

Theory and History of Ontology ([www.ontology.co](http://www.ontology.co)) by Raul Corazzon | e-mail: [rc@ontology.co](mailto:rc@ontology.co)

## Annotated bibliography on the Debate about the Subject Matter of First Philosophy

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1. "Metaphysica - Sapientia - Scientia divina. The Subject and Status of First Philosophy in the Middle Ages." 2005. *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of the Metaphysics* no. 5.  
Edited by Pasquale Porro.  
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2. "Origins and Developments of Ontology (16th-21th Century) / Origini e sviluppi dell'ontologia (secoli XVI-XXI) / Naissance et développements de l'ontologie (XVIème-XXIème siècles) / Entstehung und Entwicklungen der Ontologie (XVI-XXI Jahrhundert) / Origins and Developments of Ontology (16th-21st Century)." 2009. *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of the Metaphysics* no. 9. The volume, edited by Costantino Esposito with the cooperation of Marco Lamanna, contains the Acts of the International Congress *Origin and Development of Modern Ontology*, held at Università di Bari (Italy) 15-17 May 2008. *Indice*: Costantino Esposito: *Introduzione. Dalla storia della metafisica alla storia dell'ontologia VII-XXXI*; I. *Alle origini dell'ontologia moderna: l'orizzonte tardo-scolastico e rinascimentale*. Joseph S. Freedman, *The Godfather of Ontology?* Clemens Timpler, *"All that is Intelligible", Academic Disciplines during the Late 16th and Early 17th Centuries, and Some Possible Ramifications for the Use of Ontology in our Time* 3; Mario S. de Carvalho: *Tra Fonseca e Suarez: una metafisica incompiuta a Coimbra* 41; Jacob Schmutz: *Les innovations conceptuelles de la métaphysique espagnole post-suarézienne: les status rerum selon Antonio Pérez et Sebastián Izquierdo* 61; Paolo Ponzio: *Notitia sui est esse suum. Nota sull'ente e sull'io nel pensiero metafisico di Tommaso Campanella* 101; II. *L'età cartesiana e le metafisiche del razionalismo*. Giulia Belgioioso: *L'invenzione*

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3. "The Debates on the Subject of Metaphysics from the Later Middle Ages to the Early Modern Age / I dibattiti sull'oggetto della metafisica dal tardo medioevo alla prima età moderna." 2010. *Medioevo. Rivista di Storia della Filosofia Medievale* no. 34.  
 Edited by Marco Forlivesi.  
 Contents: Marco Forlivesi: Presentazione 7; Marco Forlivesi: Approaching the debate on the subject of metaphysics from the later Middle Ages to the early Modern Age: the ancient and medieval antecedents 9; Claus A. Andersen, "Metaphysica secundum ethymon nominis dicitur scientia transcendens". On the etymology of "Metaphysica in the Scotist tradition 61; Antonino Poppi: L'oggetto della metafisica nella *Quaestio de subiecto metaphysicae* di Giacomino Malafossa (1553) 105; Isabelle Mandrella: Le sujet de la métaphysique et sa relation au *conceptus entis transcendentissimi* aux 16ème et 17ème siècles 123; Pier Paolo Ruffinengo: L'oggetto della metafisica nella scuola tomista tra tardo medioevo ed età moderna 141; Maria Muccillo: Un dibattito sui libri metafisici di Aristotele fra platonici, aristotelici e telesiani (con qualche complicazione ermetica): Patrizi, Angelucci e Muti sul soggetto della metafisica 221; Riccardo Pozzo: Cornelius Martini sull'oggetto della metafisica 305; Marco Lamanna, "De eo enim Metaphysicus agit logice". un confronto tra Pererius e Goclenius 315; Massimiliano Savini: Una metafisica sotto tutela: gnostologia, noologia e ontologia nel pensiero di Abraham Calov 361; Marco Sgarbi, "Unus, Verus, Bonus et Calovius". L'oggetto della metafisica secondo Abraham Calov 381; Sven K. Knebel: "Metaphysikkritik"? Historisches zur Abgrenzung von Logik und Metaphysik 399;  
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4. "Aquinas on Separate Substances and the Subject Matter of Metaphysics." 2011. *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* no. 22:347-382.  
 Abstract: "Scholars who consider Thomas Aquinas's metaphysics have dedicated much attention to his account of how the separate substance known as God is related to the subject matter of metaphysics, *ens commune*. Little attention, however, has been paid to his account of how created separate substances, which theologians call 'angels', are related to this subject matter. Indeed, Thomas himself does not address this topic in detail. To the extent that he does, his considerations seem somewhat inconsistent. On the one hand, he presents created separate substances as principles or causes of *ens commune*, suggesting that they are not included under this subject

matter. On the other hand, he also treats them as substances or beings, suggesting that they are somehow included under *ens commune*. This article attempts to show that despite Thomas's seemingly contradictory treatment of this topic, one can nevertheless discern in his writings a coherent and consistent account of how created separate substances are related to the subject matter of metaphysics."

