

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN CONCRETE  
AND ABSTRACT NOUNS  
A Terminological Innovation in Herodian?\*

Abstract: This article lays out the terminological system used to distinguish between concrete and abstract nouns in Pseudo-Arcadius' Epitome of Herodian's *Περὶ καθολικῆς προσφῶδιᾶς* ('On prosody in general'), and shows that this system is fundamentally different from those found in other Greek grammatical texts.

Keywords: Pseudo-Arcadius, Herodian, concrete nouns, abstract nouns, οὐσία

(i) *Introduction*

Today we divide nouns, for some purposes, into two large groups: concrete nouns and abstract nouns. This categorization of nouns was already made by ancient Greek grammarians, but different terms for concrete and abstract nouns are used in different texts.

This article will first lay out the terminological system used to distinguish between concrete and abstract nouns in Pseudo-Arcadius' Epitome of Herodian's *Περὶ καθολικῆς προσφῶδιᾶς* ('On prosody in general'),<sup>1</sup> and then show that this system is fundamentally different from those found in other Greek grammatical texts.<sup>2</sup> At first sight, Pseudo-Arcadius' system shares the use of the term οὐσία with some other texts in which concrete and abstract nouns are distinguished, but the term turns out to occupy a quite different place in the system. Finally, we will consider the origins of Pseu-

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1) Pseudo-Arcadius' Epitome is one of the two fully-preserved epitomes of Herodian's *Περὶ καθολικῆς προσφῶδιᾶς*. The other one is by John Philoponus of Alexandria. See Dickey 2007, 76.

2) As well as reading relevant texts and secondary literature likely to be relevant, for the initial collection of evidence I also made a TLG search for the term οὐσία in grammatical and lexicographical texts up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD.

do-Arcadius' system: does it go back to Herodian, and how did it come about in the first place?

(ii) *The usage of the term οὐσία in Pseudo-Arcadius' Epitome*

There are five passages in which – as we shall see – Pseudo-Arcadius' epitome of Herodian's lost *Περὶ καθολικῆς προσωδίας* draws a distinction between abstract and concrete nouns:

(1) 121.4–9<sup>3</sup> Τὰ εἰς ΔΗ λήγοντα ἔχοντα τὴν πρὸ τέλους συλλαβὴν βραχεῖαν μὴ εἰς σύμφωνον καταλήγουσαν, εἰ μὲν κύρια ὧσιν ἡ οὐσίαν σημαῖνοι, βαρύνεται· πέδη, κνίδη, σίδη, Νέδη· εἰ δὲ κατὰ παράματος τάσσοιτο, ὀξύνεται· κομιδή (ἡ ἐπιμέλεια), ἀδή (ἡ ἡδονή), φραδὴ (ἡ βουλὴ), χλιδὴ (ὁ κόσμος).

(Words) ending in ΔΗ that have a short penultimate syllable which does not end in a consonant are recessive if they are proper names or they indicate an οὐσία, e.g. πέδη, κνίδη, σίδη, Νέδη; if they are used of a πράγμα they are oxytone; κομιδή ('care'), ἀδή ('pleasure'), φραδὴ ('counsel'), χλιδὴ ('luxury').<sup>4</sup>

(2) 34.14–17 Τὰ εἰς ΝΙΣ διβράχεια προσηγορικὰ ὀξύνεται, κατ' οὐσίας κείμενα Α ἢ Ο παραλήγοντα· ράνις, χλανίς, σανίς, ὄνις, κόνις (τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς), κόνις δὲ τὸ χῶμα. σπάνις καὶ φρόνις οὐκ ἐπὶ οὐσίας.

Common nouns ending in ΝΙΣ and consisting of two short syllables are oxytone, when they denote an οὐσία and have Α or Ο in their penultimate syllable, e.g. ράνις, χλανίς, σανίς, ὄνις, κόνις (that which is on the head), but κόνις the earth. σπάνις and φρόνις do not denote an οὐσία.

(3) 112.7–10 Τὰ εἰς Α μακρὸν μονογενῆ τῆ ΕΙ ἢ τῷ Ι μακρῷ παραληγόμενα ἐπὶ οὐσίας τιθέμενα ὀξύνεται· χειά, ζειά (εἶδος κριθῆς), φλιά, θριά. τὸ δὲ μνεία, χρεία βαρύνεται, οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ οὐσίας λαμβάνεται ...

(Words) having only one gender, ending in long Α, and having in their penultimate syllable the (diphthong) ΕΙ or long Ι, and denoting an οὐσία, are oxytone, e.g. χειά, ζειά (a kind of barley), φλιά, θριά. But μνεία and χρεία are recessive, for they are not understood in relation to an οὐσία ...

(4) 68.7–12 Τὰ εἰς ΩΜΟΣ δισύλλαβα προσηγορικὰ ἀρχόμενα ἀπὸ συμφώνου μὴ τοῦ Μ, εἰ ἐπὶ οὐσίας τάττοιτο, ὀξύνεται· βωμός, ψωμός, ζωμός, θωμός (ὁ σωρός). τὸ μέντοι κῶμος (ἡ ᾠδὴ) βαρύνεται καὶ τὸ μῶμος ἀπὸ τοῦ Μ ἄρχεται, καὶ τὸ Ῥῶμος καὶ Κρῶμος (κύριον) βαρύνεται, ὡσπερ τὸ ὦμος.

