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Gyburg Uhlmann

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Audiences in *Metaphysics Z 4*

Preliminary Studies on Audience-  
Driven Dynamics in Aristotle

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# Aristotle's Arguments and his Audiences in *Metaphysics Z 4*

Preliminary Studies on Audience-Driven Dynamics in Aristotle

Gyburg Uhlmann

## 1 Introduction

In this paper<sup>1</sup> I approach a simple question or rather two simple questions and discuss them in a paradigmatic case study from the *Corpus Aristotelicum*: Is it likely that Aristotle conducted philosophy alone? This question is entangled with another related question-spectrum: who were his audiences and how did the audiences contribute to the writings that are extant today in the *Corpus Aristotelicum*? The material usually considered in order to answer the first question are not the treatises of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* but the biographical sources, peripatetic and anti-peripatetic narratives, and letters and fragments from the published works (etc.).<sup>2</sup>

This does not come as a surprise, however the ignorance or limited interest in the treatises of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* in regard to questions of the historical contextualization of Aristotle and his philosophical practices, have proven harmful for a full and consistent understanding of Aristotle in his time and contexts. It is because of this constricted approach that the second question – about the impact that Aristotle's audiences had on his philosophy – has never been seriously addressed. The limited interest also goes hand in hand with the construction of an antagonism between Aristotle's political life and the *merely* scientific or academic life of Aristotle, the encyclopedic scientist and reader, as if the communication practices, the social networks in which Aristotle worked and studied, his students and fellow researchers were not part of the social and political life in Athens and

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<sup>1</sup>I am grateful to Carolyn Kelly for correcting linguistic weaknesses of an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup>The material is available thanks to the scholarly work of Eduard Zeller, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, W.D. Ross (Aristotle, New York/London 1923-95), Werner Jaeger, Ingemar Düring, A.-H. Chroust, Paul Moraux and Hans Gottschalk (among others). A concise critique can be found in Carlo Natali, Aristotle: His Life and School, ed. in English by D. Hutchinson, Princeton 2013, 135-151.

did not involve Aristotle in practices beyond the restricted scope of teaching and research inside the walls of the Academy, Lykeion or other discussion circles.

The artificial character of this distinction becomes obvious when reconsidering the *aporiai* into which scholars of the 19th and early 20th centuries fell in their dispute about Aristotle's political activities: 1. It proved impossible to clearly distinguish times during Aristotle's lifetime in which his writings mirror his political concern from those in which he withdraw from every political agenda whatsoever, or to distinguish writings that are clearly politically entangled in the current political debates and conflicts, from those that are not. 2. Neither the subordination of the political or, so to speak, external biography to a spiritual biography (Gomperz, Jaeger)<sup>3</sup> nor the subordination or marginalization of his philosophical activities to and against his political scope and freedom of action (Bernays,<sup>4</sup> Wilamowitz,<sup>5</sup> Gercke<sup>6</sup>) turned out to be compatible with the texts and biographical material.

Therefore, the presupposed notion of political and historical context needs to be revisited. Ingemar Düring's Quellenkritik has prepared the ground for a more open and pluralized social and political contextualization, since Düring situated every biographical reference or story about Aristotle in its particular institutional context and affiliation with a certain school tradition or tradition of thought and focused on the particular intentions and uses of the narratives.<sup>7</sup>

However, Düring does not apply this principle of consistent contextualization to his examination of Aristotle's writing in search of indirect biographical evidence (which takes him only seven pages),<sup>8</sup> but deduces Aristotle's attitude towards life in general and his own intellectual life in particular from concepts and philosophical theories of the treatises. Here, he finds Aristotle promoting the concept of the life of contemplation ('*bios theoretikos*')<sup>9</sup> as his own recipe for the utmost happiness, endowed with a passion for truth and a sense of tolerance (etc.).

Yet Düring makes no attempt to analyze the philosophical practices *themselves*

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<sup>3</sup>E.g. Theodor Gomperz, *Die Akademie und ihr vermeintlicher Philomacedonismus. Bemerkungen zu Bernays' Phokion*, in: *Wiener Studien* 4, 1882, 102-120; Werner Jaeger, *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung*, Berlin: Weidemannsche Buchhandlung 1923 (translated into English as *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, trans. by R. Robinson, Oxford 1934, 2nd ed. Oxford 1948, repr. 1962).

<sup>4</sup>J. Bernays, *Phokion und seine neueren Beurteiler*, Berlin 1881.

<sup>5</sup>Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen*, Berlin 1966 (first published in 1881); *Platon*, Berlin 1919 (2 vls.).

<sup>6</sup>A. Gercke, s.v. *Aristoteles*, in: *R.E.* 2, 1896, coll. 1012-1054.

<sup>7</sup>Ingemar Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, Göteborg 1957.

<sup>8</sup>Düring 1957, 366-372

<sup>9</sup>Carlo Natali - following and further developing Düring - has placed the *bios theoretikos* in the center of his narrative on Aristotle's life: Natali 2013, esp. 72-95.

as they are performed in the different treatises and transmitted in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* in a particular way or to contextualize the argumentational and disputational situations in the contexts for which they are designed and in which they can reach their audiences.

Düring also did not overcome the dichotomy between political and intellectual life in his otherwise innovative interpretation: According to Düring Aristotle was neither a political protagonist nor an influential teacher and intellectual but an isolated individual ahead of his time in a rather hostile anti-intellectual, anti-Macedonian, xenophobic environment. Especially in his comparison of Aristotle with Plato, traces of Jaeger's and Wilamowitz' spiritual biography become dominant in Düring's biographical narrative, which retells the story of the rational or even rationalistic scholar who was intellectually nourished by the empirical philosophy of the Ionian tradition, and whose thinking – in contrast to Plato – was not built by the intercommunication between a group of disputants and their philosophical inspiration but who was rather content with being thrown back on himself and his engagement in books and with books.<sup>10</sup>

Carlo Natali in his excellent review of the biographical texts, follows Düring in this respect and imagines Aristotle as a rational scholar who lived in and with a culture of experts without being dependent, in his conduct of philosophical life, on the presence of his fellow researchers.<sup>11</sup> His look at the treatises of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* is because of this perspective primarily focussed on Aristotle's references to earlier thinkers and on his concept of a theoretical life, which according to Natali is Aristotle's intellectual legacy for centuries to come.<sup>12</sup>

However, the logical next steps after Düring's new insight in the dependence of the "sources" (which are in fact literary texts with their own agenda and story line) on the historical contexts and his pluralizing reading of Aristotle's philosophical positions and references to Plato during his lifetimes are (1) the analysis of the argumentational structure and practices in the treatises of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* and (2) the application of a broad and comprehensive concept of political and social contexts in which Aristotle was involved and involved himself by (and not: instead of or as an alternative to) doing philosophy. For, if we read the arguments in Aristotle as addressed to certain audiences and readers and as induced or influenced by discussions and questions from his audiences, the necessarily intuitive<sup>13</sup> conception of a spiritual history and inner scheme of life

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<sup>10</sup>Düring 1957, 460-461.

<sup>11</sup>Natali 2013, 64-71.

<sup>12</sup>Natali 2013, 72-95.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Günther Patzig, "Furchtbare Abstraktionen". Zur irrationalistischen Interpretation der griechischen Philosophie im Deutschland der 20er Jahre, in: R. von Thadden (ed.), *Die Krise des Liberalismus zwischen den Weltkriegen*, Göttingen 1978, 193-210 [reprint in: Günther Patzig,

as we find it in Jaeger and others can be replaced. The intuition and “Einfühlung” in the historical person Aristotle becomes necessary only under the premise that one disregards the writings of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* for the purpose of biographical studies and at the same time uses them implicitly as the backbone of the narrative about the intellectual life or development of the philosopher Aristotle.

Since the philosophical texts in the proper sense of the word would have to be omitted, the lack of sufficient reasons would have to be met.<sup>14</sup>

How much an analysis of the treatises themselves could add when one aims at a consistent contextualizing of Aristotle doing philosophy in the institutional and social contexts in which he was involved becomes evident by a re-analysis of fragment 668 (Rose) and its history of interpretation. The fragment consists of one sentence which the grammarian Demetrios in his treatise *On style (peri hermeneias)* quotes from one of Aristotle’s letters to the Macedonian politician Antipater in order to illustrate that even an expression taken from everyday language can have an elegant effect in style.

“for as much as I was by myself and alone-living, I became rather loquacious”

ὄσω γὰρ αὐτίτης καὶ μονώτης εἰμί, φιλομυθότερος γέγονα. (Frg. 668 (Rose))

In this fragment Aristotle uses one rarely documented word (*monotes* (‘alone-living’)) and one made-up word (*autites* (‘by oneself-being’)) in order to apologize for the length of his letter (*philomythoteros*, which means ‘loquacious’ here (rather than ‘friend of myths’)). ‘Please excuse me for writing so longish, that’s what happens if you are by yourself. People get loquacious.’

Werner Jaeger has interpreted this fragment<sup>15</sup> without respect to context and function just in the same way as Cicero’s remark in a letter about having a small bed (*lecticulum*) resulted in interpretations about the shortness of his body, although in the context it is used as an instrument for appearing a humble and

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Gesammelte Schriften. Vol. III: Aufsätze zur antiken Philosophie, Göttingen 1996, 273-294].

<sup>14</sup>This holds true if one does not wish to relegate the philosopher Aristotle to a person that is completely detached from this philosophical legacy as Anton-Hermann Chroust suggested: Anton-Hermann Chroust is an interesting case in this respect because he has been an advocate for the radical separation of the published writings from the unpublished school writings and of a political Aristotle of the early published writings from the character Aristotle, whose contours disappear in the dominance of a school tradition. The *Corpus Aristotelicum* as we have it today is, according to Chroust, a product of the first outstanding figures of the later Peripatos who are supposedly the authors of Aristotle’s school texts. Chroust (just like scholars with such different opinions as Jaeger, Düring, and Natali) does not use the potential of the school writings to contextualize Aristotle socially, intellectually and politically. Instead, he disentangles the extant writings from the person Aristotle and his political and social contexts. Cf. Anton-Hermann Chroust, Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 981 b 13-25: A Fragment of the Aristotelian on Philosophy, in: *Rheinisches Museum* 120, 1977.

<sup>15</sup>Werner Jaeger 1923, 342.

modest host (Cic. Ad fam.VII.1.5.10). Jaeger suggested reading the letter-fragment (without any further context) as evidence of a lonesome Aristotle spending a good time cheerfully delving into the wonders of myth.<sup>16</sup> Nothing of this fancy empathy is even likely<sup>17</sup>, but a product of the conjectures from a general vision of Aristotle's personality and mood in this stage of his life.

In any case it disregards the apologetic and momentary strategy behind the expressions.<sup>18</sup> We also have to take into account the (presumable) relationship that Aristotle had with Antipater, who was one of the closest henchmen and even intimate of Philip II, and later a governor in Macedonia in the service of Alexander the Great.<sup>19</sup>

In his letters to Antipater Aristotle repeatedly expressed criticism about social and political instability in Athens and an atmosphere of fear due to sycophants (Frg. 667 (Rose, 3rd edition)) thereby satisfying anti-Athenian resentments in Macedonia. On the basis of these letters Aristotle has been suspected of having given intelligence reports on a regular basis to Antipater about the situation in Athens.<sup>20</sup> This relation might also have encouraged Aristotle to rather place emphasis on problems in social contacts and communication in his personal life. It is noteworthy that Demetrius reflects on the need to use a plain style in letters and refers to examples from Aristotle's letters to Antipater in which he spoke rather pompously<sup>21</sup> in such a way, as Demetrius puts it, in which nobody would ever write to his friend. His style in these letters resembles rather a speech-style and is not taken from everyday language.

Considering this characteristic of Aristotle's letters to Antipater, or at least some of them, it becomes unlikely to imagine Aristotle in an intimate conversation with a close friend to whom he opens his heart and confesses his deep-felt loneliness. Therefore, it cannot be regarded directly as a personal document with autobiographical significance.

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<sup>16</sup>Jaeger 1923, 342: "Mitten im geräuschvollen Hause altert ein ganz für sich Lebender, ein Einsiedler, nach einem eignen Ausdruck ein in sich zurückgezogenes Ich, das sich in seinen heiteren Stunden einspinnt in die tief sinnige Wunderwelt des Mythischen. Die herb verschlossene Persönlichkeit, nach außen streng verborgen hinter den starrenden Wällen des Wissens, taucht hier auf und lüftet den Schleier des Geheimnisses."

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Patzig 1978, 289.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. E. N. Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato*, Stockholm 1977, 44-47 (on Wilamowitz' reading of Plato's seventh letter).

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Aristoteles, *Die historischen Fragmente*, ed. by Christof Rapp, Berlin 2002, 290; Waldemar Heckel, *The Marshals of Alexander's Empire*, London/New York, 1992.

<sup>20</sup>Anton-Hermann Chroust, *Aristotle Returns to Athens in the Year 335 B.C.*, in: *Laval théologique et philosophique* 23, Numéro 2, 1967, 244-254.

<sup>21</sup>Demetrius, § 225 (G.M.A. Grube, *A Greek Critic. Demetrius on Style*, Toronto 1961), cf. Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis*, Waco 2006, 184-188.

There is no reason whatsoever<sup>22</sup> to conjecture images about Aristotle's time commitment to his communication with Antipater or other individuals in Macedonia. Instead we should connect the fragment with the reasonable assumption that Aristotle in these years was intensely involved in the teaching and philosophical discussions on issues in first philosophy, *Physics*, or other subparts of the natural sciences including biological studies. The evidence of the existence of this text material and its probably and widely-accepted<sup>23</sup> *terminus post quem* (sc. after Aristotle's second arrival in Athens after his sojourn in Assos and Mytilene) should be the starting point and premises for the interpretation of the decontextualized small letter-fragment. Therefore, we need to study the way in which Aristotle in his writings proves to be involved in debates and how he communicates with his audiences and fellow researchers.

For, directing one's attention to the audiences and readerships of Aristotle's extant treatises not only provides access to new details of his philosophical practices – and answers as to whether or not Aristotle did philosophy alone and who were his audiences – but will also help to solve philosophical and historical *aporiai* about particular (crucial) passages in the *Corpus Aristotelicum*. This new horizon is especially fruitful in cases where other traditional approaches have proven to be insufficient.

In this paper, my paradigmatic case study for this is chapter 4 in book Z of the *Metaphysics*.<sup>24</sup>

## 2 *Metaphysics Z* and Audience-Driven Dynamics

*Metaphysics Z* has puzzled ancient and still puzzles modern commentators and scholars. This holds true in regard to the general structure and text variants but especially simply in regard to the interpretation of single sentences and arguments. They often seem to be strung together rhapsodically and obscurely because of very short expressions and elliptic constructions. There is a close connection between the rhetorics, i.e. the communication practices that Aristotle uses, and the understanding of the very content of the argument, the underlying philosophical premises, and the dynamics of philosophy itself.

Since Ps.-Alexander's commentary, and in any of the most important contributions to the discussion in the 20th and 21st century – by Werner Jaeger (*Studien*

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<sup>22</sup>And no sufficient reason to postulate the full and only authorship of treatises of the *Corpus* for Aristotle's students and fellow researchers (cf. Chroust a.a.o.).

