Abstract

The opposition πτώσις ὄρθη (εὐθεία) – πτώσεις πλάγιαι (CASUS RECTUS – CASUS OBLIQUI) in the linguistics of ancient Greece

The opposition πτώσις ὄρθη (εὐθεία) / πτώσεις πλάγιαι, which with time began to express the contrast between the nominative and the oblique cases (casus rectus – casus obliqui) in the grammatical tradition, first appeared in the Greek reflection on language most probably in the circle of the Stoic doctrine, where it was used to determine the meanings of nouns perceived from the point of view of their constituting elements of the predicative-argumentative structures which formed propositions (ἀξίωματα). What justifies this statement is the fact that in the framework of the Stoic dialectics concepts denoted by terms ὄρθη πτώσις and πλάγιαι πτώσεις were unambiguously situated in the sphere of the linguistically expressed content (τὰ σημαίνομενα, τὰ λεκτά) and used consistently in connection with the concept of κατηγόρημα ("predicate"), that is the predicative content expressed by the verb. The analysis of the preserved records demonstrates that the term ὄρθη πτώσις had a meaning of the subjective predicate argument (disregarding the value of the case of the noun which denoted it), whereas πτώσεις πλάγιαι had the meaning of the non-subjective arguments implied by multi-argument predicates. Therefore, in the Stoic dialectics the opposition ὄρθη πτώσις / πλάγιαι πτώσεις reflected the hierarchical differentiation of the status of the content expressed by the nouns perceived as arguments of the predicate within the proposition. These terms gained the meaning of the nominative and the oblique cases, respectively, only in the circle of Hellenistic philologists, whose research and analyses were to a greater extent focused on the formal side of linguistic signs (words). Those scholars used the terminological apparatus of the Stoic school, while introducing there some vital modifications, however. With reference to the issue which interests us here, the modification consisted in the identification of the Stoic ὄρθη πτώσις with its most frequent language exponent, i.e. the noun in the nominative, and following the same principle, of the Stoic πλάγιαι πτώσεις with nouns in the oblique cases. The Hellenistic philological school should probably also be ascribed the introduction of the term εὐθεία πτώσις as a name of the nominative synonymous with ὄρθη πτώσις, as there are no sufficient premises on which to attribute the use of the adjective εὐθεία as an index of that case already to Aristotle.
The distinction between the casus rectus (i.e. nominative) and the oblique cases (i.e. all the remaining ones) is commonly used in traditional and structural linguistics.¹ This distinction was already known to Roman grammarians in Antiquity, the reflex of which is a frequent reference to this division with the help of Latin terms: casus rectus – casus obliqui. In turn, Roman grammar was, as is known, largely secondary with regard to Greek grammar. It is thus not surprising that the Latin attributes rectus and obliquus are calques of Greek words, ὁρθὸς and εὐθὺς (lit. ‘straight’), and πλάγιος (lit. ‘oblique, transverse’), respectively, which began to be used in the Greek grammatical tradition to express the aforementioned opposition between the casus rectus (nominative) and the oblique cases.

The use of the terms ὁρθὸς and εὐθὺς in the function of determiners of the nominative in the Greek grammatical theory is documented by a well-known Τέχνη γραμματική, attributed to the Alexandrian grammarian Dionysius Thrax (170–90 BC), which contains the most complete exposition of the Greek word grammar. In the chapter characterising the cases (πτώσεις) as one of the morphological features (παρεπόμενα) of words belonging to the class of names (ονόματα) we read:

D.T. 31, 5–32, 1: Πτώσεις ὁνομάτων εἰσὶ πέντε: ὁρθῆ, γενικῆ, δοτικῆ, αἰτιατικῆ, κλητικῆ. Λέγεται δὲ ἢ μὲν ὁρθῆ ὀνομαστικῆ καὶ εὐθεῖα, ἢ δὲ γενικῆ κτητικῆ τε καὶ πατρικῆ, ἢ δὲ δοτικῆ ἐπισταλτικῆ, ἢ δὲ αἰτιατικῆ † κατ’ αἰτιατικῆν, ἢ δὲ κλητικῆ προσαγορευτικῆ.

“There are five cases of the names: ὁρθῆ, γενικῆ, δοτικῆ, αἰτιατικῆ, κλητικῆ. The ὁρθῆ case is also called ὀνομαστικῆ and εὐθεῖα, the γενικῆ case [is also referred to as] κτητικῆ and πατρικῆ, the δοτικῆ case [is also called] ἐπισταλτικῆ, the αἰτιατικῆ case † according to αἰτιατικῆ, whereas κλητικῆ [is also referred to as] προσαγορευτικῆ.”

Although the listed and named πτώσεις were not characterised more closely or illustrated with any examples here, it is clear that these are indeed grammatical cases. It results not only from the entirety of the later tradition, unambiguously identifying the πτώσεις mentioned in the above passage with the grammatical cases,² but also from the fact that the status of πτώσεις as inflectional cases corresponds with the status of the remaining παρεπόμενα ὁνόματος, which in the text of the Τέχνη identify various other properties of words in this class, including both of their remaining inflectional features, i.e. genders (γένη) and numbers (ἀριθμοί). Besides, in this text πτώσεις were also attributed – as one of the παρεπόμενα – to words belonging to the class of ἄρθρων and ἀντωνυμία (cf. 62, 1 and 5; 64, 1; 67, 3–6), and the exemplification provided

¹ The vocative is often excluded from this distinction, due to its specific status of an exponent of the element which does not belong to the syntactic structure of the sentence, but fulfils the (impressive) function of an appellative, and thus constitutes a means used for accomplishing certain objectives found at the level of the sending and receiving strategy of speech.

² Cf. e.g. Schol. D.T. 230, 21; A.D. Synt. I, 103 (86, 9–10); 104 (87, 6–7).
there does not leave any doubts as to their identification with the grammatical cases.3

For the same reasons it is also beyond doubt that the case named (πτώσεις) ὀρθή in the quoted passage is indeed the nominative.² Further on in the passage this case was given two other, secondary, names, of which one is the term (πτώσεις) εὐθεία ⁵ synonymous with (πτώσεις) ὀρθή. With regard to the other (i.e. the oblique) cases the term (πτώσεις) πλάγιαι was in fact not used here, however, the functioning of this term as a determiner of the oblique cases in the Greek grammatical tradition is confirmed both by the scholiasts ⁶ and the treatises of Apollonius Dyscolus.⁷ The indicated terms, in fact similarly as the term πτώσεις itself, were, however, used also in philosophical texts dealing with language questions which preceded the formation of the grammatical tradition in the circles of Hellenistic philologists, and it turns out that the terms discussed in these texts had a definitely different meaning. This particularly concerns the Stoics’ texts.

