

## THE SKOPOS OF THE CATEGORIES

*Skopos* is the Greek word for target. The *skopos* of a book or of a reasoned-out knowledge is the target aimed at therein. The determination of the *skopos* is fundamental in the proemium which paves the way for our reason in approaching any book or reasoned-out knowledge. Aristotle, for example, in his proemium to wisdom (at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*) first determines in general that wisdom aims at causes and then, in particular, at the first cause(s).

The Greek Commentators, in their proemia to Aristotle's *Categories*, determine at length the *skopos* of that work, first in general and then in particular. Their general determination of the *skopos* is important not only for the *Categories*, but also for logic as a whole.

### GENERAL DETERMINATION OF THE SKOPOS OF THE *CATEGORIES*

Greek Commentators, like Ammonius Hermias, determine the *skopos* of the *Categories* in general by tying a knot in our reason from the opposite opinions and arguments of their predecessors about the *skopos* of the *Categories* and then untying this knot.

### THE KNOT

The knot comes from the difference of opinion about the *skopos* of the *Categories* and what can be said in support of each opinion. The difference of opinion was that some said the *Categories* was about things; others, that it was about vocal sounds; and yet others, that it was about thoughts. Something can be said for and against each of these opinions.

The division *Tôn œntwn* (of beings) in Chapter 2 would seem to be a division of things rather than of thoughts or vocal sounds. The distinction between substance and accident is met here, and this is a distinction between things. Later various accidents (for example, quantity, quality etc.) are distinguished and this is also a distinction between things. The *Categories* then, it would seem, are about these things: substance, quantity, quality, etc.

On the other side, it is argued that the consideration of being as being, or things as things, belongs to metaphysics (as is shown in the fourth book of the *Metaphysics* by Aristotle) and not to logic. But the *Categories* belongs to logic.

The division *Tôn legoménwn* (of that which is said) beginning Chapter 2 seems to be a division of vocal sounds. One part of this division is either an affirmation or a negation (as is clear from Chapter 4) which are species of statement which is defined as a vocal sound in the *Peri Hermeneias*. Hence, the other member of the division, those said without any intertwining, must also be vocal sounds, especially since they are said in Chapter 4 not to be by themselves an affirmation or negation, but only by being combined or intertwined do they form an affirmation or a negation. If these latter are vocal sounds, what makes them up (those said without intertwining) must also be vocal sounds.

Further, it is said in Chapter 4 that "each of those said without intertwining signifies either substance or how much etc." But it is not things that *signify* (things are *signified*) but vocal sounds that signify. Hence, Aristotle is talking about vocal sounds when he speaks of *those said without intertwining*.

But the consideration of vocal sounds as vocal sounds belongs to grammar. It seems to be a lowering of the dignity of logic to say it is about vocal sounds.

In the beginning of Chapter 10, after he has considered substance, quantity, etc., Aristotle refers to them as *genera*. Moreover, he gives rules for ordering genera, their differences and species in the Chapter 3. But genera, differences, species and other such universals would seem to be in the mind or in our thoughts. Genus and species are differences in our thoughts, not differences in things. When I say that Socrates is a man and that he is an animal, *man* and *animal* do not differ as two things but as a more general thought and a more particular thought of what Socrates is.

But the consideration of thoughts as such pertains to the third book *About the Soul*.

The above is a sample of the dialectical discussion of whether the *skopos* of the *Categories* is things or thoughts or vocal sounds. Each of these positions was held by some thinker before the Greek Commentators whose works we have.

If there is a part of the truth in each of the above positions, it is good to have a dialectical discussion about them. For such a discussion will help to bring out these elements of the truth without making us think that anyone of them is the whole truth. Such a *manuductio* corresponds to the nature of our reason which sees a part of the truth before it sees the whole. Further, one man often sees one part of the truth and another man, another part, so that it is only through the efforts of many that the whole truth is eventually seen by later thinkers.

