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### Article abstract

The hermeneutic tradition concerning Aristotle's *Categories* goes back to Eudorus and his contemporaries in the first century BC. Initially a perplexing text, it forces the Platonist to consider a variety of new dialectical questions. The criticisms of Eudorus demonstrate the desire for orderly arrangements, and pose questions that the hermeneutic tradition, culminating in the magnificent commentary of Simplicius, would try to answer. His pursuit of a critical agenda does not warrant the label "anti-Aristotelian" or "polemical", but it does show why he preferred to be known as an Academic than as a Peripatetic.

# EUDORUS AND THE EARLY PLATONIST INTERPRETATION OF THE *CATEGORIES*

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**RÉSUMÉ :** *La tradition herméneutique concernant les Catégories d'Aristote remonte à Eudore et à ses contemporains du premier siècle av. J.-C. Pour interpréter ce texte difficile, il faut que les disciples de Platon considèrent quelques problèmes nouveaux de la dialectique. Les critiques d'Eudore manifestent le désir d'un ordre rigoureux, et elles posent des questions auxquelles la tradition herméneutique, culminant dans le magnifique commentaire de Simplicius, tentera de répondre. Le projet critique d'Eudore ne nous permet pas de parler d'un « ennemi d'Aristote », ni de « polémique », mais on y voit bien pourquoi il préférerait être reconnu comme un « académicien » plutôt qu'un péripatéticien.*

**ABSTRACT :** *The hermeneutic tradition concerning Aristotle's Categories goes back to Eudorus and his contemporaries in the first century BC. Initially a perplexing text, it forces the Platonist to consider a variety of new dialectical questions. The criticisms of Eudorus demonstrate the desire for orderly arrangements, and pose questions that the hermeneutic tradition, culminating in the magnificent commentary of Simplicius, would try to answer. His pursuit of a critical agenda does not warrant the label "anti-Aristotelian" or "polemical", but it does show why he preferred to be known as an Academic than as a Peripatetic.*

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## I. ARISTOTLE AND THE PLATONISTS

We have recently witnessed much interest in the early reception of Aristotle by those of broadly Platonist persuasion. Lloyd Gerson has written a powerful book examining Neoplatonist theories of the harmony of Plato and Aristotle, in which he strikes significant blows against the modern Anglo-American orthodoxy that assumes a wide gulf between Aristotle and his philosophic mentor.<sup>1</sup> We also have a useful and scholarly, though less engaging and less illuminating, account by George Karamanolis of the reception of Aristotle by Platonists from Antiochus of Ascalon to Porphyry.<sup>2</sup> A significant difference between the two books results from the relative

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1. Lloyd GERSON, *Aristotle and Other Platonists*, Cambridge, CUP, 2005 ; the orthodox view results partly from the lack of interest in Aristotle's early work, coupled with an unwillingness to engage with issues of his development.

2. George E. KARAMANOLIS, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement ? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*, Oxford, OUP, 2006, p. 83 ; John DILLON, *The Middle Platonists*, London, Duckworth, 1977.

consensus of Neoplatonists to the effect that Aristotle was an ally,<sup>3</sup> as opposed to the radical disagreement among platonically inclined philosophers before Plotinus as to whether Aristotle ought to be afforded any credibility at all. From Iamblichus in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century Aristotle supplied the early part of the philosophic curriculum that any emerging Platonist could be expected to tackle, and from AD 529 (and probably for some time before at Alexandria) it became the politically astute option (if not the only one)<sup>4</sup> to give greater prominence to one's Aristotelian credentials.

However, I know of no compelling evidence that the reading of Aristotle ever featured directly in any Platonist curriculum before Plotinus,<sup>5</sup> and even there it was less an educational text than a basis for discussion within an educational circle. Not until Porphyry do we find a Platonist producing a commentary-like work on an Aristotelian text, and Porphyry was sufficiently scholarly in outlook to have commented on other non-Platonists from Homer to Ptolemy.<sup>6</sup> Admittedly we have some evidence of works about the *Categories* from the end of the first century BC to the middle of the second century AD, from figures such as Eudorus, Lucius, and Nicostratus, but these works were certainly not commending Aristotle's teachings and using them as an authoritative basis for positive lessons.<sup>7</sup> However, during the same period some Platonists came to appreciate the didactic potential of the Aristotelian *Organon* in particular, and no work became more important than the *Categories*, with some Platonist authors striving to show that Plato himself held a theory of "categories" in works such as the *Sophist*, *Theaetetus*, *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*.<sup>8</sup>

3. Proclus is somewhat less convinced than most, and frequently brings out the differences between Plato and Aristotle, often alluding to the latter rather than mentioning him by name.

4. It appears that Olympiodorus could still lecture on Plato in the mid-560s at Alexandria, albeit with the occasional effort to disguise the full extent of his disagreement with Christian readings of the climax of the *Alcibiades* at 133c.

5. Certainly Eudorus himself, whose fragments may be found in Claudio MAZZARELLI, "Raccolta e interpretazione delle testimonianze e dei frammenti del medioplatonico Eudoro di Alessandria", I, "Testo e traduzione dei frammenti sicuri", *Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica*, 77 (1985), p. 197-209, is labelled an "interpreter" of Aristotle by Simplicius in the context of his engagement with the *Categories* (ἐξηγητής, *Simpl. in Cat.*, 159, 32 = T. 14 Mazzarelli) and he is associated as early as Alexander with an emendation (or perhaps, more accurately, a factual correction) to the text of the *Metaphysics* (Alex. Aphr. in *Met.*, 58, 31-59, 8 = Eudorus T. 2 Mazzarelli), but none of this implies that he wrote a commentary of the kind that would reflect a class curriculum.