<sup>23</sup>Natali 2013, 55-60; cf. D.L. V.10; Dinoys. Hal. First Letter to Ammaeus 5.3.

<sup>24</sup>Followed by a second paper on *Metaphysics Z* 5: Gyburg Uhlmann, *School Examples and Curricular Entanglements in Aristotle's Metaphysics, other Pragmateiai, and Plato's Theaetetus: The Case of the Snub Nose*, in: *Working Papers des SFB Episteme in Bewegung*, Working Paper No. 10, 2017.



zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Metaphysik des Aristoteles, Berlin 1912), W.D. Ross (Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Vol. I-II, Oxford 1924), Joseph Owens (The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian *Metaphysics*, Toronto 1951-1978), Pierre Aubenque (Le problème de l'être chez Aristote, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), Michael Frede and Günther Patzig (Frede, Michael and Patzig, Günther. Aristoteles 'Metaphysik Z'. Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar (in 2 volumes), München: C.H.Beck 1988 (=Frede/Patzig)), Myles Burnyeat (A Map of *Metaphysics Zeta*, Pittsburgh: Mathesis Publications, 2001), and Stephen Menn - different perspectives have been applied in order to settle the question of the internal connection and relation of the chapters and arguments.

In this paper I will present a different perspective that can be useful to answer structural questions together with questions concerning what Aristotle says about substance, being etc., and test it by using it as a method to understand *Z* 4 - in its context and in relation to *Z* as a whole and other books from the *Metaphysics* and other *pragmateiai*).

The guiding hypothesis is that argumentations in *Metaphysics Z* are also determined by the audiences that Aristotle addresses and with which he disputed the topics under consideration. This means that the single approaches to the meaning of 'what-it-is-to-be' (*ti ên einai*), i.e. the very being of an object should not be considered as a continuous argumentational sequence but as questions and answers that are asked and addressed in regard to certain people with particular preconditions or momentary perspectives.

Some arguments presuppose and address the terminology of the *Analytics*, some terms are taken from the *Topics*, some of them address questions that are similarly addressed in the *Physics*. This does not necessarily mean that these treatises - as they have been transmitted and as they are extant today - must be presupposed in terms of the chronology of text production. But it means that Aristotle refers to arguments and discussions which led to the texts of these treatises as we have them today.<sup>25</sup> It is a process of arguing and answering, questioning and revising which is spurred by audiences' intended or actual previous studies, interests, and acquired logical tools and which therefore does not proceed as a continuous single line of argument or as two distinct levels of arguments in a certain architecture (Burnyeat) but in an argumentational room in which several approaches to one question in regard to several aspects and related topics are tested like waves that beat repeatedly against the shore and which finally serve one and the same task.

In the audience-action-perspective we can observe Aristotle and his audiences didactically approaching and re-approaching certain aspects of his and their questions again and again and with slightly different perspectives and in regard

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<sup>25</sup>In accordance with Burnyeat 2001, 24, fn. 34.

to different properties and insights on relations, without the need to uncover a persistent one-directional or (multilevel-, but consecutively related) structure.

Analyzing the structure of arguments and their contexts, however, does not excuse the interpreter from dealing with the philosophical questions and does not allow him or her to be content with only stylistic or structural insights.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, to read *Metaphysics Z* as a dialogue with the school audiences means to answer crucial questions like: What is Aristotle's (main) question? What are the substances (*ousiai*)? Is there something like an individual substance (*ousia*)? The communication strategies that elucidate school practices in the Lykeion and Academy are bound to specific arguments and their philosophical meaning. They not only have the effect that the text seems to be more lively<sup>27</sup> – perhaps that is not even the case – but they hint directly at the didactic laboratory in which and with which Aristotle developed his philosophy.

Scholarship is increasingly aware of the dynamics of different versions of the text of the *Metaphysics* and the reciprocity between oral lectures given by Aristotle and written treatises. However, what has not been considered or addressed so far is the fact that Aristotle's arguments testify to audiences' input and disputational practices. The task of this paper is to use this perspective as a method in order to understand what Aristotle is actually saying in *Metaphysics Z 4*.

### 3 The arguments of Z 4

Z 4 addresses the question: how, by starting from the sensible substances (*ousiai*),<sup>28</sup> do we understand what something that we speak of is in respect of itself (*kath'auto*). Aristotle calls his method 'logical' and uses the tools from the *Categories* just as he did in chapter 3 – without calling it like that – while dealing with the option that the *substratum* (*hypokeimenon*) is the primary being. To argue logically means<sup>29</sup> herein to deal with forms of predication. Subject/*substratum* is that of

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<sup>26</sup>Cf. the otherwise useful study of Ralf Lengen: *Form und Funktion der aristotelischen Pragmatie*, Stuttgart 2002, in which the author limits himself only to formal questions and reflections.

<sup>27</sup>cf. Lengen 2002, 39.

<sup>28</sup>I follow in my reading of Z 4 the reconstruction of the text by Bonitz, Jaeger and Ross, who positioned 1029b1-2 after 1029b3-12, where Aristotle explained the didactic order of the topics which he is going to discuss: starting with the sensible substances and contemplating non-sensible substances on the basis of this understanding. Cf. Frede/Patzig, II, 54; and cf. the reference to non-sensible substances in Z 16 and 17 (esp. 1041a7-9) and Z 11, 1037a13-17. Cf. also Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 347-348 on the scope of *Metaphysics Z* which studies "sensible entities as the means of arriving at a higher and absolutely more knowable type."

<sup>29</sup>Lucas Angioni, *Definition and Essence in Aristotle's Metaphysics vii 4*, in: *Ancient Philosophy* 34, 2014, 75-100 analyzes Aristotle's use of *logikós*; cf. also Michail Peramatzis, *Aristotle's 'Logical' Level of Metaphysical Investigation*, in: *The Aristotelian Tradition: Aristotle's Works on Logic and*

which everything else is said. In Z 4 he talks about what is said of something in respect of itself (*kath'auto*) because this is the name (*onoma*) that signifies the *ti ên einai*, the 'what-it-is-to-be(-something)'.

Ps.-Alexander remarks on this starting passage of Z 4 that there is a lack of articulateness (*saphêneia*: Alex.Aphr. in Metaph. 467,10-27 (resp. -19)) and identifies this lack in the condensing briefness of his diction, which interfuses the logical level of predication with the ontological level of being (*hyparxis*). Aristotle defines the *ti ên einai* by saying that it is what is said of each thing in respect to itself (per se, *kath'auto*). Later in the chapter he states explicitly that in defining something, it is the *logos*<sup>30</sup> that signifies the 'what-it-is-to-be-something' (*ti ên einai*), i.e. not the *ti ên einai* is said of something but a word or speech that signifies the *ti ên einai*. For example: the word 'man' (*anthropos*) signifies the *ti ên einai* of Socrates because it is said of Socrates *per se* (*kath'auto*).

This obscurity or lack of articulateness has a *fundamentum in re* and in theory: Aristotle's theory of predication depends on ontological distinctions, for the question of whether something can be said of something (as a logical predicate) depends on the question of whether it belongs to something else as an ontological property, i.e. whether it is an ontological predicate. As Jonathan Lear has pointed out, Aristotle's method of scientific proof implies that only such predications that reveal the metaphysical structure (i.e. the ontological relation between subject and predicate of the proposition) of a thing can be taken as real predications in the strict sense and can be the premises of a scientific proof.<sup>31</sup> In Z Aristotle goes beyond the scope of the *Categories* and not only describes our way of talking about and addressing things, but analyzes which kind of predication (language), i.e. relating terms to each other, is adequate to the properties that are signified by the terms, and which kind is not.

If we thus ask which passage is characterized as logical (*logikôs*)<sup>32</sup> by the

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Metaphysics and Their Reception in the Middle Ages, ed. by Börje Bydén and Christina Thomsen, Thörnqvist Papers in Mediaeval Studies, PIMS: 2017, 81-130 (and cf. also his earlier work: Aristotle's Metaphysics Z.4: Criteria for Definition and Essence and Their Relation to the Posterior Analytics A.4, Deukalion, 24/1, June 2006, 5-30).

<sup>30</sup>Cf. Frede/Patzig, I, 20.

<sup>31</sup>Jonathan Lear, Aristotle and Logical Theory, Cambridge 1980, 31. Antonio Mesquita in discussing Lukasiewicz refers to that passages and underlines the correctness of Aristotle's expressions when he is talking about properties or individuals that are predicated of something (António Pedro Mesquita Types of Predication in Aristotle (Posterior Analytics I 22), in: Journal of Ancient Philosophy VI/2, 2012, 1-27, 21); however, he ignores the fact that Aristotle sometimes speaks completely accurately (and therefore, in a cumbersome way) while he in other cases speaks less accurately but more comfortably. On the centrality of the difference between ontological and predicational or even linguistic cf. Michael J. Loux, Primary Ousia: An Essay on Aristotle's Metaphysics Z and H. Ithaca/London 1991, 78 who argues in favor of a linguistic understanding of 1029b13 (*logikôs*).

<sup>32</sup>Burnyeat 2001, 19-24 building on Simp. in Ph. 440,19-441,2 who presents three different meanings of *logikôs*.

expression in 1029b13 and up to which part of the text Aristotle argues solely logically – without any concern for ontological relations – there is not only one answer, and it is therefore reasonable to follow different tracks concerning that issue,<sup>33</sup> while keeping in mind that each of them will not be exclusively valid. Rather, Aristotle simply does what he has announced just before: he starts with what is easier to understand (1029b3-12) and that is the level of predication, i.e. the way we talk about things.<sup>34</sup>

The aim of these negotiations and accesses is to get a grip on what single things are in themselves and as themselves. What is it to be Socrates? What is it to be a man? What is it to be a white man? Answers to these questions do not come from discussions about (modes of) predications but from predications that signify properties and from definitions of words that signify objects of knowledge. Therefore, Aristotle does not refrain from predicational and logical inquiries in the last part of Z 4 or in the following chapters Z 5 and 6 and until the end of Z (even in Z 17<sup>35</sup>) or the whole books Z,H,Θ,<sup>36</sup> (and does not only start with it in Z 4, but already in Z 1) but starts over with and re-introduces logical or predicational<sup>37</sup> approaches each time it is required by the current question, task, or by a request from the audience.

Every single question, implicit or explicit objection, and argument originates from other argumentational contexts of which we find traces in the extant treatises and which can be backtracked to school discussions in the Lykeion, but each passage and argument for different reasons. In his “Map to Metaphysics Z”<sup>38</sup> Myles Burnyeat suggests the distinction between two separate or fairly separate levels of argument in Z. This interpretation can be further developed by applying the idea of didactically motivated and structured approaches to the topic under consideration not only of larger text passages but of every single argument and the approaching and re-approaching of the pivotal questions again and again.

This also needs to be considered in view of the well-known fact that Aristotle in Z 4 does not point to the matter-form-distinction and does not use it as a tool for the analysis of ‘what-it-is-to-be-something’. This fact has led to analytical positions and to Burnyeat’s two-level- and non-linearity-thesis and directs other

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<sup>33</sup>Burnyeat argues that the whole of Z 4-6 (and further parts of Z) is characterized as logical and builds a logical level on its own, while for Michael Woods it is only Z 4, 102913-22; Peramatzis 2017 summarizes scholarship on this issue and presents own observations on the pervading relation between ontology and logical approach in *Metaphysics Z 4* (passim).

<sup>34</sup>On the relationship between ontology and logic cf. the Heideggerian approach by Pierre Aubenque 1962, 133.

<sup>35</sup>Peramatzis 2017, passim and 28 points out that the argumentation about causality and matter-form-distinction is based on the logical inquiries.

<sup>36</sup>W.D. Ross, II, 166 and 168 argues that Aristotle ends the logical considerations in 1030a27.

<sup>37</sup>Peramatzis 2017, 8-9 and passim.

<sup>38</sup>Burnyeat 2001, passim and esp. 87 and ff. in regard to Z 4-6.

approaches, too.<sup>39</sup>

To be sure, not every new approach and new start is marked equally as such by Aristotle; there is a gradually different similarity and separateness of the particular pathways to answering the questions under discussion. But, just as there is a close connection even between the ‘big’ cuts such as in *Z* 17<sup>40</sup> (“What and what kind of thing one needs to say that the substance is, we want to say by making quasi another start.” *Z* 17, 1041a6-7) to the preceding argumentations,<sup>41</sup> there is also a difference between the argumentational parts that are more closely connected to each other. Each approach contributes something specific<sup>42</sup> to the clarification of the question under discussion and is therefore connected to the other parts and refers to them implicitly (or explicitly).<sup>43</sup>

## 4 Running analysis of the school practices in *Metaphysics Z* 4

It is therefore necessary to follow the arguments step by step – by taking up all major contributions to the understanding of this piece of text in its present text context.

### 4.1 ‘Educated’ (*mousikos*) as example for accidental predication

In 1029b14-18 Aristotle uses ‘educated’ (*mousikos*) as an example which he reiterates in the logical treatises, the *Metaphysics*, and the *Physics* for a otherwise unspecified accidental predication (*kata symbebekos*).<sup>44</sup> In *Z* 4 ‘educated’ (*mousikos*) draws on that and, in our context, is presupposed to be a property that is not predicated *kath’auto*. “For, to be you is not the same as to be educated, since

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<sup>39</sup>Peramatzis 2017, 8; Burnyeat 2001, 7-8.

<sup>40</sup>On the entanglement between *Z* 17 and the *Posterior Analytics* see Frank A Lewis, How Aristotle gets by in *Metaphysics Zeta*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013.

<sup>41</sup>Michael Frede and Günther Patzig, Aristoteles ‘*Metaphysik Z*’, Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar, Bd. 2: Kommentar, München 1988, 308 point at the multiple connections of the chapter with the preceding ones.

<sup>42</sup>Although not necessarily new or totally different from other arguments.

<sup>43</sup>The perspective in this paper adds to Burnyeat’s interpretation and gives an explanation for the non-linearity *and* the connectedness of the different levels and approaches through a contextualization of Aristotle’s philosophical practices in his school discussions and by taking into account the active part of the audiences.

<sup>44</sup>de int. 21a11; *Metaph.* 1007b4-5; b14-15; 1015b16-22; and esp. 29-34; ; 1017a6-22; 1018b34-35; *APo* 73b4-5; *Mechanica* 856a34-35; *Ph.* 189b34-191a3; differently used by relating to the common usage: *GC* 334a10-12; etc.

your are not educated according to your being you.” (“οὐ γὰρ ἔστι τὸ σοὶ εἶναι τὸ μουσικῶς εἶναι οὐ γὰρ κατὰ σαυτὸν εἶ μουσικός.”). Aristotle does not have to argue for that but can use it as a premise.<sup>45</sup>

In the *Physics* Aristotle uses the example ‘educated’ (*mousikos*) together with ‘man’ (*anthropos*) in the context of the analysis of changes in the sensible world (Ph. 189b34-191a3). The foremost aim of this distinction is the insight that we do not have to distinguish between two but between three principles of change: the *substratum* (*hypokeimenon*), the form (*eidos*) or shape (*morphê*) and the lack of form or shape (which is the opposite of the form).

