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Introduction: Contours of Aristotelian Studies in the 19th Century

The 19th century witnessed a process of institutionalization in European philosophy which was to have unforeseen consequences continuing right into the present day.¹ With the changing of the shape and scope of faculties at the universities, the role of philosophy shifted ever more to a kind of introduction to science. At the same time, another process took place. Under the guiding influence of philosophy, the program of “education through science” would develop together with a new orientation of the sciences on the model of research.² The gradual establishment at the universities of the seminar (Wolf in Halle, Boeckh in Berlin) led to a professionalization of teaching and the creation of new forms of research organization. Through co-operation between the universities and the academies, new research projects emerged which would serve as models until the very end of the 19th century. Before the rise of the natural sciences and engineering, these projects were mostly within the realm of *Altertumswissenschaften* and Classical philology.³ The transformation of science and research emerged from the reform movement of New Humanism with which Fichte, Humboldt and Schleiermacher were associated, and which would take institutional form at the beginning of the 19th century with the founding of the Friedrich-Wilhelms University (currently Humboldt-Universität) in Berlin (1809–10).⁴

I Aristotelian Studies of the 19th Century

Aristotelian studies in the 19th century are part and parcel of these processes in the transformation of institutional forms and disciplinary boundaries, processes which in turn wrought changes in techniques and methods of research in the individual departments of scientific and academic research.⁵ The historiography of philosophy in the 18th century, from Johann Jakob Brucker to Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann and Wilhelm Traugott Krug, did little to nothing for the history of

¹ See Köhnke (1989), 832–846.

² See Turner (1980), 68–93.

³ See Horstmann (1978), 27–57.

⁴ See Nipperdey (2013); Osterhammel (2009); Schneider (1999); Schnädelbach (1983).

⁵ See Hartung (2011), 450–455.

Aristotelian philosophy. The 19th century, by contrast, has long been dubbed the “age of the Aristotle Renaissance”.⁶ In its first decades the renewal of Aristotelian studies would be exclusively the concern of *Altertumswissenschaft* and Classical philology (Barthold Georg Niebuhr and August Boeckh). The first document of the philological efforts, besides the massive *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (1825–1877), is the first modern critical edition of Aristotle’s complete works (1831), an edition which in many ways still informs the textual foundation of Aristotelian studies today. In 1817 the Prussian Academy of Sciences resolved, not least due to the advocacy of Schleiermacher, to undertake a critical edition of Aristotle’s works, a task entrusted to Immanuel Bekker and, as his assistant, Christian August Brandis.

Bekker would subsequently travel through Europe for three and a half years, transcribing manuscripts of Aristotle’s works in Paris, Oxford, Cambridge and Leyden; his Aristotle would set new standards for text-critical editions. On January 8, 1821, a Commission for the Edition of Aristotle’s works was established by the Prussian Academy, and to this committee Bekker, Boeckh, Philipp Karl Buttmann and Schleiermacher were appointed. In consequence of a resolution of the Commission, Bekker was hired for a period of six years, during which time he was to be devoted exclusively to the edition of Aristotle’s works.⁷ The edition would appear beginning in 1831, and the story of its development and reception reveal that this project was the place of several converging but distinct interests. It is clear, for one, that the philological work on Aristotelian texts was inseparable from philosophical system-thinking. In the texts of the time it can be seen that there is a systematic interest in Aristotle’s works, an interest motivated by “the idea of an essential confluence of historical appearances, a unity of the historical process”⁸ which was supposed to be represented in these works. The decisive factor for the success of the research program of Aristotelian studies consists less in systematic questions as in the implications of these studies for the politics of knowledge. The progress of philological research on Aristotle’s texts – for which Immanuel Bekker, in the eyes of his contemporaries, did so much⁹ – would develop in the further course of the century a dynamic of its own. This in turn led to the demand for an ever more exact under-

6 See Petersen (1913), 137.

7 Details concerning the planning and organization of the *Opera omnia Aristotelis* may be found in Wilt Aden Schröder (2009), 329–368, with information about the Akademie-Ausgabe, 345 ff. Originally, Schleiermacher asked August Boeckh to be the editor; it is unclear why Boeckh did not take up this task.

8 See Zeller (1910), 1–85; here: 52. See also Hartung (2010).

9 See Bonitz (1862), 3.

standing of texts *as* texts and of text-critical procedures, and bolstered the drive for innovative research in the sciences.

Philological foundational research and historiography of philosophy entered into a dynamic and symbiotic relationship. Whereas philologists from Christian August Brandis to Adolf Stahr and Hermann Bonitz were primarily concerned with the reconstruction and emendation of texts, the historiography of philosophy, building on this textual work, came to fruition with Heinrich Ritter and Eduard Zeller.¹⁰ In Zeller's *The Philosophy of the Greeks in its Historical Development* (1. Edition: 1844–1852), Aristotle emerges from Plato's shadow and takes a central place in the presentation of ancient philosophy. New foundational work in the history of philosophy offered, in turn, new impulses for large edition projects in the academies of science, projects for which Zeller but also Mommsen were responsible.¹¹ The return to Aristotle even becomes a sort of political program.¹² These strands of Aristotle reception and the complex projects which they helped to form can be understood in terms of a project of reconstructing a concept of philosophy for all branches of the sciences, of making an "Aristotelian worldview" (Franz Brentano) a basic model for the knowledge of reality.