The achievements of the Stoics in the field of Greek linguistics are commonly considered to be very significant, however, at the same time identifying views of the representatives of this school on concrete language issues causes huge interpretation problems. This results mainly from the fact that the linguistic conceptions of the Stoics can be studied only second- or third-handedly because, in principle, no texts which would allow for a direct access have been preserved. The major source of knowledge about the subject are The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers by Diogenes Laërtius⁸ (D.L.), to a smaller extent the scholia to Τέχνη γραμματική by Dionysius Thrax as well as other later works, as e.g. Ammonius’ commentary ⁹ to the Hermeneutics by Aristotle. Due to the state of preservation of the Stoic writings it is also impossible to establish what the contribution of particular representatives of this trend to its intellectual output was. It is commonly believed that most of the basic theses and views observed in the Stoic school were formulated by its founder, Zeno of Citium (ca. 336–264) and Chrysippus of Soloi (ca. 280–205), who consolidated and systematised the Stoic doctrine, conveying it in over 700 books.

A major factor which needs to be taken into consideration while interpreting the Stoic linguistic doctrine is the place of linguistic issues in the general framework of the philosophical exposition accepted by the representatives of this school. As Diogenes Laërtius, following the ἐπιτόμη by Diocles Magnes (1st c. BC),¹⁰ certifies (7, 39), the Stoics distinguished three basic branches of

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³ E.g. 67, 3–4: Πτώσεως πρωτοτύπων [καθ. ἀυτωνομεών] μὲν ὀρθής ἑγώ σοί τι, γενικῆς ἐμοὶ σποί, δικτηκῆς ἐμοὶ σοί αΐ, αἰτιατικῆς ἐμὲ σὲ ἐκ, κλητικῆς σύ.
⁴ See supra footnote 3; cf. also e.g. A.D. Synt. I 137 (112, 17).
⁵ See also e.g. A.D. Synt. I, 13 (15, 10); 80 (67, 11); 83 (71, 2); 102 (85, 14); 136 (112, 4).
⁶ See e.g. Schol. D.T. 383, 22–36.
⁷ See e.g. A.D. Synt. I, 15 (18, 4); 80 (68, 8); 125 (105, 4); 136 (112, 2).
⁸ 3rd c. AD
⁹ 3rd c. AD
¹⁰ In turn, the source of knowledge about the Stoic study of language was for Diocles most probably the lost treatise Περὶ φωνής by Diogenes of Babylon (240–150); cf. SVF, III, Diog. Babyl. 21, 22.
philosophy, namely, physics, ethics, and logic, and the latter, i.e. logic, was divided into rhetoric and dialectics (D.L. 7, 41). The scope of the Stoic dialectics was reported by Diogenes Laërtius as follows:

D.L. 7, 43–44: Τὴν διαλεκτικὴν διαιρέσθαι εἰς τὸν περὶ τῶν σημαινομένων καὶ τῆς φωνής τόπων καὶ τῶν μὲν τῶν σημαινομένων εἰς τὸν περὶ τῶν φαντασιῶν τόπων καὶ τῶν ἐκ τῶν ἄφαστομένων λεκτῶν αξιωμάτων καὶ αυτοτελῶν καὶ κατηγορημάτων καὶ τῶν ὁμοιῶν όρθῶν καὶ ὑπτίων καὶ γενῶν καὶ εἰδών, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ λόγων καὶ τρόπων καὶ συλλογισμῶν καὶ τῶν παρὰ τὴν φωνήν καὶ τὰ πράγματα σοφισμάτων. [...] Εἶναι δὲ τὴς διαλεκτικῆς ἱδιον τόπων καὶ τῶν προειρημένων περὶ αὐτῆς τῆς φωνῆς, ἐν ὡς δείκνυται ἡγγάματος φωνῆ καὶ τίνα τὰ τοῦ λόγου μέρη, καὶ περὶ συλλογισμοῦ καὶ βαρβαρισμοῦ καὶ ποιημάτων καὶ ἀμφιβολών καὶ ἐμμελείς φωνῆς καὶ περὶ μουσικῆς καὶ περὶ ὁρῶν κατὰ τινὰς καὶ διαφάνειας καὶ λέξεων.

"[According to the Stoics] dialectics is divided into a part dealing with what is signified [through the medium of language] and a part discussing language alone. The part which concerns what is denoted through language is divided into a section examining images and a part concerning the content of utterances based on them, [i.e.] propositions, and [other] complete [content of utterances] as well as predicates and straight and inverted [content of utterances] similar to them, and also genera and species, and likewise arguments, tropes, syllogisms, and sophisms regarding language or [the denoted] objects. [...] There also exists a separate part of dialectics, the one which was mentioned above, namely a part dealing with language alone, within the framework of which the written language and parts of speech are explained; this part is also concerned with solecisms, barbarisms, poetic language, ambiguities, language melodiousness, music as well as, according to some, with definitions, divisions and style."

The presented list of the subjects taken up within dialectics draws attention to the clear separation of the issues concerning that which is signified by language from the issues relating to language as such, and thus the separation of issues connected with the signified aspect of linguistic signs (i.e. with the denoted content) from the issues connected with the signifying aspect (i.e. the linguistic form). This separation is reflected in the division of dialectics into two principal parts (τόπων), of which one treats περὶ τῶν σημαινομένων (of the signified things), the other, on the other hand, περὶ τῆς φωνῆς (of language alone). We also note that one of the terms analysed by us, i.e. ὀρθῶς, appears as a determiner of one of the elements constituting the object of studies of the part of dialectics which does not deal with language alone, but with what is signified via language. These elements are the “predicates and the content of the utterances similar to them,” out of which some were described precisely as ὀρθά (‘straight’), others, on the other hand, as ὑπτια (‘inverted’). Another passage quoted below from the text by Diogenes Laërtius throws a little more light on the subject of what these “predicates” are and what their place among the other type of content signified via language is:
The origin of the opposition πτώσις ὀρθή (εὐθεία) – πτώσεις πλάγιαι...

D.L. 7, 63\(^\text{11}\): Ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τῶν σημαινόμενων τόπῳ τέτακται ὁ περὶ λεκτῶν καὶ αὐτοτελῶν καὶ ἀξιωμάτων καὶ συλλογισμῶν λόγως καὶ ὁ περὶ ἐλλιπῶν τε καὶ κατηγορημάτων καὶ ὀρθῶν καὶ ὑπτίων. Φασὶ δὲ [τὸ] λεκτὸν εἶναι τὸ κατὰ φαντασίαν λογικὴν ψυχοτάμενον. τῶν δὲ λεκτῶν τὰ μὲν λέγουσιν εἶναι αὐτοτελῆ οἱ Στοικοὶ, τὰ δ’ ἐλλιπή μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ τὰ ἁναπάρτιστον ἔχουσα τὴν ἐκφοράν, οἷον Γράφει: ἐπεζητούμεν γὰρ, «Τίς;» αὐτοτελῆ δ’ ἐστὶ τὰ ἀποτραυμένην ἔχουσα τὴν ἐκφοράν, οἷον Γράφει Σωκράτης. εἶ μὲν οὖν τοῖς ἐλλιπέσι λεκτοῖς τέτακτα τὰ κατηγορήματα, ἐν δὲ τοῖς αὐτοτελέσι τὰ ἀξιώματα καὶ οἱ συλλογισμοί καὶ τὰ ἐρωτήματα καὶ τὰ πύσματα.

“In the part about objects and about what is signified there is situated the study about the content of utterances, both in terms of the complete type, i.e. propositions and syllogisms, and the content of incomplete utterances, i.e. predicates, both the straight and the inverted ones.