“As we do not say from being a man he came to be musical but only the man became musical. When a simple thing is said to become something, in one case it survives through the process, in the other it does not. For the man remains a man and is such even when he becomes musical, whereas what is not musical or is unmusical does not survive, either simply or combined with the subject. [...] For to be a man is not the same as to be unmusical.” (Ph. I, 7, 190a7-12 and 17, transl. R. P. Hardie/R. K. Gaye)<sup>46</sup>

The logical distinction between substantial and accidental predication, therefore, is not and cannot be developed in the *Physics* but must be presupposed. In the logical treatises, especially in the *Analytics*, we find many passages where this distinction is exemplified with the educated-man- (*mousikos-anthropos*-) conjunction.

“Likewise also in the case of ‘Coriscus’ and ‘Coriscus the musician’- are they the same or different? For the one signifies an individual and the other a quality, so that it cannot be isolated; though it is not isolation which creates the third man, but the admission that it is an individual. For what man is cannot be an individual, as Callias is.” (SE 178b39-179a5, transl. Pickard)<sup>47</sup>

As in *On Interpretation*, ‘educated’ (*mousikos*) (de int. 21a8-10) in the *Sophistici Elenchi* is a common example for accidental predication that does not need to be introduced as such.<sup>48</sup>

By choosing this example in Z 4 Aristotle addresses an audience that is acquainted with predication theory and syllogistic as it is presented in the treatises

<sup>45</sup>For Aristotle’s use of examples as a school practice see Uhlmann 2017b.

<sup>46</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ἀνθρώπου ἐγένετο μουσικός, ἀλλ’ ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο μουσικός. τῶν δὲ γιγνομένων ὡς τὰ ἀπλᾶ λέγομεν γίγνεσθαι, τὸ μὲν ὑπομένον γίγνεται τὸ δ’ οὐχ ὑπομένον ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ὑπομένει μουσικός γιγνόμενος ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἔστι, τὸ δὲ μὴ μουσικὸν καὶ τὸ ἄμουσον οὔτε ἀπλῶς οὔτε συντεθειμένον ὑπομένει. [...] οὐ γὰρ ταυτὸν τὸ ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὸ ἀμούσων εἶναι.

<sup>47</sup>ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Κορίσκου καὶ Κορίσκου μουσικός, πότερον ταυτὸν ἢ ἕτερον· τὸ μὲν γὰρ τότε τι, τὸ δὲ τοιόνδε σημαίνει, ὥστ’ οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτὸ ἐκθέσθαι. οὐ τὸ ἐκτίθεσθαι δὲ ποιεῖ τὸν τρίτον ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὅπερ τότε τι εἶναι συγχωρεῖν οὐ γὰρ ἔστι τότε τι εἶναι, ὥσπερ Καλλίας, καὶ ὅπερ ἄνθρωπος ἔστιν.

<sup>48</sup>SE 176a1; 175b18-27; 179a1; 181a10-12.

of the *Organon* and especially the *Analytiks* (APo I, 22), which entitles him to presuppose the use of *mousikos* as a paradigm for an accidental predication.<sup>49</sup> In the *Posterior Analytiks* I,22 Aristotle introduces basic distinctions that are necessary for the analysis of predication modes (but which go beyond the scope of the *Categories*). He defines substantial and accidental predication (APo. 83a25-33)<sup>50</sup> by using ‘white’ and ‘man’ in order to explain accidental predication. Interestingly, Aristotle mentions Plato’s theory of forms and marks it as not relevant in this regard (Apo. 83a31-34).

“We may at once dismiss Ideas; they are mere empty names, and if they do exist, cannot concern our argument, for demonstrations deal only with subjects such as we have already mentioned.” (Apo. I 22, 83a32-35, (transl.: Edmund Spencer Bouchier))<sup>51</sup>

This reference points at an audience that is acquainted with Platonic theory and its basic question (‘What is something in itself (and not insofar as it is a mere predicate of something else as it is described in the *Categories* as our primary way of addressing things)’ or ‘by what can something be identified as this or that’).

Why does Aristotle mention this? There is no particular reason in his previous argument, but it is not far-fetched in front of an audience that is acquainted with Platonic theory to ask the question ‘what about defining accidentals as something that can be grasped in respect of itself?’. There, it could have been introduced by this audience itself or presented as a school exercise that asks ‘what about the forms?’ In a context where Aristotle reveals the ontological relations that are sometimes hidden or obscured by predication customs and corrects these practices, it is striking that he rejects Plato’s approach so rudely, for it is one of the main aims of Platonic theory of forms to uncover and correct such structures (as Plato does in his 7th letter) just as Aristotle does here in the *Analytiks* and similarly in other treatises like his *On the soul*.

Aristotle’s side note marks a difference to the Platonic approach, namely the insistence that everywhere in the sensible realm the existence of a thing, a *tode ti*, is the basic precondition for any predication and ontological relation – a fundament of his argumentative moves which Aristotle similarly makes in the *Metaphysics*

<sup>49</sup>Cf. Burnyeat 2001, 24-25 and 87-115.

<sup>50</sup>“What does not signify a substance but is said as something of a *substratum* that is neither, what that is, nor what a single thing of that kind is, is called accidental, for example ‘white’ is said of ‘man’. For man is neither what it is to be white nor what something white is, but, say, an animal/animate being...” – ὅσα δὲ μὴ οὐσίαν σημαίνει, ἀλλὰ κατ’ ἄλλου ὑποκειμένου λέγεται ὃ μὴ ἔστι μήτε ὅπερ ἐκεῖνο μήτε ὅπερ ἐκεῖνό τι, συμβεβηκότα, οἷον κατὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ λευκόν. οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἀνθρώπος οὔτε ὅπερ λευκόν οὔτε ὅπερ λευκόν τι, ἀλλὰ ζῶον ἴσως

<sup>51</sup>τὰ γὰρ εἶδη χαιρέτω τερετίσματά τε γάρ ἐστι, καὶ εἰ ἔστιν, οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν λόγον ἐστὶν αἱ γὰρ ἀποδείξεις περὶ τῶν τοιούτων εἰσίν.

(e.g. Z 4, 1029b22-27). The fact, that talking about real singular things in the sensible realm is the regular basis of our language and predication and the normal use of syllogistic, justifies the general statement that everything that is said is said of a substance, a *tode ti*. While Plato in the *Timaeus*<sup>52</sup> and the 7th letter<sup>53</sup> corrects the normal language and its predication practices, Aristotle here clarifies the underlying fundamental rationale and corrects only such cases in which we predicate something more or less loosely or negligently. He does so more precisely and strictly in the *Posterior Analytics* where the scientific nature of a proof and the status whether a proposition is true or false is at stake.

It is not at all evident from the Platonic corpus that Plato would have objected to the position in the *Posterior Analytics* (APo. I 22, 83a25ff.), but the emphasis is different: if we do as we do and predicate something like 'white' of a single substance, like 'this man' or 'this horse', we also need to think of what we mean when we say 'white' and distinguish it from everything that is not white. However, Aristotle takes a different approach to the question and therefore denies the adequacy of the Platonic sets of question for the present context (*chaireto* Apo. 83a34), which could have either anticipated or reported or reacted to an school audience's objection or request for clarification.

Regarding its tone ("We may at once dismiss Ideas; they are mere empty names...") the text is more likely to be imagined as a seminar in the Lykeion than in the Academy and perhaps as a response to an address from the audience side, suggesting a greater proximity. Even though Plato seems to have practiced the freedom of opinion in his circles and among his students and followers,<sup>54</sup> one can hardly imagine Plato sitting next to Aristotle when he criticizes his teacher with such harsh words.<sup>55</sup> Such practices of distinguishing the "new school" from Platonic approaches can even be imagined to have contributed to generating a school identity of the Lykeion.

In any case, in Z 4 the school examples, the multiplicity of questions and (implicit and explicit) objections from different directions, the elliptic style that expects the readers and audiences to supplement the argument with topics and positions discussed frequently or on an almost curricular basis, and the confidence with which Aristotle starts with advanced distinctions from the *Organon*<sup>56</sup>, are clear-cut criteria that claim a contextualization in the institutional practices of Aristotle's school contexts, i.e. Academy and Lykeion. Moreover, the differences in tone in regard to Platonic doctrines or concepts in the *Metaphysics* can be explai-

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<sup>52</sup>Ti. 49c7-50b5

<sup>53</sup>Ep. VII, 343a-c.

<sup>54</sup>Natali 2013, 20-25.

<sup>55</sup>L. Lynch, *Aristotle's school. A Study of a Greek Educational Institution*, Los Angeles/London, 1972, 47-67.

<sup>56</sup>Burnyeat 2001, 25.



ned by the different audiences and contexts of the lectures and argumentations.<sup>57</sup> If we distinguish between audiences who are familiar with Platonic discussion practices and who are in favor of Academic approaches on the one hand, and those audiences who are more reserved in relation to a or the Platonic theory of forms on the other, then, *aporiai* and alleged discrepancies can be resolved and rather harsh verbal attacks in answer to Platonic suggestions and concepts can be explained by referring to the wish to distance the school context of the Lykeion from their mother ‘country’, i.e. the Platonic Academy. Furthermore, if the audience is not well acquainted with Platonic discussions and not advanced in dialectics and ontological argumentations, there is no need to attempt to explain the particular doctrinal differences, nor is it fruitful for the purpose of understanding.

## 4.2 Defining ‘per se-predications’ and ‘what-it-is-to-be-something’

The presupposition of distinctions from the *Analytiks* in *Metaphysics Z* 4 becomes even more obvious in the following case where Aristotle specifies what he means by ‘in respect of itself’ (*kath’auto*) (1029b16: οὐδὲ δὴ τοῦτο πᾶν). This move is motivated by an implicit objection that comes from a terminological distinction that is regularly connected with another school example, namely the predicate ‘white’, *rq*. This distinction presents another meaning of the term ‘*kath’auto*’ that is not suitable for identifying the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ (*ti ên einai*) of a thing, i.e. the predication of something in a primary way such as ‘white’ (or any other color) is predicated in a primary way of the surface: ‘white’ belongs to the surface ‘in respect of itself’ (*kath’auto*) but not as a defining property, for being a surface is not identical with being white (1029b16-18).

In the extant treatises we find this mode of primary predication called *kath’auto*-predication in the *Metaphysics* in book  $\Delta$ , the so-called philosophical lexicon, and in the *Physics*;<sup>58</sup> neither of these texts need to be chronologically earlier than *Z*<sup>59</sup>; the evidence only proves that in the discussions about first philosophy and physics, to which Aristotle implicitly refers, the distinctions between substantial and accidental predication induce distinctions between different

<sup>57</sup>On the need for or advantage in introducing audiences as protagonists in the interpretation of Aristotle’s arguments see below.

<sup>58</sup>Aristotle discusses per se predications and attributes also in the *Posterior Analytics* I 4 (73a34-b16). (Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, Toronto 1951-1978, 349 connects this discussion with the reference to the *Analytiks* in *Metaphysics Z* 12, 1037b8-9 which is more likely to point at *APo* II,10.) and introduces a strict sense of ‘per se’ on which he can build the principle from which the demonstration can be deduced.

<sup>59</sup>Owens 1951-1978, 349.

modes of being ‘in respect of itself’ (*kath’auto*).

“That in virtue of which’ has several meanings, (1) the form or substance of each thing, e.g. that in virtue of which a man is good is the good itself, (2) the proximate subject in which an attribute is naturally found, e.g. color in a surface. ‘That in virtue of which’, then, in the primary sense is the form, and in a secondary sense the matter of each thing and the proximate *substratum* of each.” (Metaph. Δ ch. 18, 1022a15-19 and esp. 16 und 18-19, transl. Ross)<sup>60</sup>

In addition to the primary (*protos*) distinction Aristotle speaks about gradually nearer or more distant accidentals.<sup>61</sup> ‘White’ is said primarily of the surface and secondarily of the body and tertiarily of man (etc.) (Ph. 210b4-5)

By considering these other cases it becomes clear that the distinction has been developed primarily to settle questions about changing individual subjects with different accidental and substantial properties, since nearer or more distant predications do not imply indices for essential or non-essential properties. It is thus transferred<sup>62</sup> to our context<sup>63</sup> and presupposed as a known perspective and tool in order to further distinguish the meaning of certain predication practices that are analyzed and systematized in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*. The objection is made by or for somebody who has learned to distinguish between different modes of being-by-oneself (*kath’auto einai*). In this case, we cannot know for sure whether such an objection is implicit or has been actually put forth, since Aristotle does not name a discussion partner. However, in either case it is the audience that pushes Aristotle’s argument and adds to the preceding not, so to speak, as the natural or causal consequence but rather in the mode of encircling or orbiting the case under consideration by applying different school distinctions.

Here, as always, we can ask: could Aristotle not have anticipated such an objection or could he not have thought of it all by himself? Why do we need to

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<sup>60</sup>Τὸ καθ’ ὃ λέγεται πολλαχῶς, ἓνα μὲν τρόπον τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἡ οὐσία ἐκάστου πράγματος, οἷον καθ’ ὃ ἀγαθός, (15) αὐτὸ ἀγαθόν, ἓνα δὲ ἐν ᾧ πρώτῳ πέφυκε γίγνεσθαι, οἷον τὸ χρῶμα ἐν τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ. τὸ μὲν οὖν πρώτως λεγόμενον καθ’ ὃ τὸ εἶδος ἐστὶ, δευτέρως δὲ ὡς ἡ ὕλη ἐκάστου καὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἐκάστῳ πρώτον. Cf. Metaph. XII, 4, 1070b18-21.

<sup>61</sup>An accidental attribute may also be more or less remote, e.g. suppose that a pale man or a musical man were said to be the cause of the statue. All causes, both proper and accidental, may be spoken of either as potential or as actual... (Ph. 195b1-5, transl. Gaye/Hardie)

ἔστι δὲ καὶ τῶν συμβεβηκότων ἄλλα ἄλλων πορρώτερον καὶ ἐγγύτερον, οἷον εἰ ὁ λευκὸς καὶ ὁ μουσικὸς αἴτιος λέγοιτο τοῦ ἀνδριάντος. πάντα δὲ καὶ τὰ οἰκείως λεγόμενα καὶ τὰ κατὰ συμβεβηκότως τὰ μὲν ὡς δυνάμενα λέγεται τὰ δ’ ὡς ἐνεργοῦντα,... (Ph. 195b1-5)

<sup>62</sup>By using the terms ‘new contextualization’ or ‘re-contextualization’ and ‘transfer’ I refer to the terminological instruments that have been developed in the Collaborative Research Center “Episteme in motion” (CRC 980) at the Freie Universität Berlin. The CRC 980 has supported this paper by a financial aid for proof reading.

<sup>63</sup>A fact that becomes evident in that Aristotle mentions movement (*kinesis*) among the list of categories, which is rather unusual: cf. Ross II, 169, ad 1029b25.

introduce other protagonists? The answer to this must be: yes, he could have done so, however, it is not likely that he did. For there is no evidence that Aristotle was a lonely thinker. He was the most important part and head of a school<sup>64</sup> and philosophized as a teacher and co-researcher. Therefore, in cases in which we find objections that are – logically – presented from the side and which embed the philosophical question in a wider spectrum of concerns, or in cases in which we find elliptic arguments that presuppose implications that are made obvious in other contexts, it is not only plausible but directly inferable to describe Aristotle’s philosophy as a dialogic school philosophy that is generated and further developed by such objections that are raised as a side note.