Due to its intensity and many facets in philology, historiography of philosophy and the politics of knowledge and the academy, the Aristotelian Renaissance of the 19th century was a major research project, particularly in German-speaking lands. But this should not detract attention from the fact that there were major studies of Aristotle in other places at this time, for example in France, where Jean Gaspard Félix Ravaisson-Mollien would produce an important monograph on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.¹³ We may claim nonetheless that the developments in the German context summarized above were those which would mark the 19th century and give rise, in the history of Aristotle reception, to "Aristotelian discourses" (Gutschker 2002) in the 20th century, both on the Continent and in Anglo-American traditions of philosophy.¹⁴

By way of introduction, we will limit ourselves here to mentioning only a few salient aspects and examples of Aristotelian studies of the 19th century. First, the reception of Aristotle's *Categories* and doctrine of categories opens a productive controversy between "realist" and "antirealist" currents in philosophy after Hegel, not unlike some controversies which would later take place in analytic

¹⁰ See Hartung (2015), 9–24.

¹¹ See Rebenich (1997).

¹² See Hartung (2008), 297–319.

¹³ See Ravaisson (Paris 1837–1846). See also Aubenque (2004), 157–170.

¹⁴ See for example Gutschker (2002).

philosophy.¹⁵ Through the formative influence of Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg and his *Logical Investigations* (1840) and *History of the Doctrine of Categories* (1846), this strand of Aristotle reception also produced lively investigations into the relationship between logic, psychology and language. Second, the study of Aristotelian concepts also served as a basis for the larger systematic and historical investigation of the history of categories (from Bonitz and Teichmüller to Windelband, Lask and Hartmann), for the study of philosophical terminology (Eucken) and the dictionaries of philosophy (Lalande, Eisler, and others). Third, Aristotle's theory of the soul was revived (by Eucken, Dilthey, Brentano, and in the psychology of thinking) and would become an important option in the psychologism controversy around 1900. Fourth, in the debate concerning the right reception and understanding of Darwin's biology as a scientific hypothesis, the option of a non-teleological understanding of nature plays a large role in the controversy concerning the conception of ends in nature which took place in the second half of the 19th century.¹⁶ This discussion would be pursued by Friedrich Albert Lange, Wilhelm Dilthey and Friedrich Paulsen, and continued into the 20th century, when a controversy between materialists on the one hand and neo-vitalist adherents of Aristotle (e.g. Hans Driesch) on the other would take place. It is amazing that Aristotle's philosophy, which already substantially formed the intellectual world in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period up to the 18th century, would experience such intense reception yet again in the 19th century. It is a desideratum of future research to analyse this fact with a view to the historical differences between these very different phases of Aristotle reception.

II Uses of Aristotelian Studies for Studying Aristotle Today

All of these aspects are important for understanding the modern formation of the historiography of (particularly: ancient) philosophy. Yet it is a distinguishing mark of at least some contemporary historiography of ancient philosophy to care rather little about history, ancient or otherwise. To correctly interpret an ancient philosophical text is, on this method of interpretation at least, to simply make the best philosophical sense out of the text, regardless of its context. The task of the interpreter is to defend an Aristotelian position, not to embed

¹⁵ See Beaney (2013), 30–60.

¹⁶ See Hartung (2003), 171–191.

it historically. Contemporary philosophical exegesis of ancient texts bears little resemblance to that practiced in the 19th century in another way. Then, much effort then was spent on showing the contours of ancient philosophy and particularly Aristotle as some organic whole. The project of showing the unity and coherence of the Aristotelian corpus and particular works within it was a perpetual occupation of Aristotle interpreters in the 19th century, one which found its expression at the outset of the 20th century in Werner Jaeger's "foundation" for the history of Aristotle's development.¹⁷ Today, the developmental approach is largely eschewed, and the attempt at integrating Aristotle's works as wholes is seldom undertaken.¹⁸ What, then, can we learn from this history of Aristotelianism in the 19th century for the purposes of our current exegetic practice in work on ancient philosophy?

One important thing we can learn is how Aristotle and other ancient philosophers became interlocutors in philosophical discussions quite generally in the form of an Aristotelian point of view, while *at the same time* being understood historically – a "stereo" setting which is seldom found in contemporary practices of interpretation. By studying the way that Aristotelian positions were constructed and defended in the 19th century, we may witness a mode of interpretation from which much remains to be learned. But we can also learn the history of how Aristotle and his texts were involved as witnesses (and sometimes defendants) in a whole range of controversies and discussions which, in turn, would determine the further history of Aristotle reception. The contributions to this volume have tales to tell in this regard; here we will briefly summarize them with a view to the specific way in which the 19th century itself, with its various agendas and controversies, formed the Aristotle we have today.

