

A FRAGMENT OF ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS* FROM PORPHYRY, CONCERNING SYNONYMY

An important fragment of the lost portion of Aristotle's *Poetics* is the definition of synonyms preserved by Simplicius,¹ which corresponds to Aristotle's own citation of the *Poetics* for synonyms in the *Rhetoric*, 3. 2. 1404b37 ff. I shall argue elsewhere that this derives from a discussion of the sources of verbal humour in the lost account of comedy and humour.² Here it is my aim to show that Simplicius definitely derived the quotation from Porphyry,³ which pushes back the attestation of this part of the *Poetics* by more than two centuries (although the citation in the Antiatticist, *Poet.* fr. 4 Kassel, is older still). Furthermore, I shall show that some of the words in the definition are a gloss added by Porphyry for the purposes of his own polemic.

In commenting on the discussion of synonyms that opens Aristotle's *Categories*, Simplicius is concerned to show that Aristotle did know and adopt the non-technical sense of synonymy, i.e. the use of many names for the same entity, as well as the technical sense in his system of logic given in the *Categories*. Simplicius is quite correct in this: compare the recent article of J. Barnes in this journal.⁴ The quotation of the fragment is as follows (Simplicius, in *Categ.* 36. 13 Kalbfleisch, = *Poet.* fr. 3 Kassel):

καὶ γὰρ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τῷ περὶ ποιητικῆς συνώνυμα εἶπεν εἶναι ὧν πλείω μὲν τὰ ὀνόματα λόγος δὲ ὁ αὐτός, ὅσα δὲ ἔστιν τὰ πολύνυμα, τό τε λῶπιον καὶ ἱμάτιον καὶ φάρος.⁵

However, the passage in Simplicius continues immediately by quoting Porphyry, who explains that there is nothing strange about Aristotle's use of two different senses, but the one is used in the logical works, the other in those where he is concerned with words and the multifarious nomenclature of each, as in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* (Porphyry must mean *Rhet.* 3. 2. 1404b37). And Boethius (a previous commentator on the *Categories*, of Augustan date) is wrong to say that this sense of synonymy is lacking in Aristotle; it is not lacking, but occurs in other works, where it is relevant to the argument: in Greek, as follows (ibid. 36. 16–31):

... λῶπιον καὶ ἱμάτιον καὶ φάρος. ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἄτοπον, φησὶν ὁ Πορφύριος, τῆς χρήσεως τὸ διττὸν ἐχούσης χρῆσθαι μὲν ἐκατέρω τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη... (he explains the two senses)... καὶ διὰ τοῦτο, ὅπου μὲν περὶ γενῶν ᾗτοι τῶν τὰ γένη σημαίνουσιν φωνῶν ἢ σπουδῇ, χρεῖα τοῦ

¹ ap. *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* VIII, Simplicius in *Categorias*, ed. K. Kalbfleisch (Berlin, 1907).

² In a book nearing completion I argue that this part of the *Poetics* is in fact still extant, albeit in heavily epitomised form, in a tenth-century ms. in Paris, and in extracts elsewhere.

³ First to suggest this was V. Rose, *De Aristotelis librorum ordine et auctoritate Commentatio* (Berlin, 1854), p. 133; cf. E. Heitz, *Die verlorenen Schriften des Aristoteles* (Leipzig, 1865), pp. 92 f., Montmollin, *La Poétique d'Aristote* (Neuchâtel, 1951), pp. 348 f.; none proved the point. I thank Prof. R. Kassel for drawing my attention to their comments. A. Gudeman, *Aristoteles Peri Poietikēs* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1934), p. 1, noted the testimonium but ascribed it to Simplicius without discussion.

⁴ 'Homonymy in Aristotle and Speusippus', *CQ* n.s. 21 (1971), 65–80. Barnes quoted the citation of the *Poetics* by Porphyry, but drew no conclusions. Cf. also L. Tarán, 'Speusippus and Aristotle on homonymy and synonymy', *Hermes* 106 (1978), 73–99, with full bibliography.