We are especially compelled to hypothesize that the audiences actively participated if (and only if) these structural insights about school practices and all of these contexts in other treatises prove directly helpful for the understanding of a text such as Z 4.

In our current case: the question<sup>65</sup> as to whether it is the surface that is to be determined or the color white, can be settled by the principle of economy, i.e. the premise that Aristotle uses the standard example in the standard way. It is the surface that is to be determined, and of which it is shown that there is no way in which ‘white’ could signify the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ (*ti ên einai*) of the surface.

This is supported by the following argumentation (1029b18 and ff.), which makes clear that we cannot understand ‘white’ as signifying the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ (*ti ên einai*) of the surface. Aristotle tests another possible candidate that could well have been induced by an objection of the audience: if ‘white’ does not signify the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ (*ti ên einai*) of the surface, perhaps ‘white surface’ could. The justifying reason for this claim is that ‘surface’ and ‘white surface’ are not the same (concerning their being as such). Aristotle only hints at the reason for this by saying that the *definiendum* cannot be part of the *definiens*. When Aristotle argues that the composite ‘white surface’ (*epiphaneia leuke*) cannot signify the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ (*ti ên einai*) of the surface, he presupposes that ‘white surface’ (*epiphaneia leuke*) cannot be defined without using ‘surface’ (‘epiphaneia’) as *definiens*. But why is that so?

The reason seems to be that ‘white’ has been introduced for the first time as part of the *definiens* because in the school example it has by some means or other a closeness to ‘surface’ (*ephianeia*). Aristotle is now making several attempts to approach the question as to what kind of closeness this is and why it does not work for defining the *ti ên einai*. The point here is that even in the conjunction, the only term that could determine ‘surface’ still is ‘surface’ and not ‘white’. Therefore,

<sup>64</sup>Düring, 1957, 460; Chroust, cf. Natali 2013, 56-60.

<sup>65</sup>Frede/Patzig, 1988, II, 60-61.

the only real defining element in the definition is ‘surface’, which is also the *definiendum*, and this must be eliminated from the definition. The point therefore is not that one cannot eliminate ‘surface’ by saying (e.g.) ‘termination (*peras*) of a solid (*soma*)’ (cf. Eucl. XI,2, Definition EO IV, 2,4), but that there is no connection between ‘surface’ and its defining elements on the one hand and ‘white’ and its defining elements on the other.

Aristotle is more than succinct in making this point. He argues without having introduced the principle of his argument properly but by presupposing it.<sup>66</sup> Ever since the ancient commentators this brevity has led to *aporiai* and different readings. Among them is an explanatory addition (“why” (*dia ti*)), which is transmitted in two important manuscripts, E (Par.Graec. 1853) and J (Vindobonensis 100), and was preferred or chosen by several modern editors<sup>67</sup>: This reading adds the question ‘why’ (sc. is ‘surface’ not what ‘white surface’ is, i.e. the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ (*ti ên einai*) of ‘white surface’).<sup>68</sup>

Here, it is helpful to refer to Ps.-Alexander’s explanation: he emphasizes that in general the definition says and unfolds the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ (*ti ên einai*) of the *definiendum* (Alex.in Metaph.468,32-39). But ‘white’ cannot unfold the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ (*ti ên einai*) of ‘surface’. If ‘white’ itself is unfolded, it is unfolded in the parts of the definition of ‘white’ and not of ‘surface’. Aristotle omits to say that ‘white’ is in no way part of the ‘what-it-is-to-be-surface’ (although it is closely connected to it as a predicate) but presupposes the validity of this – elsewhere introduced – case.

The very next sentence contains the next obscurity that is entangled with the preceding, and which must be led back to an (implicit, anticipated) objection as Ps-Alexander suggests (469, 3-4): The absurdity of the effort to identify ‘what-it-is-to-be-white’ and ‘what-it-is-to-be-surface’ is made obvious by introducing ‘smooth’ (*leios*) as a second example for an accidental predication that is said of the surface in a primary way but not as a *definiens* of its what-it-is-to-be (*ti ên einai*). Again, we find traces of the use of ‘smooth’ as a school example in  $\Delta$  11, 1018b34-1019a4,<sup>69</sup> where Aristotle uses ‘smooth’ together with ‘surface’ in just the same way as (a) color (*chroma*) in *Metaphysics*  $\Delta$  18. If we thus have two standard examples for the usage of in respect-of-itself (*kath’auto*) instead of

<sup>66</sup>Pietsch implicitly considers this elliptic argumentation: Prinzipienfindung, 20.

<sup>67</sup>Frede/Patzig, 1988, I, 66.

<sup>68</sup>Cf. Alex.Aphr. in Metaph. 468,33-34.

<sup>69</sup>“The attributes of prior things are called prior, e.g. straightness is prior to smoothness; for one is an attribute of a line as such, and the other of a surface. Some things then are called prior and posterior in this sense, others in respect of nature and substance, i.e. those which can be without other things, while the others cannot be without them—a distinction which Plato used.”

ἔτι πρότερα λέγεται τὰ τῶν προτέρων πάθη, οἷον εὐθύτης λειότητος τὸ μὲν γὰρ γραμμῆς καθ’ αὐτὴν πάθος τὸ δὲ ἐπιφανείας. τὰ μὲν δὴ οὕτω λέγεται πρότερα καὶ ὕστερα, τὰ δὲ κατὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐσίαν, ὅσα ἐνδέχεται εἶναι ἄνευ ἄλλων, ἐκεῖνα δὲ ἄνευ ἐκείνων μή ἢ διαιρέσει ἐχρήσατο Πλάτων.

‘in a primary way’, ‘smooth’ and ‘white’ have the same relationship to ‘surface’ and are both said in the same way ‘in a primary way’ (*protos*), i.e. *kath’auto* in the sense of ‘in a primary way’ of ‘surface’. That means that they would have to be identified/equated if one removed ‘surface’ from the parts of the *definiens*, although they are not parts of the same definition.

Ross refers to *De sensu* (442b11)<sup>70</sup> and Theophrastus, *De sensu* 13,<sup>71</sup> where Aristotle and Theophrastus report that Democritus identified ‘white’ and ‘smooth’ (Ross, II, 168). The argument in *De sensu* runs completely differently. Aristotle argues against the absurdities that are elicited by the atomistic position that everything in nature is caused by a collision of atoms. Democritus must deduce everything in the senses from the sense of touch because the sense perception of color, taste, sound etc. are actually perceptions of different shapes and positions of atoms. Therefore, he even identifies ‘white’ and ‘smooth’ and reduces all colors to geometric forms. Theophrastus discusses at length (*De sensu* 73-78 [contra: 79-83]) Democritus’ doctrines on colors and color sensation. In both texts it is obvious that Democritus’ identification of ‘white’ and ‘smooth’ is not taken into serious consideration. And: it does not touch upon the ontological question of what it is to be something.

Although the use of ‘smooth’ in addition to ‘white’ can be explained by its function as an example for a primary predication, the explicit consequence (1029b22: “... with the consequence that ‘what-it-is-to-be-white’ and ‘what-it-is-to-be-smooth’ are one and the same”) is very likely to be induced or further promoted by the association with the example from the discussions about sense perception. For only here has the identification of ‘white’ and ‘smooth’ been explicitly reduced to absurdum. To be sure, this critique is aimed at the materialistic Democritean theory of sense perception and not at defining ‘what-it-is-to-be-a-surface’, but there is no reason why a school example that is at hand should not be transferred

<sup>70</sup>Sens. 442a29-442b26, cf. esp. a29-b3: “Democritus and most of the natural philosophers who treat of sense-perception proceed quite irrationally, for they represent all objects of sense as objects of touch. Yet, if this is really so, it clearly follows that each of the other senses is a mode of touch; but one can see at a glance that this is impossible”; b 11-12: “On the other hand, they reduce the special to common sensibles, as Democritus does with white and black; for he asserts that the latter is rough, and the former smooth, while the reduces savors to the atomic figures.” (transl. J. I. Beare)

Δημόκριτος δὲ καὶ οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν φυσιολόγων, ὅσοι λέγουσι περὶ αἰσθήσεως, ἀποπώτατόν τι ποιοῦσιν πάντα γὰρ τὰ αἰσθητὰ ἅπτα ποιοῦσιν. καίτοι εἰ τοῦτο οὕτως ἔχει, δῆλον ὡς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αἰσθήσεων ἑκάστη ἀφή τις ἐστὶν τοῦτο δ’ ὅτι ἀδύνατον, οὐ χαλεπὸν συνιδεῖν; b 11-12: τὸ γὰρ λευκὸν καὶ τὸ μέλαν τὸ μὲν τραχύ φησὶν εἶναι τὸ δὲ λεῖον. εἰς δὲ τὰ σχήματα ἀνάγει τοὺς χυμούς.

<sup>71</sup>See Theophrastus of Ephesus, Pamela Huby, Dimitri Gutas (eds.), *Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence: Commentary*, vol. 4: Psychology (Texts 265-327) (*Philosophia Antiqua* 81), Leiden (1999), 32-82 (fragments on sensation).

to another school context where aspects of the example can be made fruitful. In such a case the aspects that are used need not be the same as in the former context.

What is striking, however, is that we have a twofold evidence in regard to this school example, namely a critique of Democritus performed by Aristotle himself and a rather lengthy discussion by Theophrastus in his own treatise about senses and sense perception. In both texts the identification of 'white' and 'smooth' is quoted as a genuinely Democritean doctrine and an example for the reduction of everything to the sense of touch and touchable qualities of atoms and atom collisions. If Aristotle in Z 4 uses this example (in a different way) and thereby refers to the physiological and psychological context, we must act on the hypothesis that the intended audience of Z 4 is acquainted with this discussion and critique.

Considering that in our argumentative context the *Analytics*, the *Physics* and basic aspects of the *Metaphysics* are already presupposed, further reference to a rather specialist-field of study brings us even closer to the inside of the school institution of the Lykeion and into the discussions between Aristotle and his master student Theophrastus, who by then was himself long since himself a teacher and renowned scholar. It is true that one does not need to be familiar with Democritean doctrines in order to understand that 'white' cannot be identified as a *definiens* of 'what-it-is-to-be-a-surface', but it is also true that it is implausible to assume that Aristotle would have argued with these examples and in such an elliptic way if he had not intended to address an audience that had studied physiology and psychology either with him or Theophrastus.

It is the audience's previously acquired knowledge about the Presocratic atomists that fills the gaps in the elliptic arguments. If Aristotle wanted his arguments to be understood he had to communicate with exactly such an audience, be that orally or by producing a written text that was fit to circulate among students and fellow researchers, as will also be affirmed by the following arguments.

### **4.3 Can there be a 'what-it-is-to-be-something' and definitions of composites?**

Starting from 1029b22 the question is extended to composite objects in any of the categories (from the *Categories*): is there a 'what-it-is-to-be' (*ti ên einai*) of composite objects such as 'white man' at all? The identity of 'what-it-is-to-be-a-surface' and 'what-it-is-to-be-a-white-surface' was not rejected due to the special kind of primacy of 'white' in relation to 'surface', although this relation seemed at first sight most likely to provide parts of a substantial definition, i.e. a definition of the *ti ên einai* of something.

The discussion moves on to a more open and far-reaching question insofar as not the identity of composite and simple objects is concerned but the possibility to define composite objects in general. This is a rather associative move and Aristotle starts with very preliminary considerations: can't there be a way in which composite objects can also be defined? If we postulate that the essential quality of a 'what-it-is-to-be' is that it can be said of something 'in respect of itself' (*kath'auto*), the reverse argument would be that everything that does not meet the contrary definition of 'not in respect of itself' is – at least – not obviously not definable.

It is therefore only one first and preparatory step with which Aristotle moves forward by this argument, and it is very elliptic in its implementation, for Aristotle introduces a (possible or actual) objection with only a brief summarizing expression. Against the assumption that only what is said 'in respect of itself' (*kath'auto*) in the primary ontologically founded sense can be predicated, he puts forward the distinction between two different ways in which something can be said to be 'not in respect of itself' (*ou kath' auto*). If composites like 'white man' are in neither sense 'not by themselves' (*kath'auto*) one needs to inquire further about the possibility to define them.

Ross assumes that Aristotle anticipated the objection and therefore addressed the question.<sup>72</sup> What is the reason for this assumption? Obviously the fact that there is no inner necessity in the preceding argument that forces this follow-up to be made. However, we need to positively describe this as a philosophical practice that is characteristic of the school argumentations that are performed and reflected in book Z of the *Metaphysics*. Elliptic expressions need to be complemented by an audience or readership capable of doing so. This can be accomplished on the basis of general known premisses and implications. But, it can also be used as a didactic method that involves Aristotle's audiences and readers in the process of elaborating the problem, which deals with the possibility to define and to properly have a knowledge of composite beings. Therefore, in our case knowledge is required from the audiences, and this knowledge is a specialist resp. school knowledge that is based on school or curricular practices.

Here it becomes obvious how, from the very beginning, the logical approach involves ontological questions. Aristotle makes that point clear by introducing the expression 'robe' (*himation*) as a substitute for 'white man'. He will not be dealing with the linguistically motivated difficulty of defining terms that consists of two words,<sup>73</sup> but with the problem whether 'white man' and other composites are one thing that can be grasped at all.

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<sup>72</sup>Ross 1924, II, 169 ad 1029b27: "The objection assumes, arbitrarily enough, that only what is internally *kath'auto* can be a *kath' auto* predicate of something else. But Aristotle takes it seriously..."

<sup>73</sup>Frede/Patzig, 1988, II, 62.

To answer that question he introduces a very formal criterion for the non-definability of something or, in other words, for the fact that something is not said in respect of itself (ou *kath'auto*): either because something different is part of the definition, like 'white man' for the definition of 'white'; or because something that is an essential part of the *definiendum* is missing, as in the definition of '*himation*', i.e. 'white man', only 'white' is included in the definition (1029b30-1030a2).<sup>74</sup>

This distinction can only be useful as a general preliminary condition whose existence can be tested in each particular case. Therefore, only the next question and answer lead to the real problem: composites like 'the robe' have not the same being as single entities (*tode ti*), which are self-subsistent, because they do not presuppose the existence of something else that is different from their own being. In the proper sense of the word, there can only be a definition of this kind of 'this-thing-only' entities, whereas of other things there can be a 'formula' (*logos*), i.e. the verbal or rational explication of its being, only in a way that is secondary to a real definition.

#### 4.4 Defining in *Metaphysics Z*, the *Posterior Analytics*, and the *Topic*

The distinction between mere *logos* and proper definition (*horismos*) is further elaborated by the reference to the *Iliad*<sup>75</sup> as an example of a *logos*, which is not a definition. The passage is again dense and short. However, Aristotle explains the example and the difference between *logos* and definition in another text passage in his *Analytics*, namely in the *Posterior Analytics* II, 7 (92b26-34), a text passage that starts with the question of whether in a definition the very being (*ousia*) or the what-it-is (*to ti estin*) is explained (Apo. 92a34-35). Therefore, what is at stake is the question of whether the definition is an explanation of words or of the essential being of things.