3) I quote the text of Pseudo-Arcadius' Epitome from my forthcoming edition, but the page and line numbers are those of Schmidt 1860.

4) Translations of passages of Greek are mine, unless otherwise noted.

Disyllabic common nouns ending in ΩΜΟΣ and beginning with a consonant other than Μ, if they are used of an οὐσία, are oxytone: βωμός, ψωμός, ζωμός, θωμός ('hear'). But κῶμος ('singing') is recessive, and μῶμος begins with Μ, and Ῥῶμος and Κρῶμος (a proper name) are recessive, just like ὦμος.

(5) 113.20–114.2 Τὰ εἰς Α μακρὸν τρισύλλαβα παραληγόμενα τῷ Ι ἐπὶ οὐσίας λαμβανόμενα βαρύνεται, χωρὶς τινῶν· καρδία, σχεδία, ζημία, σηπία, οἰκία.

Trisyllabic (words) ending in long Α which have Ι in their penultimate syllable, understood in relation to an οὐσία, are recessive, apart from a few: καρδία, σχεδία, ζημία, σηπία, οἰκία.

Passages (1)–(5) thus divide the entities denoted by nouns into two groups: οὐσῖαι on the one hand, and πράγματα or non-οὐσῖαι on the other. The table below contains a list of words denoting an οὐσία and a list of words denoting the sort of entity that is contrasted with οὐσία. It is clear from the meanings of the words in the two lists that the distinction between ἐπὶ οὐσίας / κατ' οὐσίας (vel sim.) and οὐκ ἐπὶ οὐσίας / κατὰ πράγματος is a distinction between concrete and abstract nouns:

Passage	Term used to label concrete nouns	Term used to label abstract nouns
Passage (1)	οὐσίαν σημαίνει πέδη ('fetter') κνίδη ('nettle') σίδη ('pomegranate')	κατὰ πράγματος τάσσειται κομιδή ('care') ἀδή ('pleasure') φραδή ('counsel') <sup>5</sup> χλιδή ('luxury')
Passage (2)	κατ' οὐσίας κείμενα ῥανίς ('drop') χλανίς ('upper-garment of wool') σανίς ('board') όνίς ('ass's dung') κονίς ('louse egg')	οὐκ ἐπὶ οὐσίας σπάνις ('scarcity, lack') φρόνις ('prudence, wisdom')

5) LSJ s.v. φραδή, II give the meaning 'hint, warning' and cite as examples A. Ch. 941 and E. Ph. 667. In these passages 'counsel' is also an appropriate translation for φραδή, and Pseudo-Arcadius' gloss βουλή is a reasonable one.

Passage (3)	ἐπὶ οὐσίας τιθέμενα χειά ('hole, esp. of serpents') ζειά ('one-seeded wheat') <sup>6</sup> φλιά ('doorpost') θριά ('pebble used in divination')	οὐ (γὰρ) ἐπὶ οὐσίας λαμβάνε- ται μνεία ('remembrance') χρεία ('need, want')
Passage (4)	ἐπὶ οὐσίας τάττεται βωμός ('altar') ψωμός ('morsel') ζωμός ('soup, sauce') θωμός ('heap')	(No term is used: an implicit contrast only) κῶμος ('singing')
Passage (5)	ἐπὶ οὐσίας λαμβανόμενα καρδία ('heart') σχεδία ('raft') ζημία ('fine') <sup>7</sup> σηπία ('cuttle-fish') οικία ('house')	(No mention of an opposing category)

Pseudo-Arcadius has a single internally coherent system for distinguishing between concrete and abstract nouns. The term οὐσία is consistently used for the sort of entity that concrete nouns denote, while the sort of entity that abstract nouns denote can be called a πρᾶγμα or 'not an οὐσία'. In passage (1) the term οὐσία is juxtaposed with the term πρᾶγμα. In passages (2) and (3) κατ' οὐσίας κείμενα and ἐπὶ οὐσίας τιθέμενα are juxtaposed with οὐκ ἐπὶ οὐσίας and οὐ (γὰρ) ἐπὶ οὐσίας λαμβάνεται respectively. In the latter passages it is more relevant for Pseudo-Arcadius to point out that the words in question do not fall under the category κατ' οὐσίας κείμενα / ἐπὶ οὐσίας τιθέμενα than to give a positive designation for the contrasted category. Differently from passage (1), where words denoting an οὐσία are said to be recessive while those denoting a πρᾶγμα are oxytone, passages (2) and (3) only tell us how to accent words that denote an οὐσία and fulfil various other conditions.

6) This is LSJ's gloss rather than a translation of the gloss εἶδος κριθῆς given in the text.

7) The gloss 'fine' in its sense 'sum of money imposed as penalty' denotes something tangible. However, ζημία can also denote something less tangible (e.g. 'penalty' or 'damage'), but in the context of the other words in this list it is clear that ζημία is included as a word capable of denoting something relatively tangible.

Pseudo-Arcadius notes that certain words do not fall under these rules because they do not denote an οὐσία: what is relevant here is not what kind of entity they do denote but simply that they do not fulfil the condition *κατ' οὐσίας κείμενα* or *ἐπὶ οὐσίας τιθέμενα*.

