Bonitz’ entry gives a false impression of the state of the text as it now stands: ὤρος is distinguished from the other three types of predicate when it heads the list of all four predicates, but when ‘definition’ closes the list the word used is ὄρισμος; ὄρισμος appears about three times more often than ὤρος; fere promiscue might lead one to suppose that the distribution was more random than it in fact is. These points will be considered in more detail below.

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2) I am indebted to a reader of a previous version of this paper for suggesting this and several other objections raised below. To these I have added further objections in anticipation.

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Mnemosyne, Vol. LIII, Fasc. 3
are not intended to prove the need for emendation, since one can still object that Aristotle was not all that concerned with careful distinctions.

It is the subsequent philological, rather than the philosophical, considerations which lead me to conclude that the text must be emended. It is generally assumed that Aristotle is using the terms ὀρος and ὀρισμὸς interchangeably, an assumption strengthened by the belief that Aristotle uses certain key terms interchangeably elsewhere too. I do not propose to argue here that Aristotle can never use terms interchangeably. Whether Aristotle was lax or not in his general use of terms is a vast subject, complicated by the textual tradition itself, and far beyond the scope of this paper. My remarks will be strictly confined to the use of ὀρος and ὀρισμὸς in the Topics. I contend that the distribution of ὀρος and ὀρισμὸς in the Topics is not as random as one should have expected from mere laxity or confusion; that is to say, the pattern of distribution is a mechanical, non-philosophical one, and therefore cannot be reasonably ascribed to Aristotle. I shall demonstrate below that ὀρος now appears in prominent places in the text while ὀρισμὸς—the more frequent term for ‘definition’—appears in less prominent places. The prominent places where ὀρος now appears include the first time ‘definition’ is named; the first place in lists of the four types of predicate (of which ‘definition’ is one); the beginnings of main sections; and throughout the discussion of ἰδιον. Significantly, ὀρος appears far less than one might have expected in the actual discussion of ‘definition’ (purportedly ὀρος), where instances of ὀρισμὸς outnumber those of ὀρος by three to one. As for ὀρισμὸς, this term now appears in less prominent places in the text: namely, the body of the text after the beginnings of main sections and at the end of a list of the four types of predicate (i.e., when ‘definition’ is the last predicate named). The term ὀρισμὸς regularly appears in each section more often than ὀρος, with the significant exception of the discussion on ἰδιον.

I shall present a detailed analysis of the distribution a little later, but this will necessitate a brief introductory outline of Aristotle’s general use of ὀρος and its relation to the four types of predicate, of which ‘definition’ is one. The philosophical arguments presented in this outline will serve to show why the use of ὀρος as well as ὀρισμὸς to designate ‘definition’ must be regarded as confusing if