

Ion Tănăsescu (ed.)

**Franz Brentano's  
Metaphysics  
and Psychology**

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AND PSYCHOLOGY



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AND PSYCHOLOGY

Upon the Sesquicentennial  
of Franz Brentano's Dissertation



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# CONTENTS

FOREWORD. . . . .	7
EDOARDO FUGALI <i>Trendelenburg, Brentano und die Aristoteles-Renaissance in der deutschen Philosophie des 19. Jahrhunderts: die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Kategorien . . . . .</i>	13
DALE JACQUETTE <i>Brentano on Aristotle's Categories: First Philosophy and the Manifold Senses of Being. . . . .</i>	53
KLAUS HEDWIG <i>„...Eine gewisse Kongenialität“ Brentanos Rückgriff auf Thomas von Aquin in seiner Dissertation. . . . .</i>	95
SUSAN KRANTZ GABRIEL <i>Heidegger's Question and the Fundamental Sense of Being in Brentano . . . . .</i>	132
ION TĂNĂSESCU <i>Franz Brentano's Dissertation and the Problem of Intentionality. . . . .</i>	154
JOSEF SEIFERT <i>Über das notwendige Dasein Gottes Eine kritische Antwort auf Franz Brentanos Kritik des ontologischen Gottesbeweises . . . . .</i>	180
PAUL JANSSEN <i>Die Gottesrede bei Brentano . . . . .</i>	225

ROBIN D. ROLLINGER <i>Brentano's Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint: its Background and Conception . . . . .</i>	261
GUILLAUME FRÉCHETTE <i>Deux aspects de l'intentionnalité dans la Psychologie de Brentano . . . . .</i>	310
DENIS SERON <i>The Fechner-Brentano Controversy on the Measurement of Sensation . . . . .</i>	344
CARLO IERNA <i>Brentano and Mathematics . . . . .</i>	368
ROBERTO POLI <i>Modes and Boundaries . . . . .</i>	397
FEDERICO BOCCACCINI <i>La vérité efficace: l'origine du concept de vrai chez Brentano entre Evidenzphilosophie et pragmatisme . . . . .</i>	419
THOMAS BINDER <i>Franz Brentanos philosophischer Nachlass Eine historische Annäherung an einen schwierigen Fall. . . . .</i>	452

## FOREWORD

It is well known that metaphysics and psychology are Brentano's main areas in philosophy. His first writings, the dissertation *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle* (1862) and the habilitation thesis, *The Psychology of Aristotle* (1867), bear witness to the duality of his concerns. As such, these works are not only significant contributions to the German Aristotelianism of the second half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, but they also played an important role in the development of Brentano's later philosophy and in defining his school. For example, the problem of intentionality, definitive for both Brentano and his most preeminent students, cannot be understood if we ignore the fact that Brentano reintroduced it in contemporary philosophy in his habilitation thesis by interpreting the object of sensible cognition according to Aristotle from the perspective of some scholastic concepts. On the other hand, the dissertation, now celebrating 150 years since its first publication, was noticed beyond the immediate sphere of the Brentanian school, since his reading of it played a decisive role in the young Heidegger's thought on being, and thus in his development of a new type of phenomenology, distinct from the Husserlian one.

The studies comprised within this volume examine the relevance of Brentano's dissertation, of his metaphysics and psychology for contemporary Brentanian research. At a general level, the studies emphasize a tendency in Brentanian research which has become more pronounced in the last two decades, and which can be described as a gradual shift in focus from the specific problems of Brentano's late philosophy – after 1904, in his reist period,



Brentano will state that only real things exist and can be presented – towards his earlier philosophy, especially his first writings. This shift attracted the interest of other works than the ones published by his inter-war and post-war editors, Oskar Kraus, Alfred Kastil and Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand. The way in which Brentano shifted his thought after 1904 encouraged the three editors to consider his late philosophy to be his true philosophy, and this determined them to edit the manuscripts in a version modified in accordance with Brentano's late philosophy. This working model left contemporary editors with the task of rendering the numerous remaining manuscripts to the public. In any case, it is worth noting that in the last two decades the publishing of research based on Brentano's manuscripts has outpaced the publishing of his manuscripts themselves. This state of affairs is relevant to the need for contemporary research to have access to and to study Brentano's writings other than his posthumous works and those published by the aforementioned editors.

Two of the studies presented in this volume offer eloquent proof in favour of the thesis just mentioned, and show how profitable the study of Brentano's works in the light of the manuscripts is. Based on manuscripts recorded during the writing of the dissertation Klaus Hedwig demonstrates that Brentano's interest in Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle is considerably broader than the single reference to Aquinas from the dissertation leads us to believe; at the same time, the author convincingly emphasizes the manner in which Brentano reinterprets Aquinas's commentary on *Metaphysics V* lect. 9 reading it as an attempt to deduce the Aristotelian categories. Robin Rollinger's study also shows how deeply connected the theme and the programme from *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874) are to the lectures held earlier by Brentano at Würzburg University, lectures whose theme is thoroughly examined for the first time here and from which the author generously quotes.