In passage (4) we are not given a specific term for the notion that contrasts with οὐσία. After a list of examples that illustrate the rule ‘Disyllabic common nouns ending in ΩΜΟΣ and beginning with a consonant other than Μ, if they are used of an οὐσία, are oxytone’, we are told that κῶμος (‘singing’) is recessive. One could argue that this word is intended as a straightforward exception to the rule: a disyllabic common noun ending in ΩΜΟΣ and beginning with a consonant other than Μ, used of an οὐσία, but not accented in accordance with the rule. But the other examples mentioned in the same sentence are excluded from the rule because they do not fulfil all the conditions mentioned (‘Disyllabic common nouns ending in ΩΜΟΣ and beginning with a consonant other than Μ, if they are used of an οὐσία’): the word μῶμος (‘blame, reproach’) does not obey the condition ‘beginning with a consonant other than Μ’, while Ρῶμος and Κρῶμος, both proper names, are excluded because the rule applies to *προσηγορικά* ‘common nouns’, and finally ὄμος must have been cited as an example of a word that fails to meet the condition ‘beginning with a consonant other than Μ’. This suggests that κῶμος too fails to fulfil one of the conditions, and the only condition of this rule that κῶμος could fail to fulfil is ‘if they are used of an οὐσία’.

(iii) *The terms used by other Greek grammarians to distinguish between concrete and abstract nouns*

(iiiia) *The Τέχνη γραμματική attributed to Dionysius Thrax and the scholia to the Τέχνη*

We find a distinction between abstract and concrete nouns in the *Τέχνη γραμματική* attributed to Dionysius Thrax (passage [6])<sup>8</sup> and in two scholia to Dionysius Thrax (passages [7] and [8]):

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8) It is not the purpose of the present study to answer the fiercely debated question of the authenticity or lack of authenticity of this *Τέχνη γραμματική*. On this issue one can consult the essays in Law / Sluiter 1995, Di Benedetto 2000, 394–400, De Jonge 2008, 91–95, Matthaïos 2009, 386–400, and Pagani 2010, 390–409.

(6) ὄνομά ἐστι μέρος λόγου πτωτικόν, σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα σημαῖνον, σῶμα μὲν οἷον λίθος, πρᾶγμα δὲ οἷον παιδεία, κοινῶς τε καὶ ἰδίως λεγόμενον, κοινῶς μὲν οἷον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος, ἰδίως δὲ οἷον Σωκράτης. παρέπεται δὲ τῷ ὀνόματι πέντε: γένη, εἶδη, σχήματα, ἀριθμοί, πτώσεις.  
(D.T.<sup>9</sup> GG<sup>10</sup> i.i 24.3–7)

ὄνομα is a part of speech with cases, signifying a σῶμα or a πρᾶγμα (a σῶμα like λίθος ['stone'] and a πρᾶγμα like παιδεία ['education']), and employed generally or individually (generally as in ἄνθρωπος ['man'], ἵππος ['horse'], or individually as in Σωκράτης). The ὄνομα has five accidents: genders, derivational statuses (i. e. primitive or derived), compositional statuses (i. e. simple or compound), numbers and cases.

(7) 'σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα σημαῖνον', τουτέστιν οὐσίαν αἰσθητήν ἢ νοητήν.  
(sch. D.T. Vat. GG i.iii 217.2–3)

"signifying a σῶμα or πρᾶγμα", that is to say an οὐσία perceived through the senses or an οὐσία perceived through thought.

(8) τοῦ μὲν οὖν ὀνόματος ἴδιον τυγχάνει τὸ οὐσίαν σημαίνειν· ἔστι δὲ οὐσία ἀυθύπαρκτον τι καθ' ἑαυτό, μὴ δεόμενον ἐτέρου εἰς τὸ εἶναι· τῶν δὲ οὐσῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσιν αἰσθηταί, αἱ δὲ νοηταί.  
(sch. D.T. Vat. GG i.iii 215.26–8)

The distinguishing characteristic of the ὄνομα is that it signifies an οὐσία; and an οὐσία is something that exists in itself, that does not need another (thing) in order to exist; and some of the οὐσία are perceived through the senses, while others are perceived through the mind.

In passage (6), the terms σῶμα and πρᾶγμα convey the kinds of entities denoted by concrete and abstract nouns respectively. The examples λίθος and παιδεία help to give an idea of what is meant by these terms: a σῶμα is a tangible entity, while a πρᾶγμα is an intangible entity.<sup>11</sup>

Passages (7) and (8) distinguish between the kinds of entities denoted by concrete and abstract nouns with the terms αἰσθητὴ οὐσία ('an οὐσία perceived through the senses') and νοητὴ οὐσία ('an οὐσία perceived through thought'). The αἰσθηταὶ οὐσῖαι correspond to the σῶμα that we find in the Τέχνη γραμματικῆ attri-

9) Ancient authors and works are abbreviated as in LSJ.

10) GG = Grammatici Graeci.

