

F.V. TOMMASI, *'Philosophia transcendentalis'. La questione antepredicativa e l'analogia tra la Scolastica e Kant (Le corrispondenze letterarie, scientifiche ed erudite dal Rinascimento all'Età Moderna. Subsidia, 10)*. Florence, Leo S. Olschki, 2008, 24 × 17, XVI+236 p., € 27.

Francesco Valerio Tommasi's work, *Philosophia transcendentalis*, assumes an important role in Kantian sources studies, particularly inquiries related to the terminological background of *Transzendentalphilosophie*. This book belongs to a research ambit which can be traced back to the works of Giorgio Tonelli and Norbert Hinske, both of whom hypothesized a correlation between Kant and German Aristotelianism. For a long time, this view was quite uncommon in light of a significant lack of real historiographical evidence. However, this hypothesis has recently been confirmed thanks to the publication of the *Vorlesungsverzeichnisse der Universität Königsberg* by Riccardo Pozzo and Michael Oberhausen.¹⁰ Based on an examination of the teaching program of the University of Königsberg, it is clear that Aristotelianism had not disappeared from the academic environment in which Kant began his studies. Franz Albert Aepinus's Aristotelian treatise, the *Introductio in philosophiam* (1714), was still being taught in the *Academia Albertina* during Kant's time, at the very least indirectly. In particular, the title given to the metaphysical section of Aepinus's work, *Philosophia transcendentalis*, supports the idea of speculative continuity. Thus, Tommasi presents new historiographical evidence by analyzing certain features of both the historical roots of the term 'transcendental' in a strict sense and the many issues that it implies. These discoveries support the premise that there is continuity between the Scholastic and the Kantian use of the term 'transcendental' as regards the theoretical paradox of necessary, though impossible, transcendence of the categorical ambit.

The first chapter treats the history of the word 'transcendental'. This notion is first found in the context of Scholasticism as *transcendens/transcendentia*, the transcendentals being the most general predicates of things and also divine names. It should be noted, however, that there is no textual evidence that the term *transcendentalis* was ever used in the Middle Ages. In fact, the appearance of the term in medieval texts is due to modern editors rather than the original authors themselves. In the sixteenth century, Suárez used the terms *transcendens* and *transcendentalis* as synonyms. As Jan Aertsen¹¹ suggests in his work, however, its exact origin remains unknown. It was probably coined according to the analogy with the term *praedicamentalis* by virtue of the ambivalence within the term *transcendens*. Thus, Tommasi highlights some key aspects of the 'transcendental' notion behind Kant's decision to adopt this Scholastic term via German Aristotelianism. The first aspect is strongly related to the domain of predication and therefore of *analogia entis*. One

¹⁰ M. OBERHAUSEN und R. POZZO (Hrsg.), *Vorlesungsverzeichnisse der Universität Königsberg (1720-1804)*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, frommann-holzboog, 1999.

¹¹ J.A. AERTSEN, 'Transcendens-Transcendentalis. The Genealogy of a Philosophical Term', in: J. HAMESSE et C. STEEL (Éds), *L'élaboration du vocabulaire philosophique au Moyen Âge*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2000, pp. 241-255.

of the primary uses of the concept ‘transcendental’ is its grounding function in metaphysics, insofar that it speaks to the relation between the necessity of being with what is absolutely first. This can be proven by the fact that some adherents of German Aristotelianism, such as Scharf and Aepinus, use the term *philosophia transcendentalis* as a synonym for First Philosophy in order to underline the priority of philosophy over other disciplines. The second aspect of the notion of ‘transcendental’ is its proximity to a deep theoretical tension: *nomina transcendentia* are always related both to the commonness (*communissima*) and to the eminence (*prima*) of their content. In other words, ‘transcendental’ speaks to that which is formally predicated of every being, but which also transcends or goes beyond every being. The verb ‘to be’ represents the apex of this tension, as it can be both a syncategorematic term as well as an instrument of existential predication. ‘*Ens*’ is both an empty substrate predicable of everything as well as the foundation of all the intentional determinations, which denote real differences among beings. This twofold sense of “being” stands for the gap between predication and being that plays a decisive role in the Kantian metaphysical reflection. According to Tommasi, the effort to incorporate both the commonness of predication as well as the eminence of ‘transcending’ is the theoretical nucleus of the doctrine of the transcendentals and of the *analogia entis*. In the same way, the German thinkers of *Schulphilosophie* tried to preserve the universality and primacy of metaphysics by distinguishing between the *pars generalis* and the *pars specialis*. Thus, according to Tommasi, Transcendental Philosophy has its origins in a great strain between semantic and syntactical concerns, which sought a very frail solution through the doctrine of *analogia entis*.

