

**BEING
AND LOGOS**

BEING AND LOGOS

Categorical and Generic
Analyses of Being
in Classical Philosophy



edited by
Agnieszka Woszczyk
and
Dariusz Olesiński

impuls



Kraków – Katowice 2012

© Copyright by University of Silesia in Katowice 2012

Reviewer:
dr hab. Dorota Zygmuntowicz

Proofread:
Editorial Staff

Cover design:
Anna M. Damasiewicz

Picture on the cover:
© *Antonio Abrignani | Depositphotos.com*

Desktop publisher:
Alicja Kuźma

Publication was funded by the University of Silesia in Katowice

ISBN 978-83-7850-146-6

Oficina Wydawnicza "Impuls"
30-619 Kraków, ul. Turniejowa 59/5
tel./fax: (12) 422 41 80, 422 59 47, 506 624 220
www.impulsoficyna.com.pl, e-mail: impuls@impulsoficyna.com.pl
Edition I, Kraków 2012

Contents

Introduction	7
<i>Adam Drozdek</i>	
Archelaus: Between Ontology and Anthropology	11
<i>Bogdan Dembiński</i>	
Categories in the Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle	23
<i>Dariusz Olesiński</i>	
Plato's Conception of the Good in <i>The Republic</i>	39
<i>Anna Zhyrkova</i>	
The Academic Roots of Plotinus' Treatment of the Aristotelian Categories	55
<i>Rafał Oleś</i>	
The Highest Genera of Being and Substantial Unity in Plotinus' Ontology	69
<i>Agnieszka Woszczyk</i>	
Prenoetic Genera in <i>The Enneads</i> by Plotinus	89
<i>Jacek Surzyn</i>	
Disjunctives as Transcategorical Attributes of Being – An Outline of John Duns Scotus's Standpoint	105

Introduction

Since the beginning of history of philosophy, the specificity of philosophical knowledge, which results from its fundamentality, has manifested itself in the quest for the most general notions which would adequately describe the structure and dynamics of reality. Such notions as oneness and multiplicity, sameness and difference, finitude and infinity, changeability and unchangeability, motion and rest, among others, have become a permanent challenge for philosophizing intellect, and also an irremovable element of the dictionary of European philosophy, to which new terminological entries are being added, and the meanings of the old ones are being specified.

From the very beginning, their fundamental understanding has been disputed, namely, it has been argued whether they result from a subjective description of the world, or they reflect and name objective manners of being. Consequently, there have occurred epistemological and linguistic interpretations (categories as notions or predicates), and ontological interpretations (categories as ideas or various substantial forms.)

This monograph is devoted to the analysis of different meanings of these generic and categorical notions which occurred in the history of classical philosophy, as well as relations between them. In the first presented text "Archelaus: Between Ontology and Anthropology" Adam Drozdek analyzes how the meaning of the main category of Anaxagoras' ontology, i.e. the cosmic Mind, is modified in the philosophy of Archelaus. On the one hand, Archelaus decreased the elevated status of the cosmic Mind by allowing it to be mixed with other beings, on the other hand, he made a human soul to be a part of the Mind, thereby elevating the status of man, and introducing the anthropological perspective, which was absent in Anaxagoras' philosophy.

Then, in the perspective of a general reflection on basic understandings of categories which occurred in the philosophical tradition, in his "Catego-

ries in the Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle” Bogdan Dembiński characterizes similarities and differences between those two most important ancient viewpoints, namely, those of Plato and Aristotle. A category introduced by Aristotle turned out to be a direct reference to Plato’s thinking, especially to the conception of the most superior kinds presented in *The Sophist*. However, this notion was linked by Aristotle with basic manners of substantial being, as well as, linguistically, with the basic forms of predication on being. Dariusz Olesiński (“Plato’s Conception of the Good in *The Republic*”) also refers to the Platonic tradition, and he focuses on the meaning of the good in Plato’s philosophy. As it is justified by the author, the twofold nature of the good, i.e. the absolute and relative one, which is singled out in Book II of *The Republic*, turns out to be crucial for the understanding of Plato’s characteristics of the Good from the central part of the dialogue, depicted especially by employing the analogy of the sun. Consequently, the supremacy of the Good over other ideas (its status of ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας) does not mean absolute transcendence of being but is the expression of its power, adequately presented by the category of an ultimate cause (αἰτία) of reality.