6. See George E. KARAMANOLIS, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement?*, p. 2, who dates the first Platonist commentaries on Aristotle to "around AD 300". That date should be brought forward a little. From Porphyry there survives the short "catechist" commentary on the *Categories*, but a more important and more detailed commentary is lost. That commentary is probably the indirect source of much of what we know about the interpretation of the work up to that point.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 233-236; Adriano GIOÈ, *Filosofi medioplatonici del II secolo D.C. : Testimonianze e frammenti*, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2002, p. 402-406; Daniela P. TAORMINA, "Nicostrato contro Aristotele. 'Aristotele contro Nicostrato'", in Françoise DASTUR, Carlos LÉVY, ed., *Études de philosophie ancienne et de phénoménologie*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1999.

8. *Sophist* 254c is the likely source of Hermodorus' account of Plato's own categories (fr. 7 Isnardi-Parente), and Hermodorus was early enough to have known Plato; we should never have received Simplicius' report (*in Phys.* 247.30ff.) if Dercyllides had not wanted to preserve it late in the first century BC or fairly early in the first century AD; the Anonymous *Theaetetus*-Commentator, whose work I am inclined to date in the same period, brings in categories at XX.30-37, XL.8-11, and LXVIII.1-36, with some prompting in the text at 152d in particular; Plutarch at *Moralia* 1023e finds categories at *Timaeus* 37a-b; and Alcinoüs, in chap-

I should perhaps clarify what I mean by a “Platonist”. I prefer to confine myself to those who would identify their primary allegiance as being to Plato, as opposed to the founders of other philosophic schools, and believe that the true philosophy is best revealed in the works of Plato himself. Karamanolis, on the other hand, would seem to define the term broadly, but at the expense of casting the net too wide to be useful. No word for “Platonist” was current in the days of Antiochus of Ascalon, who for Karamanolis is the beginning of a pro-Aristotelian Platonism. There is some truth in this, but Antiochus showed little inclination towards unravelling a deep message in Plato’s dialogues, and he thought of himself as a follower of the “Old Academy” together with Aristotle and at least Zeno from the Stoic school. It was simply a single type of philosophy, drawing upon the common notions that all sensitive human beings share, and using a rather different language to interpret them.<sup>9</sup> The message as far as the core of the ethical system was concerned was the same. Antiochus was not an “eclectic”, since he did not acknowledge that he had to choose between the key players; he saw himself simply as a philosopher of the classical type. So far as we are aware nobody appropriated the title of “Platonic philosopher” until the early first century AD, with such a description becoming common only in the second century.<sup>10</sup> By this time it seems to imply an allegiance to Plato *as opposed to others*, and a commitment to the presentation and elucidation of Plato’s own philosophy. It seems to me that the first to qualify for the title in this sense was Eudorus of Alexandria, who was content with the term “Academic” to designate his leaning towards Plato.<sup>11</sup> Plutarch’s writings strongly suggest that this term would also have suited his own *persona*, not to speak of his mentor Ammonius,<sup>12</sup> and we today should be reluctant to refuse the title of “Platonist” to either of these. However, with the Anonymous *Theaetetus*-Commentator a gulf is already widening between the terms “Academic” and “Platonic”, with some Platonists at least (LIV.38-LV.13) being unwilling to associate themselves with a name that they associated with sceptical deserters from the Platonist cause.<sup>13</sup> It may be for this reason that Plutarch appears to have avoided such terms.

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ter 6 of the *Didascalicus* where he tries to show that Plato anticipated everything of value in Aristotelian logic, affirms Plato’s knowledge of the ten categories (159.43-44), seeking to find them “in the *Parmenides* and elsewhere”, just as he had sought to find instruction on types of sophisms and their refutations in the *Euthydemus* (159.38-42).

9. My view of Antiochus is stated in “Platonic Interpretation and Eclectic Theory”, in H. TARRANT, D. BALTZLY, ed., *Reading Plato in Antiquity*, London, Duckworth, 2006, p. 9-18.
10. John GLUCKER, *Antiochus and the Late Academy*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978, p. 206-214.
11. The title is found in Stobaeus (and therefore in Stobaeus’ seemingly well-informed source) at *Ecl.* 2.42.7 = T1 Mazzarelli, and occurs also in anon. I *Intr. ad Aratum* p. 97 = T11 and in *Simpl. in Categ.* 187.10 = T16; I discuss the meaning of this title below.
12. On the “Academic” style of Platonism encountered in Plutarch and Ammonius see Jan OPSOMER, *In Search of the Truth : Academic Tendencies in Middle Platonism*, Brussels, Verhandelungen van Koninklijke Academie, 1998.
13. See on this Mauro BONAZZI, “Un dibattito tra Academici e Platonici sull’eredità di Platone : La testimonianza del commentario anonimo al *Teeteto*”, in *Papiri filosofici : Miscellanea di studi IV*, Firenze, Olschki, 2003, p. 41-74, particularly p. 57-63; I see few implications here for the date of anon. *Th.*, beyond making a first century BC date rather unlikely. To my mind a more anti-Academic Platonism is al-

