit fallacia una in quolibet modo, oportet principium manere unum in quolibet modo; et cum in figura dictionis principium apparentiae sit unitas vocis secundum qualitatem sub qua latent plura, cum similis modus appellandi non necessario habeat similitudinem vocis, non est hoc sufficiens ad principium in hac fallacia [but this does not appear to be entirely true, since a fallacy is what it is on account of what produces its illusion. Now, if a fallacy is the same throughout its modes, what makes a fallacy what it is will necessarily be the same in each mode. Further, given that what produces the illusion in a fallacy of the form of expression is the qualitative unity of words which happen to stand for multiple things, in so far as similar designations are not necessarily expressed in the same way, this is not enough to cause that particular fallacy]» (*Anonymi salmaticensis-florentini quaestiones super Sophisticos elenchos*, q. 76, p 173.40-46 ; cf. q. 74, pp. 169.22 - 170.31).

[d] «IN TERTIO MODO FIGURAE DITIONIS». *Anonymus C* refers to the well-known confusion between a «this something» and «what qualifies it as the something it is» («*ex mutatione quale quid in hoc aliquid*»). Since

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *Aristotelis sophisticos elenchi* 4, 165b 23-27 (quoted above, note 3).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Aristotelis sophisticos elenchi* 20, 177b 31-33 and 24, 179b 11-12.

A.J. Smith, «TODE TI in Aristotle», *The Classical Review*, 35, 1921, p. 19 the issue has been widely studied. Two essential readings deserve a special mention: J. Kung, «Aristotle on Thises, Suches and the Third Man Argument», *Phronesis*, 26, 1981, pp. 207-247 and S. Ebbesen, «*Hoc aliquid - Quale quid* and the Signification of Appellatives», *Philosophia*, 5-6, 1975-1976, pp. 370-392.

[e] «UT PATET IBI». What follows is very much the linchpin of *Anonymus C*'s argument, which he regarded himself as the most substantial piece of evidence in order to prove that this mode of *figura dictionis* may be set apart from the others and be removed –so to speak– from within the sphere of language.

[f] «CORISCUS EST ALTER AB HOMINE, ERGO EST ALTER A SE». What we have here is a distinguished argument in an abridged form. The missing premise –which is to be supplied from *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi*, 5, 166b 33–being: «Coriscus est homo [Coriscus is a man]».

LECTURA. This is hardly the most memorable piece of Aristotelian scholarship the Latin Middle Ages left us, but it is most certainly a text that has the qualities of its faults. Three deserve to be pointed out in particular:

1. One of *Anonymus C*'s assumptions rests on an apocryphal source: the Latin version of a commentary by Alexander of Aphrodisias whose original greek version, if it ever existed, was long lost.
2. *Anonymus C* built his case on an example –«Coriscus est alter ab homine, ergo est alter a se»– which is both as Aristotelian as it gets and remarkably out of place.
3. *Anonymus C* hammered home his view by stating that «homo» and «Coriscus» bear no discernible similarity.

PARERGA. Before taking up point two, which is by far the most important, a few words will suffice to explain why one may leave aside issues one and three:

1. It is true that *Anonymus C* trusted an authority which we know today is not the one he thought it to be. However, it doesn't really matter whether he took so basic a principle of Aristotelian doctrine as the distinction between paralogisms *in dictione* and *extra dictionem* –directly– from Aristotle or –indirectly– from Pseudo-Alexander. Furthermore, the enigma of the «Latin Alexander» has been brilliantly solved by Sten Ebbesen, who has proved that the

alleged Latin fragments of a lost Greek commentary by Alexander of Aphrodisias are, in fact, a set of scholia James of Venice drew from Micheal of Ephesus' commentary on Aristotle's *Sophistici elenchi*<sup>44</sup>.

3. It is also true that *Anonymus C*'s morphological speculations are completely beside the point. For one thing, he must have known very little Greek in order to miss the fact that, while «homo» and «Coriscus» do not bear any resemblance, Κορίσκος and ἄνθρωπος do have the same form of expression. For another, he must have had very peculiar linguistic notions in order to believe that one may explain anything about what happens in his own language because of what happens in another. However, since the argument is an aristotelian example of the fallacy of accident<sup>45</sup>, it would reach its conclusion whatever the morphology of the words involved.

