SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE DEFINITION OF "BEING"

INTRODUCTION


From the *Editorial Preface* to the sixth volume by John W. M. Verhaar: "The present volume is the sixth of a series of studies analyzing the verb 'to be' and/or synonyms in a number of language; in contrast to preceding volumes, it is devoted to one language only: Ancient Greek. It is expected that these studies will provide some of the necessary foundational research in logic, the theory of knowledge, and ontology; and possibly in other philosophical disciplines."

Two projected volumes were never published in this series: a study on 'to be' in biblical Hebrew and biblical Greek by James Barr (*) and a concluding volume with an attempt to assess the linguistic and philosophical impact of all the contributions).


Table of Contents of the original edition of the sixth volume of the series, Charles H. Kahn, *The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek* (Reprinted Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing, 2003 with a new introduction)

Editorial Preface VII; Preface IX; Analytic Table of Contents XVII; Chapter I. The problem of the verb 'Be' 1; Chapter II. Subject, predicate, copula 38; Chapter III. Application of the transformational analysis to Greek 60; Chapter IV. Description of the copula uses 85; Chapter V. The theory of the copula 184; Chapter VI. The verb of existence 228; Chapter VII. The veridical use 331; Chapter VIII. The unity of the system of 'Be' in Greek 371; Appendix A. On the accent of esti and its position in the Sentence 420; Appendix B. On the theory of nominal sentence 435; Appendix C. The nominalized forms of the verb: to ón and ousia 453; Bibliography 463; Index 468.

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

   Actes du Colloque international de philosophie antique tenu à Genève les 2 et 3


"This article was originally intended to precede the publication of my book (Bechtle 1999a) devoted to the extant fragments of the anonymous commentary on Plato's Parmenides, also known as Anonymus Taurinensis. The aim of this article was then-and it still is now-to make the scholarly world acquainted with some of the main reasons, i.e., my view of 'the question of being', for my novel thesis of a pre-Plotinian date for this Commentary which has almost unanimously been ascribed to Porphyry. Since the thesis of the Porphyrian authorship goes back to the great French scholar P. Hadot (see in particular Hadot 1961, 1965, 1968a, and 1968b), one can say that his thesis has been generally accepted for some thirty years or, at least, it has not been seriously challenged. This fact is easily explained since neither before nor after Hadot has there been a thorough and critical examination of the evidence. Hadot's thesis concerning the identity of the author being the only serious one in more than a century since research on the Commentary first started, my idea was that probably a lot of questions had not been answered. Reconsidering all of Hadot's evidence and adding some new elements, I determined that the Commentary is very likely of pre-Plotinian date. Additional work on Iamblichus and post-Plotinian Platonism negatively confirms this thesis since one can virtually exclude Iamblichus and any of the major Platonists following him as possible authors of the Commentary. " p. 393


"This paper argues that important changes in Plato's conceptions of being (ousia) and becoming (genesis) occur over the Dialogues, but that the final version of the distinction between the two remains strong enough to sustain the essentials of the theory of degrees of reality which the distinction was originally devised to expound. This position is an alternative to the predominant prevailing positions -- that Plato's views underwent no significant change, or that there was a change so radical as to
force the abandonment of Plato's middle-period metaphysic. Relevant passages in the *Phaedo, Republic, Theatetus, Sophist, and Philebus* are fully discussed.


   "Plato's *Sophist* presents a tantalizing challenge to the modern student of philosophy. In its central section we find a Plato whose interests and methods seem at once close to and yet remote from our own. John Ackrill's seminal papers on the *Sophist*, (1) published in the fifties, emphasized the closeness, and in optimistic vein credited Plato with several successes in conceptual analysis. These articles combine boldness of 'argument with exceptional clarity and economy of expression, and though subsequent writers have cast doubt on some of Ackrill's claims for the *Sophist* the articles remain essential reading for all students of the dialogue. I am happy to contribute an essay on the *Sophist* to this volume dedicated to John Ackrill.
   Among the most disputed questions in the interpretation of the *Sophist* is that of whether Plato therein marks off different uses of the verb einai , 'to be'. This paper addresses one issue under that heading, that of the distinction between the 'complete' and 'incomplete' uses of 'to be', which has usually been associated with the distinction between the 'is' that means 'exists' and the 'is' of predication, that is, the copula."