5. Adamson, Peter, and Benevich, Fedor. 2023. *The Heirs of Avicenna: Philosophy in the Islamic East, 12–13th Centuries. Metaphysics and Theology*. Brill: Leiden. Chapter 1: *The Subject Matter of Metaphysics and Kalām*, pp. 26-63.
6. Aertsen, Jan A. 2005. "Metaphysics as a Transcendental Science." *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of the Metaphysics* no. 5:377-389.
7. ———. 2011. "The Transformation of Metaphysics in the Middle Ages." In *Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages: A Tribute to Stephen F. Brown*, edited by Emery, Kent Jr., Friedman, Russell L. and Speer, Andreas, 19-39. Leiden: Brill.
8. ———. 2012. "Why Is Metaphysics Called "First Philosophy" in the Middle Ages?" In *The Science of Being as Being: Metaphysical Investigations*, edited by Doolan, Gregory T., 53-69. Washington: Catholic University of America Press.
9. Andersen, Claus A. 2009. "«Metaphysica secundum ethymon nominis dicitur scientia transcendens». On the Etymology of 'metaphysica' in the Scotist Tradition." *Medioevo. Rivista di Storia della Filosofia Medievale* no. 34:61-104.
10. ———. 2009. "The *Quaestio de subjecto metaphysicae* by Giacomino Malafossa from Barge (1481ca.-1563). Edition of the text." *Medioevo. Rivista di Storia della Filosofia Medievale* no. 34:427-474.
11. ———. 2019. "What is Metaphysics in Baroque Scotism? Key Passages from Bartolomeo Mastri's *Disputations on Metaphysics* (1646–1647)." *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* no. 44:49-71. Abstract: "This contribution offers a first-hand impression of Bartolomeo Mastri's *Disputations on Metaphysics*, the single most important work on metaphysics produced in the Scotist school during the Early Modern period. I shall highlight a selection of key passages that convey an impression of this work's historical-literary context, its subject matter, its main motifs, and scientific aims, but also its limitations. Notably, we see Mastri emphasizing the theological aspect of metaphysics, though he in the end refrains from exploring this aspect of metaphysics within his work on metaphysics. I suggest that this discrepancy between Mastri's concept of metaphysics and his practice of metaphysics showcases the difficulty of organizing this discipline during the period of transition from the traditional commentary format, typical of medieval scholasticism, to the >Early Modern scholastic *Cursus philosophicus* literature."
12. ———. 2020. "Scotist Metaphysics in Mid-Sixteenth Century Padua. Giacomino Malafossa from Barge's *A Question on the Subject of Metaphysics*." *Studia Neoaristotelica* no. 17:69-107. Abstract: "For more than four decades around the middle of the sixteenth century, Giacomino Malafossa from Barge († 1563) held the Scotist chair of metaphysics at the University of Padua. In his *A Question on the Subject of Metaphysics, in Which Is Included the Question, Whether Metaphysics Is a Science*, he developed a remarkable stance on the subject matter of metaphysics. Metaphysics has two objects: being qua being and God. However, only when it deals with the latter object can it be said to be a science in a strict sense. The reason is that the strict Aristotelian notion of science presupposes that the object of any science has demonstrable properties, which is the case with God, but not with being as being. Although being qua being does have certain properties, namely the transcendentals, these cannot be truly demonstrated. Malafossa's *Quaestio* bears witness both to the clash between Averroism and Scotism at the Italian Renaissance universities and to the complexity of the Scotist tradition itself. This introductory article highlights



Malafossa's sources and traces the critical reception of his views among later Scotist authors."

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14. Bertolacci, Amos. 2006. *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Kitab al-Sifa'. A Milestone of Western Metaphysical Thought*. Leiden: Brill.
15. ———. 2007. "Avicenna and Averroes on the Proof of God's Existence and the Subject-Matter of Metaphysics." *Medioevo* no. 32:61-98.
16. ———. 2022. "On the Arabic Titles of Aristotle's Metaphysics. The Case of "Book of Letters". " *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* no. 22:107-146.  
Abstract: "The article has three interrelated aims. First, to document that the title "Book of Letters", despite its fame, was far from being 'traditional' in Arabic philosophy, as it is often presented, but it rather served as a temporary designation of the *Metaphysics* in Arabic. Apart from later derivatives, this title is attested only four times, in different forms, in writings of the IV/X century, with no trace beforehand and a life-span of a few decades, from the time of the translation activity of Abu- Bišr Matta- (d. 328H/940) until the composition of an ethical work by Miskawayh (written between 358H/968 and 360H/970) and of the *Fihrist* (377H/987-8). This title soon disappeared from the philosophical scenario in the course of the V/XI century, when it apparently lost currency in philosophical contexts.  
The second aim is to shed some light on the origin of this expression. "Book of Letters" as a title of the *Metaphysics* comes, in fact, from a cultural environment different from the Arabic-Islamic one, namely from the Syriac tradition of Greek philosophy, or from its Pahlavi offshoots. The Syriac provenience is indicated by the first known user of this expression, Paul the Persian (VI c. CE). It is corroborated by the Syriac background of some parts of Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on the *Metaphysics* preserved in Arabic, in which all the treatises of the *Metaphysics* are systematically designated through letters. The third aim is to explain the waning of the title under discussion with reference to Avicenna (Ibn Sī-na-, d. 428H/1037) and his renewal of philosophical nomenclature in the V/XI century.  
The author of the *Book of the Cure/Healing* (*Kita-b al-Šifa* - ') not only neglected the title at stake, as already others had done before him: in his masterpiece on metaphysics, he also proposed a new and alternative denomination of Aristotle's eponymous work ("First Teaching", *al-ta 'lī-m al-awwal*), which condemned to irrelevance the textual content of the *Metaphysics* and a fortiori its material arrangement in distinct treatise designated by means of letters."
17. Biard, Joël. 2003. "God as First Principle and Metaphysics as a Science." In *The Medieval Heritage in Early Modern Metaphysics and Modal Theory, 1400-1700*, edited by Friedman, Russell L. and Nielsen, Lauge Olaf, 75-98. Dordrecht: Kluwer.  
"In Aristotelian "first philosophy" (*prote philosophia*), wisdom is defined as 'the search for first causes and first principles.' (1) Thus, first philosophy is defined as the highest, governing science, even before its object has been determined, i.e. before knowing the precise number and the nature of these first principles, whether nature (*phusis*), being (*to on*), God, or, as Aristotle himself is inclined to think in *Metaphysics* VII (Z), *ousia*. The very claim that God is first principle -- if such a principle exists -- emerged in the field of philosophy. Before Aristotle, Anaxagoras had already characterized the *nous* as divine. Further, as we have seen, the question of the nature and existence of a first principle is a crucial one for determining the status of the "highest science" for which Aristotle was looking in the *Metaphysics*. In a situation like this, a confrontation with the doctrine of the great revealed religions was unavoidable. This began in the period of the Alexandrian commentaries, continued in the Arabo-islamic world, and the Latin Middle Ages inherited this rich and complex tradition. In fact, for a long time, medieval Latin thinkers believed that Aristotle had written a theology, supposedly the continuation of Book XII of the *Metaphysics*. They thought that this was to be found in the small