For a deeper understanding of this difference in our passage (Apo. 92b26-34) Aristotle asks whether one would completely relieve the definition from the requirement to uncover the essential being of that what is defined (Apo. 92b27). The result would be that the definition becomes a *logos*, i.e. a sequence of meaningful words that has the same meaning as the name of the thing that is to be defined.

But to equate word and explanation and to dismiss the reference to the essential nature of the *definiendum* would be absurd and lead to contradictions.

<sup>74</sup>To read this second alternative, we have to alter the text following Dorothea Frede by adding a negation particle in 1029b33: Frede/Patzig, 1988, II, 63.

<sup>75</sup>See below for the example of the *Iliad* in different Aristotelian treatises (p. 4.6) and ff.



This is Aristotle's answer to the question (Apo. 92b28) as to whether the definition can be located totally on the level of logic and semantics.

There are two arguments against this option, and it is the second that explains the function of the *Iliad* example also in *Metaphysics Z 4*: (1) there would also be definitions of non-beings; for there are words that indicate non-beings, like the word 'buck-deer' or 'dragon', which mean something that does not exist and have no essential being; and (2) all word sequences would be definitions. This is exactly our challenge in *Z 4*. Here, in the *Posterior Analytics*, he explains this perplexity by saying that it is possible to invent a name for every meaningful speech or sequence of words; therefore, everytime we talk with each other we utter definitions; and even the *Iliad* would be a definition.

In his commentary John Philoponus (in APo. 363,4-14) adds the explanation that there is a name that signifies the poetry sung by Homer about the events at the shore of Troy. If every name that signifies something were a definition then the *Iliad*, that is all 24 books with around 15000 verses, would be a definition. Philoponus also stresses one point that is implicitly present in both passages in *Metaphysics Z 4* and *Posterior Analytics II, 7*: i.e. that it is the essence of a definition to explain the nature of the *definiendum* as something that is external to mere semantics.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, to define something is not primarily a hermeneutic practice.

Book II of the *Posterior Analytics* is concerned with discussing practices of knowledge acquisition by definitions.<sup>77</sup> In order to do so Aristotle takes several approaches toward the topic and analyzes the relation between syllogistic and definitory techniques. The notion of definition (*horismos*), and its task to prepare and constitute the knowledge of something and answer the what-it-is-question (*ti esti*), are therefore rather strict in the *Posterior Analytics*. He constantly orbits the acquisition of knowledge in the truest sense by sticking to the insight that there can be knowledge in the primary sense of the word only about substances.<sup>78</sup>

The question that Aristotle explicitly asks in *Posterior Analytics II, 7* which leads to further questions there concerning the relationship between hermeneutic and semantic and ontological perspectives, is also present in our context in *Z 4*.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>in APo. 362,22-24.

<sup>77</sup>David Bronstein: Aristotle on Knowledge and Learning. The *Posterior Analytics*, 2016, who takes Meno's paradox as structural impulse for the *Posterior Analytics* as a whole; cf. also D. Charles, Aristotle on Meaning and Essence, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000, esp. 23-56; M. T. Ferejohn, Formal Causes: Definition, Explanation, and Primacy in Socratic and Aristotelian Thought, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013, 3-27; Jonathan Barnes, Aristotle's Theory of Demonstration in: Articles on Aristotle: 1. Science, ed. by J. Barnes, M. Schofield and R. Sorabji, London: Duckworth 1975, 65-87.

<sup>78</sup>E.g. APo 90b30-31; 93a3-6; 93b29; 96a20-23.

<sup>79</sup>Ps.-Alexander starts his commentary on book Z with the summary that the book is about definitions: Alex.Aphr. in Metaph. 459,4-5.

Aristotle constantly reminds his audience or readers of the primary candidate for being in the primary sense, i.e. the single entity or first substance (of the *Categories*) (*tode ti*) (1030a3-5) and confirms the theory that only these entities are definable in the truest sense of the word, because they are not said of something else, because they do not need something else in order to be defined or to have their proper being (1030a10-11).

The reference to the *Categories* is acknowledged by Frede/Patzig (II, 66) in their interpretation of 1030a12, where Aristotle concludes that there is no ‘what-it-is-to-be’ in the proper sense for anything else but the first substances. The expression he uses for this distinction is “what is not as a species of a genus”. Since in the *Categories* Aristotle distinguishes between species and genus only in regard to substances, it is clear that this expression underlines the special position of the (first) substance also in the *Metaphysics*.<sup>80</sup>

The rather strict perspective of the theory of definition in the *Posterior Analytics* is an important foil for the audiences of the *Metaphysics* because Aristotle here tends to also allow secondary and less strict meanings of being and definition, not as a critical revision of the perspective of the *Analytics* but complementary to their approach under the different scope of the newly-introduced first philosophy.

This becomes even clearer in one of the next argumentational moves (1030a14-17) by which Aristotle – for the time being (but cf. 1030b4-6) – terminates his strict only-being-can-be-defined -position, which is succeeded by the position that refers to the insight that everything is said in many ways. Whereas the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ only belongs to substances and therefore, there can only be a definition (*horismos*) of substances, there can be a *logos*, i.e. a sequence of words that renders the meaning of every verbal expression, of everything else. This is completely in agreement with the distinction between *horismos* and *logos* in the *Posterior Analytics*. The simplest account that could be given would be to explain a word (*onoma*) by saying that this belongs to that (*ὅτι τόδε τῷδε ὑπάρχει* (1030a15-16)), a typical expression for accidental predication as we find it in *Metaphysics* book Δ 7.<sup>81</sup> Alternatively, there can be a more precise explanation instead of the simple account.<sup>82</sup> In both cases, the result will not be a definition in the proper sense of the word.

Again, there is no need to postulate the chronological priority of the “philosophical lexicon” (book Δ) as we have it, but what we can presuppose is that in discussion circles where questions of predication and substantial qualities were taught, the need would have arisen for terminological and conceptual clarification,

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<sup>80</sup>Cf. Ross, I, ad A 9, 991a31 with additional parallel passages in Aristotle.

<sup>81</sup>Metaph. Δ 7, 1017a7-19.

<sup>82</sup>I do not see why it is necessary to assume that the more precise explanation needs to refer to a complex expression as Frede/Patzig suggest: 67

which can be satisfied by exemplary conceptual distinctions. It is plausible to assume that such a collection was in itself in a constant state of flux with high inner dynamics. It was subject to continuous revisions, additions and erasures. This can be substantiated by the observation that Aristotle frequently refers to the need to distinguish between multiple meanings of words and notions as it is reflected in book  $\Delta$  of the *Metaphysics*.

Aristotle famously starts the examination with this in book Z and presents it as a tool for further approaches to the being as being.<sup>83</sup> In Z 4, the next section of arguments is introduced by a question that – by distinguishing between multiple meanings – opens up new options on how to deal with the problem of defining or explaining things that are not substances but dependent properties or complex units (1030a17). Aristotle introduces this question with the particle ‘ $\tilde{\eta}$ ’, which generally can be used as the introductory particle for simple questions.<sup>84</sup> In the *Metaphysics* it is often used at the beginning of a new argumentational section, as in our context: in order to look at the question from another perspective.<sup>85</sup> Although a new argumentational line is started thereafter, it somehow continues with what has just been introduced. For in some way the distinction between *logos* and *horismos* also leads to the differentiation of multiple, gradually different meanings that are primary or secondary in regard to the specific nature of the *definiendum*.

A connection between the two passages is built by the reference to the basic distinction of the *Categories* between substance and the other categories, which is also applied in the *Topic* (I,9) – a passage to which Ps.-Alexander refers in order to explain why and how Aristotle widens the horizon to the description of the being of something other than individual beings.<sup>86</sup> Here and elsewhere (cf. e.g. 1030b11-12) Aristotle gives a short list of the ten categories, which include – beside substance – quality and quantity. This way of speaking is efficient and, for Aristotle, part of his school conventions, which also include school examples, speech patterns derived from teaching conventions and school practices, as well as often discussed and presented notions and distinctions.

Aristotle confronts or rather conjoins the two different perspectives of the *Categories* and the *Metaphysics* by saying:

“But after all, ‘definition’, like ‘what a thing is’, has several meanings; ‘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

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<sup>83</sup>Metaph. Z 1, 1028a10.

<sup>84</sup>Cf. LSJ s.v.  $\tilde{\eta}$ ; J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*. Second Edition, Oxford, 1954, 73.

<sup>85</sup>Lucas Angioni, *Definition and Essence in Metaphysics VII 4*, in: *Ancient Philosophy* 34 (1), 2014, 75-100 underlines the complementarity of sections 1030a2-17 and 1030a17-32.

<sup>86</sup>Alex.Aphr. in Metaph. 473,4-10 quotes Top. I,9,103b29ff.

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. For even of a quality we might ask what it is, so that a quality also is a ‘what’ — not simply, however, but just as, in the case of that which is not, some say, in the abstract, that that which is not is — not is simply, but is non-existent. So too with a quality.” (1030a21-26)<sup>87</sup>

It is the perspective of the *Metaphysics* that speaks of primary and secondary sense and proper sense and derivative sense as we already find it in the introductory statement in *Z* 1.<sup>88</sup> There, Aristotle – in the text as it has been transmitted – refers the recipient back to what has been said “earlier” (*proteron*).<sup>89</sup> Usually, Aristotle by using the word “*proteron*” refers back to what has been said before in the same treatise or discipline. Jaeger in his edition therefore athetizes the reference altogether, since he holds the opinion that books *Z* and *H* were originally composed separately, and book *Δ* was a later addition to the *Metaphysics*. Frede/Patzig more cautiously suggest athetizing only “*proteron*” while keeping the rest of the text in 1028a10-11, since Aristotle could have referred to an originally independent treatise.<sup>90</sup> This reasonable position can be supported and further developed by the perspective of audience action and by contextualizing Aristotle’s argumentative practices. Then we do not need to fix a certain static text to which Aristotle refers, but rather describe a discursive practice that was developed and modified in the Academy and Lykeion as a tool for different ontological and predicational studies, and which was written down at different stages of the development of parts of the project of a first philosophy.

Therefore, we have an intensive intercommunication and reciprocity between the perspective of the *Posterior Analytics* and their path to knowledge acquisition and knowledge transfer and *Metaphysics Z* 4, which further develops the idea of a hierarchy of meanings, all of which share the very being of the object of knowledge as the common center of reference (1030a28-b3).

On the opposite side we find practices of definitions in *Topic* VI:<sup>91</sup> It goes beyond the limits of this paper to decipher the entanglements between the discipline discussed in the *Posterior Analytics* or in the *Metaphysics* and that of the

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<sup>87</sup>ὥσπερ γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἔστιν ὑπάρχει πᾶσιν, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὁμοίως ἀλλὰ τῷ μὲν πρώτως τοῖς δ’ ἐπομένως, οὕτω καὶ τὸ τί ἔστιν ἀπλῶς μὲν τῆ οὐσίᾳ πῶς δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ γὰρ τὸ ποιὸν ἐροίμεθ’ ἂν τί ἔστιν, ὥστε καὶ τὸ ποιὸν τῶν τί ἔστιν, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ἀπλῶς, ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος λογικῶς φασί (25) τινες εἶναι τὸ μὴ ὄν, οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἀλλὰ μὴ ὄν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ποιόν.

<sup>88</sup>Ps.-Alexander explicitly explains this correlation to the scope of the book with the distinction of multiple senses: Alex.Aphr.in Metaph. 459,4-17.

<sup>89</sup>Metaph. 1028a10-11: There are several senses in which a thing may be said to be, as we pointed out previously in our book on the various senses of words; Τὸ ὄν λέγεται πολλαχῶς, καθάπερ διειλόμεθα πρότερον ἐν τοῖς περὶ τοῦ ποσαχῶς

<sup>90</sup>Frede/Patzig, II, 10.

<sup>91</sup>Lucas Angioni, Defining Topics in Aristotle’s Topics VI, in: *Philosophos* 19, 2, 2014, p. 151-93.

*Topic* in general. However, notwithstanding the fact that the *Topic* as we have it is earlier than the *Analytics* as we have it,<sup>92</sup> it is fruitful to hint at a comparison of the scope and the argumentational moves in *Topic* and *Analytics* (and *Metaphysics*)<sup>93</sup> in terms of audience address.

In *Topic* VI the task is to give criteria by which one can analyze the definition and quality of a definition of the opponent and improve one's own definitions.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, the considerations do not lead to a more precise understanding of the particular object of the definition or to an answer to the question of which objects can be defined in the primary sense of the word, but to a more useful analysis of the quality and the mistakes of the opponent's definition as a guidance for one's own defining practices.<sup>95</sup> Aristotle uses the same model of *genus* and *differentia specifica* as in the *Analytics*, but handles it differently. The distinctions do not aim for a 'real' definition that is able to ontologically uncover the very being of the object, but hint at the need to avoid possible flaws in the defining process, namely, either to be indistinct/obscure or to include in the definition parts that are not necessary<sup>96</sup>; the first possibility to be indistinct is if there is a homonymous expression in the definition,<sup>97</sup> another if a metaphor or a neologism<sup>98</sup> is used.

In this approach, the analysis of flaws and good definitions leads to the pivotal question of whether the definition consists of 'per se/in respect of itself' or of 'for us' better known notions.

"The demolition of a definition will most surely win a general approval if the definer happens to have framed his account neither from what is without qualification more intelligible nor yet from what is so to us." (Top. VI,4,142a13-16, transl. W. A. Pickard)<sup>99</sup>

In these cases ontological questions and tasks are involved and implicitly function as criteria for the evaluation of the definition.

"This sort of error is always found where what the object is does not stand first in the account, e.g. the definition of body as that which has three dimensions, or the

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<sup>92</sup>Christof Rapp, *Topos und Syllogismus bei Aristoteles*, in: G. Ueding/Th. Schirren (edd.), *Topik und Rhetorik*, Tübingen 2000, 15-35, esp. 20-21 emphasizes the consensus between *Topic* and *Analytics* in general and concerning the syllogismos.

<sup>93</sup>Lucas Angioni, *Defining Topics in Aristotle's Topics VI*, in: *Philosophos - Revista de Filosofia* 19 (2), 2014, 151-193.

<sup>94</sup>Cf. Alex.Aphr. in Top. 420,7-14.

<sup>95</sup>Top. VII,4, 142a12-16.

<sup>96</sup>Top. VII,1, 139b12-18.

<sup>97</sup>Top. VI,2,139b19-20.

<sup>98</sup>With reference to Plato's use of unknown words: Top. VI,2, 140a3-5.