11) See also Schoemann 1862, 79–80 and Lallot 1998, 127, who translates πρᾶγμα as 'action', but explains that πρᾶγμα can be understood very broadly for anything that lacks body and substance. Kemp 1986, 350 translates σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα as 'something corporeal or non-corporeal', Kürschner 1996, 189 translates σῶμα as 'Körper' and πρᾶγμα as 'Sache' in German, while Swiggers and Wouters 2012 translate the terms as 'a (concrete) substance or an abstract thing'.

buted to Dionysius Thrax, while the νοηταὶ οὐσίαι correspond to the πρῶγμα.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in passages (7) and (8) the term οὐσία does not independently convey the kind of entity denoted by a concrete noun but needs an additional qualification.

(iib) P. Yale 1.25

Another distinction between concrete and abstract nouns is found in P. Yale 1.25 (= Wouters [1979] 47–60; 1<sup>st</sup> century AD):

- (9) [... ὄνομα μ] ἐν ᾧ ἐστιν λέξις [οὐ-]  
[σίαν ἰδίαν σώ]ματος ἢ πρᾶγματος  
[σημαίνουσα, χ]ωρὶς χρόνου πῶσε-  
[ων ἐπιδεκτι]κή, οἷον Ὅμηρος, Πά-  
ρις

... an ὄνομα is thus a word which indicates the individual οὐσία of a σώμα or πρᾶγμα, without tense and displaying cases, like Ὅμηρος, Πάρις

In passage (9), the term οὐσία is supplemented by σώματος ἢ πρᾶγματος (column 1, lines 6–9).<sup>13</sup> The phrase (ἰδία) οὐσία πρᾶγματος

12) See also the discussion in Schoemann 1862, 80. The division of οὐσίαι into αἰσθηταὶ and νοηταί, apart from these two scholia to Dionysius Thrax, is also found in the commentators on Aristotle. Ammonius, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*, has the phrase τῶν οὐσιῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσι νοηταὶ αἱ δὲ αἰσθηταὶ (CAG 4.4, 45.17), which is almost verbatim the same phrase as in passage (8). Similar phrases containing this distinction are also found in other commentators on Aristotle, as for example Alexander of Aphrodisias (in *Metaph.* CAG 1, 175.18–19, 191.15–16) and Philoponus (in *APo.* 13.3, 338.5–6, 338.30–31).

13) The background to the use of the term οὐσία in the definition of ὄνομα is the Aristotelian tradition. See further Schoemann 1862, 81, Steinthal 1891, 237–43, and more recently Matthaios 1999, 211–12. Although no definition of ὄνομα has come down to us from Aristotle, in his *Categories* (2a11–19) he distinguishes between the πρῶται οὐσίαι (primary substances) and the δευτεραι οὐσίαι (secondary substances). Simplicius, one of Aristotle's commentators, explains that the πρῶται οὐσίαι are individuals, in other words the entities denoted by proper names, as for example Σωκράτης, and the δευτεραι οὐσίαι are the species within which the πρῶται οὐσίαι are included, in other words entities denoted by common nouns, as for example ἄνθρωπος (in *Cat.* CAG 8, 80.28–29 πρώτας μὲν τὰς ἀτόμους οὐσίας ἔθετο, δευτέρας δὲ τὰς κοινὰς καὶ ἀπλάς ['he assigned as first the individual substances, while as second the common and general ones']). The term οὐσία appears also in the two definitions of ὄνομα attested in Plato's *Cratylus*, at 388b13–388c1 ὄνομα ἄρα διδασκαλικόν τί ἐστιν ὄργανον καὶ διακριτικόν τῆς οὐσίας ὡσπερ κερκὶς ὑφάσματος ('therefore a name is an instrument for teaching and for separating being, as a pin-beater is for a web', translated by Ademollo 2011, 110) and at 436e2–4 ὡς τοῦ παντός ἰόντος τε καὶ φερομένου καὶ ρεόντός φαμεν σημαίνειν ἡμῖν τὴν οὐσίαν τὰ

presents a problem. At first sight, one could think that (ἰδία) οὐσία σώματος signifies an entity denoted by a concrete noun and (ἰδία) οὐσία πράγματος one denoted by an abstract noun. However, in lines 3–4 and 10 προσηγορία appears as another part of speech, not subsumed under ὄνομα.<sup>14</sup> Given this, it is unlikely that ὄνομα here covers anything more than proper names. In fact, after Chrysippus' distinction between ὄνομα and προσηγορία the term ὄνομα can be used to signify proper names exclusively.<sup>15</sup> The first editor of this papyrus, Hubbell, suggested as a solution to this problem that ἡ πράγματος should be bracketed.<sup>16</sup> In defence of maintaining ἡ πράγματος Wouters argued that “to the earliest Stoics the ὄνομα (κύριον) is a ‘more genuine’ name than the προσηγορία”, thus considering that the terms ὄνομα κύριον and προσηγορία do not correspond to ‘proper name’ and ‘class-name’ respectively.<sup>17</sup> This point loses ground because of Chrysippus' distinction between ὄνομα and προσηγορία. Wouters also suggested that “the addition of σώματος ἡ πράγματος to οὐσίαν ἰδίαν by the grammarian of P. Yale 1.25 was presumably inspired by Dionysius Thrax's definition”.<sup>18</sup> This, of course, would presuppose that the definition of ὄνομα we find in P. Yale 1.25 was later than the one found in the Τέχνη γραμματική – which is possible regardless of the date of the Τέχνη γραμματική itself. The problem in P. Yale 1.25 has no easy solution, but what matters for our purposes is that οὐσία in passage (9) once again requires an additional qualification (σώματος) in order to convey an entity denoted by a concrete noun. The term also needs an additional qualification (πράγματος) in order to convey an entity denoted by an abstract noun, if this point was indeed intended in the text.