text derived from Proclus' *Elements of Theology* and entitled *Liber de causis*. Does the investigation of the natural world allow us to conclude the existence of a first principle? Following natural reason, what might prompt us to call this principle 'God'? In the highest part of philosophy, what functions does God as first principle play? Are we talking about the same God as the God of the Bible, or is this pure homonymy?

In the first part of this paper I sketch the thirteenth and fourteenth century debate concerning the object of metaphysics, which raised the question of whether God, insofar as he is first principle, is the object of this science. Then I investigate how the first principle can be apprehended and conceived as an integral part of a discipline that proceeds according to human reason. I consequently touch on how the question of the knowability of the first principle serves simultaneously to assign the limits of metaphysics and to determine fully the extent of its validity. Finally I show that Early Modern metaphysics, specifically René Descartes, while completely abandoning the peripatetic conception of knowledge prevalent in the Middle Ages, nevertheless retains certain aspects of the medieval tradition through the use that Descartes made of a philosophical conception of God that provided a foundation for the order of nature and guaranteed our knowledge." (pp. 75-76)

(1) *Metaphysics* A, 1, 981 b 27-28: "All men suppose what is called wisdom to deal with the first causes and the principles of things".

18. Booth, Edward. 1983. *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology in Islamic and Christian Thinkers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
19. Callus, Daniel A. 1963. "The Subject-Matter of Metaphysics according to some Thirteenth Century Oxford Masters." In *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter. Ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung*, edited by Wilpert, Paul and Eckert, Willehad Paul, 393-400. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
20. Chroust, Anton-Hermann. 1951. "The Definitions of Philosophy in the *De divisione philosophiae* of Dominicus Gundissalinus." *New Scholasticism* no. 25:253-281.
21. Crowe, Michael Bertram. 1963. "Peter of Ireland's Approach to Metaphysics." In *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter. Ihr Ursprung und Ihre Bedeutung*, edited by Wilpert, Paul, 154-160. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
22. D'Ancona, Cristina. 1998. "Al-Kindi on the Subject-Matter of the First Philosophy. Direct and Indirect Sources of Falsafa al-ülä, Chapter one." In *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter? - Qu'est-ce que la philosophie au Moyen Age? - What is Philosophy in the Middle Ages?*, edited by Aertsen, Jan A. and Speer, Andreas, 841.855. Berlin: de Gruyter.
23. D'Ettore, Dominic. 2015. "A Thomist Re-consideration of the Subject Matter of Metaphysics: Chrysostom Iavelli on What is Included in Being as Being." *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* no. 89:209-223. Abstract "Catholic Philosophy has long acknowledged the primary place of Metaphysics, and a primary question of metaphysicians is "what is Metaphysics about?" This paper engages this primary metaphysical question through the lens of Scholastic dispute over the adequate subject matter of Metaphysics. Chrysostom Iavelli defended the position that the subject of Metaphysics is real being common to God and creatures against the position of his predecessor Dominic Flandrensis who had argued that it is categorical being to the exclusion of uncreated being. I find Flandrensis's position represented in the writings of notable contemporary Thomists, but not Iavelli's. This paper, offers a sixteenth-century Thomist's position on the subject matter of Metaphysics as a challenge to current Thomist consensus. It attempts to prompt a re-investigation of the reasons behind the current consensus both as a philosophical position and as an interpretation of St. Thomas Aquinas."
24. d'Onofrio, Giulio. 2005. "Quando la metafisica non c'era. "Vera philosophia" nell'Occidente latino 'pre-aristotelico." *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* no. 5:103-144.

