
The superior of the important project of the Berlin *Akademie Verlag* to present a modern German translation of Aristotle’s philosophical writings together with current scholarly commentaries could not have found a more competent author than Professor Weidemann for the translation of, and commentary upon Aristotle’s *De interpretatione* (henceforth *Int.*). W. has taken great pains to inquire into all aspects involved in such an enterprise. In an extensive *Introduction* he exhaustively deals with the problems surrounding the title, authenticity, and composition of *Int.,* as well as with the Ancient commentaries on this work.

The German translation is painfully precise, but not easy to read—for a non-native reader, at least—as a result of a large number of additions in brackets, which apparently are intended to rule out any misunderstandings, including the malicious ones. The text of the commentary is sometimes rather difficult to read, owing to the insertion of footnote-like remarks into the text, but always understandable.

The comments given (p. 133-473) upon the fourteen chapters of *Int.* are very helpful, and even intricate philological or doctrinal problems are never ignored or superficially dismissed. W.’s treatment of chapter nine is exemplary. As every student of Aristotle’s logic knows, this chapter, which discusses the problems concerning what later were called the “futura contingantia”—has sparked, to use the words of Professor Ackrill, whose pioneering study and English translation of *Int.* still is most helpful—a “vigoros discussion ever since it was written and not least in the last few years.” W. gives (p. 223-99) a full-scale interpretation of this difficult, and sometimes somewhat obscure or succinct text, and, on top of that, reports and critically examines (p. 300-24) the many different accounts that, from Boethius onwards, have been given of this intriguing chapter. As a whole, W.’s interpretation is convincing, and certainly indispensable for everybody who is interested in the subject matter.

Despite the general impression that W. has presented an outstanding account of *Int.,* a few remarks can be made to challenge some parts of his interpretation. I shall confine myself to some basic remarks of the introductory chapters of *Int.* (chs. 1-4).

(a) A first remark concerns the problem of time-connexion featuring from the very beginning of *Int.,* in the opening chapter (16a3-9), in which Aristotle clarifies the distinction between statement-making expressions on the one hand, and their constituents, *όνομα* and *ρήμα* on the other. The decisive difference between them is that statements are susceptible of truth-values, whereas *όνομα* and *ρήμα* are not. In order to have a truth-value, a thought, and its linguistic expression, require the addition of “is” or “is not,” because *όνομα* and *ρήμα* by themselves, like thoughts taken by themselves, are neither true nor false (16a9-15). A serious difficulty arises at 16a18, where such an addition of “is” or “is not” (*έλαβα* and *μη* *έλαβα*, respectively) is qualified by the phrase *ἀπόλαξιν* ἀπὸ κατά χρόνον (“either simply or with reference to time”). Ackrill, followed by W., prefers the common explanation of this phrase in terms of the opposition “present time versus past and future times” to taking *ἀπόλαξιν* to allude to the timeless or to the omnitemporal present tense, although he feels that the distinction between present time and past and future times would not be very happily expressed by the disjunction “either simply or with reference to time.” The same phrase is also used at *Anal. Pr.* I 15, 34b7-8 and, somewhat modified, at *Topica* I 5, 192a22-30, as well as at *De anima* III 10, 433b5-10. To my mind, these parallel passages suggest that we should take the alternative interpretation of this phrase mentioned above (which is rejected by both W. and Ackrill), *viz.* the one that takes...
it to concern the opposition between time-connotation and timelessness. (Incidentally, W. (157) only adduces Anal. Pr. I 15, 34b7-8, but does not take this passage as a parallel).

The key notion is here that of ἀπλοῖος. Whoever takes Aristotle’s use of this term elsewhere into consideration (e.g. Anal. Post. 71b34-72a5; Topica, 115b29-35 and 141b24; De generatone, 317b5-7; De caelo I, 9) cannot fail to see that the general idea in all these passages is that the phrase “[x] taken ἀπλοῖος” is used to stand for an entity irrespective of its being instantiated in matter, and that its counterparts, viz. “[x] κατὰ μέρος,” “[x] μεταμόιρων,” and so on, stand for [x] as instantiated in matter. Now all material instantiation is temporally conditioned. Therefore, the notion of ἀπλοῖος naturally comes close to that of timelessness.

In point of fact, one sometimes finds the notions of ἀπλοῖος and “universality,” opposed to the temporality of particular instantiations. Thus, when discussing the nature of the universal syllogistic premises (e.g. “A belongs to all B”), Aristotle explains (Anal. Pr. I 15, 34b7ff.) that we should understand the phrase “belonging to all of a subject” not with reference to any time (μὴ κατὰ χρόνον ὄρθωντος), but ἀπλοῖος, i.e. “timeless,” for that is the way to get hold of the material genuine syllogisms are made of. The author insists that in such cases “universality must be taken simply,” not limited, that is, in terms of time (ibid., 34b17-8). The phrase (οὗ χρόνον διορθωτος at 181) seems to rule out time and temporal instantiation and to imply timelessness, rather than merely temporal indefiniteness or omnitemporality. Contrary to Plato, of course, Aristotle’s notion of timelessness in no way implies the existence of a transcendent domain of being. In his view, this notion is merely instrumental in our conceiving the things of the outside world, viz. our taking (e.g. when framing apodeictic syllogisms about them) their immanent natures as abstracted from these natures’ inherence in these things, in order to draw, and to justify, non-contingent conclusions about them.

Aristotle’s remark, at 16a18 (“either simply or with reference to time”) should be interpreted along the same lines, i.e. in terms of timelessness vs. temporality. What he means to say is that the “being” added to verbal expressions or thoughts, which provides them with a truth-value, either refers to the timeless being that belongs to the connotatum of the term involved, or to temporal instantiations and instances.

(b) This interpretation finds some support in Aristotle’s discussion of ἰθανατος, which (in chapter 3 of his treatise) is said to be “additionally signify time” (its definition being [1] “that <sc. ἰθανατος> which additionally signifies time, [2] no part of which is significant separately, and [3] which is always a sign of things qua being said of something else”).

Aristotle explains (16b8-9) what is meant by “to additionally signify time” by opposing ἀγαθανατος to (the name) ἰθανατος: “By ‘additionally signifying time’ I mean this: health is a name, but is-healthy a ἰθανατος, because it additionally signifies something as obtaining now.” Apparently he intends to say that as a name ἰθανατος refers to the entity “health,” but in bringing it up qua form only, whereas ἀγαθανατος refers to health as a form actually inhering in something else, thus as an enmattered or actualised form, manifesting itself in temporal conditions. According to Aristotle, no form exists unless it is enmattered in something else as its subject-substrate. This does not mean, however, that we could never refer to a form as such, irrespective of its being immanent in a substrate. For that matter, Aristotle’s vivid discussion with Plato about his Master’s Separate, Transcendent Forms, as well as his own reflections in his Metaphysics about true substance, would have been impossible without bringing up “forms as such” in an abstract way. Now in such discussions, names designate entities regardless of their being immanent in temporal substrates (“without time”), whereas by using ἰθανατος this ontological state is focussed on.

Feature [3] (“is always a sign of things qua being said of something else”) is closely linked up with [1], and is in a way its counterpart. Whereas [1] brings up an entity’s ontological state as something being immanent in a subject-substrate and hence temporally determined, [3] refers to the matching grammatico-semantical situation that, in keeping with this ontological state, the entity is also brought up qua assigned to this subject-