Karamanolis likewise has no problem about seeing Numenius as a Platonist,<sup>14</sup> even though it is clear enough that this was not how he preferred to describe himself. He was a “Pythagorean”, who happened to believe that many works of Plato largely preserved Pythagorean doctrine. As an interpreter of Plato he could be referred to as a “Platonic” by later Platonists who leaned towards Pythagoras.<sup>15</sup> We should not expect much allegiance to Aristotle on the part of those on the boundary between Pythagoras and Plato, and this description would at first sight appear to suit Eudorus too. Eudorus is consequently treated regularly as a member of an anti-Aristotelian movement that would apparently embrace Moderatus and Numenius among the Pythagoreans as well as Lucius, Nicostratus, and Atticus among the Platonists. But did Eudorus’ Pythagorean interests really entail any hostility to Aristotle? Porphyry and many other Neoplatonists happily regarded both Pythagoras and Aristotle as allies. The evidence for Eudorus really only concerns the *Categories*, and we should leave open the possibility that he may have had a more ambiguous attitude to other parts of the Corpus.

## II. THE PROBLEMS OF EARLY ENGAGEMENT WITH ARISTOTLE

Recent scholarship on Platonic hermeneutics in this period has clearly revealed just how difficult it was for Platonists to be able to interpret Plato’s own writings, given the absence of strong interpretative traditions and agreed hermeneutic principles. It was little wonder then that framing their response to Aristotle was an even more difficult challenge. Long known primarily from his exoteric works, Aristotle in a post-Andronicus era had to be re-assessed on the basis of esoteric as much as exoteric texts. It was no easy matter to be reconciling the *Eudemus*, that not only argued for the existence after death of the intellect but actually seemed to assume the continuity of some rudimentary memory upon the resumption of bodily life (fr. 5 Ross), with the concept of the soul as *eidos* and *morphê* of the physical body at the beginning of the second book of the *De Anima*. Then again, there were quite enough interpretative challenges within the esoteric treatises themselves, such as reconciling what is said about *ousia* in the *Categories* with what is said about it in *Metaphysics Z*. Analogous problems were felt with regard to Plato, by whom sense-objects could be described both as *on* and as *mê on* according to the pro-Thrasyllan source of D.L. 3.64. Plato was hard enough, but at least Platonists had to seem to be in agreement with him. Aristotle often presented much the same challenges, and it was open to them to embrace or dismiss such parts of the corpus as they pleased.

At this point I think that we have to distinguish sharply between Platonist attitudes to the Aristotelian categories themselves and to the work in which they are

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ready in evidence with Thrasyllus, the bulk of whose writings would date from the beginning of the first century AD.

14. See especially KARAMANOLIS, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement?*, p. 129, with n. 5-6.

15. Numenius was twice referred to in a list of “Platonics” (Iambl. *De An.* 23, Proc. in *Remp.* II. 96.11; cf. Porph. *V. Plot* 14 [without the key term]), as the word often applied to *Plato’s interpreters* rather than to his self-declared followers (cf. Panaetius at Proclus, in *Tim.* I. 162.12-13).

spelled out. For instance, the Anonymous *Theaetetus*-Commentator (LXVIII) is happy to find the first three Aristotelian categories (according to the order foreshadowed in *Categories* 4) behind the text of *Theaetetus* 152d : *ousia*, *poson*, and *poion*. But he is not so much acknowledging a debt to Aristotle as claiming to find in a Platonic text many of the concepts that are fundamental to Aristotelian theory here. This is even more obvious in Alcinous, when he claims in chapter 6 (158.43-44) that all ten categories (he does not call them “Aristotelian”) are to be found in the *Parmenides* and other writings. The primary legacy of the *Categories* is embraced, without any obvious endorsement of the work itself. This may be important given that chapter 5, which gives ontological primacy to the physical particular, is one of the seemingly most anti-Platonic texts of the Aristotelian corpus — at least for those who see a theory of transcendent ideas as being the heart of Platonism. Where we see Platonists of the period attacking Aristotle on the categories it generally involves an attack on the work itself ; where we see the embrace of the categories themselves there is no admission that the Aristotelian work is covering important new ground. Plato may either have anticipated Aristotle’s ten, as in Alcinous, or have employed a different set that better meets philosophy’s needs.

At this point it is worth recalling that according to Dercyllides, a figure somehow linked with Thrasyllus and highly regarded by Theon of Smyrna, the Old Academic entrepreneur Hermodorus (fr. 7 Isnardi-Parente = Simpl. in *Phys.* 247.30ff) had attributed three categories to Plato : “in itself” (*kath’ hautō*), and two kinds of “in relation” (*pros heterā*), one of which involved its relation to its opposite (*pros enantia* as opposed to the simple *pros ti*). If this information was well known among Platonists of the early empire, then it may have placed them under some kind of pressure both to find categories in the dialogues and to demonstrate that they serve their purpose better than Aristotle’s. The basic division suggested by the report was supported both by *Sophist* 255c-d and by many passages of the *Parmenides* from 136a. It is supported by Xenocrates too.<sup>16</sup> Finding a distinction between the simple *pros ti* and the *pros enantion* in Plato would have been more difficult, but one could certainly find examples of the latter in the *Parmenides* (e.g. 152d6). It is likely that Dercyllides had appealed to Hermodorus’ authority with a view to reviving these “categories” and finding something distinctively Platonic rather than Aristotelian or Stoic.