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ὀνόματα (‘we say that names signify being for us on the assumption that everything moves and is carried about and flows’, translated by Ademollo 2011, 438). In Aristotle, Simplicius, and Plato, however, the term οὐσία does not appear in the context of distinguishing between concrete and abstract nouns.

14) To be more precise, Hubbell 1933, 190 and Wouters 1979, 49 read προσηγορία in line 3 and reconstruct -γορία at the beginning of line 4. προσηγορία in line 10 is a reconstruction on the basis of the preserved sections of the definition and the example given.

15) See Wouters 1979, 53 and Matthaïos 1996, 55, 71.

16) Hubbell 1933, 191. See also the discussion in Matthaïos 1996, 70–71. As an alternative solution along similar lines, an anonymous reviewer tentatively suggested adding μάλλον before ἡ πράγματος.

17) Wouters 1979, 53.

18) Wouters 1979, 53. See also the discussion in Matthaïos 1996, 70–71.

Thus, in passages (7), (8), and (9), by contrast with (1)–(5), the term οὐσία does not independently signify the kind of entity denoted by a concrete noun. By itself the term signifies the entity denoted by any noun, and to signify the entity denoted by a concrete noun it needs an additional qualification.

The table below summarises the terminology used by Greek grammarians other than Pseudo-Arcadius to distinguish between concrete and abstract nouns:

Passage	Term used to label concrete nouns	Term used to label abstract nouns
Passage (6)	σῶμα σημαίνει λίθος ('stone')	πρᾶγμα σημαίνει παιδεία ('education')
Passage (7)	αἰσθητὴ οὐσία	νοητὴ οὐσία
Passage (8)	αἰσθητὰ οὐσία	νοητὰ οὐσία
Passage (9)	οὐσίαν ἰδίαν σώματος σημαίνει Ἵμῆρος Πάρις	οὐσίαν ἰδίαν πράγματος σημαίνει

(iv) *The terms used in philosophical texts to distinguish  
between concrete and abstract nouns*

Given the Aristotelian background of the term οὐσία, one would like to know if any philosophers in the Aristotelian tradition employed the term οὐσία exclusively with regard to concrete nouns.<sup>19</sup>

Ammonius in his commentary on Porphyrius' *Introduction* considers that both the σῶμα ('corporeal being') and the ἀσώματον ('incorporeal being') are types of οὐσία (passage [10]):<sup>20</sup>

19) See also footnote 13 above.

20) The distinction between σῶμα and ἀσώματον is found in Aristotle at Cael. 305a17–18 πᾶν γὰρ τὸ γινόμενον (ἐν τινι γίγνεται καὶ) ἤτοι ἀσώματον ἔσται ἐν ᾧ ἡ γένεσις, ἢ ἔξει σῶμα ('for everything that comes into being, comes into being in something, and that in which the generation takes place will either be incorporeal or will possess body').

(10) καὶ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα οὐσία ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ ἀσώματον οἶον ψυχὴ, ἄγγελος, θεός  
 (Ammon. In Porph. CAG<sup>21</sup> 4.3, 19.1–2)<sup>22</sup>

for a σῶμα is an οὐσία, as is an ἀσώματον, as for example ψυχὴ ('soul'), ἄγγελος ('angel'), θεός ('god')

Porphyrus, in his commentary on Ptolemaeus' Ἀρμονικά, combines the Aristotelian distinction between σῶμα and ἀσώματον with the distinction between αἰσθητά and νοητά.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in passage (11) αἰσθητά and νοητά differ in terms of their species of οὐσία:

(11) Λέγεται τοῖνυν νοητὸν ἰδίως, ὃ κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν οὐσίαν διενήνοχε τῶν αἰσθητῶν, ὡς ἐστὶ μόνα τὰ ἀσώματα νοητά καὶ καθάπαξ ὅσα μὴ σώματα.  
 (Porph. In Harm. 17.13–4)

What is specifically called 'perceived through thought' is that which differs in terms of οὐσία itself from the things perceived through the senses, because only incorporeal beings are perceived through thought, and to put it briefly everything that is not a σῶμα.

For both Ammonius and Porphyrius, the term οὐσία thus covers both tangible and intangible entities. There is no evidence that any philosophers in the Aristotelian tradition use the term οὐσία exclusively for tangible entities such as could be denoted by concrete nouns.

(v) *The ways in which other Greek grammarians use the term οὐσία*

We have seen in section (iii) that some grammatical texts (passages [7], [8], and [9]) employ the term οὐσία together with an additional qualification to indicate concrete and abstract nouns. We will now investigate cases where the term οὐσία is employed in other contexts.

21) CAG = Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca.