TRANSLATION MATTERS. When it comes to the second issue we encountered, it is an entirely different story. In fact, treating the «Coriscus other than himself» argument as a fallacy of figure of speech provides us with a lead as to how and why *accidens* ended up playing a key role in a discussion whose focus is *figura dictionis*, a different type of fallacy altogether. Since *Anonymus cordubensis* is far from being an isolated case, there's only one plausible explanation for the consensus Latins reached over this particular issue, which is that the connection between the «Coriscus other than himself» argument and the fallacy of figure of speech was hinted at in Aristotle's text itself. When Latin scholars rediscovered Aristotle's *Sophistici elenchi* –that is, about the time of Peter Abelard, Thierry of Chartres and Adam of Balsham (mid-XII<sup>th</sup> century)– it was by and large through Boethius' translation<sup>46</sup>. Not only did Boethius take a few

<sup>44</sup> S. EBBESEN himself tells the story of «Alexander»'s recovery in «The Greek under the Latin and the Latin under the Greek», *Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction. Collected Essays of Sten Ebbesen. Volume 1*, Ashgate, Aldershot – Burlington 2008, pp. 1-7, a text philologists and philosophers alike should read each and every morning before starting to work.

<sup>45</sup> *Aristotelis Sophistici elenchi* 5, 166b 32-33: «οἷον “εἰ ὁ Κορίσκος ἕτερον ἀνθρώπου, αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ ἕτερος· ἔστι γὰρ ἄνθρωπος” [for instance, if Coriscus is other than man, he is other than himself, for he is a man]».

<sup>46</sup> Cf. L. MINIO-PALUELLO, «Boezio, Giacomo Veneto, Guglielmo di Moerbeke, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples e gli “Elenchi sophistici”», *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolas-*

liberties with the text –mainly in the choice of examples<sup>47</sup>– but –what is more– he changed for good the face of at least one argument related to the form of expression.

THE «THIRD MAN» ARGUMENT AND ITS LATIN AVATAR. It would require much labour to fully discuss the «Third man» argument. Besides, as it will soon become clear, its reconstruction is not –strictly speaking– required. A minimal account will do<sup>48</sup>. As conveyed by its conclusion (ὅτι ἔστι κτλ.) –

*tica*, 44 (1952) 399-400; «Jacobus Veneticus Grecus. Canonist and Translator of Aristotle», *Traditio*, 8 (1952) 265-304; «Gli “Elenchi sophistici”: redazioni contaminate colla ignota versione di Giacomo Veneto (?); frammenti dello ignoto commento d’Alessandro di Afrodisia tradotti in latino», *Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica*, 46 (1954) 222-231; «Giacomo Veneto e l’Aristotelismo Latino», in A. PERTUSI (ed.), *Venezia e l’Oriente fra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Sansoni, Firenze 1966, pp. 53-74. B. G. DOD, *Praefatio*, in *Aristoteles latinus. De sophisticis elenchis. Translatio Boethii, Fragmenta Translationis Iacobi et Recensio Guillelmi de Moerbeke*, Brill, Leiden 1975, pp. XII-XIV; «Aristoteles latinus», in N. KRETZMANN – A. KENNY – J. PINBORG (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy. From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism (1100-1600)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1982, pp. 45-79. S. EBBESEN, «Jacobus Veneticus on the *Posterior Analytics* and Some Early 13<sup>th</sup> Century Oxford Masters on the *Elenchi*», *CIMAGL*, 21 (1977) 1-9; «Anonymi Aurelianensis I commentarium in *Sophisticos elenchos*. Introduction: Boethius, Jacobus Veneticus, Michael Ephesius and “Alexander”», *CIMAGL*, 34 (1979) p. xxxvii; «Review Article. Union Académique Internationale Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Academiarum consociatarum auspiciis et consilio editum. *Aristoteles Latinus VI 1-3 De Sophisticis Elenchis Translatio Boethii, Fragmenta Translationis Iacobi, et Recensio Guillelmi de Moerbeke*, Edidit Bernardus G. DOD, Brill, Leiden & Desclée de Brouwer, Bruxelles 1975, pp. XLII + 152», *Vivarium*, 17 (1979) 69-80.

