

## Aristotle's Philosophical Theology

### OTHER THINKERS ABOUT SUBSTANCE (*METAPHYSICS* Λ 1)

#### Aristotle's text

1069a26-9 οἱ μὲν οὖν νῦν τὰ καθόλου οὐσίας μᾶλλον τιθέασιν (τὰ γὰρ γένη καθόλου, ἃ φασιν ἀρχὰς καὶ οὐσίας εἶναι μᾶλλον διὰ τὸ λογικῶς ζητεῖν)· οἱ δὲ πάλαι τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα, οἷον πῦρ καὶ γῆν, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸ κοινὸν σῶμα.

#### Translation

1069a26 Now, the present-day thinkers posit the universals instead as substances (for the genera are universals, which they say are principles and substances instead because they inquire logically); whereas the early thinkers posited individuals—for example, fire and earth—but not the common body.

#### Ps.-Alexander (670,9-23)

[1] After Aristotle has proven that substance is prior to the other [categories] and, in addition to this, that wisdom, as prior to all the other [sciences], inquires into the principles and causes of substances, he consequently discusses who considered which beings to be substances. He says, 'The present-day [thinkers] say that 'the universals (*ta katholou*) instead are substances', and he adds what the universals are: 'for the genera' (*genê*), he says, 'are universals', which they declare to be principles and substances, because they 'inquire logically' (*logikôs*), that is, emptily (*kenôs*).

[2] For since they had neglected the things (*pragmata*), that is, beings in the strict sense, they used to carry out their inquiry about not-beings; for universals are not-beings since they possess being [merely] for thought. Thus the present-day [thinkers] say that universals are substances.

[3] And by these remarks Aristotle could not be hinting at Plato (for this is not the opinion of Plato), but he might be talking about others who were Plato's contemporaries.

[4] 'But the early [thinkers] used to speak on the contrary of 'individuals' (*ta kath' hekasta*) as substances. Heraclitus posited fire as a substance and principle, Parmenides fire and earth in his writings concerning opinion, Thales water, and others other things. But none of them said that the common, [i.e.] universal, body (*koinon katholou sôma*), which is predicated of every body, is a principle.