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Several Senses of Being Starting from Metaphysics Δ7

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List of contributions

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John Buridan on the *ens per se*
(*In Metaph.* V 7: MS Darmstadt, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, 516)[*]

Abstract: This contribution will focus on an unpublished and barely known text by John Buridan, namely one of the two *Metaphysics* commentaries preserved in MS Darmstadt, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, 516. I have chosen to focus on this text because it provides more material than Buridan's other commentaries on *Metaphysics* concerning the notion of being *per se*, that is one of the four senses of being described by Aristotle in chapter 7 of *Metaphysics* V (Δ). I will proceed as follows. First, I will shortly present the different *Metaphysics* commentaries attributed to Buridan. Next, I will study the notion of being *per se*, as it emerges in the first Darmstadt version. Finally, I will compare the positions of this text with those of a commentary on the *Metaphysics*, the *lectura erfordiensis*, also by Buridan. A selection of unedited texts will be published as an appendix.

Keywords: John Buridan, Nominalism, *Metaphysics* commentaries, Ontology, *Per se/per accidens* distinction, Being

1. Introduction

It is well known that several commentaries of John Buridan's on the *Metaphysics* have come down to us.[1] The relationships between these

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[1] For an introduction to the metaphysics of John Buridan, see Kok (2014).

different texts have not yet been clarified: this will require a long and meticulous study.

The literary form, as well as the number of questions and the number of commented sections vary from one version to another. Consequently, not all versions offer materials on chapter 7 of Book V. The so-called *ultima lectura*, that is the version who has been printed in the 16th c.,[2] skips the chapter on the senses of being. Yet, the chapter is commented in the other extant commentaries, that is in the *reportatio* of MS Paris, BnF lat. 16131, in the two commentaries of the Darmstadt MS, Darmstadt, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, 516,[3] and in the *lectura erfordiensis*.[4]

First, let's take into account the Paris and Darmstadt versions.[5] As noted by Christoph Flüeler, MS Paris, BnF lat. 1613,1 is the original *reportatio*, i.e. the notebook used to record the contents of one of Buridan's series of lectures on *Metaphysics*. It contains a collection of *quaestiones* on Books I-IX (fol. 2-122) and the *expositio litterae* of Books I-XII (fol. 124-214); these two stages originally formed a single unit, but the questions and the literal explanation were recorded in distinct sets of notebooks, so that they are now separated.[6] This text is undeniably an invaluable witness, but also poses considerable reading problems, due to the fact that the *reportator*, as it is easy to imagine, was constrained to write very quickly. One finds here no questions on V 7, but the *expositio litterae* is extant (fol. 157vb-158rb). The Darmstadt manuscript preserves

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[2] Preserved in five MSS: Carpentras, Bibl. Inguimbertine 292; Paris, BnF lat. 14716; Salamanca, Univ. 1882; Venezia, Marc. VI 204a; Wien, Dominikanerbibl. 187/153. This version is the source of the 1518 edition by Badius Ascensius.

[3] See Flüeler (1997) and Flüeler (1999).

[4] The *lectura erfordiensis* has been recently edited by L. M. de Rijk: Johannes Buridanus (2008).

[5] I'm currently writing a study on the textual problems posed by the Paris and Darmstadt versions. Here, I'll confine myself to the essentials.

[6] See above, note 3.

two distinct commentaries on the *Metaphysics* of John Buridan. Each of these commentaries includes a literal explanation (*sententia*) and questions, and, as in the Paris manuscript, the literal explanations are separated from the questions. Here's how the contents are structured[7]:

- *Sententia lib. Metaph.*, Books I-VIII, incomplete, *expl. ex abrupto* (fol. 1ra-32vb);
- *Questiones sup. lib. Metaph.*, Books I-X, XII, incomplete (fol. 33ra-102[104]rb);
- *Sententia lib. Metaph.*, Books I-VII, incomplete, *expl. ex abrupto* (fol. 105[108]ra-128[131]va);
- *Questiones sup. lib. Metaph.*, Books I-VI, incomplete, *expl. ex abrupto* (fol. 133[136]ra-167[170]rb).

The first commentary consists of 1) and 2), the second of 3) and 4).

The *incipits* and *explicits* that can be found in various places in the manuscript inform us that the first commentary was written under Buridan's own supervision[8]; the second commentary appears to be a *reportatio*, and as Christoph Flüeler rightly points out[9], it could be, as in the case of the Paris manuscript, the notebooks originally used to collect the lessons' notes. It should also be noted that, given the differences

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[7] There is a discrepancy between the modern folio numbering (top right of the *recto*) and the old numbering (top left of the *verso*); that is why, starting on fol. 56, I will indicate both (the second in square brackets). It should also be noted that some folios have been left blank (43[44]r-45[44]v; 53[53]r-64[66v]; 102[104]v-104[107]v; 125[128]v; 127[130]ra, partially; 128[131]vb-132[135]v; 163[166]v, partially; 167[170]v). According to the notes in the manuscript, they were intended to contain missing sections of the commentaries.

[8] For example: fol. 1r, upper margin (beginning of the *compilatio*, literal commentary): 'Sententia magistri Iohannis Buridani supra librum methaficice [*sic*] compilate ante ipsum'; fol. 33r, upper margin (beginning of the *compilatio*, questions): 'Questiones libri methafisice compilate ante magistrum Iohannem Buridani'.

[9] Flüeler (1997: 91).

between them, the Paris and Darmstadt *reportationes* depend on two distinct cycles of lessons on *Metaphysics*.