22) Cf. passages In Porph. CAG 4.3, 70.14 and 77.16–17. Similar passages are found in Alexander of Aphrodisias (In Metaph. CAG 1, 267.29–30) and in Philoponus (in APr. CAG 13.2, 15.14).

23) Compare the distinction between αἰσθηταὶ and νοηταὶ οὐσίαι in passages (7) and (8), but in passage (11) the terms αἰσθητός and νοητός do not qualify οὐσία. Instead, it is implied that things perceived through thought (νοητά) and things perceived through the senses (αἰσθητά) all have an οὐσία of one kind or the other.

In the *Τέχνη γραμματική* attributed to Dionysius Thrax, the term οὐσία is used in the definition of κύρια and προσηγορικά:

(12) κύριον μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ τὴν ἰδίαν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον, οἷον Ὅμηρος, Σωκράτης. προσηγορικὸν δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ τὴν κοινὴν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον, οἷον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος.  
(D.T. GG i.i 33.6–34.2)

A proper name is one signifying an individual οὐσία, like Ὅμηρος, Σωκράτης. And a common noun is the one signifying a shared οὐσία, like ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος.

The terms ἰδίᾳ οὐσία and κοινῇ οὐσία here convey the entities denoted by proper names (κύρια ὀνόματα) and common nouns (προσηγορικά) respectively.<sup>24</sup> The distinction between concrete and abstract nouns is not raised in this passage, but the use of the term οὐσία is consistent with its use in the scholia to Dionysius Thrax (passages [7] and [8]). The entity denoted by any noun is termed an οὐσία, and this term is further qualified in order to distinguish the entities denoted by different sorts of nouns – abstract and concrete nouns in passages (7) and (8), or proper and common nouns in passage (12).

In Apollonius Dyscolus, in the context of a distinction between ἀντωνυμῖαι (‘pronouns’) and ὀνόματα (‘nominals’),<sup>25</sup> pronouns are said to signify an οὐσία, while ὀνόματα signify an οὐσία μετὰ ποιότητος (‘οὐσία with a quality’):<sup>26</sup>

(13) οὐσίαν σημαίνουσιν αἱ ἀντωνυμῖαι, τὰ δὲ ὀνόματα οὐσίαν μετὰ ποιότητος  
(A.D. Pron. GG ii.i 27.9–10)<sup>27</sup>

the pronouns signify an οὐσία, while the nouns (signify) an οὐσία with a quality

24) See also Lallot 1998, 150.

25) I use the word ‘nominal’ as a cover term for nouns and adjectives.

26) See also the discussion in Schmidt 1859, 232 and Steintal 1891, 239–41. The term ποιότης (‘quality’) is the Stoic term employed in the definitions of ὄνομα. For example, Diogenes of Babylon uses the term ποιότης instead of οὐσία in his definitions of common noun and proper name transmitted by Diogenes Laertius (7.58): ἐστὶ δὲ προσηγορία μὲν κατὰ τὸν Διογένη μέρος λόγου σημαῖνον κοινὴν ποιότητα, οἷον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος· ὄνομα δὲ ἐστὶ μέρος λόγου δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα, οἷον Διογένης, Σωκράτης (‘a common noun is according to Diogenes a part of speech signifying a shared quality, like ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος; a (proper) name is a part of speech indicating an individual quality, like Διογένης, Σωκράτης’).

27) Apollonius’ οὐσία μετὰ ποιότητος finds a successor about seven centuries later, when Choeroboscus (in Theod. GG iv.i 106.3–10) mentions the definition of

In suggesting that ὀνόματα refer to a being (οὐσία) and convey a quality (ποιότης), the phrase οὐσίαν μετὰ ποιότητος appears to combine the Aristotelian and the Stoic traditions.<sup>28</sup> Pronouns, as opposed to nouns, refer to someone or something without telling us anything about this entity: in other words they do not indicate a quality (ποιότης) (cf. A.D. Pron. GG ii.i 4.1–2). Apollonius makes no distinction here between abstract and concrete nouns, but his distinction between nouns and pronouns suggests once again that the entity denoted by any noun (and indeed any pronoun) is considered an οὐσία.

Further evidence for Apollonius' use of the term οὐσία comes from his *Syntax*, where we find the phrase γενικὴ οὐσία. The idea here is that by referring to a particular individual, a proper name implicitly conveys also the category it belongs to, so that a common noun can be understood (e.g. Trypho implies also 'man'). The supplement γενικὴν was introduced by Franciscus Portus on the basis of Priscian (GLK<sup>29</sup> III 122.5–6 *generalem substantiam*):<sup>30</sup>

(14) ὕπαρξιν τινος ὑποκειμένου ἐπιζητοῦντές φαμεν τίς κινεῖται; τίς περιπατεῖ; τίς λαλεῖ; προδήλου μὲν οὐσης τῆς κινήσεως, τῆς περιπατήσεως, τῆς λαλιᾶς, τοῦ δὲ ἐνεργούντος προσώπου ἀδήλου καθεστῶτος. ἔνθεν καὶ αἱ ἀνθυπαγωγαὶ ὀνομαστικαὶ γίνονται, προσηγορικαὶ ἢ κῆρι-

