One of the most debated problems concerning Aristotle's Metaphysics is whether and how the science of being qua being there presented is structured according to the model of the demonstrative sciences proposed by Aristotle himself in the Posterior Analytics. According to this model, every science has as its object a determinate subject genus of which it demonstrates the per se accidents starting from definitions and principles proper to the particular science at issue or common to several sciences. Against this background picture of how a demonstrative science works, the science of being qua being is a problematic case. The first and in a way the most difficult problem is whether being qua being can constitute an appropriate object of enquiry for a single science, given that being is not a genus and that it is said in many different ways. The issue of the subject genus of Aristotle's science of being has been broadly discussed over the last two thousand years and is not the topic of this paper. Rather, I shall focus on the complementary problem of establishing what the per se accidents of being are and how they should be investigated.

Despite its significance for the development of metaphysical thought in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, this aspect of Aristotle's enquiry has been perhaps overshadowed by the predominance of the subject-genus question. Nevertheless, the relevance of the topic can be inferred from the very notion of a science of being qua being, and can also be observed a posteriori. A posteriori, we can see that bits and pieces of Aristotle's analysis of what allegedly counts as per se accidents of being qua being continue to be pertinent in the debate on simple and disjunctive transcendental predicates, which are convertible with being. In fact, the theory of the transcendents has been regarded as one of the main areas in 'old ontology' (before Kant's revolutionary approach to metaphysical thought) as well as the primary

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1 An. Post., A, 7, 75a39-b2 ; A, 10, 76a37-b2.
focus of genuine philosophical investigation in the Middle Ages\(^3\). But we can also infer the importance of per se accidents of being qua being simply by analysing the very idea of a science of being qua being as a demonstrative science along the aforementioned lines: a demonstrative science starts with the observation of the de facto regular connection of its subject with some properties (its per se accidents) and shows why such properties belong to the subject. The identification of per se accidents of the subject genus is therefore crucial to determine the scope of the science at issue.

The problem of clarifying the structure and the elements of the science of being qua being arises only once it has been accepted that the knowledge of being, i.e. the eminent philosophical knowledge described by Aristotle in the Metaphysics, must take the form of a demonstrative science. But this point is in fact very far from being uncontroversial. Ancient as well as modern debates on the form of philosophical knowledge sought-for and practiced in Aristotle’s Metaphysics have always involved the opposition of two main parties: according to some interpreters, the form of this kind of knowledge is dialectic\(^4\), whereas according to others it is demonstrative.


\(^4\) For instance, Syrianus must take into account the fact that, from an ‘orthodox’ Platonic point of view, dialectic (and not scientific demonstration) is the form of the most genuine philosophical knowledge. Therefore Syrianus seems to identify the highest form of philosophical knowledge in Aristotle with dialectic and to make room for a diminished and inferior form of dialectical technē; first philosophy provides the latter with the basic axioms (e.g. the principle of non-contradiction). On the different kinds of dialectic in Syrianus’s commentary on the Metaphysics see A. LONGO, Siriano e i principi della scienza, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2005, pp. 225-292. The modern supporters of the dialectical reading of Aristotle’s metaphysics do not seem to be animated (at least not primarily) by Platonic concerns on the relevance of dialectic itself. Rather, they ground their interpretation on the textual situation of the Metaphysics as we have it (in which no relevant argument is structured in syllogistic form) and on the way in which Aristotle shows the validity of the principle of non-contradiction. See in particular E. BERTI, Dimostrazione e metafisica in Aristotele, in Teoria della dimostrazione. Atti del convegno Padova 1962, Gregoriana, Padova 1963, pp. 21-29 (repr. in Id., Studi aristotelici, jepadre, L’Aquila 1975 (Methodos 7), pp. 41-45) ; La nouvelle métaphysique d’Aristote, in Akten des XIV Internationalen Kongresses für Philosophie, Herder, Wien 1970, pp. 447-456 (repr. in Id., Studi aristotelici cit., pp. 135-142) ; La dialettica in Aristotele, in L’attualità della problematica aristotelica, Antenore, Padova 1973, pp. 33-80 (repr. in Id., Studi aristotelici, pp. 109-133) ; and T. H. IRWIN, Aristotle’s First Principles, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1988. Irwin in particular proposes a distinction — in a way close to Syrianus’s distinction — between strong dialectic (able to deliver genuine metaphysical knowledge) and weak dialectic, somewhat indifferent to the philosophical truth of the arguments it deals with.
science\textsuperscript{5}. The idea that Aristotle's philosophical knowledge of being is demonstrative goes back at least to Alexander\textsuperscript{6}, but the strongest attempts to make Aristotle's project of the science of being fit together with the model of the demonstrative sciences in the Posterior Analytics is regarded as a main feature of the Arabic reading of Aristotle's Metaphysics\textsuperscript{7}. In particular, the vigour of Avicenna's efforts to strengthen this view is unparalleled. On this aspect, it should be stressed that Avicenna is perfectly aware of his original contribution in improving and in bringing to perfection Aristotle's — in many respects missing — account. Avicenna's self-awareness is emphasized by the fact that he does not write a commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, but a new treatise which, although heavily relying on Aristotle's work, is meant to be a new Metaphysics and which, in at least some cultural and geographical areas, becomes a replacement for Aristotle's Metaphysics itself\textsuperscript{8}.

Avicenna's improvements on Aristotle's project are in relevant aspects built out of Aristotelian materials. In particular, the problem of the structure and nature of the science of being arises from Aristotle's text. In this paper I should like to analyse how the different commentators on Aristotle's Metaphysics come to grips with the problems emerging from Aristotle's text as it stands. I shall start by analysing the texts in which Aristotle presents and tackles the aporia (the fifth in Ross's enumeration of the aporiai in Met., B, 1) of whether the sought-for science must deal only with substance or also with per se accidents of substance.

The texts devoted to and linked with the development and the solution of the fifth aporia also outline a project of enquiry into a group of notions, usually dealt with by the 'dialecticians' (henceforth: dialectical notions). At some point Aristotle seems to identify dialectical notions with per se accidents of being or of substance, but the argumentative steps leading to this identification are not clear. Moreover, it is not clear whether and where Aristotle actually engages in the completion of this project of enquiry, which would be nonetheless quite crucial if the science of being qua being is


\textsuperscript{6} M. Bonelli, Alessandro di Afrodisia e la Metafisica come scienza dimostrativa, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2001.

\textsuperscript{7} Cf. Bell, Metaphysics cit., pp. 10-11 refers explicitly to the tradition of the Arabic interpretation.

\textsuperscript{8} A. Bertolacci, The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Kitāb al-Šifa': a milestone of Western metaphysical thought, Brill, Leiden 2006, in particular Part Two, pp. 107-263.
supposed to fulfill its task of enquiring into its object and its per se accidents. Apart from doctrinal matters, these texts present some additional difficulties, among which significant shifts in terminology and some ambiguity as to what such per se accidents are supposed to be. In particular, Aristotle oscillates between talking of per se accidents of substance (in the original formulation of the aporia) and per se accidents of being (in the introduction of the alleged solution to the aporia). I should anticipate that almost every line of Aristotle’s text on these topics gives rise to a plethora of questions and problems which have been variously addressed and tackled by ancient, medieval and modern interpreters. Of some of them I provide an account elsewhere\(^9\), but in general I cannot analyse them in full. My aim in Part I is to sketch the main problems — rather than the solutions — as they emerge from Aristotle’s text. By doing this I would like to prepare the discussion of the different ways in which the commentators deal with them. I shall therefore sketch Aristotle’s presentation of these aspects and emphasize the main issues left open by Aristotle’s treatment of the matter.

As we shall see, the ways in which the different commentators deal with these conceptual lacunae in Aristotle’s text is not unanimous. In Part II I shall consider some of the analyses provided for the passages presented in Part I. From the survey of Part II three main points emerge. First, not all the commentators are equally clear on the relation between per se accidents of substance, dialectical notions and per se accidents of being. Second, not all the commentators agree on the place in which Aristotle actually carries out his enquiry into the per se accidents of being qua being. Third, an interesting framework of textual references surfaces, which might help in understanding the perspective of the different commentators on relevant doctrinal aspects.

In Part III I shall discuss these points, with particular attention to Syrianus’s apparently isolated identification of the place in which Aristotle carries out (parts or all of) the enquiry into the per se accidents of being with the tenth book (I) of the *Metaphysics*. In discussing the textual references emerging from Part II I shall try to provide a tentative explanation of the extent to which such an explicit (and, in my opinion, insightful) suggestion was partly lost and partly retained in the exegetical work of the following centuries.

\(^9\) L. M. Castelli, Problems and Paradigms of Unity. Aristotle’s accounts of the meanings of the one, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 2010 (International Aristotle Studies 6); see in particular Chapters 1 and 2.
PART I

ARISTOTLE ON PER SE ACCIDENTS OF BEING QUA BEING

The third book of the Metaphysics is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the so-called aporiai, i.e. the theoretical knots which prevent reasoning from proceeding either way. Aristotle often introduces his own enquiry with a survey of the relevant opinions of people who have already worked on the topic at issue with — at least apparently — opposite results, neither of which seems intrinsically more plausible than the other. The presentation of the aporiai in Met., B is divided into two sections: In B, 1 Aristotle gives a somewhat sketchy list of all the aporiai he intends to tackle, while in the remaining chapters he analyses both sides of the theoretical dilemmas contained in each of them. From the point of view of their contents, the aporiai can be divided into two groups. According to Ross’s enumeration of them in Met., B, 1\textsuperscript{10}, aporiai I (995b5-6), II (995b6-10), III (995b10-13) and V (995b18-27)\textsuperscript{11} are methodological (in the sense that I shall presently explain), whereas the others concern specific theoretical points which must be assessed by the science of being qua being. Aporiai I, II, III and V in B, 1 are methodological or meta-theoretical in character in the sense that they do not concern problems which have to be tackled by the sought-for science, but concern the very nature of it. In particular, the fifth aporia is whether the sought-for science must deal only with substances or also with the per se accidents of substances and with a series of other notions. In the presentation in B, 1 the aporia is divided into two parts and syntactically articulated into three points:

«We must enquire, then, as we say, into these questions, and also whether (1) our investigation is concerned only with substances or also with the accidents per se of substances. (2) Further (2a) with regard to the same and other and similar and dissimilar and contrariety, and with regard to prior and posterior and all other such things, about which the dialecticians try to enquire starting their investigation from reputable opinions only — whose business is it to enquire into all these? Further (2b) the accidents per se of these themselves, and not only what each of these is, but also whether one thing has one contrary only » (Ross’s translation, slightly modified)\textsuperscript{12}.


\textsuperscript{11} The fact that these aporiai constitute a homogeneous group is confirmed by their continuous analysis in the full-length discussion in B, 2, 996a18-997a34.

\textsuperscript{12} Met., B, 1, 995b18-27 : Περί των ουσιών, καθάπερ φαμέν, ἐπισκέπτετον, καὶ πρότερον περὶ τὰς οὐσίας ἢ θεωρία μόνον ἐστίν ἢ καὶ περὶ τὰ συμβεβήκτα καὶ οὕτω ταῖς οὐσίαις, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις περὶ ταύτων καὶ ἐτέρου καὶ ὠμότου καὶ ἀνομοῖο καὶ ἐναντίτητος, καὶ περὶ προτέρου καὶ ύστερου καὶ τῶν
All the problems raised in the passage concern the scope of the science which Aristotle is trying to define; in other words, they raise questions concerning whether the science at issue must deal with determinate objects and topics or not. The first part of the text (1) asks whether the science at issue must include the study of the per se accidents of substances. The second part (2) asks whether it must include the study (2a) of those notions which are usually considered by the dialecticians (the dialectical notions) and (2b) of per se accidents of such notions.

There are some problems with this text. The first problem is that it is not clear what the relation between (1) and (2) is and, more particularly, whether the notions described in (2) coincide with the accidents per se of substance mentioned in (1). The second problem is that it is not very clear which properties would count as per se accidents of substance at all. I shall deal with these problems together.

I. 1 Per se accidents of substance, dialectical notions and per se accidents of being

First of all, it must be observed that in the corresponding full-length discussion of the aporia in B, 2, 997a25-34 only (1) is considered:

«Further, does our investigation deal with substances alone or also with their accidents? I mean, for instance, if the solid is a certain substance and so are lines and planes, is it the business of the same science to know these and to know the accidents of each genus (about which the mathematical sciences do demonstrations), or of a different science? If of the same, the science of substance must also be a demonstrative science, but it is thought that there is no demonstration of the essence of things. And if of another, what will be the science that investigates the accidents of substance? This is a very difficult question» (Ross’s translation, modified)13.

έλλαν ἀπάντων τῶν τοιούτων περὶ ὅσιον οἱ διαλεκτικοὶ πειράνται σκοπεῖν ἐκ τῶν ἐνδόξων μόνων ποιούμενοι τὴν σκέψιν, τίνος ἐστι θεωρήσαι περὶ πάντων· ἐτι δὲ τούτοις αὐτοῖς ὁσα καθα’ αὐτά συμβεβήκεν, καὶ μὴ μόνον τί ἐστιν τούτων ἐκχαστον ἄλλα καὶ ἀρὰ ἐν ἐνί ἐναντίον. Unless otherwise indicated, modifications in the translation are to the effect of making the translation more literal and the vocabulary consistent throughout the paper.

13 Met., B, 2, 997a25-34: ἕτι δὲ πότερον περὶ τὰς οὐσίας μόνων ἡ θεωρία ἐστὶν ἡ καὶ περὶ τὰ συμβεβήκτα τούτας· λέγο δ’ οἶνον, εἰ τὸ στερεόν οὐσία τίς ἐστι καὶ γραμμαί καὶ ἑπίπεδα, πότερον τῆς αὐτῆς ταύτα γνωρίζεται ἐστὶν ἑπιστήμης καὶ τὰ συμβεβήκτα περὶ ἐκχαστον γένος περὶ ὁμαθηματικά δεικνύον, ἡ ἄλλης, εἰ μὲν γὰρ τῆς αὐτῆς, ἀποδεικτική τις ἐν ἐνί καὶ τῆς οὐσίας, οὐ δοκεῖ δὲ τού τί ἐστιν ἀπόδειξις εἶναι· εἰ δ’ ἐτέρας, τίς ἐστι ἡ θεωροῦσα περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν τὰ συμβεβήκτα; τοῦτο γὰρ ἀποδοῦναι παγχάλεπον.
The passage unpacks the idea that if a science deals with the per se accidents of its subject genus, then it is a demonstrative science. In fact, in this case a question about the scope of the science automatically converts into a question about the structure of the science. However, given that B, 2 deals only with (1), it is not very helpful to spell out the riddle of the connection between (1) and (2) — unless one takes the very fact that (2) is not separately mentioned as evidence e silentio for its straightforward identification with (1) — nor what per se accidents of substances are supposed to be exactly.

The connection between (1) and (2) has given rise to a comparatively rich range of interpretations among contemporary readers. Madigan\textsuperscript{14} modifies Ross’s enumeration of the aporiai by reckoning (1) and (2) as two different aporiai; of the two aporiai, (2) would not be reconsidered in the course of \textsc{met.}, B. On the other extreme, Bell\textsuperscript{15} claims that (1) and (2) constitute a single aporia and that their association in the text can be understood only by assuming that the notions mentioned in (2) coincide with the per se accidents of substance mentioned in (1). Ross\textsuperscript{16} offers an intermediate position: although there is only one aporia, of which (1) and (2) are two subsections, it is not possible to identify the accidents per se of substance in (1) with the dialectical notions in (2). Of these interpretations, Bell’s is in line with a long tradition of ancient and medieval commentators whose positions I shall present in Part II\textsuperscript{17}.

Even if, as we saw, Aristotle does not mention (2) in B, 2’s full-length discussion, he does go back to all three points of the fifth aporia in \textsc{met.}, γ, 2. Having stated that the science of being qua being must deal with the notions mentioned in (2), he outlines a project for the enquiry into such notions. Before taking a closer look at this project and quite apart from the question of whether Aristotle eventually identifies the dialectical notions in (2) with the per se accidents of substance in (1), it should be stressed that Aristotle’s vocabulary in these texts is far from being unambiguous. This uncertainty in vocabulary can be shown through a survey of the relevant passages. In both the presentation of (1) in \textsc{met.}, B, 1 and of the corresponding section in γ, 2 Aristotle refers to (per se) accidents of substances (τὰ συμβεβηκότα καθ᾽ αὐτὰ ταῖς οὐσίαις):

\begin{quote}
\textsc{met.}, B, 1, 995b19-20: πότερον περὶ τὰς οὐσίας ἡ θεωρία μόνον ἐστὶν ἢ καὶ περὶ τὰ συμβεβηκότα καθ᾽ αὐτὰ ταῖς οὐσίαις.
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{15} Bell, Metaphysics cit., pp. 99 ff.


\textsuperscript{17} F. De Haas, Aporiai 3-5, in M. Crubellier, A. Laks eds., Aristotle’s Metaphysics Beta, Symposium Aristotelicum, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2009, pp. 73-104 does not analyse (2) nor does E. Berti, Aporiai 6-7, ibid., pp. 105-133.
In the course of Met., G, 1-2, though, Aristotle resorts to different expressions. In G, 1, 1003a21-22 he talks of «things belonging per se to being»:

Met., G, 1, 1003a21-22: ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη τις ἡ θεωρεῖ τὸ ὄν ὣν καὶ τὰ τούτω ὑπάρχοντα καθ’ αὐτό.

The use of ὑπάρχοντα is not a problem, because it is replaced by συμβεβηκότα at 1003a25. But the shift from substance (οὐσία) to being qua being (τὸ ὄν ὣν) as the subject (i.e. the bearer) of the per se accidents at issue is quite problematic. At least at this stage, Aristotle has not done anything to show that the problem of whether the same science must deal with substance and with the per se accidents of substances is the same as the problem whether there is a science of being and of its per se accidents. It is only this second formulation which is addressed at the beginning of G, 1, where Aristotle states that there is such a science. The shift from per se accidents of substance to accidents of being adds a problem to the original difficulty of the shift from per se accidents of substance in (1) to dialectical notions in (2).