Later thinkers continue to dwell upon what is found in these three positions. We may take Thomas Aquinas as a witness here. There is a text where Thomas seems to say that logic is about the nature of things. The example in this text is also found in the *Categories*. The text also contrasts logic with grammar as is done in the dialectic above:

passio potest sumi dupliciter: vel quantum ad naturam rei prout logicus et naturalis passionem considerat..vel quantum ad modum significandi, prout grammaticus considerat.<sup>1</sup>

But there are also texts in Thomas from which someone might draw the conclusion that the *Categories* is about concepts or thoughts:

De his igitur quae pertinent ad primam operationem intellectus, id est de his quae simplici intellectu concipiuntur, determinat Aristoteles in libro *Praedicamentorum*.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, there are texts in Thomas where he seems to say that the *Categories* is about simple sayings or *dictiones* which are vocal sounds:

Si quis autem quaerat, cum in libro *Praedicamentorum* de simplicibus dictum est, quae fuit necessitas ut hic rursum de nomine et verbo determinaretur; ad hoc dicendum quod simplicium dictionum *triplex* potest esse consideratio. *Una* quidem, secundum quod absolute significant simplices intellectus, et sic earum consideratio pertinet ad librum *Praedicamentorum*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In *II Sent.*, Dist XXXV, Q. I, Art. I, Ad 5

<sup>2</sup>In *I Peri Hermeneias*, Proemium, n. 2

<sup>3</sup>In *I Peri Hermeneias*, Lectio I, n. 5

One might thus draw from these and other texts of Thomas some confirmation that there is an element of truth in each of the above positions discussed dialectically by the Greek Commentators.

## UNTYING THE KNOT

The untying of the knot and the determination of the skopos of the *Categories* in general is made by the Greek Commentators, like Ammonius Hermias, in three ordered steps. The first step is that the skopos involves all three; that is, things, thoughts and vocal sounds (words or names). The second is that the logician talks about any one of these only in its connection with the other two. The third step is that the *Categories* is about names signifying things through thoughts. This last step is, of course, only a general determination of the skopos of the *Categories*. After that, the Greek Commentators begin a determination of the skopos in particular.

### FIRST STEP IN UNTYING THE KNOT

One cannot untie a knot without examining it closely. Indeed, a close examination of the knot above leads to the first step in untying it. The more carefully one examines the different positions above and the reasons which can be given for them, the more one sees that there is an element of truth in each of them. The first step then in untying this knot is to see that skopos of the *Categories* involves all three. One could say in general that logic is about things, thoughts and vocal sounds. Here we might bring in Thomas Aquinas as a witness again.

When Thomas paves the way for our consideration of logic in his two proemiums to logic (his major proemium at the beginning of his commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* and his minor proemium at the beginning of his commentary on the *Peri Hermeneias*), he does not begin with the above three (things, thoughts and vocal sounds). Rather he begins by saying that logic is about three acts of our reason which he distinguishes. Further, in the major proemium especially, he brings out that logic is the art which directs these three acts. Logic is an art that helps reason order its own acts. From this starting-point, we can see how Thomas regards thoughts and vocal sounds first and later even things in some way as pertaining to the skopos of logic. A fundamental text for seeing this connection in Thomas' mind between ordering the acts of reason and considering thoughts and vocal sounds is the following:

Alius autem est ordo, quem ratio considerando facit in proprio actu, puta cum ordinat conceptus suos ad invicem, et signa conceptuum, quia sunt voces significativae.<sup>4</sup>

If logic helps reason order its own acts, and reason orders its own acts by ordering its own thoughts and the vocal sounds that signify them, then logic (if it is to help reason order its own acts) must consider thoughts and the vocal sounds that signify them. Hence, Thomas, later in the same text determines that logic is about the order in our thoughts and vocal sounds:

Et quia consideratio rationis per habitum perficitur, secundum...diversos ordines quos proprie ratio considerat, sunt diversae scientiae...Ordo autem quem ratio considerando facit in proprio actu, pertinet ad *rationalem philosophiam*, cuius est considerare ordinem partium orationis adinvicem, et ordinem principiorum adinvicem et ad conclusiones.<sup>5</sup>

Does Thomas see any connection between logic being about the acts of reason and being about things? There is one text where a certain connection is made through the *intentions of reason*:

Et quia circa omnia quae in rebus sunt habet negotiari ratio, logica autem est de operationibus rationis; logica etiam erit de his quae communia sunt omnibus, idest de *intentionibus* rationis, quae ad omnes res se habent.