<sup>47</sup> A few Westerners seem to have been aware of the fact that Boethius did not translate but rather adapted (from Vergil and Horace) two of Aristotle’s examples. Cf. *Anonymi summa sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 326.1-8; *Anonymi parisiensis compendium sophisticorum*, p. 84.23-28; *Anonymi aurelianensis I commentarium in Sophisticos elenchos*, p. 123.3-4 and p. 123.26-33; *Anonymi Cantabrigiensis commentarium in Aristotelis sophisticos elenchos*, 88Vb. Cf. L. MINIO-PALUELLO, «The Text of Aristotle’s *Topics* and *Sophistici elenchi*. The Latin Tradition», *The Classical Quarterly*, 5 (1955) 110.

<sup>48</sup> Interested readers will find a more detailed story in L. GAZZIERO, «“*Et quoniam est quis tertius homo*”. Argument, exégèse, contresens dans la littérature latine apparentée aux *Sophistici elenchi* d’Aristote», *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 80 (2013) 7-48. Relevant sources have been edited in L. GAZZIERO, «The Latin “Third Man”», op. cit., pp. 11-93.

which is, anyway, all *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi*, 22, 178b 36 - 179a 10 has to offer— the argument aims at inferring the existence of a third man (α τρίτος ἄνθρωπος precisely) besides man himself (παρ’ αὐτὸν) and individual men (καὶ τοὺς καθ’ ἕκαστον). Even if Aristotle’s main concern is to explain how to avoid the «Third man» rather than to recount the argument itself, one can be reasonably sure that the decisive move is to bring about the idea that the universal is on a par with the particulars whose universal it is, for —as Aristotle says in 179a 4-5— «οὐτὸ ἐκτίθεσθαι δὲ ποιεῖ τὸν τρίτον ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὅπερ τόδε τι εἶναι συγχωρεῖν [setting apart does not produce the “Third Man”, rather the admission that <what is set apart> is an individual thing]». All of which makes excellent sense, given that Aristotle thought that —no matter how dire the consequences— being wrong about which is which between particulars and universals is an easy mistake to make and, more to the point, a mistake we cannot easily avoid because of what can only be described as a fact of language. In fact, not only is it most natural to assume that everything we say refers to something that exists<sup>49</sup>, but such delusion is all the more likely to occur when talking about substances, as one can easily draw from a well-known passage of Aristotle’s *Categories*<sup>50</sup>, where the way we name things is held responsible

<sup>49</sup> *Aristotelis sophistic elenchi*, 6, 168a 25-26: «σύνηθες γὰρ τὸ πάντα ὡς τόδε τι σημαίνειν [we usually speak of everything as though it were an individual thing]»; cf. 7, 169a 33-34: «πᾶν τὸ κατηγορούμενόν τινος ὑπολαμβάνομεν τόδε τι [we trust everything predicated of something else to be an individual thing]».

<sup>50</sup> *Aristotelis Categoriae*, Ed. by R. BODÉUS, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2001, 5, 3b 10-18: «πᾶσα δὲ οὐσία δοκεῖ τόδε τι σημαίνειν. ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν πρώτων οὐσιῶν ἀναμφισβήτητον καὶ ἀληθές ἐστιν ὅτι τόδε τι σημαίνει ἄτομον γὰρ καὶ ἐν ἀριθμῷ τὸ δηλούμενόν ἐστιν. ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν δευτέρων οὐσιῶν φαίνεται μὲν ὁμοίως τῷ σχήματι τῆς προσηγορίας τόδε τι σημαίνειν, ὅταν εἴπῃ ἄνθρωπον ἢ ζῶον· οὐ μὴν ἀληθές γε, ἀλλὰ μάλλον ποιόν τι σημαίνει, - οὐ γὰρ ἐν ἐστὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ὡσπερ ἡ πρώτη οὐσία, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πολλῶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος λέγεται καὶ τὸ ζῶον. οὐχ ἀπλῶς δὲ ποιόν τι σημαίνει, ὡσπερ τὸ λευκόν· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο σημαίνει τὸ λευκὸν ἀλλ’ ἢ ποιόν, τὸ δὲ εἶδος καὶ τὸ γένος περὶ οὐσίαν τὸ ποιόν ἀφορίζει -, ποιᾶν γὰρ τινα οὐσίαν σημαίνει [it looks like every substance refers to an individual thing. As far as primary substances are concerned it is true and undisputable that each refers to an individual thing, for what we refer to is something particular and one in number. As for the secondary substances, on the other hand, they seem to refer to an individual thing, as when we say “man” or “animal”, on account of the form of denomination (τῷ σχήματι τῆς προσηγορίας). Yet, this is not true, for they rather signify something that is such and such. In fact, the subject is not one, as in the case of primary substances; in fact, man and animal are said