Last, we have the *lectura erfordiensis*, entirely made up of questions. Here, question 22a is about the senses of being.

To summarize what all the surviving commentaries on the *Metaphysics* of Buridan can offer about Book V, chapter 7:

Version:	*Expositio litterae* of V 7:	Questions on V 7:
Paris, BnF lat. 16131	fol. 157vb–158rb	—
Darmstadt (*compilatio*)	fol. 12ra-rb	qu. V 5, fol. 69[71]va-vb
Darmstadt (*reportatio*)	fol. 118[121]vb–119[122]ra	qu. V 6, fol. 161[164]rb-vb
ultima lectura	(no *exp. litt.* in this version)[10]	—
lectura erfordiensis	(no *exp. litt.* in this version)	qu. 22a

An additional element is worth noting: the three questions preserved by the two Darmstadt versions and by the *lectura erfordiensis* concern the same subject, i.e. the validity of the division of being into being *per se* and being *per accidens*. This indicates that, of all the problems raised by the Aristotelian division of the senses of being, this is the one Buridan considered most important[11].

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[10] After having finished this article, I discovered in one of the witnesses of the *ultima lectura*, that is in MS Carpentras Inguimbertine 292, an (unknown?) *expositio litterae*. It is located before the questions that constitute the *ultima lectura*, and its relationship to them is not yet clear. The explanation of V 7, which is fairly succinct, can be found on fol. 10rb-va. Its study cannot be included in this survey.

[11] Unfortunately, based on our current knowledge, it is impossible to establish the relative chronology of these versions, which will be the task of a detailed study.

I'll leave aside the Paris and Darmstadt *reportationes*, and concentrate on the Darmstadt *compilatio*, which is certainly more accomplished than the other versions.

2. Six possible understandings of the *ens per se*

In the *expositio litterae* of the *compilatio*, Buridan focuses above all on the *ens per se*.

In *Metaphysics* V 7, Aristotle declares that 'all things which signify the figures of predication are said to be in their own right [καθ' αὐτὰ]'[12]. As we shall see, the interpretation of this statement is problematic in relation to the *Posterior Analytics*, where Aristotle seems to use 'being *per se*' in a rather different sense. In the *expositio litterae* of the *compilatio*, Buridan gives six possible understandings of the *ens per se* as being signifying the ten categories. As far as I know, he is the only Latin commentator to devote so much attention to this sense of being[13].

To begin with, I will explain what these possible understandings are.

(a) First, Aristotle's statement concerns true propositions, and means that any proposition that attributes being to one of the categories is true *per se*. So, propositions as 'substance is being', 'being qualified is being' etc. are true propositions *per se*. Buridan adds: 'tamen non sequitur quod ista sit uera: 'esse quale est ens' etc.';[14] according to my comprehension of the text, we need to understand that it is false to state 'being qualified is being *per se*' (hence I think that the *etc.* replaces *per se*).

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[12] *Metaph.* V 7, 1017a22-23. English translation in Aristotle (1993²: 40). Greek text edited in Aristotle (1924): καθ' αὐτὰ δὲ εἶναι λέγεται ὅσαπερ σημαίνει τὰ σχήματα τῆς κατηγορίας. In the Latin translation commented by Buridan, that is the *Moerbekana*, edited in Aristoteles Latinus (1995: 103): 'Secundum se uero esse dicuntur quecumque significant figuras predicationis'.

[13] The *lectura erfordiensis* is less rich in this respect: see § 4. below.

[14] Latin text below, 194.

Indeed, a quality (as being white or tall) is not a being *per se*, if we intend being *per se* as something endowed with autonomous existence. Thus, the propositions that assert that the categories are beings are true *per se*; those that assert that categories are beings *per se* are not necessarily true: indeed, the proposition 'Socrates is a being *per se*' is true, because it attributes being *per se* to a substance; on the contrary, 'to be white is a being *per se*' is obviously false.

(b) The second understanding, on the other hand, considers the possibility of attributing being *secundum se* to each category. This does not mean that the categories other than substance have an independent existence; it means that the substance, of which the categories are predicated, is *secundum se*. Then a proposition as 'being qualified is being *secundum se*' can only be understood as 'the substance, which is qualified, is being *secundum se*'; or 'the quality, being in a substance, is in a being *secundum se*'. Buridan concludes: 'since in this way, all the categories are taken [to mean] the substance'[15].

(c) The third understanding is based on the following passage of Aristotle's Categories:

> Of things that are said, some involve combination while others are said without combination. Examples of those involving combination are 'man runs', 'man wins'; and of those without combination 'man', 'ox', 'runs', 'wins'.[16]

Buridan concludes that the identification of being *per se* with being said according to categories means that each category can be considered

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[15] Latin text below, 194.

[16] *Cat.*, 2, 1a16-19. English translation in Aristotle (1963: 3). In the translation by Boethius, quoted by Buridan, edited in Aristoteles Latinus (1961: 5): 'Eorum quae dicuntur alia quidem secundum complexionem dicuntur, alia vero sine complexione. Et ea quae secundum complexionem dicuntur sunt ut homo currit, homo vincit; ea vero quae sine complexione, ut homo bos, currit, vincit'.

separately (*solitarie*, rendering Aristotle's *sine complexione*) from the whole constituted by the substance and the accidents, the subject and the attributes. In this case, as in the two previous cases, being *per se* does not seem to refer to anything real, but only to categories, each considered in itself (quantity in itself, relation in itself, etc.). Here we can underline Buridan's exegetical prudence, as he writes: 'to state that the ten categories are [here in V 7] understood without combination would be in line [*sonaret*] to what is said in the Categories';[17] and avoids using terms such as *concordat* or *consonat*.