ὄνομα ascribed to Philoponus and his teacher Romanus: δεῖ δὲ γινώσκειν ὅτι τινές, ὧν ἔστιν ὁ Φιλόπονος καὶ ὁ Ῥωμανὸς ὁ τούτου διδάσκαλος, 'ποιότητα' λέγουσιν ἐν τῷ ὄρφαντὶ τοῦ 'οὐσίαν', οἷον 'ὄνομά ἐστι μέρος λόγου πτωτικὸν ἐκάστου τῶν ὑποκειμένων σωμάτων ἢ πραγμάτων κοινὴν ἢ ἰδίαν ποιότητα ἀπονέμον', ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἡ ποιότης ἐν οὐσίᾳ θεωρεῖται· καὶ ἰστέον ὅτι οὐσία μὲν ἔστιν ἡ ἀνθυπόστατος ὕπαρξις, οἷον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ποιότης δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ ποιόν, οἷον τὸ λευκόν, τὸ ξανθόν, τὸ μέλαν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ('one must know that some, among whom are Philoponus and his teacher Romanus, say 'ποιότης' instead of 'οὐσία' in the definition, that is to say 'ὄνομα is a part of speech capable of inflection, assigning a common or individual quality to each σῶμα or πρᾶγμα in question', because a ποιότης is observed in an οὐσία; and one must know that an οὐσία is something that exists in itself, like ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος and the like, while a ποιότης (is) the actual quality, like white, yellow, black and the like').

28) This mixing of the Aristotelian and Stoic traditions can be also seen in Priscian, who follows Apollonius Dyscolus closely at *Institutiones Grammaticae* 2.18: *proprium est nominis substantiam et qualitatem significare* ('it is characteristic of a *nomen* to signify a substance and a quality'). See also the discussion in Schmidt 1859, 233 and Jeep 1893, 124–25.

29) GLK = *Grammatici Latini* edited by Keil.

30) See Lallot 1997, II 27 n. 95. In his critical apparatus Uhlig 1910, 29 reports that Egenolff in his copy of Bekker's edition noted his preference for the word κοινή instead of γενική.

αι, τῶν κυρίων ἐμφανιζόντων καὶ τὴν (γενικὴν) οὐσίαν· φαμέν γὰρ ἢ ἄνθρωπος περιπατεῖ ἢ ἵππος ἢ Τρύφων ἐγκειμένου πάλιν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. (A.D. Synt. GG ii.ii 29.1–7)

When we seek the identity of someone given, we say ‘who is moving?’, ‘who is walking?’, ‘who is talking?’, when the motion, the walking, and the talking are manifest, while the person acting is unclear. The replies are nominal, either common nouns or proper names, with proper names also revealing a general οὐσία. For we say ‘the man is walking’ or ‘the horse (is walking)’, or ‘Trypho (is walking)’, with ‘the man’ again implied.

Once again no distinction between abstract and concrete nouns is made, and the term οὐσία conveys the entity denoted by any noun.

In Choeroboscus’ commentary on Theodosius the term οὐσία is used in connection with the pronoun τίς, and is employed in the context of distinguishing between an individual entity and its properties. The pronoun τίς, by contrast with the other interrogative pronouns which are said to be ζητητικά περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν (‘asking after the properties of the οὐσία’), is said to be αὐτῆς τῆς οὐσίας ζητητικόν (‘asking after the οὐσία itself’):

(15) πάλιν ἀποροῦσί τινες λέγοντες, τί δήποτε τῶν πευστικῶν πάντων ἀπὸ τοῦ Π ἀρχομένων, οἷον ποῖος πόσος πηλίκος πόστος ποδαπός, μόνον τὸ τίς ἀπὸ τοῦ Τ ἄρχεται; καὶ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν, ὅτι τὸ τίς αὐτῆς τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ ζητητικόν, οἷον τίς ἐστὶ Σωκράτης, Πλάτων; τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πευστικά τῶν περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν εἰσὶ ζητητικά, οἷον τὸ ποῖος ποιότητος, τὸ πόσος ποσότητος, τὸ πηλίκος πηλικότητος, τὸ ποδαπός ἔθνους, τὸ πόστος τάξεως; ἐπειδὴ οὖν τὸ τίς αὐτῆς τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ ζητητικόν, τῶν ἄλλων πευστικῶν ζητητικῶν ὄντων τῶν περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν, εἰκότως ὡς διαλλάξαν περὶ τὸ σημαίνονμενον πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα πευστικά διήλλαξε καὶ περὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν, καὶ οὐκ ἄρχεται ἀπὸ τοῦ Π, τῶν ἄλλων ἀπὸ τοῦ Π ἀρχομένων.

(Choerob. in Theod. GG iv.i 193.15–25)

Again some raise the question, “Why among all the interrogatives beginning with π, like ποῖος πόσος πηλίκος πόστος ποδαπός, does only τίς begin with a Τ?” And it is possible to give this reason: that τίς asks after the οὐσία itself, as in τίς ἐστὶ Σωκράτης; (τίς ἐστὶ) Πλάτων; The other interrogatives ask after the properties of the οὐσία, as in ποῖος after quality, πόσος after quantity, πηλίκος after size, ποδαπός after nationality, πόστος after position in a series. So since τίς asks after the οὐσία itself, while all the other interrogatives ask after the properties of the οὐσία, just as τίς differs in meaning in comparison with the other interrogatives, so it reasonably differs also with regard to its beginning, and it does not begin with a π while the others begin with π.