The second chapter is an inquiry into different elements, which confirm Kant’s reliance on German Aristotelianism, first of all in the distinction between ‘analytic’ and ‘dialectic’. The most important historiographical piece of evidence in this regard is the appearance of an Aristotelian trait in the *Vorlesungsverzeichnisse der Universität Königsberg*. According to the university programme, the textbook used by Thomas Burckhard — professor of poetry in the *Academia Albertina* from the summer semester of 1720 to the winter semester of 1743/44 — was Aepinus’s *Introductio in philosophiam*. This time frame partially coincides with the young Kant’s presence in the *Albertina* (although there are certain historical incongruities that the author does not hesitate to point out), making it likely that a student of *Albertina* in the 1740s could have easily come into contact with the *philosophia transcendentalis sive metaphysica*. According to Tommasi, there are three general hypotheses, all of which suggest the presence of Aristotelianism in the academic environment of the time. First of all, the young Kant could have heard Burckhard speaking explicitly about Aepinus’s work. Secondly, Kant could have attended Burckhard’s classes without a direct reference to Aepinus’s thought. Finally, even if he had not personally followed Burckhard, Kant could have found the *philosophia transcendentalis* circulating among students or, at least Aepinus’s books might have been in the Königsberg library. Beyond these historiographical elements, Tommasi points out

that almost all of the traditions, which incorporate the notion of 'transcendental' in eighteenth century Germany, can be found in Aepinus's thought. Aepinus employs certain terms, such as 'categories', 'scientific syllogism', 'antithesis' and 'paralogism', which Kant uses in the *Critique of Pure Reason* either with an identical or very similar technical meaning, as Tonelli¹² suggested to point out Aristotelian language in Kant. However, the most considerable element is the division of logic into analytic (about truth) and dialectic (about the probable). This represents the primary correlation between Kant and the Aristotelian tradition. In rejecting radical scepticism, Aepinus flatly separates the form of knowledge from the matter, according to a perspective, which Kant would later employ to specify a general criterion of truth lacking any content. According to Kant, the question of the transcendental foundation of truth is, first and foremost, a comparison between the doctrine of *adaequatio* and its inner limitations. The *adaequatio* cannot really assure heterogeneity between the action and the subject of knowledge and produces a circular relationship between the being and the intellect; that is, between what transcends and what adequately knows. Therefore, it is precisely this division between the form and the matter of knowledge that allows one to go beyond the criterion of truth as *adaequatio*. This allows for a methodological choice between purely formal knowledge and material knowledge.

The third chapter analyses the dialectic as the logic of the probable and as *ars disputandi*, another element favoring the hypothesis of a connection between Kant and the Scholastic tradition. Again, Burckhard made this possible, insofar that he devoted himself to teaching the so-called *collegium dialectico-analyticum* along with the *disputatorium*. According to the Scholastic Aristotelian paradigm, dialectic, which analyses the probable, proceeds by debates, but, in that way, risks devolving into skepticism and sophism. The achievement of Kant's transcendental dialectic, then, is the use of this logic of debates in order to arrive at a general criterion of truth. The demand for a universal foundation can already be found in Scharf's *Processus disputandi* and the *Institutiones logicae*, but the most interesting reference is again to Aepinus. According to Tommasi, in spite of a gradual abandonment of Aristotelianism during the eighteenth century, for Aepinus, the *ars disputandi* still plays an important role. However, the ambiguity according to which dialectic was subordinated to analytic appeared while debates were still being placed in the analytic framework. Besides the need to attribute the logic of the probable to the incontrovertibility of analytic, this ambiguity recalls the procedure in the matter of the transcendental and analogical understanding of being. The relation between analytic and dialectic is equally ambiguous, because it produces circular reasoning: on the one hand dialectic is methodologically subordinated to analytic, while on the other hand, analytic, by reason of its formality, cannot omit material premises. In other words, in order to resolve debates, it is necessary to have preliminary

