1. Introduction

In *Topics*, I, 4-5 Aristotle introduces and describes the so-called ‘four predicables’: definition (φιλοσοφία), property (φύσιν), genus (γένος) and accident (συμβεβηκός). These notions single out the four basic ways in which a predicate can belong to a certain subject. As forms of predicative relations between terms, the predicables are not types of predicate as rather types of predication. They are relational items: no predicate is a priori or simpliciter a property or an accident, but only with reference to a certain subject. For example, ‘biped’ is a property of a human being but an accident of a dog who lost two paws. Further, inasmuch as Aristotle demonstrates, through induction (διά της ἐξαπόσπασης) and deduction (διά συλλογισμοῦ), the completeness of the classification of the predicables in *Topics*, I, 8 (103b6-19), they constitute a ‘system’, i.e. a unitary, complete and organized set. As a result, the four predicables form a

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1 Aristotle does not have a common name for these four notions. He frequently uses either the word ‘genera’ (γένη) or phrases with no substantive, cf. Brunschwig, *Aristote. Topiques cit.*, p. xlvi n.1.

2 There are clues to speculate that he could have used κατηγορία or κατηγορούμενα, cf. infra, pp. 5 and 10. ‘Predicables’ is a calque of the Latin word praeicabilia introduced in the Middle Ages, perhaps to distinguish these items from the ten ‘categories’ (praedicamenta).


4 More precisely, Aristotle proves that every proposition (πρότασις) or problem (πρόβλημα) expresses one of the predicative relations conveyed by the four predicables (a claim stated and left unproved at 101b17-25). However, despite Aristotle’s demonstration in I, 8 and his mention of
system of predication. The theoretical issue tackled by Aristotle through this system is a relevant one and might be expressed by this question: which are all the possible types of predication one can make of an object? His answer, in this context, is the following: when a predicate $P$ is (truly) predicated of a subject $S$, then $P$ must be either a definition, or a genus, or a property or an accident of $S$.

In *Topics*, I, 9, according to the interpretation I attempt to support, Aristotle introduces another system of predication, consisting of ten items. He distinguishes this system from the predicables and explores their mutual relationship. These two systems, I maintain, cut across each other and their relationship is semantic in nature (§2). Further, this second list of kinds of predications ($κατηγορίες$) introduced in I, 9 is nearly identical with the list of items signified by the ‘things said without any combination’ ($τα ἐκ μὴ συνθέσεως λεγόμενα$) presented in Chapter 4 of the *Categories*\(^4\). It is widely agreed that these are the two most complete lists of ‘categories’ in the *Corpus Aristotelicum*. The only difference between them is their first member, which in the *Topics* is called ‘what it is’ ($τι ἐστι$), while in the *Categories* is ‘substance’ ($ὁνάτο$). Commentators have often identified these two lists and their first members, I argue, on the contrary, that the lists of *Topics*, I, 9 (henceforth T-categories) and *Categories*, 4 (C-categories)\(^5\) cannot be considered identical and that Aristotle not only separate them but also explains their connection (§3).

2. Two systems of predication: a semantic interpretation

In the opening sentence of I, 9, Aristotle introduces ten $κατηγορίες$ and connects them to the four predicables. Next, he lists these $κατηγορίες$ and makes clear the nature of this connection.

«Now, after these things, we have to determine the kinds of predications in which the four aforementioned <predications> are found. They are ten in number: what

\(^1\) ‘four items’ throughout Book I (cf. e.g. 4, 101b16-25), the number of the predicables distinguished by Aristotle is not an uncontroversial question. As *Barnes*, *Porphyry. Introduction* cit., pp. 30-31 remarks, there are reasons to maintain that Aristotle intended his fourfold scheme as a provisional one and there are passages suggesting a possible extension thereof, e.g. separating difference from genus (cf. IV, 6, 128a20-29). This might also explain why Aristotle’s followers, from Theophrastus to Porphyry, did not hesitate to reduce or increase the number of the predicables. Nonetheless, even though I do not take the word ‘system’ in too strong a sense and not exclude possible variations in Aristotle’s view, I think that, as far as Book I is concerned, there is little doubt that Aristotle has in mind a classification of exactly four predicative relations. More in detail, he explicitly includes difference under genus (cf. 4, 101b17-19). Cf. also M. Malink, *Categories in Topics I.9*, *Rhizai*, 4, 2007, pp. 271-294: p. 281.


\(^3\) I take from Malink, *Categories* cit. the denominations T-categories and C-categories.
it is, of a certain quantity, of a certain quality, relative to something, somewhere, at some time, lying, having, acting, being affected. For the accident, the genus, the property and the definition are always in one of these predications. For all the propositions <formed> by means of them [viz. accident, genus, property and definition] signify either what it is, or of a certain quantity, of a certain quality or one of the other predications »6.

In what follows I first address the meaning of γένη τῶν κατηγοριῶν and try to justify why I take the list at 103b22-23 as a second ‘system of predication’. Then, I argue for a semantic interpretation of the relationship between the four predicables and these ten kinds of predication.

Some interpreters have claimed that a κατηγορία is either a ‘predicate’ or a ‘predication’7. In I, 9 there are five occurrences of this term (103b20-21, 25, 26-27, 29, 38-39)6. Following Frede, I maintain that the most appropriate translation is ‘predication’ throughout the chapter, with the single exception of b29, where ‘predicate’ must be preferred8. I shall account for this exception below. Three chief reasons support the choice for ‘predication’ in all the other cases.

(1) The other six occurrences of this term in the Topics (107a3; 109b5; 141a4; 152a38; 178a5; 181b27) very likely have this meaning and at least three of them (109b5; 141a4; 181b27) must do so.

(2) In b21 we read the phrase αἱ ῥηθέεισα τέταρτες (‘the four aforementioned’). As Alexander of Aphrodisias already observed, this phrase is of course elliptical (‘the...