Simplicius cites three Platonically-inclined philosophers for their hostile attitude to the *Categories* : Eudorus, Lucius, and Nicostratus. The latter two are easily dismissed as engaging in trivial polemics, but Eudorus presents a considerable challenge, as it is very difficult to build a coherent picture of him from the varied fragments that we possess. We know him as one who engaged also in the interpretation of Plato and Pythagoras, to both of whom he is well disposed.<sup>17</sup> As indicated above, he

16. Fr. 95I-P = 12H ; the reference is actually to “those who take the position of Xenocrates and Andronicus”, and one imagines that Simplicius (in *Categ.* 63.22ff) would not have been speaking from independent knowledge of Xenocrates himself.

17. Scholars still regularly refer to DILLON, *The Middle Platonists*, for discussion of Eudorus ; he is now being re-examined in depth by Mauro Bonazzi.

is only ever described as an “Academic”. For a follower of Antiochus of Ascalon that term would raise questions of what the true “Academic” tradition was, ultimately entailing the rejection of all that had followed Arcesilaus’ accession, but followers of Philo of Larissa would have denied that there was any choice to be made, and would thus have been able to employ the term more proudly without ambiguity. Certainly, Eudorus was committed to Plato and committed to doctrine of some kind, but Philo’s history of philosophy would not deny him that. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, I suspect (not uncontroversially) that Eudorus espoused everything that the term “Academic” might have implied, resembling Plutarch in being committed to a broadly Platonic philosophy, with a nod towards the critical activities of New Academy as well.<sup>18</sup>

Eudorus flourished at a time when Aristotle was being re-marketed as the author of the treatises. The efforts of Antiochus of Ascalon to show that Platonism and Aristotelianism were one and the same philosophy seemed plausible enough as long as Aristotle was known *primarily* from the “exoteric” works, but, whatever the truth behind the story of the rediscovery of the treatises, there was certainly a new wave of interest in them, involving Andronicus, Boethus, Aristo, and Athenodorus as well as Eudorus.<sup>19</sup> Two former followers of Antiochus of Ascalon’s school, Aristo and Cratippus,<sup>20</sup> were led to declare themselves to be Peripatetics, presumably after (i) recognizing that Aristotle did differ from Plato in spite of what some exoteric works might suggest, and (ii) finding on reflection that they preferred the mature Aristotelian position. I wish to emphasize here that the treatises do not only reveal an Aristotle who cannot without ingenuity be reconciled with Plato; they also indulge in extensive criticism of positions adopted by Plato, Speusippus and Xenocrates in matters that range from the practical (ethics and politics) to the theoretical (metaphysics and physics). This criticism highlights aspects of Plato’s thought and the thought of his successors that were not grounded in the familiar sensible world. Furthermore, they serve to suggest links between Plato (with the Old Academy) and the Pythagoreans, links that would have been less evident without Aristotle’s personal contribution. Hitherto transcendent or Pythagorizing elements in Plato may have been dismissed as hyperbolic metaphor, with their radical nature going unnoticed. When the treatises began to attract attention both the transcendent leanings of Plato and the Aristotelian emphasis on the world of physical particulars became evident. The single Platonic-Aristotelian-Stoic system of Antiochus had to disappear, built as it was upon a flawed history of philosophy. Ironically it was in this new era that the first philosophy to describe itself as “eclectic” was born — Potamo of Alexandria (D.L. 1.21) really did recognize that on any given issue one had to choose between the doctrines of Plato,

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18. In my view this would not have implied any meaningful approval of “scepticism”.

19. *Simpl. in Categ.* 8.159.32 = T14 Mazzarelli.

20. Philod. *Acad.* XXXV.10-16. Cratippus was a pupil of Antiochus’ brother Aristus rather than of Antiochus himself; a little later, Aristocles of Messene, on whom see KARAMANOLIS, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement?*, p. 37-41, was to regard himself as a Peripatetic, though his orientation too is remarkably similar to that of Antiochus.

Aristotle, and the Stoa, and that an amalgam of classical and early Hellenistic doctrines could be marketed as something new.<sup>21</sup>

It is a reasonable supposition that Eudorus too recognized the extent of Aristotle's differences from Plato and his Successors, and was led to resist the new Aristotelian force in philosophy in favour of a Platonism that leaned towards the very elements of Platonism that Aristotle had taken a stand against — transcendence and Pythagoreanism. Eudorus too is interested in transcendent principles, of a quasi-mathematical kind, and in the early Pythagoreans — interests that are absent from our evidence for Antiochus. Since he embraced the side of Plato that Aristotle had repeatedly rejected, it is inevitable that he would ultimately have treated some parts of Aristotle as suspect. As yet the philosophic world lacked the hermeneutic devices that would later enable Neoplatonists to find truth in Aristotelian philosophy at a different level to that addressed by Plato.