Non autem ita, quod logica sit de ipsis rebus communibus, sicut de subiectis. Considerat enim logica, sicut subiecta, *sylogismum, enunciationem, praedicatum*, aut aliquid huiusmodi.<sup>6</sup>

In the first part of this text, Thomas sees a certain connection between logic and things through the intentions of reason *quae ad omnes res se habent*. But in the second, he seems to deny that logic is about things. Albert the Great also sees logic as about intentions and not things, but in the very text where he says this, he sees that this consideration of intentions cannot be divorced from things:

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<sup>4</sup>In *I Ethicorum*, Lectio I, n. 1

<sup>5</sup>In *I Ethicorum*, Lectio I, n. 2

<sup>6</sup>(In *I Posteriorum Analyticorum*, Lectio XX, n. 171

Quamvis enim logicus intentiones rerum considerat, et non res: principaliter tamen logicus intentiones considerat relatas ad res: et sic considerat res stantes sub intentionibus quas considerat.<sup>7</sup>

Does Albert contradict himself when he says in the first sentence that the logician considers the intentions of things and *not* things and in the last sentence when he says that the logician considers things standing under the intentions which he considers? I think this would be a sophistical refutation of Albert based on the mistake of simply and in some respect. He denies that logic is about things and affirms that logic is about things standing under intentions. He admits that logic is about things in some way (*secundum quid*) and denies that it is about things simply (*simpliciter*, without any qualification or addition). Thomas also affirms that logic is about things in this way:

Sed dicendum quod secundum logicam considerationem loquitur Philosophus in *Praedicamentis*. Logicus autem considerat res secundum quod sunt in ratione; et ideo considerat substantias prout secundum acceptionem intellectus subsunt intentioni universalitatis. Et ideo quantum ad praedicationem, quae est actus rationis...Sed Philosophus primus considerat de rebus secundum quod sunt entia.<sup>8</sup>

To consider things *secundum quod sunt entia* is to consider things simply or without qualification (one is considering things as things), but to consider things *as they are in reason* or *as they stand under the intention of universality* is to consider them in some respect or *secundum quid*. That logic considers things only in some respect is also clear from another text of Thomas:

Logicus enim considerat modum praedicandi, et non existentiam rei.<sup>9</sup>

What Thomas says here, that logic considers *modum praedicandi* is reflected in the Latin words in the first part of logic, the *praedicabilia* and the *praedicamenta*. It is also seen in the Greek word that gives its name to the *Categories*.

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<sup>7</sup>*Comm. In Priora Analytica*, Bk. II, Tract VII, Cap. X, Les Presses de l'Universite Laval, pp. 164b-165a

<sup>8</sup>*In VII Metaphysicorum*, Lectio XIII, n. 1576

<sup>9</sup>*In VII Metaphysicorum*, Lectio XVII, n. 1658

One can also reason that logic must be about things in some way because it is ordered to knowing things.

## SECOND STEP IN UNTYING THE KNOT

The second step in untying the knot and determining the *skopos* of the *Categories* in general is to show that it is about each of these three (vocal sounds, things and thoughts) only in connection or order with the other two.

This is seen most clearly in the case of vocal sounds. The logician is not interested in vocal sounds as such, but only insofar as they signify. But what do they signify? They signify our thoughts about things or they signify things through our thoughts. The Greek Commentators point out with reason that the philosopher is not concerned with thoughts that have no foundation in things, that are not about things. Likewise, we can say that vocal sounds signify the things we want to know, as when we use the name of a thing in asking what it is. But vocal sounds signify things only through thoughts. Hence, when the logician speaks of vocal sounds, he must bring in explicitly or implicitly both thoughts and things.