The content of the utterance is said to be that which is based on the mental image. The Stoics claim that some content of utterances is complete, other, revealed in an incomplete way, is defective, as e.g. (s/he) writes, since we ask ‘Who?.’ On the other hand, the complete [content of utterances] is that which is revealed in a complete way, as e.g. Socrates writes. Thus, the group of incomplete content types covers predicates, whereas among the complete ones there are propositions, syllogisms, questions, and inquiries.”

The quoted passage demonstrates that the basic term referring to what is signified (τὰ σημαινόμενα), is τὸ λεκτὸν – ‘the content of the utterance.’ Depending on the degree of its autonomy (completeness) referents of this term are divided into the ‘complete content of utterances’ (τὰ λεκτὰ αὐτοτελῆ), within which one can find propositions (τὰ ἀξιώματα), syllogisms (οἱ συλλογισμοὶ), questions (τὰ ἐρωτήματα), and inquiries (τὰ πύσματα), and the ‘incomplete content of utterances’ (τὰ λεκτὰ ἐλλιπῆ), which covers ‘straight’ (ὀρθά) and ‘inverted’ (ὑπτία) ‘predicates’ (τὰ κατηγορήματα).\(^\text{12}\) The attached exemplification shows that the exponents of the ‘incomplete content of utterances’ (τὰ λεκτὰ ἐλλιπῆ), constituted by ‘predicates’ (τὰ κατηγορήματα), are verbs. And thus the ‘predicate’ (τὸ κατηγορήμα) is the content expressed by the verb, i.e. the meaning of the verb. In turn, the information concerning the difference between the ‘straight predicates’ (τὰ ὀρθὰ κατηγορήματα) and the ‘inverted predicates’ (τὰ ὑπτία κατηγορήματα) can be taken from another passage of Diogenes’ work:

D.L. 7, 64–65\(^\text{13}\): Ἐστι δὲ τὸ κατηγορήμα τὸ κατὰ τινὸς ἀγορευόμενον ἢ πράγμα συντακτόν περὶ τινὸς ἢ τινῶν, ὡς ὁ περὶ Ἀπολλόδωρον ἀπαντᾷ καὶ λεγόντων ἐλλιπῶν συντακτόν ὀρθὴ πτώσει πρὸς ἀξιωμάτος γένεσιν. τῶν δὲ κατηγορημάτων τὰ μὲν ἐστὶ συμβάματα, οἷον τὸ διὰ πέτρας πλείν... ἄ. καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐστὶ τῶν κατηγορημάτων ὀρθά, ὁ δ’ ὑπτία, ὁ δ’ ὑπτία

\(^{11}\) = SVF, II, 181 (Diocles Magnes apud Diog. Laërt. 7, 63).

\(^{12}\) For more information about the concept of λεκτῶν (among others, about its ontological status) see Long (1971).

\(^{13}\) = SVF, II, 183 (Diocles Magnes apud Diog. Laërt. 7, 64).
The predicate is what is stated about somebody / something, or a thing attributed to one or many objects, as Apollodorus’ disciples claim, or else the incomplete content of the utterance which should be linked with \( \text{ojrqa; ptw’si} \), in order to create a proposition. Some of the predicates are congruent, e.g. to sail among the rocks…. Apart from this, some predicates are straight, others are inverted, still others are neuter. The straight ones are those which combine with one of \( \text{plavgiai ptwvsei} \) for the sake of creating a [complete] predicate, as e.g. (s/he) hears, (s/he) sees, (s/he) talks. The inverted predicates are those which combine with a passive element, as e.g. I am heard, I am seen. Neuter predicates are those which do not show any of these features, as e.g. (s/he) thinks, (s/he) walks. Among the inverted predicates reflexive ones are those which, while being inverted, constitute actions, e.g. (s/he) gives himself / herself a haircut, as the person cutting his or her own hair gets personally engaged in this activity. \( \text{Plavgiai ptwśes} \), in turn, are \( \text{genikhv}, \text{dotikh}; \) and \( \text{aijtiatikhv} \).

Ignoring for a moment the interpretation of the term \( \text{sumbavmata} \) (‘congruent predicates’), which constitutes an element of Diogenes’ discussion partly unpreserved due to the text damage in this place, we note that in the above passage, apart from the ‘straight’ predicates (\( \text{órth} \)) and the ‘inverted’ ones (\( \text{úptia} \)), known from the passages quoted earlier, there are also distinguished the ‘neuter’ predicates (\( \text{óûdêtera} \)) and the ‘reflexive’ ones (\( \text{ántipropoibótta} \)), the latter being a kind of the ‘inverted’ predicates. Besides, the predicate as such was in one of the definitions quoted above linked with the concept of \( \text{órth} \text{ ptwśis} \), depicted as an element which, when combined with the predicate, will constitute a proposition. On the other hand, the ‘straight’ predicate was said to combine with one of \( \text{plavgai ptwśes} \). Thus, the presented definitions demonstrate that the term \( \text{ptwśis} \) cannot have the meaning of the grammatical case here as it refers to the linguistically expressed content and not to the form of the linguistic sign (cf. Frede 1978: 31–32, Long 1971: 105–106). Since, on the other hand, the linguistically expressed content constituted by \( \text{ptwśes} \) creates a proposition when combined with a predicate, it can be concluded that the concept of \( \text{ptwśis} \) is in this approach very close to the contemporary concept of the predicative argument. \( \text{órth} \text{ ptwśis} \), as has been mentioned, was characterised as the linguistically expressed content which is necessary for making a proposition in combination with the predicate as such, i.e. irrespective of the kind (variant, type) of this predicate, which in turn leads to a conclusion that this concept needs to be recognised as identical with the logical subject of the predication, the object about which the predicate content is stated, i.e. with the argument of the predicate expressed obligatorily (or connoted contextually) in each proposition.

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The origin of the opposition ΠΤΩΣΕΙΣ ὌΡΘΗ (ΕΞΘΕΙΑ) – ΠΤΩΣΕΙΣ ΠΛΆΓΗΑΙ...

ΠΤΩΣΕΙΣ ΠΛΆΓΗΑΙ were, in turn, presented as the linguistically expressed content which is combined with ‘straight’ predicates. The examples provided (ἀκοίητα ‘(s/he) listens,’ ὀρθά ‘(s/he) sees,’ διαλέγεται ‘(s/he) talks’) suggest that it concerns multi-argument predicates, i.e. predicates whose exponents are (at least) two-place verbs.