25. Darge, Rolf. 2015. "Suárez on the Subject of Metaphysics." In *A Companion to Francisco Suárez*, edited by Salas, Victor M. and Fastiggi, Robert L., 91-123. Leiden: Brill.
26. Di Giovanni, Matteo. 2011. "Averroes and the Logical Status of Metaphysics." In *Methods and Methodologies: Aristotelian Logic East and West, 500–1500*, edited by Cameron, Margaret and Marenbon, John, 53-74. Leiden: Brill.
27. Di Liscia, Daniel A. 2017. "The Subject Matter of Physics and Metaphysics in Jacques Legrand's *Compendium utriusque philosophie*." *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval* no. 24:249-265.
28. Doig, James C. 1972. *Aquinas on Metaphysics: A Historico-Doctrinal Study of the Commentary on the Metaphysics*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
29. Doolan, Gregory T. 2011. "Aquinas on Separate Substances and the Subject Matter of Metaphysics." *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* no. 22:347-382.
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31. Fakhry, Majid. 1984. "The subject-matter of metaphysics: Aristotle and Ibn-Sina." In *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Studies in Honor of G. Hourani*, edited by Marmura, Michael E., 137-147. Albany: State University of New York Press. Reprinted in: M. Fakhry, *Philosophy, Dogma, and the Impact of Greek Thought in Islam*, Aldershot: Variorum 1994, Essay XII.
32. Fazzo, Silvia. 2012. "The *Metaphysics* from Aristotle to Alexander of Aphrodisias." *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* no. 55:51-68.
33. Fidora, Alexander. 2013. "Dominicus Gundissalinus and the Introduction of Metaphysics into the Latin West." *The Review of Metaphysics* no. 66:691-712. "It is in his influential encyclopedia *De divisione philosophiae*,(\*) however, that Gundissalinus presents his most systematic discussion of metaphysics as a science." (...)  
"Accordingly, the following discussion is divided into three parts: firstly, an exploration of the history of the relevant terminology will show how, for the first time, Gundissalinus interpreted metaphysics as the name of a discipline (1); in a second step, I will analyze the epistemological foundation of metaphysics as an autonomous science in the chapter on metaphysics in *De divisione philosophiae*, paying particular attention to Gundissalinus's criticism of twelfth-century philosophical theology (2); thirdly, I will examine a key text of the treatise on the division of the sciences, which has received little attention so far: Gundissalinus included a translation of a passage from Avicenna's *Kitâb al-burhân* in his treatise, which discusses the difficult matter of the subordination of the philosophical disciplines under metaphysics (3)." (pp. 691-692)  
(°) A Latin edition with German translation of the text may be found in: Alexander Fidora, and Dorothee Werner, *De divisione philosophiae — Über die Einteilung der Philosophie*, Herders Bibliothek der Philosophie des Mittelalters, vol. 11 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2007). Henceforth: Gundissalinus, *De divisione*.
34. ———. 2020. "The Arabic Influence on the Classification of Philosophy in the Latin West. The Case of the Introductions to Philosophy." In *The Diffusion of the Islamic Sciences in the Western World*, edited by Paravicini Bagliani, Agostino, 191-209. Firenze: SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo.  
"The Arabic divisions of the sciences mainly influenced the Latin West through translations from Arabic into Latin by Dominicus Gundissalinus (1110-1190) and even more so through his own works, which rely heavily on the materials he translated<sup>1</sup>. Like other translators from the Iberian Peninsula, Dominicus

Gundissalinus – who was by far the most philosophical of the Toledan translators of the twelfth century – began to translate from Arabic into Latin with the help of Jewish (Ibn Daʿūd) and Mozarabic assistants. These co-translators, who were proficient in Arabic, produced oral translations into vernacular which Gundissalinus then brought into Latin." (p. 191)

(...)

"How much Gundissalinus himself was influenced by al-Fārābī's work is evident in the fact that he took his translation or adaptation of it, called *De scientiis*, as the basis of his own seminal philosophical encyclopedia *De divisione philosophiae*. This work constitutes a hallmark of the history of philosophy, primarily because this synthesis introduces a number of hitherto unknown sciences into Latin philosophy, such as optics (*de aspectibus*) and statics (*de ponderibus*), while substantially redefining others, namely metaphysics and politics. This makes Gundissalinus the first (Latin) thinker to treat metaphysics as the name of a discipline rather than of a text (4)." (p. 192)

(4) 4. See A. Fidora, «Dominicus Gundissalinus and the Introduction of Metaphysics into the Latin West», *The Review of Metaphysics*, 66 (2013), 691-712.