for this confusion: the form of appellatives being roughly the same in all cases, it is not by means of a linguistic analysis that one shall settle whether a given name refers to a particular or to a universal thing. Be that as it may, Boethius' translation of «καὶ ὅτι ἔστι τις τρίτος ἄνθρωπος παρ' αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς καθ' ἕκαστον» was to change the game altogether, since it sounds «et quoniam est quis tertius homo A SE ET AB UNOQUOQUE», which is as literal as it gets, except for the fact that Boethius translated as if his Greek model read αὐτὸν instead of αὐτὸν<sup>51</sup>. As a result, Latin commentators understood the expression *tertius a se* as if it meant either *diversus a se* (different from himself) or *alter a se* (other than himself), which –as far as I know– they did without exception<sup>52</sup>. Such understanding proved fatal for the «Third man».

of many things. That being said, secondary substances do not mean a quality tout court, as white does. As a matter of fact, white means just a quality, whereas species and genus have more to do with a determination of the substance, they rather signify what qualifies a given substance as the substance it is]. For all practical purposes, the σχῆμα τῆς προσηγορίας is synonymous with the σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως of the fallacy of the same name: προσηγορία is the denomination according to a certain name (the term occurs in Aristotle's definition of παρώνυμα in chapter one of the *Categories*: «παρώνυμα δὲ λέγεται ὅσα ἀπὸ τινος διαφέροντα τῇ πῶσει τὴν κατὰ τοῦνομα προσηγορίαν ἔχει, οἷον ἀπὸ τῆς γραμματικῆς ἢ ἡ ὁ γραμματικὸς καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνδρείας ὁ ἀνδρεῖος [we call paronym things that are named after something else through a flexion of the name of the latter: for instance, grammarian is named after grammar and brave after bravery]» (*Aristotelis Categoriae*, 1, 1a 12-15). Both notion and their relation have been thoroughly dealt with by F. Ildéphonse, «*Ta skhêmata tês lexeôs*», in M. S. CELENTANO – P. CHIRON – M.-P. NOËL (eds.), *Skhêma/Figura. Formes et figures chez les Anciens. Rhétorique, philosophie, littérature*, Editions Rue d'Ulm/ENS, Paris 2004, pp. 143-157.

<sup>51</sup> Since it is more than likely that the oncial letters of his manuscript lacked diacritical marks, it does not come as a surprise that Boethius got the breathing wrong.

<sup>52</sup> *Roberti Grosseteste quod fertur commentarium in Sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by L. GAZZIERO, «The Latin “Third Man”», op. cit., pp. 30-32; *Petri hispani portugalsensis tractatus VIII*, pp. 141.31-143.19; *Anonymi Monacensis Commentarium in Sophisticos Elenchos*, pp. 33-44; *Roberti Kilwardby (?) commentarium in Sophisticos Elenchos*, pp. 45-53; *Nicholai Parisiensis Notulae super librum elenchorum*, 54-59; *Roberti <Kilwardby ?> commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, pp. 60-67; *Roberti de Aucumpno commentarium in Sophisticos Elenchos*, pp. 68-82; *Alberti magni expositio sophisticorum elenchorum*, pp. 938b-939a; *Roberti anglici commentarium in Sophisticos elenchos*, Ed. by L. GAZZIERO, «The Latin “Third Man”», op. cit., pp. 83-87; *Thomae de Aquino (?) de fallaciis IX*, p. 411.66-81; *Anonymi salmaticensis-florentini quaestiones super Sophisticos elenchos*, q. 80, pp. 179-185; *Aegidii Romani expositio super libros Elenchorum*, 54va-55rb; *Anonymi bavarici lectura super librum*