A lack of hermeneutic strategies, however, actually made it easy to accept that Aristotle was a complex philosopher, only some of whose findings had to be rejected. Just as the interpretation of Plato was an extremely difficult task in the early days of serious interpretation, so too the Aristotelian treatises repeatedly offered some excruciating challenges for anybody dedicated to finding a single coherent Aristotelian system.<sup>22</sup> Works and parts of works seemed to disagree. One could not easily make it one's task to tackle just one work at a time (as one might the *Phaedo*, for example), since treatises lacked the internal coherence that would be required and often stood in close relation to others. Nor was it so easy to apply to him an early Platonist hermeneutical principle that many have attributed to Eudorus: that Plato was "of many voices", not "of many opinions".<sup>23</sup> In fact, if this principle was meant to *distinguish* Plato from the leaders of other major schools of philosophy, thereby accusing them of the kind of *diaphônia* usually associated with the attacks of the sceptics<sup>24</sup> and indicative in Plato's eyes of opinion rather than knowledge,<sup>25</sup> then Aristotle was a likelier opponent than either Stoics or Epicureans. Even if the tactic of appealing to different

21. It is difficult to be sure whether Potamo is behind his fellow Alexandrian Clement's concept of philosophy as "this total eclectic [assemblage]" of appropriately reasoned conclusions in the four major philosophies (*Stromateis* I 1.7.37.6.4); it no doubt suited a Christian to avoid recognizing any single authority-figure among the Greek philosophers, and to acknowledge their disagreements.

22. Hence it is not surprising that Riccardo CHIARADONNA, "Autour d'Eudore: Les débuts de l'exégèse des *Catégories* dans le moyen platonisme", in Mauro BONAZZI, Jan OPSOMER, ed, *The Origins of the Platonic System. Platonisms of the early Imperial Age*, Leuven, Peeters, 2009, n. 4, can write of Eudorus: "Ce que nous avons d'Eudore ne permet pas de lui attribuer une connaissance profonde de l'œuvre et (surtout) de la pensée d'Aristote", for much the same could be written of most philosophers of his age, with the exception, perhaps, of Andronicus.

23. The passage of Stobaeus (*Ecl.* 2.49.25-50.5, 2.55.5-21) used to be thought to be Arius Didymus following Eudorus, but the "Arius Didymus" construct (among others) has quite properly been questioned by Tryggve GÖRANSSON, *Albinus, Alcinous, Arius Didymus*, Göteborg, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis (coll. "Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia", LXI), 1995; but there remains a good chance that Stobaeus' immediate source was a follower of Eudorus.

24. Even the mildest adherents of the New Academy employed the tactic, as Plutarch did in his anti-Stoic works.

25. The classic text is perhaps *Meno* 95c-96b, but the idea is present in texts such as the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, and it occurs at *Timaeus* 51e2-4.



philosophic phases in Aristotle's life had been known (and it was not a tactic employed in antiquity to rescue Plato from charges of inconsistency), it could only have *explained* his *diaphônia*, not absolved him of it. Hence it is entirely plausible that Eudorus found fault with the *Categories* and with parts of the *Metaphysics*, while still admiring certain exoteric works and certain other parts of the *Metaphysics*.

For a Platonist the *Categories* was a confronting text. It is virtually certain that the *Organon* attracted a great deal of interest, insofar as it gave something lacking any explicit treatment in the writings of Plato. Much that was said in the works on logic was potentially helpful to a Platonist, and offered the kind of instruction that one would not think wasted on any respectable student of philosophy. So should a Platonist adopt them as something that was a natural product of Plato's school with which Plato would agree? Should he in fact argue that Plato actually anticipated all this in one work or another? Should he detect traces of a different but related theory scattered throughout Plato's work and the works of his immediate followers? Or should he expose weaknesses in what Aristotle offered and try to work towards something more plausibly Platonic?

The centrality of the *Categories* to modern Aristotelian endeavours and its consequent familiarity should not obscure the fact that it is rather a fiendish work to interpret. To begin with the author does not set out by defining its subject matter. The name suggests that we shall deal with the ten categories, but we are plunged straightaway into a discussion of homonyms and synonyms, before noting some basic points about predication. Chapter 4 finally introduces the ten categories themselves, but it does not do so in the order in which Aristotle will tackle them, and it does not commit him to tackling them all either. Above all, we do not receive any guidance as to whether we should be reading anything metaphysical into what we are being told, or whether we are dealing strictly with the meaningful terms that constitute sentences. Here it should be appreciated that the Stoics had long built language into the fabric of the world, while Platonists too were used to assuming that the world of language somehow reflected the realities of the universe. The precise relation may have been difficult to pinpoint, but somehow dialectic had to serve as a science *for an approach to reality*. Divisions and definitions were also supposed to reflect reality. So how could they easily accept that the Aristotelian *Categories* was a metaphysically neutral document? In particular, how could they not suspect an anti-Platonic agenda behind the identification of primary *ousia* with individual particulars, while universals were called *ousia* only in a secondary sense? And as soon as they allowed something metaphysical here, how was it to be reconciled with Aristotle's own *Metaphysics Z*?

It is against this background that we should see the activities of Eudorus. We hear of him nine times in Simplicius' magnificent *Commentary on the Categories*, all in the treatment of *Categories* 7-8, where Aristotle is dealing with Relative and with Quality respectively.<sup>26</sup> This probably indicates that Porphyry, to whose full-length commentary we owe most of the early material,<sup>27</sup> only used anything by Eudorus in

26. See 159.32, 174.14, 187.10, 206.10, 236.28, 246.22, 256.16, 263.27, 268.13.

27. See *Simpl. in Categ.* 160.10.

this section, and possibly also that Eudorus had written either on Relative and Quality alone (as Boethus had written on the Relative, 163.6) or with a special focus on it — for he had been especially keen to show the priority of Quality over Relative. In any case Eudorus is clearly going well beyond casual criticism of Aristotelian trends, writing rather with the intention of undermining much of the detail of Aristotle's book. Eudorus asks, not without some point, why it was that Aristotle tackled *to pros ti* without paying any attention to the concept of *to kath' hauto* to which it is opposed. Simplicius is fairly dismissive, but it does seem rather like discussing the concept of altruism without a mention of selfishness. One needs to know what else is possible. But it is certainly relevant that *kath' hauto* had been regularly contrasted with *pros ti* in Platonic and Old Academic thought.