35. Forlivesi, Marco. 2006. "Impure Ontology. The Nature of Metaphysics and its Object in Francisco Suarez's Texts." *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* no. 5:559-686.
36. ———. 2008. "Quae in hac quaestione tradit Doctor videntur humanum ingenium superare. Scotus, Andrés, Bonet, Zerbi and Trombetta Confronting the Nature of Metaphysics." *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* no. 8:219-277.
37. ———. 2009. "Approaching the Debate on the Subject of Metaphysics Between Later Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Ancient and Medieval Antecedents." *Medioevo. Rivista di Storia della Filosofia Medievale* no. 34:9-59.
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"Concluding remarks. We have to come to a close. The study of the history of metaphysics has been addressed from the perspective of the postmetaphysical era. We shied from reproducing the claims to self-evidence that the various metaphysical projects convey and, seeking for safer, more objective ground, rather investigated into the structures that underlie this self-evidence and induce its very production. This line of questioning brought us to consider a connection which is characteristic of the foundation of metaphysics in the Middle Ages, the one between the first object of thought and the *subiectum* of first philosophy. Without reducing the speculation on the first object of thought to the modern concept of subjectivity - both parties would resist their insertion in such a history of continuity -, the medieval discussion on the first object of thought proved to have an important feature in common with the later philosophy of subjectivity, insofar as an investigation into the horizon of knowledge settles the possibility of a homogeneous



field and, therewith, of metaphysics. Yet these same structures which establish the homogeneous field of metaphysics are, in the 14th century, involved in its dispersion. This event, the dispersion of metaphysics at the beginning of the 14th century, was verified by four examples and clarified by the image of the scattered field: the collision of the homogeneous field of metaphysics with the object of knowledge made it disperse in a scattered field. Still, because of its foundation in an established distribution of subjectivity, the medieval dispersion of metaphysics remained entirely unproblematic. Only the explicit turn to the subject for the unfurling of the homogeneous field of metaphysics after the Middle Ages allowed a refreshed dispersion of subjectivity to damage the confidence in metaphysics and herald the postmetaphysical era.

Perhaps the question arises whether, in this way, metaphysics itself has indeed become impossible. Is it not rather a certain episode of its history that has come to a close, an episode in which this foundational scheme of subjectivity grew to full stature and then faded away? But it would be quite ahistorical to think that one could escape from this development and once more try, free now from the rise and fall of subjectivity, to establish a homogeneous field of metaphysics. This reality of which we are not the most creative part, is constituted, on a theoretical level, by structures of which we cannot dispose, structures that, historically determined, are imposed upon us and do not allow us - thus the diagnostics of our postmetaphysical era - to describe reality, like metaphysics intends to do, in terms of a homogeneous field.

This transition from the era of the philosophy of subjectivity to the post-metaphysical era was symbolized by the succession of those both catchwords 'subjectivity' and 'structure'. Structural reflection on subjectivity reveals its constitutive vigor to be embedded in or even derived, not to say borrowed from more fundamental structures in the ordering of knowing, structures that propose and indeed define both the subject-positions to be occupied and the object-domains of metaphysics allegedly constituted by mutually irreducible instances of subjectivity. Turning things round, a conclusion is reached to which we - rather on the sly, as must be admitted - were tacitly leading all this time. For if, by accepting the perspective of the postmetaphysical era and receiving the self-evidence of metaphysical projects not as something given, but as constituted by analyzable structures, we reached insight into tendencies of dispersion in the history of metaphysics, then, finally, also the self-evidence to which the *postmetaphysical* era appeals reveals itself to be produced and analyzable as to its constitutive structures - with this analysis, thus we may conclude, we have made a beginning here." (pp. 63-64)

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Abstract: "The epistemic constellation that underlies the transformation of metaphysics in the 13th and 14th century is legitimized by the identification of the subject of first philosophy with the first object of the intellect. In this epistemic constellation, a new thought presents itself: the foundation of Aristotle's unconditional starting point of thinking, i.e. the principle of non-contradiction, in the first known, transcendental concepts of the mind. The present article argues that, on the one hand, innovative attempts to found the principle of non-contradiction of the Franciscan Nicolaus Bonetus and the Carmelite John Baconthorpe demonstrate the stability of this epistemic constellation. It is true that, in their foundation of the principle of non-contradiction. Bonetus and Baconthorpe effect a dissociation of the subject of first philosophy and the first object of the intellect, which seems to challenge the very legitimizing strategy of the medieval transformation of metaphysics. But the very discourse that breaches the identification of the subject of

metaphysics with the first object of the intellect, tacitly reproduces it by means of a division of first objects of the intellect. Its articulation of a first object of the intellect that surpasses the subject of first philosophy in generality, on the other hand, preludes tendencies in modern philosophy that, in presenting the thinkable as such as what grants access to reality, give full attention to the modes of being excluded from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*."

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"In the following, we will investigate metaphysics' status as a scientific discipline, through an examination of the medieval sources of the approach that most profoundly transformed modern metaphysics, i.e. Kantian transcendental philosophy. Starting with Kant's direct sources we will trace the discussion back to the ideas of John Duns Scotus (§ 1) and of Francisco Suarez (§ 2), in order to demonstrate with regard to its most important features just how Kant received (§ 3) and transformed (§ 4) these ideas."
49. Jagadeeswaraiah, Murala. 2018. "Western Understanding of Metaphysics up to Aquinas: A Survey of Literature." *International Journal of Recent Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRSSH)* no. 5:67-82.  
Abstract: "In this essay an attempt is made to bring out the importance of the understanding of metaphysics. The origin of the term is discussed and the implication in the ancient Greek philosophy and medieval period in the West are given some consideration. The Ancient Greek philosophers were metaphysicians with a scientific mind. Their search is to find out the one 'stuff' out of which the universe is made. Whereas the Pre-Socratics considered the 'stuff' as one or the other of the elements Socrates and Plato takes Ethics as one thing that is responsible for the universe. Aristotle names it as 'the philosophy' which is the 'wisdom' that inquires the first cause. It has implications on modern science."
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Abstract: "The article analyzes the status of metaphysics in relation to other sciences, especially the sense and reasons behind its priority in the system of sciences, as conveyed in the works of Thomas Aquinas. The question of what comes first in the system of sciences has led to an exploration and justification of the criteria behind this priority. According to Thomas Aquinas, metaphysics is justly considered to be the first philosophy: on the one hand it is occupied with what comes first in the ontological order – the first causes of being, on the other hand, other sciences rely on it for their first principles. The article critically analyzes both substantiations of the idea of being first. The substantive criterion is questioned by the introduction of revealed theology into the system of sciences accepted by Aquinas; revealed theology is also occupied with what comes first, and does so with greater authority than metaphysics. The article focuses on the analysis of main doubts concerning metaphysics' methodological criterion of priority: the idea that