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6 103b20-27: μετὰ τοῦν ταῦτα ἄριστος τὰ γένη τῶν κατηγοριῶν ἐν ὑπάρχοντι αἱ ῥηθέεισαι τέταρτες. ἂν δὲ τάτα τῶν ὀρισθέντων δέκα, τί ἔστι, ποσόν, ποιὸν, πρὸς τοῦ, ποτέ, κεῖσθαι, ἔχειν, ποιὸν, πάσχειν. ἄριστος γὰρ τὸ συμβεβηκός καὶ τὸ γένος καὶ τὸ ἰδιων καὶ ὁ ὀρίσθεν ἐν μία τούτων τῶν κατηγοριῶν ἔσται: πάσα γὰρ αἱ διὰ τῶν προτετάσιμα ἢ τί ἔστι ή ποσόν ἢ ποιὸν ἢ τῶν ἄλλων τινά κατηγορίων σημαίνοντα.


8 Only in the first occurrence κατηγορία is preceded by τὸ γένος. Otherwise Aristotle simply uses τῶν κατηγοριῶν and dismisses the previous phrase, apparently referring to the same objects. Thus, τὸ γένος τῶν κατηγοριῶν is equivalent to the simple κατηγορία. According to R. Smith, Aristotle: Topics. Books I-VIII with excerpts from related texts, Translated with a Commentary, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1997, p. 74, similar equivalences occur also in AP-, for ‘problems’ and ‘kinds of problems’, ‘causes’ and ‘kinds of causes’.

9 Cf. Frede, Categories cit., pp. 33-35. My work is much indebted to Frede’s groundbreaking paper. However, in what follows I shall criticize some crucial points in his reading.
four aforementioned [something'])\(^{10}\). Intuitively one would tend to say that Aristotle is referring to the four predicables described in I, 4-6 and whose exhaustivity is demonstrated in I, 8. This hypothesis is confirmed by the next sentence (b23-25), where συμβεβηκός, γένος, ἰδιον and ὀρθομός are explicitly recalled, and they unambiguously are ‘the four aforementioned’\(^{11}\). According to the grammar, though, the implicit noun should be κατηγορία\(^{12}\). It means that the same word designates both the predicables and the ten categories introduced by Aristotle in the opening sentence and listed in the next one. However, as I already remarked, the predicables are not ‘predicates’, but ‘predications’. This further proves that γένη τῶν κατηγοριῶν should mean ‘kinds of predications’.

(3) At b22-23 Aristotle lists the ‘kinds of predications’\(^{13}\). Most commentators, since Alexander, have considered this list identical with another ten-items list which Aristotle provides in Cat., 4, 1b25-2a4. These two lists consist exactly of the same members except for the first one: in the Topics the first member is ‘what it is’ (τί ἐστι), while in the Categories it is ‘substance’ (οὐσία). It has been usually assumed that these two phrases are synonyms\(^{14}\). However, leaving a closer examination of this assumption to §3, I now confine myself to claiming that the textual evidence of I, 9 does not warrant this identification. Indeed, as some recent studies have shown\(^{15}\), it rather suggests that τί ἐστι and οὐσία cannot be identical items. More generally, the τί ἐστι must be taken as a predication. A predicate P is a ‘what it is’

\(^{10}\) Cf. Alex. Aphr., In Top., 65, 13. I assume that the διαφοραί found after τέτπαρες in some more recent mss. and in Boethius' translation, is a posterior interpolation. Alexander does not have this word in his text, and it is absent from the older mss., cf. G. Colli, Aristotele. Organon, Einaudi, Torino 1955, p. 919. Alexander, though, in order to explain the phrase, claims that Aristotle has omitted διαφοραί τῶν προβλήματων τε καὶ πρωτόςων (In Top., 65, 13-14). Hence, it is very likely that διαφοραί had been later introduced in the main text on the basis of Alexander’s gloss.

\(^{11}\) The γὰρ at b23 is exegetical. Both the subject and the object of both the predicates are exactly the same, i.e. the four predicables and the ten T-categories. So the two verbs point out the same kind of relation.

\(^{12}\) Considering the terminological context of Topics, I, the implicit noun can be either πρότασις or κατηγορία. About the former, at b26, i.e. five lines after our phrase, this is the subject of a sentence which has a similar meaning with respect to the first one we are dealing with. However, the last occurrence of πρότασις, to whom the pronoun is supposed to refer, is at 103b4, i.e. 17 lines before. So, presumably, the implicit noun is not πρότασις but κατηγορία, mentioned in the same sentence few words before, though in a different case.

\(^{13}\) The plural neutral adjective ταύτα at b22 must refer to the previous τὰ γένη.


when it expresses an essential attribute of a subject S, i.e. when it appropriately answers the question ‘what is S?’. As a result, a predicate P is not *a priori* a ‘what it is’, but rather with respect to a certain subject S.

These last remarks suggest the following conclusion. The word *κατηγορία* can certainly mean both ‘predicate’ and ‘predication’, but in *Topics*, I, 9 the latter should be preferred (in seven of its eight occurrences). Hence, in this chapter, another list of kinds of predication is introduced. Aristotle never explicitly comes up with a demonstration of its members, neither inductive nor deductive, like for the predicables in I, 8. Nonetheless, in I, 9, he presents these kinds saying that they are exactly ten in number (**ἐστι δὲ τωρὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν δέκα**, i.e. suggesting that he is providing a complete and exhaustive set. So I call also this second list a ‘system of predication’.

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16 *Pace Malink, Categories* cit., p. 271 who is persuaded that the two translations do not need to be mutually exclusive. In this article, though, he does not explicitly provide any reasons to justify his opinion. The only pertinent argument I found is in Malink, *Aristotle’s Modal Syllogistic* cit., p. 145 n. 20. Quoting Alexander, *In Top.*, 66, 7-10, Malink states that «a term belongs to a given T-category just in case every predication in which this term occurs as the predicate belongs to that T-category». However, I still do not see Malink’s point. This reading seems to me still open to an objection already advanced by Frede, i.e. that a predication like ‘white is a colour’ is in the first category of predication (**πὶ ἡμῖν**), but ‘color’ as a predicate could not be in any other kind of predicate than **ποιον**.