It is, however, easy to notice that, when understood literally, the definition of the ‘straight’ predicate given in Diogenes’ text contradicts the principles of logic, as it states that the ‘straight’ predicate gets combined with one of ΠΛΆΓΗΑΙ ΠΤΩΣΕΙΣ for the sake of creating a predicate. Thus, it is not difficult to criticise it for the lack of logic which stems from the fact that a certain type of the predicate is characterised as something which, after fulfilling certain conditions, becomes a predicate. In other words, something which only in combination with something else creates a predicate cannot be a predicate itself. However, as a result of its illogical character visible at the level of the wording, the definition suggests that in the system of the Stoic dialectics there additionally must have existed a different type of the linguistically expressed content, i.e. the “defective” predicate, which – in order to become “complete” – requires being supplemented or combined with something else. The presence of this Stoic concept covering the predicative content which is not a full predicate as such is also signalled – outside the quoted passage – in two other places of Diogenes’ text. One of them is the already cited passage 7, 43–44, which concerns, among others, “predicates and straight and inverted (content of utterances) similar to them” (κατηγορημάτων καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων ὀρθῶν καὶ ὑπτίων), which allows us to assume that, apart from predicates, the Stoics also identified some types of the utterance content “similar” (ὁμοίως) to predicates, and within this group they distinguished exactly between the “straight” (ὀρθά) and the “inverted” (ὑπτία) ones. The other place is paragraph 7, 58. It contains a definition of the verb which is described as a “part of speech denoting a non-complex predicate” (ῥήμα δὲ ἐστι μέρος λόγου στιμάτων άυσθετῶν κατηγόρημα). By attributing the status of a “non-complex predicate” (ἀυσθετῶν κατηγόρημα) to the meaning of the verb this definition implies that in the Stoic dialectics there was too a concept of a “complex predicate,” constituted by the meaning of the verb together with some additional element of the linguistically expressed content. Let us add that exactly such a predicable content denoted by verbs which demand a completion is also discussed by Porphyry in his account of the systematics of the Stoic terms referring to what is stated. It is conveyed by Ammonius in his commentary to Aristotle’s Hermeneutics. In his account Porphyry claims that the Stoics described that content with the help of the term ἔλαττων ἢ κατηγόρημα – ‘less than a predicate’:

Amm. Comm. 44, 33–45,15: καὶ πάλιν ἀν μὲν τὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος

14 A Neoplatonic living in the 3rd c. AD; a philosopher, grammarian, commentator, and exegete of philosophical writings.
15 = SVF, II, 184 (Porphyrius apud Ammonium in Aristot. de interpr. p. 44, 19 Busse).
And then, if what is predicated of the name,16 requires to be completed with an [oblique] case of some [other] name for the sake of making a proposition, it is called ‘less than a predicate,’ just as in the case of (s/he) loves and (s/he) favours, e.g. Plato loves; as only after ‘whom’ is added to it, e.g. Dion, a definite proposition is formed, i.e. Plato loves Dion.”

It can thus be seen, also from the exemplification provided, that Porphyrus’ ‘less than a predicate’ (ἐλαττον ἡ κατηγόρημα) closely corresponds to the ‘straight predicate,’ identified in passage 7, 64 of The Lives by Diogenes, which constitutes an element of the “complex predicate” or a kind of the linguistically expressed content “similar to the predicate.” The element of the content with which the ‘straight’ predicate must be combined for the sake of creating a complete predicate, defined in passage 7, 64 of Diogenes’ text as one of πλάγια πτώσεως, must, therefore, be recognised as identical with the concept of an additional argument, implied by multi-argument predicates. This conclusion is confirmed by the exemplification of ‘straight predicates’ provided by Diogenes, which shows that those predicates imply not only an argument identical with the logical subject of the predication (the theme) – obligatory for predicates as such – i.e. ὅρθη πτώσις ((τις) ἀκούει, ὁρᾶ, διαλέγεται – ‘(who) hears, sees, talks’), but also an additional argument, which constitutes with them the predicative content (the rheme) stated about the subject of predication (ἀκούει, ὁρᾶ (τινα/τι), διαλέγεται (τινα) – ‘hears, sees (who / what), talks (with whom)’). Thus, it may be assumed that in the Stoic dialectics the term πλάγια πτώσεως denotes the concept of the arguments of a multi-argument predicate which constitute elements of the predicative content (the rheme) stated about the subject of predication, and in this way remains in opposition to the term ὅρθη πτώσις, which denotes the concept of an argument which is the subject of predication (the theme).

In the aforementioned passage from Diogenes Laërtius (7, 64), apart from the ‘straight’ predicates additionally distinguished were the ‘inverted’ predicates (ὑπτια), which also included the ‘reflexive’ ones (ἀντιπεποιθότα), as well as the ‘neuter’ ones (οὐδέστερα). The presented characteristics and the examples provided demonstrate that the ‘inverted’ and the ‘reflexive’ predicates are estab-

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16 Porphyrus’ claim that something “is predicated about the name” (ὅνομα) and “requires to be completed with an [oblique] case of some [other] name” (δέηται προσθήκης πτώσεως ὅνοματος), does not of course strictly reflect the terminology and the conceptual apparatus of the Stoics, as it is not possible to state something about a name, but only about what this name expresses (means). This inaccuracy results from the fact that Porphyrus, who lived already in the 3rd c. AD, on the one hand uses certain terms in the meanings they acquired in his times, and on the other – similarly to many other later commentators – he ignores the Stoic distinction between the form of the sign and its content. It needs, therefore, to be assumed that the quoted statement conveys a view that something is stated about the content expressed by the noun in the nominative and requires a completion with the content expressed by another noun used in an oblique case.
lished by the predicative content whose exponents are verbs indicating the passive and the reflexive diathesis, respectively. Thus, these predicates also imply more than one argument, however, they differ from the ‘straight’ predicates in that the exponents of the latter are verbs indicating an active diathesis. The ‘neuter’ predicates, in turn, just as the ‘straight’ predicates, are represented by verbs which indicate an active diathesis, however, they differ from the ‘straight’ ones in that they imply only one argument, i.e. the subject of the predication (όρθη πτώσις). Such a conclusion results from the definition of the ‘neuter’ predicates presented in the discussed passage, which defines them as predicates that do not demonstrate any of the predicate features described earlier (οὐδέτερα δ’ ἐστὶ τὰ μηδετέρως ἐχοντα), i.e. the features of the ‘straight’ and the ‘inverted’ predicates. It means that the ‘neuter’ predicates neither con-note any other argument (πλάγια πτώσις) apart from the subject of predication (όρθη πτώσις) nor do they combine with the passive element (παθητικων μόριον). On the basis of these characteristics and the examples provided (φρονεῖ (s/he) thinks, περιπατεῖ (s/he) walks) it may thus be assumed that, contrary to the ‘straight’ and ‘inverted’ predicates, the ‘neuter’ ones constitute complete predicates, i.e. predicates which do not require any completion. A confirmation of this is also provided by passage 7, 43–44, which only talks about the ‘straight’ and the ‘inverted’ – but not the ‘neuter’ – content of utterances “similar to predicates.” It proves that the ‘neuter’ predicates do not constitute a type of the content “similar to predicates,” but complete predicates, which stand in opposition to Porphyryus’ ‘less than predicates’ (ἐλαττών ἢ κατηγόρημα).

