

Ockham and Burley on Categories and Universals: a Comparison

Realism and nominalism were the two major theoretical alternatives in the later Middle Ages concerning the reality and kinds of general objects, and the status and mutual relationships of the basic items of the world (individual and universal substances, individual and universal accidents) as well as their connection to language. Realists believed in the extra-mental existence of common natures (or essences); Nominalists did not. Realists held that Aristotle's table of categories was first of all a partition of things grounded on ontological criteria and only secondarily a classification of (mental, written, and spoken) terms, and therefore that the world is divided into ten kinds of things (in a broad sense of 'thing'), no one of which can be reduced to any other: substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, affection, where, when, position, and possession. Nominalists maintained that the division into ten categories was a partition of terms on the basis of semantic criteria, and that there are only two or three real categories (substance and quality, and perhaps quantity too). Realists believed that thought was linguistically constrained by its own nature, and accordingly they considered thought to be related to reality in its elements and constitution, and deemed language, thought, and external reality to be of the same logical coherence. Nominalists sharply distinguished between things as they exist in the external world and the various forms by means of which we think-of and talk-about them, since for them our (mental) language does not reproduce the world, but merely regards it, as our (mental) language and the world are logically independent systems.

William Ockham and Walter Burley probably are the most remarkable thinkers of the 14th century among the champions of the nominalist and the realist approaches to philosophy respectively. Their polemical activity is set in the first half of the 14th century — a very crucial period when the diffusion of Ockham's theories caused a sharp conflict between the followers of the old realist view, such as Burley, and the supporters of the new nominalist way, such as Ockham himself. Burley used all of his intellectual resources and authority in fighting against the new nominalist trend, and was the first author who tried to remove the aporetic points of the traditional realist theory of categories and universals (that Ockham had pointed out) by a suitable strategy. As a matter of fact, after 1324 in his writings he always maintained that (1) universals, conceived of as general forms, fully

exist outside the mind and are *really distinct* from the individuals in which they are present and of which they are predicated; (2) the external world contains real propositions that are the *significata* of true sentences; and (3) there is a real distinction among the ten categories, whose items he viewed as *things* in the strictest sense of the term.

In what follows, I shall outline the main characteristics of their opposite ontologies, trying to show the semantic premises of their doctrines and to indicate how their debate over categories and universals evolved. First, I shall sketch the chief aspects of Burley's realist doctrine on categories and universals as it was worked out by him at the beginning of the 14th century. Second, I shall summarize Ockham's attack on this traditional view and his own theories of categories and universals. Third, I shall consider Burley's reply and illustrate the most important features of his last version of realism. Finally, I shall compare their systems in order to show similarities and differences between them.

I. CATEGORIES AND UNIVERSALS IN THE "FIRST" BURLEY (BEFORE 1324)

In the (later) Middle Ages categories and universals were closely linked topics. Categorical doctrine concerned the existence, inner natures, and the mutual relationships of the basic items of the world, and the connections of such basic items to language. Late medieval theories of universals dealt with the problems of real existence of universals (or common natures), both substantial and accidental ones, and the relationship between them and the (perceptible or otherwise intelligible) individuals. Hence, in one way, later medieval theories of universals investigated more thoroughly some of the many related questions which categorical doctrines went into. This is not surprising, since, textually, medieval discussions on the problem of universals derived from a well-known passage of Porphyry's *Isagoge* (1,13-16)¹, a work which was intended to be an introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*, and, philosophically, the medieval problem of universals is one of the various aspects of the problem of meaning, which in its turn is one of the two main subjects of any later medieval categorical doctrine.

With the only remarkable exception of Duns Scotus, all the moderate realist authors of the second half of the 13th century considered categorical items as composed of two main aspects: the inner nature, or essence, and their peculiar mode of being or of being predicated (*modi essendi vel praedicandi*); and thought that the table of categories divides those items according to their modes of being (or of being predicated) and not according to their inner natures, or essences. In more detail, some authors, such as Robert Kilwardby and Thomas Sutton, following Boethius,² supported a nominalist solution of the problem of the *intentio* of the book (which would deal with non-compounded utterances in their capacity for being significant, according to Boethius's formula), while offering a realist inter-

pretation of the crucial points of the treatise and judging the division into ten categories of the fourth chapter to be a division of things, and only derivatively of their signs.³ Others, such as Henry of Ghent and Simon of Faversham, held a *reductionist* position about the question of the number of real categories, as they estimated only the items falling into the three absolute categories (substance, quantity, and quality) to be things in the strictest sense of the term (*res*), and considered the remaining ones real aspects (*respectus reales*) proper to the former.⁴ Few medieval authors, such as Albert the Great and John Duns Scotus, developed a fully consistent realist interpretation of the *Categories*, by defending the thesis of the real distinction of all the ten categories, which would be world things irreducible one to another.⁵ So between the 13th and 14th centuries two different interpretative trends can be acknowledged among the so called ‘moderate realist’ authors: the first somehow followed the Boethian tradition, according to which the ten categories correspond to ten distinct kinds of things, while the second was more critical of the Aristotelian text, both as to the ontological value of the table and the number of real categories. This second line of thought was supported by theologians such as Henry of Ghent and Peter John Olivi,⁶ whereas Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus are the most famous among the exponents of the first.

At the beginning of his philosophical career Burley seems to have been attracted by Henry of Ghent’s theory on categories rather than by the more radical one he was to support some thirty years later. In the chapter on the *sufficientia praedicamentorum* of his middle commentary on the *Categories* (the *Tractus super librum Praedicamentorum*) Burley claims that apart from substances, quantities, and qualities (the three traditional absolute categories) the other seven ones do not contain things in the strictest sense of the term, but only real aspects (*respectus reales*) of absolute entities. Burley mentions three different accounts of the problem of the number and distinction of the ten categories. The first seems to be a sort of “inverted” way of the method utilized by Kilwardby, where the inherence proper to the nine forms of accidents is first divided according to the “triad”: matter, form, and composite, and then according to ‘from inside’, ‘from outside’, and ‘partially from inside and partially from outside’. The second (from Simon of Faversham’s commentary on the *Categories*, q. 12) states that ultimately the categories really divide entities according to their modes of being. The main are: being by itself, proper to substance; and being in something else, proper to the nine genera of accidents — the latter subdivided into being in something else absolutely, proper to quantities and qualities, and being in something else in virtue of a relation to a third *res* (*esse ad aliud*), proper to the remaining seven categories. The third, inspired by Henry of Ghent, holds that being in relation to something else,

*Ockham and Burley on Categories
and Universals: A Comparison*
Alessandro D. Conti

that is, the mode of being of the seven non-absolute categories, does not involve a *res* distinct from substance, quantity, and quality, but only their real aspects. Although Burley does not explicitly endorse any of those three interpretations, he is not exactly neutral on the matter. In fact, his introductory comments seem to suggest that he agrees with those authors who think that, properly speaking, only the three absolute categories are fully things (*res*), since he maintains that the ten categories can be ordered in terms of their degrees of reality, as the non-absolute categories are caused by and grounded-in the three absolute ones.⁷

As far as the constitutive and distinctive principles of the categories are concerned, Burley maintained that what characterizes the *res praedicamentales* as such are their peculiar modes of being.⁸ According to him, there is a close correspondence between the mode of being of a given category and the nature made known by its supreme genus. Thus the ten categories do partition what is real (*ens*), as each category is constituted by its own distinctive *modus essendi*. For instance, in the chapter on substance Burley affirms that the mode of being proper to substances consists in existing through itself and in underlying accidents.⁹ Henceforth he assumes this description as the rough definition of the common nature of substance. Furthermore, in the chapter on quantity he states that the mode of being proper to quantity (that is, having integral parts) is the *ratio generalis* of the category itself.¹⁰ In this way, the real existence and distinction of the ten Aristotelian categories is backed up at a different level, inasmuch as their own modes of being are consubstantial with their own natures.

Two other questions connected with the table of categories have to be examined here: the reckoning of the relationship of the ten categories to being (*ens*); and the determination of what properly falls into the categorial fields. Regarding these, Burley's position remained unchanged in his earlier and later writings.

So far as the former problem is concerned, his general position seems to be influenced by Albert the Great's. In his middle commentary on the *Categories* there is only the brief remark that being, as a transcendental, is predicated equivocally or analogically of the categories,¹¹ but *ens* does not feature in his discussion of the divisions of equivocation and univocity. By contrast, his *Expositio librorum Physicorum* contains a settlement of the problem, which remained unchanged in the last works, with the only remarkable exception of a shift in terminology. According to the standard interpretation of the opening passages of the *Categories* (1, 1a 1-12) equivocal terms are correlated with more than one concept and refer to a multiplicity of things sharing different natures, whereas univocal terms are correlated with only one concept and refer to a multiplicity of things sharing one and the same nature. In the *quaestio*: "utrum ens sit aequivocum ad decem praedicamenta" of the first book of his *Expositio librorum Physicorum* Burley states that being (*ens*) is at the same time univocal and analogical with respect to the categories. It is univocal since the items falling into the categorial fields are

called beings (*entia*) according to a single concept, and not according to many. It is analogical as being is shared by the ten categories in ten different ways: directly by substance and secondarily by accidents.¹² Within Burley's system, what seems to differentiate analogy from univocity is the way in which a certain nature or concept is shared by a set of things: analogous things share it according to different degrees (*secundum magis et minus*, or *secundum prius et posterius*), univocal things share it all in the same manner and to the same degree. So, according to Burley, being is a sort of basic stuff of the metaphysical structure of each reality, which posess it in accordance with its own nature and peculiar mode of being.¹³

More interesting is Burley's solution to the problem of which entities properly fall under which categories. Unlike most medieval thinkers, he was well aware of the importance of this question, and he discusses it in the chapter on relation of his middle commentary on the *Categories*. According to the common realist view, not only simple accidental forms (such as whiteness), but also the compound entities they cause when inhering in substances (*album*) belong to the nine categories of accident. Burley denies this, since he regards the entities resulting from the combination of substance and accidental forms as mere aggregate *per accidens*, lacking in any real unity. He claims that what is signified by abstract terms, i.e., simple forms such as whiteness and fatherhood, properly falls under the ten categories, whereas what is signified by concrete accidental terms does not; even though an aggregate *per accidens* may be said to belong, improperly and reductively, to the category to which its accidental form belongs.¹⁴ Concrete substance-terms (such as 'man') are different, however. For even though they signify composites, they signify items with a real, *per se* unity that properly belongs to the category of substance. In this case, the abstract forms connoted by concrete substance terms (e.g., the form of humanity by 'man') do not lie outside the nature of the things themselves, i.e., the individual substances for which the concrete substance-terms supposit. Thus, both the form and its substance belong to the same categorial field. In this case the individual substances are the bearers (*supposita*) of the form and not its subject (*subiecta*), as they are instantiations of it and not mere substrates of inherence.¹⁵

The most important feature of Burley's early ontology is his claim that the being (*esse*) of common natures (or universals) coincides with the being of their instantiations as individuals. He conceives of universals as metaphysical entities, existing independently of our minds, which are necessary conditions for our language to be significant. Common nouns would be meaningless if they did not signify something (1) that exists somehow in reality, and (2) that has the peculiar feature of being common to (namely, present in) many individual items.