(d) So far, Buridan has set out possible understandings of being *per se*, without taking a position for one in particular; he probably considered them all coherent. But he refutes the fourth understanding, which seems very close to the third but departs from it by asserting that each category signifies formally (*formaliter*) something (namely a *res*) that it is not the task of the other categories to signify formally. This is false, Buridan states, because 'the ten categories can supposit for the same thing' ('decem predicamenta possunt supponere pro eadem re'): so, 'man', 'runs' and 'wearing shoes' formally stand for Socrates, who is running and is wearing shoes. Buridan seems thus to suggest that one cannot think of a category that refers from a formal point of view to anything other than a substance endowed with attributes, even if we can conceptually isolate the attributes.[18]

(e) The fifth understanding is related to Averroes reading of *Metaphysics* X: 'On the other hand, that the one in some sense signifies the same as being, is clear in virtue of the fact that it follows the categories in the same number of ways and that it is in none of them'.[19]

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[17] See below, 195.

[18] Buridan seems to be implicitly referring to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII (Z) 2, 1028a32-25.

[19] *Metaph.*, X 2, 1054a13-15. English translation in Aristotle (2018: 6). Greek text edited in Aristotle (1924): ὅτι δὲ ταὐτὸ σημαίνει πως τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ ὄν, δῆλον τῷ τε παρακολουθεῖν ἰσαχῶς ταῖς κατηγορίαις καὶ μὴ εἶναι ἐν μηδεμιᾷ.

Averroes comments: 'the essences and quiddities of the categories are different,[20] and they do not share anything common, as if one or being were as a genus [to them], indeed if it were so, then this term "one" wouldn't signify what it signifies in the category of substance or of quality or of quantity by its primary meaning and immediately, but it would signify the same way as the term "genus" signify the species by means of something common',[21] that is something common to the individuals composing the species, i.e. the specific difference. Buridan finds here a possible explanation of the Aristotelian assertion that being *secundum se* corresponds to being divided into categories: 'being divided *secundum se* in the categories' means 'being divided immediately in the categories'; in fact, the passage from being to the ten categories is not achieved by adding a third element to being,[22] unlike the passage from genus to species, which is achieved by means of specific difference.

(f) According to the sixth and last understanding, true propositions *per se* can be given in each category; this is the case when superior attributes are predicated of inferior attributes: this can be exemplified by propositions such as 'paternity is a relation' or 'human beings are substances', i.e. cases in which (superior) genera are predicated of (inferior) species. Buridan will develop this understanding in the question devoted to the distinction between being *per se* and being *per accidens*.[23]

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[20] That is to say, irreducible one to each other.

[21] Averroes, *In Metaph.* X 8 (ed. Venetiis 1562, fol. 257vG-H): 'Deinde dixit: 'Et quia essentiae eorum etc.', id est et quia essentiae et quidditates praedicamentorum sunt diuersae, et non est in eis aliquid commune, ita quod unum et ens sint tanquam genus, quoniam si ita esset, tunc hoc nomen unum non significaret illud quod significat in predicamento substantiae aut qualitatis aut quantitatis prima significatione et sine medio, sed significaret quemadmodum hoc nomen genus significat species mediante aliquo communi'.

[22] Buridan specifies: 'sine differentiis diuresis': see below, 195.

[23] See § 3. below. The same reading is adopted by Ross in Aristotle (1924: 306-308).

The point that seems to have particularly preoccupied Buridan is the following: how can we admit that the nine categories other than substance are per se? This point is explored in greater depth in Buridan's only question devoted to V 7: qu. 5 on Book V, which will be the topic of the next section.

3. On the relevance of the division of being in being *per se* and *per accidens*

The question Buridan devotes to V 7 will spread more light on this problem. The question asks whether the distinction between *ens secundum se* and *ens secundum accidens* is a valid distinction ('utrum sit bona diuisio entis in ens secundum se et in ens secudum accidens');[24] it treats the same topic as the question in the *lectura erfordiensis*, but the way the problem is dealt with is not the same in both texts.

Like the *expositio litterae*, the question also takes into account several possible readings of the distinction. Of these many exegetical options, the one Buridan discusses in the greatest detail is to read the distinction as a distinction of propositions. Thus, he considers the propositions *tertio adiacens*.[25] Since any negative proposition can be reduced to an affirmative proposition (insofar as 'Socrates is not white' is equivalent to 'Socrates is non-white'), Buridan limits himself to affirmative propositions in their simplest form, i.e. 'S is P'. In an affirmative proposition such as 'S is P', the relationship between subject S and predicate P is either necessary or contingent. In the first case, the proposition is true because the terms that make it up, in the order in

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[24] Latin text below, 196-200.