⁵ Kalbfleisch's text; cf. Kassel, *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica* (Berlin, 1976) ad 3. 2. 1404b39. The accentuation *pháros* of the mss. should be kept; *phāros* in several editions of the *Poetics* is not native to Attic, but poetic (cf. Lejeune, *Phonétique historique du mycénien et du grec ancien* (Paris, 1972), p. 159).

δευτέρου σημαινομένου, διότι τὰ γένη κατὰ τοῦτο τὸ σημαινόμενον συνωνύμως τῶν εἰδῶν κατηγορεῖται· ἐνθα δὲ περὶ τὰς πλείους φωνὰς ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ τὴν πολυειδῆ ἐκάστου ὀνομασίαν, ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ *Περὶ Ποιητικῆς* καὶ τῷ τρίτῳ *Περὶ Ῥητορικῆς*, τοῦ ἐτέρου συνωνύμου δεόμεθα, ὅπερ πολυνώνυμον ὁ Σπεύσιππος ἐκάλει. καὶ οὐ καλῶς ὁ Βόηθος παραλείφθαι τῷ Ἀριστοτέλει φησὶ τὰ παρὰ τοῖς νεωτέροις καλούμενα συνώνυμα, ἅπερ Σπεύσιππος ἐκάλει πολυνώνυμα· οὐ γὰρ παραλείπεται, ἀλλ' ἐν ἄλλαις πραγματείαις, ἐν αἷς ἦν οἰκείος ὁ λόγος, παρείληπται.

From this it is certain that Porphyry knew the account of synonymy in the lost part of the *Poetics*,⁶ and that he knew it to be used there in the popular sense, just as it is given in the definition quoted already. But there is a further conclusion to be drawn. Twice, when Porphyry refers to the popular sense, he glosses it 'what Speusippus called "things with many names"', *polyonyma*. Now the definition of synonyms quoted contained the words *οἷα δὴ ἐστὶν τὰ πολυνώνυμα* 'like polyonyms', but Porphyry does not say, as we would expect if these words are Aristotle's, 'Aristotle actually called synonyms polyonyms in the *Poetics*', but instead he twice refers this term to Speusippus. It is very clear that these words are not Aristotle's. Yet the rest of the definition, and the example given, are quintessentially Aristotelian; compare *Topics* 1. 7. 103a 10 *ὦν ὀνόματα πλείω τὸ δὲ πρᾶγμα ἓν, οἷον λῶπιον καὶ ἱμάτιον*. The examples *λῶπιον καὶ ἱμάτιον* recur five times elsewhere.⁷

The discrepancy can be explained if these words are a gloss by Porphyry added as polemic against Boethus. As soon as the definition has been given, we find ourselves inside the quotation from Porphyry, who very soon refers to this same passage. Simplicius was prone not to mark quotations clearly, as witness his quotation of Porphyry (ap. 36. 25 ff.) at 38. 15 ff., where he does not name his source. Moreover, it was Boethus, as Porphyry makes plain, who brought Speusippus into the argument. In quoting the *Poetics* to refute him, it would be natural to insert the remark 'like *polyonyma* of course'; if the remark is Porphyry's, the appearance of the ironical particle *δή* is explained.

Further evidence of Porphyry's acquaintance with the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* is found in his *Life of Pythagoras* 41, where he mentions that Aristotle discussed metaphor (cf. *Poet.* 21. 1457b 16 ff.). The lost work which Simplicius is quoting here, the *Major Commentary on the Categories*, evidently displayed a wide range of learning.