There are times, however, when Aristotle feels the need to be especially precise, as when he says that the wing is properly *pros pterôton*, not *pros ornin* (6b36-7a5), so that there is this reciprocity even when there appears not to be. Here Eudorus is, I believe, almost *satirizing* Peripatetic precision when he objects that the reciprocity is now between what is spoken of in activity and what is spoken of in potency. Presumably, on the analogy of the soul, the wing is the first entelechy of a potentially winged creature, and Eudorus claims that *pterôton* is used to refer to any member of a species *whose adult has wings* (such as a caterpillar, for instance), while *epeterômenon* is used for anything whose wings are actually formed (such as the adult butterfly). It is no accident here that Eudorus is given the title *Akadêmaikos*, since he appears to be giving a critique of Aristotle in Aristotelian terms as a New Academic would have done. And, whatever his intention, it is clear that he set in train a considerable debate, involving Athenodorus, Cornutus, Boethus, Apollonius of Alexandria, Aristo, and unnamed commentators about problems involving the status of “wing” and “rudder” as Relatives, and what is reciprocal to them (187.18-189.12). Simplicius concludes by noting that “Archytas” (I think somebody who *adopts* this name),<sup>28</sup> who is closely associated with Eudorus and who produced a derivative Doric work on categories himself,<sup>29</sup> omits the reciprocal feature of the Relative altogether.

28. Adoption by intellectuals of appropriate Greek names was probably common enough in the case of non-Greeks. Euharmostus, another of Eudorus' associates, bears a name that would be highly appropriate for a Pythagorean. There are interesting cases in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*, since the author had been known (i) by the transliteration of his own name under Longinus, (ii) by its translation into Greek by Amelius, and (iii) by a word that suggested royalty more obliquely later in life (17). Within the Plotinian circle there was one Zethus, an Arab, who had undoubtedly been given this Greek name, wholly or partly, because, like the character of Euripides' *Antiope*, he preferred the practical life to the theoretical (7). Plotinus had also altered Amelius' name to suit a philosopher who exalted the One, making it Amerios (“Partless”, 7), while Amelius bestowed the name Mikkalos on Paulinus (apparently giving the Lat paul- a new Greek form mikk-, *mikkos* being Doric for *mikros*, cf. also *mikkyllos*, but with unflattering reference to his mental powers, 7). I tackle such issues, including their relation to the linguistic speculation of the *Cratylus* and other texts in H. TARRANT, “Living by the *Cratylus* : Hermeneutics and Philosophic Names in the Roman Empire”, *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, 3 (2009), p. 3-25.

29. The Doric fragments have been placed in order by Holger THESLEFF, *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period*, Åbo, Åbo Akademi, 1965, with the help of an inferior *koine* version. That version does give not only Sparta but also Tarentum as examples of place, giving rise to the reader's expectation that the author is the original Archytas of Tarentum, but, even if it was original, it does not necessarily mean that the author was intending to deceive, only that he had taken on a new *persona*.

Archytas is also associated with Eudorus over the question of the order of the categories, both making Quality second, Quantity third, with Relative coming later. As a Platonist Eudorus feels that Quality must be more closely linked with Substance than Quantity can be. Since he recognizes that Aristotle is concerned with sensible Substance (206.14), it may be that Quality's link with form and shape in the *Timaeus* has suggested this to him (cf. *Simpl. in Categ.* 206.15-18); again, the pre-cosmic condition in the *Timaeus* had already involved something Quality-like, but nothing very Quantity-like. Furthermore Eudorus goes beyond Archytas in putting Time and Place before the Relative. This again could be connected with the belief that until the one world is given Quantity, which in turn provides the conditions for separation by Time and Place (both conceived mathematically), one cannot have  $x$  standing in relation to  $y$ . One certainly cannot have the wing serving as part of the winged or the rudder serving as part of the ruddered.

A discussion earlier in Simplicius at 156.17 had credited "those who take Lucius' position" with criticizing the order Substance-Quantity-Relative-Quality in favour of Archytas' Substance-[Quality + Quantity]-Relative, itself compatible with the order of *Categories* 4. It is worth noting here that not even Andronicus would defend Aristotle on the position of Relative, and that he actually placed it last (157.18-20). So, in delaying Relative further, Eudorus had the backing of Andronicus. A non-Platonist could perhaps be content to deny that Aristotle was propounding any special order, as seen at 155.31-32, but for a Platonist such hierarchies are important; hence Simplicius will defend the order as both natural and suited to teaching (158.1-27), while Porphyry defended the Aristotelian order even more vigorously, referring explicitly to Empedocles<sup>30</sup> and to the ratios of the Psychogony in the *Timaeus* but earning himself a mild rebuke from the later commentator.