*Ockham and Burley on Categories
and Universals: A Comparison*
Alessandro D. Conti

Moreover, like any other 13th century author, he investigated the metaphysical composition of such common natures by the doctrine of categories, from a point of view that we can call “intensional” and in a way similar to that exploited by our modern componential analysis. Only by associating general nouns with such entities as their proper *significatum* did Burley think the fact could be explained that a general noun can be used predicatively to ascribe a given property (say, being a man or an animal) to many individuals at the same time. According to him, a general noun stands for (*supponere*) and names (*appellare*) a certain set of individual items only by way of the common nature (the universal) that it directly signifies, and is present in that set of individuals as a constitutive parts of their own intelligible essence. Since common natures connect general nouns to their extensions by determining the classes of the things to which they are correctly applied, and are what general nouns stand for when they have simple supposition,¹⁶ they are the intensions of common nouns; or better, the hypostatisations of these intensions, inasmuch as they were conceived of as entities existing independently of our minds.

This comes out quite plainly, especially from his reading of *Categories* 5, 3b 10-15, where Aristotle maintains that a primary substance signifies a single item (*hoc aliquid* according to the Latin translation) whilst a secondary substance signifies a qualifying (and therefore common or universal) item (*quale quid* according to the Latin translation), notwithstanding it seems to signify a single item. Burley identified the secondary substance with the *quale quid* and the primary substance with the *hoc aliquid*, and consequently secondary substances (namely, the universals of the category of substance) with the *significata* of general nouns of that category (such as ‘man’) and primary substances (namely, the individuals of the category of substance) with the *significata* of individual expressions of that category (such as ‘this man’, which refers to a single human individual only). Furthermore, he assumed that common nouns of the category of substance, when used predicatively, specify which kind of substance a certain individual substance is.¹⁷ As a consequence, he thought of universals and individuals as linked together by a sort of relation of instantiation. In other words, he conceived of primary substances as *the* tokens of secondary substances (and, more in general, individuals as tokens of universals), and secondary substances as *the* types of primary substances (and, more in general, universals as types of individuals). In fact, according to Burley, (1) individual substances are unique physical entities, located at a particular place in space and time, and universal substances are their specific or generic forms — that is, their intelligible natures, immanent in them, having no independent existence, and apt to be common to many different individuals at the same time. (2) Any individual substance can be recognized as a member of a certain natural species by virtue of its conformity to the universal substance that it instantiates, and by virtue of its likeness to other individual substances.

From what has been said it is manifest that the crucial question of Burley’s

approach to the problem of universals in his early writings was not that of the ontological status of the universals (as it was for Boethius and the other late Ancient commentators of Aristotle); it was that of their relation with the individuals. Since Burley, agreeing with Aristotle (*Categories* 5, 2a35-2b6), maintained that, if primary substances did not exist, it would be impossible for anything else to exist, as everything else depends on them for its own being,¹⁸ the question of the status of universals necessarily became the question of their relation to individual substances. In fact, according to the moderate realist view, universals are not self-subsistent entities, but exist only in individual items, as universals have no being (*esse*) outside the being of their instantiations. As a result, Burley thought that universals could be said to be everlasting because of the succession of their individuals, not because of a peculiar kind of being of their own.¹⁹ But whereas according to the most common opinion of his time, defended by authors such as Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Giles of Rome, universals existed *in potentia* outside the mind and *in actu* within the mind, on Burley's accounts they exist *in actu* outside the mind, since their being is exactly the same as the being of individuals, which is actual. For Burley the necessary and sufficient condition for a universal to be *in actu* is the existence of at least one individual instantiating it. Therefore our mind does not give actuality to universals, but a separate mode of existence only.²⁰ Hence, Burley thought of universals as formal causes in relation to their own individuals, and individuals as material causes in relation to their universals. Furthermore, in his middle commentary on the *De interpretatione* Burley speaks of mental universals, i.e., the concepts through which our mind relates general names to their *significata*.²¹

In conclusion, Burley's earlier position on universals can be summed up as follows: (1) universals exist in a twofold way, as common natures in the external world and as concepts in our minds. (2) Real universals are naturally suited to be present in many things as their primary metaphysical components and to be predicated of them. (3) Mental universals are partially caused in our minds by common natures existing outside our minds. (4) Real universals have no being (*esse*) outside the being of their particular instantiations. (5) Properly speaking, an individual substance, such as Socrates, is compounded not only by singular form and matter, but also by any substantial common nature (or substantial universal) which is predicated *in quid* of it.

II. OCKHAM'S VIEW AND CRITIQUE TO REALISM

In the first decades the 14th century, in his commentary on the first book of the *Sentences*, in his *Expositio aurea*, and in the first part of his *Summa logicae*,

*Ockham and Burley on Categories
and Universals: A Comparison*
Alessandro D. Conti

Ockham maintained that (1) the assumption of a relation of identity between universals and individuals was inconsistent with the standard definition of (real) identity, which implies transitivity in predication; and that (2) from an ontological point of view, the only kind of distinction which could hold between two creaturely beings was the real one, as (in his opinion) any form of distinction between two creaturely beings necessarily implied a real distinction between them. From these two theses and the presupposition of the truth of Aristotle's statement that there cannot be real universal forms apart from their individuals, he derived a rejection of any type of extra-mental reality for universals. His most general argumentations, can be summarized as follows: if universals are something existing *in re*, really identical with their individuals, then (1) a same thing would be in different places at the same time, since, for example, the universal-man (*homo universalis*) is present at the same time in this man here and in that man there.²² (2) Whatever is predicated of individuals must be predicated of their universals too, and so a unique universal entity (say, the human nature) would possess contrary attributes simultaneously (for instance, could be blessed and damned) via the attributes of different individuals (say, Christ and Judas).²³ (3) The same singular thing (say, Socrates) would be at the same time individual and universal, since the main component of its essence (say, the human nature) would be a universal.²⁴ (4) God could not annihilate Socrates or any other singular substance without at the same time destroying the whole category of substance and therefore every created being, since every accident depends on substance for its existence.²⁵ Conclusions clearly unacceptable.

The crucial point of Ockham's attack on the traditional realist theory of universals is the demonstration of the thesis that, from an ontological point of view, the only kind of distinction which could hold between two creaturely beings is the real one.²⁶ In fact, the idea that there cannot exist real universal forms apart from their individuals was a sort of undisputed dogma for the Realists of his times, and that a relation of identity between universals and individuals was inconsistent with the standard definition of identity was recognised to be somehow true by moderate Realists too. They had tried to avoid that internal contradiction by introducing some form of distinction between universals and individuals considered as second intentions. It was a common topic in the explanation of *Categories* 3, 1b10-15, that one cannot infer from 'Socrates is a man' and 'man is a species' that 'Socrates is a species', notwithstanding the identity between *homo* and Socrates.²⁷ On the other hand, in their opinion, the thesis of the identity of universals and individuals was necessary in order to assure the division of predication into essential and accidental, and the difference between substantial and accidental forms, stated by Aristotle in the second (1a20-1b5) and fifth (2a18-33, 3b17-21) chapters of the *Categories*. Like accidental forms, universal substantial forms are present in singular substances and cannot exist without them; so, if they, unlike accidental forms, had not been somehow identical with singular substances, as constitutive

parts of their essence, then they would have been undistinguishable from accidents. As a consequence, moderate Realists had been compelled to maintain identity between universals and individuals considered as first intention, but to weaken that same identity by limiting the transitivity of predication between them, since not all that was predicated of individuals could be predicated of universals and *vice versa*. In a certain way, the intentional distinction of Henry of Ghent and the formal distinction of Duns Scotus were like the vehicle for satisfying both these demands²⁸.

But according to Ockham, there was no room for any further distinction in addition to the real one, as any other possible kind of distinction necessarily implies identity (or else it would count as a real distinction), and identity is a transitive, symmetrical, and reflexive relation.²⁹ Hence the transitivity of predication could not be limited by current strategies. Moreover, he subscribed to the Indiscernibility of Identicals (for all x , y , and P , if x is identical with y , then P is predicated of x if and only if it is predicated of y). Accordingly, he concluded that it was impossible that contradictory properties (such as the natural-tendency-to-be-common, or *communicabilitas*, and the impossibility-of-being-common, or *incommunicabilitas*, which characterize respectively universals and individuals) were truly asserted of the same *res*. Instead, the bearers of those contradictory properties would have to be really distinct and therefore existentially independent things.³⁰ But, given the thesis that there cannot be real universal forms apart from their individuals, universals could not in any way be real (that is, external and mind-independent things); thus, if something was universal, it necessarily had to be a mental entity (*ens rationis*), as no other alternative was possible.³¹ Hence, for Ockham, the only universal beings it made sense to talk about were universal concepts, and derivative on them, universal terms in spoken and written language — taking for granted that such universal concepts, if regarded simply as beings, were individual like all others, as they were universal only in the sense of being the mental signs of a multiplicity of individual things. In fact, this is the way Ockham viewed the property of being-common which is peculiar to what is universal. So that for Ockham universality consisted simply in the universality of the representative function of mental terms.³²

As is well known, over the course of his career, Ockham modified his belief on the status of such universal concepts.³³ At the very beginning, following the ideas of Henry of Harclay and Peter Auriole, he was of the opinion that universals were purely intentional objects (*ficta*), in the sense that they did not exist in our minds as in their own subjects of inherence (*subiective*), but they were the objects (namely, the semantic contents) apprehended by our minds through the acts of

*Ockham and Burley on Categories
and Universals: A Comparison*
Alessandro D. Conti

understandig (*obiective*). Such semantic contents would be what we grasp by means of common nouns and compare with reality in order to establish the truth or falsity of a sentence.³⁴ In the second redaction of his *Ordinatio*, however, Ockham presents two different opinions on this subject as equally probable: his earlier version of the *ficium*-theory and the quality-theory of Walter Chatton, whose critique to the *ficium*-theory the *Venerabilis Inceptor* partially accepted. According to the latter view, universals would be qualities present in our minds as in their own subjects of inherence (*subiective*), natural signs of the external things. But Ockham was still uncertain whether such qualities were the same things as the acts of intellection, or something different and posterior to them.³⁵ Eventually, he made up his mind and in his later *Quaestiones super libros Physicorum* (qq. 3-6), *Quodlibet IV* (q. 35), and *Summa logicae* (around 1327) adopted the so called “*intellectio*-theory”. Ockham maintained that universal concepts were those singular acts of understanding by means of which our minds think of several individuals at once³⁶ — a choice that was consistent with his theories of supposition and of meaning, and with his ontological parsimony, since in this way he eliminated any kind of intermediary entities between our thoughts and the world. Now for Ockham, the acts of cognition themselves function as signs for the external things, so that they stand for individual things in the external world.

