As a matter of fact all the genuine texts of Boethius' Aristotelian translations are recent discoveries. They were all out of reach thirty years ago and they have come to light only after the long and intricate labour involved in discerning and collecting the manuscript material for *Aristoteles Latinus*. This is an edition, planned for thirty-three volumes, of all the Latin versions of Aristotle surviving from the Middle Ages; each volume of the collection is devoted to a single Aristotelian work, gathering together the various translations of it so far identified.¹ The first six volumes cover the treatises on logic, collectively known to the tradition as the Organon: *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Prior and Posterior Analytics*, *Topics* and *Elenchi*, together with Porphyry's *Isagoge* ('Introduction'). In these volumes the pioneer translations done by Boethius have been edited for all of the treatises except the *Posterior Analytics*, of which the genuine Boethian version is still missing.²

The procedure by which these genuine versions were discovered may prove to be one of the most impressive feats of scholarly achievement in this century.³ It happens that Boethius wrote extensive commentaries to elucidate the translations he had made of the *Categories*, the *De Interpretatione* and the *Isagoge*, and in his explanations he often repeated phrases or sentences of the Aristotelian text. The commentaries were left comparatively undisturbed by medieval teachers and scribes, whereas the text of the Master was detached, changed and contaminated. But the investigations of Lorenzo Minio-Paluello for *Aristoteles Latinus* brought to light a few rare manuscripts, among several hundreds, in which the continuous Aristotelian text was found

¹ A brief description of the enterprise was given by me in Medium Aevum, 33 (1964), 61-64; 42 (1973), 147-152.
³ Many of the basic studies relating to the work of identification are collected in: L. Minio-Paluello, *Opuscula: the Latin Aristotle*, Amsterdam, 1972.
to coincide dramatically with the patches of it quoted by Boethius in his commentary: *that* was obviously the genuine text of Boethius’ translation. In that way were identified the genuine versions of those first three works. For the other four, those with no commentary attached, detailed comparison of the translator’s vocabulary, as found in certain manuscripts, with that of the first three proved very revealing, especially in the case of casual words, connectives, particles, adverbs and the like—words like ‘and’, ‘for’, ‘both ... and’—where the translator was consciously or unconsciously adhering to consistent usage. The rapport between the two groups yielded conclusive evidence that the authentic Boethian versions of the *Prior Analytics*, the *Topics* and the *Elenchi* (but not of the *Posterior Analytics*) had also come to light.

This discovery has reversed the error of many centuries. In the Middle Ages hundreds of copies of contaminated and anonymous versions circulated throughout Europe. The situation did not improve with the invention of printing. Corrupt Latin versions of all seven works of the Organon came to be presented by the printers as the work of Boethius. In the early editions the *Isagoge*, the *Categories* and the *De Interpretatione*, as ‘revised’ by Lefèvre (1501), were printed with Boethius’ name on the title-page. Almost at once they were enclosed in the same printed volume with non-Boethian versions of the other four works, so that Boethius’ name became attached to these as well. The confusion lasted until 1862, when C. Schaarschmidt, in a study of John of Salisbury, first suspected the authenticity of the prevalent editions, and although this suspicion started a long and lively debate the erroneous versions have been accepted by several eminent Aristotelian scholars right up to our own day.

Identification of the Boethian *Categories*, the basic task, was beset with special difficulties. But these were eased with the eventual discovery that the Boethian translation existed in two drafts, one imperfect and the other more polished, and that these had later on been conflated into an ‘editio composita’, a copy of which was already at Reichenau as early as the year 822. Part of a similar second version also came to light in the case of the *Topics*.®

---

4 *AL* i, pp. xii-xix. 5 *AL* vi, p. xiii.
6 *AL* iii, pp. xix-xx; *Opuscula* pp. 223-227.
7 *AL* i, p. xxii; *AL Codices* n. 828 (Karlsruhe, Bibl. Bad. Reich. 172). The ninth-century location is erroneously confused with the modern in my description (note 1 above) p. 62; I owe the correction to Dr M. T. Gibson.
8 *AL* v, p. xxxvi.