17 The demonstration of the completeness and systematicity of the table of categories is a vexed question of Aristotelian scholarship. Aristotle does not give any strong proves of the exhaustiveness of his table, nor he declares whether he followed a criterion whatsoever to fill that out. I confine myself to speculating that the list descends from an inductive recollection and an accurate classification of all the things that can be asked or said about a given subject (cf. e.g. *SE*, 22, 178a4f.), likely fostered by a prolonged practice in dialectical discussions and definitory divisions within Plato’s Academy, where Aristotle was educated. Otherwise said, the categories were selected one by one and catalogued on the basis of empirical observations; for similar readings cf. C. M. Gillespie, *The Aristotelian Categories*, «Classical Quarterly>, 19, 1925, pp. 75-84; E. Kapp, *Greek Foundations of Traditional Logic*, Columbia University Press, New York 1942; Ackrill, *Aristotle. Categories* cit.; Kahn, *Questions* cit.; Frede, *Categories* cit.; S. Menn, *Metaphysics, Dialectic and the Categories*, «Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale», 100, 1995, pp. 311-377; R. Bodèus, *Aristote. [Categories]*, introduction, texte, traduction et notes, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2001. Notice that (1) Aristotle refers to exact numbers even of other kinds of things, e.g. four causes or twelve virtues. In all these cases Aristotle does not give a strict justification of the number at issue, which is presumably established by means of induction, cf. C. Natali, *Aristotele, Categoria*, 4. *La lista delle categorie*, in M. Bonelli, F. Masi eds., *Studi sulle Categorie di Aristotele*, Hakkert, Amsterdam 2011, pp. 89-94; p. 90. Further, (2) in *An. Pr.*, B, 23, 68b13-4 Aristotle claims that every **πίσς** is reached either by syllogism or by induction (**ἀπαντά γὰρ πιστεύσωμεν ἢ διά συλλογισμοῦ ἢ εἰς ἑπαρχηγῆ**). The completeness of the table of categories is never demonstrated by syllogism, so it is likely reached by induction. As a matter of fact, (3) induction is one of the two proves to demonstrate the completeness of the list of the predicables in *Top.*, I, 8. So Aristotle regards induction at least as a proof worth to be mentioned. Moreover, besides *Top.*, I, 9 and *Cat.*, 4 Aristotle either composes shorter lists or avoids recalling all the items of the list, making use of abbreviations (cf. K. Oehler, *Aristoteles. Kategorien*, Übersetzt und Erläutert, Academie Verlag,
The aforementioned theoretical issue — which are all the possible types of predication one can make in relation to an object? — seems to be given a second answer: when a predicate P is (truly) predicated of a subject S, then P is either a ‘what it is’, or a ‘quantity’ or a ‘quality’ and so on.

So far, then, there are two actors in this scenario, two systems of predication, both designated by the label of κατηγορία: (a) Predicables: συμβεβηκός, γένος, ἰδίον, ὀρισμός.
(b) T-categories: τί ἐστι, ποσόν, ποιόν etc.

Next task is to determine the nature of their relationship.

Aristotle expresses the relationship between T-categories and predicables by means of the phrase ἐν οίς ὑπάρχουσιν, which I translated ‘are found in’18. I assume that here the verb ὑπάρχειν is used in a non-technical fashion, i.e. does not mean anything like ‘being predicated of’ (as synonym of κατηγορεῖσθαι κατά τινος), nor does it denote the belonging of a quality or an attribute to a given substrate (as synonym of τὸ ὑποκείμενον παθεῖν)19. At b24-25, in fact, an equivalence is established between (ἐν τινι) ὑπάρχειν and a ‘generic’ (ἐν τινι) ἐίναι, ‘being in (something)’20. So ὑπάρχειν is rather employed in its ordinary meaning of ‘belonging to’, ‘being found in’ or ‘being present in’21. Taking this for granted, we still need to know what is the philosophical sense of ‘being found’ here. Commentators do not usually provide satisfactory explanations about this point. How is a predicables found in one of the kinds of predications?

When we predicate a genus or a definition of a given subject, both designate, at different levels of generality, what a subject is, an essential attribute of a subject. So these are instances of τί ἐστι. By contrast, when we predicate one of the other two predicables, i.e. a property or an accident, these are instances of ποσόν, ποιόν, πρός τι and so on, as long as both coincide with a non-essential attribute of a subject. This seems very likely to be how the predicables belong to or are found in the T-categories.

Berlin, 1984, pp. 289-292 for a complete comparative table of all the enumerations of categories in the Corpus Aristotelicum). How can one account for this numeric discrepancy? Top., I, 9 and Cat., 4 offer the most extended pattern of all the possible categories, albeit it should not mean that in every single case, the entire scheme is useful to the current inquiry. For example, the seventh and eighth categories (κατηγορεῖσθαι, ἐκεῖν) are useful if one takes a human being as object of questioning, while do not make sense if applied to other objects.

18 Cf. e.g. SMITH, Aristotle. Topics cit., p. 8, MALCOLM, On the Generation cit., p. 663 and BARNES, Aristotle’s Categories cit., p. 189 for this translation.
19 Cf. H. BONITZ, Index Aristotelicus, Reimer, Berlin 1870, p. 789a for these technical acceptations.
20 Cf. supra p. 4 n. 11.
21 Cf. LSJ s.v. ὑπάρχειν.
But what is the nature of this belonging or presence? The term γένη would suggest membership in a kind, i.e. the belonging of a species to a genus. But a species falling under a genus cannot fall under other genera which are not in the same column of predicates. For example, ‘man’ is under ‘animal’, but cannot be also under ‘color’ unless accidentally. On the other hand, property and accident do so, since they would be species of ποιόν, ποιόν and so forth. Consequently, this is not the right type of relationship we are looking for. I do not think either, from a more general point of view, that any extensional interpretation of this relationship, or any interpretation explaining this belonging or presence as a subordination, can aspire to fit well these lines.