Ockham’s theory of the categories also is governed by the principle of ontological parsimony. In fact, as far as the problem of the number of real categories was concerned, in contrast to the Realists of the late Middle Ages, Ockham argued that our experience leads us to posit only two extra-mental categories: substance and quality. He holds that written and vocal terms are conventional signs of mental concepts, which are in turn natural signs of individual things. He also admits that there are ten kinds of concepts corresponding to written and vocal terms. However, Ockham argues that there are not valid justifications to think that the simple terms we use signify ten extra-mental kinds of entities. Rather, experience and reasoning support the view that only individual substances and qualities have an extra-mental form of reality, since no other kind of categorial items is necessary in order to explain the signifying function of terms and propositions, the distinction between essential and accidental predication, the validity of our knowledge, and the possibility of definitions.³⁷ Ockham uses many semantic devices to make his point. In general, he tries to provide us, at the propositional level, with paraphrases of propositions that seem at first to refer to entities whose extra-mental reality he does not believe in. For instance, while according to Burley, if Socrates is a father and similar to Plato, necessarily he is a father because of fatherhood inhering in him, and similar to Plato because of the similarity inhering in him, Ockham would rather say that Socrates is a father because he has generated a son, and similar to Plato because of himself, without anything else added. Therefore, instead of positing abstract entities, such as the fatherhood and the similarity, to account for why Socrates is a father and similar to Plato, Ockham

gives Socrates himself and the activity of Socrates as an individual substance as the reason why Socrates is similar to Plato and a father. In this way, he removes all need for entities in eight of the traditional ten categories; all that remain are entities in the categories of substance and quality.³⁸ Thus Ockham detaches himself from the real intention of Aristotle. In so doing, he was to consider the Aristotelian table of the categories to concern terms alone and not things.

As a consequence, the starting-point of Ockham's theory of categories is the affirmation that the term '*praedicamentum*' is a term of second intention (such as 'species' or 'differentia'), that is, a natural sign which designates terms of first intention (like 'man'), which in turn signify object in the external world. From this assumption, it plainly follows that the table of the categories concerns and divides mental (as well as spoken and written) terms alone and not extra-mental things, as only the terms of first intention can be categorial items, according to this view. For supporting this interpretation, Ockham quotes Boethius's claim³⁹ that in the fourth chapter of the *Categories*, when he introduces the table of the categories, Aristotle clearly intends to speak of terms and not of things, since he says: "Singulum aut significat substantiam" etc., and the things are what is signified and not what signifies.⁴⁰ The final result of Ockham's ontological parsimony is therefore a rejection of the principle of a close isomorphism between mental language and the world which ruled the epistemology and semantics of medieval realist authors. Then, in Ockham's opinion, the ten Aristotelian categories are not matched by as many kinds of real entities in the world, but by two only.⁴¹ Our thought as well as our language are richer and wider than reality. Hence he was obliged to recognize a double possibility of categorization: in relation to mental terms and in relation to external things. In the *Summa logicae* he maintains that the expression 'falling into a category' (*esse in praedicamento*) has two different meanings. On the one hand it signifies what falls into a category in such a way that the highest genus of that category (*primum illius praedicamenti*), taken in personal supposition (*sumptum significative*)⁴², is predicated of the pronoun which stands for it. On the other hand, it signifies everything of which, taken in personal supposition, the highest genus of a certain category, taken in personal supposition, can be predicated *in quid*. According to the first meaning, individual substances only fall into the category of substance, and every universal, even though it signifies substances, falls into the category of quality. According to the second meaning, some universals fall into the category of substance, some others into that of quantity, and so on for all the ten Aristotelian categories.⁴³ It is evident that according to the first meaning of the expression '*esse in praedicamento*' individual substances and qualities alone fall into a categorial field; whereas according to the second meaning it is

possible to build up a table of the categories divided into ten fields containing both singular and universal items. So only the first table of the categories is related to external things, while the second one concerns mental terms, divided according to linguistic criteria. In fact, Ockham thinks that the ten Aristotelian categories correspond to the ten different kinds of terms that we can use in order to answer to the ten main types of questions we can raise about individual substances: what is it? (*quid est?*) — substance; how is it? (*quale est?*) — quality; how much? (or how many?) (*quantum est?*) — quantity; whose (or to whom or to which) is it? (*cuius est?*) — relation; where? (*ubi?*) — where; when? (*quando?*) — when; what is he doing? (*quid facit?*) — action; and so on.⁴⁴

Further consequences of this way of addressing the problems of universals and categories were a new interpretation of the nature of predication and an original explanation of the truth-conditions of a sentence.⁴⁵ The basic idea of almost all the theories of truth worked out in the 13th and at the beginning of the 14th centuries was that a sentence is true if and only if it describes how things are arranged in the world — in other words, a sentence is true if and only if its own primary *significatum* is an ontological truth. Such ontological truths do have constituents (the items signified by the subject and the predicate of a given sentence), but they are not mere collections of constituents; instead, they are “unities” which bring the constituents together. In their view, predication was the real relation holding between those constituents. Fundamentally, two different approaches can be singled out within that line of thought: an ontological approach (inspired by Augustine, and held by authors such as Grosseteste), and an epistemological approach (inspired by Aristotle, and held by thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas and to a certain extent Giles of Rome)⁴⁶. According to the ontological theory, the truth is a thing’s being in accordance with the idea in the mind of God. According to the epistemological one, the true and the false are properly *about* things, and not *in* things, but in the soul, as the truth is the result of an act of judging of the intellect which states the combinations or separations found in things themselves. Notwithstanding the differences in individuating the truth-bearers (the things and the intellect, respectively), both these kinds of approach seem to expound simply slightly different versions of a correspondence theory of truth. Unlike the other authors of his times, Ockham refuses to accept that predication is a real relation between things. He affirms that there is not an ontological relation in the world which matches the logico-linguistic relation of predication. In his view, predication is simply a logico-linguistic relation of terms in a sentence.⁴⁷ Moreover, his theory of truth seems to be a peculiar elaboration of a coherence theory (of truth), since he maintains that (1) an affirmative proposition⁴⁸ is true if and only if its subject and predicate, taken in personal supposition, stand for the same thing, or things; and (2) the truth conditions of propositions are other propositions, and not objective features of the world.⁴⁹ According to Ockham, the truth of a sentence such as ‘Socrates is a man’ does not depend on the existence and mutual connection of two somehow distinct

entities, Socrates and the form of humanity, signified by the subject and the predicate respectively, but it depends on the fact that we can correctly refer to Socrates by means of these two simple expressions ‘Socrates’ and ‘man’. So he denies that sentences like ‘Humanity is <something> present in Socrates’ (*‘humanitas est in Sorte’*) or ‘Socrates is a man because of <his> humanity’ (*‘Sortes est homo humanitate’*) are true.⁵⁰ What is more, he holds that a universal affirmative proposition, such as ‘every man is white’ (*‘omnis homo est albus’*), is true if and only if each singular affirmative proposition is true to which it is possible to descend (from it), that is, ‘Socrates is white’, ‘Plato is white’, and so on for all men.⁵¹

This means to translating Aristotle’s statements on the ontological and physical status of substances, common natures, accidental forms, and so on, into rules for the correct use of terms, so that the level of language in Ockham’s system was raised a step in relation to its level in other philosophical system of his times — the necessary presupposition of any consistently nominalist interpretation of the Aristotelian encyclopedia of sciences.

III. BURLEY’S LAST VERSION OF REALISM (AFTER 1324)

Burley was persuaded that Ockham’s objections were sufficient to show that the traditional realist account of the relation between universals and individuals was unacceptable, but not that realism as a whole was untenable. Thus, in his later years, in the prologue of his last commentary on the *Physics* (1324-34), in the last commentary on the *Ars Vetus* (1337), in the *Tractatus de universalibus* (after 1337), and in the later *Quaestiones octo super logicam in communi necnon super Porphyrii Isagogen*, he developed a new ontology based on a threefold *real* distinction: between universals and individuals; between categorial items, or simple objects (*incomplexa*), and complex objects (*complexa*), or real propositions (*propositiones in re*); and among the ten categories.

Precisely to avoid the inconsistencies pointed out by Ockham, Burley claims that (1) universals fully exist outside the mind and are *really distinct* from the individuals they are-in (and are predicated of); and (2) each species (and genus) is one and the same in species (or genus) and not in number, that it, it has some sort of unity and identity other than numerical ones. In his view, if universals are no longer constitutive parts of their own individuals, then the inconsistencies stressed by Ockham vanish, as universals cannot take the (opposite) properties of the latter (against Ockham’s second argument). Furthermore, the principle holds that causes must be proportionate to the effects they produce — a principle stated by Aristotle in the second book of his *Physics* (3, 195b25-26).⁵² But the causes of an individual, which is a singular effect, must be individual, while obviously those of

*Ockham and Burley on Categories
and Universals: A Comparison*
Alessandro D. Conti

a common nature must be universal. Therefore, individual substance cannot be composed of anything but singular form and matter; whereas universals must be compounded by genus and specific difference, and by any other universal form ordered over the genus. Consequently, the lowest species is not a constitutive part of the individuals it is-in (and is predicated-of), but only a form coming together with their individual essences, and making their metaphysical structure known (against Ockham's third argument). Therefore, God could annihilate Socrates without at the same time destroying the whole category of substance (against Ockham's fourth argument).⁵³ Hence, Burley sharply distinguishes between two main kinds of substantial forms: one singular (*forma perficiens materiam*) and the other universal (*forma declarans quidditatem*).⁵⁴ The former affects a particular piece of matter and, together with it, brings the substantial composite (or *hoc aliquid*) about. The latter, the lowest species, discloses the nature of the individual substances in which it is present (and of which it is predicated), but it is not one of their constitutive parts. Although the lowest species is *one* thing and *the same* in all the singulars in which it is present, it is not one in number, but one according to the species (*una et eadem res secundum speciem*). As a consequence, it can be present in different places, say in Rome and in Oxford, at the same time, since this is compatible with its kind of other-than-numerical unity (against Ockham's first argument).⁵⁵ According to Burley, universals belong to a different rank of reality in relation to individuals, although they are unable to exist (that is, to be *entia in actu*) by themselves. Their unity is a transcendental (and therefore trans-categorical and intelligible) and not a numerical (that is, quantitative) unity. As a consequence, universal essences cannot be counted with (their) individuals. The universal-man (*hoc commune: homo*) is not another man in addition to the concrete existing human beings.⁵⁶ To the traditional anti-realist argumentative schema which established that no one thing can be a universal in its being, since nothing can be both one entity and common to many things in such a manner that it shares its own being with them, constituting their essence, Burley could reply that real universals are possible, since they (1) do not share their own being with the individuals that instantiate them, and (2) are not located at a particular place in space and time, because they are not one and the same in number. The peculiar kind of unity that Burley ascribes to species and genera can be better understood if we consider that each common nature (say, humanity) is one and the same in each individual in which it is present (say, Socrates and Plato), as, taken by itself, it is defined (or described) just in the same way in all of its instantiations (for instance, Socrates's humanity is defined in the same way as Plato's, Aristotle's, and so on). Therefore, because of the Identity of Indiscernibles (for all x and y , if for all P , P is predicated of x if and only if it is predicated of y , then x is identical with y), each common nature must be considered as one and the same in all of its instantiations. In other words, specific and generic natures are not multiplied by their being-present-in many different singulars at once.

Moreover, like Ockham, Burley now rejects any kind of distinction in addition to the real one — and therefore even that form of intentional distinction he had employed in his early works for clarifying the relations between genus and difference, and between essence and being.⁵⁷ In his *quaestiones* on the *De interpretatione*, he had claimed that there was not a real distinction between essence and being (as Aquinas and Giles of Rome had taught), but they were really the same and only intentionally distinct.⁵⁸ Now he admits Ockham's thesis that the only kind of distinction which holds between two beings is the real one — a further reason for supporting a real distinction between universals and singulars, and among the ten categories. In his *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*⁵⁹ and in the *Tractatus de universalibus*⁶⁰ he considers identity a transitive, symmetrical, and reflexive relation; and identity and difference (or distinction) two mutually incompatible concepts. In fact, he defines identity and distinction as follows:

- *a* is identical with *b* if and only if for all *x*, it is the case that *x* is predicated of *a* if and only if it is predicated of *b*;
- *a* differs from *b* if and only if there is at least one *x* such that *a* is predicated of *x* and *b* is not, or vice versa, or there is at least one *y* such that *y* is predicated of *a* and not of *b*, or vice versa.