Keeping Porphyry's remarks in mind, we must turn to a passage in Olympiodorus, in *Categorias* 23. 1–13 Busse,⁸ that P. Moraux⁹ has recently unveiled, correctly I believe, as a testimonium to the *Poetics* on synonymy. 'Some say that the book' (sc. the *Categories*) 'is spurious, because there he discusses homonyms and synonyms, but in the *Physics* (sic) homonyms, synonyms, heteronyms and polyonyms, so that the book is clearly spurious, as what it says is not in harmony with the statements in the *Physics*.'¹⁰ As Moraux saw, '*Physics*' is an error for '*Poetics*'; this is clear from a

⁶ Rose, loc. cit. (cf. Tarán, art. cit. n. 40), suggested that Porphyry invented the reference from his knowledge of *Rhet.* 3. 2; otherwise, why cite *Rhet.* 3 but only *Poet.*, not *Poet.* 2? Why Porphyry's citation takes this form I know not, but it is not his custom to invent quotations from Aristotle, and there is no good reason to doubt Porphyry's veracity.

⁷ cf. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* s.v. *λῶπιον*.

⁸ ap. *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* xii. 1, ed. A. Busse (Berlin, 1902).

⁹ ap. *Mélanges Mansel* 1 (Ankara, 1974), pp. 267 f. I am very grateful to Professor Kassel for knowledge of this article.

¹⁰ *τοσοῦτον, φασί, νόθον ἐστὶ τὸ βιβλίον, ὅτι ἐνταῦθα μὲν ὁμωνύμων καὶ συνωνύμων ἐμνημόνευσεν, ἐν δὲ τῇ Φυσικῇ τῶν ὁμωνύμων καὶ τῶν συνωνύμων καὶ τῶν ἑτερωνύμων καὶ τῶν πολυνώνυμων, ὡς δὴλον ὅτι νόθον ἐστὶ τὸ βιβλίον ὡς μὴ συνωδὰ φθεγγόμενον τοῖς ἐν τῇ Φυσικῇ εἰρημένους.*

comparison with Simplicius cited above. The reason for the error, incidentally, is surely that a correct reference to the *Physics* follows at once, and Olympiodorus must have had the work in mind as he wrote; the extant *Physics* contains no such passage. Moraux rightly perceived that the cause of the doubt must have been the difference in the definitions. But it does not follow from this that Aristotle himself used the terms 'heteronyms' and 'polyonyms' in the *Poetics*. Moraux notes that Olympiodorus ignores the fifth type, paronyms. The same peculiarity occurs in his very similar account of the four types at 27. 21–28. 7 Busse, which shows that the two can be taken together. Now there is a passage in Simplicius, 23. 12–25 Kalbfleisch, which corresponds almost word for word with the latter passage of Olympiodorus, apart from the fact that it does include paronyms, is less garbled, and gives the philosopher Syrianus as its source.

Syrianus says, rather like Porphyry, that the two types omitted in the *Categories* are absent because more suited to verbal than to ontological analysis; 'therefore he (sc. Aristotle) will speak on these more appositely in his rhetorical handbooks and other such treatises, in which he will teach that the same thing can be said in many different ways through polyonymy, and things different in nature can be expressed in different words, so that the sense may seem clear and not confused; here he speaks of homonyms and synonyms as having a difference in reality...'¹¹ This is surely Olympiodorus' source; he has muddled it badly.¹² Now Syrianus does not say that Aristotle used the term heteronymy, and the mention of polyonyms is suspect, along with the whole passage, of being derived from Porphyry.¹³ But the term heteronymy goes back to Speusippus too, as our friend Boethus reports at Simplicius in *Categ.* 38. 19 ff., and it seems likely that his information is also known from Porphyry, especially since Porphyry's reference to the *Poetics* is in the preceding sentence.¹⁴ If heteronyms, like polyonyms, were introduced into the debate by Boethus, it seems likely that he was the objector to the *Categories*, and that the garbled passage in Olympiodorus reflects Porphyry's reply that Aristotle's definition of synonymy in the *Poetics* was divergent.