Eudorus has a number of detailed criticisms on the discussion of quality itself, beginning with the third line (8b27-9a13). Critics generally (236.12-13) had objected that states (*hexeis*) and conditions (*diatheseis*) are listed under Quality as they had been under Relative. While some thought Aristotle's distinction between states and conditions here ran counter to general Greek usage, Eudorus objects that it runs counter to Aristotle's own further statements. The distinction makes a *hexis* relatively stable in contrast to the *diathesis*, but Eudorus somewhere finds Aristotle committed to the instability of both — a state too being easily got rid of.<sup>31</sup> This connects up with the next criticism, where the distinction is actually presumed. Eudorus now complains that Aristotle's discussion of natural capacities under the heading of Quality (9a14-27) is superfluous, as any natural capacity must be either long-lived or short-lived, either a *hexis* or a *diathesis* (246.22-24).

It does not take long to realise that Eudorus is somebody with a liking for neat and orderly divisions, with a precise rationale. That actually fits well with what those

30. To cite Empedocles was a blow against "Archytas", showing the Pythagorean tradition (to which Empedocles was assumed to belong) to be on Aristotle's side.

31. There is no relevant note in Barry Fleet (trans.), *SIMPLICIUS, On Aristotle Categories*, London, Duckworth, 2002, but it seems that Eudorus finds his text at 9a10, where there is a crux.

who called themselves “Academics” were doing in the first century BC.<sup>32</sup> At 256.16-18 he objects to the inclusion of heat, cold, health, and disease under both “conditions” (*diatheseis*) and “affective qualities” (*pathêtikai poiôtêtes*), and he is actually taking issue with Andronicus’ attempt to discover a fifth type of quality at 263.27-29. At 268.13-14 he is puzzling over Aristotle’s exclusion of rare, dense, rough and smooth from the category of quality on the ground that they (but not straightness and roundness) are indicative rather of position (10a16-24).

On the whole Eudorus’ reaction to *Categories* 7 and 8 is one that questions the refinement of the *organization* of materials in Aristotle’s texts, often raising points that it would not be difficult to puzzle over today. Even though we might now be well able to supply solutions, and Porphyry nearly always had an answer for Aristotle too, it remains a fact that Aristotle has not always explained what he is doing and the basic principles behind his division. The *Categories* are simply not as clear as one might have supposed. Eudorus is not so much attacking Aristotle, as exposing weaknesses and countering what was probably a growing admiration for the Stagirite. At this time not even the Peripatetics were handling the text with great confidence.

### III. EUDORUS AND ARISTOTLE

In these circumstances it is not necessary to regard Eudorus’ activity as “anti-Aristotelian”.<sup>33</sup> It is likely that he had read the *Metaphysics* avidly for clues about how Plato’s own metaphysics should be understood, even though he ultimately found it necessary to disagree on details. In recent work Bonazzi, building on an idea of Mansfeld,<sup>34</sup> has made it seem highly probable that Eudorus, in some of his own central work on Pythagorean metaphysics,<sup>35</sup> has taken due note not only of *Metaphysics* I.5 986b24-25 but also of XII.4-5. When one takes into account also the emendation to *Metaphysics* 988a9-11, the picture that emerges is of a Platonically-inclined philosopher who struggled with the details of some Aristotelian texts.<sup>36</sup>

32. Both Philo of Larissa and Eudorus in Stob. *Ecl.* 2.39.20-2.50.10, where Eudorus’ book entitled *Division of Philosophic Discourse* is introduced by Stobaeus’ source (conceivably Arius) with great praise for its “problem-by-problem” treatment at 2.42.7.

33. To be fair to KARAMANOLIS, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement?*, he does not seem to go quite this far. His main discussion of Eudorus at 82-84 is more balanced, but on p. 28 we read: “Eudorus was the first to react to Antiochus, disputing the value of Aristotle’s philosophy”.

34. Mauro BONAZZI, “Eudorus of Alexandria and Early Imperial Platonism”, in R. SHARPLES, R. SORABJI, ed., *Philosophy 100 BC to AD 200, BICS Suppl.*, London, ICS Publications, 2007, p. 365-377 at 368-369, 373-376; cf. Jaap MANSFELD, “Compatible Alternatives: Middle Platonist Theology and Xenophanes’ Reception”, in R. van den BROEK, T. BAARDA, J. MANSFELD, ed., *Knowledge of God in the Greco-Roman World*, Leiden, Brill, 1988, p. 92-117, at 99-100.

35. *Simpl. in Phys.* 181.7-30 = T3-5 Mazzarelli; I shall not insist here that Eudorus means this metaphysics of One principle above a pair of elements to apply to Plato as well, but this is likely to have been the case since Longinus and Porphyry (*VPlot.* 20-21) imply that Thrasyllus and Moderatus did so in the following century.

36. It is worth observing, with Mauro BONAZZI, Franco TRABATTONI, *Quaderni di Acme*, 58 (2004), p. 375, that 10 out of 22 Eudoran texts deal with Aristotle.