   "I examine key uses of 'to be' in Parmenides, Plato (especially Republic V and *Sophist*) and Aristotle. I argue against imposing modern distinctions (into predicative, existential or identity uses) on to the texts, showing that while Greek uses of einai may be partitioned into syntactically complete and incomplete (noted by Aristotle and perhaps at *Sophist* 255cd) the distinction was neither clear-cut nor perceived as philosophically important. I examine how these authors treated the inference from 'X is F' to 'X is' (compare that from 'X teaches French' to 'X teaches') and, more problematically (as Plato *Sophist* saw, correcting Parmenides and Republic V) from 'X is not F' to 'X is not'. "

   Kapitel III. Subjekt und Prädikat, C. Kopula mit einem Prädikativum, pp. 69-77.


Plato's analysis of falsity at *Sophist* 263 is given in terms of not being and difference. 'Theaetetus flies' is false because what is different is stated as the same, and what is not as what is, (263 D 1-2), things that are different from what is the case concerning him (viz. flying) are described as the same (as what is the case about him). That there are indeed many 'not-beings' in the sense of things different from the things that are, the Eleatic Stranger (ES) and Theaetetus remarked some lines above, 'for we said there are many things that are with regard to each thing and many things that are not (263 B 11-12), referring to 256 E 6-7, 'so, with regard to each of the forms, being is many and not-being is indefinite in quantity'. In this way they had been disobedient to Parmenides, who had stated, 'Never shall it force itself on us that things that are-not are'. But they had gone even further in their disobedience: 'but we have not merely shown that the things that are-not are, but also brought to light the form not-being happens to have' (258 D 5-7).

The context of both points has caused commentators a lot of problems. The main question is, how is it that something (i.e. a form) is called an *ouk on* in 256 D 8-257 A 6? Is it because it is different from the form of being; or is it because it is different from any thing (i.e. any form) it is not identical with? And on which of the two lines is the form of not-being defined as it is introduced in the section that follows, in 258 A 11-B 8 and 258 D 7-E 3? Only a few commentators have tackled the problems systematically, and as far as I know no interpretation has been reached that is both coherent and sound. Nevertheless, such an interpretation is possible, as I shall argue in the following. I shall discuss the passages at issue, criticize commentaries that have been given, and present the interpretation intended." pp. 63-64 (Greek omitted)


"This paper takes its point of departure from a recent article by Joseph Owens: "The content of existence," (*) which argues that being is unknowable in terms of concepts since it either has all cognitive (when contrasted with not-being) or none at all (when contrasted with beings). These dilemmas can be resolved by means of Aristotle's categories as the intrinsic formal structure of being, and as constituting the cognitive content of being "qua" being. In terms of this cognitive content, being is conceptualized, becomes knowable, and can be meaningfully contrasted with both not-being and beings. Beyond the resolution of Owens' dilemmas, the paper goes on to examine the need for meaningful contrasts in all knowledge as well as the adequacy and relevance of Aristotle's categories in relation to modern science."


Reprinted by Hackett Publishing, 2003 with new introduction and discussion of relation between predicative and existential uses of the verb *einai*.

"This book began unintentionally in 1964, when I tried to put together a brief description of the pre-philosophical uses of the Greek verb be in order to lay the groundwork for an interpretation of the more technical use of the verb by the philosophers beginning with Parmenides. But the task was harder and longer than I thought, and it gradually became clear that no adequate description of the Greek data could be given without confronting a number of major issues in linguistic theory and in the philosophy of language.

As often happens in so-called empirical research, the terms in which the problem is posed and the recognition of what might count as a solution turn out to depend upon certain theoretical assumptions about the nature of the subject matter and the appropriate form for description, analysis, and explanation. In this case there was the preliminary question of an appropriate method for describing and classifying the different uses of the verb, and the closely connected question of the relationship..."
between a syntactic or formal analysis of these uses and a semantic account in terms of difference of meaning. Similar questions would arise in the study of any verb. But the verb be poses specific philosophic problems of its own: how are we to define or clarify the concepts of subject, predicate, copula, and verb of existence? And there is the problem of the verb be itself: in what sense is this system of distinct uses a unity? Is the possession of a single verb be with such a diversity of uses only a historical accident of Indo-European? And does it follow that the concept of Being is only a philosophic illusion?” (Preface (1973), XLV)

"Thus the argument of my book reaches two conclusions, one linguistic and one philosophical. The philosophical conclusion, my defense of Greek ontology, rests on my account of the system of \textit{einai} but does not follow from it. Greek ontology might be defended on different grounds, and a reader might accept my account of the system of \textit{einai} but doubt its value as a defense of ontology. Furthermore, I have not tried to demonstrate the fruitfulness of my linguistic analysis for the interpretation of Greek philosophy. That could be done only by a detailed analysis of Platonic and Aristotelian texts.(1) The current study remains, after all, essentially a grammatical preludomenon to the history of Greek ontology."