With regard to this there appears a question whether it is possible to identify the sense of the terms ὀρθή πτώσις and πλάγια πτώσεις with the arguments of the predicate, which are denoted by nouns in the nominative and in the oblique cases, respectively. Accepting such a possibility would mean accepting an assumption that within the Stoic doctrine the argument of the subject of predication (όρθη πτώσις) is denoted exclusively by the noun in the nominative, whereas arguments which form the predicative content (πλάγια πτώσεις), exclusively by nouns in the oblique cases. The preserved records of the Stoic dialectics, however, seem to prove something different. First of all, we mean here the already quoted text by Ammonius, which reports Porphyryus’ exposition about the Stoic systematics of predicates. We read there, among others:

Amm. Comm. 44, 23–45, 717: ἂν μὲν οὖν ἰδιόματος τι κατηγορηθέν ἀπόφασιν ποιή, κατηγόρημα καὶ σύμβαμα παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἀνομάζεται (σημαίνει γὰρ ἄμφοι ταῦτα), ὡς τὸ περιπατεῖ, οἷον Σωκράτης περιπατεῖ, ἂν δὲ πτώσεως, παρασύμβαμα, ὦσανει παρακείμενον τῷ συμβάματι καὶ ὅν οἷον παρακατηγόρημα, ὡς ἔχει τὸ μεταμέλει, οἷον Σωκράτης μεταμέλει. τὸ μὲν γὰρ μεταμελεῖται σύμβαμα εἶναι, τὸ δὲ μεταμέλει παρασύμβαμα ὡς δυνάμειν ἰδιόματι συνταχθὲν ἀποφάσιν ἐργάσασθαι, οἷον Σωκράτης μεταμέλει (οὐδεμία γὰρ τούτο ἀπόφασις), ἀλλ’ οὕτε

17 = SVF, 2, 184 (Porphyrius apud Ammonium in Aristot. de interpr. p. 44, 19 Busse).
clīsin ēpōdēkthai dynǎmēon, ὡς τὸ περιπατῶ, περιπατεῖ, περιπατεῖ ὀὕτε συμμεταχηματισθῆται τοῖς ἀριθμοῖς· ὥσπερ γὰρ λέγομεν τούτω μεταμέλειν ὀὕτως καὶ τούτως μεταμέλει. […] ἀν δὲ τὸ τῆς πτώσεως κατηγοροῦμεν ἢ τὸ δεόμενον ἄτερα συνταχθῆται πλαγία πτώσει πρός τὸ ποιήσαν, ἐκατόν ἢ παρασύμβαμα λέγεται, ὡς ἔχει τὸ μέλει, ὅδε Σωκράτει Ἀλκibiάδου μέλει.

“If something predicated of a name creates a proposition, it is called by them [scil. the Stoics] a predicate and a congruent (since both mean the same), as (s/he) walks, which, for instance, [forms a proposition] Socrates walks, however, if [something predicated] of an [oblique] case [of a name forms a proposition, it is called by them] a paracongruent, as if it was situated next to the congruent and constituted a parapredicate, as in (it) is a regret, [forming], for instance, [a proposition] It is a regret to Socrates, since regrets constitutes a congruent, whereas (it) is a regret a paracongruent unable to form a proposition in combination with a name, as e.g. Socrates is a regret (as it is not a proposition), and also unable to take any inflection, as e.g. (I) walk, (you) walk, (s/he) walks, or change its form in agreement with the number: for as we say It is a regret to him so do we also say It is [and not are] a regret to them. […] And if what is predicated about the [oblique] case [of a name], is something which demands its being combined with another [oblique] case [of a name] in order to form a proposition, it is also described as less than a paracongruent, just as is the case of (it) is a care, e.g. in It is a care to Socrates about Alcibiades.”

The passage quoted above indicates that apart from the division of the predicative content denoted by verbs to be ‘predicates’ and ‘less than predicates,’ the division which takes into consideration the criterion of completeness of this content or rather its “sufficiency” for forming (together with the subject of predication) a proposition, the Stoics also introduced a distinction between ‘congruents’ (συμβάματα) and ‘paracongruents’ (παρασύμβαμα). The ‘congruents’ were exemplified by the content given by the verbs περιπατεῖ (‘(s/he) walks’) and μεταμελεῖται (‘regrets’), whereas the ‘paracongruents’ were illustrated by the content of the verb μεταμέλει (‘(it) is a regret’). The verb μεταμέλει is characterised by the fact that it does not open a slot for the nominative form of the noun as an exponent of the subject of predication. This subject is denoted by the nominal phrase in the dative (Σωκράτει μεταμέλει – ‘It is a regret to Socrates’), and irrespective of the value of the number and the person taken by it the verb appears only in the third person singular (τούτως μεταμέλει – ‘it is a regret to them,’ ἐμοὶ μεταμέλει – ‘it is a regret to me’). The terms describing both of the distinguished types of the predicative content, namely σύμβαμα and παρασύμβαμα, are linked with the complex verb συμβαίνειν meaning ‘come together,’ ‘join,’ ‘agree.’ The inability of the exponent of παρασύμβαμα to express the plural and take the values of the 1st and the 2nd person, which Porphyryus emphasised, clearly suggests that it is exactly here that the source of the difference between σύμβαμα and παρασύμβαμα lies. And thus σύμβαμα (‘a congruent’) would be a predicative content which always “agrees” with the subject of predication in terms of the number and the person.
The origin of the opposition πτώσις ὥρθη (εὐθεία) – πτώσεις πλάγιαι...

The essence of the ‘paracongruent’ would then lie in the fact that, within the proposition it co-constituted, alongside the predicative content implying e.g. the concept of singularity (μεταμέλεια – ‘it is a regret to me’), there would also appear the subject of the predication implying the concept of plurality (ποὺτοι – ‘to them’).

As was mentioned earlier, contrary to the verbal exponent of σύμβαμα, which connotes the exponent of the subject of predication in the nominative, the verbal exponent of παρασύμβαμα connotes the exponent of the subject of predication in the dative. Porphyrus identifies this subject as πτώσις (without the determiner ὥρθη) and contrasts it with ὅνομα (‘a name’) as the subject of predication constituted by σύμβαμα. Naturally, in this regard Porphyrus’ account is not accurate, as according to the assumptions of the Stoic conceptual and terminological apparatus, within which the opposition between the form and the content of linguistic signs is firmly observed, the term ὅνομα refers to the form of the sign and not to its meaning. Following the more precise account of Diogenes in this case, the subject of predication constituted by any kind of predicate, and thus also by σύμβαμα, is ὥρθη πτώσις (see above, passage 7, 64–65), whose language exponent is ὅνομα (‘a name’). The inaccuracy of Porphyrus’ account may also be indicated by the last part of the analysed passage, in which the ‘less than a paracongruent’ (έλαττον ἡ παρασύμβαμα) was defined as a predicative content stated about πτώσις, which “in order to form a proposition needs to be combined with another πτώσις πλάγια” (τὸ δεόμενον ἐτέρα συνταχθήμα πλάγια πτώσει πρὸς τὸ πούμει άπόφασιν).” The inco-nsistency of the record saying that something stated about πτώσις requires being juxtaposed with another πτώσις πλάγια obviously stems from the fact that, erroneously understanding the Stoics’ term πτώσις as an oblique case, Porphyrus altogether does not take into consideration the Stoic concept of ὥρθη πτώσις in his account, and therefore the term πλάγια πτώσις used by him has a tautological character. Besides, in the aforementioned passage 7, 64–65 of Diogenes’ text ‘the congruent’ (σύμβαμα) is not identified with the predicate as such (as is the case in Porphyrus’ account: κατηγόρημα καὶ σύμβαμα παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἁναμάζεται (σημαίνει γὰρ ἄμφος ταύτων)), but it is presented as one of the types of predicates (τών δὲ κατηγορημάτων τὰ μὲν εἰσὶ συμβάματα, οἶνον τὸ διὰ πέτρας πλέιν... † – “among predicates some are congruents, e.g. to sail among the rocks... †”). In this regard it is possible to assume that in the damaged passage of the text the ‘paracongruent’ (παρασύμβαμα) was men-
tioned as the other type of the predicate, standing in opposition to the ‘congruent’ (σύμβαμα). And if the ‘paracongruent’ (παρασύμβαμα) is the other type of the predicate, opposite to the ‘congruent’ (σύμβαμα), and not some ‘quasi-parapredicate,’ as Porphyrus would have liked it to be (ὅπως παρακατηγόρημα), then the subject of predication constituted by the ‘paracongruent,’ just as in the case of all other types of predicate, is also ὅρθη πτώσις (‘Εστι δὲ τὸ κατηγόρημα […] λεκτὸν ἐλλήπτες συντακτῶν ὅρθη πτώσει πρὸς ἄξιοματος γένεσιν – “the predicate is […] the incomplete content of the utterance which should be linked with ὅρθη πτώσις in order to create a proposition” – passage 7, 64–65), and not πτώσις, as in Porphyrus’ account.

