THE AUTHENTICITY OF ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES *)

BY

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Most scholars either deny Aristotle's authorship of the first treatise of the Organon, or else consider the problem of authorship to be insoluble. I maintain, however, that such judgements are wrong and that the treatise is of genuine Aristotelian authorship, and of considerable importance for our knowledge both of Aristotle's own development, and also that of later Platonism. I shall try to show the authenticity of the treatise in the following study, and shall divide my investigation into the following main divisions:

A. The view of the ancient commentators concerning the authenticity of Categories Chs. 1-9;
B. Modern criticism of the authenticity of Categories Chs. 1-9;
C. The authenticity of Categories Chs. 10-15.

A. THE VIEW OF THE ANCIENT COMMENTATORS CONCERNING THE AUTHENTICITY OF Categories Chs. 1-9

By late antiquity doubt was already thrown upon the authenticity of the categories 1). The well-known scholion 33a.28 ff (ed. Brandis) is not our only source on the question 2), for alongside the information of the scholiast one must also put the Prolegomena in Categ., (wrongly 3) ascribed by Busse to Olympiodorus), 22,38 ff. As the information of the other commentators is indispensable to a just valuation of their judgements, I shall try to outline their views about the authenticity of the Categories.

*) The correct English form of this paper I owe to mr. T. Birrell, Lecturer in the University of Nimuegn.
1) In the following passages the ancient commentators always speak of Categ., Chs 1-15 as a whole.
2) As has hitherto been wrongly assumed, cp. E. Duprée1'Aristote et le Traité des Catégories in Archiv für Gesch. der Phil. 22 (1909), p. 231.
3) On this question vide infra pp. 131 ff.
We have extant the writings of eight of the ancient commentators 1). The oldest of them is the neoplatonist Porphyrius (232-304 A.D.). This author does not touch at all upon the question of the authorship, but from his own words 2) it is clear that he considers Aristotle to be the author of the Categories. Dexippus also, a disciple of Jamblichus (who himself was a pupil of Porphyrius), has no doubts about Aristotle's authorship 3).

Ammonius (c. 500 A.D.) is the first writer that we know of, who raises the problem of authenticity 4). He says that there were two different Κατηγορία in the ancient libraries 5), of which ours was preferred, and considered as genuine by all: Εἰδέναι δὲ δεῖ ὅτι ἐν ταῖς παλαιαῖς βιβλιοθήκαις τῶν μὲν Ἀναλυτικὸν τεσσαράκοντα βιβλία εὑρήκατο, τῶν δὲ Κατηγορίαν δύο· τὸ μὲν ἔτερον εἶχεν ἀρχὴν „τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν ὁμόνωμα λέγεται τὰ δὲ συνώνυμα”, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον, ὅπερ νῦν προκείμενον ἔχομεν· καὶ προτείμηται τούτῳ ὡς τάξει καὶ πράγματι πλεονεκτοῦν καὶ παντοχοῦ πατέρα τὸν Ἀριστοτέλην κηρύττει.

1) Edited as Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca by the Acad. Litt. Regia Boruss. (51 vol., Berlin 1882-1909). I have omitted one of them, an Anonymus (? Sophonias), as he only gives a paraphrase.

2) E.g. in Categ. Prooemium (ed. A. Busse, comm. gr. vol. IV 1) p. 57, 8-10: αὐτὸς τε (sc. Ἀριστοτέλης) ῥήτορας ἔργον (sc. Categ. 4,1 b 25) „τῶν κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκῆν λεγομένων ἔκκατον οὐδὲν συμβαίνει . . . κτλ.”


5) This information probably derives from Adrastus, an authoritative peripatetic (c. 150 A.D.); cp. Simpl. op. cit. p. 18, 16-20.