[25] See below, 197. The text of the MS must be corrected here, as it has *secondo adiacens* instead of *tertio adiacens*. The pertinence of the correction is obvious from the rest of the reasoning. It should also be noted that Buridan, in the *expositio litterae*, proposes to reduce *secundo adiacente* propositions to *tertio adiacente* propositions, as 'homo est' is equivalent to 'homo est ens': below, 194.

which they are found, are linked in a necessary way: this is the case of propositions such as 'homo est animal': here, the terms stand for the same object ('homo' and 'animal' being co-extensive, if 'animal' is attributed to 'homo') and they stand necessarily for the same object, hence the proposition is true *per se*. In the second case, the proposition is true because its terms stand for the same object, however, the link between them is not necessary: this is the case of propositions such as 'Coriscus est musicus': here, the terms stand for the same object (since this individual and this musician are the same being), but they do not stand necessarily for the same object, since it's possible that Coriscus wasn't a musician; hence the proposition is true *per accidens*. Buridan concludes that, when Aristotle divides being into being *per se* and being *per accidens*, he means to divide true propositions *per se* and true propositions *per accidens*:

> Now, an affirmative proposition is sometimes said to be true *per se*, sometimes *per accidens*. Example of the first case: when the terms, by virtue of their meaning, determine that the proposition is true; but it is true *per accidens* when the terms refer to the same object, but nevertheless do not determine, by virtue of their meaning, that they refer to the same object. And taking being in this sense, Aristotle divides it into *per se* and *per accidens*, and so the distinction only means that, among affirmative propositions in which the predicate is attributed to the subject by means of this verb 'is', some are true *per se*, others *per accidens*.[26]

If we go back to the *expositio litterae* and we compare it with these lines, here Buridan seems to explore the conditions that allow to read the distinction *per se/per accidens* as a distinction of propositions.

As announced above, Buridan insists on the relationship between chapter 7 of Book V and the section devoted to the *per se* in the *Posterior Analytics* (I 73a35-b5). Here in qu. 5, he states, about the fact that being

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[26] Latin text below, 197.

per accidens refers to affirmative propositions that are accidentally true:

> This is evident in Aristotle's examples: indeed, 'man to be an animal' posits being *per se*, 'Coriscus to be musician' posits being *per accidens*, and this [distinction] of propositions is also found in Book I of the *Posterior Analytics*. And since every affirmative true proposition is either true *per se* or *per accidens*, hence this division is good: being is said either *per se*, or *per accidens*. And here in Book V he has explained, of the two members of the division, only the being *per accidens*,[27] because the first one [i.e. being *per se*] had been treated in Book I of the *Posterior Analytics*. Then, when he states that being *secundum se* is divided in the ten categories [1017a22-30], he doesn't take being *secundum se* as *secundum se* is divided against the being *per accidens* that he had just explained [1017a8-22], but he takes [*secundum se*] as taken with no combination [*solitarie*], and I take 'being' as the term to which is truly attributed the term 'being' there [in the *Posterior Analytics*].[28]

In these few lines, there are two points to note. First, Buridan considers that, here in *Metaphysics* V 7, Aristotle discussed extensively only the *ens per accidens*, because he already explained the *ens per se* in the *Posterior Analytics*: whatever one thinks of this explanation, it may be seen as a sign of the trouble caused by the brevity of the lines devoted to being *per se*. Second point, and more meaningful: Buridan suggests that the first two senses of the being of V 7 represent a somehow 'asymmetrical' division; in fact, being *per accidens* refers here to propositions, whereas being *per se* does not; on the contrary, he sees a more coherent opposition between, on the one hand, being *per accidens* of *Metaphysics* V 7 and being *per se* of the *Posterior Analytics*, and, on the other hand,

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[27] The section on being *per se* is, in fact, extremely short in *Metaphysics* V 7 (1017a22-30), while that on being *per accidens* is slightly more detailed (1017a8-22).
[28] Latin text below, 197-198.

between being *per se* of *Metaphysics* V 7 and being *secundum complexionem* of the *Categories*:

1) *Ens per accidens* (*Metaph.* V 7)	*Ens per se* (*Anal. post.* I 4)
2) *Ens per se* (*Metaph.* V 7) = *incomplexum* (*Cat.* 2)	*Secundum complexionem* (*Cat.* 2)

Let's recall that, of the different understandings of being *per se* that Buridan distinguished in the *expositio litterae*, the third, (c), identified being *per se* with the *incomplexum* of the *Categories*. So, in the first case, the opposition is between substance, which exists in itself, and accidents, which exist in something else, i.e. in substance; while in the second case, the opposition is between isolated terms, which necessarily refer to one of the ten categories, and terms that have been joined to other terms, to form a proposition.

In the last part of the solution, Buridan suggests other possible interpretations of the *ens per se/per accidens* distinction. First: *sine connotatione* (as opposed to *cum connotatione*). This is a division – a suitable division, states Buridan – of terms. So, Buridan is thinking here to the distinction of terms such as 'homo' and 'pater': 'homo' means the species without any further connotation, the term is limited to signifying the category of the substance; 'pater' means the species with a supplementary connotation, since it doesn't only mean the species 'homo' but it means the species with the addition of another category, in our case, the relation:

> [Being] absolutely signifies that which it denotes without connotation, and then is said to be *per accidens* that which does not signify absolutely that which it denotes, but it connotes the being in question by a foreign disposition, since among the terms to which 'being' is attributed, some are not connotative, like those in the category of substance, others are connotative, and these terms are or are said to

be *per accidens*, and dividing being in this way is equivalent to dividing substantial and accidental terms, and, as it concerns terms, it is a good division.[29]

This is a distinction of terms based on the fact that the terms mean either the category of substance or the other nine categories. Note that according to this division, a term like *currit* (term considered *sine complexione* of *Cat.* 2) could not be considered as a term *per se*, since it adds the supplementary category of action; while above, Buridan considered the possibility of taking terms *sine complexione* of the *Categories* as cases of being *per se*. This does not indicate any contradiction in Buridan's thinking; on the contrary, it shows that he understood the extent to which the text of *Metaphysics* V 7 was open to a variety of readings.