Judging from the history of its reception, it can be said that the dissertation *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle* has

been interpreted either from the perspective of its place in the German Aristotelian Renaissance of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, or from the role it played in the genesis of Heidegger's philosophy. Edoardo Fugali's paper belongs to the first interpretative category, and analyses both the role of the Aristotelian Renaissance, especially Adolf Trendelenburg's role in overcoming the crisis of German philosophy after the death of Hegel, and the relationship between the Brentanian deduction of the Aristotelian categories and Trendelenburg's deduction starting from the category of movement. Susan Krantz Gabriel's contribution illustrates the second interpretative perspective and discusses the metaphysical (and by implication, political) significance of Heidegger's philosophy of being starting from the fact that both in the dissertation and in the later Brentano the fundamental sense of being is the primary, individual substance. Ion Tănăsescu's study completes this perspective and highlights the correlation between *being in the mind* (being as being true) and *real being* in the dissertation, and the specific aspects of intentionality from Brentano's *Psychology* (1874) which establish the distinction between *real existence* and *mental existence* in Philo of Alexandria and St. Anselm.

In relation to these articles, which are a part of a well-established way of interpreting the dissertation, Dale Jacquette's essay discusses Brentano's dissertation investigation of Aristotle's categories, and offers a pure category logic and Aristotelian applied category logic to express Brentano's understanding of Aristotle's systematization of the categories.

The Aristotelian philosophy was a major source for Brentanian metaphysics. The lectures dedicated to the existence of God, which were given during Brentano's teaching at Würzburg and Vienna, prove that his metaphysics is not only inspired by the reflection on his predecessors, but also by the scientific data of his time. In his paper Josef Seifert critically analyses Brentano's objections to the ontological and epistemological presuppositions of the ontological arguments put forth by authors like Anselm, Descartes and Leibniz, and advocates an interpretation

which does not rest on an arbitrary definition or potentially subjective idea of divinity, but on God's necessary essence. Based on the contemporary data of physics, Paul Janssen critically examines the manner in which Brentano employed the data of physics and biology available at his time within the framework of his teleological proof and his proof from motion, and questions the unity between science, philosophy and theology assumed by the Brentanian approach.

Apart from the general presentation of the theoretical context of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* made by Robin Rollinger, Brentano's psychology is tackled by Guillaume Fréchette who distinguishes, in reply to Roderick M. Chisholm's interpretation of the intentional, two different concepts of intentionality in the work from 1874: the *inclusion conception* (being 'intentionally contained' in an act) and the *directional conception* of intentionality. The analysis dedicated by Denis Seron to the importance of Brentano's critique of Fechner's psychophysical logarithmic law joins the same field of problems in an effort to prove that Brentano's late theory of "sensory spaces" could be viewed as a positive contribution to the psychophysical problem as posed by Fechner. The *Psychology from 1874* is also the starting point of Carlo Ierna's study, since Brentano's view on mathematics in this work is used for reconstructing the contours of a possible Brentanist philosophy of mathematics, which can be further extracted from his lectures and the works dedicated to this subject authored by his students, i.a. Carl Stumpf, Edmund Husserl, and Christian von Ehrenfels. The considerations on the part – whole relation entailed by these reflections are also at the centre of Roberto Poli's study which offers a comprehensive picture of Brentano's late mereology and its Aristotelian background. By examining a very important concept of Brentanian psychology, the evidence of inner perception, Federico Boccacini's contribution attempts to show a link between descriptive psychology and pragmatism offering another way to apprehend

the successive phases of the Brentanian notion of true by focalising on correctness as act of agreement.

Last but not least, Thomas Binder's paper reconstructs the sinuous path of Brentano's manuscripts from 1917 until today, and sheds light on the role played by the philosopher's son, John Brentano, in setting up his father's philosophical bequest.

Considered as a whole, the contributions of this volume are relevant for the dynamic and the diversity of contemporary Brentano research, now less than half a decade until the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. At the same time, the papers stand witness to the complexity and the historical dimension of a legacy whose richness and diversity still await full discovery.

The papers by Thomas Binder, Guillaume Fréchette, Carlo Ierna, Dale Jacquette, Paul Janssen, Robin Rollinger and Denis Seron were previously published in the special issue of *Revue roumaine de philosophie* 1-2 (2011) dedicated to Franz Brentano's philosophy. The editor is grateful to the Romanian Academy Publishing House for the permission of republishing them and warmly thanks all the contributors for the care they have taken in collaborating on this volume. My thanks also go to Elena Băltuță, who was constantly and expertly involved in the realisation of this whole project.

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