I propose the adoption of a semantic interpretation of this belonging. According to this option, a predicabile is found in a category as a constituent. It means that every proposition formed through a predicabile constitutes at the same time a predicacion according to one of the ten T-categories, and, consequently, signifies one of them, expressing one of the predicative relationships conveyed by them. This hypothesis is confirmed at b25-622, where it is specified that the ὑπάρχειν/εἶναι ἐν–relationship consists in a relationship of signification linking every proposition built up by means of a predicabile, to one of the T-categories. There does not exist, in other words, any proposition composed through one of the four predicables, which is not a proposition expressing one of the ten categories too. Further, this belonging is also biunivocal because as long as a proposition formed through a predicabile signifies simultaneously one of the ten T-categories, the converse is likewise true, viz. every proposition built up through a T-category means at the same time one of the predicative relationship conveyed by one of the predicables. This ‘biunivocity’ is not explicit in our passage. Nonetheless, I think it is legitimate to infer it, for the simple reason that the opposite is false. We will not find any propositions expressing one of the ten predicative relationships of the T-categories, which does not express one of the four predicative relationships of the predicables too. After all, in Top., I, and particularly in Chapters 4-12, the focus is on the predicables not on the categories. If this is not groundless, we can infer the following conclusion: in Top., I, 8 is stated that every proposition or discourse (λόγοι) is formed through one of the predicables; in I, 9 Aristotle establishes also that every proposition formed through one of the predicables signifies at the same time one of the ten kinds of another system of predicacion. Therefore, each proposition signifies one of the ten T-categories23.

22 « For all the propositions <formed> by means of them [viz. accident, genus, property and definition] signify either what it is, or of what quantity, or of what sort or one of the other predications ». I interpret the γὰρ at b25 as epexegetical.
Accordingly, we have two systems of predication cutting across each other, so that predications classified under the heads corresponding to the four predicables can also be classified under the heads specified in the list of the T-categories. That is presumably why Aristotle calls predicables and T-categories with the same term (κατηγορία), i.e. in order to remark this double track in predication. The clarification of this intersection seems to me the main purpose of Chapter 9.

3. T-cATEGORIES AND C-CATEGORIES

The list of ten kinds of predication occurring in Topics, I, 9, as I have already noted, counts almost the same members as that of ten items signified by the ‘things said without any combination’ in Categories, 424. The only variation in these two lists involves their first member. It has almost always proved tempting, at least since Alexander of Aphrodisias, to identify these lists, and take τί ἐστι and οὐσία as synonyms. These are the two most complete enumerations of the categories in the Corpus Aristotelicum. Thus, supposing that Aristotle had just one list of categories, it has been concluded that T-categories and C-categories correspond and represent Aristotle’s complete ‘table of categories’. Moreover, in the manifold classifications of categories we find throughout the Corpus Aristotelicum, there is a quite wide range of phrases or words aimed to designate the first of their items, viz. οὐσία, τί, τὸδε, τὸδε τί. So it has seemed reasonable to suppose either that all these phrases are synonyms, or, even though they do not have precisely the same meaning, they should at least have the same denotatum, of which they specify different aspects.

However, in Topics, I, 9 Aristotle states something significantly different. Reading the following passage in a non-biased way, it is hard to deny that ‘what it is’ and ‘substance’ cannot be the same:

«On the other hand, it is clear from the things themselves that someone who signifies the ‘what it is’, signifies either a substance, or a quantity or a quality, or one of the other predicates. For when a human is taken as an example and one says that the example is a man or an animal, one says what it is and signifies a substance. On the other hand, when a white color is taken as an example and one says that the example is white or a color, one says what it is and signifies of what sort. And likewise when a magnitude of a cubit is taken as an example and one says that the example is, one says what it is and signifies of what quantity. And likewise in the other cases.»

25 103b27-35: δήλων εξ αὐτῶν ὅτι τὸ τί ἐστι σημαίνον ὅτε μὲν οὐσίαν σημαίνει, ὅτε δὲ ποσόν, ὅτε δὲ ποιόν, ὅτε δὲ τὸν ἄλλον τὶνα κατηγορίαν. ὅταν μὲν γὰρ ἐκκειμένου ἄνθρωπου ἢ τὸ ἐκκειμένου ἄνθρωπον εἶναι ἡ ξών, τί ἐστι λέγει καὶ οὐσίαν σημαίνει. ὅταν δὲ χρώματος λευκοῦ ἐκκειμένου ὢν τὸ ἐκκειμένου
In what follows, I first argue for the distinction of the lists at b22-23 and b28-29. Then I reply to two possible objections against a part of my reading. Finally I provide an overall account of the relationship between predicables, T-categories and C-categories.

As I already remarked, the governing claim (b27-29) of the passage just mentioned, which is illustrated by three examples (b29-35), suggests that τί ἐστι and οὐσία cannot be identical items. The τί ἐστι is not restricted to substances and includes instances of οὐσία, ποσόν, ποιόν and so forth. Commentators endorsing the traditional interpretation cannot avoid to acknowledge that, as long as the identification of τί ἐστι and οὐσία is maintained, this identification can fit only two of the eight occurrences of τί ἐστι, i.e. the first two of b22 and 26, where τί ἐστι appears as the first item of the list of T-categories. Whereas in the other six occurrences it does not work. Otherwise said, one would have to argue that τί ἐστι is used equivocally, i.e. with different meanings, without any explicit clarifications by Aristotle.