<sup>99</sup>μάλιστα δ' ὁμολογουμένως ἀναιρεῖν ἐνδέχεται τὸν ὀρισμὸν, ἐὰν μήτ' ἐκ τῶν ἀπλῶς γνωριμωτέρων μήτ' ἐκ τῶν ἡμῖν τυγχάνη τὸν λόγον πεποιημένος.

definition of man, supposing anyone to give it, as that which knows how to count; for it is not stated what it is that has three dimensions, or what it is that knows how to count; whereas the genus is meant to indicate what it is, and is submitted first of the terms in the definition.” (Top. VI,5,142b23-29, transl. Pickard)<sup>100</sup>

This ontological backbone of the topical practices is enclosed in the progression of the presentation but does not eliminate or withdraw the dialectical context in which the disputational victory is at stake. It is therefore, not the business of the dialectician, schooled in the *Topic*, to discover the ontological structure of the *definiens* or *definiencia* in general. But, he uses the ontological principles and relations in order to find the most convincing, most unchallengeable definition and argument as part of defining practices that allow us to explore more than the primary sense of a definition and definable object. On the contrary, the topical practices require a wider horizon of definitions according to common disputational practices and objects of the everyday realm of experiences, and therefore only hint at a hierarchy of primary and secondary senses.

#### 4.5 In Dialogue with Academic Discussions: Metaph. 1030a25-27 and the *Sophistes*

The widening of perspective in Z 4 towards several meanings and different ways of being besides the primary being, which are the first substances, however goes beyond the intercommunication between different *pragmateiai* or rather: different disciplines of Aristotle’s school practices, and also include Platonic or Academic discourses and even Presocratic and especially Eleatic discussions. The discussion about the being of what is not, is closely entangled with Plato’s dialogue *Sophistes*<sup>101</sup> and other texts.

“For even of a quality we might ask what it is, so that a quality also is a ‘what’ — not simply, however, but just as, in the case of that which is not, some say, in the abstract, that that which is not is — not is simply, but is non-existent.” (Metaph. 1030a25-27, transl. Ross)<sup>102</sup>

Aristotle uses the third person plural (“they say” (φασί)), and thereby introduces other protagonists to whom he can refer affirmatively. There is more than one

<sup>100</sup>ἐν ἅπασιν δὲ τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀμάρτημα ἔστιν ἐν οἷς οὐ πρόκειται τοῦ λόγου τὸ τί ἐστίν, οἷον ὁ τοῦ σώματος ὀρισμὸς “τὸ ἔχον τρεῖς διαστάσεις”, ἢ εἴ τις τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὀρίσαιο τὸ (25) ἐπιστάμενον ἀριθμεῖν. οὐ γὰρ εἴρηται τί ὄν τρεῖς ἔχει διαστάσεις, ἢ τί ὄν ἐπίσταται ἀριθμεῖν τὸ δὲ γένος βούλεται τὸ τί ἐστι σημαίνειν, καὶ πρῶτον ὑποτίθεται τῶν ἐν τῷ ὀρισμῷ λεγομένων.

<sup>101</sup>I thank Sandra Erker for fruitful discussions on the whole topic of audience-driven dynamics and school practices in Aristotle and especially on the entanglements with Plato’s *Sophistes*.

<sup>102</sup>ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος λογικῶς φασί τινες εἶναι τὸ μὴ ὄν, οὐχ ἀπλῶς ἀλλὰ μὴ ὄν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ποιόν.

passage in the Platonic dialogue that could be identified as the target of the reference, although it is even more probable that Aristotle in a more general way refers to discussion practices about the non-being that somehow is/has being:

However, among the published dialogues, we find this in the *Sophistes*<sup>103</sup>, in the *Politeia* (e.g. R. 478b-e), and in the first part of the *Parmenides*. In the *Sophistes* the sequence of arguments is somehow similar to what Aristotle is doing here. There, the Friend (*xenos* means here ‘Gastfreund’) from Elea starts by reminding his dialogue partner Theaetetus of the teaching of the philosopher Parmenides, who “from the beginning and until the end [...] in prose and in metre everytime said” and taught that it is impossible to connect being and non-being (Sph. 237a4-7 and ff.).

Thereby, the father figure Parmenides obtains a similar role and function to that of the later Socrates in Plato’s dialogues; for he teaches his students by constantly reminding and re-thinking his methodological principle, just like Socrates again and again talks about the forms and the need to assume forms in order to achieve sufficient knowledge about singular entities.<sup>104</sup> The Friend from Elea teaches Theaetetus to go beyond the Eleatic approach to being without resolving it. The task is to think of being in a way that is a secondary way of defining being (in regard to the priority of unity in comparison to multitude) but a way that is necessary and as a “second sailing” (cf. Phd. 99d1) suitable in order to acquire knowledge of the world on one’s own.

First, the Friend presupposes that that what is not can be in no way connected with being. This assumption leads to the consequence that it proves to be impossible to connect anything whatsoever with non-being, since every property is connected in some way with being. The Friend shows this by the connection of ‘one’ and ‘many’ with non-being. This argumentation is closely entangled with the dialectical studies in the *Parmenides*, where Parmenides together with the young Aristotle – a different person than the Philosopher Aristotle,<sup>105</sup> but perhaps introduced as Plato’s subtle hint to his master student – analyzes the conceptual relation between one and being and together with being with a multitude of other concepts. There, in the *Parmenides*, it is shown that, if one disentangles ‘one’ from ‘being’ (‘if one one’ (in contrast to ‘if one is’)) then it is disentangled from everything else and cannot ‘be’ something anymore and therefore cannot be predicated or said or thought of (Prm. 142c-e). On the contrary, if we admit the being of the one, then everything can be said of the one, for being implies oneness, many-ness,

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<sup>103</sup>Frede/Patzig, I, 68 refer to Sph. 257c-258e and 258b8-c3; Ross, II, 171 to Sph. 237, 256ff.

<sup>104</sup>Phd. 100a9-b2 (and 75c-76d etc.); Euthyphr. 6d9-e10; Men.73e-77b; Crat. 438a-440a (esp. 439c6-d2).

<sup>105</sup>Nails, Debra, *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics*, Indianapolis, 2002, 89.

identity, diversity, wholeness, being part of something, motion, rest, etc. (Prm. 143a4-6).

In the *Sophistes* the Friend reveals this necessary connection of being with everything else that can be said or thought of and – seemingly – ends in a perplexity and calls for Theaetetus to find another path:

“Friend: Make a noble effort, as becomes youth, and endeavor with all your might to speak of not-being in a right manner, without introducing into it either existence or unity or plurality.

Theaet.: It would be a strange boldness in me which would attempt the task when I see you thus discomfited.” (Sph. 239b8-c3, transl. by Benjamin Jowett)<sup>106</sup>

The Friend asks Theaetetus to try again because he is young and like young people with full energy. He should, thus, try another path to true knowledge. This seems to be a hint in terms of philosophical history that Theaetetus, as a representative of a new generation, should take up the *aporiai* in which people who were direct followers of Parmenides have fallen. In the *Sophistes*, this emancipation – as it were – does not work by recanting Eleatic wisdom but by trying another path that is different (but not totally independent) from the dialectics of one and being.

Together with the Friend, who of course does not abandon his young student, Theaetetus comes to the insight that the reflection on the being of images with some necessity leads to the opinion that non-being in some way needs to be connected to being (Sph. 240c1-2). For in some way images are what they represent, in some way they are not, but something different from that. It is the task of the following discussion to follow this lead. The argumentational moves, therefore, direct the disputants and the readers to insights that one cannot have only one primary sense of being, but that it is necessary to distinguish further, secondary and derivative senses. Since only forms *are* the very being of something whereas everything else, i.e. a singular thing, *has* this being only as a property of something else (ep. 7, 343a-c and Ti. 49c7-50b5), singular sensible objects are in some sense images of the form, i.e. something that has properties and similarities of the being but has a (different) *substratum* and is thereby different from the very being of the form.

In this sense the new way of the new generation, inspired by the Friend from Elea and elaborated by the young Theaetetus, approaches the general problem of singular beings directly and suggests secondary meanings of ‘being’ and secondary

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<sup>106</sup>ΞΕ. Ἰθι ἡμῖν εὖ καὶ γενναίως, ἅτε νέος ὢν, ὅτι μάλιστα δύνασαι συντείννας πειράθητι, μήτε οὐσίαν μήτε τὸ ἐν μήτε πλῆθος ἀριθμοῦ προστιθείς τῷ μὴ ὄντι, κατὰ τὸ ὀρθὸν φθέγγασθαί τι περὶ αὐτοῦ.

ΘΕΑΙ. Πολλὴ μεντᾶν με καὶ ἄτοπος ἔχει προθυμία τῆς ἐπιχειρήσεως, εἰ σὲ τοιαῦθ' ὀρῶν πάσχοντα αὐτὸς ἐπιχειροίην.



ways in which something can be said to be (something). Theaetetus' request is fulfilled by Socrates in the *Phaedo*, i.e. in a text that is designed by Plato as the philosophical legacy of his teacher and which at the same time presents his own concept and practice as an experienced teacher. Here, the answer to the question of how one can recognize and define something that is a singular sensible object is the theory of forms, which function as sufficient causes (*aitiai*) for the ontologically and predicationally-dependent sensible entities.

Starting from this entanglement with the *Phaedo* – which was without any doubt a pivotal text in the Platonic Academy and of which members of the Academy are very likely to have been aware – there is another connection and reference from *Metaphysics Z*, namely argumentations in Z 17, where Aristotle takes another argumentational approach to the being qua being<sup>107</sup> and asks in which way the substance can be considered as principle and cause (*aitia*). This takes up the arguments about the primacy of the substance and the relatedness of predications in other categories to the substance as their formal (and) final cause in Z 4 and 5, and especially in the following passage in Z 4.

Although this perspective is implicitly or explicitly present in book Z as a whole,<sup>108</sup> the background of an audience that is acquainted with Platonic loci classici seems to add substantially to the explanation of Aristotle's argumentational moves. E.g. it helps to clarify *why* Aristotle in Z 17, 1041a7-9 alludes to non-sensible substances in the first place. For it is not in itself convincing to refer to Z 3 or Z 11<sup>109</sup>, where no non-sensible substances are mentioned explicitly. Z 16 in fact discusses the issue of the separation or separateness of forms (*eidos*), but as a distinguishing dispute with the Platonists. The consideration of eternal, non-sensible substances is, thus, introduced or at least inspired by Platonists.<sup>110</sup> Aristotle here even – cautiously – agrees that it might be (even) necessary to admit that there are eternal substances (1041a3). The primary scope of this reference therefore does not seem to be the rivalry between the two schools as monolithic social entities, but rather a dispute that was ongoing across the two institutions and between members of both.

But, if we take Platonic texts into account then it is plausible to assume that the mentioning of Platonic discussions (as represented in the dialogues) on the foundational role of the forms as *aitiai* (esp. Phd. 99a5-b6 and 99d1) may have inspired not only the reflections on non-sensible forms (in Z 16 and at the start of Z 17) but also the connection between the argumentational approach in Z 17 and Z 4-6. This means: a connection that is built between the current task to consider

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<sup>107</sup>“What and what kind of thing one needs to say that the substance is, we want to say by making quasi another start.” Z 17, 1041a6-7.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. the observations in Peramatzis 2017.

<sup>109</sup>Z 3, 1029b3-12, Z 11, 1037a10-17: Frede/Patzig, II, 309.

<sup>110</sup>Metaph. Z 16, 1040b27-1041a3.

the substances as causes on the one hand (Z 17), and the question in relation to what singular beings can be defined and recognized on the other, reflected in Z 4, as we have seen, in terms of predicational relations.

Unlike in A 9, Aristotle does not include himself in the group of friends of the forms but carefully (“perhaps” (ἴσως) 1041a3) distances himself from the theory of forms while, however, approving the existence of eternal beings. Those who take the forms as separate beings are in some respect, he argues, doing right where others are not (1040b28-29), by emphasizing the perspective of the primacy for us, i.e. for our way of acquiring knowledge (1040b33).

The argumentation in the *Sophistes* (239 and ff.) thus also offers a direct connection to Aristotle’s task in *Metaphysics Z* and especially in Z 4, where the fundament is prepared for the distinction between being in primary and derivative senses that can be traced and referred back to the primary being: i.e. in the structure of ‘in relation to one and derived from one’ (*pros hen kai aph’ henos*).<sup>111</sup> This, however, is closely related to the consideration of (first) substances as causes.

With regard to the affirmative reference to Platonic and/or Eleatic discussions on non-being, the intended audience of Z 4 is likely to be acquainted with and in favor of Academic discourses. Aristotle presents his critique rather cautiously. He involves the background of the *Sophistes* and *Phaedo* in and for his argument. Compared with the harsh reference to Platonic theory in *Posterior Analytics* I 22, the dialogue with Academic approaches here is more affirmative and with less striving for distinction. These are not radical, but only gradual differences. They can be led back to the different argumentational context, but also to different input and response from the side of the audiences.

## 4.6 Secondary options for definitions

In the next argument Aristotle reminds the reader that it is not only necessary to clarify how we should speak of something but also how it behaves (πῶς ἔχει: 1030a27). Are we, then, moving from a logical discourse to an ontological one? However, what follows does not define ‘what-it-is-to-be-something’.<sup>112</sup> It does not refrain from talking about ways of speaking and predicating. Rather, the preceding arguments are different insofar as Aristotle draws the conclusion from the preliminary considerations that one must define more concretely the way in which something can be said to be and can be defined in a secondary way, which needs to be correlated to the primary being of the first substances.

<sup>111</sup>Metaph. Z 4, 1030b3, *locus classicus* in Metaph. Γ 1, 1003a33-b1, Γ 2, 1003b1-4; but cf. also EE 1236b26, EN 1096b27-28. On the *pros hen* -relation cf. also Aubenque, 1962, 191-192.

<sup>112</sup>Frede/Patzig, II, 68 against Ross, II, 171

This is compatible to how Aristotle in other texts defines or explains *logikôs*:<sup>113</sup> In *de generatione animalium* (B 8, 747b28-30) with '*logikôs*' he refers to a more general approach that is not bound to the nearest principles. This implies a certain sense of being abstract and less concrete, which in *Physics* I 1 is connected to the first beginning of the process of acquiring knowledge.<sup>114</sup>

Here, in Z 4, the argumentation since 1030a17 heads towards an amplification of the consistent, but therefore narrower perspective<sup>115</sup>, which only allows definition and being in the primary sense, by considering derivative kinds of definitions and predications and derivative kinds of being something and being a unity. It is not the difference between ontological and logical that marks the boundary between the different approaches but the epistemic rigor and request for pure being and oneness in comparison with the requirement of instruments that allow us to understand and describe the being of compound entities.

It is also at this level of thought and methodological principles where there are close entanglements between *Metaphysics Z* and the *Theaetetus* and *Sophistes* of Plato - references that are supported by the use of similar examples in pivotal argumentational contexts (e.g. the example 'white').<sup>116</sup>

To be sure, the following text passage (1030a32-1030b13) is in multiple ways connected to passages in *Metaphysics Z* and H and other *pragmateiai*<sup>117</sup>, therefore the background in Platonic dialogues remains rather remote. However, it could have been used as a tool for Aristotle to go beyond the scope of the *Categories* and the definitory method in the *Analytics*, when Aristotle declares here in Z 4 that it is not possible to understand the secondary kinds of being and definition as cases of homonymy. Homonymy, as defined at the beginning of the *Categories* (Cat. 1a1-6.), simply cannot imply and sufficiently express the conceptual relation between the secondary and the primary beings. Instead he prefers the other alternative that is mentioned: namely that the secondary way of being is explained "by adding or removing something" (1030a33-34).<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>See above p. 9-10; Jonathan Barnes, Aristotle: *Posterior Analytics*, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1993, 173

<sup>114</sup>Ph. I 1, 184a16-b5.