This line of argument is fully in accord with the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas. Thomas also insists that logic is interested in vocal sounds only insofar as they signify:

Sed quia Logica ordinatur ad cognitionem de rebus sumendam, significatio vocum, quae est immediata ipsis conceptionibus intellectus, pertinet ad principalem considerationem ipsius; significatio autem litterarum, tanquam magis remota, non pertinet ad eius considerationem, sed magis ad considerationem grammatici.<sup>10</sup>

Although Thomas says that vocal sounds signify immediately concepts or thoughts, they do not do so without reference to things at last. This part of Thomas' teaching is beautifully brought out in part of his explanation of why Aristotle says that vocal sounds signify the *passions* of the soul when by *passions* he means the conceptions or thoughts of reason::

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<sup>10</sup>*In I Peri Hermeneias*, Lectio II, n. 13

Utitur autem potius nomine *passionum* quam *intellectuum*...quia significatio vocum refertur ad conceptionem intellectus, secundum quod oritur a rebus per modum cuiusdam impressionis vel passionis.<sup>11</sup>

Since logic is ordered to knowing things, logic is interested in vocal sounds insofar as they signify things. But here it is even clearer that we must bring in thoughts also. For we name things insofar as we know them or have some thoughts of them. As Thomas says:

secundum autem quod res sunt nobis notae secundum hoc a nobis nominatur<sup>12</sup>

A sign of this is that the order in naming follows the order in knowing, not the order in things; for we name sensible things first etc. Further, it is not possible that vocal sounds signify things immediately:

Non enim potest esse quod significant immediate ipsas res, ut ex ipso modo significandi apparet: significat enim hoc nomen *homo* naturam humanam in abstractione a singularibus. Unde non potest esse quod significet immediate hominem singularem; unde Platonici posuerunt quod significaret ipsam *ideam* hominis separatam. Sed quia hoc secundum suam abstractionem non subsistit realiter secundum sententiam Aristotelis, sed est in solo intellectu; ideo necesse fuit Aristoteli dicere voces significant intellectus conceptiones immediate et eis mediantibus res.<sup>13</sup>

Thus if logic is about vocal sounds signifying things, it must also bring in what is between them - namely, thoughts.

If logic is about things in some way, it must consider them in reference to thoughts and vocal sounds. Logic cannot consider things as things for this is the matter of metaphysics. (Likewise, the matter of logic cannot be natural or political things as such.) The way logic considers things is exemplified in the first two definitions of Chapter 1 of the *Categories*. There we learn that things can be named equivocally or univocally. But it is impossible to consider things in this way without bringing in names and thoughts. For names are vocal sounds

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<sup>11</sup>*In I Peri Hermeneias*, Lectio II, n. 16

<sup>12</sup>*In V Metaphysicorum*, Lect I, n. 751

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *In I Peri Hermeneias*, Lectio II, n. 15



and whether a name is said equivocally or univocally of things depends upon the thought (or thoughts) we have in mind when saying the name of those things. If logic considers things as named, it must also consider them as known in some way - for we name things as we know them. And if we know them in some way, they must be in our mind. But they are not in our mind without our having some thought about them.

Although one can say that logic considers things as they are in our reason, it is much more concrete or sensible to say that logic is about things as named (since a name is sensible) which (since we name things as we know them) will lead to the more abstract truth that it considers them as they are in the mind. Albert the Great in his commentary on this part uses this concrete way of distinguishing between the logician and the metaphysician or philosopher:

Et dicuntur univoca per oppositum modum ad aequivoca, res scilicet univocatae in nomine uno, ut res ipsa ad dici et ad sermonem referatur, quia aliter non esset logicum quod dicitur: quia res in se considerata, non secundum quod stat sub dictione, non ad logicum, sed ad Philosophum pertinet.<sup>14</sup>