To make another long story short, this is how the argument was refined out of existence: Latin commentators just lost sight of the «Third man» as an argument and resorted to those they had at hand in order to make sense of what they read. As it happens, they had the good fortune and the flair to find a perfect match in Aristotle's discussion of the fallacies of accident. As true to the text as Boethius allowed them to be, they were brought to take the «tertius a se» apart from the «ab unoquoque». Instead of thinking of them as two clauses of one and the same conclusion («there is a "third man" beside man and individual men»), Latin commentators considered the «tertius a se» and the «ab unoquoque» as two different conclusions («a given man is other than himself» and «he is other than any other man»). Therefore, if there are two conclusions instead of one, there are also two arguments rather than one. This split issue became the standard story and we find it repeated time and again in the XIII<sup>th</sup> and XIV<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>53</sup>. If the second line of reasoning, which stipulates that a man differs from any other («ab unoquoque»), is usually treated as a mere repetition of the first, whose conclusion is that a man differs from himself («a se»)<sup>54</sup>, Latin commentators displayed sometimes an uncanny ingenuity. The palm of sophistication goes to *Anonymus bavaricus* who most of the time rates as an average, run-of-the-mill commentator. On this occasion, nevertheless, he outdid himself

*Elenchorum*, Ed. by L. GAZZIERO, «The Latin "Third Man"», op. cit., pp. 88-91; *Anonymi Cordubensis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, q. 838, pp. 362-366; *Simonis de Faverisham quaestiones novae super libro elenchorum*, q. 19, pp. 148-150; *Ioannis Duns Scoti quaestiones super librum elenchorum Aristotelis*, q. 41, pp. 459-463; *Anonymi expositio super libros Elenchorum*, Ed. by L. GAZZIERO, «The Latin "Third Man"», op. cit., pp. 92-93.

<sup>53</sup> *Anonymus monacensis* is as good an example as any and more explicit than most: «"QUONIAM QUIS HOMO", id est aliquis homo, "EST TERTIUS", id est diversus a se ipso. Et per hoc habetur conclusio primi paralogismi. "ET AB UNOQUOQUE", id est aliquis homo potest concludi esse diversus ab unoquoque alio. Et per hoc habetur conclusio secundi paralogismi ["QUONIAM QUIS HOMO", that is: a certain man; "EST TERTIUS", that is: is different from himself; and we have here the conclusion of the first sophism. "ET AB UNOQUOQUE", that is: it may be inferred that a certain man is different from any other. And we have here the conclusion of the second sophism]» (*Anonymi monacensis commentarium in Sophisticos Elenchos*, p. 35).

<sup>54</sup> *Anonymi monacensis commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, p. 35; *Roberti <Kilwardby> commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, p. 46; *Roberti de Aucumpno commentarium in sophisticos elenchos*, p. 69; *Alberti magni expositio sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 938b 21-33; *Roberti anglici commentarium in Sophisticos elenchos*, p. 83; *Aegidii romani expositio super libros elenchorum* 54va 3-7.

(and everybody else in the process). As a matter of fact, not only did he pull two arguments out of his sleeve where there was only one to begin with, but he also managed to match them perfectly with the first and the second example Aristotle offered of the fallacy of accident<sup>55</sup>. If symmetry is the seal of truth, seldom two wrongs came so close to make a right.