Like Albert the Great, whom he quotes by name, Burley admits the typical 13th century division of universals into *ante rem*, *in re*, and *post rem*;⁶¹ however, like Auriole and the “first” Ockham, besides the act of understanding (the standard *post rem*, conceptual universal) he posits another mental universal, distinct from the former, and existing in the mind only as its object (*habens esse obiectivum in intellectu*).⁶² By introducing a second mental universal, existing *obiective* in the mind, Burley hoped to account for the fact that we can grasp the meaning of a general noun even though we have never seen any individual among those for which the noun can stand for in a predicative sentence, and therefore without properly knowing the universal it directly signifies. For instance, one can speak of the lion (or the elephant) and define what is to be a lion (or to be an elephant), even though one does not know any individual lion (or elephant), because, in this case, what he grasps is not the common nature of lion (the real universal), but the mental universal having an objective mode of being the intellect, as it is somehow a substitute for the universal form with respect to the mind itself.

Notwithstanding the assumption of a real distinction between universals and individuals (and the different evaluation of the categorial table in relation to his early works), Burley kept on supporting, without introducing any restrictive clause, the Aristotelian principle (stated in *Categories* 5, 2b5-6) that primary sub-

stances are the necessary condition of existence for any other categorial items (universal substances included).⁶³ This was still possible since he held that universals were forms, and therefore entities existentially incomplete and dependent which require the existence of at least one individual substance which instantiates them for being *in actu*. Ockham had interpreted in an original way that same principle: he had claimed that what Aristotle meant was that the truth of all the propositions of the form “Sortes is not” necessarily entails the truth of the following proposition “no man is” (“*nullus homo est*”),⁶⁴ so translating a metaphysical principle into a logical rule. Burley, in commenting that passage of the *Categories*, observes that it goes against Ockham’s position on universals, since, if universal substances were concepts, the destruction of all the members of a certain species could not imply the disappearance of the corresponding universal.⁶⁵

The other two main theses of Burley’s system (the existence of a real proposition and a real distinction among the ten categories) depend on his new position on identity and distinction, and consequently on what he thought was necessary in order to defend a realist view of universals.

Because of his giving up of the intentional difference, Burley was compelled to make the ontological status of *propositiones in re* much stronger than it was before.⁶⁶ In the *Quaestiones in librum Perihermeneias* and middle commentary on the *De interpretatione* he had clearly stated that (1) the real proposition is the last of the four kinds of propositions: written, spoken, mental, real; and (2) mental propositions exist in our minds as in their own subjects of inherence (*habent esse subiectivum in intellectu*), while real propositions (*propositiones in re*) exist in our minds as their intentional objects (*habent esse obiectivum in intellectu solum*).⁶⁷ On the contrary, in his last commentary on the *Ars Vetus* he affirms that a real proposition is something composite (*ens copulatum*), existing *in re*, and having the same structure as the mental proposition.⁶⁸ Such an *ens copulatum* is formed by the external entity (or entities) for which the mental subject and predicate stand together with a (real) relation of identity, if the proposition is affirmative, or a non-identity relation, if the proposition is negative.⁶⁹ So in the chapter *de priori* of his last commentary on the *Categories* he maintains that there are four kinds of proposition, written, spoken, mental, and real, and specifies that the mental proposition is twofold: the first, existing in the mind as in a subject (*habens esse subiectivum in intellectu*), is composed of acts of understanding; the second, existing in the mind as the object of the preceding complex act of understanding (*habens esse obiectivum in intellectu*), is what we grasp by means of the mind and compare with reality to determine the truth or falsity of a proposition. This second mental proposition is the semantic link between the written, spoken, and first mental propositions on the one hand, and the real proposition on the other. It exists even if the written, spoken, and first mental propositions are false and nothing corresponds to them in reality.⁷⁰ Accordingly, the proposition *habens esse obiectivum in intellectu* is like the cognitive or descriptive meaning (we could say, the sense)

of a sentence. On the other side, the *new* real proposition is the ultimate *significatum* (the reference, we could say) of a statement and its truth-maker, since those sentences that signify a complex object existing in reality are true, whereas those sentences that do not signify such a complex object, but to which only the two (simple) objects designated by the subject and predicate correspond in reality, are false.⁷¹

However, a question arises: if universals and singulars (and the items falling into the ten categories) are really distinct, how can Burley maintain that there must be an identity relation holding between the things signified by the subject and predicate of every true affirmative proposition? Burley's solution seems to be the following: in a true, affirmative sentence, the *significata* of the subject-term and predicate-term are different, but the things for which they stand in personal supposition (i.e., the individual substance or substances) are the same. In fact, Burley distinguishes what a concrete term (like 'album' or 'pater') signifies (*id quod terminus significat* — in the case of 'pater', for example, the aggregate compounded by an animal and the accidental form of *paternitas*) from what it denotes (*id quod terminus denotat* — in our example Socrates or Brunellus) — a distinction which is reflected in the difference between simple and personal supposition.⁷² In the *De suppositionibus* and *De puritate* the same idea is expressed by the definition of the formal supposition as the supposition that a term has when it supposits for its *significatum* or for the singular objects that instantiate it. In the first case, we properly speak of simple supposition, and in the second, we speak of personal supposition.⁷³ This obviously implies that a mental (or written or spoken) affirmative proposition is true if and only if its extremes have personal supposition for the same thing or things. For example, 'Socrates is a man' is true if and only if 'man' in this context has personal supposition for Socrates, that is, if the abstract form of humanity is present in Socrates as his *forma declarans quidditatem*. In this way, the real distinction between universals and particulars, and among the ten categories, is safe, without affecting his theories of correspondence and identity.

Finally, as far as the problem of the ontological value of the Aristotelian categories is concerned, in his last commentary on the *Categories* Burley claims that (1) the division into categories is first of all a division of *res* existing outside the mind, and only secondarily of the mental concepts and spoken or written terms which signify them; and (2) things in one category are really distinct from those in others.⁷⁴ It could not be otherwise: if universals and individuals belonging to the same category are really distinct between them, there is all the more reason why items belonging to different categories are so. What is more, (3) he polemizes against Ockham's strong reductionist position. Burley contends that Ockham's

*Ockham and Burley on Categories
and Universals: A Comparison*
Alessandro D. Conti

view on this subject is not only manifestly in contrast with the letter and the inner meaning of Aristotle's doctrine, but that it compromises the goal of any correct categorial theory, namely, the classifying and putting in hierarchical order all the world items according to their peculiar modes of being and metaphysical structure and properties.

Burley's constant concern was that Ockham's approach to philosophical questions was pernicious. Many times in his later works he expressed the deepest hostility to his linguistic form of nominalism. He thought that only on the ground of a close isomorphism between mental language and world could the signifying power of simple and complex expressions, the possibility of definitions, and consequently the validity of our knowledge be accounted for and assured. His most important objection to Ockham's claims about categories is that, if he were right, then all the items belonging to the ten Aristotelian categories would fall into the categorial field of quality alone. A patent absurdity.⁷⁵ On the other hand, in Burley's opinion, were the division into categories exclusively a division of terms according to linguistic criteria, it would be impossible to reduce all the different kinds of simple expressions to ten alone.⁷⁶

Such remarks are not effective, since they are based on a misinterpretation of Ockham's thought. Burley assumes that Ockham holds the identification of all the accidental categories, except quality, with that of substance — a thesis which is obviously equivalent to the negation of the Aristotelian one that each category is distinct from any other. But this means to distort Ockham's statements. On the one hand, Ockham affirms that the ten *linguistic* categories (namely, the ten semantic fields into which all the signifying terms of our mental language can be divided) are really different from each other — so translating, as usual, Aristotle's principle concerning things into a rule concerning language. On the other hand, he does not assert that *in re* all the categories other than substance and quality must be identified with substance; yet, he claims that *in re* there are only two categories: substance and quality. And finally, Burley's objection that within Ockham's system it is not possible to reduce all the different kinds of simple expressions to ten alone is groundless, as Ockham elaborates a logico-linguistic method for finding the (linguistic) categories — as we have seen above. Burley could have questioned it, but, as a matter of fact, he did not, so missing his polemical mark.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

If the foregoing analyses are correct, then (1) the divergent interpretation of *Categories* 2b5-6, (2) Ockham's principle of ontological parsimony, and (3) Burley's trust in the scheme object-label as the general interpretative key of every logico-epistemological problem⁷⁷ are the only decisive differences between the main features of Burley's theory of universals (and, as a consequence, of his whole metaphysics) and those of Ockham's. Indeed, both Burley's and Ockham's

approaches to philosophy can be defined as analytical, since they believed that ontology must be developed in relation to the resolution of semantic problems, and that a philosophical explanation of reality must be preceded by a semantic explanation of the structure and function of our language, even if we can only give meaning to linguistic expressions by correlating the expressions of our language with objects in the world. Moreover, both of them subscribe to the theses that a relation of identity between universals and individuals is inconsistent with the standard definition of (real) identity, and the only kind of distinction which holds between two items is the real one. Finally, neither simply adopts the assumption that there cannot be real universals apart from their individuals: Ockham in the sense that he presumes that universal concepts do exist outside, apart from, and independently of their signified individuals (namely, singular substances and qualities); Burley in the sense that, in his opinion, the being of universal forms does not coincide with the being of their individuals, but it is really distinct from it, even though universals need individual substances in order to exist — and this implies an extension of the range of the notion of being, and a sharp distinction between being and existence, as the former is the general condition of every kind of reality and the latter the mode of being peculiar to individual substances only. What prevents the “last” Burley from totally agreeing with Ockham are precisely the opposite reading of Aristotle’s affirmation that if primary substances did not exist, it would be impossible for anything else to exist, and his rejection of the principle of parsimony. Being faithful to the Aristotle of the *Categories*, Burley had to build up a sort of mixed theory of universal, where some principles of Aristotelian ontology went alongside some of Platonic one. In contrast, detaching himself from the real Aristotelian intention in the *Categories*, Ockham could construct a theory consistent with Aristotle’s claim in *Metaphysics Z* 13 (1038b8-9, 1038b34-1039a3) that universals are not substances. Furthermore, against Ockham’s principle of ontological parsimony, Burley accepted without any uncertainty the ontological proliferation which follows from his belief in an analytical correspondence between mental language and the world. For example, in replying to Ockham’s argument that, if relations were something real, then each time that a person moves from a place to another an infinite number of entities would be destroyed and an infinite number of new entities would be created in the world,⁷⁸ he answers that this is not an inconvenience at all, but simply a necessary effect of the reality of relations.⁷⁹

So Ockham’s world consists only of individual substances and qualities, and of the components of the individual substances themselves: singular form and matter; and nothing complex corresponds *in re* to propositions. On the contrary,

*Ockham and Burley on Categories
and Universals: A Comparison*
Alessandro D. Conti

Burley, because of his over-simplified semantics, which seems to allow only one way of signifying, has a very rich and complex ontology. In his world, macro-objects (i.e., what is signified by a proper name or by a definite description, such as ‘Socrates’ or ‘this man here’) are the basic components of reality. They are aggregates made up of primary substances together with a host of substantial and accidental forms existing in them and through them. Primary substances and substantial and accidental forms are simple objects or categorial items, each possessing a unique, well-defined nature. These simple objects belong to one of ten main types or categories, each really distinct from the others. Although they are simple, some of these components are in a sense composite because they are reducible to something else — for example, primary substance is composed of a particular form and matter.⁸⁰ Primary substance differs from the other components of a macro-object because of its peculiar mode of being as an autonomous and independently existing object — in contrast with the other categorial items, which necessarily presuppose it for their existence. Primary substances are therefore substrates of existence and predication in relation to everything else. The distinction between substantial and accidental forms derives from their different relations to primary substances, which instantiate substantial forms (which in turn, *qua* instantiated, are secondary substances), so that such universal forms disclose the natures of particular substances. By contrast, those forms that simply affect primary substances without being actually joined to their natures are accidental forms. In Burley’s words, the forms in relation to which particular substances are the *supposita* are substantial forms (or secondary substances), whereas those forms in relation to which particular substances are the *subiecta* are accidental forms.⁸¹ As a result, the macro-object is not simply a primary substance but an orderly collection of categorial items, so that primary substance, even though it is the most important element, does not contain the whole being of the macro-object.