<sup>115</sup>Frank A. Lewis, A Nose by Any Other Name: Sameness, Substitution, and Essence in *Metaphysics Z* 5, in: *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 28, 2005, 161-91 S. 161 argues that Z 4 presents an exclusive view of definition.

<sup>116</sup>E.g. Th. 156c6-157d2.

<sup>117</sup>Frede/Patzig, 1988, II, 71 with reference to *Metaphysics* Γ 1 and 2 and to G.E.L. Owen, Logic and *Metaphysics* in Some Earlier Works of Aristotle, in: I. Düring and G.E.L. Owen (edd.), *Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth-Century*, Göteborg 1960, 163-190.

<sup>118</sup>When Aristotle concludes that it does not matter whether one call the relationship and dependence by one of these expressions (1030b3-4) he refers to the phrase 'according to one' (*kath'en* (1030b3)), which is distinguished from the 'in reference to' (*pros hen*) phrase which he prefers. (Frede/Patzig, 1988, II, 71-72) He aims at emphasizing that the concrete understanding of

Ps.-Alexander explains right at the beginning of his interpretation of the new approach, which starts in *Metaph.* 1030a14 (or 1030a17) that the being of other objects can be explained by an addition<sup>119</sup>, i.e. the addition of what the being 'such and such' (*poion* or *poson* etc.) is (or: the 'what-it-is-to-be-such-and-such'). From this general account he – cautiously (474,15) – presents an interpretation of the puzzling expression “by addition or subtraction” and refers the subtraction to the definition of substances (without any addition). Frede/Patzig convincingly argue that this is a rather weak interpretation because addition and subtraction are taken as referring to different levels of argument, and suggest that subtraction should be taken as meaning 'negation' as in 'not recognizable' in relation to 'recognizable'.<sup>120</sup> This does not seem to be plausible either if one considers the preceding reference to the discussion on the status of the non-being (1030a25-26) and a parallel text in *Metaphysics* Γ:

Here, in Γ 1 of the *Metaphysics*, a similar case is made by implicitly referring to the *Categories* and the being of that which is said in categories other than the substance (*ousia*). This being is led back to the primary being in different ways according to the different categories. In this context the being of 'what is not' is also mentioned explicitly as one case among others, where 'being' is used in a secondary but not only homonymous or analogous way.<sup>121</sup>

“There are many senses in which a thing may be said to 'be', but they are related to one central point, one definite kind of thing, and are not homonymous. Everything which is healthy is related to health, one thing in the sense that it preserves health, another in the sense that it produces it, another in the sense that it is a symptom of health, another because it is capable of it. And that which is medical is relative to the medical art, one thing in the sense that it possesses it, another in the sense that it is naturally adapted to it, another in the sense that it is a function of the medical art. And we shall find other words used similarly to these. So, too, there are many senses in which a thing is said to be, but all refer to one starting-point; some things are said to be because they are substances, others because they are affections of substance, others because they are a process towards substance, or destructions or privations or qualities of substance, or productive or generative of substance, or of things which are relative to substance, or negations of some of these things or of substance itself. It is for this reason that we say even of non-being that it is non-being. As, then, there is one science which deals with all healthy things, the same applies in the other cases also. For not only in the case of things which have one common notion does the investigation belong to one science, but also in the

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the relationship is not a question of the correct name.

<sup>119</sup>Alex.Aphr. in *Metaph.* 472,33-474,3

<sup>120</sup>Frede/Patzig, II, 70.

<sup>121</sup>*Metaph.* Γ 1, 1003a33-b15, see esp. 1003b10.

case of things which are related to one common nature; for even these in a sense have one common notion. It is clear then that it is the work of one science also to study all things that are, qua being.” (Metaph. Γ 1, 1003a33-b15, transl. Ross)<sup>122</sup>

Here, the main point is that in every derivative case of being there is a particular referential relationship to the primary being, such as affections of the substance or as ways to the substance. As an extreme example, non-being is mentioned in order to argue that even in this case there is a dependence on and relation to substance in that a particular being is negated. This argument is parallel to the argument in *Z* 4, 1030a25-27. Therefore, it seems plausible to assume that ‘negation’ (*apophasis*) in Γ 1<sup>123</sup> has the same meaning as *aphairesis* in *Z* 4, 1030a33. ‘Not recognizable’ is in some way, although a certain being (‘recognizable’) is denied. Therefore, one could argue that its being can be defined through subtraction (of a certain being).

But, there is another case to make in regard to Γ 1:

“Therefore, we say that also that what is not *is*.” (1003b10)<sup>124</sup>

In the face of this assertion, which Aristotle makes in the first person plural in Γ 1, we must reconsider the degree of distance that might be implied in the third person plural in *Z* 4, 1030a25 and the description that this way of speaking can be characterized as ‘logical’.

The two texts refer to roughly the same topic, but do it differently according to the different argumentational context and different audience activity resp. audience expectations. In Γ 1 there is no need for Aristotle to distance himself from the position that had been developed in the discourse presented in the Platonic *Sophistes*.

In *Z* Aristotle introduces an approach to primary and secondary being that allows him to keep to a strict notion of being without excluding (nearly) everything from the realm of being.

Since in the *Sophistes* the gradual difference in the being of primary and derivative beings is not pointed at, and therefore no hierarchical relation between being and non-being (this something) is established,<sup>125</sup> the argument aims

<sup>122</sup>Τὸ δὲ ὄν λέγεται μὲν πολλαχῶς, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἓν καὶ μίαν τινὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐχ ὁμωνύμως ἀλλ’ ὡσπερ καὶ τὸ ὑγιεινὸν ἅπαν πρὸς ὑγίειαν, τὸ μὲν τῷ φυλάττειν τὸ δὲ τῷ ποιεῖν τὸ δὲ τῷ σημείον εἶναι τῆς ὑγείας τὸ δ’ ὅτι δεκτικὸν αὐτῆς, καὶ τὸ ἰατρικὸν πρὸς ἰατρικὴν (τὸ μὲν γὰρ τῷ ἔχειν ἰατρικὴν λέγεται ἰατρικὸν τὸ δὲ τῷ εὐφυῆς εἶναι πρὸς αὐτὴν τὸ δὲ τῷ ἔργον εἶναι τῆς ἰατρικῆς), ὁμοιοτρόπως δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ληψόμεθα λεγόμενα τούτοις, — οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ ὄν λέγεται πολλαχῶς μὲν ἀλλ’ ἅπαν πρὸς μίαν ἀρχὴν τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὅτι οὐσίαι, ὄντα λέγεται, τὰ δ’ ὅτι πάθη οὐσίας, τὰ δ’ ὅτι ὁδὸς εἰς οὐσίαν ἢ φθοραὶ ἢ στερήσεις ἢ ποιότητες ἢ ποιητικὰ ἢ γεννητικὰ οὐσίας ἢ τῶν πρὸς τὴν οὐσίαν λεγομένων, ἢ τούτων τινὸς ἀποφάσεις ἢ οὐσίας διὸ καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν εἶναι μὴ ὄν φαμεν.

<sup>123</sup>Or as mentioned directly before: ‘privation’ (*steresis*) 1003b8.

<sup>124</sup>διὸ καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν εἶναι μὴ ὄν φαμεν.

<sup>125</sup>Sph. 258b9-c5

at establishing the concept that non-being is in every single case not absolute non-being but means ‘not-this-being’ or ‘being-different-than-X’. Aristotle can, therefore, not simply accept the reflections in the *Sophistes*, but add something significant to it.

Aristotle concludes the argumentation by referring to a previously mentioned thesis according to which a definition is (or is not), if the name says the same as the discursive explanation (1030a7-8 and 1030b7-8). He puts emphasis on the insight that the unity of the object of definition is an important point of reference and a decisive criterion. Objects are in a primary or derivative way definable depending on the kind and degree of unity they have: 1030b8-13.

Again, the *Iliad* is used as an example, but as an example to illustrate the kind of unity that is not meant. The *Iliad* here exemplifies a continuous unity.<sup>126</sup> This seems to refer to the *Iliad* simply as a running text where one word or one line follows after the other or as a continuous storyline where one action follows after the other. In contrast to the unity of a substance, which is definable and contains only what is pertinent to the thing to be defined (ἐὰν ἐνὸς ᾗ (1030b9)), this is a rather weak kind of unity due to mere continuity, which is the minimal requirement for a unity.

Aristotle explains what is meant by a mere continuity and the connection through a conjunction roughly at the beginning of book I (Metaph. I 1, 1052a15-1052b1)<sup>127</sup> as part of the description of multiple senses of oneness

<sup>126</sup>Ps.-Alexander argues that the description “tied by a link” (συνδέσμων) should be understood as an explanation for the assertion that the *Iliad* is a unity through continuity (Alex.Aphr.in Metaph. 475,29-32). This is supported by the parallel expression in Metaph. H 6, 1045a13 and in the *Posterior Analytics* B 10, 93b35-37: λόγος δ’ εἷς ἐστὶ διχῶς, ὁ μὲν συνδέσμων, ὡσπερ ἡ Ἰλιάς, ὁ δὲ τῷ ἐν καθ’ ἐνὸς δηλοῦν μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

<sup>127</sup>“We have said previously, in our distinction of the various meanings of words, that ‘one’ has several meanings; while it is used in many senses, the things that are primarily and of their own nature and not accidentally called one may be summarized under four heads. There is the continuous, either in general, or especially that which is continuous by nature and not by contact nor by bonds; and of these, those things have more unity and are prior, whose movement is more indivisible and simpler. That which is a whole and has a certain shape and form is one in a still higher degree; and especially if a thing is of this sort by nature, and not by force like the things which are unified by glue or nails or by being tied together, i.e. if it has in itself something which is the cause of its continuity. A thing is of this sort because its movement is one and indivisible in place and time; so that evidently if a thing has by nature a principle of movement that is of the first kind (i.e. local movement) and the first in that kind (i.e. circular movement), this is in the primary sense one extended thing. The things, then, which are in this way one are either continuous or whole, and the other things that are one are those whose formula is one. Of this sort are the things the thought of which is one, i.e. those the thought of which is indivisible; and it is indivisible if the thing is indivisible in kind or in number. In number, then, the individual is indivisible, and in kind, that which in intelligibility and in knowledge is indivisible, so that that which causes substances to be one must be one in the primary sense. ‘One’ then, has all these meanings—the naturally continuous, the whole, the individual, and the universal. And all these are one because in some

and refers back to the analyses in book Δ<sup>128</sup>, where he distinguishes between accidental unity (like the unity of ‘educated man’) and unity in respect of itself of which continuous unity is the simplest and least conceptual. Here, in book I he is much more interested in the kind of unity that has its origin in the essence of a thing. Therefore, the mere external, as it were, unity of the continuous unity by a conjunction is only referred to as the negative foil of the real (*prôtôs* or *haplôs*) unity that is constituted by the very being of a thing.

“There is the continuous, either in general, or especially that which is continuous by nature and not by contact nor by bonds; and of these, those things have more unity and are prior, whose movement is more indivisible and simpler. That which is a whole and has a certain shape and form is one in a still higher degree; and especially if a thing is of this sort by nature, and not by force like the things which are unified by glue or nails or by being tied together, i.e. if it has in itself something which is the cause of its continuity.” (Metaph. Δ 1. 1052a19-25, transl. Ross)<sup>129</sup>

‘By conjunction’ here represents a kind of continuous unity that is only external and fabricated by force and not through an inner connectedness that the object has on its own.<sup>130</sup> Together with the distinction from book Δ between substantial/essential and accidental unity, this fanning out of possible kinds or meanings of unity correspond to the discussions in book Z and H and the tentative approaches to those kinds of unity that refer to the independence of an essential being of something.

cases the movement, in others the thought or the formula, is indivisible.”

Τὸ ἐν ὅτι μὲν λέγεται πολλαχῶς, ἐν τοῖς περὶ τοῦ ποσαχῶς διηρημένοις εἴρηται πρότερον πλεοναχῶς δὲ λεγομένου οἱ συγκεφαλαιούμενοι τρόποι εἰσὶ τέτταρες τῶν πρώτων καὶ καθ’ αὐτὰ λεγομένων ἐν ἀλλὰ μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκός. τό τε γὰρ συνεχές ἢ ἀπλῶς ἢ μάλιστά γε τὸ φύσει καὶ μὴ ἀφῆ μηδὲ δεσμῶ (καὶ τούτων μᾶλλον ἐν καὶ πρότερον οὐ ἀδιαρετωτέρα ἢ κίνησις καὶ μᾶλλον ἀπλῆ) ἔτι τοιοῦτον καὶ μᾶλλον τὸ ὅλον καὶ ἔχον τινὰ μορφήν καὶ εἶδος, μάλιστα δ’ εἴ τι φύσει τοιοῦτον καὶ μὴ βίαι, ὡσπερ ὅσα κόλλη ἢ γόμφω ἢ συνδέσμω, ἀλλὰ ἔχει ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ αἴτιον αὐτῷ τοῦ συνεχές εἶναι. τοιοῦτον δὲ τῷ μίαν τὴν κίνησιν εἶναι καὶ ἀδιαίρετον τόπω καὶ χρόνῳ, ὡστε φανερόν, εἴ τι φύσει κινήσεως ἀρχὴν ἔχει τῆς πρώτης τὴν πρώτην, οἷον λέγω φορᾶς κυκλοφορίαν, ὅτι τοῦτο πρῶτον μέγεθος ἐν. τὰ μὲν δὴ οὕτως ἐν ἢ συνεχές ἢ ὅλον, τὰ δὲ ὡς ἂν ὁ λόγος εἴς ἢ, τοιαῦτα δὲ ὡς ἢ νόησις μία, τοιαῦτα δὲ ὡς ἀδιαίρετος, ἀδιαίρετος δὲ τοῦ ἀδιαίρετου εἶδει ἢ ἀριθμῶ ἀριθμῶ μὲν οὖν τὸ καθ’ ἕκαστον ἀδιαίρετον, εἶδει δὲ τὸ τῷ γνωστῷ καὶ τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ, ὡστ’ ἐν ἂν εἴη πρῶτον τὸ ταῖς οὐσίαις αἴτιον τοῦ ἐνός. λέγεται μὲν οὖν τὸ ἐν τοσαυταχῶς, τό τε συνεχές φύσει καὶ τὸ ὅλον, καὶ τὸ καθ’ ἕκαστον καὶ τὸ καθόλου, πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐν τῷ ἀδιαίρετον εἶναι τῶν μὲν τὴν κίνησιν τῶν δὲ τὴν νόησιν ἢ τὸν λόγον.

<sup>128</sup>Metaph. Δ 6, 1015b34-1016a17.