When we say that logic is about thoughts. we must be careful to keep it distinct from the study of the soul. The Greek Commentators point out that the consideration of thoughts belongs as such to the *De Anima*. This is why Aristotle is so brief in his consideration of thoughts in the *Peri Hermeneias* when he shows that written words signify vocal sounds, vocal sounds signify thoughts and the latter are likenesses of things. Aristotle excuses himself from a more lengthy consideration of thoughts which he says belongs to another consideration, that of the soul. Here is Thomas' commentary on the passage:

excusat se a diligentiori harum consideratione: quia quales sint animae passiones, et quomodo sunt rerum similitudines, dictum est in libro *De Anima*. Non enim hoc pertinet ad logicum negotium, sed ad naturale.<sup>15</sup>

In what way then is logic about thoughts? Logic is about ordering our thoughts for the sake of knowing things. But how can one order thoughts for the sake of knowing things without making any reference to things? Logic considers the

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<sup>14</sup>*De Praedicamentis*, Tract I, Cap. III, ed. Doyon, p. 10a

<sup>15</sup>*In I Peri Hermeneias*, Lectio II, n. 22

order in our thoughts that is useful for knowing things; and hence, it cannot consider thoughts without making reference to things.

Likewise, is it possible for reason to order its thoughts without using vocal sounds to signify them? Reason doesn't even know clearly what it thinks before it expresses its thought in words. The Poet puts this well in the words of Miranda to Caliban:

.....I pitied thee  
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour  
One thing or other; when thou didst not, savage,  
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like  
A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes  
With words that made them known.<sup>16</sup>

If reason could order its thoughts without using vocal sounds (like an angel), logic would not be about vocal sounds. But then we would not be animals with reason and there would be no need for logic.

This ends the second step in the untying of the knot and the general determination of the *skopos* of the *Categories*. It adds to the first step, which was that the *skopos* includes things, thoughts and signifying vocal sounds, the important clarification that it is about each of these in reference to the others, about each of them in order to the other two.

### THIRD STEP IN UNTYING THE KNOT

We now come to the third step in the untying of the knot and the determination of the *skopos* of the *Categories* in general. Although the *Categories* (and the whole of logic) is in some way about things, thoughts and vocal sounds, the Greek Commentators do not think that the *Categories* (and logic as a whole) is about each of these equally in any order. Rather they are unanimous in saying that the *Categories* and logical treatises of Aristotle in general are about *vocal sounds signifying things through thoughts*. (One could add here that they are, of course, speaking about vocal sounds signifying by human agreement or custom rather than by nature.)

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<sup>16</sup>Shakespeare, *Tempest*, Act I, Sc. 2

The beginning for this consideration is the *Peri Hermeneias*. There Aristotle makes very clear that the book is about vocal sounds. In his proemium, he enumerates what he is going to consider in the book (noun, verb, negation, affirmation, enunciation and speech); and when he comes to define them, he puts vocal sound or voice that signifies by human agreement as the genus in each definition. The *proemium* and the division of the *tractatus* all revolve around vocal sounds, as Thomas explains:

Praemisso proemio, Philosophus accedit ad propositum exequendum. Et quia ea, de quibus promiserat se dicturum, sunt voces significativae complexae vel incomplexae, ideo praemittit tractatum de *significatione* vocum: et deinde de vocibus significativis determinat de quibus in proemio se dicturum promiserat. Et hoc ibi, *Nomen ergo est vox significativa* etc.<sup>17</sup>

From this solid basis, one can reason in two ways that the other treatises of logic are also about vocal sounds. First, one can reason from part to part. If the *Peri Hermeneias* is one part of logic and is about vocal sounds, then likewise the treatises in the other parts of logic will be about their own vocal sounds. And more particularly, if the *logos* in the definition of enunciation is that complex vocal sound called speech (rather than a composite thought), then likewise the *logos* in the definition of syllogism or definition is to be understood in the same way as a speech.