EPILEGOMENA. Whether in its more subtle formula or in its ordinary capacity, the appeal of this solution was immensely strong. While nothing in Aristotle's words pointed in its direction, the association of the «Third man» and the «Coriscus other than himself» sophism proved so successful that more than one Latin reader believed he found it in Aristotle's text itself. Around 1280, Simon of Faversham –who was neither the first nor the last to do so<sup>56</sup>– quoted Aristotle himself as the final authority on the issue:

<sup>55</sup> *Anonymi bavarici lectura super librum Elenchorum*, p. 88: «Primus parallogismus formatur sic: “ab homine Coriscus est alter; Coriscus est homo; ergo, alter a se”. Conclusionem solum ponit cum dicit: “ET QUONIAM QUIS”: id est, aliquis est homo tertius a se et paralogizetur sicut dictum est. Tunc ponit alium cum dicit: “Coriscus est alter a Platone et Plato est homo, ergo alter ab homine”. Conclusionem ponit cum dicit “ET AB UNOQUOQUE” [the first paralogism goes like this: “Coriscus is other than man; therefore he is other than himself”. Aristotle states the conclusion only: “ET QUONIAM QUIS”, that is to say: some man is other than himself, and the paralogism is argued for as it has been said. Then he brings about the other paralogism: “Coriscus is other than Socrates; Socrates is a man; therefore Coriscus is other than man”. Aristotle states the conclusion when he says: “ET AB UNOQUOQUE”]». NOTA BENE: «ab homine Coriscus est alter; Coriscus est homo; ergo, alter a se» is none other than the first fallacy of accident Aristotle discussed at the beginning of chapter 5 of *Sophistici elenchi* (quoted above, note 45); while «Coriscus est alter a Platone et Plato est homo, ergo alter ab homine» –apart from the fact that Plato has replaced Socrates– is pretty much the same as the second fallacy of accident Aristotle discussed right after the first we just mentioned: «ἢ εἰ Σωκράτους ἕτερος, ὁ δὲ Σωκράτης ἄνθρωπος, ἕτερον ἀθρώπου φασὶν ὡμολογηκέναι διὰ τὸ συμβεβηκέναι οὐ ἔφησεν ἕτερον εἶναι, τοῦτον εἶναι ἄνθρωπον [otherwise, if Coriscus is other than Socrates, since Socrates is a man, they pretend that it has been admitted that he is other than man because of the fact that man is predicated of Socrates and Coriscus is said to be other than Socrates]» (*Aristotelis sophisticis elenchi* 5, 166b 33-36).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *Petri hispani portugalsensis tractatus VII*, p. 142.4-8; *Roberti <Kilwardby> Commentarium in Sophisticos elenchos*, p. 51; *Nicholai parisiensis notulae super librum elenchorum*, p. 54; *Alberti magni expositio sophisticorum elenchorum*, p. 939a; *Anonymi salmaticensis-florentini quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, q. 80, p. 179.21-23 and q. 85, p. 196.16-21; *Anonymi Cordubensis quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, q. 838, p. 363.32-33; *Ioannis Duns Scoti quaestiones super librum elenchorum Aristotelis*, q. 41, p. 460.14-17.

«Philosophus dicit, secundo huius, quod hic est figura dictionis: “Coriscus est alter ab homine; ergo, Coriscus est alter a se” [says the Philosopher, in the second book <of the *Sophistici elenchi*>, that we have here a case of fallacy of figure of speech: “Coriscus is other than man ; therefore he is other than himself”]»<sup>57</sup>. It would not be historically accurate to say that the collapse of the Latin «Third man» brought alone the fallacy of accident and the fallacy of figure of speech together. That said, the exegetical anomaly it turned out to be soon became the single strongest reason in favour of this unlikely association. At any rate, it proved compelling enough to make Latin commentators wonder whether some fallacies of form of expression fall outside expression itself and to persuade some of them that, contrary to all expectations, this may well be the case.

<sup>57</sup> *Simonis de Faverisham quaestiones novae super libro elenchorum*, q. 19, p. 148.17-18. As is well known, a distinctive feature of the Latin tradition of Aristotle’s tract was its division in two books: the first ends at 16, 175 where the second begins. This division is –in all probability– a Latin invention, for there is no trace of it in Aristotle nor in the Greek and Byzantine tradition. That being said, it is far from arbitrary. As a matter of fact, the first fifteen chapters of Aristotle’s work’s focus is upon sophistic objectives (*metae*) and techniques (*fallaciae*). From chapter 16 on, Aristotle’s attention turns to the ways we can counter or neutralize sophistic arguments.

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**FORMAL APPROACHES AND NATURAL  
LANGUAGE IN MEDIEVAL LOGIC**

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