As was pointed out earlier, the exponent of the ‘paracongruent’ (παρασύμβαμα) connotes the noun in the oblique case in the function of the exponent of the subject of predication, i.e. in the function of the exponent of the ὅρθη πτώσις (Σωκράτει κατηγόρημα – ‘It is a regret to Socrates,’ τούτως κατηγόρημα – ‘It is a regret to them’). And thus it is not possible to identify the Stoic concept of ὅρθη πτώσις even with the meaning (predicative argument) denoted by the noun in the nominative, since it covers the meanings (predicative arguments) also denoted by nouns in the oblique cases (e.g. in dative). This concerns arguments of the subject of predication implied by the predicative content classified as ‘paracongruents’ (παρασύμβαμα), and also ‘less than paracongruents’ (ἐλαττών ἢ παρασύμβαμα), which differ from the former in that, for the sake of forming a proposition together with the subject of predication, they must get combined with an additional argument (πλάγια πτώσεις), e.g. Σωκράτει Ἀλκιβίαδον μέλει – ‘It is a care to Socrates about Alcibiades.’

And thus ‘the less than paracongruents’ are the type of predicative content implying more than one argument, denoted by polyvalent verbs which do not open a place for any argument expression in the nominative.

The statement that the concept of ὅρθη πτώσις may be connected with the argumentative content denoted not only by the noun in the nominative, but also by the noun in an oblique case, at the same time excludes the identification of the concept of πλάγια πτώσεις with the content expressed by nouns in the oblique cases. The term πλάγια πτώσεις refers to additional (non-subjective) arguments of multi-argument predicates which are, indeed, in most cases expressed by nouns in the oblique cases, however, in the case of the predicative content expressed by such verbs as γίγνεται (‘becomes’), also the non-subjective argument, and thus πλάγια πτώσεις, is denoted by a noun in the nominative, e.g. Σωκράτης γίγνεται διδάσκαλος – ‘Socrates becomes a teacher.’

It may appear that the thesis about the lack of connection between the Stoic concepts of ὅρθη πτώσις and πλάγια πτώσεις and the category of the gram-

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18 The expression: τῶν δὲ κατηγορήματος τὰ μὲν ἐστὶ συμβάματα… (“among predicates some are congruents…”) opens the space for another element of the presented systematics, introduced by the operator τὰ δέ. The types of predicates enumerated further (after the damaged passage) surely represent another division already within συμβάματα (also possibly ἐλαττῶν ἢ συμβάματα).
The origin of the opposition \( \pi\tau\omega\varsigma \ \dot{o}\rho\thta \ (e\iota\theta\eta\iota\alpha) - \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\ \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \)

mational case is contradicted by a statement opening passage 7, 65 of the afore-
mentioned text by Diogenes: \( \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \ \Delta \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \ \varepsilon\iota\iota \ \gamma\epsilon\iota\nu\kappa\iota \ \delta\omega\tau\kappa\iota \ \kappa\alpha \ \alpha\iota\tau\iota\tau\iota\kappa\iota. \) All the terms mentioned here correspond precisely to the names of the oblique cases established in the Greek grammatical tradition, which is attested, among others, by the passage from Τέχνη γραμματική attributed to Dionysius Thrax, quoted at the very beginning of this paper. However, it needs to be remembered that within the conceptual apparatus of the Stoic school, which precedes the birth of Greek philology and grammar, the terms \( \dot{o}\rho\thta \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) and \( \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) did not refer to forms of words, but to the content expressed by them, presented as arguments implied by the particular types of predicates. As we attempted to demonstrate earlier, the difference between \( \dot{o}\rho\thta \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) and \( \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) is not linked directly with the case of the noun denoting a given argument, but with the position (rank) of this argument in the structure of the proposition formed together with it by the predicate. The position of the argument denoted by the term \( \dot{o}\rho\thta \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) can be identified with the subject of predication, whereas the position of \( \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) with other, non-subjective, arguments implied by the multi-
argument predicates. Contrary to the subject of predication, the logical status of the non-subjective arguments is diversified, which results from the multiplicity of ways in which they complete the predicates implying them, as the relationships between particular types of predicates and their non-subjective arguments differ. For instance, the relationship between the predicate \( \delta\iota\lambda\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\epsilon\tau\alpha \ ('(s/he) talks') \) and its non-subjective argument, i.e. \( \tau\it\nu\varsigma \ ('\text{with someone}') \), is certainly different than the relationship between the predicate \( \dot{o}\rho\thta \ ('(s/he) sees') \) and the argument \( \tau\it\nu\varsigma \ ('\text{someone}') \). It may thus be assumed that distinguishing these different \( \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \), attested in passage 65 of Diogenes’ text, reflects the aforementioned variation of the logical status of non-subjective arguments of particular predicates, and not (at least directly) the cases of nouns denoting these arguments. This also seems to be indicated by the accepted terminology, which quite clearly refers to the functions performed by particular \( \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) in the structure of the proposition. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the authenticity

19 Also the way of using these terms is characteristic in this respect; we mean here the fact that, at least in Diogenes Laërtius’ text, there is a reference only to \( \dot{o}\rho\thta \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) and \( \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \), but never to \( \dot{o}\rho\thta \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \ \delta\omega\mu\alpha\varsigma \varsigma \) or \( \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \ \delta\omega\mu\alpha\varsigma \varsigma \).