metaphysics, in relation to other sciences, is in a sense first and functions as a determinant, while also being last and determined by these very sciences.

Metaphysics is first, as other sciences draw from it their first principles, and last, as it utilizes facts established by other sciences which come first in the process of knowledge acquisition. Hence the charge that Aquinas' argumentation concerning metaphysics' priority is circular in nature. The article analyzes various aspects of this difficulty and offers suggestions on how to overcome them."

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*Metaphysics as the Science of God* pp. 538-584; *Metaphysics as the Science of Being* pp. 585-638.

"The subject-matter of metaphysics has been debated since the time when Aristotle first conceived the idea of the science. He himself speaks of 'the science we are seeking' and describes it differently in different places. In *Metaphysics* IV 1003a 21-6)) he speaks of a science which studies being as being and contrasts this science with the special sciences, like the mathematical disciplines, which investigate the attributes of a part of being. Two chapters later, IV.3 (1005b2), Aristotle speaks of a science which he calls 'first philosophy' because it grounds the first principles or axioms of the special sciences. But in book VI.1 (1026a18-19) he distinguishes three types of speculative science, physics, mathematics and 'divine science', so that one must ask how he understood the relationship between the general science of being, first philosophy and divine science. It is clear that divine science studies objects that are separate from matter and not subject to change. But Aristotle seems to have wanted to identify this science both with the investigation of being and with the science of the principles of the sciences, on the ground that divine science concerns itself with the highest principle of being in general and can for this reason preside over the special sciences. At the same time, each of these definitions of metaphysics must be understood in accordance with Aristotle's own idea of what science is. In his conception, scientific knowledge is attained by way of the definition of the essential natures of things and the demonstration of the attributes which necessarily belong to them. Basically, Aristotle understood reality as an ordered structure. Even where his definitions are definitions of events, these are understood not in their variability as a process, but rather as reified. His science of metaphysics deals therefore with all reality according to its fixed essences and their necessary attributes and has consequently a static character, like the ancient society which it reflected.

In the course of history it was Aristotle's conception of metaphysics as divine science that gave rise to the most difficulties. The encounter of his idea of God as first substance with divergent religious traditions often forced later thinkers to modify the conception of metaphysics as the science of being. In late antiquity those philosophers who came to the defense of the pagan gods tended to interpret metaphysics as the science of intelligible reality, arranged in hierarchical degrees, separate from matter, but mediating between the divine and the material worlds. In Islam the doctrine of God's oneness compelled philosophers and theologians to emphasise the great gulf which separates the necessary being of the creator from the radically contingent being of the created world. Medieval Latin Christianity learnt

of both of these approaches through Avicenna and Pseudo-Dionysius. The notions of a necessary first substance and a hierarchy of intelligences readily found a place in the contemplative and ordered society of the Middle Ages. The Christian notion of a God active in himself as triune and active in the world as incarnate as the fundamental articles of a faith thought to be even more certain than scientific knowledge would seem to have demanded a new definition of science and a new definition of the reality which metaphysics studies. But, paradoxically, it was only with the revolutionary social changes that marked the period under consideration in this volume [the Renaissance] -- a period in which the medieval faith was breaking down - that a vision of reality as dynamic process and a new understanding of science emerged.

This new conception of reality appeared in various guises, as a new mathematics, as the idea of a magical control over nature, as a conflict between Plato and Aristotle, or in connection with the doctrine of God. It was resisted by scholastic authors, who sought for apologetical reasons to maintain Aristotle's static notion of being. But as more and more new sciences -- sciences connected with this new vision of reality and often undreamt of in antiquity -- came to maturity, even thinkers in the Aristotelian tradition were forced to reopen the question of the definition of metaphysics and its relationship to the individual sciences. Since each of these problems -- the problem of God and the problem of the science of being -- had its own history, I shall treat them separately." (pp. 537-538)

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#### "The Subject of Metaphysics"

The Islamic commentators Avicenna and Averroes set the background to the questions that discuss this issue in Scotus's *QM*, namely Book I, q. 1, Book IV, q. 1, and Book VI, q. 1. Avicenna had concluded that the only way to reconcile the criteria for scientific knowledge laid down in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* with the descriptions given and the procedures followed by Aristotle in the text of the



*Metaphysics* was to take the subject of investigation within metaphysics to be being as being. In proposing this manner of understanding the subject of metaphysics, Avicenna showed how only being as being could fit the Aristotelian requirements for scientific knowledge (Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 1.10, 76a31-76b23; 1.28, 87a38-87b4), the range of subjects treated in metaphysics (truth, goodness, and unity; cause/effect; substance and accident; act and potency, as well as necessary and possible being), and, above all, the metaphysical proof of God's existence and the divine attributes (Avicenna, *Metaphysics*, I.1.1 [IV 4: 64- 5: 81 ]; I.1.2 [IV 12: 14-22 ]). Fundamentally, Avicenna reasons that, since no science can prove the existence of its subject, if God's existence is shown in metaphysics, that science cannot have God as its subject.