Moreover: the distinction can be intended as a distinction between necessary and contingent. This is not only a division of propositions and terms, but a distinction of real beings or facts. So, in the case of 'homo est animal' the link between the subject and the predicate is necessary, so that the proposition is necessary and the corresponding reality has the same necessity; but in the case of 'Sortes currit', the link is contingent, and the fact signified by the proposition is contingent:

In another way, being *per se* expresses what is necessarily, so that non-being is naturally incompatible with it, and being *per accidens* expresses what is contingent. This dicition of being could suffice not only as a division of terms, but also insofar as it says or signifies everything else, since this division would only be that of necessary being and contingent being.[30]

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[29] Latin text below, 198-199.
[30] Latin text below, 199.

Furthermore, the distinction *per se/per accidens* is a distinction concerning causality. The source of this position is to be found, again, in the *Posterior Analytics*. Aristotle states:

> Again, in another way what holds of something because of itself holds of it in itself, and what does not hold because of itself is incidental. E.g. if there was lightning while he was walking, that was incidental: it was not because of his walking that there was lightning—that, we say, was incidental. But what holds because of itself holds in itself—e.g. if something died while being sacrificed, it died *in* the sacrifice since it died because of being sacrificed, and it was not incidental that it died while being sacrificed.[31]

Here, we can talk about two events being linked *per se* or *per accidens*. However, Buridan enriches the text with metaphysical considerations on causality. The fact that someone is walking and lightning are coincident *per accidens*, though each of these events has his own set of causes *per se* (being in shape for the former, meteorological conditions for the latter). So every possible being, or every possible event, is the result of *per se* causes, with exceptions he wishes to point out here: absolutely ultimate causes have no *per se* causes other than themselves, in this respect, these beings are beings *per se*. Then if we take the chain of efficient and final causes, then we see that from this point of view only God is *per se*, in that he is not dependent on any efficient or final cause. If, on the other hand, we take the totality of material beings, then we see

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[31] *An. post.*, I 4, 73b11-16. English Translation in Aristotle (1984: 118-119). Text of the Latin translation by James of Venice, revised by William of Moerbeke, edited in Aristoteles Latinus (1968: 289-290): 'Item alio modo quod quidem propter ipsum inest unicuique per se, quod autem non propter ipsum accidens, ut si ambulante coruscavit, accidens est; non enim propter id quod ambulat coruscavit, sed quod accidit dicimus hoc. Si vero propter ipsum, per se, ut si aliquid interfectum interiit, et secundum interfectionem, quoniam propterea quod interfectum est, sed non quod accidat interfectum interire'.

that prime matter is *per se*, since it has no material cause; on this respect, separate intelligences, insofar as they are immaterial, are also *per se*.

> If [being] depends on another cause, it is not said *per se*. And this would be said not only of being but of every other attribute. And so if something is said to be without an efficient or final cause, then only God is said to be *per se* since all other entities fall, through God, within the genus of such causes; if something is said to be *per se* because of the absence of material cause, then prime matter and intelligences are said to be per se, and so material form is not *per se*; if something is said to be because of the absence of formal cause, then final causes, which do not themselves depend on other formal causes, are said to be *per se*.[32]

Note again that this argument implies that a being that is not *per se* from the standpoint of efficient cause, such as an angel, can be considered *per se* from the standpoint of material cause.

4. The *lectura erfordiensis*

As we said, the *lectura erfordiensis* also devotes a question to the division of being into *per se* and *per accidens*. It deals with the same subject as the one we have just examined: 'utrum ens bene dividitur in ens secundum se et in ens secundum accidens'.[33] This text is slightly less extensive than the Darmstadt *compilatio*; however, the method of the *lectura erfordiensis* is similar to that of the Darmstadt *compilatio* in that it is an enumeration of different meanings of being *per se*. Buridan comes to the same conclusion here: the distinction between being *per se* and being *per accidens* is an adequate division.

Here are the different senses of being *secundum se* that Buridan retains here. (i) The copula: in this case, the Aristotelian distinction is a

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[32] Latin text below, 199.

[33] Johannes Buridanus (2008: 139).

distinction of propositions.[34] (ii) The terms taken *solitarie*, or *sine complexione* of the *Categories*.[35] (iii) The absolute term 'without connotation', which corresponds to the category of substance.[36] (iv) The substance: in this case, Aristotle would be dividing substances and accidents.[37] (v) Being that does not depend on a cause per se.[38] (vi) Being as true: this last meaning seems reducible to the first, because it corresponds to the distinction between propositions that are true per se or true *per accidens*.[39]

As we can see, the *lectura erfordiensis* contains no remarkable innovations compared to the Darmstadt version. As in the latter, Buridan devotes more attention to the relationship between being per se and propositions, which is not surprising from a nominalist.

Conclusions

There's one thing that strikes the reader about the material I've presented. Buridan seems to have wanted to list as many interpretations of *Metaphysics* V 7's distinctions as possible. This confirms something we have already observed in our research group devoted to Medieval interpretations of this Aristotelian chapter: the account of *Metaphysics* V 7 has somehow puzzled readers, who have more or less explicitly pointed out a gap between this text and other sections of the Aristotelian corpus, first and foremost the *Posterior Analytics* and the *Categories*.