There is a second and stronger way of reasoning. Since what is considered in the logic of the first act becomes a part of the statement or enunciation considered in the *Peri Hermeneias*, and the statement in turn becomes a part of what is considered in the logic of the third act (e.g., syllogism) then since the statement is a vocal sound so also must be what are put together in statements or put together from statements.

A third way of reasoning from the *Peri Hermeneias* can be used in the case of the *Categories* and of definition. In the *Peri Hermeneias*, Aristotle speaks of written words as signifying spoken words and spoken words as signifying thoughts. but he does *not* say that thoughts signify things. And, of course, things do not signify anything in this context. But the subject of the *Categories*, those said without any intertwining<sup>18</sup> signify either substance or how much etc.

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<sup>17</sup>In *Peri Hermeneias*, Lectio II, n. 11

<sup>18</sup>See *Categories*, Chapter 4, 1b 25 seq.

as Aristotle says in the *Categories* and likewise, definition signifies the what it is, as Aristotle notes in the *Topics*.<sup>19</sup> Although some scholastic might want to make the word sign analogous and extend it to thoughts, Aristotle does not seem to do so in the fundamental text on signification of the *Peri Hermeneias* (He says there that the written word is a sign of the spoken and the spoken, of the thought, but he does not say the thought, of the thing.) Hence, it is reasonable to say that in the *Categories* and in the definition of definition, he is speaking of vocal sounds. (Further, it is easy to argue that if either of these last two is a vocal sound, the other must be so too. Definitions are put together from what is studied in the *Categories*.)

The *Categories* are thus in general about vocal sounds signifying things through thoughts. One could ask why not say vocal sounds signifying thoughts about things. This second is not false but the first is more sensible. No thought is able to be sensed but some things can be sensed. We bring in what cannot be sensed last and point it out through its middle position between two sensibles.

#### THE SKOPOS OF THE *CATEGORIES* IN PARTICULAR

But since other logical treatises are about vocal sounds signifying things through thoughts, it is necessary to determine the skopos of the *Categories* in particular. Greek Commentators, such as Ammonius Hermias, determine the skopos of the *Categories* in particular in three ordered steps. The first is familiar to students of the *Peri Hermeneias*. Vocal sounds signifying by human agreement either have parts that signify by themselves (as do definitions, statements and other speeches) or they do not have such parts (as the name *animal* or *man* ). The *Categories* is about the second kind of vocal sound which does not have parts signifying by themselves.

This suffices to separate the subject of the *Categories* from the principal subjects of the logic of the second and third acts which are speeches (that is, vocal sounds having parts that signify by themselves), namely the *statement* and the *sylogism*. This would also separate the *Categories* from any book on definition or division which are also speeches as we have just defined *speech*. But since in considering statement and syllogism, we also consider parts do them which do not or need not signify something separately (such as noun and verb in the statement and terms in the syllogism), it is also necessary to

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<sup>19</sup>Book I, Chapter 5, 101b 38

consider the difference between the simple vocal sounds belonging to the *Categories* and those considered in books on statement and syllogism.

The Greek Commentators ask this question in particular: what is the difference between the consideration of simple vocal sounds or names in the *Categories* and in the *Peri Hermeneias* which follows it? The distinction they make is between the *first placing* of names and the *second placing* of names. What is this distinction?

In the beginning there were things, but no names. Then man placed names upon things calling this a *man* and that a *horse* etc. This is the first placing of names, the placing of names upon things. Then, man by a second consideration came back over the names of things and called some of them *nouns* and some of them *verbs*, depending upon whether they signified with or without time. This was a second placing of names, *not* a placing of names upon things, but a placing of names *upon names*.