The terminology is also inconsistent in the case of dialectical notions, which in the course of Met., G, 2 are successively designated as:

‘species (or ‘forms’) of the one’ (1003b33: τοῦ ἐνός εἴδη);

‘affections per se of one qua one and being qua being’ (1004b5-6: τοῦ ἐνός ἣ ἐν καὶ τοῦ ὄντος ἣ ὣν ταῦτα καθ’ αὐτά ἐστι πάθη);

‘propria’ of being qua being (1004b15: οὐτῶ καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἣ ὄν ἐστὶν τινὰ ἰδίω).

Some ambiguity on the precise characterization of these notions is kept also in the passages in which Aristotle summarizes the solutions to the aporiai concerning the extension of the science of being qua being at 1004a31-34.¹⁸

¹⁸ The notion of proprium (necessary not essential property) belongs in particular to the conceptual framework of the Topics (see in particular Top., A, 5, 102a18-30; and the whole of Top., E, completely devoted to the topoi for dismissing and establishing the ascription of a proprium). There is some debate as to whether the notion of proprium in the Topics develops in the notion of per se accident of the Analytics. On this issue see G. Verbeke, La notion de propriété dans les Topiques, in G. E. L. Owen ed., Aristotle on Dialectic. The Topics. Proceedings of the third Symposium Aristotelicum, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1968, pp. 257-276.

¹⁹ Met., G, 2, 1004a31-34: φανερὸν οὖν ὅτι μίας περὶ τούτων καὶ τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ λόγον ἔχειν (τοῦτο δ’ ἦν ἐν τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἀπαρήμασιν).
and 1005a13-18. These passages do not include a full answer to the precise way in which the science of being qua being and of its per se accidents is linked to or identified with the science of substance and of its per se accidents. In the latter passage (1005a13-18), however, Aristotle seems to endorse the view that the per se accidents of substance are in fact to be identified with the dialectical notions mentioned in (2):

« Obviously then it is the work of one science to examine being qua being, and the attributes which belong to it qua being, and the same science will examine not only substances but also their attributes, both those above named and what is prior and posterior, genus and species, whole and part, and the other such things » (Ross's translation modified).

This final and apparently plain statement of Aristotle should not obscure the fact that the passages leading to it do not include any clear argument to the effect that (a) per se accidents of substance are the same as the dialectical notions nor that (b) per se accidents of being are the same as per se accidents of substance nor that (c) per se accidents of being are the same as dialectical notions. As we shall see in Part II, some commentators are aware of the gaps between per se accidents of substance / dialectical notions / per se accidents of being and try to bridge them or, at least, to clarify their differences.

I. 2 The enquiry into the dialectical notions

Quite apart from the place that they are bound to occupy in his ontology, Aristotle outlines a comparatively clear and well-structured project of enquiry into the dialectical notions. The project is mainly outlined in Met., Γ, 2, 1003b19-1004a2, 1004a10-31 and 1004b27-1005a11. As we shall see, it is not clear whether and where Aristotle actually accomplishes the enquiry here proposed. I shall devote the whole of Part III to the discussion and assessment of evidence in favour of and against the proposals of the various commentators. For now I shall confine myself to a sketch of the project as it is first set forth by Aristotle. I consider the first two passages as parts of a continuous argument, with 1004a2-10 (considered to be out of place by all modern commentators) introducing a different line of reasoning.

In Met., Γ, 2 Aristotle proposes a battery of arguments to show that the science of being qua being must consider a number of topics and that the
The progressive extension of its range to such topics does not undermine its unity as one science. In other words, Aristotle shows that the progressive extension of the science of being to the topics traditionally connected with the enquiry into being and dialectic makes sense and can be justified without any loss of unity on the part of the science itself. I shall not go through all the arguments, but I shall focus on the two aforementioned portions of text, both arguing that the science of being qua being should deal with a set of notions such as one-many, same-other, different, contrary, similar-dissimilar, equal-unequal. These are the dialectical notions mentioned in (2).

The first argument is very complex, but the main steps can be summarized as follows: every science is science of a whole genus of objects, without restricting its interest to a specific part of it (1003b19-21; this is a general assumption of Aristotle’s). Therefore (1003b21-22) the science studying all the species of being is one in genus\(^21\). Furthermore (1003b22-33), being and one are the same in substratum, i.e. they are said of all and only the same subjects (anything which is being is one and anything which is one is being). It follows that being has as many species as the one (1003b33-35). The species of the one are the same, similar, equal and such similar items (1003b35-36). This is the first step of the extension of the science of being: since being is the same in substratum as the one, the science of being must cover all the species of the one, which in a way are species of being\(^22\).

The second step is based on Aristotle’s general assumption that the science of the opposites is one and the same (1004a9-10; 1004a10-12). Now, the opposite to the one (\(\varepsilon\nu\)) (either as negation or as privation) is the plurality (\(\pi\lambda\varepsilon\vartheta\omicron\omicron\zeta\))\(^23\) (1004a10). It follows that the science of being must examine the

\(^{21}\) The passage establishing this point is very complicated and the argument quite obscure. I provide a detailed discussion of the text and of the different interpretations in Problems and Paradigms cit., pp. 51-55. At any rate, the main point of the argument seems to be that the kind and degree of unity of a science reflects the unity of its subject genus. If the subject of a science is one in species, the science is one in species; if the subject of a science is one in genus, the science is one in genus too.

\(^{22}\) Aristotle provides some arguments to show that one and being are one and the same in substratum. What he means by this is that one and being have the same extension (in particular, they range over all beings). A full analysis of the arguments is not necessary here. Among the reconstructions of the passage see M. J. Loux, Aristotle on the Transcendentals, « Phronesis », 18, 1973, pp. 225-239; M. F. Lowe, Aristotle on Being and the One, « Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie », 59, 1977, pp. 44-55; E. C. Halper, Aristotle on the Convertibility of One and Being, « The new Scholasticism », 59, 1985, pp. 213-227.

\(^{23}\) It is difficult to translate \(\pi\lambda\varepsilon\vartheta\omicron\omicron\zeta\); it can be translated as ‘plurality’, but it must be taken into account that in this context \(\pi\lambda\varepsilon\vartheta\omicron\omicron\zeta\) does not indicate a discrete plurality, made of units, but, rather, a principle of plurality; such principle, in conjunction with the principle of unity, can give place to discrete multiplicity.
opposite of the one and all the notions (other, dissimilar, and unequal) which are opposite to the species of the one (1004a17-20). In addition, the same science must investigate the notions which are said with reference to any of the aforementioned notions: for instance contrariety, which is a kind of difference, which is a kind of otherness (1004a20-22) (where otherness is the opposite of sameness).

The concluding remarks of the argument are worth quoting in full because they express the guidelines of a project which we shall take into account when assessing the possible candidates for being the place in which Aristotle actually accomplishes the enquiry here outlined. The passage reads as follows:

« (i) As a consequence, since the one is said in many ways, also these things will be said in many ways, and still it is the duty of one single science to have knowledge of them all: for it would be the duty of several sciences not if they are just said in many ways, but also if their accounts are neither said of one nor do they refer back to one. But since all these are referred back to the primary way in which they are said, as, for example, things which are said to be one are referred back to the primary one, we must maintain that things are in this same way also with respect to the same and other and the contraries: (ii) therefore, once one has distinguished in how many ways each is said, it must be explained how they refer to what is primary in each category: for some things will be called <in that way> in virtue of having that <which is called in that way primarily>, some other things in virtue of producing it, and some in other ways of this sort.»

The passage stresses two important guidelines for the structure of the enquiry into the one, the plurality and the pairs of opposite notions which can be referred back to either of them. I have divided the text into two sections in order to emphasize the two aspects. In the first part Aristotle refers to what he has already established in Γ, 1-2 for being: multivocity is compatible with the study by a single science of the subject signified by the multivocal term if the ways in which it is said can be referred back to one primary meaning. Aristotle now claims that this holds true also with reference to the one and the other dialectical notions, which are said in many ways. The passage makes an

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24 See n. 27.
25 Met., Γ, 2, 1004a22-31: ὡστε ἑπειδὴ πολλαχῶς τὸ ἐν λέγεται, καὶ ταῦτα πολλαχῶς μὲν λεχθῆσαι, ὡς δὲ μίας ἀπαντᾶ ἐστὶ γνωρίζειν· οὐ γὰρ εἰ πολλαχῶς, ἐτέρας, ἀλλ’ εἰ μὴν καθ’ ἕν ἐν μὴν πρὸς ἐν οἷς λόγοι ἀναφέρονται. ἐπεὶ δὲ πάντα πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἀναφέρεται, οἷον ὅσα ἐν λέγεται πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἐν, ὡσαύτως φατέναι καὶ περὶ ταῦτοι καὶ ἐτέρου καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων ἔχειν· ὡστε διελέμενον ποισάχως λέγεται ἐκαστὸν, οὕτως ἀποδοτέων πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἐν ἐκάστη κατηγορίᾳ πῶς πρὸς ἐκείνο λέγεται· τὰ μὲν γὰρ τῷ ἔχειν ἐκείνο τὰ δὲ τῷ ποιεῖν τὰ δὲ κατ’ ἄλλους λεχθῆσαι τοιούτους τρόπους.
additional point: the multivocity of the other notions (presumably, those which Aristotle has just mentioned, i.e. ‘the same’, ‘similar’, ‘equal’ etc.) which ‘belong together’ with the one somehow depends on the multivocity of the one. This dependence is expressed by the first line of the quoted text: given that the one is said in many ways, also these other things will be said in many ways — but this fact shall not prevent them from being the object of a single science, if the ways in which they are said can be ordered with reference to a primary meaning. I shall refer to this aspect as M.

The second aspect I should like to stress (henceforth: C) lies in the second part of the text and concerns the way in which Aristotle expresses the fact that there are secondary ways in which things are called in a certain way and that these secondary ways refer back or depend on the primary way in which the expression at issue is used. Aristotle uses a formulation in terms of ‘having’, ‘producing’ — which, according to the Categories, are distinct categorial determinations. A few lines above Aristotle says that for each of the terms at issue, one must divide the ways in which it is said and explain in which relation they stand to the primary way with reference to each ‘category’. I shall return to this formulation in Part III.

So much for the first argument. Turning now to the second argument (1004b27 ff.), the goal of the passage is similar to the goal of the first argument, but the conceptual tools are quite different. In the previous argument Aristotle has claimed that the study of the one and of the notions connected with the one pertains to the science of being qua being in virtue of the sameness in substratum of one and being. In the second argument Aristotle claims that the study of one and plurality pertains to the science of being because (i) everyone admits that the principles of being and substance are the contraries, (ii) in each pair of contraries one term is a privation and (iii) all pairs of contraries can be brought back to (in a way: reduced to) the basic opposition of one and πληθος (or being and non-being) (1004b27-1005a2). If all these notions (one, plurality and the contraries referred back to them) are said in many different ways, the philosopher should order the ways in which they are said with respect to their primary

27 The use of κατηγορία at 1004a29 is controversial: the majority of modern interpreters take the word in the sense of ‘predication’ in general. The sense would be that for each of the over-mentioned general predicates (for each ‘predication’) the philosopher must investigate in how many ways it is said. I take κατηγορία to indicate categories strictly speaking because some reference to the fact that the general predicates at issue range over the different categories and assume different meanings in the different categories seems to be relevant for the interpretation of this passage as well as of the connected texts which I shall consider in the course of the paper.
meaning (1005a6-8). Furthermore, he should consider whether one and being exist as universal properties strictly speaking (which are said in the same way of all the particulars falling under them), whether they exist as separate substances or whether they are just said with respect to one or in some other way (1005a8-11).

Although the results of the two arguments are similar, their conceptual framework is slightly different. The main difference between the first (1003b19-1004a31) and the second (1004b27-1005a11) becomes evident by way of contrast. In particular, the second argument resorts to the tenet that the contraries are considered to be the principles of substance and being and that one and plurality or being and non-being are the basic principles to which all contraries can be referred back. In addition, the pair of basic principles is a pair of opposites which stand to each other in a relation of possession and privation. The reference to the basic pair of contraries as principles is absent from the first argument, which seems to be less ontologically committed and does not suggest any specific metaphysical value for the one and the other dialectical notions. The first argument is more neutral as to the metaphysical function of the notions it considers and resorts to a series of formal relations (like convertibility and the order of the ways in which something is said) in order to provide a relatively unified picture of why the one and all the other dialectical notions can be the object of the science of being qua being without undermining the unity of the science itself. Complementarily to this difference in nature, the two arguments provide different indications about the basic structures along which the enquiry should be organized. The characteristic mark of the latter argument is that it sets the enquiry into the one and the related notions into the enquiry into the principles of all beings. In addition, in the final lines (1005a8-11) it mentions the problem of the ontological status of one and being.

As I mentioned, there is a problem as to whether and where the project of research outlined in these passages is actually carried out by Aristotle. Even if it is actually carried out, there is the additional problem of whether the reference to the enquiry into the principles of all beings is structurally relevant to make sense of the project (as it would appear from the second argument) or can be left aside (as it would appear from the first argument).

Before exploring the places in which Aristotle might have fulfilled this project, we should take a closer look at the notions explicitly included in the project. We have already seen some of them: one (ἐν), plurality (πληθος), same (τὰυτόν), other (ἐτερον), different (διάφορον), contrary (ἐναντίον), similar (ὁμοιον), dissimilar (ἀνόμοιον), equal (ἴσον), unequal (ἀνίσον). However, these are not the only notions mentioned in the passages at issue. In particular, in the course of the second argument, Aristotle refers to the fact that all the contraries can be brought under the opposition of one and πληθος, and
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mentions some pairs of contraries which have been regarded as the principles of all beings. In particular, we find motion and rest (1004b29), odd and even, hot and cold, limit and unlimited, friendship and strife (1004b31-33). These are all pairs of contraries which have been invoked by different philosophers as principles of being. They can all be ordered under the main headings of one and πληθος, which is the privation of the one, in such a way that for each pair one term (rest, odd, hot, limit, friendship) would fall under the one and the other term would fall under theπληθος. Aristotle refers (1005a1) to a ‘reduction’ of the contraries to the primary opposition of one and many, which was the object of a lost treatise also mentioned at 1004a2. Aristotle refers to this treatise as the place in which he has explained and unfolded this ordering of the contraries under a primary opposition. The method he followed to do this was probably the method of the Pythagorean systoichiae, which consisted precisely in ordering the contraries into two columns, one including the positive and the other including the negative term of each pair. Is Aristotle implying that the science of being qua being should also deal with all the pairs of contraries which have been identified by other philosophers with the principles of being? Certainly not. The function of these examples is to show that different philosophers have invoked different pairs of contraries as the principles of being and that all of them can be referred back to the basic oppositions of one and πληθος or being and non-being. It is precisely for this reason that one and πληθος must be examined by the science of being qua being, i.e. as the primary pair of contraries, which are generally acknowledged as principles of being. This point may seem trivial but is not. In fact, a major discrepancy between Aristotle's account of per se accidents of being — which extend to all beings — and Syrianus's (and possibly Plato's) account of them in terms of μεγίστα γένη is precisely Aristotle's relegation of change and rest (κίνησις and στάσις) to a confined domain of being (i.e. to natural beings), whereas according to Plato's Sophist, 254d and to Syrianus change and rest extend to the whole domain of being.

There is another passage in which Aristotle seems genuinely to enlarge the set of notions which should be the object of the science of being qua being as long as they belong to substance. In Met., ρ, 2, 1005a13-18 he explicitly adds

29 Syrianus in Metaphysics commentaria, ed. G. Kroll, Berlin 1902 (CAG VI.I), pp. 5.25 ff.; 6.28-34.
30 Quoted on p. 161.
to the notions ‘above named’ a series of notions (prior, posterior, genus, species, whole, part) and the series can be enlarged to encompass other notions of a similar kind (see lin. 18: «and the other such things»). This seems to provide a further genuine extension of the scope of the science of being qua being.

In seeking for the place (if any) in which Aristotle develops the enquiry into such notions we must bear in mind all these qualifications. To summarize, what we can gather from Aristotle’s text is that the project is meant to include the study of a set of very general notions, and at least some of them (the same, other, different, contrary, similar, dissimilar, equal, unequal) can be systematically considered as a sort of derivation from the basic opposition of one and πληθος, which are opposed as possession and privation. Each of these notions is said in many ways and such multivocity is supposed (at least in some cases) to derive from the multivocity of some other notion included in the group. Moreover, the different ways in which each of these notions is said can be referred back to a primary way or a primary meaning after which all the others are ordered.

I have tried to outline as clearly as possible a set of problems emerging from some explicit statements of Aristotle’s together with the room for implementation left open by ambiguities or lacks of qualification in Aristotle’s text. Before going back to Aristotle, I shall now turn to the way in which the different commentators of the Metaphysics have approached part or all of these problems.

PART II

GREEK, ARABIC AND LATIN COMMENTATORS ON PER SE ACCIDENTS OF BEING QUA BEING

II. 1 ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS

I shall start with the commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisias. Of the commentary on the Metaphysics handed down to us under his name only the first five books are Alexander’s work, while the remaining nine books are attributed to the Byzantine scholar Michael of Ephesus (XI-XII century CE)31. I shall go back to Michael of Ephesus’s commentary, but for now I shall

focus on Alexander’s presentation of the fifth aporia and of the problems connected with it.

In commenting on the text corresponding to Ross’s fifth aporia in B, 1, Alexander distinguishes three sections corresponding to (1), (2a) and (2b) above\(^{32}\). With reference to (1) Alexander explains what Aristotle means by ‘per se accidents’ both by elucidating the locution itself and by giving some examples. In particular, Alexander distinguishes two kinds of ‘things belonging per se’ (καθ’ αυτά ύπάρχοντα). In the first place and properly speaking (κυρίως) ‘belonging per se’ are the items included in the definitions (τά ἐν τοῖς ὁρισμοῖς παραλαμβανόμενα). In the second place, by ‘per se accidents’ (τά καθ’ αὑτά συμβεβηκότα)\(^{33}\) Aristotle indicates some properties which are not separable (ἀχώριστα) from the subject to which they belong; they belong only to that subject (ἐίδα) and are almost substance-like (ἐγγὺς ὑσιώδη), to the point that sometimes they are included in definition-like statements\(^{34}\), although they are not constituent parts of genuine definitions\(^{35}\). After this distinction, Alexander gives some examples of per se accidents (i.e.: properties of the latter kind): (1) having the three angles equal to two right angles and (2) having the sum of two sides greater than the remaining side are per se accidents of the triangle; (3) being odd or even is a per se accident of number; (4) being one in so far as it is something determinate is a per se accident of each being (ἐκάστω τῶν ὄντων τὸ εἶναι ἐν καθό τόδε τι ἔστι).