One element seems clear to me: Buridan likely pursues the nominalist line of reading, in that he favors the possibility that the

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[34] Johannes Buridanus (2008: 141).
[35] Johannes Buridanus (2008: 141).
[36] Johannes Buridanus (2008: 141–142).
[37] Johannes Buridanus (2008: 142).
[38] Johannes Buridanus (2008: 142).
[39] Johannes Buridanus (2008: 142).

division between *ens per se* and *ens per accidens* is above all a division of terms or propositions.

Editions

Below are two excerpts from the Darmstadt *compilatio*, i.e. the *expositio litterae* of V 7 (fol. 12ra-rb) and qu. V 5 (fol. 69[71]va-vb). The manuscript is of good quality, with only a few minor errors requiring correction.

The hooked brackets <…> include the words I have integrated into the text. I have used the following abbreviations in the critical apparatus: *coni.*: *conieci*; *corr.*: *correctio* etc.; *del.*: *deleuit*; *iter.*: *iterauit*; *sup. u.*: *supra uersum*; *uid.*: *uidetur*.

<Expositio littere>[40]

Ens dicitur hoc quidem… Hic est 2^m capitulum istius tractatus de isto termino 'ens' et diuiditur in quatuor secundum quod ponit quatuor acceptiones entis. Secunda ibi: *Secundum se uero …* Tertia: *Amplius esse…* Quarta ibi: *Amplius….*

Primo dicit quod ens dicitur esse per se et per accidens et diuidit ens per accidens quia esse secundum accidens dicitur uel quia predicatum accidit subiecto uel subiectum predicato uel ambo possunt accidere tertio, ut ista est per accidens primo[41] modo: 'homo est musicus'; etiam 'musicum est homo'[42] per accidens, quia subiectum accidit predicato; etiam 'musicum est album' per accidens, quia ambo accidunt tertio, scilicet homini, quia accidit homini quod sit albus et accidit sibi quod sit musicus. Et sciendum quod iste modus distinguendi nec plus nec minus est sicut erat de uno. Et ratio huius est quia, ut credo, ibi distinguitur ens

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[40] *Da*, fol. 12ra-rb.

[41] primo] ut *praem. et del.*

[42] homo] *sup. u.*

secundum quod accipitur ab hoc uerbo 'est' tertio adiacente. Vnde Commentator in X huius: hoc nomen 'ens' omnibus modis suis deriuatur ab hoc uerbo 'est'. Vnde potest capi secundum adiacens et sic sumitur simpliciter; aliquando sumitur tertium adiacens et sic est cum additione; unde si dicam 'homo est' potest resolui in istam: 'homo est ens'; et si dicatur 'homo est albus' potest resolui in hanc 'homo est ens album'. Et sic apparet quod Aristoteles distinguit hic hoc nomen 'ens' ut est tertium adiacens. Vnde quando dicit 'per accidens', sensus est quod propositio in qua predicatur hoc uerbum 'est' tertium adiacens potest esse per accidens uel per se, per accidens, ut 'homo est albus', per se, quando superius predicatur de inferiori uel quando passio predicatur de subiecto. Vnde rationale est quod sic distinguitur ens per accidens sicut unum per accidens. Vnde hoc uerbum 'est' tertium adiacens affirmatiue sumptum designat ydemptitatem eorum pro quibus supponit, sicut quando dicitur 'homo est animal', idem est dicere sicut quod 'homo' et 'animal' sunt unum uel quod homo est idem animali.

Secundum se uero ... Hic ponit secundum modum accipiendi 'ens' et 'est' ut[43] dicitur de decem predicamentis, et dicit quod ens secundum se diuiditur uel distinguitur in decem predicamenta et potest istud intelligi multis modis. <a> Vno modo quia omnis propositio est per se uera in qua hoc nomen 'ens' dicitur de aliquo decem predicamentorum: ista enim est per se uera: 'substantia est ens', 'quale est ens' etc.; tamen non sequitur quod ista sit uera: 'esse quale est ens' etc.

<b> Secundo modo exponitur quod hoc nomen 'ens' de quolibet decem predicamentorum potest uerificari cum hac modificatione 'secundum se': ut 'substantia est secundum se ens', et 'quale secundum se est ens' etc., quia sic omnia ista predicamenta sumuntur pro substantia.

<c> Tertio modo potest exponi quod ista predicamenta dicuntur secundum se esse, id est solitarie[44], accipiendo illam solitudinem pro

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[43] ut] *dub., ex corr. ?*

[44] solitarie] re, *dub., praem. et del.*

incomplexione, et sic est dicere quod ista decem predicamenta sunt incomplexa, et sonaret illi quod habetur in Predicamentis, scilicet quia 'eorum que sunt quedam sine[45] complexione dicuntur, quedam cum complexione dicuntur', et diuidit ea que sine complexione dicuntur in decem predicamentis.

<d> Alio modo quidam exposuerunt istam partem quod predicamenta dicuntur entia secundum se quia quodlibet predicamentum significat formaliter aliquod aliud ens ab illo quod significat aliud predicamentum, et intelligebant quod predicamenta significant diuersas res et unum significat aliam rem quam non significat aliud. − Set ista opinio est falsa, quamuis multi illam credebant esse ueram, immo decem predicamenta possunt supponere pro eadem re.

<e> Alio modo exponitur quod ens secundum se diuiditur in decem predicamentis, id est quod ens secundum se immediate sine differentiis diuersis diuiditur in decem predicamenta, et istam tenet Commentator X huius, commento VIII.