As the preceding investigations show, like Ockham’s ontology, Burley’s ontology also is an interesting example of that partial dissolution of the traditional doctrine of the categories and its subordination to the doctrine of universals which took place during the 14th century. Although Burley’s metaphysical system appears to be consistent and logically rigorous, two main difficulties arise from his last solution of the problem of universals in relation to the standard Aristotelian background commonly accepted in the 13th and 14th centuries: first, within his ontology, it was difficult to distinguish between essential and accidental predication, since secondary substances (namely, the universal forms of the category of substance) necessarily presupposed primary substances for their existence in the same way as accidental forms did. Thereby, their relation to primary substances was (almost) the same as that peculiar to accidental forms: a sort of inheritance. Second, universals had a their own being apart from the being of their individuals — a conclusion dangerously close to Plato’s thesis on that subject. Therefore, many late medieval Realists (in particular the so-called “Oxford

Realists”: John Wyclif, Robert Alyngton, William Milverley, William Penbygull, Johannes Sharpe, John Tarteys, and Roger Whelpdale) tried another way of replying to Ockham’s charges, developing a philosophical paradigm intermediate between those of Moderate Realists on the one hand and that of Walter Burley on the other. So they (1) revised the notions of identity and distinction to make room for the distinctive relation of partial identity and difference that they claimed holds between universals and individuals; (2) elaborated a form of intensional logic where the main relation between beings was that of formal distinction, intended as the measure of the coincidence of the metaphysical components of two *res*; and (3) built up a metaphysics of essences, culminating in an ontological and epistemological primacy of universals over any other kind of beings. But this is a further chapter in the history of Medieval philosophy, which demands further investigation.⁸²

¹ In *Isagoge* 1,13-16 Porphyry raises his famous series of questions, about the ontological status of universals and their relation to individuals, which medieval philosophers faced up to in their commentaries on the *Isagoge* and treatises on universals: (1) whether genera and species exist in themselves or are nothing but mere concepts; (2) whether, if they have an extramental form of existence, they are corporeal or incorporeal; (3) and whether they exist apart from perceptible objects or in and by virtue of them.

² Cf. Boethius, *In Categorias Aristotelis libri quattuor*, PL 64, 159C and 160A. On Boethius’s interpretation of Aristotle’s *Categorias* see J. Shiel, “Boethius’ Commentaries on Aristotle,” *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1958), 217-244; S. Ebbesen, “Boethius as an Aristotelian Commentator,” in *Aristoteles: Werk und Wirkung*, ed. J. Wiesner, 2 vols. (Berlin — New York: De Gruyter, 1987), 286-311; A.D. Conti, “Boezio commentatore e interprete delle *Categorie* di Aristotele,” in *Scritti in onore di Girolamo Arnaldi offerti dalla Scuola Nazionale di Studi Medievali*, ed. A. Degrandi et al. (Rome: Edizioni dell’Istituto Storico Italiano

per il Medio Evo, 2001), 77-102.

³ Cf. Robert Kilwardby, *Notulae super librum Praedicamentorum, prooem.*, and lectio 5, Madrid, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 73, fols.10vb-11ra, and 13va-14rb; Thomas Sutton, *Expositio super librum Praedicamentorum, prooem.*, and cap. de numero praedicamentorum, Oxford, Merton College, ms. 289, fols. 3rb-va, 7ra — transcription in A.D. Conti, “Thomas Sutton’s Commentary on the *Categorias* according to the Ms Oxford, Merton College 289”, in *The Rise of British Logic*, ed. P.O. Lewry, o.p. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1985), (173-213), 189-191 and 196. On Kilwardby’s conception of the categories see A.D. Conti, “Semantics and Ontology in Robert Kilwardby’s Commentaries on the *Logica Vetus*”, in *A Companion to Robert Kilwardby*, ed. by P. Thom and H. Lagerlund, (Leiden: Brill — forthcoming); on Sutton’s doctrine see Conti, “Thomas Sutton’s Commentary on the *Categorias*”, 173-186; and “La composizione metafisica dell’ente finito corporeo nell’ontologia di Tommaso Sutton”, *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filo-sofica medievale*, 2.1, (1991), 317-360.

Ockham and Burley on Categories and Universals: A Comparison
Alessandro D. Conti

⁴ Cf. Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinariorum*, a. 32, q. 5, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 27, 79-80; *Quodlibet V*, qq. 2 and 6, and VII, qq. 1-2, ed. Parisiis 1518, 2 vols., vol. 1, fols. 228v-230r, 238r-240v, and 386v-390v. Simon of Faversham, *Quaestiones super librum Praedicamentorum*, q. 12, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, ed. P. Mazzarella (Padua: CEDAM, 1957), 82-85.

⁵ Cf. e.g. Albert the Great, *Liber de praedicamentis*, tr. 1, cap. 3 and cap. 7, in *Opera omnia*, ed. A. Borgnet, (Paris, 1890), vol. 1, 164-165; John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Praedicamenta*, q. 1, in *Opera philosophica*, vol. 1, 249-256, especially 250-251. On Albert's and Duns Scotus's views see E.P. Bos and A.C. van der Helm, "The Division of Being over the Categories according to Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus", in *John Duns Scotus: Renewal of Philosophy*, ed. E.P. Bos (Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), 183-196. On Albert's doctrine see B. Tremblay, "Albertus Magnus on the Subject of Aristotle's Categories", in *Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle's Categories*, ed. L. Newton (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 73-97. On Duns Scotus's conception of the categories see P. King, "Scotus on Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Th. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 28-38; G. Pini, "Scotus's Realist Conception of the Categories: His Legacy to Late Medieval Debates," *Vivarium*, 43.1 (2005), 63-110.

⁶ Cf. Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, q. 28, ed. B. Jansen (Ad Claras Aquas: ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1922-26), 3 vols., vol. 1, 483-498.

⁷ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Praedicamentorum* (before 1309), cap. de sufficientia praedicamentorum, ed. A.D. Conti, available at , 22,15-24,9: "Sciendum quod non potest demonstrative probari quod sunt decem praedicamenta et non plura neque pauciora. Isto tamen numero, scilicet numero denario praedicamentorum, sunt auctores contenti. Aliqui tamen volunt assignare causam quare sunt tot praedicamenta et non plura, et dicunt quod praedicamentum sumitur a modo predicandi et modus predicandi a modo essendi. Sed duo sunt modi essendi principales, quoniam aliquod est ens per se non inherens alteri et aliquod est ens in alio. Si sit ens per se, sic est substantia; si sit in alio, aut ergo inheret alteri, scilicet substantie, gratia materie aut gratia forme aut gratia compositi. Si gratia materie, hoc tripliciter: aut intrinsece, et

sic est quantitas, quoniam quantitas inheret substantie intrinsece, et hoc ratione materie. Si extrinsece sic est ubi, quoniam ubi non inest alicui nisi ex hoc quod habet partes, et non habet partes nisi ratione materie. Aut inheret medio modo, et sic est passio. Si autem inheret ratione forme, hoc potest esse tripliciter: aut intrinsece, et sic est qualitas; aut extrinsece, et sic est quando; aut medio modo, et sic est actio. Si autem inheret substantie ratione compositi, hoc potest esse tripliciter: aut intrinsece, et sic est ad aliquid; aut extrinsece, et sic est habitus; aut medio modo, et sic est positio. Aliter accipiunt aliqui sufficientiam praedicamentorum. Et hoc sic: omne quod est, vel est per se existens vel alteri inherens. Si sit per se existens, sic est substantia. Si sit alteri inherens, aut ergo inheret substantie per aliquid intrinsecum aut per extrinsecum. Si per intrinsecum, aut inheret substantie absolute aut in habitudine ad aliud. Si absolute, aut per rationem materie aut per rationem forme. Si per rationem materie, sic est quantitas; si per rationem forme, sic est qualitas; si in habitudine ad aliud, sic est relatio. Si insit per extrinsecum, illud extrinsecum aut comparatur ad substantiam sicut mensura ad mensuratum, aut sicut agens ad patiens, aut sicut habitus ad illud quod habet ipsum. Si sicut agens ad patiens, sic resultat duo praedicamenta, scilicet actio et passio, quoniam actione agentis in patiens causatur in patiente quidam motus, qui ut est ab agente dicitur actio et ut recipitur in patiente dicitur passio. Si illud extrinsecum comparatur ad substantiam sicut mensura ad mensuratum, cum mensura extrinseca substantie sit duplex, scilicet locus et tempus, locus potest comparari ad substantiam dupliciter: aut absolute, ita quod non sit aliqua alia comparatio, et sic est hoc praedicamentum, ubi. Nam ubi causatur in locato a loco, et ubi habet esse subjective in locato, sed locus in locante. Et ideo auctor *Sex principiorum* dicit quod ubi est circumscriptio corporis a circumscriptione loci procedens. Alio modo potest locus comparari ad locatum non absolute sed in habitudine ad partes locati; et sic est positio. Positio enim non est nisi quidam modus essendi causatus in corpore locato ex habitudine quam locus habet ad ipsum et ad partes eius, secundum quod dicimus alia est sedere, alia stare. Aliter enim disponuntur partes quando aliquis sedet et aliter quando aliquis stat; et sic secundum alias differentias positionis. Unde auctor *Sex principiorum* dicit quod positio est quidam partium situs et generationis ordinatio. Si illud extrinsecum comparatur ad substantiam sicut mensura temporalis, sic resultat hoc predica-

mentum, quando. Quando enim non est nisi quoddam causatum in re temporali ex habitu-
dine quam habet ad tempus. Et hoc vult auctor *Sex principiorum*, qui dicit: “Quando est quod derelinquitur ex adiacentia temporis in re temporali”, secundum quod dicimus aliquid esse unius diei vel unius anni. Si autem comparatur sicut res habita ad illud quod habet ipsam, sic est predicamentum habitus. Habitus enim est una habitudo que causatur in homine vestito ex veste quam habet. Et hoc vult auctor *Sex principiorum*, qui dicit quod habitus est corporum et eorum que circa corpus sunt ad corpus. Et predicamentum habitus non invenimus in animalibus aliis ab homine. Istis modis sumunt omnes sufficientiam predicamentorum, sed solum affirmant et non probant. Intelligendum est quod sex predicamenta, scilicet actio, passio, ubi, quando, positio, habitus, sunt nobis multum ignota. Quidam enim dicunt quod illa sex predicamenta non sunt nisi respectus, et non sunt res absolute. Unde dicunt quod duo sunt modi essendi principales. Unus est modus essendi secundum se et absolute, alius est modus essendi in ordine ad aliud. Primus modus essendi convenit tribus predicamentis absolutis, scilicet substantie, qualitati et quantitati; sed modus essendi in ordine ad aliud convenit aliis septem predicamentis. Adhuc modus essendi secundum se et absolute est duplex, quia aut est modus essendi secundum se et in se, et sic est communis substantie, sed non competit aliis predicamentis, et ille est modus proprius predicamento substantie; alius est modus essendi secundum se sed in alio, et est modus proprius duorum accidentium, scilicet quantitatis et qualitatis. Et ille modus non competit aliis predicamentis, sed modus essendi in ordine ad aliud competit aliis septem predicamentis, ita quod alia predicamenta non sunt nisi respectus vel modi reales predicamentorum absolutorum.”