The majority of those interpreters are confident of solving this putative ambiguity through a reference to Metaph., Z, 4, 1030a17-3126. In this passage, Aristotle declares that ‘what it is’ is said in an primary and absolute sense (πρῶτος καὶ ἀπλῶς), of the substance, and in a secondary sense (πῶς, εἴτε) of the other categories27. Thus, in b22 and 26, τί ἐστι is used in its specific acceptation of ‘substance’, while in the other six occurrences in a more generic sense of ‘essence’. Yet, since in Topics, I, 9 there is no mention whatsoever of this piece of doctrine, these interpreters should assume that Aristotle, in this chapter, took for granted that readers or listeners were conscious of this implicit reference to a different tenet, i.e. that the ‘what it is’ par excellence is the substance. This also implies that the two lists given at b22-23 (and 26-27) and 28-29 are one and the same list, namely the same presented in the Categories, though seen from different perspectives. Nonetheless, even if one wants to concede such a very unnatural reading of the text, this reference to Metaph., Z, 4 is not legitimate, as Aristotle does not seem to have yet come up with that piece

26 Cf. e.g. ALEX. APHR., In Top., p. 65, 17-19; F. A. TRENDELENBURG, Geschichte der Kategorienlehre, Verlag von G. Bethge, Berlin 1846, p. 47 n. 1; MANSION, Notes sur la doctrine cit., p. 198; KAHN, Questions cit., p. 243.

27 Cf. part. 1030a17-23: « [...] ’what a thing is’ in one sense means substance and a ’this’, in another one or other of the predicates, quantity, quality, and the like. For as ’is’ is predicable of all things, not however in the same sense, but of one sort of thing primarily and of others in a secondary way, so too the ’what’ belongs simply to substance, but in a limited sense to the other categories » (transl. Ross).
of doctrine whereby he distinguishes different senses of ‘what it is’. This is a tenet which, as I shall remark below, Aristotle comes up with at the time of the redaction of the central books of the *Metaphysics*, which are beyond doubt later than *Topics*, I. Consequently, this cannot be a piece of doctrine that a reader or a listener could have presupposed. So the ambiguous use of τι ἐστι in I, 9 remains unexplained by commentators endorsing the traditional interpretation of this passage and results in being significantly puzzling for any reader.

There is an alternative way of interpreting the account of I, 9. This can make a perfect sense, though not the traditional one, even assuming that τι ἐστι is employed in its usual (originally Platonic) meaning (‘what it is’), in all of the eight occurrences of I, 9 and throughout the treatise. So the occurrences at b22 and 26 are not exceptions to this trend and between τι ἐστι and οὐσία there is not a mere difference in name. As a result, in I, 9 we have *two different and irreducible lists* of categories, one corresponding to the ten kinds of predication listed at b22-23, the T-categories, and another, whose first item is οὐσία, placed under the first T-category, the τι ἐστι. As I said, I identify this second list with that of *Categories*, 428, so I call its members C-categories.

So we have now three actors in our scenario, all designated by the word κατηγορία:

(a) *Predicables*: συμβεβηκός, γένος, ἰδιόν, ὄρισμός.
(b) *T-categories*: τι ἐστι, ποσόν, ποιόν, πρός τι etc.
(c) *C-categories*: οὐσία, ποσόν, ποιόν, πρός τι etc.

Thus, every non-traditional interpretation is compelled to admit that κατηγορία is used ambiguously here, and has three *denotata*. C-categories, though, cannot be ‘predications’, like the four predicables and the ten T-categories, because their first member is οὐσία which is not a predication. The classification in *Cat.*, 4 is expressly presented as a classification of items signified by τὰ κατὰ μηδὲμιαν συμπλοκὴν λεγόμενα. To be sure, this is presumably meant to imply a parallel classification of the ‘things said without combination’ themselves. Otherwise said, linguistic expressions and their referents (*denotata*) are corresponding fields.

28 This is also maintained, albeit without any argument, by Malcolm, *On the Generation* cit., p. 665 and Malink, *Categories* cit., p. 271.
29 Some interpreters, such as J. P. Anton, *On the Meaning of Kategoría in Aristotle’s Categories*, in A. Preus, J. P. Anton eds., *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* V, SUNY Press, Albany 1992, pp. 1-18 : p. 6 claim that κατηγορία might be actually considered as a πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον, although there is no explicit textual ground to endorse plainly this conclusion.
30 Cf. D. Sedley, *Aristotelian Relativities*, in M. Canto-Sperber, P. Pellegrin eds., *Le Style de la Pensée*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres 2002, pp. 324-352 : p. 333, who talks about predicates having both linguistic and metaphysical value. However, Sedley seems to assume that *Cat.*, 4 primarily and directly lists λεγόμενα and not items signified by λεγόμενα, which is a claim I’m not inclined to endorse. I thank the anonymous reader for saving me from a gross mistake at this point.
parallel list of linguistic expressions as a list of predicates, and I claim that this is recalled in \textit{Top.}, I, 9, 103b28-29. Hence in \textit{Topics}, I, 9 Aristotle presents two lists of predications and a list of predicates, clarifies that they should be kept separated, and explains their mutual connection.

I shall now make another point, that is actually rather speculative. Unlike T-categories, that Aristotle introduces \textit{ex novo}, as the first lines of our passage suggest\textsuperscript{31}, C-categories look as a ‘ready-made’ list which Aristotle does not need to present as something new and assumes as known. Now, it has been argued that a careful comparison between the \textit{Categories} and the \textit{Topics} suggests that the former was written before the latter and provided its general preliminary conceptual basis\textsuperscript{32}. In other words the \textit{Topics} assumes as known several essential concepts of the \textit{Categories} and build upon them. Examples thereof are the accounts of the opposites, of the homonymies and synonyms, of the difference. If this presupposition is conceded, one might raise the following hypothesis about the relationship between T-categories and C-categories. According to this hypothesis we have three steps.

(1) Aristotle sets forth the C-categories in the \textit{Categories}.

(2) Next, when he comes to tackle the problem of the possible kinds of predication which can be made about an object, in the \textit{Topics}, Aristotle exploits the pattern of notions put forward in the list of \textit{Cat.}, 4 to fill out another list of kinds of predications, the T-categories. When he sets forth this second list, in \textit{Top.}, I, 9, he explains its relationship both with another system of predication, the predicables, and with the C-categories which the T-categories derive from. In this sense, T-categories are an \textit{application} of C-categories to the logical field of propositions\textsuperscript{33}. So Aristotle runs two different lists that, according to some interpreters, are two parallel and independent devices exploited autonomously by Aristotle throughout his works, on the base of the type of object he examines\textsuperscript{34}.