Boethius, following the Greek Commentators, explains it thus:

prius breviter hujus operis aperienda videtur intentio, quae est hujusmodi: rebus praejacentibus, et in propria principaliter naturae constitutione manentibus, humanum solum genus exstitit, quod rebus nomina possit imponere. Unde factum est ut sigillatim omnia prosecutus hominis animis singulis vocabula rebus aptaret. Et hoc quidem, verbi gratia, corpus, hominem vocavit, illud vero lapidem, aliud lignum, aliud vero colorem. Et rursus quicumque ex se alium genuisset, patris vocabulo nuncupavit. Mensuram quoque magnitudinis proprii forma nominis terminavit, ut diceret bipedale esse, aut tripedale, et in aliis eodem modo.

Omnibus ergo nominibus ordinatis, ad ipsorum rursus vocabulorum proprietates figurasque reversus est, et hujusmodi vocabuli formam, quae inflecti casibus possit, nomen vocavit; quae vero temporibus distribui, verbum.

Prima igitur illa fuit nominum positio, per quam vel intellectui subjecta vel sensibus designaret. Secunda consideratio, qua singulas proprietates nominum figurasque perspicerent, ita ut primum nomen sit ipsum rei vocabulum: ut, verbi gratia, cum quaelibet res homo dicatur. Quod autem ipsum vocabulum, idest homo, nomen vocatur, non ad significationem nominis ipsius refertur, sed ad figuram, idcirco quod possit casibus inflecti.

Ergo prima positio nominis secundum significationem vocabuli facta est, secunda vero secundum figuram:

et est prima positio, ut nomina rebus imponerentur, secunda vero ut aliis nominibus ipsa nomina designaretur...

In hoc igitur opere haec intentio est, de primis rerum nominibus, et de vocibus res significantibus disputare, non in eo quod secundum aliquam proprietatem figuramque formantur, sed in eo quod significantes sunt...

Est igitur hujus operis intentio de vocibus res significantibus, in eo quod significantes sunt pertractare.<sup>20</sup>

Without discussing or agreeing with everything that Boethius says here, we may note that he distinguishes in at least two ways the first and second placing of names. I am not sure that these two ways are equivalent. One of them seems to be more basic. We place names upon things and then we place names upon names. Since we must place names upon things before we can place names upon names, the former may be called the *first* placing of names and the latter, the *second* placing of names.

Thomas makes a somewhat similar distinction in the following passage:

Nec tamen hoc nomen "ratio" significat ipsam conceptionem, quia hoc significatur per nomen sapientiae vel per aliud nomen rei; sed significat intentionem hujus conceptionis, sicut et hoc nomen "definitio," et alia nomina secundae impositionis.<sup>21</sup>

Here Thomas distinguishes between *nomen rei* and the *nomen secundae impositionis*.

It is very necessary not to confuse the distinction Thomas touches upon here and that other more common distinction he makes between the first and second (and possibly a third etc.) imposition of a name. One should not confuse the second imposition of the *same* name with name of second imposition. Thomas is here distinguishing between names of things and names of intentions. And since we place names upon things before we place names upon intentions, we may call names of things, names of first imposition or placing upon; and names of intentions, names of second imposition or placing upon. But in the more common distinction, we are talking about one and the same name that is first placed upon one thing and then carried over and placed upon a second thing because of its likeness or ratio to the first.

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<sup>20</sup>*In Categorias Aristotelis*, Liber Primus, in PL, Vol. 64, pp 159-160

<sup>21</sup>*In I Sent.*, Dist. II, Q. I, Art. III, Ad 1

Although *names of intentions* in the text from Thomas and *names of names* in the text of Boethius following the Greek commentators are not identical, they are both distinguished against *names of things*. Now names that we consider in the *Categories*, such as *substance, quantity, quality* etc., seem to be names of things while names like *noun* and *verb* in the *Peri Hermeneias* are names of names or names of intentions. Although the Greek Commentators do not take up the question, this would also seem to distinguish the *Categories* from the *Isagoge*. The *Isagoge* is about genus, difference, species, property and accident. These are also names of names or names of intentions.

