

Bibliography on the Latin Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*

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"A philosophical genre new to the thirteenth century was the question commentary. Commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories* (a book "read by children"), extending in an unbroken tradition back to antiquity, by 1300 had developed into sophisticated analyses of the fundamental concepts underlying the rest of logic and philosophy. In this article I present, from both published and manuscript sources, texts selected with two purposes in mind: to examine the development of the question commentary out of the inserted *dubia* of the literal commentary, and to point out a particular shift in the concept of quantity, which may serve as a criterion for relative dating of *Categories* commentaries."

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"This paper is a case study of how Aristotle's remarks about equivocation were read in the thirteenth century. I analyze the divisions of equivocation and analogy found in an anonymous commentary on the *Sophistici Elenchi* written in Paris between 1270 and 1280; and I show the part played by four sources: 1) the Greek commentators of late antiquity; 2) the new translations of Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*; 3) Arabic works, particularly those of Averroes; 4) new grammatical doctrines, notably *modi significandi*."

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"In this contribution we shall investigate the views held by Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus concerning the nature and number of the categories. As is traditional in medieval logic, one first has to determine the nature of something, and then its division (in this case their number). Each in their own way, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas intended to safeguard the number of ten by way of a proof, i.e. a deduction. Duns Scotus, however, believes that such a proposition is impossible. He also investigates the opinions of those who try to infer the nature of the categories from the various *modi predicandi*, thus possibly criticizing Albert and Thomas -- be it justly or unjustly. In his opinion, the members of the categories refer to distinct 'realities' ('realities' in a Scotistic sense). None of them can be reduced, neither to each other, nor to something else. All members possess a certain formal reality, although this is not merely identical with the being of an actual thing. (5) Scotus accepts the number of ten categories with reference to tradition, (6) but he gives some negative arguments. He demonstrates that there are neither more categories (for instance *motus* as an eleventh category), (7) nor less than ten (for instance *ens per se* and *ens in alio* alone). So he concludes to the number of ten in a negative way: there are no more, and no less." pp. 183-185

(5) Th. Kobusch, 'Substanz und Qualität. Die Reduzierung der Kategorien nach Wilhelm von Ockham' in D. Koch and Kl. Bort (eds.), *Kategorie und Kategorialität. Historisch-systematische Untersuchungen zum Begriff der Kategorie im Philosophischen Denken. Festschrift für Klaus Hartmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, Würzburg 1990, 79.

(6) Just as his (supposed) disciple Francis of Mayronnes would. E. P. Bos, 'The Theory of Ideas According to Francis of Meyronnes (*Commentary on the Sentences (Conflatus)* I, dist. 47), in L. Benakis (ed.), *Néoplatonisme et philosophie médiévale. Acts du colloque international de Corfu*, 6-8 octobre 1995, Bruges 1997, 211-227.

(7) Which is also suggested by Aristotle in one place of his work, where it said that for each category there is a substrate, for instance for the *quale*, for the *quantum*, for the when, for the where, and for the motion. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VII, 4 1029b 25.

"Conclusions.

1. The number of categories turns out to be a problem for medieval philosophers. It is pointed out that the Philosopher himself was not too consistent in his listings of the categories. Avicenna, for instance, does not accept the number of ten just like that.
2. Some Medievals try to deduce the ten categories. Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas do so each in their own (although quite similar) ways, starting from their own respective ontology.
3. Scotus does not undertake any kind of deduction. He stresses the *realiter* difference between the diverse categories. He only accepts the number of ten categories on the basis of tradition. He differentiates between the way the metaphysician and the logician views the list of ten categories.
4. Scotus does reduce *non-entia*, *figmenta*, and so on to *entia*, as members of the categories. To Scotus this seems to be a matter of far greater concern than it was to his predecessors. After Scotus philosophers are very much interested in the problem whether those non-positive terms can be regarded as members of the ten traditional categories." p. 196

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A realist interpretation of the *Categories* in the Fourteenth century: the *Litteralis Sententia Super Praedicamenta Aristotelis* of Robert Alyngton 317; Robert Andrews: Thomas Maulevelt's denial of substance 347; Appendix: Thomas Maulevelt: *Quaestiones super Praedicamenta: Quaestio 16* 358; Alessandro D. Conti: Categories and Universals in the later Middle Ages 369; Bibliography 411; List of Contributors 429; Index 433-439.