(\textit{Introduction} (200), p. VIII)


[In the Appendix to the \textit{Introduction} (2003) Kahn replies to four important critical reviews of the first edition of his book:] Ernst Tugendhat, "Die Seinsfrage und ihre sprachliche Grundlage," \textit{Philosophische Rundschau} 24 (1977), pp. 161-176: "Tugendhat's review contains a number of penetrating criticisms, some of which I am inclined to regard as justified." (p. XXXIII)


Joachim Klowski, Review in \textit{Gnomon} 47 (1975), pp. 737-746. "Klowski criticizes my exposition from the point of view of traditional philology and doubts the utility of introducing transformational grammar." (p. XXXV)

Cornelis Jord Ruijgh, "A review of Ch. H. Kahn, The verb 'be' in Ancient Greek," in \textit{Lingua} 48 (1979), pp. 43-83. [in French] "The most thorough and detailed discussion of my book is by C. J. Ruijgh, a linguist who is also a specialist in Greek. (Unfortunately, this 1979 publication came to my attention only quite recently, as the result of a citation in De Rijk [\textit{Aristotle: Semantics and Ontology}. Leiden: Brill 2002, two volumes]. I recommend this review for a full, fair, and accurate report of the contents and claims of the book. I discuss here some points in which Ruijgh disagrees with me." (p. XXXVII)


30. ———. 1978. "Linguistic Relativism and the Greek Project of Ontology." In \textit{The Question of Being}, edited by Sprung, Mervyn, 31-44. University Park: University of
The recent reprinting of my book *The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek* by Hackett Publishing, thirty years after its appearance in 1973, gave me the opportunity to rethink and reformulate the theoretical framework for my description of the Greek verb. Since the audience for the reprinted book will inevitably be restricted, I present here a more accessible, slightly revised version of the new (2003) Introduction. In the original 1973 book, the theoretical discussion was far too long and not always consistent. What follows is a more concise and, I hope, more coherent version of my theoretical account of *einai*.

"The papers reprinted here, published over a stretch of forty years, reflect my continuing concern with two distinct but intimately related problems, one linguistic and one historical and philosophical. The linguistic problem concerns the theory of the Greek verb *to be*: how to replace the conventional but misleading distinction between copula and existential verb with a more adequate theoretical account. The philosophical problem is in principle quite distinct: to understand how the concept of Being became the central topic in Greek philosophy from Parmenides to Aristotle. But these two problems converge on what I have called the veridical use of *einai*. In my earlier papers I took that connection between the verb and the concept of truth to be the key to the central role of Being in Greek philosophy. I think that clue pointed in the right direction, but I would now interpret the veridical in terms of a more general function of the verb that I call 'semantic', which comprises the notions of existence and instantiation as well as truth."
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<td>46.</td>
<td>Ruijgh, Cornelis Jord.</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>&quot;A Review Of: Ch. H. Kahn, the Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek.&quot;</td>
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"Sommaire: §1. Introduction: le probleme du rapport entre l'emploi copulatif et l'emploi dit existentiel de einai.


Reply to the article of R. van Bennekom in the same number.


See Parto Two. Boethius on Logic and Grammar, Chapter VI. The Verb 'To Be', pp. 187-222.

52. Vasiliu, Anca. 2001. "Dire L'image Ou La Parole Visible Chez Platon (Sur Le Sophiste, 216a, 241e)." Dionysius no. 19:75-112
"This paper is a commentary on the first part of the Sophist, aiming to identify the instruments used to persuade or to demonstrate the veracity of something considered as knowledge of a truth."