(16) πάλιν ἀποροῦσί τινες λέγοντες, τί δήποτε πάντων τῶν πευστικῶν μὴ ὄντων ζητητικῶν αὐτῆς τῆς οὐσίας ἀλλὰ τῶν περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν, οἷον

τὸ ποῖος ποιότητος, τὸ πόσος ποσότητος, τὸ πηλίκος πηλικότητος, τὸ πόστος τάξεως, τὸ ποδαπός ἔθνους, μόνον τὸ τίς αὐτῆς τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ ζηητικόν; ἐρωτῶμενοι γὰρ τίς ἐστὶ; λέγομεν Σωκράτης, Πλάτων.  
(Choerob. in Theod. GG iv.i 194.5–10)

Again some raise the question, “Why among all the interrogatives which do not ask after the οὐσία itself but after the properties of the οὐσία – like ποῖος after quality, πόσος after quantity, πηλίκος after size, πόστος after position in a series, and ποδαπός after nationality –, does only τίς ask after the οὐσία itself?” For on being asked ‘τίς ἐστὶ,’ we say Σωκράτης (or) Πλάτων.

No distinction between abstract and concrete nouns is drawn here, but the use of οὐσία is consistent with the use we have seen consistently except in Pseudo-Arcadius: the referent of any noun or pronoun, regardless of tangibility or intangibility, is termed an οὐσία.

(vi) *Should the use of the term οὐσία be attributed to Pseudo-Arcadius or Herodian?*

At this point, one might ask if the use of the term οὐσία in Pseudo-Arcadius should be attributed to Herodian, or rather to the epitomator or some intermediate source. Pseudo-Arcadius tells us in his preface that his work is an abridgement of Herodian’s *Περὶ καθολικῆς προσφῶδιας*, and that he has divided complex rules of Herodian’s into larger numbers of simpler rules. There is no evidence to suggest that he altered Herodian’s terminology, but on the other hand this cannot be ruled out. If we wish to decide whether the term οὐσία should be attributed to Herodian or Pseudo-Arcadius, we would ideally be able to find evidence on Herodian’s use of the term from his other works.<sup>31</sup> Of these, however, only the *Περὶ μονήρου*s λέξεως survives in its entirety,<sup>32</sup> while other works are preserved in epitomes or fragments. In his collected edition of Herodian’s works, Lentz made a compilation of various Herodianic sources, but his reconstruction of Herodian is notoriously speculative.<sup>33</sup> Lentz’s reconstruction of Herodian’s *Περὶ ὀνομάτων* contains two passages where the term οὐσία is used (GG iii.ii 622.6–16, GG iii.ii 622.37–42). These passages come from Choero-

31) For a list of Herodian’s works see Dickey 2014, 325–45.

32) See Dyck 1993, 790 and Dickey 2007, 75.

33) See Dyck 1993, 772–94, esp. 775–76, 779, and Dickey 2007, 76–77.

boscus' commentary on Theodosius: they are our passages (15) and (16). As we have seen, the term οὐσία is used here in the sense that we consistently find in authors other than Pseudo-Arcadius: οὐσία simply signifies the referent of any expression that has a referent. However, these passages do not contain any evidence allowing the term οὐσία to be attributed to Herodian. Thus, it cannot be decided with certainty whether the unique use of the term οὐσία we find in Pseudo-Arcadius should be attributed to Herodian, to Pseudo-Arcadius, or to some intermediate source.

### *(vii) Conclusion*

In conclusion, our examination of the term οὐσία has shown that the use of this term in Pseudo-Arcadius' Epitome differs from (i) the terms used by other ancient Greek scholars to distinguish between concrete and abstract nouns, and (ii) the ways in which other Greek scholars use the term οὐσία. Pseudo-Arcadius contrasts with all our other ancient Greek scholars in the place that the term οὐσία occupies in the system for distinguishing between concrete and abstract nouns. For Pseudo-Arcadius nouns denote an οὐσία if they are concrete or a πρᾶγμα (or 'not an οὐσία') if they are abstract. For other ancient scholars who use the term οὐσία in connection with nouns, all nouns denote an οὐσία: concrete nouns denote one type of οὐσία whereas abstract nouns denote another. Given that no predecessor for this use of the term οὐσία has been discovered so far, even in texts of a similar genre and philosophical background, Pseudo-Arcadius' use should probably be considered an innovation on the part of Herodian, the epitomator, or an intermediate source, although an antecedent might come to light in the future.

At this point we might ask how this innovation came about in the first place. The word οὐσία is derived from the verb εἶναι 'to be', and ought to mean 'existence' or 'something that exists'.<sup>34</sup> For all the other ancient scholars we have considered, an οὐσία is something that exists in a tangible or intangible sense. Herodian or Pseudo-Arcadius (or even an intermediate source) has interpreted exis-

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34) On the interpretation of the term οὐσία in Plato as a nominalization of the existential εἶναι see Ademollo 2011, 110.

tence in a more concrete and perhaps more intuitive sense: only the entities denoted by concrete nouns really exist, as it were, or can be called οὐσία.

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