Of this list of examples the most interesting is the fourth. All of (1)-(3) are more or less direct quotations of Aristotle’s examples of per se accidents or of propria of determinate beings, while (4) is a genuine insertion of Alexander, who is trying to explain what per se accidents of substance (and, as we shall see in a few lines, of being qua being) could look like.

The next important step is given by Alexander’s discussion of (2a). The passage is important because Alexander explains why the philosopher must deal with the very general notions which are usually dealt with by the dialecticians. Alexander gives a twofold pragmatic reason (177.2-6; 6-8)


\(^{33}\) Alexander seems to use τά καθ’ αὑτά ύπάρχοντα as a more generic phrase, including the parts of the definition and per se accidents (τά καθ’ αὑτά συμβεβηκότα).

\(^{34}\) Alex., In met., 176.25-26: δι’ ὁν εἰώθασι καὶ οἱ δι’ ὑπογραφῆς γινόμενοι τινον λόγοι ἀποδίδοσθαι.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 176.28-29.
together with an explanation of why such notions are relevant for first philosophy from the point of view of the contents (177.8-14). As for the pragmatic reasons, Alexander says that such notions as ‘the same’, ‘other’, ‘similar’, ‘dissimilar’ etc. must be included in the investigations of first philosophy because they are actually used by Aristotle himself in the formulation of the problems he tackles. For instance, he enquires whether «all substances are the same as each other or are, rather, other <than each other>» (177, 3-7). In this sense Aristotle resorts to ‘the same’, which is said precisely with reference to substances36. More generally — Alexander adds — all the dialectical notions mentioned by Aristotle are «common tools for those who carry out demonstrations» (κοινά γάρ ταύτα ὁργάνα τοίς ἀποδεικνύουσι)37. With reference to the contents of the enquiry into such notions, Alexander specifies that the characteristic mark of the philosophical investigation about them is that this is not a merely ‘formal’ or ‘logical’ investigation (οὐ γάρ λογικῆ ἡ πραγματεία)38 of these notions considered in themselves (οὐ γάρ δὲ αὐτὰ περὶ τούτων διαλαμβάνει)39. Rather, these notions concern first philosophy and the enquiry into being qua being because «the study about the things which belong to being in general» (περὶ τῶν κοινῶς τῶν ὄντων ύπαρχόντων τὴν θεωρίαν)40 pertains to such an enquiry. In this way, Alexander seems to claim that dialectical notions coincide with what belongs to being in general and, therefore, with the per se accidents of being.

Finally, Alexander comments on (2b), explaining that in the case of the aforementioned notions the philosopher must consider not only what they are but also their per se accidents. For instance, the philosopher must investigate what contrariety is and whether there is only one contrary to one notion.

Alexander’s comments on the first presentation of the fifth aporia in B, 1 are interesting, but do not say explicitly whether the per se accidents of substance in (1) are the same as the properties belonging to being in general mentioned in his comments on (2a). Nor does he say anything more explicit in his comments on the extended presentation of (1) in B, 2. In particular he does not mention the fact that not all three aspects of B, 1 are developed in B, 241. Also in other passages, where he mentions one or more aspects of the fifth aporia in B, 1, Alexander does not put any special effort into explaining

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36 Ibid., 177.4-7: καὶ γὰρ τῷ ταύτῳ ὀπερ ἐπ’ οὐσιῶν λέγεται χρήται. ζητεῖ γοῦν εἰ αἱ αὐταὶ εἰσὶ πάσαι αἱ οὕσι ἀλληλος ὡς οὐ ἄλλ’ ἔτεραι.
37 Ibid., 177.7-8.
38 Ibid., 177.9-10.
39 Ibid., 177.10-11.
40 Ibid., 177.13.
41 Cf. ibid., pp. 194-195 ad 997a25 ff.
whether he takes the fifth aporia as one single aporia, articulated in three aspects in B, 1 and then contracted in B, 2, or whether he takes the points in B, 1 to be more or less significantly different\textsuperscript{42}. This very fact could be taken as indirect evidence that Alexander does not see the distinction in B, 1 as particularly relevant, but there is more explicit evidence to the effect that in fact he does regard the per se accidents of substance as identical with the per se accidents of being qua being and that he identifies at least part of the per se accidents of being qua being with the ‘things belonging to being in general’, which are expressed by the dialectical notions. Such evidence can be mainly found in Alexander’s comments on the passages in \textit{Met}, \(\Gamma\) in which Aristotle solves the fifth aporia taking into account all three points distinguished in B, 1.

In \textit{Met}, \(\Gamma\), 2 Aristotle shows that the science of being qua being must deal with the dialectical notions by showing that the positive notions of the group (‘the same’, ‘similar’, ‘equal’ etc.) are ‘species’ (\(\epsilon\iota\delta\eta\)) of the one, that one and being are somehow the same in substratum and that, therefore, a science dealing with being must deal with the one and its ‘species’ as well. In addition, since one and the same science must deal with the opposites, the science of being must deal with the dialectical notions opposite to the ‘positive’ notions (‘other’, ‘dissimilar’, ‘unequal’ etc.). Each of these notions is said in many ways, all ordered \(\pi\rho\omicron\omicron\zeta\omicron\omicron\nu\) and the science of being qua being must analyse each of them by disentangling the ways in which it is said and by ordering them with respect to the primary way in which each derivative way is said. In discussing these aspects of Aristotle’s account, Alexander progressively specifies that each of such notions is said with reference to a primary meaning, which is the way in which they are said of substance for all of them\textsuperscript{43}. As ‘being’ is said in many ways, all depending on the sense in which substance is being, so for all these other predicates the ways in which they are said of other beings depend on the primary sense in which they are said of substance.

In virtue of being said of substance, they extend to all beings in general. In this sense they do not belong to any determinate being in particular, but belong per se to being qua being (\(\tau\omicron\delta\omicron\ ν\omicron\ η\omicron\ ν\omicron\ ύπ\omicron\π\omicron\ρ\omicron\χοι\ κα\omicron\θ\omicron\ α\omicron\υ\omicron\τ\omicron\))\textsuperscript{44}. Since the science of being qua being deals not only with being (and in particular: with substance) but also with the accidents of being qua being (and, in particular, with the per se accidents of substance), it must deal with the notions usually dealt with by the dialecticians, which coincide with the per se accidents of being and substance\textsuperscript{45}. What distinguishes the approach of the

\textsuperscript{42} Cf. ibid., 246.16 and 22; 250.5; 257.10-16.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 251.10 ff.; 255.9-11; 255.25-31; 255.35 - 256.18; 263.6-8; 264.17-23.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 258.20-21.

\textsuperscript{45} Cf. ibid., 258.20-24; 33-39; 259.19-22.
dialectician from the approach of the philosopher is precisely that the
philosopher does not deal with them for their own sake, but always with
reference to substance and as long as they belong to substance. This last
remark echoes Alexander’s presentation of (2a) in B, 1 and makes the
connection with the fifth aporia quite evident 46.

The last point I would like to stress concerning Alexander’s approach is his
explicit indication as to where the analysis of the dialectical notions and of
the per se accidents of being qua being is actually carried out. He does not say
anything in the commentaries on Met., B and Γ. In the commentary on Γ, 2 he
mentions only twice the places in which Aristotle explains how all the
contraries can be ‘reduced’ to the opposition of one and many. These places
are the lost ‘Selection of the contraries’ (ἐκλογή τῶν ἐναντίων) 47, also mentioned
by Aristotle himself, and the second book of the (for us fragmentary) περὶ
ἀγαθοῦ. With reference to this second work, Alexander once says that the
selection of the contraries is also mentioned in the second book of the περὶ
ἀγαθοῦ (250.17-20), while another time he says that the reduction of the
contraries to one and πλῆθος is shown in the second book of the περὶ ἀγαθοῦ
(262.18-19: τά ἐν τῷ Β περὶ τάγαθοῦ δεδειγμένα). However, at the beginning of
his commentary on Met., Δ Alexander clearly connects the presentation of the
πολλαχώς λεγόμενα in Δ with the project, outlined in Γ, 2, of a philosophical
analysis of the dialectical notions. Alexander’s prologue to Δ is interesting for
different reasons, among which Alexander’s defence of Δ as a genuine piece
of Aristotle’s Metaphysics. He claims that the attribution to Aristotle of Δ
can be proved on the basis of linguistic and stilistic considerations (ἀπὸ τῆς
λέξεως) as well as on the basis of content: in particular, Δ would provide the
philosophical analysis of the dialectical notions 48 promised in Γ, 2. These are
the notions used by all the sciences 49; they designate what belongs to being
qua being 50 or to being in general (κοινῶς) 51 and per se 52.

46 Ibid., 258.33-39; cf. 176.9-13. A further point of contact with B, 1 can be found in the remarks
about the pragmatic significance of such notions, also considered in (2a) above: see the example
at 257.24-25: πότερον ταύταν ἐστιν ἡ οὐσία ἀπλάς λαμβανόμενη καὶ μετά τινος συμβεβηκτός ἡ ἐτερον.
47 Ibid., 250.17-20; 252.3-16.
48 Ibid., 244.14-20. Alexander’s references to Met., Γ are spelled out also by Dooley (Alexander
pp. 4-5. H. Bonitz (Commentarius in Aristotelis Metaphysicam, Bonn 1849, repr. Georg Olms
Verlag, Hildesheim-Zuerich-New York 1992, pp. 19-20) argues against Alexander’s claims that
Met., Δ is in place between Met., Γ and Ε in virtue of its structure and contents.
49 Alex., In met., 244.6-7.
50 Ibid., 244.10.
51 Ibid., 244.22; 245.19-20.
52 Ibid., 345.10-11.
Syrianus explicitly sets his commentary on the *Metaphysics* against the background of Alexander’s commentary. In particular, Alexander is regarded as the source of the correct and standard literal interpretation of Aristotle’s text, to which not much can be added. Syrianus’s additions are therefore doctrinal points presented in the form of a dialogue with Aristotle from the perspective of a Platonic philosopher. Syrianus’s commentary as we have it covers books B, Γ, Μ and Ν. In introducing Met., B he says that he means not only to present the literal contents of the aporiai (work already accomplished by Alexander), but also and primarily to indicate on which side of the aporia the truth eventually lies and how Platonic philosophers should deal with Aristotle’s and similar attacks to Pythagorean and Platonic doctrines. The result is that the commentary on Met., B offers a sort of compendium of Syrianus’s views on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* inscribed in the structure of Met., B.

One distinctive feature of Syrianus’s commentary on Met., B is his very careful enumeration of the aporiai in the list in B, 1 as well as in the expanded discussion in the rest of the book\(^{53}\). In fact, he registers any variation in order as well as in content. In line with this general attitude, Syrianus considers (Ross’s) fifth aporia as two distinct aporiai, corresponding to part (1) and (2), which he counts, respectively, as the fifth and the sixth aporia in B, 1. Furthermore, he emphasizes that the sixth aporia ((2) above) is not discussed any further in B\(^ {54}\). Nevertheless, the omission is not seen as problematic. On the contrary, according to Syrianus the omission in the full-length discussion is partly due to the clear answer we find to it in Met., Γ and partly due to the obviousness of the matter: it is clear that the dialectical notions must be investigated by first philosophy because it is clear that they belong to being per se. This is made obvious by the fact that they range over all beings, from intelligible beings through the whole structure of the universe all the way down to sensible beings\(^ {55}\). Syrianus’s argument on this point is concise, but

\(^{53}\) The only other parallel of a thorough and explicit enumeration of the aporiai in Met., B is ps. Philoponus’s commentary (see n. 146, p. 201).

\(^{54}\) Syr., In met., 29.13-22; see also 53.15-21.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 5.8 - 6.34 ad 995b20; for the relevance of this passage for the development of Proclus’s and Neoplatonic metaphysics thereafter, see C. Luna, *La doctrine des Principes* : Syrianus comme source textuelle et doctrinale de Proclus. 2e partie : Analyse des Textes, in A. P. Segonds, C. Steel eds., Proclus et la théologie Platonicienne, Leuven University Press - Les Belles Lettres, Leuven - Paris 2000, pp. 227-278, in particular pp. 259-262; cf. also Luna, Trois Études cit., pp. 149-151 on the aspects of Syrianus’s argument taken over by Asclepius (143.8-144.14) and on the dependence of Asclepius on Syrianus. More generally, on the role of Syrianus’s commentary for the development of Proclus’s doctrine of principles, see C. D’Ancona, *La doctrine des Principes* : Syrianus comme source textuelle et doctrinale de Proclus. 1ère partie : Histoire du problème, in Segonds, Steel eds., Proclus et la théologie cit., pp. 189-225.
significant: he shows that these properties permeate each level of being and in this way he bridges the gap between dialectical notions and per se accidents of being. The crucial notion in Syrianus’s argument is that of διά πάντων τῶν ὀντῶν πεφοιτηκέναι, which will be taken over by Asclepius in his explanation of the same point. A further relevant aspect of Syrianus’s commentary on this point is that the account of how sameness (ταύτότης), difference (έτερότης), similarity (όμοιότης) and dissimilarity (ἄνομοιότης) etc. permeate the whole of being is inscribed in the cosmological account of the Timaeus and connected with the sense in which all beings participate in the μέγιστα γένη in the Sophist and in the primary εἴδη of the Parmenides. I shall go back to the reference to Plato’s dialogues in the course of Part III.

With reference to (1) (Syrianus’s fifth aporia) Syrianus says that philosophical wisdom (σοφία) investigates both substance and its per se accidents. However, Syrianus introduces a distinction as to the way in which per se accidents can be properly related to the different kinds of substance. He distinguishes the cases of simple substances, intermediate substances or universal forms, and individual material substances. Simple intelligible substances have no accidents and are not susceptible to demonstration and definition; intermediate substances or universal forms are the appropriate subjects of per se accidents and of demonstration; finally, material forms and individual substances are the subjects of transient accidents strictly speaking and cannot be the object of demonstration. This qualification on

56 See in particular Syn., In met., 5.12-24 : ὅτι δὲ τὰ τῶν εἰς θεωρίαν ἐκκείμενα μᾶλιστα άν δόξει τῷ ὄντι καθ’ αὐτό υπάρχειν, δηλοὶ τὸ διὰ πάντων αὐτὰ πεφοιτηκέναι τῶν ὀντῶν· ἡ γὰρ ταυτότης καὶ ἡ έτερότης καὶ ἡ ομοίωσις καὶ ὁ οἰκονομός καὶ ὁ συμβαίνειν οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ μὲν ενορίαν τῶν ὀντῶν ἄλλον δὲ τῶν ἀποστασίων, ἀλλ’ ἀνοικός ἀπό τῶν νοητῶν ἀρξάμενος καὶ πάν τὸ νοητὸν καὶ θεῖον διακοσμήσασα διὰ τῆς ψυχικῆς οὐσίας ἐπί την φύσιν τῶν ὄλων καὶ τῶν ύπορέων καὶ τὴν γένειν καταντήσασαι ταυτότητος καὶ ἡ συνότης καὶ ὁ οἰκονομός <παρά> τῆς τοῦ ἐνὲς παναγάθου φύσεως τοῖς οὐσί Μεταδόθηκαν· ἡ έτερότης δὲ καὶ ἡ ομοιότητα καὶ ἡ οἴστης ἐναντίωσεις τέ καὶ <το> πρώτον τε καὶ ὑστερον καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα σύμπαντα παρὰ τῆς γομμωτάτης καὶ ἀνεκλείπτου τῶν πάντων αἰτίας τῆς ἀπειρουνάμον δυάδος ταῖς τε αἰρότικοι οὐσίαις καὶ ταῖς αἰσθητικας κεχορηγήκασιν [...].

57 Ibid., 5.14 - 6.1. The Sophist is explicitly mentioned at 5.27, the Parmenides at 5.31. Syrianus's account of the per se accidents of being and the explicit connection he establishes between these texts and Plato’s Parmenides will be of great importance for Proclus’s account of the attributes of the One in his commentary on the Parmenides. On this aspect see in particular L. Van Campe, Syrianus and Proclus on the attributes of the One in Plato’s Parmenides, in A. Longo ed., Syrianus et la Métaphysique de l’antiquité tardive, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2009, pp. 247-280.

58 Ibid., 4.21 - 5.7.
59 Cf. ibid., 4.29-30 : ἐν τοῖς ἀποστάταις καὶ κυρίας νοητὰς οὐσίαις.
60 Cf. ibid., 4.33 : ἐν ταῖς μέσαις οὐσίαις.
61 Cf., ibid. 4.37 : τοῖς καθόλου λόγοις.
62 Cf. ibid., 5.3 : τὰ κυρίως συμβεβηκότα.
the way in which different kinds of substance relate to accidents will be inherited by Asclepius.

The Platonic perspective in which Syrianus reads Aristotle's text is obviously not surprising. What is rather unexpected is that, in the same passage in which he discusses (2), Syrianus does not follow Alexander in seeing Met., Δ as the place in which Aristotle deals with the dialectical notions and the per se accidents of being qua being. Rather, Syrianus regards Met., I (the tenth book of the Metaphysics) as containing Aristotle's philosophical and scientific discussion of the notions which dialecticians consider only with reference to opinions. Syrianus's opinion is very important not only because it introduces a new candidate for Aristotle's actual completion of the project outlined in Met., Π, 2, but also because, by mentioning Met., Π in connection with the enquiry into the μεγιστα γένη of the Sophist and the primary εἴδη of the Parmenides, it inscribes it in a precise philosophical tradition, as a 'Platonic' book, in the sense of a book dealing with the most fundamental notions of Platonic metaphysics.

For the sake of completeness, I mention here en-passant that Syrianus does not take from Alexander the mention of the second book περὶ ἀγαθοῦ in connection with Aristotle's reference to the Selection of the contraries. I shall return to this point and its possible significance in Part III.