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<td>5.</td>
<td>Bos, Egbert Peter.</td>
<td>1998. &quot;The Division of Being over the Categories According to Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus.&quot; In <em>John Duns Scotus (1265/6-1308): Renewal of Philosophy</em>, edited by Bos, Egbert Peter, 183-196. Amsterdam: Rodopi. Acts of the Third Symposium organized by the Dutch Society for Medieval Philosophy Medium Aevum (May 23 and 24, 1996). &quot;The number of categories turns out to be a problem for medieval philosophers. It is pointed out that Aristotle himself was not too consistent in his listings of the categories. Some medievalists 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 ontologies. John Duns 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. Scotus does reduce 'non-entia, figmenta', and so on to 'entia', as member of the categories.&quot;</td>
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"Jaakko Hintikka is a radical and wildly ambitious philosopher. Over the course of more than forty years he has attempted to refashion the whole of logic and philosophy in his own image, urging the overthrow of most everything analytic philosophy inherited from Frege and Russell. He argues that the correct philosophical Logic (with a capital "L" to designate "the real Logic") is his "independence-friendly" logic, wedded to his construals of modal and epistemic logic in the context of game-theoretic semantics, and he calls for a reappraisal of every philosophical problem in light of this conception. Hintikka thereby rejects what became for philosophers (after Hilbert, Gödel, and Quine) the standard answer to the question, What is Logic?, viz., first-order logic, unmoved by its commonly supposed advantages: topic-neutrality, wide curricular, mathematical, and philosophical acceptance, general (if not universal) applicability, recursively axiomatizable completeness with respect to deductive validity, and classical syntax and semantics for negation. He is not swayed either by the expressive power of second-order logic. He wants a system that is, expressively speaking, somewhere in between. To understand him as a philosopher is to be able to fathom why.

It is not the aim of this essay to come fully to grips with Hintikka's persistent campaign to overthrow the present order of things. Instead, I shall try to characterize his self-conception in broad brushstrokes. Section 1 of the essay aims to situate Hintikka's thought within the context of recent analytic philosophy. Section 2 canvasses his criticisms of Frege's and Russell's fundamental logical notions. Section 3 assesses his treatment of the classical Ontological Argument for God's existence in light of these criticisms. First, I contrast his treatment of the argument with that of Michael Dummett. Next, I consider what Hintikka has left out of philosophical account in his particular reconstruction of the argument, suggesting that it is precisely this which is most telling with respect to his own philosophy. In section 4 I delve into a more detailed analysis of Hintikka's treatment of Kant's philosophy of logic, with the aim of showing how his own philosophical preconceptions shape his historical readings." (pp. 137-138)


Contents: Preface VII-XI; I. On Being and the One 1; II. Being and Substance 41; III. Essence and Existence 74; V. Being and Existence 154; VI. Knowledge and


23. Husain, Martha. 1976. "The Question 'What Is Being' and Its Aristotelian Answer." New Scholasticism no. 50:293-309. "This paper takes its point of departure from a recent article by Joseph Owens: "The content of existence," (*) which argues that being is unknowable in terms of concepts since it either has all cognitive (when contrasted with not-being) or none at all (when contrasted with beings). These dilemmas can be resolved by means of Aristotle's categories as the intrinsic formal structure of being, and as constituting the cognitive content of being "qua" being. In terms of this cognitive content, being is conceptualized, becomes knowable, and can be meaningfully contrasted with both not-being and beings. Beyond the resolution of Owens' dilemmas, the paper goes on to examine the need for meaningful contrasts in all knowledge as well as the adequacy and relevance of Aristotle's categories in relation to modern science." (*) Joseph Owens, "The content of existence", in: Milton K. Munitz (ed.), Logic and Ontology, New York: New York University Press 1973, pp. 21-36.


varieties of Being in Aristotle 81; Sten Ebbesen: The Chimera's Diary 115; Klaus Jacobi: Peter Abelard's investigations into the meaning and functions of the speech sign 'Est' 145; Hermann Weidemann: The logic of Being in Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus 201; Simo Knuuttila: Being qua Being in Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus 201; Lilli Alanen: On Descartes' argument for dualism and the distinction between different kinds of Beings 223; Jaakko Hintikka: Kant on existence, predication, and the ontological argument 249; Leila Haaparanta: On Frege's concept of Being 269; Index of names: 291; Index of subjects: 297-300.


   "In this article, after a brief discussion of the position of Ibn Sina concerning the distinction between existence and essence, a survey is made of the views of later Islamic thinkers of various schools including "Kalam", "Ishraqi" theosophy and theoretical sufism of the school of Ibn Arabi concerning ontology. The study culminates with Mulla Sadra who brought the discussion of being among Muslim thinkers to full fruition. After this chronological survey, the distinction between the study of being in later Schools of Islamic thought and those of the West is made clear and it is shown how despite a similar background, Islamic and Western thought part ways on this basic issue. Later Islamic students of ontology emphasized that the subject of philosophy is the study of the act of existence, the "actus essendi", while Western thought became ever more concerned with the existent or "ens". In conclusion the relation between the theoretical study of being and practical and operative spiritual methods for the realization of being in the Islamic world is indicated."