⁸ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. de substantia, 26,19-27: “Sciendum quod ad predicamentum ... requiruntur duo, scilicet res et modus essendi superadditus illi rei. Et ista duo requiruntur in quolibet predicamento, quoniam diversa predicamenta distinguuntur ad invicem per diversos modos essendi. Unde diversitas essen-

tiarum solum non sufficit ad hoc quod aliqua sint in diversis predicamentis, quia in eodem predicamento sunt res diverse essentialiter differentes; sed omnes res eiusdem predicamenti habent eundem modum essendi; et si alique res habeant modos essendi primo diversos, ille res sunt in diversis predicamentis. Unde modus essendi in predicamento est formalior quam ipsa res”. The same thesis is supported in the later *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis* (written in 1337), cap. de substantia, in *Expositio super Artem Veterem Porphyrii et Aristotelis*, ed. Venetiis 1509, fol. 22ra.

⁹ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. de substantia, 26,27-31. See also the *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. de substantia, fol. 22ra.

¹⁰ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. de quantitate, 41,27-31, and 43,26-28. See also the *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. de quantitate, fol. 28vb.

¹¹ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. de equivocis, 5,10-11.

¹² Cf. Burley, *Expositio librorum Physicorum* (around 1316), lib. I, quaestio: “utrum ens sit aequivocum ad decem praedicamenta”, Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, ms. 448, (pp. 172-543), 192b-193b.

¹³ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. de substantia, 28,3-7.

¹⁴ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. de relatione, 60,24-61,8: “Sed primo oportet videre que sunt per se in hoc predicamento et quid sit nomen generis generalissimi. Pro quo est sciendum quod relationes sunt per se in hoc predicamento et non relativa, ut paternitas et filiatio sunt per se in hoc predicamento sicut species huius predicamenti, sed pater et filius non sunt species huius predicamenti nec sunt in hoc predicamento nisi per reductionem. Et huius ratio est quia termini concreti accidentales significant aggregatum per accidens, ut aggregatum ex subiecto et accidente, et ideo illud quod significatur per terminum concretum accidentalem non est per se in genere. Et ideo sicut album non est per se in genere qualitatis sicut species illius generis, sic nec pater est per se in genere relationis. Si enim concederetur quod pater et filius essent per se species de genere relationis, ista esset necessaria

*Ockham and Burley on Categories
and Universals: A Comparison*
Alessandro D. Conti

‘nullus homo est pater’, sicut et ista ‘nullus homo est albedo’, quoniam omnis propositio est necessaria in qua species unius predicamenti removetur a specie alterius predicamenti, quia ex quo negativa est immediata in qua generalissimum removetur a generalissimo, ut patet ex I *Posteriorum*, sequitur quod negativa sit necessaria in qua species unius predicamenti removetur a specie alterius predicamenti, quia ad remotionem generis a genere sequitur remotio speciei a specie. Ex hoc patet quod genus generalissimum huius predicamenti debet significari per nomen abstractum et non per nomen concretum. Et sic melius est dicere quod ‘relatio’ est nomen generis generalissimi quam quod ‘relativum’ sit nomen generis generalissimi”.

¹⁵ Cf. Burley, *De relativis*, in H. Shapiro and M.J. Kiteley, “Walter Burleigh’s *De relativis*”, *Franciscan Studies*, 22 (1962), (155-171), 168.

¹⁶ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus de suppositionibus* (1302), in S.F. Brown, “Walter Burleigh’s Treatise *De suppositionibus* and its Influence on William of Ockham,” *Franciscan Studies*, 32 (1972), (15-64), 35-36.

¹⁷ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. *de substantia*, 36,9-28.

¹⁸ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. *de substantia*, 32,10-24.

¹⁹ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. *de substantia*, 32,33-33,5.

²⁰ Cf. Burley, *Expositio libri De anima*, Vatican City, Bibl. Apostol. Vat., Vat. Lat. ms. 2151, fols. 9ra-11ra. The same arguments occur, but in a different context and aimed at a diverse goal, in John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, q. 1. See also Burley, *Tractatus super librum Praedicamentorum*, cap. *de substantia*, 32,25-32: “Notandum quod hec conclusio habet veritatem ex his duobus, quia universalis non habent esse nisi in singularibus, et similiter accidentia non habent esse nisi in subiectis; si ergo destruantur prime substantie, cum secunde substantie non habent esse separatum a primis, sequitur quod secunde substantie destruantur. Et sic, si prime substantie non sunt, nec substantie secunde sunt; et ita nullum subiectum alicuius accidentis est. Et per consequens nullum accidens est, quia accidens non est nisi in subiecto. Ergo destructis primis substantiis destruantur omnia alia, scilicet tam secunde substantie quam accidentia”.

²¹ Cf. Burley, *Commentarius in librum Perihermeneias* (before 1309), in S.F. Brown, “Walter Burley’s Mid-dle Commentary on Aristotle’s *Perihermeneias*”, *Franciscan*

Studies, 33 (1973), (45-134),53-56.

²² Cf. Ockham, *Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum Aristotelis*, cap. 8.1, in *Opera philosophica*, vol. 2, 166.

²³ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 15, in *Opera philosophica*, vol. 1, 51.

²⁴ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 15, 51.

²⁵ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 15, 51.

²⁶ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 16, 54-57.

²⁷ Cf., for instance, Kilwardby, *Notulae super librum Praedicamentorum*, lectio 4, fol. 13va-b; Albert the Great, *Liber de praedicamentis*, tr. 1, cap. 6, 161-162; Thomas Sutton, *Expositio super librum Praedicamentorum, prologus*, fol. 2rb (Conti, “Thomas Sutton’s Commentary on the *Categories*”, 187); Simon of Faversham, *Quaestiones super librum Praedicamentorum*, q. 3, 76; and Burley, *Tractatus super librum Predicamentorum*, cap. *de regulis predicationis*, 17,24-18,13.

²⁸ Henry of Ghent characterized the intentional (*secundum intentionem*) difference in the following way: two entities intentionally differ one from the other if and only if both of them are constitutive elements of the same thing, but the definition of neither of them is part of the definition of the other, so that each of them can be understood even together with the negation of the other — see Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* X, q. 7, ed. R. Macken, (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 164-166. On Henry of Ghent’s doctrine of intentional distinction see J.F. Wippel, “Godfrey of Fontaines and Henry of Ghent’s Theory of Intentional Distinction Between Essence and Existence,” in *Sapientiae procerum amore: Mélanges médiévistes offerts à Dom Jean-Pierre Müller, O.S.B.*, ed. T.W. Koehler, *Studia Anselmiana* 63, (1974), 289-321. Duns Scotus gave two different definitions of the formal distinction. In the *Lectura* and in the *Ordinatio* he described it as a symmetrical relation between two entities which cannot exist separately: two entities are formally distinct one from the other if and only if both of them are constitutive elements of the same reality, but neither of them can exist by itself, nor is one part of the definite description of the other — see Duns Scotus, *Lectura* I, d. 2, p. 2, qq. 1-4, ed. Vaticana, vol. 16, 216; *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, p. 2, qq. 1-4, ed. Vaticana, vol. 2, 356-357; II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 6, ed. Vaticana, vol. 7, 483-484. In the *Reportata Parisiensis* he defined it as an asymmetrical relation between a whole reality and

one of its constitutive elements: an entity x is not formally identical with another entity y if and only if y is not part of the definite description of x , but x and y are one and the same thing in reality — see Duns Scotus, *Reportata Parisiensis* I, d. 33, qq. 2-3, and d. 34, q. 1, ed. Vivès, vol. 22, 402-408, and 410. He utilised these two rather different notions of formal distinction in order to illustrate respectively how the genus and the specific difference, and the specific nature and the individual difference are linked together, and the relations which hold between the divine nature and its three Persons, and between the human soul and its faculties. On Scotus's theory of formal distinction see M. McCord Adams, "Ockham on Identity and Distinction," *Franciscan Studies*, 36 (1976), (5-74), 25-43; P. King, "Duns Scotus on the Common Nature and Individual Difference," *Philosophical Topics*, 20 (1992), 51-76; S.D. Dumont, "Duns Scotus's Parisian Question on the Formal Distinction," *Vivarium* 43.1 (2005), 7-62.

²⁹ Cf. Ockham, *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 6, in *Opera theologica*, vol. 2, 173-174; d. 33, q. un., in *Opera theologica*, vol. 4, 416-421.

³⁰ Cf. Ockham, *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 1, 14 and 16; *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 16, 56

³¹ Cf. Ockham, *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 1, 14-15.

³² Cf. Ockham, *Expositio in librum Porphyrii, proem.*, in *Opera philosophica*, vol. 2, 11 and 14-16; *Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum Aristotelis*, cap. 4.2, 149-154; *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 14, 48-49; and cap. 15, 53-54.

³³ Cf. Ph. Boehner, "The Realistic Conceptualism of William Ockham", *Traditio*, 4 (1946), 307-335; G. Gál, "Gualteri de Chatton et Guillelmi de Ockham controversia de natura conceptus universalis", *Franciscan Studies*, 27 (1967), 191-212; T. de Andrés, *El nominalismo de Guillermo de Ockham como filosofía del lenguaje*, (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1969), 27-149; J. Trentman, "Ockham on Mental", *Mind*, 79 (1970), 586-590; M. McCord Adams, *William Ockham*, 2 vols. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), vol. 1, 71-107; R. Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 277-289; C. Panaccio, "Semantics and Mental Language," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, ed. P.V.

Spade, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 53-75; C. Panaccio, *Ockham on Concepts* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004).

³⁴ Cf. Ockham, *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 8, 271-281.

³⁵ Cf. Ockham, *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 8, 283-291.

³⁶ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 12, 42-43; and cap. 15, 53. On Ockham's semantics see at least McCord Adams, *Ockham* cit., 327-435; and C. Panaccio, *Les Mots, les Concepts et les Choses. Le sémantique de Guillaume d'Occam et le nominalisme d'aujourd'hui*, (Montréal-Paris: Bellarmin and Vrin, 1992).