II. 3 ASCLEPIUS

Asclepius's commentary on Met., A-Z is the transcription ἀπὸ φωνῆς of a course of lectures by Ammonius, Asclepius's teacher. Apart from Ammonius, Asclepius's work draws on both Syrianus's and Alexander's commentaries, although in different measure and form. The respective contributions of

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63 ASCLEPIUS in Aristotelis Metaphysicorum libros A-Z commentaria, ed. M. Heyduck, Berlin 1888 (CAG VI.2), 142.19-143.5. On the correspondences between Syrianus's and Asclepius's commentaries on this point cf. LUNA, Trois études cit., pp. 147-149.

64 SYR., In met., 6.6-9; cf. 29.19-20. For this pejorative sense of 'dialectician', which obviously does not designate the Platonic philosopher, but a sort of technician of language and argument cf. LONGO, Siriano e i principi cit., pp. 225 ff.

65 On the absence of any reference to the περὶ ἀγαθοῦ in Syrianus's commentary, cf. LUNA, Trois études cit., p. 42.

66 On the evidence for this description of Asclepius's commentary see LUNA, Trois études cit., pp. 99 ff. and p. 108, n. 35.

67 See LUNA, Trois études cit., pp. 99 ff. In particular, Asclepius seems to have used a written copy of Alexander's commentary (from which he quotes long portions of text in order to provide the literal interpretation of Aristotle's text) and of Syrianus's commentary (from which he takes the style of the commentary as a sort of doctrinal dialogue with Aristotle together with more or less crucial doctrinal points). On Syrianus's position between Alexander and Asclepius see also C. LUNA, Syrianus dans la tradition exégétique de la Métaphysique d'Aristote, I. Syrianus entre Alexandre d'Aphrodisie et Asclépdis, in M. O. Goulet-Caze ed., Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation, Vrin, Paris 2000, pp. 301-309.
Alexander, Syrianus, Ammonius and Asclepius himself in what we read as Asclepius’s commentary on the Metaphysics are difficult to disentangle, but also quite interesting in assessing how the problem of the enquiry into the per se accidents of substance and being evolves in the three Greek commentaries.

Asclepius’s commentary on the different sections of (Ross’s) fifth aporia in B, 1 is highly structured. But, although Asclepius spends some time spelling out what, according to him, the problems at issue are, he does not say much on the connection between the points of the aporia. At first, he seems to take (1) and (2) as comparatively independent questions, but at the end of the discussion of Met., Γ, 2 and of the sense in which the enquiry into per se accidents of being belongs to first philosophy, he mentions all three points ((1), (2a), (2b)) as if they were one single aporia. From Syrianus (29.13-20) he takes the explanation of why Aristotle does not discuss dialectical notions any further in Met., B after mentioning them in (2): Aristotle clearly answers the aporia in Met., Γ. More generally, Asclepius’s account of (1) and (2) relies heavily on Syrianus’s account, although he seems to be influenced by Alexander on the identification of the place in which Aristotle actually carries out the enquiry outlined in Γ, 2. I shall consider these aspects separately.

With reference to (1), Asclepius (142.19 ff.) distinguishes the ways in which accidents can be attributed to substances and explains what the primary subjects of per se accidents are. In the first place, primary substances, being simple energy, do not have accidents strictly speaking and are only ‘touched’ through a simple ‘throwing’ (ἐπιβολή) or intuition of the intellect (142.21-24); they are superior to demonstration and definition. As Syrianus has already maintained, only universals (142.24-26) have per se accidents (for instance, having the sum of the internal angles equal to two right angles is an accident per se of the universal triangle). Finally, particulars are characterized by transient accidents strictly speaking and, even if we can say that particulars are characterized by per se accidents, the primary subjects of per se accidents are universals (142.26-27). This threefold distinction clearly derives from Syrianus.

68 Ascl., In met., 143.8 introduces (2) with the following words: πάλιν ἐνεύθεν ἐτέραν ἀπορίαν ἐπαθεὶ τοιαύτην. In this as in other cases (cf., for instance, 142. 2) ἐνεύθεν does not seem to have a causal value, i.e. it does not seem to underline logical connection with the preceding aporia. Rather, it seems to have a temporal connotation, alluding to the succession of the aporiai analyzed. On the other hand, ἐτέραν ἀπορία seems to stress a neat separation of (2) from (1).
69 242.2-6 : λυτεῖ τῶν ἀποριῶν μία [...].
70 Ascl., In met., 173.11-16.
71 On the use of this terminology see Luna, Trois études cit., pp. 148-149.
72 It is not completely clear to me whether Asclepius (and Syrianus before him) distinguishes two kinds of accidents — per se (τὰ καθ’ αὐτὸ συμβεβηκότα) and ‘accidental’ accidents (also indicated by the Greek συμβεβηκότα), which are those properties that a subject can have or lack, acquire or lose without ceasing to be the being it is — or two ways in which the same kind of
With reference to (2), Asclepius distinguishes clearly (2a) and (2b). In the first place, he explains that it is the duty of first philosophy to enquire into such notions as sameness, otherness, similarity etc. because they range over all being (143.16: διὰ πάντων τῶν ὀντῶν διαπερατηκασιν). As in Syrianus, this aspect is inscribed in the wake of Plato’s enquiry into the μέγιστα γένη in Soph., 254d ff. In addition, Asclepius regards Aristotle’s treatment of the matter in these passages as in keeping with Aristotle’s activity ‘as first philosopher’ in the Categories: in the Categories Aristotle analyses the whole domain of being, which is the domain of first philosophy.

The way in which first philosophy deals with these notions contrasts with the way in which sameness and otherness are treated in the Topics by Aristotle himself: first philosophy deals with the dialectical notions «truly and demonstratively» (ἀληθινῶς καὶ ἀποδεικτικῶς), while dialectic deals with them only on the basis of reputable opinions (ἐνδοξῶς). One interesting point is Asclepius’s consideration (following Alexander’s comments) that Aristotle adds the enquiry into these notions to the duties of first philosophy for ‘pragmatic’ reasons, namely «because he himself makes use of them in what he demonstrates in this enquiry: for he makes use of the same, as it is said of substances, and asks whether all substances are the same or different from each other; but in demonstrations he must also make use of all the other notions he listed: for these are common instruments (κοινὰ ὀργανά) for those who demonstrate things».

accident belongs to ontologically different subjects. According to Aristotle, the second kind of accident is typically ascribed to particulars and only derivatively to universals (cf. ARIST., Met., Γ, 6, 1015b28-32). It should be noted that in Aristotle’s writings it is not always clear whether by συμβεβηκὼς Aristotle refers to a) properties which belong to a subject, without further qualification; b) per se accidents; c) ‘accidental’ accidents. The ambiguity between a) and c) is particularly striking in the Topics, where Aristotle oscillates between the notion of accident strictly speaking (as in Top., Α, 5, 102b4-9) and the notion of unqualified predication (as in the whole Top., Β). The latter notion of unqualified predication seems to develop quite naturally into the notion of ὑπάρχειν, which indicates the relation of predicate and subject in the Analytics. On these issues see J. BRUNSCHWIG, Aristote. Topiques Livres I-IV, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2009, pp. LIV-LV.

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(2b) is read as an aporia about the very determination of the per se accidents of dialectical notions. Asclepius suggests some examples: apart from Aristotle’s example, of whether there is only one contrary of a determinate notion, we find the problem of whether it is possible that the contraries are brought back to different genera. In particular, Asclepius discusses whether good and bad are contraries which can be ordered under one and the same genus (i.e. under the genus of quality)\(^{17}\). I shall go back to the relevance of this example in Part III.

The problem of the relation between per se accidents of substances and per se accidents of being is not explicitly addressed until Met., Γ. At the very beginning of the commentary on Met., Γ, Asclepius provides an overview of the topics of the book. In particular (222.16-19) Asclepius anticipates that Aristotle solves the methodological aporiai raised in B by showing that the first philosopher must deal with all kinds of substance, with their causes and «with their per se accidents; for example, as it may happen, <he has to enquire> into similarity and dissimilarity and otherness and sameness (οἴον, εἰ τύχοι, περὶ ὁμοιότητος καὶ ἀνομοιότητος καὶ ἐπερότητος καὶ παντότητος) ». This formulation is not decisive as to the identification (or lack of identification) of per se accidents of substances with the dialectical notions. But Asclepius shows how the two aspects come to be the same (I shall presently come back to the way in which he does this) and, at the end of the relevant section (242.16-24) we read that, since the same, other, similar, dissimilar, equal, unequal etc. are affections (πάθη) of the one qua one and of being qua being «it is evident that, since there are per se affections of being, it is also the duty of that first philosophy to have knowledge of substances themselves and of their accidents, the same and other and all others» (фанερὸν ὡς ὁτι τοῦ ὄντος ὑπάρχουσι πάθη καθ’ αὐτά, καὶ ἐκείνης τῆς πρώτης φιλοσοφίας ἐστιν ἐργὸν γνωρίσαι καὶ τὰς ὑσίας αὐτῶς καὶ τὰ συμβεβηκότα αὐτῶς, ταύτων καὶ ἔτερων καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα). This is clearly a mere paraphrasis of Aristotle’s text, but the steps through which Aristotle shows that the first philosopher must deal with per se accidents of things (τὰ καθ’ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχοντα τοῖς πράγμασιν) is spelled out at 233.5 ff. After the general presentation of the overall nature of the argument, which (as in Syrianus) amounts to showing that all beings causally depend on the intelligible unity and on the intelligible plurality, from which they derive their properties, Asclepius comes to the details of his interpretation. In the first place he shows that first philosophy is concerned not only with substance, but, more generally, with the whole of being qua being (καθόλου περὶ παντός τοῦ ὄντος ή ὁν)\(^{18}\) : every science is of the whole genus of its object, and being

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 144.26-34.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., 234.29.
qua being is a sort of genus including all beings. In fact, τὸ ὄντος ὄν is said of all beings ἄφενος καὶ πρὸς ἐν. Therefore, the science of substance is the science of all beings as grammar is the science of articulated voice in general (not just of high-pitched voice).

In what follows (236.8 ff.), Asclepius explains Aristotle's arguments to the effect that one and being are the same in substratum: they are said of all and only the same things, which — in this case — are all things. It follows that the species or forms of the one, which are same, similar, equal, are also species or forms of being, and the philosopher must inquire into what they are (in response to (2a)). All things are one and being in different ways, which can be ordered with reference to substance. In the same way, all other predications can be ordered with reference to the primacy of substance over other beings. Finally, Asclepius shows that:

«Again, similarly other things are called ‘being’ in virtue of being affections of substance, others in virtue of being dispositions. And as each of them receives being, in the same way <each of them> receives the one and each of those <properties which fall> under the one. And having shown how these things are said from one and with reference to one, it follows that it is the duty of the same science to investigate these things, which have being from substance, and to have knowledge of substance »

From this synthesis of Asclepius's arguments it should be possible to see how he reworks Alexander's argument for the primacy of substance to explain the identification of per se accidents of substance with per se accidents of being, along with Syrianus's argument on the identification of per se accidents of being and dialectical notions.

With regard to the identification of the place in which Aristotle would carry out the project of enquiry into the dialectical notions, Asclepius seems to be closer to Alexander than to Syrianus. In the course of his analysis of Γ, 2 he never mentions Δ or Ι, but at the beginning of his commentary on Δ he connects this part of Aristotle's enquiry to Met., Γ, 3 ff. In the second part of Γ Aristotle discusses the most general principles, common to all sciences (in particular, the principle of non-contradiction). Now he turns to the other ‘common properties’ (κοιναὶ ἰδιότητες), which are used by all the particular sciences and shows that,

79 Cf. ibid., 236.31-237.4.
80 Ibid., 241.32-36: ὁμοίως πάλιν ἄλλα ὄντα λέγεται τῷ πάθῃ τῆς οὐσίας εἶναι, καὶ ἄλλα τῷ σχέσεις. ὡς δὲ τὸ ὄν αναδέχεται ἐκάστον αὐτῶν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὰν ὑπὸ τὸ ἐν ἐκάστον. δείξας δὲ πᾶς ἄφωνος ἐστὶ καὶ πρὸς ἐν τούτῳ λεγόμενα, ἐπιθέρει τὸ τῆς αὐτῆς εἶναι ἐπιστήμης περὶ τε τούτον ἀπὸ τῆς οὐσίας τὸ εἶναι ἔχει καὶ περὶ τῆς οὐσίας ἔχειν ἐπιστήμην.
81 Ibid., 303.1-5.
although they are spoken of in many different ways, they are all said with reference to one. These are the notion of principle (ἀρχή), cause (αἰτία), element (στοιχεῖον), nature (φύσις). That these notions are regarded as a homogeneous group, in consideration of the role they have in the structure of all sciences, is made clear by the observations by which they are respectively introduced and linked together. However, the following chapters on the meanings of ‘one’, ‘substance’, ‘being’, ‘the same’, etc. are not explicitly set in the frame of a determinate project. Each πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον is introduced by means of formulary expressions (‘having accomplished the discussion about... he then talks about...’) marking the move from one entry to the other. Taking this into account, it seems that Asclepius does not fully develop the idea that Met., Δ provides the fulfilment of a precise and comparatively well-structured project such as the one outlined in Met., Γ, 2, but he clearly relies on Alexander’s idea that the notions analysed in Met., Δ are used by all the sciences.

Given that Asclepius’s commentary is constantly influenced also by Syrianus’s commentary, one might then wonder whether Asclepius at all considers Syrianus’s suggestion as to the role of Met., I. We must take into account that Asclepius’s commentary covers the first seven books of the Metaphysics, so we do not know what he could have had to say about the place and role of Met., I itself. However, there are some further elements to consider, which on the one hand confirm Asclepius’s silence on Met., I, but on the other hand introduce some interesting new textual references.

In fact, in the passages in which he spells out (2b), Asclepius qualifies the per se accidents of the properties extending to all beings and on these occasions he mentions a series of aspects which cannot be found in Aristotle’s text, at least not in the passage he is commenting upon. Some of the examples can be traced back to Aristotle himself or to other commentators, but others seem to be original to Asclepius (or Ammonius).

The first of these passages is 144.18-19, where Asclepius introduces two examples of per se accidents of the dialectical notions. The first example is Aristotle’s: whether each contrary has only one contrary. The second example, though, cannot be found in Aristotle’s text: whether it is possible to bring the

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82 Cf. the words introducing the ways in which ‘nature’ is said at 308.15-18: εἰρηκώς περὶ ἀρχῆς καί αἰτίων καί τῶν ἄλλων τῶν εἰρημένων ύπ’ αὐτῶν, ἀτίνα ἐν πάσᾳ ταῖς ἐπιστήμαις θεωροῦνται, ἐντεύθεν λέγει ημῖν καί περὶ ἐτέρων τινῶν, περὶ ἀ πάσαι αἱ ἐπιστήμαι καταγίζονται, καί ταύτα δὲ ὑπάρχουσιν ὡς τὰ αὐτὸν ἕνος καὶ πρὸς ἑν, ὦν περὶ φύσεως.

83 See, for example, ibid., 312.22-23: ἐντεύθεν περὶ τοῦ ἀναγκαίου ἡμῖν διαλέγεται πληρώσας τόν περὶ τῆς φύσεως λόγον [...] or ibid., 313.26: πληρώσας τόν περὶ τοῦ ἀναγκαίου λόγον ἐντεύθεν λέγει περὶ τοῦ ἕνος [...] and similarly for the following chapters. On the recurrence of this location in Asclepius’s commentary see Luna, Trois études cit., p. 106, n. 30; pp. 215-217.
contraries under different genera. Further down (145.3-4) we find another example of a per se accident of contrariety, namely being such as to have intermediates (τὸ ἐμεσον) or being such as to have no intermediate (τὸ ἁμεσον). The same example is in Alexander's commentary. But the most significant passage is the θεωρία on 1003b19 ff. Having said that first philosophy must deal with all the dialectical notions which can be brought under the opposition of one and plurality, Asclepius pursues the enquiry into the contraries and makes it clear that first philosophy must show that to each contrary only one single contrary is opposed (as contrary) (ὅτι ἐν ἕνι ἀντίκειται), that the opposites are said in four different ways (ὅτι διγῶς λέγοντα τὰ ἑναυτα), that some opposites are contraries, namely those which are the most distant from each other (ποιά ἐστιν ἑναυτά, τὰ πλείστων ἄλλων διεστικότα), and that the contraries are said in two different ways (ὅτι διχῶς λέγοντα τὰ ἑναυτα), namely as participating and as participated contraries respectively (τὰ μὲν ως μετέχοντα, τὰ δὲ ως μετεχόμενα). For this last distinction Asclepius refers to Plato, Phaed., 103b.

The interesting fact is that the aspects mentioned by Asclepius as concerning the enquiry on the contraries and their accidents per se are actually tackled by Aristotle in Met., I as well. The definitions and the features of the contraries are dealt with in 1, 4; the intermediates of contraries are defined in 1, 7; the relation of contraries with reference to a common genus is considered in 1, 8; and a distinction between two kinds of contraries (the contrary differences and the contrary species to which contrary differences give rise) is considered in 1, 7. However, Asclepius never mentions Met., I. Rather, he prefers to emphasize the connections of the enquiry into the dialectical notions and their per se accidents with Aristotle's treatment of the oppositions and of contrariety in the logical writings, in particular in the Categories and the De Interpretatione. In the Categories, which is regarded as a genuine piece of first philosophy, Aristotle

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84 In particular, Asclepius discusses Aristotle's statement that the contraries either belong to different species of the same genus or to opposite (contrary) genera. The latter case is exemplified by virtue and vice, which belong to the genus good and to the genus bad respectively. Cf. ARIST., Cat., 11, 14a22-25. In contrast to Aristotle's statement in Cat., 11, 14a23-25 Asclepius says that good and bad in their turn belong to the same genus, namely quality.

85 On the articulation of the commentary in θεωρία and λεξικας see LUNA, Trois études cit., pp. 103-106.

86 ASCL., In met., 233.5 ff.

87 ASCL., In met., 234.16-24; the same list can be found ibid., 242.11-15, with the addition of Aristotle's example that it is the duty of the philosopher to investigate whether Socrates and sitting Socrates are the same.