20 The fact that \( \dot{o}\rho\thta \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) and \( \pi\lambda\acute{a}g\alpha\varsigma \ \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) represent meanings of nouns perceived as arguments of predicates, and thus that they have a relative character with reference to \( \kappa\alpha\tau\iota\gamma\varphi\omicron\rho\omicron\mu\alpha \), is also indicated in the Stoic characteristics of parts of speech included in the text by Diogenes Laërtius (7, 58), in which \( \kappa\omega\iota\iota \ \pi\omega\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \ (\text{common property}) \) and \( \iota\delta\alpha\ \pi\omega\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \ (\text{individual property}) \), respectively, but not \( \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \), were indicated as the proper meanings for \( \pi\rho\sigma\omicron\sigma\iota\gamma\varphi\omicron\omicron \ (\text{a name}) \) and \( \iota\delta\alpha\ (\text{a proper name}) \). \( \kappa\omega\iota\iota \) and \( \iota\delta\alpha \ \pi\omega\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \) constitute meanings of nouns presented in an absolute way; they gain the status of \( \pi\tau\omega\varsigma\varsigma \) in the situation in which they are considered in the context of their relationship to \( \kappa\alpha\tau\iota\gamma\varphi\omicron\rho\omicron\mu\alpha \), together with which they create \( \alpha\zeta\iota\mu\omicron\alpha \ (\text{a name}) \) and \( \alpha\zeta\iota\mu\omicron\alpha \ (\text{a proper name}) \), and thus in the situation in which they are presented as components of a more complex content structure. In this respect the semantic value of the words constituting \( \pi\rho\sigma\omicron\sigma\iota\gamma\varphi\omicron\omicron \) and \( \iota\delta\alpha \) differs from the status of the content denoted by \( \dot{o}\rho\thta \ (\text{the verb}) \), which always has a relative (exocentric) character; hence the verb \( \dot{o}\rho\thta \) was defined as a word meaning exactly \( \alpha\zeta\iota\vartheta\theta\varsigma\tau\omicron\omicron \ (\text{a name}) \).
of the sentence listing the names of particular πλάγιαι πτώσεις tends to be questioned; it is believed that this sentence may not come from the text by Diocles (who was a source for Diogenes), but be an interpolation by Diogenes’ himself commenting (anachronistically) on the Stoic theory through the prism of the terminological-conceptual net shaped in the post-Alexandrian era (cf. De Mauro 1965: 176, footnote 33).

And, as it seems, those were the Alexandrian grammarians, who – not showing much understanding for the Stoics’ subtle deliberations over the logical status of the referents of linguistic expressions – adapted their terminology, and referred it to the expressions themselves (cf. Frede 1994: 15). In this way πλάγιαι πτώσεις, as they are most frequently, though not exclusively, denoted by nouns in the oblique cases, were identified with the very oblique cases of nouns as such, similarly as ὄφθη πτώσεις was for the same reasons21 identified with the nominative. Additionally, this process also resulted in the fact that almost all the texts constituting the sources of knowledge about the Stoic language doctrine, whose origin, as is known, is fairly late, are marked with a specific error which consists in attributing to the terms used by the Stoics the meanings which they obtained in the grammatical tradition. This error is caused mainly by ignoring the Stoic distinction between terms and concepts referring to the field of meanings (τὰ σημαίνομενα) and those which concerned the domain of signs alone (φωνή) (cf. Frede 1994: 14). A typical example of a text marked with such an error is the account by Porphyrus interpreted above. Unfortunately, this error has also crept into many modern studies in which the Stoics are said to have introduced the concept of the grammatical case to grammar (and even the opposition between the nominative and the oblique cases) only because of the presence of the terms ὄφθη πτώσεις and πλάγιαι πτώσεις in their writings (cf. Pohlenz 1931: 171).

It is worth adding that the analogous process of transferring the Stoic terminology from the sphere of significatum to the sphere of significans can be observed also in reference to the Stoic concept of ὑφόν κατηγόρημα (‘straight predicate’). Let us recall that according to passage 7, 64–65 of Diogenes’ text quoted above it was a kind of the predicative content denoted by a verb, which, for the sake of creating a complete predicate, requires to be combined with one of the πτώσεις πλάγιαι, as e.g. ἱκουεί (‘(s/he) hears’), ὀρᾶ (‘(s/he) sees’), διαλέγεται (‘(s/he) talks’). These are therefore multi-argument predicates. The very examples quoted already show that the distinctive feature of predicates of this type cannot be any morphological (inflectional) feature of the verbs denoting them, and especially a particular value of the category of the voice, as apart from verbs in the active voice (ἀκουεί, ὀρᾶ) ‘the straight predicates’ may also be denoted by verbs in the medio-passive voice (διαλέγεται). Besides, verbs in the active voice may be exponents not only of the ‘straight predicates,’ but also of the ‘neuter’ ones (οὐδέπερα), as e.g., φρονεί (‘(s/he) thinks’), περιπατεί (‘(s/he) walks’), i.e. one-argument predicates. Meanwhile, in the Hellenistic

21 I.e. due to the fact that in most cases it is denoted by a noun in the nominative.
grammatical tradition the determiner ὀρθὸς began to be generally used with reference to verbs in the active voice, and thus in reference to the exponents of some part of the Stoic ‘straight’ and ‘neuter’ predicates, exception that this determiner was already then linked with ῥήμα (‘the verb’) and not with the term κατηγόρημα.

As was mentioned earlier, in order to point to the nominative the Greek grammar also used a synonymous determiner ἐθνής alongside with the adjective ὀρθὸς (‘straight’) and thus, side by side with the term ὀρθὴ πτῶσις there existed also the term ἐθεία πτῶσις. It is documented by the quoted passage from the Τέχνη γραμματική and a number of places in the treatises by Apollonius Dyscolos. The sources preserved do not attest the use of the term ἐθεία πτῶσις in the circle of the Stoic linguistic doctrine. The use of the adjective ἐθνής in the function of the nominative determinant is, however, often attributed to Aristotle, and in this context passage 31, 181b 35–182a 6 of his On sophistical refutations is cited, since the phrase οὐ δοτέων τὴν λέξιν κατ’ εἰθῦ appearing there is interpreted as a formulation concerning the use of the noun in the nominative.

A careful reading of the aforementioned passage convinces us, however, that such an interpretation is not legitimate:

Arist. Soph. el. XXI, 181b 35–182a 6: Ἐν δὲ τοῖς δὲ ὄνων ὄρθον ἔχει κατηγορομένα τοῦτο λεκτέον, ὡς οὐ τὸ αὐτὸ χωρὶς καὶ εἶν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ δηλομένου. Τὸ γὰρ καλὸν κοινὴ μὲν τὸ αὐτὸ δηλοὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ σμοῦ καὶ τοῦ ρουκοῦ, προστηθέμενον δὲ ὀδέον κωλύει, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν τῇ μινίτῳ δὲ τῷ σκέλει συμβαίνει εὐθὺς μὲν γὰρ τὸ σμῶν, εἰθὰ δὲ τῷ ραβδῳ συμβαίνει καὶ οὐδὲν διαφέρει εἰπέν ἡμὲν ἡμῖν ἢ ἡμῖν κοίλῃ. Ἡς ὅτι οὐ δοτέων τὴν λέξιν κατ’ εἰθῦ πρῶτος γὰρ ἐστιν. Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σμῶν ἢ τοιὲ κοίλῃ, ἀλλὰ μινὸς τοῖς, διὸν πάθος, ὡς ὀδέου ἀποτοῦ, εἰ ἢ ἡμὲν ἡμῖν ἢκοίλῃ ἑχουσα καλότητα μινός.

