

## ARISTOTLE AND A MODERN NOTION OF PREDICATION

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It is by now an accepted view that the traditional doctrine of predication allows terms representing both individuals and universals (concepts, abstract entities) to occupy the position of subject in a predicate statement, whereas modern logic allows only singular terms, for example, proper names, which stand for individuals, to be subjects. Thus, in the notation ' $Fx$ ' in modern logic, ' $F$ ' (the predicate) stands for a property (or concept) and ' $x$ ' (the subject) for an individual. In this way, traditional logic would regard as proper predication both of the following statements:

- (i) Socrates is pious,
- (ii) Piety is a virtue,

whereas modern predicate logic would disallow (ii). My aim in this brief paper is to show that, with regard to this aspect of predication—the aspect dealing with the proper subject of predication—Aristotle's theory must be dissociated from the traditional doctrine. For Aristotle means his primary substance, which is an individual, to be the paradigm case of the subject of a statement, as I will try to elucidate in this paper, and that even if what I am claiming as the position of Aristotle is not given explicit expression in his known works, it is certainly implicit in his logic and ontology.

According to Aristotle's doctrine of categories, which doctrine was meant to demolish Plato's theory of the self-existing Forms, an universal term, like piety, does not exist independently but inheres in a primary substance (i.e., an individual) and is ontologically dependent upon it; such a term is thus, in a Fregean-Russellian language, an incomplete symbol. In that doctrine, the term 'pious' (or 'piety'), being an attribute (or a property), must logically be an attribute of something—an individual: so that, if you say 'piety is a virtue', it is presupposed that there is *something* which is pious (and which virtuous). In the *Posterior Analytics* 73<sup>b7</sup> Aristotle says: "I also describe as (existing) per se whatever is not asserted of something else as subject. I mean, for example, that 'the walking' is *something else* (*heteron ti: aliquid aliud*) which walks, and similarly