88 Cf. ASCL., In met., 235.28-29: [...] τῆς πρώτης φιλοσοφίας ἢ εἰς τὰ γένη τοῦ ὄντος διαίρεσις, ἢ πεποίηκεν αὐτὸ ἐν ταῖς Κατηγορίαις; 239.31: διὸ καὶ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης ὁ πρῶτος φιλόσοφος εἶπεν ἐν Κατηγορίαις [...] In his consideration of the Categories as a writing of first philosophy Asclepius is probably influenced by Alexander, who claims (ALEX., In met., 245.33-35) that the division of being into genera presented in the Categories pertains to first philosophy.
allegedly carries out significant parts of the enquiry into being qua being in his full extension to all beings, by dividing the genera of being (235.27-29) and also by giving an account of equal and unequal, similar and dissimilar, the same and other (239.31-34). Furthermore, and problematically, Asclepius refers to the account of the opposites in De Int., 14 (144.21-22 and 242.12-13). I shall go back to the reference to the Categories and De interpretatione in part III.3.

To conclude the survey of textual references in connection with the enquiry into the per se accidents of being qua being it is important to underline that, in line with Alexander, Asclepius refers to the Selection of the contraries in connection with the second book περὶ ἀγαθῶν (247.11-14, 18-19) as the place in which Aristotle supposedly carries out the reduction of the contraries under the assumption that the contraries are the elements and principles of being and substance.

II. 4 AVERROES

Having examined three Greek commentaries I shall now turn to Averroes. Averroes writes after Avicenna's explicit attempt to improve Aristotle's account of the science of being qua being as a demonstrative science. He is very clear on the fact that the demonstrative structure must shape the enquiry into the per se accidents of substance and of being, but unfortunately he does not fully explain what the relation between per se accidents of substance, per se accidents of being and dialectical notions is. In addition, he seems to resort to Alexander's considerations on the place and function of Met., ∆, but on this point he fails to draw some clarificatory distinctions which would be needed in order to fully appreciate his views. I shall address these points one by one.

Averroes does not address the discrepancy between the presentations of the fifth aporia in B, 1 and B, 2, but in his comments on B, 1 he makes it quite clear that he regards (1), (2a) and (2b) as questions to be dealt with together: it is opportune to investigate the dialectical notions in conjunction with the question of whether the same science must deal with substances and with their accidents. He explains that the enquiry into the dialectical notions

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89 On this point cf. also Alex., In met., 245.33-35.
90 Cf. also Ascl., In met., 234.3-6.
91 This reference to the De Interpretatione is problematic, because Asclepius refers to a peculiar reason why every contrary has one and only one contrary. The reason is that it would be unfair if two were opposed to one; Aristotle does not mention any such explanation in the De Interpretatione. I go back to this point in section III.3.
92 Averrois Commentaria et Introductiones in omnes libros Aristotelis cum eorum Versione Latina, vol. VIII, Venetiis apud Juncitas 1562-1574 (Frankfurt am Main 1962), f. 39raBC-bD.
93 Ibid., 39raB : « Et cum hoc oportet nos perscrutari de eodem et de diverso... ».
coincides with the enquiry de consequentibus essentialibus, quae appropriantur enti in \(\in\) quod est ens. This locution seems to indicate the properties which follow per se any being qua being. For instance, Averroes says, any being compared to any other being (omne enim ens, quando fuerit comparatum ad aliud) is either the same as or different from, either similar to or dissimilar from it. The fact that both the dialectician (disputator or logicus) and the philosopher deal with these very same notions is explained on the grounds that both of them deal with being as such (de ente simpliciter). With reference to (2b) Averroes mainly focuses on the enquiry into the contraries and, in this perspective, he outlines a clear project of research articulated into three steps. First, we must see what each of these things is (quid est unumquodque eorum); Second, we must consider what their proper accidents\(^{94}\) are (quae sunt accidentia propria eis); Third we must see which things are contrary to them and which are not (de illis quae sunt contraria eis aut non contraria). It is only through these three steps that a complete investigation on these notions can be carried out. This process is effectively labelled by Averroes as per cognitionem trium, scilicet priorum et posteriorum et oppositorum, where the cognition of what is prior is cognition of what things are, the cognition of what is posterior is cognition of per se accidents, and the cognition of the opposites is cognition of what is opposed as contrary or in any other way to the notions concerning which we already know what they are and what their per se accidents are.

The same threefold partition is found in the comments on \(\Gamma, 2\), where Averroes explains that all the notions falling under the opposition of one and many (i.e. the dialectical notions) must be enquired into by the science of being qua being because «it is the duty of one single science to investigate all these forms and their exclusive properties and the things that follow from them» (unius scientiae est consideratio de omnibus istis formis et de propris eis et consequentibus ipsas). In particular, with reference to the third aspect Averroes mentions the contraries, which are characterized as ‘following being qua being’ (omnia enim contraria sunt consequentia ens, secundum quod est ens)\(^{95}\). More generally, it is quite clear that he identifies the dialectical notions with the accidents of being\(^{96}\) and that he identifies the per se accidents of substance with the ‘essential accidents of being’ (accidentia essentialia enti)\(^{97}\). The gaps between the three notions of per se accidents of substance, dialectical notions and per se accidents of being are not completely spelled out. However, it is likely that Averroes sees the relation between per

\(^{94}\) See n. 00, p. 00.
\(^{95}\) AVER., Comm., 67val.
\(^{96}\) Ibid., 70raD-bH.
\(^{97}\) Ibid., 71vbM.
se accidents of substance and per se accidents of being along the lines of Alexander’s commentary. In fact, on more than one occasion Averroes emphasizes the priority of substance over all other beings with reference to the different ways in which general predicates are said. This can be seen for instance from the ways in which he describes the πολλαχῶς λεγόμενα in Μετ., Δ (see below). I shall consider another very clear example of this general attitude in section III.4.

As for textual references, in the course of his discussion of dialectical notions Averroes mentions a treatise about «the one and the many and the other contraries» as the place in which Aristotle spells out the opposition of one and plurality. It is plausible that he is referring to Μετ., I — to which he probably also refers in a previous passage where he mentions the treatise in which Aristotle says that the one which is the principle of number is the thing which is called ‘one’ primarily. The reference here is quite misleading, though, because Averroes refers to the ‘ninth treatise’ (in nono tractatu), while Iota is (also in Averroes’s commentary) the tenth. But apart from this, it is quite clear that for Averroes (as for Alexander) the treatise in which Aristotle deals with the dialectical notions and completes the discussion outlined in Γ, 2 is Μετ., Δ. He describes Δ as the treatise in which Aristotle considers the intentiones omnium nominum, de quibus considerat ista scientia, each of which must be analysed according to the different ways in which it is said in the different categories with respect to the ways in which it is said with reference to substance. It is not very clear whether Averroes realizes that the characterization he gives here of what Δ accomplishes is not — at least not obviously — equivalent to what he seems to take as two comparatively clear facts, namely that Δ deals with the dialectical notions and that dialectical notions are apparently considered by him as the accidents per se of being and substance. However, it is one thing to say that Δ deals with the ways in which words are said insofar as they are significant for the science of being (among such words we can reckon ‘principle’, ‘cause’, ‘nature’ etc.); and it is another thing to say that Δ deals with the accidents of being and carries out the project of enquiry outlined in Μετ., Γ, 2. Somehow Averroes seems to conflate the two aspects given by Alexander as reasons why the science of being qua being is concerned with dialectical notions (namely: because it uses them and because they are per se accidents of being qua being). Although both aspects may be true, it is not obvious that they are two sides of one and the same coin.

98 Ibid., 69raB: « Modus autem secundum quem unum et multum sunt opposita declarabitus in tractatu in quo loquitur de uno et multo et de aliis contrariis ».
99 Ibid., 67raD.
100 Ibid., 69rbEF.
Finally, I should like to present Aquinas's views on (Ross's) fifth aporia and the connected problems, both because of their intrinsic significance as an interpretation of Aristotle's text and because of their persisting influence on some modern interpreters of Aristotle's thought.

Although Aquinas does not linger on the fact that not all the points of the fifth aporia of B, 1 are discussed in B, 2, he pays attention to all of them and there are reasons to say that he does not conflate them, although he stresses significant connections between (1) and (2).

The fifth aporia is presented as the aporia about whether the science at issue must deal, in general, with accidents (utrum consideratio huius scientiae de accidentibus sit). Under this main heading Aquinas distinguishes three questions, which correspond to (1), (2a) and (2b) above. Terminology is relevant: Aquinas says that (1) is a question about substance and per se accidents of substances (ea quae per se substantiis accidunt); (2a) and (2b) concern notions « which seem to be per se accidents of being i.e. which seem to follow all beings » (quae videntur esse per se accidentia entis, et consequi omnia entia) and things which follow per seupon 'common accidents of being' (communia accidentia entis). According to Aquinas the problem in (2a) is mainly to establish the kind of knowledge which deals with such notions: it would seem that they must be considered by first philosophy, precisely because they seem to be per se accidents of being qua being; but, as a matter of fact, they are dealt with by dialectic, which is different from first philosophy.

As I mentioned, Aquinas does not comment explicitly on the fact that in B, 2 Aristotle expounds only the first part of the aporia about the accidents. However, towards the end of the passage concerning substance and per se accidents of substances, Aquinas in a way prepares Aristotle's solution to all three questions by shifting from the consideration of substantia and communia accidentia substantiae to the consideration of substantia et ente and de per se accidentibus substantiae et entis. The shift in vocabulary from 'substance' to 'substance and being' is not explained.

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104 Ibid., L. III, I. vi, p. 112, § 402 (cf. § 398).
In the commentary on Γ 2 Aquinas specifies the aporiai that Aristotle is going to solve in it. He distinguishes three of them: first, the question whether the science at issue must consider at the same time both substance and accidents (de substantiis et accidentibus simul); second, whether it must consider the dialectical notions (de omnibus istis, quae sunt unum et multa, idem et diversum, oppositum, contrarium et huiusmodi); third, whether it must also consider the principles of demonstration. The first and the second point correspond to (1) and (2) above. The distinction between the two points is preserved in the course of the commentary, even when Aquinas recalls that they were part of the same aporia. As for the first point, Aquinas claims that the science of being qua being must deal not only with substance, but also with accidents, because it must deal with being qua being and both substances and accidents are beings. However, the science of being qua being deals primarily with substance, because all other beings are with reference to substance, which is their subject. The relevant aspect in this account of (1) is that, according to Aquinas, the accidents of substance are the accidental categories, which are all beings.

As for (2), Aquinas's explanation of why the science of being qua being must consider the 'common notions' implicitly explains also why (1) and (2) are strictly connected to each other. Following Aristotle's text Aquinas says that the common notions (i.e. the dialectical notions) are 'parts' of the one which is the same in subject as being. This means that (according to Aquinas) 'one' and 'being' designate the same nature in different ways and that, therefore, what is true of what is designated by 'one' is also true of what is designated by 'being'. Among the features shared by 'one' and 'being', Aquinas believes that both 'one' and 'being' are primarily said of substance. However, the priority of substance is not particularly stressed in the passages in which Aquinas explains why the philosopher is concerned with dialectical notions. Rather, in commenting on Aristotle's solutions to the fifth aporia, Aquinas focuses mainly on the generality of being qua being and it is with this generality in view that he explains why the

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105 Cf. ibid., L. IV, l. iii, p. 158, § 569: « inducit conclusionem ex omnibus praecedentibus; scilicet quod huius scientiae est ratiocinari de his communibus et de substantia: et hoc fuit unum quaeitum inter quaestiones in tertio disputatas ».

106 Aquinas follows Averroes in explaining the unity πρὸς τὸν of being as a unity 'with respect to a subject' (ad subiectum) and not with respect to an end (ad finem, as 'wholesome' is said with respect to health, which is an end) nor with respect to an agent (ad pricicipium efficiens, as 'medical' is said with respect to the doctor who has medical science). See ibid., L. IV, l. i, pp. 151-2, §§ 536-539.

107 See ibid., L. IV, l. ii, p. 156, § 563: « ... partes substantiae, de qua dicitur principaliter ens et unum et de qua principalis est huius scientiae consideratio et intentio ». 
science of being must deal not only with substances, but also with accidents and with the common notions. The latter are constantly referred to as the accidents of being qua being\textsuperscript{108} (and not of substance). Per se accidents of being qua being are common to all beings, namely to substances and accidents. It is possible that Aquinas thinks that, given the priority of substance over accidents, the accidents of being qua being are primarily said of substance and only derivatively of accidental categories. Nevertheless, the characteristic feature of Aquinas’s interpretation is that he seems to draw a clear distinction between the accidents of substance, which are the accidental categories, and the per se accidents of being, which are common to all beings.

As for the place in which Aristotle would carry out the project of enquiry into the dialectical notions, Aquinas connects Met., Δ with the remarks in Γ, 2 on the communia which are spoken of in different ways\textsuperscript{109}: Met., Δ distinguishes the meanings of those words which indicate aspects ‘common to all beings’. In virtue of this characterization, the investigation of the ways in which these words are said pertains to the science of being qua being. However, Aquinas qualifies this claim and specifies that not all chapters of Met., Δ are concerned with per se accidents of being. He divides the book into three parts, dealing respectively with terms indicating the causes enquired by the science of being (Met., Δ, 1-5), with terms indicating the subject (or parts of it) of the science of being (6-15) and with the properties or the causes enquired into by the science of being qua being (16-30)\textsuperscript{110}. In this framework,

\textsuperscript{108} Or with expressions which seem to be equivalent in Aquinas’ exposition: « primas passionis entis, per se accidentia entis et unius secundum quod huiusmodi, et ens inquantum ens habet quaedam propria, quae sunt communia praedita » (L. IV, l. IV, p. 160, § 571); « communia accidentia entis » (L. IV, l. VII, p. 169, § 574), cf. also L. IV, l. IV, p. 162, § 587.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., L. V, l. I, p. 208, § 749: « Et quia ea quae in hac scientia considerantur, sunt omnibus communia, nec dicuntur univoce, sed secundum prius et posterius de diversis, ut in quarto libro est habitum; ideo prius distinguunt intentiones nominum, quae in huius scientiae consideratione cadunt [...] ».

the chapters on the opposite dialectical notions, reducible to the opposition of one and plurality, belong to the second group, including terms which designate the subject of the science of being. In particular ch. 6 (on the one) and 7 (on being) deal with the subject of the science of being in its generality, whereas ch. 8 (on substance) deals with the primary subject of the science of being; on the other hand, ch. 9-15 (on the same, other, similar, dissimilar, contrary, opposite, prior and posterior, potency, quantity, quality, relation) deal with terms designating ‘parts’ of the subject of the science of being.

Given that Aquinas connects Met., Δ with the project outlined in Met., Γ, 2, it is interesting to see how he refers to Met., I in the course of the commentary. I shall return to Aquinas's commentary on Met., I in Part III.4, but I should like to anticipate some considerations here. In the first lectio on Met., Δ, Met., I 111 is referred to three times, each time as a book on the contraries (and never, for example, as the book on the one and on the convertibility of one and being113). The first of these three passages is particularly significant. Aquinas is commenting on Aristotle's mention of his reduction of the contraries in the Selection of the contraries and (in the passage in which Alexander and Asclepius refer to the second book περί ἀγαθοῦ) he glosses:

« Et hoc addit, quia in quibusdam non est ita manifestum. Et tamen hoc esse necesse est; quia cum in omnibus contrariis alterum habeat privationem inclusam, oportet fieri reductionem ad privativa prima, inter quae praecipue est unum. Et iterum multitudo, quae ex uno causatur, causa est diversitatis differentiae et contrarietatis, ut infra dicetur. Et haec dicit esse considerata “in ecloga”, idest in electione “contrariorum”, idest in tractatu, quae est pars electa ad tractandum de contrariis, scilicet in decimo huius ».


112 Ibid., L. IV, l. ii, p. 156, § 562; L. IV, l. iii, pp. 157-158, § 565; L. IV, l. iii, p. 158, § 567.

113 In the commentary to Met., I Aquinas refers back to Met., Δ by saying that Met., I belongs to the Metaphysics as a book about the subject genus and the parts of the subject genus of the science of being. However, for the reasons I shall try to explain in part III, it seems to me that, in terms of contents, the doctrinal relevance of Met., I is determined also for Aquinas by the analysis of the oppositions and, in particular, of the contraries there proposed. This is somewhat in contrast with the tendency of the modern interpreters following Aquinas on other points: Both Owens, The doctrine of being cit., pp. 316-317 and Reale, Il concetto di “filosofia prima” cit., pp. 209-214 seem to attach particular relevance to first three chapters of the book, which include clearer references to the enquiry into being and substance of the previous books.
The passage is significant because it seems to make explicit an assumption which is likely to be at work implicitly in the commentaries of Syrianus and Asclepius: the treatise on The selection of the contraries, the second book De bono and Met., I come to be regarded as all dealing with exactly the same topic, i.e. the reduction of particular pairs of contraries under the main contrariety of one and plurality, which are opposed to each other as possession and privation. I shall make this suggestion more precise in the course of Part III.

To conclude, I should like to stress that Aquinas’s interpretation of Met., I must be read against the background of his opening remarks to the whole commentary: in the prologue Aquinas explains that the science at issue is called metaphysics (metaphysica) « in quantum considerat ens et ea quae consequuntur ipsum. Haec enim transphysica inveniuntur in via resolutionis, sicut magis communia post minus communia ». Metaphysical notions concern the whole being and are more general than physical notions, which are confined to the department of being characterized by motion. In this sense they are found out through analysis after or beyond the domain of physics. To these remarks Aquinas adds that the most universal objects of the science at issue are « ens et ea quae consequuntur ens, ut unum et multa, potential et actus ». This final remark is very interesting, because it makes of Iota (which is concerned with the one and the many) an eminently ‘metaphysical’ book.