³⁷ Cf. Ockham, *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 4, 122-124.

³⁸ Cf. Ockham, *Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum Aristotelis*, cap. 7.1, 157-161. See also *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 40, 111-113.

³⁹ Cf. Boethius, *In Categorias Aristotelis libri quattuor*, 180C.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ockham, *Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum Aristotelis*, cap. 7.1, 158.

⁴¹ Cf. Ockham, *Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum Aristotelis*, cap. 7.1, 158-159.

⁴² As is well known, according to Ockham, a term is taken *significative* when it supposit for what it signifies, and this is the case when a term supposit *personaliter*, that is, for the individual substances (or qualities) it designates — cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 64, 195-197. On Ockham's theory of supposition see at least M. McCord Adams, "What does Ockham Mean by 'Supposition'?", *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, 17 (1976), 375-391; and *Ockham* cit., 327-382.

⁴³ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 40, 112.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 41, 116-117.

⁴⁵ On Ockham's theory of truth see Ph. Boehner, "Ockham's Theory of Truth", *Franciscan Studies*, 5 (1945), 138-161; G. Nuchelmans, *Theories of the Proposition*, (Amsterdam-London: North Holland Publishing Company, 1973), 195-202; McCord Adams, *Ockham* cit., 383-435.

⁴⁶ On the analogies and differences between Aquinas's and Giles's theories of truth see A.D.

Ockham and Burley on Categories and Universals: A Comparison
Alessandro D. Conti

Conti, “Cono-scenza e verità in Egidio Romano”, *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 3 (1992), 305-361.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 20, 68; cap. 31, 93-94; cap. 32, 94.

⁴⁸ Although Medieval authors were conceptually able to distinguish between sentence and proposition in the same way as we do, they use the two terms ‘*propositio*’ and ‘*enuntiatio*’ interchangeably for designating both the linguistic form by which a propositional content is manifested and the propositional content (*our* proposition) itself. So in this article I utilize the term ‘proposition’ for designating both (*our*) proposition and (*our*) sentence.

⁴⁹ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. II, cap. 2, 249-250.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. II, cap. 2, 250-251.

⁵¹ Cf. Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. II, cap. 4, 261.

⁵² But not in the fifth book of his *Metaphysics*, as Burley erroneously claims.

⁵³ Cf. Burley, *In Physicam Aristotelis Expositio et Quaestiones, prooem.*, ed. Venetiis 1501, (fols. 8rb-9vb), 9rb: “Ad tertium dico quod quamvis universale sit res extra animam, tamen non est pars individui, quia effectus particularis sunt causae particulares. Et sic dico quod, quamvis genus sit pars speciei, tamen species non est pars individui, quia individuum sufficienter constituitur ex causis particularibus. Dico tamen quod universale est de quidditate, pro eo quod significatur per definitionem, sive pro eo quod datur in responsionem ad quaestionem quaerentem quid est ipsum individuum, ut ‘quid est Sortes’, et sic de aliis. Et ita patet quod Deus potest annihilare Sortem quamvis non destruatur genus substantiae, quia ad hoc quod Sortes annihilaretur sufficit annihilare principia intrinseca Sortis, scilicet ex quibus constituitur Sortes, ut hanc materiam et hanc formam.”

⁵⁴ Burley’s distinction between a *forma perficiens materiam* and a *forma declarans quidditatem* is very like the one, very common among the moderate Realists of the 13th century, between *forma partis* (the singular form which in union with a clump of matter brings the substantial composite about) and *forma totius* (the universal form or essence which is the type that the substantial composite instantiates) — cf. e.g. Albert the Great, *De quinque universalibus*, tr. *de universalibus in communi*, cap. 8, ed. Col.

vol. 1.1A, 37-38; *Metaphysica* VII, tr. 1, cap. 1; VIII, tr. 1, cap. 3, ed. Col., vol. 16.2, 316-317, and 391.

⁵⁵ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de substantia*, fol. 23rb-va: “Ad primum in contrarium dicendum est quod substantia singularis non componitur ex universalibus, sed solum ex singularibus, quia Sortes non componitur nisi ex hac materia et hac forma, et non componitur ex genere et differentia, quae praedicantur de eo in quid. Sed species de genere substantiae componitur ex genere et differentia, et ex omnibus superioribus ad ipsum. Et huius ratio est quia effectus particularis sunt causae particulares et effectus universalis sunt cause universales, secundum Philosophum, II *Physicorum* et V *Metaphysicae*, capitulo de causa; sed individuum est effectus particularis et species est effectus universalis; et ideo individuum non componitur nisi ex hac materia et hac forma, quae sunt causae particulares, et species, cum sit effectus universalis, componitur ex causis universalibus, scilicet ex genere et differentia. ... Ad illud quando probatur quod species est pars individui, quia est quidditas individui, dicendum quod quidditas et forma unum sunt. Et ideo, sicut forma est duplex, scilicet forma declarans quidditatem et forma perficiens materiam, sic quidditas est duplex: quia quaedam est quidditas quae sest forma perficiens materiam et quaedam est forma declarans quidditatem. Quidditas quae est forma perficiens materiam est pars individui cuius est quidditas; sed quidditas declarans quidditatem non est pars individui cuius est quidditas, nec est de essentia talis individui, sed est essentialiter concomitans essentiam eius. ... Ad quantum principale, cum dicitur an haec species, homo, sit eadem omnino res in Sorte et Platone an alia et alia, dicendum quod haec species, homo, est eadem in Sorte et Platone. Et cum dicitur quod eadem esset res hic et Romae et simul moveretur et quiesceret, dicendum quod haec species, homo, est una res secundum speciem, et non est inconueniens quod eadem res secundum speciem sit hic et Romae et simul moveatur et requiescat.” This same thesis is supported with new arguments based on the definition of identity in the *Tractatus de universalibus*, pars III, 22-28. On the other-than-numerical kind of unity and identity see also his *De puritate artis logicae tractatus longior* (1325-28), pars I, cap. 3, ed. Ph. Boehner, (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1955), 14.

⁵⁶ Cf. Burley, *In Physicam Aristotelis Expositio et Quaestiones, prooem.*, fol. 9va: "Ad primum horum dico quod hoc commune, homo, et Sortes sunt duae res, sed non sunt duae substantiae neque duo corpora. Pro quo est sciendum quod sicut signum universale additum termino communi non transcendenti (communi, dico, tam universalibus quam individuis) distribuit ipsum solum pro individuis vel pro omnibus supponentibus personaliter pro individuis, ... ita terminus universalis additus termino communi non transcendenti numerat ipsum solum in individua. Et ideo ista est falsa 'hoc commune, homo, et Sortes sunt duae substantiae vel duo corpora', quia denotatur quod sunt duo individua substantiae vel corporis."

⁵⁷ Cf. A.D. Conti, "Essenza ed essere nel pensiero della tarda scolastica (Burley, Wyclif, Paolo Veneto)," *Medioevo*, 15 (1989), 235-267.

⁵⁸ Cf. Burley, *Quaestiones in librum Perihermeneias* (1301), q. 4, in S.F. Brown, "Walter Burley's *Quaestiones in librum Perihermeneias*," *Franciscan Studies*, 34 (1974), (200-295), 273.

⁵⁹ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de oppositione*, fol. 44rb: "Nota quod ex isto loco sumitur doctrina bona ad cognoscendum identitatem vel diversitatem aliorum ad invicem. Et est: si unum praedicatur de aliquo de quo non praedicatur reliquum, illa non sunt eadem, sed diversa; et si aliquid praedicatur de uno quod non praedicatur de reliquo, illa non sunt idem. Et e contrario: si quicquid vere praedicatur de uno vere praedicatur de reliquo, illa sunt eadem."

⁶⁰ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus de universalibus*, pars III, 22.

⁶¹ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super librum Sex Principiorum*, cap. *de forma*, in *Expositio super Artem Veterem Porphyrii et Aristotelis*, fol. 53rb: "Intelligendum est ulterius quod universale est triplex, secundum dominum Albertum, scilicet ante rem, in re et post rem. Universale ante rem est ratio producibilium rerum in Deo, quae a theologis 'idea' dicitur. Universale in re est natura ipsa communis in singularibus actu recepta. Universale post rem est intentio universalitatis per actum intellectus abstrahentis causata."

⁶² Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de priori*, fol. 48vb: "Non est

dubium quin, secundum omnes, universale habet esse obiective in intellectu. Potest enim intellectus intelligere leonem vel elephantem in universali non intelligendo istum leonem nec istum elephantem;" and *Tractatus de universalibus*, pars VI, 60-66.

⁶³ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de substantia*, fol. 24va: "Haec est conclusio quinta huius libri; et est ista: destructis primis substantiis impossibile est aliquid aliorum remanere. Haec conclusio probatur sic: omnia alia a primis substantiis aut sunt in primis substantiis aut dicuntur de primis substantiis; sed destructis primis substantiis destruntur omnia quae sunt in primis substantiis; et per consequens omnia quae dicuntur de primis. Et per consequens destructis primis substantiis impossibile est aliquid aliorum remanere."

⁶⁴ Cf. Ockham, *Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum Aristotelis*, cap. 8.5, 175-176.

⁶⁵ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de substantia*, fol. 24va: "Hic patet evidenter quod secundae substantiae non sunt conceptus in anima, quia, si secundae substantiae essent conceptus animae, tunc destructis primis substantiis possibile esset alia remanere. Nam destructis omnibus rosis adhuc post conceptus rosae remanere in anima. Et ita species potest manere destructis omnibus individuis suis — quod est contra Philosophum hic."

⁶⁶ On Burley's theories of proposition cf. J. Pinborg, "Walter Burleigh on the Meaning of Propositions," *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 28 (1967), 394-404; G. Nuchelmans, *Theories of the Proposition*, cit., 219-225; A.D. Conti, "Ontology in Walter Burley's Last Commentary on the *Ars Vetus*," *Franciscan Studies*, 50 (1990), (121-176), 125-136; E. Karger, "Mental Sentences According to Burley and the Early Ockham," *Vivarium*, 34.2 (1996), 192-230; A.D. Conti, "Significato e verità in Walter Burley," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 11 (2000), 317-350; L. Cesalli, "Le réalisme propositionnel de Walter Burley," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 68 (2001), 155-221; A. de Libera, *La référence vide. Théories de la proposition* (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 130-137; J. Biard, "Le statut des énoncés dans les commen-

Ockham and Burley on Categories and Universals: A Comparison
Alessandro D. Conti

taires du *Peri Hermeneias* de Gauthier Burley,” in *Aristotle’s Peri hermeneias in the Latin Middle Ages. Essays on the Commentary tradition*, eds. H.A.G. Braakhuis and C.H. Kneepkens, (Groningen: Ingenium Publishers 2003), 103-118; C. Rode, “Sätze und Dinge. Die *propositio in re* bei Walter Burley und anderen,” *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter*, 10 (2005), 67-90; L. Cesalli, *Le réalisme propositionnel: sémantique et ontologie des propositions chez Jean Duns Scot, Gauthier Burley, Richard Brinkley et Jean Wyclif*, (Paris: Vrin, 2007), 166-240. Unlike the other contemporary scholars L. Cesalli and A. de Libera think that Burley did not develop two rather different theories of proposition during his life, but that he worked out two very similar version of the same doctrine.