(3) In the \textit{Metaphysics}, as Frede has argued, these two lists overlap through a restriction of the first T-category, the ‘what it is’, to the first C-category, ‘substance’. This is one of the most considerable outcomes of a new piece of doctrine elaborated by Aristotle at the time of the redaction of the central books of the \textit{Metaphysics}, that of the relationship προς ἔν: the truth of statements about non-substantial items grounds on truth about substances.

\textsuperscript{31} Cf., in particular, two textual clues: the verb ‘determine’ (ὁρισμός) and the specification of the number of items.


\textsuperscript{33} Cf. \textsc{Trendelenburg}, \textit{Geschichte} cit., pp. 164-165. Cf. \textsc{contra Kahn}, \textit{Questions} cit., p. 242-243 for the claim that in the \textit{Topics} we find the earliest version of the doctrine of categories.

\textsuperscript{34} Cf. \textsc{Malcolm}, \textit{On the Generation} cit., pp. 669-671.
Before I move on to explain the connection between the three lists, I should address two objections raised by Frede against the possible identification of the list provided at 103b28-29 with that of Categories, 4, or rather, against the claim that in Aristotle’s logical works, as well as in all the other writings earlier than the central books of the Metaphysics, it actually occurs a list of ‘categories’ whose first member is ωσια.

(a) According to Frede, in the Topics, as much as in the Organon in general, no category of ‘substance’ exists. A category of ωσια appears only in Aristotle’s later writings, especially in the Metaphysics, as a restriction of the first T-category of τι ἐστι to substances. Frede takes this restriction, as I said, as one of the most considerable outcomes of the doctrine of the relationship πρὸς ἐν\(^{35}\). In I, 9, therefore, ωσια is not one of τῶν ἄλλων κατηγοριών mentioned right after (b28-29), but it refers just to a given object. It is ποσὸν, ποιὸν and the other implicit items (with reference to b22-23) which are kinds of predicates, not ωσια. It follows that, if one indicates the first T-category, she may indicate, on the one hand an ωσια, which is not a kind of predicate; on the other hand, one of the other kinds of predicates. Hence if ωσια should not be conceived as a category, the enumeration of items at b28-29 is not effectively a list of ‘categories’ starting with ‘substance’. But if in the Topics there is no category of ‘substance’, and in Categories, 4 ωσια is certainly one of the items signified by one ‘things said without any combination’, which are usually taken as the ‘Categories’ categories’, it means that the list of Topics, I, 9, 103b28-29 and that of Categories, 4 cannot overlap.

To this objection I reply that in Top., IV, 1, 120b36-121a9 Aristotle explicitly mentions again ωσια, ποσὸν, ποιὸν, πρὸς τι and, by a usual abbreviate form (ὁμοιός δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων), all the other members of the list given at I, 9, 103b28-29, under the heading of ‘divisions’ (διαίρεσεις)\(^{36}\). The context of the passage strongly suggests that this label means kind of predicate (not predication), i.e. refers to τῶν ἄλλων τινὰ κατηγοριῶν of 103b29. For Aristotle says that a genus and a species should belong to the same ‘division’ (καθόλου δ’ εἶπεν ὑπὸ τὴν αὐτὴν διάίρεσιν δὲ τὸ γένος τῷ εἶδει εἶναι), i.e. two predicates with different extension, one subordinated to another in the same column of predicates, should fall under the same kind of predicate. There is no doubt that ωσια is actually one of these διαίρεσεις and I do not see any good reason to interpret this passage separating ωσια from the other ‘divisions’. This passage is never quoted or recalled by Frede. So in the Topics there is a passage in which the separation that he proposes does not work.

36 « Moreover, see whether the genus and the species are not found in the same division, but the one is a substance while the other is a quality, or the one is a relative while the other is a quality (ἐπὶ εἰ μὴ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ διαιρέσει τὸ γένος καὶ τῷ εἴδος, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ωσια το δὲ ποιὸν, ἢ τὸ μὲν πρὸς τι τὸ δὲ ποιὸν) » (transl. Pickard-Cambridge).
(b) The second objection is that we cannot rely on the *Categories* in order to find a satisfactory meaning of κατηγορία, or better, that the *Categories* is not about categories. Thus the list of items signified by the ‘things said without any combination’ in *Cat.*, 4 should not be considered as a list of ‘categories’. He gives basically two main reasons to draw this rather striking conclusion: (i) in this treatise, there are several philological issues about title and textual unity which would not license certainty about its actual content; (ii) more specifically the treatise does not say anything clear from which we can infer that it examines categories, nor uses the word κατηγορία unless twice (8.10b19, 21) and in insignificant contexts. The latter reason, in my opinion, is questionable. First of all it is false that κατηγορία is used just twice in the *Categories*. There are four occurrences: 5, 3a35; 5, 3a37; 8, 10b19; 8, 10b21. Now, in the former two the term is used in a non-technical fashion and has very likely the meaning ‘predicate’. Secondly, I do not see any good reason to consider the use of κατηγορία in *Cat.*, 8, 10b19, 21 as aspecific or not pertinent. This assumption is unwarranted and the scholars endorsing it do not offer any clear reason to hold it. In this passage Aristotle uses the word κατηγορία (10b19: τὰς ἄλλας κατηγορίας; b21: τῶν ἄλλων κατηγοριῶν) with regard to items like ποσῶν, ποιῶν, πρὸς θ, πόου which unambiguously are the items signified by the ‘things said without any combination’ given in *Categories*, 4 — and the phrase τι τῶν ποιοτικῶν (10b23) clearly alludes to the full list. And, as is known, the items signified by the ‘things said without any combination’ are the subject of the survey carried out at least in *Cat.*, 4-9. Therefore, we actually do have textual evidence to claim that at least the section called *Praedicamenta*, viz. *Cat.*, 4-9, of the *Categories*, whatever their real title might be, are about ‘categories’, whatever sense this word might have in this context. And it does not seem too challenging to find an explanation for the two different uses in chapters five and eight: κατηγορία might well mean both items placed in a column of predicates, and at once the headings of these columns.