PART III

A network of textual references and the place of Met., I

From the presentation of the exegetical work of the commentators it should be clear by now that there is no uncontroversial answer to the questions as to where Aristotle actually carries out the enquiry into the per se accidents of being and of substance, whether per se accidents of being are the same as per se accidents of substance, in what relation per se accidents of being or of substance stand to dialectical notions. However, an interesting network of textual references emerges in the discussion on these topics. In addition to Met., A and I, explicitly acknowledged by Alexander and Syrianus respectively as the place in which Aristotle carries out the enquiry corresponding to the fifth aporia, some other texts are mentioned: the Selection of the

114 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
115 This feature of Met., I could be connected with Aquinas distinction of the level of real being and the level of mental being. The first is the object of metaphysics, whereas the second is the object of logic. Perhaps Met., I could also be read as a book concerned with intentiones secundae. I am grateful to Gabriele Galluzzo for this suggestion.
contraries and the writing περὶ ἀγαθοῦ; the Categories and the De interpretatione, ch. 14. The interconnections of these writings must be spelled out in order to be significant, but we can already say that, with some qualification, they all provide (or were supposed to provide) some comparatively systematic account of Aristotle’s doctrines on the opposites and, in particular, on the contraries. In Met., Γ, 2 the enquiry into the contraries is placed by Aristotle in the framework of the science of being and this is the aspect on which I shall primarily focus. With reference to all these texts I shall show what their thematic and programmatic affinities and discrepancies are — as far as we can tell from what we have — and how this analysis can be of help in the attempt to answer the question of where Aristotle carries out the enquiry into the per se accidents of being and substance. In order to give a full answer to this question we should take into account philological and chronological issues about the relative dating of Aristotle’s writings, which is not my intention here. Rather, I shall confine myself to an account of the contents of these writings. Furthermore, for Met., Δ, Met., Ι and Cat., 10-15, I shall compare their structure with the guidelines of the enquiry sketched in Met., Γ, 2 as I have outlined them at the end of Part I.

III. 1 Met., Δ

I shall begin with Met., Δ. As we have seen, Alexander reads Δ as the place in which Aristotle carries out the enquiry into the dialectical notions, which are used by all sciences and extend to all beings. Different commentators take over different aspects of Alexander’s interpretation, not always clarifying how they hold together. As I mentioned, Alexander’s defence of the authenticity of Δ on the ground of its contents is based precisely on the correspondence with the fifth aporia. In this section I should like to discuss the credentials of Met., Δ for being regarded as the place in which Aristotle presents his positive account of the dialectical notions hinted at in the first presentation of the fifth aporia in Β, 1. I shall not deal with the whole book, but I shall confine my attention to the chapters in which Aristotle deals with the notions mentioned in Γ, 2. By doing this I do not imply that the very fact that in Met., Δ Aristotle considers other notions in addition to those mentioned in Met., Γ, 2 speaks against the identification of Met., Δ as the place in which Aristotle carries out the enquiry there outlined. In fact, it is Aristotle himself who, at the very end of Γ, 2, leaves room for an enlargement of the group of the relevant notions (see 1005a18: «and other things of this kind»)\(^\text{116}\). By focusing on the chapters

\(^{116}\text{See p. 161.}\)
concerning the notions explicitly mentioned in Γ, I merely intend to remain on 'safe' ground, in the sense that at least for these notions we can be sure that Aristotle meant to include them in the project.

In fact, the problem of the precise extension of the enquiry and of the determination of the notions it covers is not confined to Met., Δ. From the point of view of the extension of the analysis, Δ actually has the advantage of including chapters on all the notions mentioned in the course of Γ, whereas other texts, such as Met., I and Cat., 10 ff., concern only some of them (in particular, Met., I does not deal with prior, posterior and part, and it deals only partially with the notions of genus and species — only in connection with contrariety and difference in species; Cat., 10 ff. does not deal with part, whole, completeness, genus and species).

From the point of view of the structure of Δ as a whole, there are two main controversial questions which have been variously addressed by different interpreters. The first general question is whether there is any underlying systematic structure to the composition and disposition of Δ. The view that Δ is a sort of philosophical lexicon, not responding to any particular unifying plan, is comparatively widespread, but there are tenacious attempts to see Δ as a well-structured whole. The second question is whether there is any common theoretical aspect across the single chapters. In particular, one might wonder whether all chapters display a pro;~ legovmena structure of the different ways in which each analysed term is spoken of and, if so, what exactly this structure amounts to.

As I said, my aim here is not to provide a complete reading of the book as a whole and therefore I shall not address these two general questions, for which I refer to the corresponding literature. Rather, I intend to focus on the possible correspondences between Met., Δ and the precise terms in which the project is outlined in Γ, 2. As we have seen in Part I, in Γ, 2 Aristotle sketches a comparatively systematic structure according to which the dialectical notions are linked together: (i) For each pair of opposite notions, one notion can be ordered under the main heading 'the one', the other under the main

117 In Met., Δ, ch. 6 concerns the ways in which 'the one' is said, ch. 7 'being', ch. 9 'the same', 'other', 'different', ch. 10 the opposites, ch. 11 'prior' and 'posterior', ch. 16 'complete' (or 'perfect'), ch. 25 'part', ch. 26 'whole', ch. 28 'genus'.


119 For references to neo-scholastic interpretations, following Aquinas's reading of Met., Δ, cf. n. 101.

120 For two recent alternative accounts of the πολλαχως λεγομενα see C. Shields, Order in Multiplicity: Homonymy in the Philosophy of Aristotle, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1998; Halper, One and many cit. Alpha-Delta, p. 53 ff.
heading ‘plurality’. (ii) The two main headings (one and plurality) are opposed to each other as possession and privation. (iii) All these notions are said in many different ways. The multivocity of the other dialectical notions is somehow connected with the fact that one and plurality are said in many ways, which must be ordered with respect to a primary way in which each notion is said. Of (i)-(iii), (i) and (ii) seem to me to be basically absent in Δ. Nowhere in the chapters concerning the one (6), same, other, different, similar and dissimilar (9), and the opposites (10) does Aristotle resort to the ‘reduction’ of the contraries to the primary contrariety of one and plurality, which are opposed as possession and privation.

With reference to (iii), I distinguished two aspects of Aristotle’s presentation of his project, namely (M) the dependence of the multivocity of some dialectical notions on the multivocity of other dialectical notions, and (C) the formulation of the different ways in which each of these notions is said in terms of different categorial determinations. Bearing these two aspects in mind, we can see that there are some passages in the chapters of Μετ., Δ dealing with the notions mentioned in Μετ., Γ, 2\textsuperscript{121} which are indeed very close to Aristotle’s formulation in the passage above. These passages are not many and one might wonder whether the intention they express can be extended to the other chapters of Μετ., Δ. Be that as it may, we can divide the relevant texts into two subgroups, depending on whether they emphasize aspect (M) or (C) above.

As for (M), three passages can be mentioned.

1) The first is Μετ., Δ, 9, 1018a5-9, in which Aristotle makes explicit the dependence of the ways in which the same is said with the ways in which the one is said:

\[ \ldots \] τά δὲ καθ' αὐτά ὀσαχύσσεται καὶ τὸ ἐν· καὶ γάρ ὅν ἡ ὑλὴ μία ἡ εἰδεὶ ἡ ἀρίθμη ταύτα λέγεται καὶ ὅν ἡ υἱαία μία, ὡστε φανερὸν ὃτι ἡ ταυτότης ἐνότης τῆς ἑστιν ἡ πλείονον τοῦ εἶναι ἢ ὅταν χρήται ὡς πλείοσιν, οἷον ὅταν λέγη αὐτὸ αὐτῷ ταύτων· ὡς δυσί γὰρ χρὴται αὐτῷ.

2) The second passage is Δ, 10, 1018a35-38, which sounds like the conclusion of chapters 9-10, where Aristotle has distinguished the ways in which the same, the other, the similar, the dissimilar and the opposites are said. The multivocity of the other notions is connected with the multivocity of one and being. The passage is significant not only for the theoretical structure there emphasized, but also from the point of view of the vocabulary: we again find the reference to the different ways in which the multivocal terms are said according to each category (cf. (C) above):

\textsuperscript{121} Text quoted on p. 163.
3) The third passage seems to me less close to the formulation in \( \Gamma \), 2, but it is significant nonetheless because it refers to a similar theoretical structure: the dependence of the multivocity of some terms on the multivocity of other terms. The passage is \( \Delta \), 11, 1019a4-11, in which Aristotle distinguishes the ways in which the prior and the posterior are said. These are two of the notions added to the list of per se accidents of being qua being at the end of Met., \( \Gamma \), 2. Aristotle connects the ways in which the prior is said with the ways in which being is said:

\[
\text{épeì de tò én kai tò ón pollaìchòs légetai, ákoloutheìn ánàgkh kai tálìa ósa kata tаúta légetai, óste kai tò taútòn kai tò èteron kai tò ènanthi'ón, óst' eìnai èteron kath' é kásthìn katègorìan.}
\]

Although these passages could be regarded as nothing more than episodic remarks, it is significant that they are included precisely in the chapters dealing with the notions mentioned in \( \Gamma \), 2, for they could be important for identifying a selection of chapters more or less closely connected with Met., \( \Gamma \), 2.

To these three passages, we can add other two, which emphasize the link of the same chapters in \( \Delta \) with aspect (C) above. In particular:

4) In \( \Delta \), 6, 1016b6-9 Aristotle expresses the dependence of the ways in which things are derivatively said to be one from the primary ways of being one in these terms: tа mèn óun pлеìsta èn légetai tò èteron ti ì poisèin ì ëxein ì pásçhein ì próç ti eìnai èn, tа dè pròtòs leìgmèna èn òn ì òúsìa múì, múì dè ì suneçheia ì eì déì ì lóghì. As in the passage from Met., \( \Gamma \), 2 Aristotle expresses the secondary ways in which things are said to be one in terms of different categorial determinations.

5) A similar formulation can be found in Met., \( \Delta \), 10, 1018a31-35, with reference to the derivative ways in which items are said to be contrary:

\[
\text{tà d' állla ènanthìa légetai tà mèn tiò tà toisùta ëxein, tà dè tà dèktìkà ëinai tòn toisùtòn, tà dè tà pòïtìkà tà pàðhtìkà ëinai tòn toisùtòn, ì poiònta ì pàschonta, ì ápobolai ì lìgeisì, ì ëxeisì ì steìrèseis ëinai tòn toisùtòn.}
\]

As I said, it is difficult to draw any general conclusion about the whole of book \( \Delta \) from these passages. What seems relevant to me is that these passages
are all included in the chapters concerning the notions mentioned in \( \Gamma, 2 \), and this could speak in favour of a group of chapters relating to that project more closely than others\(^{122}\).

**III. 2 The references to the Selection of the contraries and the \( \pi\epsilon\rho\eta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omega\nu \)**

I shall now consider the references to the second book \( \pi\epsilon\rho\eta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omega\nu \) and to the Selection of the contraries. Both treatises are lost. However, the Selection of the contraries is mentioned by Aristotle himself in \( \text{Met.}, \Gamma, 2 \) 1003b33-1004 a2 and \( \text{I, 3}, 1054a29-32\)\(^{123}\), whereas the \( \pi\epsilon\rho\eta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omega\nu \) is mentioned by Alexander and, henceforth, by Asclepius\(^{124}\). The \( \pi\epsilon\rho\eta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omega\nu \) was supposed to be Aristotle’s written report of Plato’s controversial\(^{125}\) lecture on the Good. Therefore, this writing was intended more to portray Plato’s doctrines than Aristotle’s and I shall not deal with it in all respects. The only point I should like to focus on is Alexander’s joint mention of the second book of the \( \pi\epsilon\rho\eta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omega\nu \) and of the Selection of the contraries in his commentary on \( \text{Met.}, \Gamma, 2 \). Alexander\(^{126}\) comments on Aristotle’s reference to the reduction of all contraries to the one and the plurality (\( \tau\omicron \ \tau\epsilon\ \epsilon\omicron \ \kappa\omicron \ \tau\omicron \ \pi\lambda\nu\theta\omicron\omicron \)) as it has been carried out in the Selection of the contraries, and glosses that Aristotle discusses the same selection in the second book \( \pi\epsilon\rho\eta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omega\nu \) (\( \epsilon\iota\rho\rho\epsilon\kappa \ \delta\epsilon\pi\epsilon \ \tau\omicron \ \tau\omicron \ \iota\sigma\iota\alpha\upsilon\tau\upsilon\zeta \ \epsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\gamma\upsilon\eta\zeta \ \kappa\alpha\iota \ \epsilon\nu \ \tau\omicron \ \delta\epsilon\upsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron \ \Pi\epsilon\rho\iota \ \tau\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omicron\omicron \)). From this reference it is not clear whether Alexander wants to say that in the second book \( \pi\epsilon\rho\eta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omega\nu \) Aristotle merely mentions the same treatise on the selection of the contraries or whether he means that in the second book \( \pi\epsilon\rho\eta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omega\nu \) Aristotle provides an account similar to the one provided in the Selection. The doubts are spelled out in a second passage\(^{127}\), in

\(^{122}\) Furthermore, of the five passages I have quoted, it is quite difficult to assess the conclusive significance of passages 4) and 5), because reference to different categorial determinations is quite frequent in Aristotle’s otherwise unrelated accounts of the \( \kappa\omicron\lambda\lambda\omicron\alpha\upsilon\varsigma\ \lambda\epsilon\gamma\omega\mu\epsilon\nu\aig\).

\(^{123}\) There is some controversy as to whether Aristotle is mentioning the same writing in both places: in \( \text{Met.}, \Gamma, 2 \) he speaks of what he has done in the ‘selection’ of contraries (\( \epsilon\nu \ \tau\epsilon\ \epsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\gamma\upsilon\eta\zeta \ \tau\omicron\ \epsilon\nu\ \tau\omicron\ \iota\upsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron \ \tau\omicron\ \iota\sigma\iota\alpha\upsilon\tau\upsilon\zeta \) \( \epsilon\nu\ \tau\omicron\ \iota\sigma\iota\alpha\upsilon\tau\upsilon\zeta \)), whereas in \( \text{Met.}, \text{I, 3} \) he mentions a ‘division’ of contraries (\( \epsilon\nu \ \tau\omicron\ \delta\iota\alpha\iota\rho\omicron\epsilon\sigma\omicron\ \tau\omicron\ \iota\upsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron \ \tau\omicron\ \iota\sigma\iota\alpha\upsilon\tau\upsilon\zeta \)). H. J. \( \text{K}r\acute{\text{a}}\text{m}er, \text{A}rete \text{bei} \text{Plato \ und \ Aristoteles}, \text{Winter}, \text{Heidelberg 1959, pp. 271 ff., 310} \) and Guariglia, Quellenkritische und logische Untersuchungen cit., pp. 44-45 think that these are just to ways of referring to the same treatise, while O. \( \text{G}i\text{gon, Aristotelis Opera. Vol. III : Librorum deperditorum fragmenta}, \text{W. de Gruyter, Berlin 1987, p. 723 ff.} \) is more cautious. In any case, even if the treatises were meant to be two, a significant overlap in contents seems very plausible.

\(^{124}\) \( \text{Ascl.}, \text{In met.}, \text{79.10 ; 237.14 ; 247.18-19.} \)

\(^{125}\) The disappointment of the participants is recorded by Aristoxenus (Harm. II 20.16 - 31.3), who refers to their surprise when, instead of listening to discourses about what is commonly regarded as good by the humans, they were confronted with a lecture about numbers, geometry, astrology and the limit.

\(^{126}\) \( \text{Alex.}, \text{In met.}, \text{250.17-20.} \)

\(^{127}\) \( \text{Ibid., 262.18-26.} \)
which Alexander explains Aristotle’s words at 1004b34-1005a1 «let us assume the reduction» (ειληφθη γαρ η αναγωγη ημιν) by saying: «he refers us again to the things which are shown in the second book περὶ ἁγαθοῦ (ἀναπέμπει πάλιν ἡμᾶς εἰς τὰ ἐν τῷ β Περὶ τάγαθου δεδειγμένα). Apparently, according to Alexander, the second book περὶ ἁγαθοῦ was supposed to include the same materials which were the object of the treatise on the Selection of the contraries. This could explain why ps. Alexander (i.e. Michael of Ephesus), in his commentary on the other passage in Met., I in which Aristotle refers to the ‘division’ of the contraries says straightforwardly that Aristotle is referring to the division which he has accomplished in the περὶ ἁγαθοῦ.\

As for the Selection of the contraries, we have a comparatively clear idea of what Aristotle intended to do in this treatise, although there is some controversy among interpreters over the number and nature of Aristotelian treatises devoted to the contraries and the oppositions. I have already mentioned the controversy over the ‘selection’ and the ‘division’ of the contraries — which I assume to be one and the same treatise. The debate is further complicated by the fact that according to some interpreters Aristotle would have written one or two other treatises On the contraries (περὶ ἔναντιον) and/or On the opposites (περὶ τῶν ἀντικειμένων), the contents of which can partly be inferred from Simplicius’s commentary on Aristotle’s Categories. The details of the controversy are not relevant for the present discussion, because in any case only the Selection of the contraries is mentioned in the commentaries on the Metaphysics I have been dealing with. However, I should like to discuss very briefly one passage from Simplicius’s commentary on the Categories which clarifies the connection of the writings about the contraries and the opposites with a further section of Aristotle’s surviving writings.

128 Ps.-A L., In met., 615.14-17; cf. 642.38-643.3; 695.23-26.
129 P. 193, n. 123.
130 Rose (V. ROSE, Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta, Teubner, Stuttgart 1836) and Ross in their collections of fragments from Aristotle’s lost writings identify the treatise On the contraries with the treatise On the opposites mentioned by Simplicius. The most extensive discussion of the issue is that of G UARIGLIA, Quellenkritische und logische cit.; Guariglia identifies two kinds or two groups of writings on the contraries, the first (to which the Selection or Division of the contraries would belong) providing lists of contraries, ordered according to more or less explicit criteria; the second (to which the writing On the contraries would belong) spelling out an articulated doctrine of contrariety. Guariglia thinks that Selection and Division are the same writing and that On the contraries and On the opposites are the same writings (p. 35 ff.). O. Gigon (Aristotelis opera cit.) says (p. 359) that it is possible that the treatise On the contraries was close in contents to the On the opposites, although we cannot assume that they were one and the same; the same holds for the Division and On the contraries.

