

An Argument for the Existence of God by Bolzano.  
An Analysis with a Distinction  
between *Menge* and *Inbegriff*

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**Abstract**

Bernard Bolzano is the author of a text considered by him as an argument for the existence of God, originally published in the "Lehrbuch der Religionwissenschaft" (1834). His disquisition was formalized by H. Ganthaler and P. Simons in 1987 who based their approach on the well-known set theoretical interpretation of Bolzano's idea of multiplicity. The authors formulated a theory expressed in set theoretical language extended by some specific terms and constructed a proof as a formalization of the reasoning given by Bolzano. A problematic aspect of the proposal of Ganthaler and Simons is that it passes over the distinction of two different types of multiplicities which enable to point some interesting formal and material details of Bolzano's revised argumentation. In the frame of the presented proposal we invent two special meanings of Bolzano's notion of multiplicity: distributive and collective. In connection with this distinction we reconstruct the argument analyzed by Ganthaler and Simons and discuss the formal and philosophical power of the obtained formalization. The inspiration for our approach comes from the fact that Bolzano used in his text two terms *Menge* and *Inbegriff* in probably different meanings. The main aim of this proposal is to take a new look at Bolzano's argument providing some historical interpretation.

keywords: formal ontology, theodicy, argument for existence of God, Bernard Bolzano