<f> Vltimo modo potest exponi quod in quolibet predicamento inueniuntur propositiones uere per se, scilicet ubi superiora predicantur de suis inferioribus. Igitur etc.

Nichil enim ... Hic aliquis cauillaret quod aliqua sunt predicamenta de quibus non dicitur hoc nomen 'ens', ut 'homo secat' etc. Respondet Aristoteles ad hoc quod non refert dicere 'homo secat' et 'homo est secans' etc.

Amplius esse et est ... Hic est tertius modus distinguendi ens et dicit Aristoteles quod tertio modo 'esse' uel 'ens' accipitur ut significat uerum et non-ens uel |12rb| non-esse significat idem quod falsum. Vnde greci propositionem ueram dicebant esse, propositionem falsam non esse, et sic ille modus erat magis usitatus apud grecos quam apud nos. Vnde quando queritur: 'homo est animal?', respondetur quod sic; si sit falsa,

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[45] sine] sunt *praem. et del.*

dices quod non est ita. Et sic esse ita et esse non ita de propositione dicuntur.

Amplius esse significat ... Hic ponit[46] quartum modum ens distinguendi et est quod aliquid dicitur ens in actu, aliquid in potentia ens. In actu est de quo uerificatur hoc uerbum 'est' et ens in potentia de quo uerificatur hoc uerbum 'potest esse' et ita est de uerbo tertio adiacente. Igitur etc.

<Questio V 5>[47]

Quinto queritur utrum sit bona diuisio entis in ens secundum se et in ens secudum accidens. Arguitur primo quod non.

<1> Quia membra diuisionis non euacuant totum diuisum, quia Aristoteles ponit alia membra preter ista. Igitur etc.

<2> Secundo uidetur quod nullum sit ens per accidens, et sic diuisio non erit bona, quia omne de quo dicitur ens est inferius sibi uel essentiale; si sit inferius, tunc per se dicitur ens, non per accidens, quia predicatio superius de inferiori est per se; si essentiale, tunc est predicatio conuertibilis de conuertibili et sic est per se.

<3> Etiam ens dicitur de quolibet per suam essentiam et sic omne ens est per se.

<4> Et confirmatur quia si esset aliquod per accidens, hoc esset sicut musicus iustus; set nullum istorum est ens per accidens quia illud non est aliud quam Coriscus uel musicus; igitur etc. Etiam, si esset tale, tunc illud esset agregatum ex diuersis entibus uel predicatis, quod est falsum, quia mondus est agregatus ex multis entis et tamen non est ens per accidens quia de ente per accidens non est scientia, set de mondo est scientia.

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[46] ponit] po^m *praem. et del.*

[47] *Da*, fol. 69[71]va-vb.

<5> Iterum, uel tu dicis aliquod ens esse per accidens quia est contingenter uel quia habet esse ab alio et per aliud; nullo modo potest dici; igitur nullum est tale. Maior patet sufficienti diuisione. Minor probatur: non primo modo quia tunc omnis homo esset ens per accidens quia quemlibet istorum contingit non esse, quod est falsum quia Aristoteles diuidit ens secundum se in decem predicamenta, modo Sortes, Plato pertinent ad predicamentum substantie; nec potest dici secundo modo quia tunc omnia entia essent per accidens preter Deum, quod est falsum.

<6> Vltimo, ens sufficienter diuiditur in substantiam et accidens et accidens diuiditur in nouem predicamenta, et tamen quodlibet istorum dicitur ens secundum se. Igitur etc.

Oppositum patet in littera.

Possumus hic dicere quod hoc nomen 'ens' sumitur ab 'esse' et ideo quot modis dicitur esse, tot modis dicitur ens. Vnde secundum hoc esse[48] illud potest dici quod dicitur de aliquo mediante hoc uerbo 'est', et ideo illud uerbum 'est' aliquando sumitur tertio[49] adiacens, et sic illud in propositione affirmatiua significat quod sit idem pro quo termini supponunt et sic significat propositionem esse ueram; et quando negatur tunc e conuerso significat et per consequens significat quod propositio affirmatiua non sit uera. Modo illa affirmatiua aliquando dicitur uera per se, aliquando per accidens. Exemplum primi: quando termini per suam significationem determinant sibi quod sit uera; set tunc est uera per accidens quando supponunt pro eodem, set tamen per suam significationem non determinant sibi quod supponant pro eodem. Et isto modo sumendo ens, Aristoteles diuidit ens in ens per se et in per accidens, et sic diuisio non erat nisi quod propositionum affirmatiuarum in quibus predicatum dicitur de subiecto mediante hoc uerbo 'est', alia dicitur uera per se, alia per accidens. Et hoc apparet per exempla

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[48] esse] omne *uid.*

[49] tertio *coni.*] secundo

Aristotelis, quia 'hominem esse animal' ponit ens per se,[50] 'Coriscum esse musicum' ponit ens per accidens, et ista etiam est posita de propositionibus in I Posteriorum. Et quia omnis propositio affirmatiua uera est uera uel per se uel per accidens, ideo est ista diuisio bona: ens dicitur aliud per se, aliud per accidens. Et de ista diuisione terminorum[51] non declarauit in isto V nisi ens per accidens, quia de primo satis dictum fuit in I Posteriorum. Et ideo quando dicit quod ens secundum se diuiditur in decem predicamentis, non sumit ens secundum se prout opponitur secundum se illi per accidens de quo determinauerat iam, set sumit sic quia est acceptum solitarie, et ibi accipio 'ens' pro termino de quo uere predicatur ille terminus 'ens'.