"Originally, I planned to include essays on all three main philosophical traditions alive throughout the Middle Ages, namely, those written by Jewish, Christian and Islamic philosophers. Essays pertaining to the Jewish tradition, however, are noticeably absent due to the lack of contemporary scholarship in this area. Consequently, the preponderance of the remaining articles focuses mainly on Christian philosophers. The scope of the project has, however, stayed away from theological issues, even though discussions of the categories often have tremendous theological implications, especially concerning the doctrines of Transubstantiation and the Trinity. Consequently, the issues raised in the following essays are properly philosophical issues, not theological. What follows is a collection of fourteen original essays,⁴ all devoted to one or more medieval commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*, written by a wide variety of philosophers from Europe, Canada, and the United States." p. 2

42. Pattin Adriaan. "Pour L'histoire Du *Commentaire Sur Les Catégories D'Aristote De Simplicius Au Moyen.*" In *Arts Libéraux Et Philosophie Au Moyen Age*. 1073-1078. Paris: Vrin, 1969.
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"The aim of this paper is to argue for a twofold thesis: (a) for Aristotle the verb '*katégorein*' does not as such stand for statemental predication, let alone of the well-known 'S is P' type, and (b) 'non-statemental predication' or 'categorization' plays an

important role in Ancient and Medieval philosophical procedure.

1. *Katêgorein and katêgoria in Aristotle*

Aristotle was the first to use the word 'category' (*katêgoria*) as a technical term in logic and philosophy. It is commonly taken to mean 'highest predicate' and explained in terms of statement-making. From the logical point of view categories are thus considered 'potential predicates'.(*)

(...)

1.3 Name giving ('categorization') as the key tool in the search for 'true substance'

What Aristotle actually intends in his metaphysical discussions in the central books of his *Metaphysics* (Z-Th) is to discover the proper candidate for the name 'ousia'. According to Aristotle, the primary kind of 'being' or 'being as such' (*to on hêi on*) can only be found in 'being-ness' (*ousia*; see esp. *Metaph.* 1028b2). Unlike Plato, however, Aristotle is sure to find 'being as such' in the domain of things belonging to the everyday world. Aristotle's most pressing problem is to grasp the things' proper nature *qua* beings. In the search for an answer name-giving plays a decisive role: the solution to the problem consists in finding the most appropriate ('essential') name so as to bring everyday being into the discourse in such a way that precisely its 'beingness' is focussed upon.

(...)

2. *The use of 'praedicare' in Boethius*

The Greek phrase *katêgorein ti kata tinou* is usually rendered in Latin as *praedicare aliquid de aliquo*. The Latin formula primarily means 'to say something of something else' (more precisely 'of somebody'). Of course, the most common meaning of the Latin phrase is 'to predicate something of something else in making a statement of the form S = P'. However, the verb *praedicare*, just as its Greek counterpart *katêgorein*, is used more than once merely in the sense of 'naming' or 'designating by means of a certain name', regardless of the syntactic role that name performs in a statement. In such cases *praedicare* stands for the act of calling up something under a certain name (designation), a procedure that we have labelled 'categorization'. (...) Boethius' use of *praedicare* is quite in line with what is found in other authors. Along with the familiar use of the verb for statemental predication, Boethius also frequently uses *praedicare* in the sense of 'naming' or 'designating something under a certain name' whereby the use of the designating word in predicate position is, sometimes even explicitly, ruled out." pp. 1, 4, 9-10.

(*) See L. M. de Rijk, *The Categories as Classes of Names (= On Ancient and Medieval Semantics 3)*, in: *Vivarium*, 18 (1980), 1-62, esp. 4-7

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