Among the testimonia on Aristotle’s writing on the contraries, one is particularly interesting. In his commentary on the Categories, Simplicius\footnote{SIMP.\textsuperscript{132} In cat., 382.7-10.} maintains that Aristotle derives his conclusions concerning the opposites (τὰ περὶ ἀτικειμένων) from a treatise by Archytas\footnote{The treatise to which Simplicius alludes is actually the work of a ps.-Archytas who wrote it in the first centuries of the Roman empire. The treatise of ps.-Archytas On the opposites belongs to a group of texts (mainly known through indirect tradition) probably written between the 1st century BC and the 2nd century CE. These pseudoepigraphic treatises, all ascribed to ancient Pythagorean philosophers, testify to a revival of interest in Pythagorean philosophy, although the precise reasons for this peculiar literary production remains somewhat obscure. Pseudo-Pythagorean treatises are edited by H. THESELEFF, The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period, Åbo Akademi, Åbo 1965. Apart from the aforementioned treatise On the opposites, some other treatises are preserved under the name of Archytas: a treatise on the categories (Περὶ τοῦ καθόλου λόγου, on which see T. A. SZLEZAK, Pseudo-Archytos über die Kategorien -Text zur griechischen Aristotelesexegeze, W. de Gruyter, Berlin 1972 [Peripatoi 4]); some ethical treatises (B. CENTRONE, Pseudopythagorica ethica. I trattati morali di Archita, Metopo, Teage, Eurifamo. Introduzione, edizione, traduzione e commento, Bibliopolis, Napoli 1990); a treatise on the principles (περὶ ἀρχῶν); a treatise on intellect and perception (περὶ νοῦ καὶ αἰσθάνοντος); a treatise on wisdom (περὶ σοφίας) and a treatise on being (περὶ ὄντος). On the spread of Pythagorean philosophy in the Imperial Age see M. BONAZZI, C. LEVY, C. STEEL eds., A Platonic Pythagoras. Platonism and Pythagoreanism in the Imperial Age, Brepols, Turnhout 2007. I am very grateful to Angela Ulacco for her competent and generous help on pseudo-Pythagorean matters.} on the same topic. Simplicius adds that Aristotle did not include the analysis of the opposites in the treatise ‘on the genera’ (ὅσον συνέταξεν τῷ περὶ γένον λόγῳ, scil. Cat., 1-9) but considered it as a part of a separate enquiry (ιδίαις πραγματείαις ἡξίωσεν). Simplicius is commenting on the last section of the Categories, also known to the tradition as the Postpraedicamenta. In this passage Simplicius is one of the participants in a debate on the place (and the authenticity) of Cat., 1-9 whose reasons and origin are quite obscure, and I shall not go through the details. Nevertheless, I shall clarify why the mention of the Categories in connection with (ps.) Archytas and Aristotle’s work on the oppositions is relevant here. We have seen that Asclepius does not follow Syrianus in viewing Met., 1 as the place in which Aristotle carries out the enquiry into the attributes of being qua being, but he often refers to the Categories as a work of first philosophy. The fact that in Simplicius’s commentary the last chapters of the Categories are explicitly linked with Aristotle’s work on the contraries provides a connection between the Categories and the project outlined in Met., Γ, 2, where Aristotle himself refers to his work on the contraries. In addition, by inscribing Aristotle’s work on the opposites in the wake of a Pythagorean author as Archytas, Simplicius is doing for the Categories something similar to what Syrianus does with Iota: they both inscribe Aristotle’s enquiry into the most general predicates
(dialectical notions or per se accidents of being qua being) in the framework of metaphysical doctrines compatible with Neoplatonic metaphysics and, moreover, connect the places in which Aristotle presents such doctrines to Pythagorean and Platonic sources.

III. 3 Categories and De Interpretatione

Apart from the link to Pythagorean metaphysics introduced by Simplicius, Asclepius’s mention of the Categories and the De Interpretatione as sources of information on the development of Aristotle’s account of the per se accidents of substance and of being, of the contraries and of the opposites, requires some comments. In particular, I should like to comment on two points: first, I shall address the question whether the contents of Cat., 10 ff. may or may not be an answer to the kind of problems raised in Met., Γ, 2; second, I shall comment on some of Asclepius’s reports on Aristotle’s De Int., 14 which do not match Aristotle’s text as we have it.

As for the first point, it should be stressed that none of the structural indications of Met., Γ, 2 have a parallel in Cat., 10 ff. What we do find, though, is a reference to the good and the bad as contrary genera (14a19-25). This is important if we consider that, according to the dyadic structure of the systoichiai, one column of terms was always seen as the positive column, in contrast with the negative column, where positive and negative must be taken in both metaphysical or ontological and ethical sense. It is not clear how metaphysically committed Aristotle is in these chapters, but the very fact that he mentions a structure of opposite genera which can be identified with the structure referred to in Met., Γ, 2 certainly leaves room for metaphysically committed readings on the part of metaphysically (in particular: Platonically) minded commentators.

At first sight the metaphysical commitment of Asclepius’s reading is particularly striking in his remarks on the De Interpretatione. In two passages Asclepius comments on the property of the contraries that there is only one contrary for one term by saying that according to the De Interpretatione only one term is contrary to another term because it would be unfair (or unjust) if more than one were opposed to one (144.19-22: φαμέν οὖν ὃ τι ἀδύνατον δύο ἐν έναντία εἶναι· ὥστε γὰρ οὗτος ἀδικός ἐστιν ή φύσις, καθάπερ ἐν τῷ Περὶ ἐρμενείας λέγεται, ὥστε δύο ἐν ἀντιτάξιν, ήνίκα περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ λόγος ἐγίνετο, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἐν έναντίον ἐστι). He adds that he is referring to the passage in which «the discourse comes to bear upon the good» (ήνικα περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ λόγος ἐγίνετο).

134 See p. 181.
The passage is probably De int., 14, 23a40 ff., where Aristotle discusses the opposition of propositions claiming that something is good, something is not good and something is bad. These examples are used through the whole chapter 14. However, nowhere does Aristotle say that it would be unfair if two were contrary to one. Probably the reference can be explained by the fact that Ammonius, in his commentary on De int., 14, explains the goal of Aristotle’s chapter by referring to Syrianus’s interpretation in these terms. In Ammonius’s report, Syrianus appeals to Plato as a witness to the difference between a (contradictory) negative proposition and a contrary proposition to a given affirmative proposition. Syrianus is referring to Soph., 257b, where Plato shows that, although the negative proposition signifies something other than the affirmative proposition, still it does not signify the contrary. With reference to this passage, Ammonius says:

\[\text{καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τὸν τε θειότατον Πλάτωνα μάρτυρα παραφέρων (scil. Syrianus) ἐν τῷ Σοφίστῃ ἀποφαίνεται τὴν ἀπόφασιν ἐπερον μὲν τι τῆς καταφάσεως σημαίνειν, οὐ μὴν ἐναντίον πρὸς αὐτὴν, διότι ἐν μὲν ἐν ἐναντίον (οὐ γὰρ ἀδικοὶ ἡ φύσεις, ὥστε πλείονα ἐνὶ ποιῆσαι πολέμια).}\]

The passage not only explains Asclepius’s remark, but is also interesting for another reason. Ammonius mentions a series of texts, from both Plato’s and Aristotle’s writings, in order to clarify the difference between negation and contrariety. These texts are: Plato, Resp., VI, 491d (« the bad is more contrary to the good than what is not good »); Aristotle, Met., I, 4, 1055a3 ff. (where Aristotle shows that contrariety is the biggest difference); Aristotle, Cat., 10, 12a17 ff. (who is neither good nor bad is intermediate between the good and the bad, which are contraries); Aristotle, Phys., Γ, 5, 205a6 (the contrary comes to be from the contrary, which are distant from each other in the highest degree and are determinate) and Phys., Ε, 5, 229a7 ff. (in change, non-being is not contrary to being). I shall leave aside the references to the Physics. Ammonius’s mention of Met., I, 4 is interesting. Ammonius mentions Met., I three times in total in his commentary on the De interpretatione and all three references are in his commentary on ch. 14. The first is the one already mentioned; the second is at 255.8, where he refers to I, 7, 1057a24; the third is at 263.14-15, where he refers again to Met., I, 4, 1055a6. This fact is

136 Amm., In De int., 253.18-21.
137 Ibid., 253.23.
138 Ibid., 253.29.
139 Ibid., 254.4.
interesting in the first place because it shows that Ammonius follows Syrianus in seeing Met., I as a significant text, in the second place because it shows that Met., I is always referred to in virtue of the analysis of the contraries. Furthermore, Aristotle’s pronouncements on the contraries in the passages mentioned by Ammonius are all inscribed in a precise metaphysical perspective: what is at issue is the metaphysical struggle between a positive and a negative principle which determine the whole structure of being. It goes almost without saying that this aspect is quite far from being unmistakable in Aristotle’s texts. But Met., I seems to be read in this perspective precisely qua a book on the contraries. As we shall see in the next section, the reading of Met., I as a book on the contraries is also a constant among the commentators who do not endorse the further metaphysical perspective adopted by Syrianus, Ammonius and Asclepius.

III. 4 Met., I

I shall now turn to Syrianus’s claim that the enquiry into the dialectical notions — which Syrianus identifies with the per se accidents of being qua being through an explicit argument — must be found in Met., I. I shall divide the discussion into two parts: first, I shall analyse the structure of Met., I along the lines of Met., I, 2 and see whether there is any explicit or at least clear parallelism between the two texts. Secondly, I shall propose some considerations concerning the consequences of Syrianus’s or a Syrianus-like reading of Met., I.

First of all I shall provide a brief summary of the contents of Met., I. In I, 1 Aristotle distinguishes the different ways in which τὸ ἐν is said; in I, 2 he solves the aporia on the nature of τὸ ἐν, by saying that it is not a separate substance but a very general predicate, which — like being — is said in many different ways of all items in all categories. In I, 3 Aristotle spells out the nature of the opposition of τὸ ἐν and τὸ πληθος as contraries (i.e. as indivisible and divisible) of which one is the privative negation of the other. Aristotle refers to the ‘division of the contraries’ and says that the same, the similar and the equal belong to the one, while the other, the dissimilar and the unequal belong to τὸ πληθος; he explains the different ways in which these notions are said, qualifies the difference between ‘other’ and ‘different’, and shows the connection between difference and contrariety. I, 4 distinguishes the different ways in which the contraries are defined and illustrates the definitional link between contrariety and the opposition of possession and privation. I, 5-6 discuss some questions arising from the definition of contrariety given in I, 4 with reference to some peculiar cases of apparent contrariety (the opposition...
of equal, great and small in I, 5, the opposition of one, many and few in I, 6). I, 7 discusses the nature of the intermediates, I, 8 the nature of otherness in species. Since I, 7-8 have established that contrary differences of the same genus give rise to a difference in species, in I, 9 Aristotle discusses the reason why some contraries, which do not belong accidentally to a determinate subject (e.g. as male and female belong to animal), do not give rise to a difference in species. Finally, in I, 10 Aristotle analyses the kind of difference (in genus) which is generated by the contraries corruptible-incorruptible.

From this schematic presentation it should be possible to see how the book may be ideally divided into two parts: Chapters 1 and 2, on the ways in which the one is said, on its nature and relation to being; and Chapters 3-10, on issues concerning the contraries, starting with the opposition of τὸ ἐν and τὸ πληθος and progressively moving from general accounts of determinate notions (contrariety in I, 3, intermediates in I, 7 and otherness in species in I, 8) to the analysis of specific cases (I, 5, 6, 9, 10). This fact has been observed by the commentators, who all divide the book into two parts: the first (chapters 1 and 2) on the one as such, the second (chapters 3-10) on the opposition of one and τὸ πληθος and on the contraries.

An interesting datum is that mentions of Met., I outside Met., I itself for the most part seem to take the second part of the book as the most representative from the doctrinal point of view. I referred to Averroes's and Aquinas's cross-references to Met., I as the book or treatise on the contraries141. In addition, from a superficial overview of the references to Met., I by the Greek commentators, it is striking that 1) apart from Syrianus, the only one who seems to have Met., I in mind is Ammonius, in the commentary on De Int., 14; 2) apart from Syrianus's general assessment of the book as a book on the dialectical notions (which are organized according to opposition and contrariety), all references to doctrinal points are to the second part of the book142.

It is possible that the second part of the book was felt to be more representative because both I, 1 and 2 have important parallels or, better, antecedents in some previous passages. In I, 1 Aristotle distinguishes the ways in which the one is said by explicitly recalling his treatment of the same topic in Met., Δ, 6 (although the parallelism between the two chapters is controversial)143. Furthermore, the arguments which Aristotle uses to show

141 See pp. 183, 187-189.
142 S Y R. In met., 60.18 (reference to I, 6, 1056b32), 167.25 (reference to I, 6), 23.32 and 114.18 (references to I, 10); for Ammonius's references see pp. 197-198.
143 I provide a full account of the analogies and discrepancies between Met., Δ, 6 and I, 1 in L. M. C A S T E L L I, τὸ ἐν δὲ μεταφράζεται πολλαχώς. Questioni aristoteliche sui significati dell’uno, «Antiquorum philosophia», 2, 2008, pp. 189-215; see in particular pp. 204-208.
that the one is not a substance and that it is said of all beings and in as many ways as being is said are anticipated respectively in Met., Z, 16 and Γ, 2. But the analysis of the contraries, in general and in particular, with reference to the special cases (I, 4-10), and of the opposition of τὸ ἔν and τὸ πλῆθος both as contraries, opposed as possession and privation (I, 3) and as relatives (I, 6), is unprecedented in extension and systematic structure.

Additionally, from the point of view of the connection with the aporiai in Met., B, Met., I is somewhat divided: Met., I, 2 refers back to the eleventh aporia, on the nature of one and being, whereas Met., I, 3, which marks the beginning of the second part of the book, can be referred back to what Aristotle says in Γ, 2 in answer to the fifth aporia. In I, 3 Aristotle first illustrates the sense in which τὸ ἔν and τὸ πλῆθος are opposite to each other as contraries, one of which is the privation of the other. Then we find an explicit mention (1054b29-32) of Aristotle's work on the contraries, already mentioned in Γ, 2 1004a2 (and likely referred to in 1004b34-1005a1) and a division of the ways in which τὸ ταύτα (1054a32-b3) and τὸ ὁμοιόν (1054b3-13) are said. All the ways in which τὸ ταύτα is said are explained in terms of unity and all the ways in which τὸ ὁμοιόν is said are explained either in terms of sameness or in terms of unity. As a consequence of the multivocity of the same and the similar, the other and the dissimilar are said in many ways (1054b13-14), which are explained in opposition to the ways in which the same and the similar are said (1054b13-19). This procedure recalls Met., Γ, 2, 1004a17ff., and the guidelines for the analysis of the contraries belonging to the one and of the notions opposite to these: The sought-for science must investigate «the opposites of those we have already mentioned, the other and the dissimilar and the unequal and all the other things which are said either on the basis of these (κατὰ ταῦτα) or on the basis of τὸ πλῆθος and τὸ ἔν».

Among these notions Aristotle mentions contrariety, which is a kind of difference, which is a kind of otherness (1004a20-22). By following the same line of thought Aristotle characterizes, after otherness, difference and contrariety in Met., I, 3, 1054b22 ff. Furthermore, in I, 4 Aristotle explains why there is only one contrary for each contrary (i.e. why contrariety is a dyadic relation) (1055a19-23). This property of contrariety was mentioned in the fifth aporia (2b) in B, 1 as an example of a per se accident of those dialectical notions, which first philosophy must investigate. Finally, Met., I, 4, 1055a33 ff. seems to take over Aristotle's hints in Γ, 2, 1004a10-15 on the characterization of negation.

144 Aristotle provides the main arguments to show that universals in general cannot be substances in Met., Z, 13. In Z, 16, 1040b16-27 he makes the point explicit for the most general universals of all, namely one and being. The treatment of the topic in Met., Z is referred to in I, 2, 1053b16-18. The arguments on the convertibility (or co-extensiveness) of one and being presented in I, 2, 1054a13-19 are similar to those in Γ, 2, 1003b22-33.
and privation, by specifying the relation of the opposition of privation and possession to the oppositions of contrariety and contradiction. In all these respects the presentation of Met., I, 3 ff. (the following chapters developing more specific problems raised by the account in I, 3-4) seems to unfold along the structural lines of the project of Met., Γ, 2.

In developing this account, Aristotle does not ascribe much relevance to the aspect — characteristic of the second argument in Γ, 2 — according to which τὸ πληθὸς and τὸ ἐν would be the first principles of all beings, precisely in so far as all the contraries can be referred back to them. This does not necessarily imply that Aristotle has completely dropped the materials out of which that argument was built. In fact, at the very end of the argument in Γ, 2, Aristotle advanced some cautionary remarks on the nature of the one. The nature of one and being is the object of an independent aporia (the eleventh in Ross’s enumeration of B, 1) which is explicitly tackled in Met., I, 2. Aristotle’s solution to the aporia is that one and being cannot be substances and principles of being. As a consequence, the sense in which τὸ πληθὸς and τὸ ἐν provide the basic contrariety or the primary opposition of possession and privation cannot be explained in terms of ontological derivation of the other contraries from those principles. Rather, as we have seen, Aristotle spells out the ways in which the other notions (in particular: sameness and similarity) can be explained in terms of unity (and, in the case of similarity, of sameness) — and analogously for the opposite notions.

On the basis of these considerations, I think that Syrianus’s reference to Met., I as the place in which Aristotle deals with the second part of the fifth aporia is appropriate. By way of conclusion I should like to add a few remarks on how four medieval commentators have read this book and on the extent to which Syrianus’s interpretation of Met., I was forgotten or retained. The lives of these four commentators span over the XII and XIII centuries and they can be considered in pairs: ps. Alexander or Michael of Ephesus and ps. Philoponus (XII-XIII century) are both Byzantine

145 For the conclusive assessment of ps. Alexander’s identity as Michael of Ephesus see Luna, Trois études cit., Étude I, pp. 1-71.

scholars. Ps. Philoponus regards Michael of Ephesus’s work as his main and closest source; the latter is mentioned by name in the commentary on Met., E, 4 and as ὁ ἐξηγητής in the commentary on Z, 15\textsuperscript{147}. The other two commentators I shall consider are Averroes (1126-1198), the Commentator, and Aquinas (1225-1274). As is well known, Aquinas relies on Averroes’s commentary in many respects and in this final section I should like to stress in particular how the two commentaries relate to each other in their general reading on Met., I. I must defer the details of the commentaries on Met., I till another occasion. For now I confine myself to a few notes on their general approach to the book as a whole.