Adopting the opposing standpoint, Averroes argued that, since no science proves the existence of its own subject, metaphysics must be about God as First Form and Substance or Last End. God's existence is not, contrary to Avicenna's claim, shown within metaphysics but in physics or natural philosophy and its treatment of the Unmoved Mover. Metaphysicians begin, then, with the proof of God's existence afforded them by the natural philosopher and hence the range of being displayed before them:

material and immaterial being. What metaphysical analysis strives to indicate is how all the beings of our experience are related to the First Form or God by way of final causality, while also attempting to show how we may meaningfully attribute certain properties to God (Averroes, *Physics* I, t. 83 [ 1550, 22vb-23ra ]; Averroes, *Metaphysics* IV, t. 6 [1562, 145vM-146vM]; IV, t. 2 [71 vG-M]).

Scotus 's discussion in Book I, q. 1 involves a protracted treatment of the two Islamic interpreters and their conflicting claims. Though this particular question is one in which there are layers of revision on Scotus 's part and, at times, the discussion is a strain to follow, the gist of Scotus's successive views becomes clear. In the earliest view expressed in the primitive text, Scotus held ultimately that metaphysics is a science that has being as being in the sense of substance as its subject (*Questions* I, q. 1, n. 91-2;

1997: 38-9). At this stage of his career he could see no greater unity to the concept of being than that of the ten categories of being and among these there is only a unity of attribution of the nine accidental categories to the category of substance. Since there is no common notion under which the full range of being can be treated, Scotus opted for the primary subject of the science as substance with the properties of accidents being treated in so far as they are dependent upon and exist for the sake of substance.

When we turn to the extras and additions found in Book I, q. 1, we encounter the more mature and developed position that is assumed in the later books of the *QM* and expounded at even greater length in Scotus's theological writings. The concept of being is univocal not only to the whole of categorial being, the being of substance and the nine accidents, but to being as considered prior to its modal differentiation into finite being and infinite being. Such a notion allows God to enter into metaphysical discourse as something falling under disjunctive propositions such as "Every being is either First or not-First" or "Every being is either in act or in potency" and hence under the disjunctive properties of being "finite/infinite" and "act/potency" respectively (*Questions* I, q. 1, n. 156-7; IV, q. 1, n. 45; 1997: 57-8, 264). This position is one that engenders its own difficulties, troubles that would cause Scotus to continue to struggle with the senses in which being can be predicated of its own differences and would lead to conflicts among his followers for a considerable period of time after his premature death (Dumont, 1987); subsequent refinements of the position aside, however, the position itself was attractive to contemporaries because of its ability to explain both the transcendental and theological dimensions of metaphysical discourse within the same framework." (pp. 168-169)

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- "Considering the rich survey Professor Lohr has presented this afternoon of Medieval commentaries on Aristotle's philosophical works including *Metaphysics*, there is no point in discussing in general terms the vicissitudes of this Aristotelian work at the Parisian Faculty of Arts. On top of that, in the *lettre d'invitation* of the organizers we were asked to say something about our own recent research in the field under discussion. Therefore I shall confine myself to John Buridan's (c. 1290-c. 1360) commentaries on *Metaphysics*. Fortunately, Buridan's activity as a commentator on *Metaphysics* may to a large degree be regarded as representative of the period. As we learn from Lohr's survey, from the fourteenth century only some five commentaries on this important Aristotelian writing are extant, quite unlike the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, from which a considerable amount of such works have survived. (\*)" (p. 303)
- (\*) For the reception of the *Metaphysics* into the curriculum of the Parisian Faculty of Arts see A. L. Gabriel, *Metaphysics in the Curriculum of Studies of the Mediaeval Universities*. in P. Wilpert ed., *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter. Ihr Ursprung and Ihre Bedeutung* (Miscellanea Mediuevalia 2) Berlin, 1963, pp. 92-102 ; G. Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities in the XIIIth and XIVth Centuries*, New York, 1988, p. 189 sqq.