⁶⁷ Cf. Burley, *Quaestiones in librum Perihermeneias*, q. 3, 248-249; *Commentarius in librum Perihermeneias*, 61.

⁶⁸ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis, prologus*, fol. 17vb-18va: “Ad istud (aliud *ed.*) dubium recole me dixisse et in scriptis reliquisse quod intellectus potest facere propositionem ex quibuscumque, quia intellectus potest asserere illa esse eadem vel diversa. Sed propositio non est aliud quam compositio aliquorum per intellectum ad invicem, ut propositio affirmativa, aut divisio aliquorum ab invicem, ut propositio negativa. Quaecumque ergo intellectus potest componere ad invicem aut dividere ab invicem possent esse partes propositionis (*orationis ed.*); et per consequens esse subiecta vel praedicata. Sed intellectus potest ad invicem componere res, asserendo illas esse easdem, et potest dividere res ab invicem, asserendo illas non esse easdem; potest etiam intellectus componere voces et conceptus ad invicem. Et ideo aliqua propositio componitur ex rebus extra animam, aliqua ex vocibus, aliqua ex conceptibus. Quod autem propositio possit componi ex rebus probatur quattuor modis. ... In omni propositione est aliquid materiale et aliquid formale. Formale in propositione est copula copulans praedicatum cum subiecto, et illa copula est in intellectu, quia est compositio vel divisio intellectus; materialia vero in propositione sunt subiectum et praedicatum. ... Sed dubium est an ipsi copulae existenti in intellectu (*intellectiva ed.*) correspondeat aliquid in re aut non. Dicendum quod copulae existenti in intellectu copulanti extram propositionis

<affirmativa> verae ad invicem correspondet aliquid in re, scilicet identitas extremorum vel identitas eorum pro quibus extrema supponunt; divisioni vero vel negationi copulae in propositione negativa vera correspondet aliquid in re, scilicet diversitas extremorum vel illorum pro quibus extram supponunt. Sed copulae existenti in intellectu copulanti extrema propositionis falsae ad invicem nihil correspondet in re nisi ipsa extrema. ... Similiter nec divisioni vel negationi copulae in propositione falsa negativa nihil correspondet in re nisi ipsa extrema”. *De virtute sermonis*, the last affirmation is false. In fact, if a negative proposition ‘A is not B’ is false, then the (corresponding) affirmative ‘A is B’ must be true. But, on the basis of what Burley has just stated, an affirmative proposition is true if and only if it is matched in the world by a real proposition compounded by the real subject and predicate and by the relation of identity holding between them. The affirmation can be considered true only in the sense that if a negative proposition is false, then in the world there is not the relation of non-identity (*diversitas*) holding between the real subject and the real predicate.

⁶⁹ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super librum Perihermeneias, prooem.*, in *Expositio super Artem Veterem Porphyrii et Aristotelis*, fol. 66ra-b: “Sed utrum sit aliqua propositio composita ex rebus extra animam dictum est supra in principio libri *Praedicamentorum*. Supposito vero quod non sit aliqua propositio in re composita ex rebus, ut communiter dicitur, est dubium quid ex parte rei correspondeat veritati et falsitati propositionis in mente et in prolatione. Oportet enim quod ei correspondeat aliquid in re per quod dunc dicamus quod verum est quod propositio in mente et in prolatione est vera, quia sic significat sicut est in re. Ad hoc igitur quod propositio sit vera oportet quod sit in re sicut propositio significat; et per consequens veritati propositionis in mente, et in voce et in scripto correspondet aliquid proportionale. Dicendum est, ut mihi videtur, quod ad hoc quod aliquid sit verum oportet quod veritati propositionis in mente, in prolatione et in scripto correspondeat identitas vel diversitas, seu non-identitas, istorum pro quibus supponunt subiectum et praedicatum. Unde veritati propositionis affirmativae correspondet in re identitas illius pro quo supponit subiectum ad illud pro quo supponit praedicatum. Non enim potest aliqua propositio affirmativa categorica in recto esse

vera nisi subiectum supponat pro eo pro quo supponit praedicatum, id est: verificetur. Et si supponat pro eodem, tunc est affirmativa vera. Et negativa categorica non est vera in recto si subiectum et praedicatum supponant pro eodem; sed si supponant pro diversis, tunc est negativa vera.”

⁷⁰ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de priori*, fol. 48vb: “Sciendum quod propositio habet esse quattuor modis, scilicet in scripto, in prolotione, et in mente, et in re ... Propositio in mente est duplex, quia quaedam habet esse subiective in mente, et talis propositio componitur ex conceptibus; et quaedam est propositio habens esse obiective in intellectu. Et huiusmodi propositio componitur solum secundum considerationem intellectus et ex partibus habentibus solum esse obiective in intellectu.”

⁷¹ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de substantia*, fol. 27vb. “In eo quod res est vel non est, oratio dicitur vera vel falsa — hoc est: in eo quod ita est in re sicut oratio significat, est oratio vera; et in eo quod non est ita ex parte rei sicut oratio significat, est oratio falsa”; *de oppositione*, fol. 45va: “Omne quod est verum vel falsum est complexum. ... Dico quod verum et falsum sunt in voce complexa sicut in signo, sic quod vox complexa dicitur rem quia est significativa veri”; cap. *de priori*, fol. 47va: “Cum dicitur ‘ex eo quod rest est vel non est’ etc., Philosophus non intelligit <per ‘rem’> rem significatam per subiectum nec rem significatam per praedicatum, ... sed Philosophus per ‘rem’ intelligit rem significatam per totam propositionem. ... Et ex hoc patet quod per propositionem in voce et etiam in conceptu significatur aliqua res complexa quae non est proprie aliqua res praecise significata per subiectum nec res significata per praedicatum, sed aggregatum ex his. Et illa res, quae est ultimum et adaequatum significatum propositionis in voce et in conceptu, est quoddam ens copulatum. Et propter hoc potest dici propositio in re, sicut declaratum est in principio huius libri.”

⁷² Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de relatione*, fol. 37ra-b: “Pro instantiis adductis est intelligendum quod terminus concretus potest accipi dupliciter, vel pro eo quod significat vel pro eo quod denominat. Vel, sub aliis verbis: terminus concretus potest accipi vel secundum quod supponit simpliciter vel

secundum quod supponit personaliter. Quando accipitur pro eo quod significat, tunc supponit simpliciter; sed quando accipitur pro eo quod denominat, tunc supponit personaliter. ... Eodem modo est dicendum ad aliam instantiam de patre et filio, quia, si accipiantur ista nomina, scilicet ‘pater’ et ‘filius’, ut habent suppositionem simplicem, ita quod supponant pro his quae (qui *ed.*) principaliter significant, sic <haec> est vera: ‘pater et filius sunt relativa et sunt simul natura’; et sic est haec falsa: ‘pater genuit filium’. Sed si ista nomina, ‘pater’ et ‘filius’, accipiantur ut habent suppositionem personalem, sic est haec falsa: ‘pater et filius sunt per se relativa’, quia posito quod Sortes sit pater Ciceronis, est haec falsa: ‘pater et filius sunt per se relativa’, secundum quod haec nomina habent suppositionem personalem.” See also *Tractatus super librum Praedicamentorum*, cap. *de relatione*, 73, 13-26.

⁷³ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus de suppositionibus*, 35-36; *De puritate artis logicae tractatus longior*, pars I, cap. 3, 7-8.

⁷⁴ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de numero et sufficientia praedicamentorum*, fol. 21ra-b: “Hic est videndum utrum illa divisio sit rerum vel vocum. Boethius dicit quod haec divisio sit vocum. ... Videtur tamen verius dicendum quod illa sit divisio rerum significatarum per voces incomplexas. Nam illa divisio est eorum de quibus Philosophus exemplificat posteriori; sed exemplificando ponit exempla de rebus et non de vocibus. ... Dico ergo quod Aristoteles in ista divisione dividit significata per voces incomplexas in decem res primas, scilicet in decem praedicamenta. Et cum dicit Boethius quod Philosophus dividit ea quae significant, dico quod verum est, sed non ex primaria intentione, sed ex secundaria intentione. Ex primaria dividit rem significatam per vocem incomplexam in decem res. ... Ulterius est videndum an illa decem praedicamenta, scilicet substantia, quantitas etc., sunt realiter distincta. Quidam moderni dicunt quod de istis decem praedicamentis non sunt nisi duo realiter distincta, scilicet substantia et qualitas. Sed est contra Aristotelem et omnes alios philosophos, qui dicunt decem esse res primas omnino distinctas, scilicet substantiam, et quantitatem etc. Unde Aristoteles, I *Posteriorum*, dicit quod propositio negativa est

*Ockham and Burley on Categories
and Universals: A Comparison*
Alessandro D. Conti

vera in qua unum genus generalissimum unius praedicamenti removetur ab alio alterius praedicamenti. Ista enim est vera et immediata ‘nulla substantia est ubi’, et sic de aliis.”

⁷⁵ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de numero et sufficientia praedicamentorum*, fols. 21ra-b: “Item, illa divisio est illorum de quibus determinatur hic inferius per totum istum librum; sed huiusmodi sunt res, quia infra determinat de decem praedicamentis, qua non sunt voces, sed res. Quia, si essent voces, omnia praedicamenta essent in praedicamento qualitatis, quia omnis vox est qualitas sensibilis, et per consequens est in tertia specie qualitatis. Et sic Philosophus non determinaret nisi de qualitibus in tertia specie qualitatis — quod manifeste falsum est.”

⁷⁶ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de numero et sufficientia praedicamentorum*, fols. 21rb: “Item, decem sunt membra huius divisionis quae hic enumerantur; sed non tantum decem sunt voces incomplexae; ergo haec divisio non est in voces. Confirmatur sic, quia si haec divisio esset in voces, tunc sensus divisionis esset iste: singulum incomplexorum aut est haec vox ‘substantia’, aut est haec vox ‘quantitas’, et sic de residuis. Manifestum est autem quod intellectus non est ille, quia sunt multae voces incomplexae quae non sunt de numero illarum.”

⁷⁷ Like almost all the realist thinkers after him, Burley firmly believed that language somehow was a sort of ordered system of signs,

each referring to one of the constitutive elements of reality (universal and singular substances and accidents), and that true propositions were like pictures of inner structures and/or mutual relationships of those constitutive elements.

⁷⁸ Cf. Ockham, *Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum Aristotelis*, cap. 12, 241; *Summa logicae*, p. I, cap. 50, 159-160.

⁷⁹ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de relatione*, fol. 34ra.

⁸⁰ Cf. Burley, *Expositio super Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, cap. *de substantia*, fol. 22ra: “Ex dictis patet quod materia et forma, quae sunt partes substantiae compositae, non sunt per se in praedicamento substantiae.”

⁸¹ Cf. Burley, *Tractatus de universalibus*, pars VI, 58-60.

⁸² On the various forms of realism in the Late Middle Ages see A.D. Conti, “Studio storico-critico”, in Johannes Sharpe, *Quaestio super universalia*, a cura di A.D. Conti (Florence: Olschki, 1990), 211-336; the issue 43.1 (2005) of *Vivarium*, Guest Editor: A.D. Conti, dedicated to *Realism in the Later Middle Ages*; A.D. Conti, “Categories and Universals in the Later Middle Ages”, in *Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle’s Categories*, cit., 369-409; and “Realism”, in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. R. Pasnau, 2 vols., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), vol. 1, 647-660.