We should note however that Thomas does not use this distinction when he must separate the consideration of simple vocal sounds (sounds whose parts do not signify anything by themselves) in the *Peri Hermeneias* from that of the *Categories*:

Si quis autem quaerat, cum in libro *Praedicamentorum* de simplicibus dictum sit, quae fuit necessitas ut hic rursum de nomine et verbo determinaretur; ad hoc dicendum quod simplicium dictionum *triplex* potest esse consideratio.

*Una* quidem, secundum quod absolute significant simplices intellectus, et sic earum consideratio pertinet ad librum *Praedicamentorum*.

*Alio modo*, secundum rationem, prout sunt partes enunciationis; et sic determinatur de eis in hoc libro; et ideo traduntur sub ratione nominis et verbi: de quorum ratione est quod significant aliquid cum tempore vel sine tempore, et alia huiusmodi, quae pertinent ad rationem dictionum, secundum quod constituunt *enunciationem*.

*Tertio modo*, considerantur secundum quod ex eis constituitur ordo syllogisticus, et sic determinantur de eis sub ratione terminorum in libro *Priorum*.<sup>22</sup>

This distinction reminds one of that made in practical philosophy. Ethics considers what an individual man should do; domestics, what the family should do; and politics, what the city should do. But since the father of a family is an individual man and the king or a citizen of a city is an individual man, why is it necessary to consider what an individual man should do in the family or in the city if this has already been considered in the ethics? One could say that what an individual man as such should do is considered in ethics while what he should do as a part of the family or the city is considered in domestics and politics. In

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<sup>22</sup>In *I Peri Hermeneias*, Lectio I, n. 5

domestics, the individual man is considered as a father or son or something of this sort; and in politics, the individual man is considered as a king or citizen or something of this sort.

If we compare Thomas' distinction with that of the Greek Commentators, we can bring them closer by pointing out another order in the placing of names. We place names upon things before we place them in statements. And since statements are in turn placed in syllogisms (see the definition of syllogism), there is then a third placing of the original names. They were placed first upon things; second, in statements; and third, in syllogisms. Logic is ordered to a knowledge of things. If we did not place names upon things *before* we placed them in statements, our statements would not be about things. And if our statements were not about things, then when we placed them in syllogisms (and other arguments), we would not be reasoning about things which would defeat the whole purpose of logic.

The Greek Commentators say that the *Categories* are about names of things or about the first placing of names which is the placing of names upon things. Indeed, the *Categories* begins with definitions of the two ways in which things can have a name in common or two ways in which one name can be placed upon many things.

Having arrived at this position on the skopos of the *Categories*, Greek Commentators, like Ammonius Hermias, ask whether the *Categories* are about all names of things or about the first placing of all names upon things. Here they say that such names are unlimited and no science can take up the unlimited. Rather such names are brought under ten universal names or vocal sounds. They then enumerate ten names which are those given by Aristotle in the beginning of Chapter Four of the *Categories*.

In their proemia, the Greek Commentators, like Ammonius Hermias, do not explain how names of things may be brought under these ten names. But in their explanation of the ante-predicaments, we can find further elucidation on this question. The rules of Chapter Three of the *Categories* are especially important here.

We have follow at length the determination of the skopos of the *Categories* by the Greek Commentators and Boethius with some comparisons to texts of Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great. This determination also touches upon the general question of the skopos of Aristotle's logical treatises. We are



not unaware that a number of serious questions and objections can be made about many parts of this determination. Rather it is with a view to the importance of these questions and objections for understanding the skopos of the *Categories* and, in general, logical treatises, that we have gone through that determination of the skopos of the *Categories*.

Two questions stand out in our mind now. The first is whether the genus in the definition of the skopos of an Aristotelian logical treatise is a vocal sound or more precisely, vocal sound signifying by human agreement (hence, either a name or a speech, depending upon whether it has parts that signify by themselves or not).

The second question is whether any other logical treatise is about names of things or names placed upon things. Men are more apt to think this of the *Categories* than of any other treatise.

One can argue dialectically on both sides of these questions. Perhaps the kind of knot produced in our mind by this dialectic will be useful in the discovery of some truth (if we can untie it).

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