¹² G. TONELLI, 'Das Wiederaufleben der deutsch-aristotelischen Terminologie bei Kant während der Entstehung der KrV', *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 9/1964, pp. 233-242.

definitions, but identifying these definitions should be outcome of the debates themselves. Thus, certain definitions should refer to an antepredicative level, but, keeping in mind the problem of *antepredicamenta*, the analogy and the transcendental seem to show the non-transcendentality of the predication level and, at the same time, the need to give it an external foundation.

The fourth chapter engages with the Kantian theory of reality and language, which again involves the inherent tension in the doctrine of the transcendentals against an unbridgeable gap between being and predication. Tommasi adds a further element confirming the connection between Kant and Scholasticism, dealing with Michael Piccart's *Isagoge in lectionem Aristotelis* (1605). Kant probably never knew this work directly, but many annotations in the *Nachlass* of the pre-critical period and in the *Deutlichkeit* (1764) suggest a significant influence of this exponent of the School of Altdorf. By outlining features of this School's tradition, Tommasi highlights their distinction between dialectic and analytic, which, unlike Aepinus, is understood as a radical separation between logic as *ars disputandi* addressed to everyone (exoteric philosophy) and scientific logic, which is strictly for scholars (acroamatic philosophy). Kant recalls and develops several main aspects of the *philosophia altdorfina*. First of all, Tommasi quotes the definition of mathematics as a procession from words to real things and those of philosophy — in reverse — as a procession from real things to words. For Kant, this means that philosophy, unlike mathematics, can never bypass ordinary language, which continually has to be clarified, right up to primary terms (the primacy of syntax). Secondly, Kant criticizes the possibility that language operates mathematically, in an argument specifically directed at Aepinus's pupil J.G. Darjes, who supported the idea that philosophy is an *ars characteristicam combinatoriam*.

In the last chapter, Tommasi demonstrates the cohesiveness of his arguments, by resolving all of the tensions in the Transcendental *I*, the climax of Kant's reflection. The new *nomen transcendens*, which lacks any content as a syncategorematic term, replaces the being, analogically understood, and resolves the tension inside the *analogia entis*, by conveying the gap between the categorical level of being and the being in itself, which is unattainable. The *I* is on another qualitative level than the predication altogether. Because of its lack of semantic signification, it is the foundation and the limit of the predication and it guarantees the excess of reality compared to thought. The antepredicative level, being merely functional and formal, is totally unfastened from being and placed before the *dictum* as its condition of possibility. Being, then, only becomes a manner of judgment as there is now no external foundation to such a categorical domain. Therefore, every judgment is always set on a modalised level, as it is connected to the different determinations of "*est*" (of the copula), which are always necessarily combined with their temporal determination. According to Tommasi, the founding aspect and the limiting aspect form a whole. The establishment of the semantic aspect is possible only in the immanence of predication, whose conditions of possibility are guaranteed by the Transcendental *I* as a unifying function. However, reference to the *I* involves the

difficulty of placing the analogy within logic. The trouble is that Kant defines induction and analogy as inferential proceedings, which do not properly belong to logic, without offering another position. For Kant, analogy is the instrument of the logic of discovery, as it can guarantee the growth of knowledge. In the *Critique of Judgment*, analogy assumes an even more important role of mediation between heterogeneous ambits, namely between the intuitive (form) and the discursive (matter). It is interesting to note that symbolic knowledge (i.e. analogical) is a part of intuitive knowledge, which is opposed to discursive knowledge and its working by concepts. Drawing back the analogy to a new level, Tommasi achieves his primary aim: describing the main features of the passage from traditional metaphysics, grounded on the doctrine of *analogia entis*, and Kantianism as tracing an analogy between these two ambits. In this way, the second part of the subtitle of Tommasi's work is intentionally ambiguous.

Alice RAGNI