Michael of Ephesus’s commentary on Met., E-N is preserved after Alexander’s commentary on Met., A-D under Alexander’s name. With respect to Met., I, it is the oldest Greek commentary we have. For unknown reasons, Michael’s commentary on Met., I covers only the first six chapters. Ps. Philoponus, who could read Michael’s commentary, comments on the whole book without reporting any anomaly in his model. Ps. Philoponus’s commentary is very concise and we cannot gather \textit{e silentio} that Michael of Ephesus’s commentary did indeed cover the whole book I, but there does not seem to be any particular reason to believe that the restriction of Michael’s commentary to the first six chapters is the result of a deliberate choice. I shall not deal with the details of Michael of Ephesus’s commentary, but I should like to mention a peculiarity of his reading of Met., I, a peculiarity inherited by ps. Philoponus. In the prologue\textsuperscript{148} to his commentary on Met., I Michael divides the book into two parts, corresponding to I, 1-2 and I, 3 ff. (which is nothing peculiar) and sets Aristotle’s enquiry within a precise philosophical debate (which is something peculiar): since the philosophers who posited the Ideas maintained the existence of the one itself (αὐτοῦν), which is by being just one, Aristotle wrote Met., I in order to explore whether such a thing as the one itself exists or not\textsuperscript{149}. In itself the Pythagorean and Platonic tradition is explicitly addressed by Aristotle himself in Met., I, 2, where he assesses the eleventh aporia on the nature of the one. However, Michael adds a suggestion for the curious reader, by referring those who wish to know more about the conception of the one itself to Plato’s Dialogue entitled Parmenides or On Ideas\textsuperscript{150}. The same reference to Plato’s Parmenides can be found in the first lines of ps. Philoponus’s

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{In the Latin translation the references are respectively on f. 25rb and f. 32rb.}
\footnote{Ps. Al., In met., 602.12-19.}
\footnote{Ibid., 10-12: ἐπειδὴ οὖν τούτην εἶχον περὶ τοῦ ἐνός τὴν ἐννοιαν, ζητήσαι ἐν τῷ παρόντι βιβλίῳ προτίθεται εἰ ἔστι τι τοιοῦτον ἐν ᾗ μη.}
\footnote{Ibid., 8-10: καὶ ὅτε ὁ θάνον πάς τούτα λέγουσι μαθεῖν, ἐνυπαγανεῖ τὸν ἐπιγραφόμενον Παρμενίδην ἢ Περί ἰδεῶν τοῦ Πλάτωνος διάλογον.}
\end{footnotes}
commentary to Met., I, 1151. There are two things to observe here. The first is that Michael’s straightforward identification of the Parmenides with the dialogue in which Plato would present his doctrines on the one itself seems to presuppose some acquaintance with the neo-Platonic interpretation of the dialogue. As it stands, the Parmenides is dramatically not explicit on its precise metaphysical scope. The second thing to observe is that nowhere in Met., I do Aristotle refer to the Parmenides, whether explicitly or through more or less vaguely recognizable hints of whatever sort. How did Michael come to establish the link between Met., I and the Parmenides? Unfortunately, we do not have any earlier commentary on Met., I. Nonetheless, in his discussion of what he reckons as the sixth aporia (the second part of the fifth according to Ross), Syrianus explicitly mentions the Sophist and the Parmenides as the Dialogues in which Plato deals with the dialectical notions mentioned by Aristotle in the sixth aporia, and which, Syrianus adds, Aristotle investigates fully in Met., I153. In this respect, the Byzantine commentaries on Met., I place the book within a precise philosophical tradition, somehow preserving part of Syrianus’s suggestion.

How are things with Averroes and Aquinas? Again, I shall confine myself to a few points which seem to me quite revealing as to the general attitude of the two commentators. It seems to me that, although with different modalities and in some cases with different results, both Averroes and Aquinas make an effort to link as tightly as possible Met., I with Aristotle’s analysis of substance. In particular, both commentators tend to make the priority of substance over

151 Ps.-Phil., In met., f. 40ra « Quoniam ideas ponentes, et ipsumum opinabantur esse, id esse ipsum dicentes naturam ipsius, et in ipsum substantia tum esse, sicut disputatur in Platonico Parmenide, quaerere de ipso proponit in hoc libro ». The division of the book into two parts is perfectly parallel to ps. Alexander’s division in the prologue, which ps. Philoponus takes over almost verbatim.

152 It should be added that Michael does not seem to be an illuminated philosophical mind and his commentaries are often jottings of remarks taken from other writings. The reason for this style of composition is not that he was the worst of plagiarists, but, more likely, that he was constantly under pressure to produce a considerable number of commentaries on different writings of Aristotle in order to make Aristotle intelligible to his noble patrons (on this aspect see LUNA, Trois études cit., pp. 70-71). Therefore it seems to me quite unlikely that he came to regard Met., I as Aristotle’s reply to Plato’s Parmenides all by himself.

153 Syr., In met., 5.27-6.9 : καὶ διὰ τοῦτο Πλάτων ἐν τῷ Σοφίστῃ τά γενέ τοῦ ὄντος διερευνώμενον, οὐ διὰ πάντων φοιτῶν τῶν ὄντων, ταυτότητα καὶ έπερότητα καὶ οὕσιαν καὶ στάσιν καὶ κίνησιν ἀπηριθμήσατο [...] καὶ έτι ἐν τῷ Παρμενίδῃ τά πρῶτα τῶν εἰ δόν ἀπηριθμήσαμεν ὡμοίωσιν μὲν μένη τῶν ἀλλῶν ὡμοίωσιν πρότερον τῶν υποθέσεων <ἐν> τοῖς περὶ τῶν ἰδεῶν σκέμμασι καὶ εν αὐτάις ταῖς υποθέσεις, διὰ μὲν τῆς πρώτης μόνην τὴν τοῦ ἑνός υπερούσου καὶ ἀπλήσθητον ἀγαθότητα τούτων εξείρησον, διὰ δὲ τῆς δευτέρας πάντα τά ὅντα ταύτας διακοσμών ταῖς αἰτίαις. [...] οἴθεν καὶ αὐτός ὁ δαιμόνιος Ἀριστοτελῆς ἐν τῷ Ι ταύτης τῆς πραγματείας περὶ πάντων τούτων ἀναδιάδοσκε καὶ ἐν τούτως λεληθότως κατεσκεύασεν, ὅτι τοῦ σοφοῦ περὶ τούτων ἐπίστασθαι.
all other beings explanatorily significant in their account of Met., I. Aquinas is very explicit on the function and place of Met., I within the enquiry into being and substance; Averroes is less explicit as to the programmatic reading of the book, but is much more explicit in emphasizing the priority of substance in at least one crucial point. I shall begin with this last aspect.

In Met., I, 1052b18-24 Aristotle claims that being one amounts to the same as being the primary measure in each genus and, in the most appropriate way, in the genus of quantity. Therefore, the one which is the principle of number is what is primarily one, by answering to this description literally. Aristotle then devotes I, 2 to showing that there is no substance which is the one and to explaining that in each genus of being what plays the role of the one in that genus must belong to that very genus. In other words, the measure of a certain genus of objects must belong to the same genus as the objects of which it is the measure. After showing this for colours (1053b28 ff.), sounds (1053b32 ff.), geometrical figures (1054a3 ff.) and other genera (1054a4-8), by saying that in each of these cases the essence of what is one in each genus does not consist in being one, Aristotle says that the same holds true for the category of substance (1054a8-9): the essence of what is one with respect to substances does not consist in being one (i.e. there is no substance which is the one). The same point is expressed a few lines later (1054 a11-13): « [...] as in the case of colours the one itself must be investigated as one colour, in the same way also in the case of substance the one itself must be investigated as one substance »154. Aristotle seems to be saying that, as in the case of all other genera of being, so in the case of substance, if we want to count substances, we must choose a unit of measurement which is a substance (and not simply one). It is not completely clear whether Aristotle wishes to push the statement any further than this by explaining the sense in which a substance is a measure, i.e. a principle of knowledge, for other substances. If ‘measure’ just equals ‘principle of knowledge’, any principle of knowledge can be called a measure. Averroes seems to follow this train of thought to the point of identifying the one or the measure in substance with God or the Unmoved mover, which, according to Averroes, is the final, efficient and formal cause of substances155.


155 Aver., Comm., f. 257ra : « Deinde dicit “sed sicut in coloribus etc.” i.e. quod est principium esse substantiarum est principium numeri eorum, quae existunt in substantia. Et intendit quod, cum huic fuerit iunctum quod declaratum est in Physicis, scilicet hoc esse primum motorem aeternum et absolutum ab amni materia, et declaravit post quod hoc non solummodo est principium tanquam motor, sed tanquam forma et finis, declarabitur, quod illud est unum, de quo declaratum fult hoc, quod est principium substantiae : sicut est declaratum, quod est actus ultimus, cui non admiscetur potentia omnino ». 
Averroes’s reading of this passage, much more ontologically committed than Aristotle’s text itself, can be compared with a similar and complementary remark on Met., I, 1 1052a33-34. In this passage Aristotle is explaining what is primarily one in knowledge (τὸ γνῶστῳ καὶ τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ) and says that, in this sense, the cause of unity for substances is primarily one (ὡς ἐν ἀν εἰς τὸ πρῶτον τὸ ταῖς οὐσίαις αἰτίαιν τοῦ ἐνός). Averroes reads this passage to the effect that the cause of unity for substances is the cause of unity for all beings, i.e. the cause of unity for substances is primarily one in general. Finally, Averroes’s attention to the priority of substance can be observed at the beginning of his commentary on I, 2: Aristotle says that, with reference to the one, «it must be enquired how things are with reference to substance and nature», and by this he probably just means that we must establish what the one is, i.e. what the nature of the one is (whether it is a self-subsistent principle or a universal predicate). Averroes gives a paraphrase of Aristotle’s words at the beginning of his commentary in which he seems to emphasize that we must enquire what the one is in the category of substance.

Although we do not have explicit remarks on the overall interpretation of the book as a whole, it seems to me that these remarks reveal at least a tendency, which is the tendency to read the contents of Met., I by emphasizing the priority of substance emerging from Met., Z-Θ and Δ. The same tendency can be seen in Averroes’s reading of the πρὸς ἐν structure of the chapters in Met., Δ. In this respect Averroes takes over Alexander’s remark that the focus of all πρὸς ἐν λεγόμενα is substance.

The tendency to use the priority of substance over other beings and the centrality of the enquiry into substance as the key for understanding the other parts of the Metaphysics and, in our case, Met., I in particular, is quite clear in Aquinas as well. But in contrast to Averroes, in Aquinas this is to be observed more in the analysis of the general structure of the Metaphysics than in specific points. Like all the other commentators, Aquinas divides Met., I into two parts. The most interesting aspect of his approach is his constant attempt to tighten the links between Aristotle’s enquiry on the one and the

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156 Ibid., f. 250va: «cum primum in unoquoque genere est illud quod non dividitur secundum definitionem in illo genere et substantia est primum omnium entium secundum definitionem, manifestum est quod unum primum quod non dividitur secundum definitionem in substantiam, est causa unius in omnibus generibus entium ».

157 Met., I, 2, 1053b9-10.

158 AVER., Comm., 255va: « Et cum sit declaratum quod in unoquoque generum est unum quod est primum in illo genere, perscrutemur de natura unius in substantia, quid sit [...] ».

159 Cf. p. 183.

160 Cf. p. 170.
contraries with the rest of the Metaphysics. Apart from more or less sparse but revealing observations in the commentary on Met., I, which I shall not consider here, Aquinas regards Met., I as the appropriate sequel of the books on substance (Met., Z-H) and on being in potency and actuality (Met., Θ). As he has already explained in Met., Δ, Aquinas takes unum as another way to designate beings and, therefore, as a way of designating the subject of the science of being qua being. To claim this Aquinas relies on Met., Γ, 2, where Aristotle claims that one and being are the same in substratum. In particular, Met., I belongs to the section of the Metaphysics, including books Z-Λ, in which Aristotle deals with being per se, after having discussed accidental being and being as true in Met., E. Aquinas divides books Z-Λ into two sections: Z-K, in which Aristotle discusses being qua being, and Λ, in which Aristotle discusses the first principles of being. Of books Z-K, Z-H and Θ deals with being as it is said according to the categories and as it is said in actuality and potentiality respectively, while I considers « the one and what follows the one ».

Apart from stressing the connection with the enquiry into substance, can we find even a remote hint at Platonic metaphysics strictly speaking? I think the answer is no. References to Plato and Platonic philosophy as such are confined to the places in which Aristotle himself establishes a debate with Platonic doctrines. Even in the discussion on the nature of the one, where

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161 Aquinas, In Met., L. X, l. 1, p. 461, § 1920: « Superius in quarto huius Philosophus ostendit quod ista scientia habet pro subjecto ens, et unum, quod cum ente convertitur. Et ideo, postquam determinavit de ente per accidens et de ente quod significat veritatem propositionis, in sexto ; et de ente per se secundum quod dividitur per decem praeedicamenta, in septimo et octavo ; et secundum quod dividitur per potentiam et actum, in nono : Nunc in hoc decimum intendit determinare de uno, et de his quae consequuntur ad unum : et dividitur in duas partes. In prima determinat de unum secundum se. In secunda per comparationem ad multa, ibi, "opponuntur autem unum et multa" ».

162 Ibid., L. VII, l. 1, p. 315, § 1245: « Postquam Philosophus removit a principali consideratione huius scientiae ens per accidens, et ens secundum quod significat verum, hic incipit determinare de ente per se, quod est extra animam, de quo est principalis consideratio huius scientiae. Dividitur autem pars ista in duas partes. Haec enim scientia et determinat de ente inquantum est ens, et de primis principiis entium, ut in sexto libro est habitum. In prima ergo parte determinatur de ente. In secunda de primis principiis entis, in duodecimo libro, ibi "de substantia quidem etc.”. Quia vero ens et unum se consequuntur, et sub eadem consideratione cadunt, ut in principio quarti est habitum, ideo prima pars dividitur in partes duas. In prima determinat de ente. In secunda de uno et de his quae consequuntur ad unum, in decimo libro, ibi, “Unum quia multis dicitur”. Ens autem per se, quod est extra animam, dupliciter dividitur, ut in quinto libro est habitum. Uno modo per decem praeedicamenta, alio modo per potentiam et actum. Dividitur ergo prima pars in duas. In prima determinat de ente secundum quod dividitur per decem praeedicamenta. In secunda determinat de ente secundum quod dividitur per potentiam et actum, in nono libro, ibi, “ergo de primo ente etc.”. ».
Michael of Ephesus and ps. Philoponus refer to Plato’s Parmenides, in this other branch of Aristotelian commentaries we rather observe the replacement of the controversy between Plato and Aristotle with the controversy with a new interlocutor: Avicenna. As I mentioned, Averroes stresses the idea that the primary one and the primary being are one and the same thing, namely the primary substance which is God. The universal predicate ‘one’, which is convertible with ‘being’, is primarily said of substance and derivatively said of any other being. In clarifying his position, Averroes starts a debate on the nature of the transcendental one by stressing an alleged mistake by Avicenna, who is accused of confusing the transcendental one with the numerical one. Aquinas takes over Averroes’s polemic in a way analogous to the way in which ps. Philoponus takes over from Michael of Ephesus the idea that Aristotle writes Met., I in opposition to Plato’s Parmenides.

To conclude, it would seem that we can individuate two main general interpretative lines of Met., I. At the beginning of both we find Alexander as the first authority on the littera of Aristotle’s Metaphysics. Unfortunately we lack many rings in the chain, but, from what we have, we can trace the more or less conscious inscription of Met., I in a tradition starting with Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy and texts on the Platonic branch of Syrianus-Ammonius-Asclepius down to Michael of Ephesus and ps. Philoponus; on the other ‘Aristotelian’ branch, in this paper represented by (Alexander-)Averroes-Aquinas, we can see the development of a substance-minded and, as it were, ‘inter-Aristotelian’ reading, which emphasizes the priority of substance as the basic key to read and explain Aristotle’s Metaphysics.\cite{163}

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ABSTRACT

In Met., B, 1-2 and G, 2 Aristotle outlines a project of enquiry into a group of general notions which he might want to identify with the per se accidents of being and substance. These passages are far from being uncontroversial both from the terminological and from the doctrinal point of view. Part I of the paper presents these texts and the main problems arising from them, while Part II shows how the different commentators try to fill in the doctrinal lacunae left open by Aristotle’s explicit statements. The discussion of the different solutions of the commentators points at a group of writings, which are regarded as the places where Aristotle provides an analysis of the general notions included in the project of enquiry outlined in Met., G, 2. In particular, Syrianus thinks that Met., Iota is the book where Aristotle accomplishes such an enquiry. Part III presents this group of writings and, more particularly, sketches two main interpretative trends on the place and role of Met., Iota.

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Greek, Arab and Latin Commentators on Per Se Accidents of Being qua Being and the Place of Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book Iota.

Castelli. Die atmende Form in der Materie. Le commentaire de Syrianus à cette section (151.4-154.3) se révèle un peu décevant en ce qu'il répond pas sur ce point à Aristote. Pour Syrianus en effet, les nombres idéaux ne sont pas monadiques (idée qui sera défendue par CookWilson en 1904 et Cherniss en 1945 et qui est encore l'opinio communis des interprètes modernes). Book Epsilon is brief: it returns to the science of being qua being, and also passes some remarks on truth. Books Zeta, Eta and Theta hang together, and together they form the core of the Metaphysics. The following book, Iota, concerns itself with the notions of unity (‘oneness’) and identity. Book Kappa consists of 1 di 8 04/12/2013 18.14 Aristotle and the Science of Being qua Being http://www.ontology.co/being-qua-being.htm a resumé of Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon and of parts of the Physics. In book Lambda, we return to the study of beings and of first principles: the book contains Aristotle's theology, his account of the 'unmoved movers', which are in some sense the supreme entities in his universe.