"The title of the present paper appears provocative as it brings together one of the most prominent fighters of metaphysics, R. Carnap, a famous metaphysician and a very difficult metaphysical problem. In fact, Leibniz, whose stance on that very issue we have chosen to relate to that of Carnap's, has not written about the problem of being explicitly either. We will thus ask the reader for some patience as we will try to demonstrate that they both do so implicitly.

Our task is perhaps even more complex with respect to Carnap for aside of being an extraordinarily consistent and systematic thinker, he has also been very self-conscious methodologically. It is remarkable that the system of *Aufbau*, to which we will restrict our attention, was supposed to be a mere illustration of some methodological principles developed in the so-called construction theory. Accordingly, almost none of the moves in his system lacks a justification. As a result, there are not too many degrees of interpreter's freedom." (p. 163)


See Chapter I. *The Philosophical Background* (pp. 21-72), in particular § 2. *Ens, Esse, and Existere* (pp. 23-42).


"If, in what follows under the general title of 'Being', we are to give an outline of the rebirth of metaphysics as ontology, we cannot avoid giving an account in detail of the various ontological projects of that time. What is to be clarified can be described as a rehabilitation of the 'problem of being' as a genuinely philosophical problem. This 'problem of being' must obviously be posed in such a way that it cannot be solved by any of the procedures of the empirical sciences; otherwise, any philosophical theory of being would be superfluous. On the other hand, the 'problem of being' should also not be reducible to the problem of knowledge, as the whole of Criticism had taught, since then the attempt to break out of the epistemological ghetto would fail. A third general condition, accepted by all the new ontologists, is that modern ontology should not proceed in a dogmatic fashion in Kant's sense; this also rules out simple reference back to pre-Kantian traditions. The rehabilitation of philosophy as theory of knowledge also remains decisive for
the new ontology, to the extent that it regards an epistemological self-justification as absolutely indispensable. The priority of the question of being over that of knowledge, which is the general characteristic of the new ontology, should itself be seen as the result of epistemological reflection: since the time of Lotze, the argument that the subject is him: self an existent and the knowledge-relation a relation of being had played a central role in that connexion. In Hegel's words, the new ontology saw itself as an immanent critique of epistemology, not as its simple opposite. The success of this critique was then felt as the great liberation 'to things themselves'." (pp. 194-195)


a) Die Formulierung der ontologischen Grundfrage als Frage nach dem Sinn von "sein" 16; b) Zur Geschichte der ontologischen Grundfrage 18; c) Die Zielsetzung der Wiederaufnahme der ontologischen Grundfrage 20; d) Ergänzende Bemerkungen zur Methode 22; e) Vier semantische Grundfunktionen von "sein": i) Die Kopula als "offene Prädikatsform" 25; ii) Das "ist" in identifizierenden Aussagen 32; iii) Existenz 32; iv) Veritatives Sein 37; f) Die Antwort: Der Sinn von "sein" -- eine in aller gegenständlichen Bezugnahme immer schon vorausgesetzte semantische Verweisungsstruktur 39; g) Ist diese Sinnstruktur nur ein sprachgeschichtlicher Zufall? 45;
Teil II
Die mögliche Rolle der ontologischen Grundfrage für eine (heute noch durchführbare) Metaphysik
a) Das Problem der thematischen Eingrenzung der Metaphysik als philosophischer Disziplin 47; b) Metaphysik als "transphysica" - zwei Deutungstypen 49; c) Die Differenz von positionalem und formalem Seinssinn als Grund zweier fundamentaler ontologischer Fragedimensionen 52; d) Die Entfaltung der ontologischen Grundfrage als Organisationsprinzip für eine philosophische Metaphysik; die Rolle erkenntnis- und sprachkritischer Erörterungen 56; e) Das Verhältnis der ontologisch-metaphysischen Fragestellung zu anderen philosophischen Grundfragen 65; Anmerkungen 72;
Anhang
Ernst Tugendhat über die 'Seinsfrage' als fundamentalphilosophische Fragestellung 91.

"The pervasiveness of Being is the doctrine that everything is. This doctrine would he false if something was not. That being is pervasive is not a trivial claim. An ontology might he motivated by the desire to quantify over non-beings in such a way that we can say that something is a flying man without implying that some being is a flying man. If such a distinction is allowed, then it might be thought that something is not, even though no being is not. Pervasiveness then would be true for beings but not for 'somethings.'
This chapter explores the different positions that philosophers from Parmenides to Aristotle take on the question of the pervasiveness of Being, and traces some of the relations linking those positions to one another."
Six volumes.
The Vocabulary of Ontology: Being