Moreover, although Frede holds that the *Categories* do not provide any answer to the question about the nature of categories, at the same time, a few pages after this statement, he accepts that one of the uses of the term κατηγορία, as well as ‘kind of predication’ and ‘kind of predicate’, is « the ultimate genera of what

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40 This allows to reply also to (i).

there is as they are distinguished, e.g., in the treatise *Categories*"\(^{42}\). Hence, even for Frede, there seems to be a meaning of *kathgoriva* conveyed by the *Categories*, and Frede believed it is that of *γένη τοῦ ὄντος*, i.e. kinds of being (non-linguistic terms), albeit this, as a matter of fact, is far from obvious. It might well be the case that the old formula proposed by the Aristotelian commentators in Late Antiquity, of categories as «simple significant vocalizations, insofar as they signify things» (περὶ φωνῶν σημαντικῶν ἀπλῶν καθὸ σημαντικαί εἶσι τῶν πραγμάτων) still has some explanatory efficacy, and some notable interpreters still accept that\(^{43}\). I must acknowledge, however, that with the last remarks I have not yet replied to all the objections formulated by Frede, but I hope they at least have some value in suggesting a revision of some relevant aspects of his interpretation.

I have argued that in I, 9 Aristotle deals with three lists: the four predicables (predications), the T-categories (predications), and the C-categories (predicates). I shall now provide an overall account of their connection, which is expressed through two verbs: ‘signifying’ (σημαίνειν) and ‘saying’ (λέγειν). Let us first explain the meaning of these verbs and then how they work in connecting the three lists.

The verb ‘saying’ (λέγειν), in three of its four occurrences follows the phrase ‘what it is’. Aristotle shows the meaning of ‘saying what it is’ (τί ἐστι λέγειν) through three examples, then expresses it with an abstract formula at b36-37. The three examples are equivalent, so I shall recall just one of them: taking a man as example, a person saying (ὅταν ... φη) (through a proposition) that this is a man or an animal, actually says what it is (b30-31). Outside the example, and according to the abstract formula: a person says what a certain item is, when, in the proposition she states, (a) the same thing is said of itself (αὐτὸ περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγηται) or (b) its genus is said of it (τὸ γένος περὶ τούτου)\(^{44}\). What kinds of predication are (a) and (b)? (a) is a definition. Strictly speaking, it is a self-predication. As Alexander already noticed, and modern scholars confirm, a self-predication might be considered as a particular type of definition\(^{45}\). (b) is undoubtedly a predication of genus. Hence (a) and (b) refer to predications according to two of the four

\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 35.


\(^{44}\) Cf. 103b36-7: «for <with regard to> each of such things, both if it is said of itself and if the genus is said of this, it signifies what it is (ἐξακολουθοῦν γὰρ τῶν τοιούτων, εὰν τε αὐτὸ περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγηται εὰν τε τὸ γένος περὶ τούτου, τί ἐστι σημαίνει) ». I understand αὐτῷ at b36 as not referring to ἐξακολούθων τῶν τοιούτων. Further, as the examples show, the term αὐτῷ might refer either to a substantial or to a non-substantial term (ἄθροισις; λειτουργία; πραγματικός): when there occurs an essential predication, in any of the C-categories, a τι ἐστι-predication will be formed, i.e. a predication according to the first T-category.

\(^{45}\) Cf. Alex. Aphr., *In Top.*, p. 67, 8-11; Malink, *Categories* cit., p. 280 and In., *Aristotle’s Modal Syllogistic* cit., pp. 139-140.
predicables and ‘saying what it is’ means making a predication according to the definition or the genus. On the other hand, a person does not say what a certain item is, when, in the proposition she states, the same thing is said of another (περὶ ἕτερου λέγειν)\(^{46}\). In this case (non-essential predication), we shall have a predication according to one of the non-τὶ ἑστὶ T-categories. But such a predication can be made only when a proposition is formed out of an accident (συμβεβηκός) or a property (ἰδιον), which are the only two predicables not signifying an essential feature of a given subject.

The verb σημαίνειν occurs eight times in I, 9 always tied to items belonging to one of the two lists of categories\(^{47}\). Two questions might be asked about this verb: (a) What does ‘signifying’ mean? I am persuaded by Malink’s opinion, according to which, when Aristotle uses this verb in relation to his theory of categories, it always refers to the belonging of an item to one of the categories\(^{48}\). So ‘signifying’ a ‘predication’ means uttering a proposition which conveys one of the predicative relationships listed at b22-23; ‘signifying a ‘predicate’ means uttering a proposition whose predicate (e.g. b32-33) belongs to one of the kinds of predicate listed at b28-29. (b) Who/What signifies? There are four different subjects linked to σημαίνειν: (i) πρότασις (b25) for the occurrence at b27; (ii) the masculine subject expressed by the substantive participle ὁ σημαίνων (b27) for the occurrences of b28; (iii) the implicit subject of the three occurrences of φίλος, which is likely an indefinite masculine pronoun\(^{49}\) and is also the implicit subject of the three occurrences of σημαίνει at b31, 33, 35; (iv) the indefinite pronoun ἐκείνον (followed by the demonstrative plural pronoun τῶν τοιούτων) for the occurrences of b37 and b38. I consider the first subject and the first occurrence of σημαίνειν as the governing one. Aristotle, as we have already seen, states that it is ἅ πρότασις — every πρότασις formed out from the four predicables — that signifies, i.e. indicates or express, one of the ten categories. The predicative relationship conveyed by one of the ten kinds of predications is expressed by a proposition constituted through one of the predicables. This is how the two systems of predication cut across each other, and this seems to me the main claim of this chapter 9. In b28 the participle ὁ σημαίνων is presumably a person who signifies\(^{50}\). But very likely, a speaker signifies something through a proposition — otherwise it would not make any sense to state that a person belongs to one of the categories.