On the other hand, Anna Zhyrkova in “The Academic Roots of Plotinus’ Treatment of the Aristotelian Categories” reconstructs the Academic and Middle Platonic interpretation of the Aristotelian categories, and she criticizes a common belief according to which the standpoint of Plotinus seems contrary to the Middle Platonic one. Therefore, the author argues that both Plotinus and his Neo-platonic successors created their conceptions based on the same Platonic tradition of interpreting Aristotle’s categories, which was historically rooted a few centuries ago. Then in “The Highest Genera of Being and Substantial Unity in Plotinus’ Ontology” Rafał Oleś outlines Plotinus’ generic analysis of being, focusing on the explanation of the nature of interdependence and oneness of the most superior kinds (being, motion, rest, sameness and difference) both, for the corporal substance (the analysis of the nature of body and soul), and for the noetic substance (the analysis of formal attributes of the most superior kinds). In the subsequent text on Plotinian thinking (“Prenoetic Genera in *The Enneads* by Plotinus”), Agnieszka Woszczyk points at the necessity of distinguishing between two perspectives in Plotinus’ presentation of principal kinds

(μέγιστα γένη), firstly, the immanent analysis of being which leads to an understanding of kinds in the context of noetic world; secondly, the genetic analysis of being which involves referring it (as the noetic unity of multiplicity) to transcendental principles of the One and Indefinite Dyad. In the latter perspective, the kinds are what precedes and facilitates the analysis of being, and hence obtains the pre-noetic status.

The monograph ends with “Disjunctives as Transcategorical Attributes of Being – An Outline of John Duns Scotus’s Standpoint” by Jacek Surzyn, however, at the same time this text opens the perspective for reflection on the importance of the development of a categorical and generic analysis of being in the Middle Ages. The author considers in detail the opinion which John Duns Scotus represented in the discussion on the disjunction as one of the aspects of understanding transcategorical properties of being (e.g., absolute-relative, infinite-finite, substance-accident, cause-effect). The author shows that Scotus’ original understanding of disjunction can be interpreted as an important bridge between the ancient Aristotelian tradition of conceiving categories and their modern Kantian conception.

Certainly, this monograph is not an exhaustive presentation of this subject since it is impossible to present it exhaustively when we remember that generic and categorical classifications of being represent the pivotal issue of the whole philosophical tradition, at least the classically conceived tradition. However, taking into consideration unquestionable importance of this issue as well as its complexity, even a modest contribution to the elucidation of here addressed questions seems needed, and the effort of addressing them appears justified. The authors of this volume, which is now being offered to the Reader, also believe that such a contribution is valuable.

Agnieszka Woszczyk
Dariusz Olesiński

Tematem [książki] są rodzaje i kategorie, w których wyraża się w tradycji klasycznej namysł nad bytem oraz dynamiką i strukturą rzeczywistości i które w filozoficznej samorefleksji stają się przedmiotami owego myślenia. [...] Wielkim bogactwem historyków filozofii starożytnej jest umiejętność odkrywania i analizowania kontekstu źródłowego owych najogólniejszych pojęć, odczytywania pytań poprzedzających ich wyrażenie. Wyniki tych badań budują i utrwalają kulturę filozoficzną, gdyż rozjaśniając rodowód antyczny wielu pojęć i pytań, pomagają odróżnić pytania i pojęcia powszechne i fundamentalne dla dociekania filozoficznego od wielorako uwarunkowanych różnych stylów myślenia swoistych dla danych epok.

Z recenzji dr hab. Doroty Zygmuntowicz



impuls

Zamówienia prosimy składać na adres:
Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls” – Dział Handlowy
tel./fax: (12) 422 41 80, 422 59 47, 506 624 220
e-mail: impuls@impulsoficyzna.com.pl
www.impulsoficyzna.com.pl