Vel illi termini possunt sumi |[69[71]vb]| incomplexe uel complexe. Si primo modo, tunc accipitur secundum se; si secundo modo, tunc non dicuntur secundum[52] se. Et isto modo intendit Aristoteles quando dicit quod ens secundum se diuiditur in decem predicamenta et illud concordat[53] ei quod dicebat in Predicamentis, quia 'eorum que sunt alia secundum complexionem dicuntur, alia sine complexione'; et postea diuidit secundum membrum in substantiam quale etc., quia illa que dicuntur primo modo non ponuntur proprie in predicamento nisi ratione[54] partium solum.

Notandum quod aliter dicitur ens secundum se preter istos modos. Vno modo quia simpliciter significat illud pro quo supponit sine connotatione et tunc illud dicitur ens per accidens quod significat non simpliciter illud pro quo supponit, set connotat circa illum dispositionem alienam, quia terminorum de quibus dicitur hoc nomen 'ens', quidam sunt non connotatiui, ut termini de predicamento substantie, alii sunt

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[50] per se *coni.*] per accidens

[51] terminorum] t'i^{r(um)} *uel* Aristoteles?

[52] secundum] *iter.*

[53] concordat] conca *praem. et del.*

[54] ratione] *ex corr.*

connotatiui, et isti sunt siue dicuntur per accidens, et sic diuidere ens non est <nisi> diuidere ens in terminos substantiales et in accidentales, et talis diuisio est bona de terminis.

Alio modo ens per se solet dici quod de necessitate est, ita quod ex natura sua repugnat sibi non esse, et ens per accidens quod contingenter est. Et isto modo diuisio entis in per se et per accidens esset sufficiens, non solum prout ens sumitur pro terminis, set etiam prout dicitur siue significat quecumque alia, quia ista diuisio non esset nisi in necessarium et contingens in essendo.

Alio modo potest dici secundum Linconiensem[55] I Posteriorum quia per se causam cum participatione[56] excludit, id est: si sic aliquid est non per aliam causam, ita dicitur esse per se, si sic est per aliam causam, non dicitur esse per se. Et non solum diceretur de esse set de quibuscumque attributis alteri. Et tunc si aliquid dicitur esse per carentiam cause efficientis uel finalis, tunc solus Deus dicitur esse per se quia omnia alia sunt propter illum in genere talium causarum; si aliquid dicitur per se per pruiuationem cause materialis, tunc materia prima dicitur per se et intelligentie et sic forma materialis non dicitur per se; si aliquid dicitur per priuationem cause formalis, tunc cause finales que ultra non informantur aliis formis dicuntur esse per se[57].

Adhuc Aristoteles aliquando uidetur sumere esse per se quia istum terminum dicitur esse per se qui est subiectum finale de quo alia dicuntur et ipsum non dicitur de alio et isto modo prime substantie dicuntur per se. — Aliquando ens sumitur pro uero ita quod propositionem ueram dicimus ens et falsam non-ens. — Modo iterum uerum diuiditur in uerum per se et per accidens et sic isto modo diuideretur ens et sic quocumque modo sumitur hoc nomen 'ens' diuisibile est in per se et per accidens.

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[55] Linconiensem *coni.*] lin^c *uid.*

[56] cum participatione *coni.*] cumpartic ipē *sic*

[57] esse per se *coni.*] uniuersaliter ideo

Ad rationes. Ad primam. Aristoteles ponit etc., dico quod ista non est sic alia acceptio quin sibi conueniat predicta diuisio, et sic diuisio est sufficiens.

Ad aliam dico quod multipliciter est ens per accidens. Et cum dicitur: omne de quo dicitur hoc nomen 'ens' etc., dico quod hoc nomen 'ens' non est uniuocum nec dicitur de omnibus de quibus dicitur secundum unam rationem. Et ideo dico quod secundum unam acceptionem dicitur per se et secundum aliam per accidens. Et quando dicitur: superius etc., concedo, et ideo concedo quod ista est per se: 'hominem esse musicum est per accidens', quia ens per accidens est superius ad hoc quod est hominem esse musicum; tamen ista non est propositio per se: 'homo est musicus', et ideo dicitur ens per accidens.

Ad aliam. Ens dicitur de quolibet per suam essentiam: potest dici quod uerum est, tale quale est, et ideo ista 'homo est musicus' per suam significationem dicitur ens per accidens. — Vel potest dici quod refert sumere hoc nomen 'ens' pro entitate propositionis uel pro ueritate. Si sumatur primo modo, tunc quelibet propositio est ita bene ens per se sicut homo; si secundo modo, sic non est uerum et sic sumitur hic.

Ad aliam dico quod non, set sic esset dicere 'Coriscus est musicus'; unde hoc uerbum 'est' significat quod sic idem pro quo termini supponunt et accidit quod sit ita.

Ad aliam. Vel hoc esset etc. Forte istis modis potest sumi ens per accidens, tamen non est iste modus de quo loquitur Aristoteloes in principio capituli et isto modo intendit Aristoteles in VI quod de ente per accidens non est scientia.

Ad aliam. Ens sufficienter etc., nego, nisi sumatur pro termino incomplexo quia est diuisio terminorum incomplexorum in decem predicamentis, et ideo bene est ens per se et per accidens etc.

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