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 This transition allows for a deeper reading of the Condemnation of 1277. The structure of the Condemnation reveals an intriguing commitment on the part of the condemned articles concerning the separate substances (or angels) and the peculiar neoplatonic "chain of being" that was the underpinning of their accounts. Peter Olivi argued against the neoplatonic chain of being soon after 1277. Even if this polemic is still neglected in the secondary literature on 1277, Olivi's interpretation of the state of the debate reinforces the reading of the Paris Condemnation with regard to neoplatonistic chains of being, and the options available for characterizing the proper subject of metaphysics."
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 Abstract: "In different parts of *Metaphysics*, Aristotle presents different (and apparently, conflicting) views on the nature and subject matter of the discipline in question. These different characterizations led to wide-ranging interpretations of the relation between metaphysics and philosophical theology. Muslim Philosophers adopted two different views. Al-Kindi and al-Farabi (in some of his works) endorsed the view that metaphysics is the same as theology as far as its subject matter is the First Cause (God) and it deals essentially with incorporeal entities. After Avicenna, however, a second view became dominant according to which metaphysics has a broader realm that embraces theology as its most noble part. The rationale behind this view is that the subject matter of metaphysics is "being qua being", or unconditioned existent, in its broad sense so that philosophical theology can be taken as discussing some of the proper accidents of the unconditioned existent. This view requires that metaphysics cannot be a secular discipline and should be totally consistent with theology. It also provides us with a certain interpretation of what is usually called "Islamic philosophy"."
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 "Balancing the system in the *Disputationes*, the Index amounts to a late medieval commentary, "by way of question," on the first 12 books of the *Metaphysics*. Shorter in length than, for example, St. Thomas Aquinas' (1225–1274) commentary on the same 12 books, Suárez's *Ample Index* more than makes up for that by cross-referencing the *Disputationes* itself hundreds of times. In fact, the *Index* and the *Disputationes* are exactly as Suárez intended them to be, complementary of one another and mutually supportive." (Doyle, p. 8).  
 "However, because there will be very many who will desire that this whole doctrine be collated with the books of Aristotle, not only in order to better perceive on what principles of the so great Philosopher it is based, but also in order that it be more easily and usefully employed for understanding Aristotle himself, I have also sought to provide the reader in this matter with an elaborate index, in which, if it is attentively read, most easily (if I am not mistaken) all those things which Aristotle treated in the books of *Metaphysics* can be comprehended and retained in memory. And again, [with that index] all questions can be at hand which are customarily raised among the expositors of these books." (Suárez, p. 21).
  
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 Translated and annotated, with corrected Latin text, by Shane Duarte.  
 "Section 1: Identifying the adequate object or subject of metaphysics.  
 Suárez classifies metaphysics or first philosophy as a natural science (*scientia naturalis*) (DM 1.2.17). In so classifying it, he in no way means to identify it with a branch of physics or natural philosophy. Rather, "natural" is here contrasted with "supernatural," so that in this sense of the expression mathematics also counts as a natural science, whereas sacred or supernatural theology, based on divine revelation, does not. Suárez further classifies metaphysics as a real science (*scientia realis*), since it is about things (*res*) or real beings (DM 1.2.13). The implicit contrast here is with a rational science (*scientia rationalis*) such as logic, which is not about any thing or real being, but is commonly thought to deal with objective second intentions (e.g., genus, species, subject, predicate, antecedent, consequent), which are beings of reason or items existing only objectively in the mind as objects of thought. Suárez also classifies metaphysics as a theoretical or speculative science (*scientia speculativa*) (DM 1.2.13), since it has the contemplation of truth as its highest end, unlike the practical and productive sciences, whose truths are ordered to some further goal (i.e., action or production)." (pp. XXVI-XXVII)
  
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Summary: "Aristotelian science conveys understanding by showing the necessary relationship between immediately evident first principles and conclusions about the natural world. To take a trivial example: induction from repeated experience teaches us that all broad-leaved plants are deciduous. We discover that grapevines have broad leaves. We infer that grapevines are deciduous, and thereby we also learn that they lose their leaves in winter because they are broad-leaved (see Aristotle, *Post. An.* II.16–17).

Aristotelian science explains a subject's possession of an attribute (the *explanandum*) by identifying the possession of that attribute with membership in a species, and then citing as *explanans* the inclusion of that species within a prior genus. In the present example, the property is "losing its leaves in winter," the species is "grapevines," and the genus is "broad-leaved plants." The explanation is then presented in the form of a syllogism. In the first premise an attribute (being deciduous) is predicated of a subject (broad-leaved plant). The second premise introduces a new subject that belongs to the class described by the subject of the first premise, allowing us to conclude that the second subject shares an attribute of the first.

Aristotle describes this demonstration as *propter quid* science because it explains why grape leaves fall. If the deduction were valid, but its premises were not explanatory, it would count as *quia* science: knowing a fact without understanding why it obtains (ibid., I.13, 78a22–b3) (see also Chapter 26)." (p. 609)

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Abstract: "Aristotle is considered to be the founding father of metaphysics. He specified the subject and scope of this science and used the names "first philosophy (*prote philosophia*)", "theology" and wisdom (*sophia*) for it. However, there have been some changes both in the scope and naming of this science after his time. Although it is generally accepted that the subject of metaphysics is "being qua being," there has been a confusion about the relationship between metaphysics and theology. Philosophers such as al-Fārābī and Avicenna directly studied this issue to eliminate such confusions. Different names such as first philosophy, after-physics, *al-‘ilm al-ilāhī* and *al-ilāhiyyāt* have always been used to refer to it. This study discusses why the science of metaphysics is named in different ways, mainly based on the evaluations of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī. It also questions if there is a relationship between different names and the scope of metaphysics and the method of analysis it uses? Do different names for the same scholarly area refer to the same science in terms of the subjects, areas of study and problems addressed, or does each name refer to different content than others? To achieve its intended aims, it also refers to the epistemology of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī."
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