¹¹ πέντε οὖν τούτων ἐκ τῆς διαιρέσεως ἀναφανέντων, ὁμωνύμων συνωνύμων πολυωνύμων ἑτερωνύμων παρωνύμων, τὰ τρία μόνα νῦν παρέλαβεν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης...ὥς καὶ τῷ φιλοσόφῳ Συριανῷ δοκεῖ, τὸ τὰ παραλειφθέντα δύο, τὰ τε πολυώνυμα καὶ τὰ ἑτερώνυμα, πρὸς λεκτικὴν (μᾶλλον) παρασκευὴν ὁρᾶν ἢ πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπίβλεψιν· διόπερ ἐν ῥητορικαῖς τέχναις καὶ τοιαύταις ἄλλαις πραγματεαῖς οἰκειότερον περὶ τούτων διαλέγεται, ἐν αἷς τὸ τε αὐτὸ πολλαχῶς λέγειν διὰ τῆς πολυωνυμίας διδάξει καὶ τὰ ἕτερα τῇ φύσει δι' ἑτέρων ὀνομάτων προφέρεσθαι, ἵνα σαφὴς καὶ ἀσύγχυτος ὁ λόγος φαίνεται. ἐνταῦθα δὲ περὶ ὁμωνύμων καὶ συνωνύμων διαλέγεται πραγματεῖωδῃ τὴν διαφορὰν ἔχοντων...

¹² In both Simplicius and Olympiodorus the preceding argument is the same, namely that Aristotle aims at concision, and we are meant to deduce the two missing types from the others. Olympiodorus has made nonsense of the ideas here, changing 'verbal' to 'dialectical', which destroys Syrianus' antithesis (and that of Porphyry); he confuses the distinction between what is said in the rhetorical and similar works and what is said in the *Categories*: ἐν δὲ ῥητορικαῖς τέχναις καὶ ἄλλαις πραγματεαῖς παραπλησίως πολυωνύμων καὶ ἑτερωνύμων ἐδεῖθη, ἐπειδὴ πῇ μὲν διδάσκει ὅτι τὸ αὐτὸ πολλαχῶς ἔστιν εἰπεῖν, ὅπερ οἰκεῖον πολυωνύμων, πῇ δὲ ὅτι δι' ἑτέρων ὀνομάτων τὰ ἕτερα ἔστι δηλώσαι διὰ τὸ ἀσύγχυτον καὶ διηρθρωμένον τῆς διδασκαλίας. ἐτι δὲ τοῦτο ἀναπέφανται ἡμῖν, ὅτι πρὸς διωλεκτικὴν μᾶλλον προπαρασκευὴν ὁρᾷ ταῦτα πρὸς τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων φύσιν, τὰ δὲ ὁμώνυμα καὶ συνώνυμα πραγματεῖωδῃ πρὸς ἄλληλα διαφορὰν ἔχει. Read ὁρᾷ ταῦτα <ῆ> at 28.5 Busse.

¹³ Compare Syrianus' ἐν ῥητορικαῖς τέχναις...διὰ τῆς πολυωνυμίας διδάξει and Porphyry's closing sentences.

¹⁴ Simplicius has repeated his antithesis between verbal and ontological analysis, ending ἄμφω ταῦτα παρήκεν, ὡς εἴρηται, διότι ῥητορικῆς μᾶλλον καὶ ποιητικῆς ἔστι περιεργίας, ἀλλ' οὐ φιλοσόφου θεωρίας.

Thus I conclude that we should reconstruct Aristotle's definition of synonymy in the *Poetics* as follows:

συνώνυμα [εἶπεν εἶναι] ὧν πλείω μὲν τὰ ὀνόματα λόγος δὲ ὁ αὐτός, [οἷα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ πολυώνυμα,] <οἷον> τό τε λώπιον καὶ ἱμάτιον καὶ φάρος.

Aristotle used neither of the Speusippian terms 'heteronyms' and 'polyonyms' there. We should also give the source as Porphyry, not Simplicius.¹⁵

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¹⁵ The statement of S. Haupt, *Philologus* 69 (1910), 252, that Jacob Bernays had proved that Plotinus and Porphyry knew the lost part of the *Poetics*, is wholly false: cf. Bernays, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die aristotelische Theorie des Drama* (Berlin, 1880), pp. 32 ff., 107.