<sup>129</sup>τό τε γὰρ συνεχές ἢ ἀπλῶς ἢ μάλιστά γε τὸ φύσει καὶ μὴ ἀφῆ μηδὲ δεσμῶ (καὶ τούτων μᾶλλον ἐν (20) καὶ πρότερον οὐ ἀδιαρετωτέρα ἢ κίνησις καὶ μᾶλλον ἀπλῆ) ἔτι τοιοῦτον καὶ μᾶλλον τὸ ὅλον καὶ ἔχον τινὰ μορφήν καὶ εἶδος, μάλιστα δ’ εἴ τι φύσει τοιοῦτον καὶ μὴ βίαι, ὡσπερ ὅσα κόλλη ἢ γόμφω ἢ συνδέσμω, ἀλλὰ ἔχει ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ αἴτιον αὐτῷ τοῦ συνεχές εἶναι.

<sup>130</sup>This seems to be connected with discussions on Plato’s *Timaeus*, in which the soul famously is defined as a natural bond in the *cosmos*: Ti. 34b-36d.

Werner Jaeger has argued that book I originally was not connected with books Z,H,Θ because, according to Jaeger, it does not proceed with the methods that were introduced in books Z, H, Θ.<sup>131</sup> However, although book I follows another methodological line, it adds to the pathways to knowledge that have been explored in books Z, H, Θ.

Neither in book I nor in book Δ does Aristotle use the example of the *Iliad* that functions in Z 4 and H 6 as a school example for a mere continuous external unity.

Interestingly, no reference is made by this example (here in Z 4, as well as in H 6, and in APo II, 10) to discussions that are mirrored and taken up in the poetologically-central parts of the *Poetics* as we have it today. There, the *Iliad* and its specific form of unity is contrasted to weaker poems that realize looser kinds of unity. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* function here as paradigms for the best kind of poetry, which accomplishes not only a shallow kind of unity (as the epic poems which we today call *Cyclic Epics*), but a unity that is constituted through the composition of one action.<sup>132</sup> Such poetological and philological considerations and questions do not form the background to Z 4. Aristotle does not presuppose any knowledge about good or bad composition techniques. To be sure, the *Iliad* will have been known to virtually every reader and student in the 4th century B.C., and it will have been known as one large poem with numerous lines, which nevertheless form a unity because they are built as a continuous narrative. There is no reflex whatsoever in the entire lectures on *Metaphysics*, as we have it today, of any of the discussions that we find in the *Poetics*.

But, the same holds true of the grammatical passages in the *Poetics* (ch. 20-22), where Aristotle uses the *Iliad* as an example in exactly the same way as in the *Metaphysics* and in the *Posterior Analytics*:

“A sentence is a composite significant sound, some of the parts of which have a certain significance by themselves. It may be observed that a sentence is not always made up of noun and verb; it may be without a verb, like the definition of man; but it will always have some part with a certain significance by itself. In the sentence ‘Cleon walks’, ‘Cleon’ is an instance of such a part. A sentence is said to be one in two ways, either as signifying one thing, or as a union of several speeches made into one by conjunction. Thus the *Iliad* is one speech by conjunction of several; and the definition of man is one through its signifying one thing. (Po. ch. 20, 1457a23-30 (esp. 28-30), transl. B. Jowett)<sup>133</sup>

<sup>131</sup>Jaeger 1923, 96.

<sup>132</sup>Po. ch. 8, 1451a18-35.

<sup>133</sup>λόγος δὲ φωνῆ συνθετὴ σημαντικὴ ἥς ἔνια μέρη καθ’ αὐτὰ σημαίνει τι (οὐ γὰρ ἅπας λόγος ἐκ ῥημάτων καὶ ὀνομάτων σύγκριται, οἷον ὁ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὀρισμός, ἀλλ’ ἐνδέχεται ἄνευ ῥημάτων εἶναι λόγον, μέρος μέντοι ἀεί τι σημαῖνον ἕξει) οἷον ἐν τῷ βαδί-ζει Κλέων ὁ Κλέων. εἰς δὲ ἐστὶ



The use of this example in the course of the poetic theoretical and methodological discussions seems to support the idea that the *Poetics* as we have it is a compound of originally independent treatises or text passages<sup>134</sup> with partly rather loosely connected parts. In fact, when using this example in the context of his introduction of grammatical or assertoric issues as far as they are relevant for poetical questions, Aristotle does nothing to connect this notion of unity with the, so to speak, ‘poetic unity’ that was established as a key concept of his own *Poetics*. This observation strongly suggests that the example as it is used in ch. 20 (and in *Metaphysics* Z 4 and H 6 and *Posterior Analytics*, II, 10) has other origins than Aristotle’s poetological theory, which are naturally located in grammatical fields or fields of predicational theory.

This is supported by the argumentation in the treatise *On interpretation*, where Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of unities; one which is derived from the one meaning of an assertion, the other by a connection of more than one (simple) sentence/assertion.

“A single statement-making sentence is either one that reveals a single thing or one that is single in virtue of a connective. There are more than one if more things than one are revealed or if connectives are lacking.” (de int. 17a15-17, transl. J. L. Ackrill)<sup>135</sup>

Since Aristotle speaks of a “first (kind of) sentence/assertion” that is built only by the simple connection of noun and verb, it is clear that the unity through a conjunction is considered as a secondary kind of unity and connection.<sup>136</sup>

Aristotle in this context refers to parallel problems in the discipline that deals with definition practices and different kinds of being:

“To explain why ‘two-footed land animal’ is one thing and not many belongs to a different inquiry.” (de int. 17a13-15, transl. Ackrill)<sup>137</sup>

λόγος διχῶς, ἢ γὰρ ὁ ἐν σημαίνων, ἢ ὁ ἐκ πλείονων συνδέσμων, ὅσον ἡ Ἰλιάς μὲν συνδέσμων εἷς, ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῶ ἐν σημαίνειν.

<sup>134</sup>Cf. Pierre Swiggers and Alfons Wouters, *Grammatical Theory in Aristotle's Poetics*. Chapters XX, in: *idem* (ed.): *Grammatical Theory and Philosophy of Language in Antiquity*. Leuven/Paris 2002, 101-120; and *ibidem*, Nikolay P., *Grammar of Poetry (Aristotle and Beyond)*, 71-100, esp. 74; Gerald F. Else: *Aristotle's Poetics: The argument*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1957, 567 even omitted chapters 19-22 from his commentary because they “have very little, astonishing little, connection with any other part of Aristotle’s theory on poetry”.

<sup>135</sup>ἔστι δὲ εἷς λόγος ἀποφαντικός ἢ ὁ ἐν δηλῶν ἢ ὁ συνδέσμων εἷς, πολλοὶ δὲ οἱ πολλὰ καὶ μὴ ἐν ἢ οἱ ἀσύνδετοι.

<sup>136</sup>Cf. Ammon. in de int. 73,15-18 who emphasizes that the unity through a conjunction is a secondary (and weaker) kind of unity.

<sup>137</sup>διότι δὲ ἐν τί ἐστιν ἄλλ’ οὐ πολλὰ τὸ ζῶον πεζὸν δίπουν, — οὐ γὰρ δὴ τῶ σύνεγγυς εἰρησθαι εἷς ἔσται, — ἔστι δὲ ἄλλης τοῦτο πραγματείας εἰπεῖν.

Again, he distinguishes between simple connection and continuity on the one hand, and real primary unity that results from the relatedness to one thing on the other. The reference aims at either books Z and H of the *Metaphysics* (especially Z 4-5) and H 6, where Aristotle talks about degrees of unity in definition or definitory practices,<sup>138</sup> and to the definitory theory in the *Posterior Analytics*. In a different way than in the *Rhetoric*, where the conjunction is only considered as a stylistic means, the argumentation in *On interpretation* is much more entangled and refers to the ontological discussions in first philosophy.

Therefore, a complex of inter- and intracconnected texts and argumentations becomes transparent where the *Iliad* plays the role of a simple, externally-fabricated continuous unity through conjunctions – an example that is most likely to be originally situated in grammatical or predicational contexts that are – as a starting point – re-used in the *Metaphysics* and in the philosophy of science of the *Posterior Analytics*. The specific task of the *Poetics*, which is rather irrelevant for students of philosophy and/or ontology and logic, seems not to be further connected to this complex – an observation that is supported by the lack of any reception or any information of reception whatsoever of the *Poetics* in antiquity and in the contexts of the philosophical schools of late antiquity.

In regard to the *Poetics* itself it seems as if Aristotle did not feel the necessity to look for another example in his short version of assertoric theory in ch. 20 of the *Poetics*, probably because taking the *Iliad* as an example of continuous unity was such a common practice that it could be presupposed as a school knowledge on the part of his audience and would not have attracted the attention of the audience or invoked any controversy about the poetic unity, the *systasis ton pragmaton*, which was the predominant focus in the *Poetics* for which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* function as outstanding paradigms.

In the *Metaphysics*, the reference to Platonic texts is a driving force for conceptual distinctions: This is the case in the concluding argument of Z 4: Since every being has a certain kind of unity, Aristotle concludes his argumentation for now, and since it is practical to distinguish being according to the categories, we can describe the particular degree of unity that is realized in (first) substances, in the category of quality, of quantity etc.<sup>139</sup> Ps.-Alexander remarks in his commentary on book I that the distinction between different kinds of unity is a particular platonic view;<sup>140</sup> this is now entangled with the fundamental analytical tool of the categories and with the concept of commutability of unity and being that was

<sup>138</sup>This interpretation is supported by Ammonius' commentary on de int: 71,4-7: ἀναβάλλεται τὴν τούτων παράδοσιν εἰς τελειότεραν τινὰ πραγματείαν, ἥς ἔργον ἐστὶ τὰ ὄντα ἢ ὄντα ἐστὶν ἐπισκοπεῖν. διόπερ ἔν τε τῷ ἐβδόμῳ καὶ ἐν τῷ ὄγδῳ βιβλίῳ τῆς Μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ πολὺν περὶ τούτου ποιήσεται λόγον,...

<sup>139</sup>Again, we find the shortened list of the categories: cf. 1030a19.20.

<sup>140</sup>Alex.Aphr.in Metaph.602,2-12.

discussed in book Γ.

## 5 Conclusions

All this leads to the insight that our notion of book units is much stricter and more static than that of Aristotle in his school writings. For, in the case of the *Iliad* -paradigm, Aristotle did not bother about the difference between the *Iliad* as an example for a real poetic unity on the one hand and the *Iliad* as a grammatical example for a simple continuous unity on the other, in the frame of one and the same discipline and lecture.

At the same time, in this and other cases he transgressed the borders of his disciplines by frequent cross-references between the treatises and by transferring examples and notions from one discipline to another. In this process the example is newly contextualized and modified according to the argumentational needs of the new context.

If we take the perspective of Aristotle's audiences and the focus on the school and communicative practices, then the discussion on the *original* composition and connection between texts or text parts is not pivotal. What is crucial is rather the analysis of the communication practices that deliberately, and as a structural aspect of these practices, go beyond the boundaries of the particular disciplines or treatises.<sup>141</sup> In this paper I have collected material that proves that it is not likely that Aristotle either produced a written text *or* gave a lecture which was recorded afterwards. We are rather compelled to think of a dynamic interaction between written and oral practices in which Aristotle constantly revised an original order of arguments by adding further objections and additional perspectives which resulted from oral discussions or comments on the written text that might have circulated in a smaller school circle. These additions may have been noted down as amendments of the first drafts in the original papyrus roll until the amount of additions and corrections called for another transcription.

However, the texts from *Metaphysics Z* 4 are in multiple ways connected with terms, methods and texts from the logical writings.<sup>142</sup> Aristotle presupposes several times that his audience or readership will have been acquainted with these basic tools for the philosopher and scientist. These references are not restricted to

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<sup>141</sup>Papyrus rolls will have been much easier to handle for everyday purposes if they were not long (Plinius secundus, N.H. XIII, 23-24 reports details about papyrus quality and maximum sizes. This of course does not mean that for every purpose the maximum size will have been in use or practical.) Therefore, it is plausible to assume that Aristotle could have used more than one roll even for shorter treatises. This procedure would have provided the opportunity to connect and dissociate certain parts of a text.

<sup>142</sup>Myles Burnyeat has pointed this out for the whole book *Z* with different implications: Burnyeat 2001, 25 and 87-125.

treatises that are more easily accessible like the subject matter of the *Categories* or of *On interpretation* or are rather directed at students of communicative practices (according to a generic meaning of dialectic and rhetoric) that are at least potentially useful beyond the walls of philosophical schools. However, they connect the ontological and predicational questions of book Z explicitly with the theory of knowledge and knowledge acquisition and learning (as we find it in the *Posterior Analytics*). Therefore, the full impact of the arguments and the different approaches and tentative pathways to knowledge of 'being qua being' will not have been accessible to an audience that is not familiar with the different branches of Aristotelian logic and his theory of learning and true knowledge.

The fact that there are not only so many cross-references but that these cross-references apply the notions or insights to the particular context and through these new contextualizations or re-contextualizations change or re-think them, shows that the intended audience of Z 4 will have been very well-educated and experienced in pivotal Aristotelian methodological moves. The sometimes small moves and slight changes in the different questions suggest that these well-prepared audiences themselves actively participated in the argumentational process that was designed to train the audiences to build their knowledge by and through themselves.

This proves to produce interesting results especially in the case of references to Plato and the expression of a critical revision of Platonic issues, because in these cases different partisanshipes or different accentuations from the side of the audiences could have produced different objections or provocations. But not only critique and confutation become an issue, but also the merging of different methodological approaches that thus prove to be compatible or even especially helpful for an audience that reads or listens to both Aristotelian logic and Platonic dialogues. We have to take into account the primary contexts in which the audiences were philosophically educated. The objections and additional arguments that are incorporated into the argumentational flow can reflect the preconditions of the audiences and momentary needs for demarcating the boundaries between what is Platonic and what is Aristotelian thought in the face of a particular audience.

This approach can help to understand the differences in tone and content that we find in the critical references to Platonic concepts and texts: one and the same Aristotle can feel the need to map out the specific and significant insights and perspectives of his philosophical work to a different degree in front of different audiences and in different teaching situations. In order to understand these individual moves the presupposed knowledge of particular Platonic, Academic or Aristotelian texts and discussions in the arguments of the treatises of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* is pivotal. If Aristotle uses elliptic references or arguments, we can deduce that he expects his audience to be well-acquainted with problems or texts.

If he is very explicit in the exposition of an argument, it is likely that the intended audience is expected to have little or no knowledge or acquaintance with a certain type of argument or discussion.

In any case, by following the references and practices of transfer of arguments and examples we observe Aristotle in his communicative practices and discover him as deeply involved in the discussion with partners who are acquainted with Academic discourses. And we observe that the philosopher concentrates on his audiences and their need for specific arguments and reasons. This is not the solitudinarian that Werner Jaeger suspected (“ein ganz für sich Lebender, ein Einsiedler, nach einem eignen Ausdruck ein in sich zurückgezogenes Ich”) in his interpretation of fragment 668 (Rose). By considering and contextualizing treatises from the *Corpus Aristotelicum* and following the philosophical arguments themselves it is possible to gain a revised image of the political and social involvement of Aristotle. At the same time the analysis of the cross-references and intra-textual entanglements – which, together with the analysis of external texts and other material and narratives, is the backbone of the audience-driven approach – prove directly helpful for the understanding of the philosophical argument itself.

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