How plausible was it historically that Eudorus should have been a confirmed anti-Aristotelian? Plutarch is one figure obviously influenced by Eudorus on exegetical matters. He displays the same ability to indulge in criticism of other Schools in the Aristotelian tradition, and is certainly capable of applying that to Aristotle too, albeit constructively rather than destructively.<sup>37</sup> Aristotle is less of an enemy than the Stoics and Epicureans, and Plutarch will also make positive use of Aristotle at times, and assume that he is bringing out material already explicit in Plato. Both Dillon and Karamanolis discuss a passage in the *De Animae Procreatione* (1023e) in which it appears that Plutarch is finding the categories already implied by *Timaeus* 37b-c,<sup>38</sup> and a Plutarchian work on the ten categories is to be found in the Lamprias catalogue. That both works talk of ten categories indicates an acceptance of the basic conceptual scheme that Eudorus did not perhaps share, but that is a matter of detail. Nothing prevents Eudorus' attitude to Aristotle having been broadly similar to Plutarch's.

On the other hand, at around AD 160, it seems that Nicostratus was composing an attack on the *Categories* in the tradition of a Platonist Lucius, aimed at all parts of the work. His objections are described as *enstaseis* (Simpl. in *Categ.* 1.21 ; 2.13 ; cf. 26.21 ; 30.16 ; 73.29 ; 76.13) or *aporiai* (Simpl. in *Categ.* 1.18 ; 2.1), and verbs of accusation such as *enkaleō* (Simpl. in *Categ.* 29.24 ; 58.15 ; 63.4 ; 127.30 ; 368.12 ; 370.1 ; 428.3) or *aitiaomai* (Simpl. in *Categ.* 231.20 ; 388.4 ; 406.6 ; 410.25) are regularly used, along with other vocabulary of polemics, such as *antilegein* and cognates (62.30 ; 390.15). At one point an accusation of "empty-talk" (*mataiologia*, 58.15) is employed. What I wish to be noticed here is that the kind of language used by Simplicius, and perhaps by Porphyry before him in the seven books of the so-called *Commentary to Gedaleius*,<sup>39</sup> is not characteristic of his treatment of Eudorus. There were clearly some significant differences in the ways that Nicostratus and Eudorus approached the *Categories*, and it is dangerous to find the origins of Nicostratus' activities in Eudorus.

## CONCLUSION

Eudorus was indeed capable of being a critic of Aristotle, but he was not committed to being either an enemy or a friend. In particular, he was part of an age that was making new discoveries in the Aristotelian corpus and re-evaluating the history of philosophy in the light of these. Some philosophers had developed a greater enthusiasm for the Stagirite's writings than he had, and it would have been incumbent upon him to explain some of the reasons why he refused to be carried in a Peripatetic direction. As I wrote in 1985 concerning Eudorus' philosophic orientation : "His criticism

37. See KARAMANOLIS, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement ?*, p. 92-115.

38. See *ibid.*, p. 124-125 ; DILLON, *The Middle Platonists*, p. 226.

39. Note the following at Simpl. in *Categ.* 2.5-8 : "After these, Porphyry, the cause to whom we owe everything fine, achieved with considerable labour a perfect exegesis of the book and solutions to all the objections in seven volumes that are addressed to Gedaleius."

of Aristotle's *Categories* tells us little."<sup>40</sup> It was part of my early thesis, more often ignored than answered, that one would at that time have expected any philosopher called an "Academic" to have a critical attitude to a range of philosophies, along with some kind of loyalty to Plato. A loyalty to Plato, and in particular a loyalty to the *Timaeus*, would have entailed at that time an interest in the Pythagorean background of such works. So, when interpreting the ingredients of soul in the *Timaeus*, he is attracted to Old Academic scholarship, but seems not wholly won over by either Xenocrates or Crantor.<sup>41</sup> Plutarch engages with Eudorus here on the basis of the Academic standards of probability and reasonableness (*pithanon*, *eulogon*), as if conducting an in-school debate,<sup>42</sup> though this is less indicative of Eudorus' own self-image than of the sort of philosopher Plutarch saw Eudorus as. Overall, there is little in Eudorus to show that he was any more given to unreasoned dogmatism or unreasoning polemics than Plutarch had been.

It is well known, however, that close study of Eudorus' approach to the *Categories* makes it clear that he was very close to the Pythagorean writer on categories, Archytas. I presume that this is a matter of Eudorus influencing Archytas, since his researches clearly had an important impact on the Pythagorean tradition. Pythagoreans were very committed to their philosophy and tended to suspect the influence of the Socratic side of Plato,<sup>43</sup> so that they may usually be placed firmly in the "dogmatist" camp. However, Eudorus himself, while keen to find an understanding of Pythagorean ideas that explained Plato's attraction to them, is not known as a Pythagorean and therefore did not have to commit himself to any Pythagorean doctrine not found in Plato. We cannot be sure that he would never have subjected Pythagorean books to the same kind of critique to which he subjects the *Categories*.<sup>44</sup>

40. Harold TARRANT, *Scepticism or Platonism?*, Cambridge, CUP, 1985 ; 1<sup>st</sup> paperback ed. 2007, p. 5 ; cf. p. 131-132.

41. Plut. *Mor.* 1013b.

42. Later the criterion of harmony or *symphônia* is applied (*Mor.* 1020c).

43. See particularly Numenius fr. 24.54-56, 60-64.

44. I am grateful to Paul Thom for inviting me to speak at a conference on the reception of Aristotle's *Categories* hosted by Southern Cross University, and to the feedback of those present particularly Katerina Ierodiakonou. I am likewise grateful to Mauro Bonazzi and Riccardo Chiaradonna for allowing me a preview of Riccardo Chiaradonna's paper cited above in n. 22, which I am gratified to find myself in substantial agreement with. I greatly look forward to the edition of Eudorus promised by these two scholars.