\(^{46}\) The structure of the sentence at b37-39 is exactly the same as that of that at b35-37, which I have already quoted. Therefore two implicit words should be found in the first part of the sentence: ὅσον ὑπὸ [οὐδὲ] περὶ ἑτέρου [λέγειν].

\(^{47}\) 103b27, twice in 28, 31, 33, 35, 37, 38.

\(^{48}\) Cf. MALINK, Categories cit., p. 227.

\(^{49}\) Cf. Brunschwig’s translation: « quand... on dit ».

\(^{50}\) Cf. KAIN, Questions cit., p. 270; MALCOLM, On the Generation and Corruption cit., p. 663; FREDE, Categories cit., p. 12; MALINK, Categories cit., p. 272.
Thus, the actual subject of the signification throughout the passage, at least until 103b35 is a proposition: πρότασις is what actually σημαίνει; a person σημαίνει only inasmuch as she utters a πρότασις. This leads me to believe that the last subject of σημαίνει, ἔχωστον τῶν τοιούτων, does not interrupt this trend. I am not saying that the implicit noun which the pronoun refers to is πρότασις, that is grammatically incorrect, πρότασις being a feminine noun. But it is plausible that the neutral pronoun ἔχωστον refers generically to the three cases examined and we would not need necessarily a feminine pronoun ἐκάστη referring to κατηγορία.

These last remarks suggest the following conclusion about the connection between predicables, T-categories and C-categories.

(1) Essential predication
[Predicables-level] 'Definition' and 'genus', i.e. saying what a certain item is.
[T-categories-level] 'What it is', i.e. signifying what a certain item is.
[C-categories-level] Any of the C-categories, i.e. signifying 'substance', 'quality' and so on.

(2) Non-essential predication
[Predicables-level] 'Accident' and 'property', i.e. not saying what a certain item is.
[T-categories-level] Any of the other nine T-categories besides the first.
[C-categories-level] Any of the other nine C-categories besides the first.

4. Conclusion

Let me sum up what seems to me the chief philosophical claim that emerges from this survey. In the context of the description of the four predicables, Aristotle decides to devote a chapter of Topics, I to the comparison between this system.

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51 A similar ambiguous case is at Soph., 262a9-e3. F. Ademollo, Names, Verbs, and Sentences in Ancient Greek Philosophy, in M. Cameron, R. J. Stainton eds., Linguistic content. New Essays on the History of Philosophy of Language, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2015, p. 43 n. 29 maintains that in this case there is an intended equivalence between the claim that with names a speaker names things and the claim that names name things. One might make the same point about these lines of Topics, I, 9.

52 I do not exclude that this might be the case, but I do not think that this would jeopardize my point. If a speaker is able to name things only 'with names' it means that it is because of names that she is able to name. Similarly, it is because of a proposition that a person is able to signify.

53 I do not think that ἔχωστον refers to the predicates of the previous examples, because a predicate, alone, cannot signify a 'what it is', that is a predication.

54 Accordingly, in the case of a non-essential predication T-categories and C-categories coincide: for instance, a predication according to quality can be made only if the predicate that we use belongs to the kind of predicate of quality.
of predication, and another (T-categories), of whom Aristotle offers a complete list comprising ten items. I attempted to offer a fresh account of the relationship between these two systems of predication. I have maintained that these systems cut across each other and all the predications might be classified under the headings of one system or another. Thus, their relationship might be defined semantic (and biunivocal). Every proposition formed out of the four predicables signifies, i.e. expresses, at once the predicative relationship conveyed through one of the categories. The converse is likewise true. By means of an ἀρισμός or a γένος, one (through a proposition) signifies the first kind of predication, the ‘what it is’. By means of a συμβεβηκός or an ἵδιον, one signifies (through a proposition) one of the other T-categories.

Furthermore, Aristotle clarifies the connection between these two systems of predication and the list of predicates implied at Cat., 4 and recalled in Top., I, 9. When one makes a predication according to the ‘definition’ or the ‘genus’, she signifies the first T-categories and, in turn, any of the C-categories. Whereas, when one makes a predication according to the ‘accident’ or the ‘property’, she signifies any of the other nine T-categories besides the first and, in turn, any of the other nine C-categories besides the first.

What is the ultimate point of the introduction of these lists? Categories (of both lists) are basically a classificatory and heuristic device. During his twenty-year research and discussions on predication in Plato’s Academy, Aristotle found out this extremely powerful dialectical tool, that he used to dissipate conceptual ambiguities and discover or bring out logical linguistic fallacies. It is a centrifuge carefully separating different elements which ordinary communicative praxis or sophistical tricks coagulate in equivocal single phrases. As a matter of historical fact, this might be considered as the most notable outcome of an Academic widely shared interest for linguistic ambiguities. In this sense its main philosophical role is to reveal and neatly articulate multivocity according to a certain pattern.
ABSTRACT

Systems of Predication. Aristotle’s Categories in Topics, I, 9

In this paper I investigate Aristotle’s account of predication in Topics, I, 9. I argue for the following interpretation. In this chapter Aristotle (i) presents two systems of predication cutting across each other, the system of the so-called four ‘predicables’ and of the ten ‘categories’, in order to distinguish them and explore their mutual relationship. I propose a semantic interpretation of the relationship between them. According to this reading, every proposition formed through a predicative constitutes at the same time a predication according to one of the ten categories, and, consequently, signifies one of them, expressing one of the predicative relationship conveyed by them. Further, Aristotle (ii) explains the predicative connection between these two systems and the ten items signified by the ‘things said without any combination’ enumerated in Chapter 4 of the Categories, whose list is almost identical with that of categories in Top., I, 9, with the only exception of their first members.

ROBERTO GRANIERI, University of Toronto
rob.granieri@gmail.com