“With regard to terms which are stated about [other] terms by defining them in the character of attributes, it needs to be said that it is not the same what the terms mean in isolation, and what they mean within a phrase [in which they appear as attributes together with the term]. For instance the word ‘concave,’ understood in a general sense, expresses [always] the same, [i.e. something that can be stated] both in reference to what is snub and what is bandy; however, in

22 Following the characteristics presented by Diogenes it may be assumed that the ‘neuter predicates’ (οὐδὲτερα) could also be expressed by verbs in the medio-passive voice, as e.g. κείται (‘(s/he) is lying,’ ἐρέω (‘(s/he) is resting’), μαίνεται (‘(s/he) is raging’) or τέθηκε (‘(s/he) is flying’).
23 Cf. e.g. Schol. D.T. 548, 35, where the indication of the term ὀρθὸς as a determiner of the verb in the active voice (being in opposition to the term ὑπόπος describing the form of the passive voice) is accompanied by the reference to a motivation based on the metaphor of the standing (upright) and the floored wrestler: τὰ ἐνεργητικά ῥῆματα καλοῦνται δραστικά, καλοῦνται καὶ ὀρθὰ [...] ἀπὸ μεταφορᾶς τῶν ἀθλητῶν τῶν ὑπόπων ἢ ὑπόπων καλωμένων.
24 Cf. e.g. A.D. Sync. I, 13 (15, 10); 80 (67, 11); 83 (71, 2); 102 (85, 14); 136 (112, 4).
connection with a concrete subject it may have different meanings, of which one
is suitable e.g. for the nose, and the other for legs, as in one case it means ‘snub-
ness,’ and in the other ‘bandyness.’ However, the expression: ‘a snub nose’ does
not differ in terms of its content from the expression ‘a concave nose.’ However,
it is not possible to recognise it as an expression equivalent to the one which
formulates a given concept directly (i.e. in a non-attributive way), as it would be
a manifestation of an erroneous deduction. The ‘snubness (of the nose)’ is not
the same as ‘a concave nose,’ but a sort of a property of such a nose, so it is
nothing inappropriate to claim that the snub nose is a nose possessing a concav-
ity which characterises this nose.’

The sense of the reasoning presented in this passage may thus be summed up
by the statement that the expression ‘a snub nose’ (μακεντήρα) does not differ
from the content of the phrase ‘a concave nose’ (μακεντήρας κοιλή), however, what does
differ is the content of the phrase ‘snubness (of the nose)’ (τὸ σμιόν (μυνός)),
which was described exactly as λέξεις κατ’ ειθέν. In other words, Aristotle con-
trasts the phrase ‘a snub nose’ as an equivalent to the phrase ‘a concave nose’
with the phrase ‘snubness of (the nose)’ as non-equivalent to it, describing it as
λέξεις κατ’ ειθέν. While characterising the expression ‘snubness (of the nose)’
and at the same time explaining the grounds for its opposition to the expression
‘a snub nose,’ the term λέξεις κατ’ ειθέν cannot, therefore, refer to the case in
which this expression is used (i.e. nominative), as both elements of the opposi-
tion presented here, i.e. τὸ σμιόν (μυνός) and μακεντήρα, appear in the nominat-
ive. Thus, the expression λέξεις κατ’ ειθέν cannot be interpreted as meaning ‘the
phrase in the nominative,’ because the phrase which is contrasted with it (i.e.
’a snub nose’ – μακεντήρα), also appears in the nominative. And if it is not about
the contrast between the phrase in the nominative and the phrase in the oblique
case, the term ειθέν cannot be identified with the nominative. This term, as it
stems from the context, should, however, rather be interpreted as referring to
a word (a noun) which means a particular feature expressing it “directly”
(κατ’ ειθέν) from the logical-semantic point of view, i.e. as a (nominal) design-
ation of this property (τὸ σμιόν ‘snubness’) – contrary to the word (an adjec-
tive) expressing this property “indirectly,” that is attributively, i.e. as an attribute
of something (σμιός ‘snub’). It appears then that the term ειθένα (πτώσις) ac-
quired the technical meaning of the name of the nominative only either among
the later disciples of Aristotle, or in the circle of the Alexandrian grammarians,
and thus became an expression parallel to the synonymous ὀρθή (πτώσις).

To sum up, it may be stated that the opposition ὀρθή πτώσις /
πλάγια πτώσεις first appeared in the Greek reflection on language most
probably in the circle of the Stoic doctrine, where it constituted an expression of
the terminological and conceptual identification of meanings of nouns from the
point of view of their constituting elements of predicative-argumentative struc-

26 For commentaries of the late ancient and Byzantine grammarians justifying the use of the terms
The origin of the opposition πτώσις ὄρθη (εὐθεία) – πτώσεις πλάγιαι...  

atures which formed propositions (ἀξιώματα).27 What justifies this statement is the fact that in the framework of the Stoic dialectics concepts denoted by terms ὄρθη πτώσις and πλάγιαι πτώσεις were unambiguously situated in the sphere of the linguistically expressed content (τὰ σημαïνόμενα, τὰ λεκτά) and used consistently in connection with the concept of κατηγόρημα (‘predicate’), that is the predicative content expressed by the verb. The analysis of the preserved records demonstrates that the term ὄρθη πτώσις had a meaning of the subjective predicate argument (disregarding the value of the case of the noun which denoted it), whereas πτώσεις πλάγιαι had the meaning of the non-subjective arguments implied by multi-argument predicates. Therefore, in the Stoic dialectics the opposition ὄρθη πτώσις / πλάγιαι πτώσεις reflected a hierarchical differentiation of the status of the content expressed by nouns, perceived as arguments of the predicate within the proposition. These terms gained the meaning of the nominative and the oblique cases, respectively, only in the circle of Hellenistic philologists, whose research and analyses were to a greater extent focused on the formal side of linguistic signs (words). Those scholars used the terminological apparatus of the Stoic school while introducing there some vital modifications, however. With reference to the issue which interests us here, the modification consisted in the identification of the Stoic ὄρθη πτώσις with its most frequent language exponent, i.e. the noun in the nominative, and following the same principle, of the Stoic πλάγιαι πτώσεις with nouns in the oblique cases. The Hellenistic philological school should probably also be ascribed the introduction of the term εὐθεία πτώσις as a name of the nominative synonymous with ὄρθη πτώσις, as there are no sufficient premises on which to attribute the use of the adjective εὐθεία as an index of that case already to Aristotle.

Bearing in mind the structuralist model of description of the language syntactic system widely used today, which is based on the concept of predicative-argumentative structures, it is hard to resist the impression that the history of European linguistics has just come a full circle.

References


27 Another passage of the already adduced text by Ammonius (i.e. 42, 30–43, 16 = SVF, II, 164) throws some light on the reasons for which in order to name meanings expressed by nouns, the Stoics made use of such a term as πτώσις, i.e. a derivative coming from the verb πέπτειν meaning ‘to fall.’ Namely, it may be deduced from the text that the Stoics perceived this meaning as something that "fell out of the concept existing in soul" (ἀπὸ τοῦ νοηματος τοῦ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ […] πέπτωκεν), and thus as a specific, external reflex of this concept. In turn, we learn about the expression ὄρθη πτώσις that the Stoics were to link it with “prototypicality” (τὸ ὀρθότητος) of reflecting this concept, and thus probably with such a formulation of it which would allow for stating something about it.