The obvious place to begin the story of the philosophical reception of Aristotle in the German 19th century is Kant, who laid the ground not just for much of German philosophy in the 19th Century, but for approaches to philosophy's past. The bifurcated reception of Aristotle – as logician *or* metaphysician (Hegel), and, from Hegel to Schelling, as two very different metaphysicians – was possible because of an assumption that logic needed to be subjected to criticism upon the basis of metaphysical theorizing, an assumption that was widespread in German-language philosophy due to Kant's own insistence on this point. The place for resistance to this trend was thus precisely Aristotle's *Categories*. The interpretation of this text became the *locus* to pursue the further philo-

¹⁷ Jaeger (1923).

¹⁸ Stephen Menn's monumental interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as a whole can be seen in this respect as an exception and a return to earlier models of scholarship.

sophical aim of defending logic against an epistemological recalibration of concepts such as that found in the transcendental and metaphysical deductions of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. As Colin Guthrie King argues, this was the ultimate philosophical ambition of Adolf Trendelenburg's interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine of categories, but perhaps more important than this project itself were its derivatives: a model for the proper philosophical interpretation of an ancient philosophical text, and an exemplary show of how to defend such a text against an influential anachronistic interpretation.

Reforming logic from the conceptual level up is an ongoing philosophical preoccupation in the 19th century, and Aristotle is often centrally involved as the author who, by turns, either must be rejected or should be consulted. This was also true of Aristotle reception before 1850, of which our volume provides a few prominent examples in the cases of Hegel and Schelling. If Aristotle the "classical" logician was a favourite enemy of Hegel, Aristotle the metaphysician could be a Hegelian friend, as Valentin Pluder argues in his contribution on "Aristotle's and Hegel's Logic". And yet, as Thomas Buchheim shows in his contribution to this volume, the later Schelling would also develop a metaphysical affinity to an Aristotle quite different from Hegel's, an Aristotle "to whom more than anyone else the world owes the insight that only the individual exists". – Shifts in the reception of Aristotle can be indicative of deeper underlying philosophical differences, which can be tracked through such reception.

The neo-Kantian groundswell in philosophy in the latter half of the 19th century made the place of logic particularly contested. Gerald Hartung shows just how different projects could be while sharing the title of "Logical Investigations", a title which was used by such disparate figures as Trendelenburg, Husserl, Frege and Wittgenstein. For Hartung, the crucial background for the reception of Aristotle after 1840 is a battle for conceptually determining territory which is shared by philosophy and the nascent fields of psychology and linguistics. As in the case of Ostwald, the status of the logic implicit in language as used is at issue here: the philosophical analysis of grammar ultimately issues in a critique of language itself. This is a development to which Trendelenburg's Aristotelianism very much contributed, but which would develop a philosophical dynamic of its own in the second half of the 19th century. And yet even the programs of phenomenology and the re-grounding of logic through Frege and Russell do not end the pattern of a recourse to Aristotle. As Christian Pfeiffer shows, also at the beginning of the 20th century the Neo-Scholastic philosopher Joseph Geyser (1869–1948) would attempt to reform logic through return to an Aristotelian point of view, in full cognizance and explicit rejection of both the phenomenological approach and that of Frege and Russell. This can be seen (as Pfeiffer points out) as the persistence of a conception of logic which is

broad and includes what we would today call theory of language and ontology. The persistence of an Aristotelian point of view in this connection is thus, at the same time, an indication of the durability of the metaphysical and linguistic conception of logic, which would haunt philosophy even after Frege, Russell and even Husserl did their best to dispel at least its psychologistic remains.

Aristotle's perceived influence on the formation of concepts would also provide cause for opposition to the Stagirite. For at least one prominent German-language scientist and philosopher of science in the 19th century, Aristotle was the devil himself, and concepts derived from Aristotelian philosophy were the devil's work. Wilhelm Ostwald (1853–1932), the Nobel-prize winning chemist from Riga, cites Aristotle in connection with Mephistopheles in his *Vorlesungen über Naturphilosophie*: here he claims that it is Aristotle's remaining influence, his presence as “colleague”, which presents problems for the proper formation of scientific concepts.¹⁹ The alleged problem with Aristotle's modern presence in this respect is, interestingly, precisely what later interpreters such as G.E.L. Owen would praise: a tendency to take “ordinary usage as the basis for further conceptual refinement in philosophy” (Ziche, *infra*, 132). The problem with using ordinary usage as a guide to the most basic concepts and their *relata* is that these concepts are not sufficiently empirically informed, they are not flexible enough to accommodate new information on what there is. This critique, as Ziche shows, also tends to implicate Aristotle's syllogistic which, as most authors of the 19th century assume, is supposed to be based on the metaphysical structure expressed in the *Categories*.

It is particularly interesting to see how Aristotle's own theory of intellect was used as a resource by Franz Brentano, whose Aristotelianism was not the less sophisticated for being frankly partisan and programmatic. Dale Jacquette argues that Brentano's *Habilitationsschrift* on Aristotle's theory of *nous poietikos* would provide a lasting systematic contribution to a precise problem in the theory of mind: the problem of how the mind generates abstractions from subjectively experienced sense impression and perceptions. One of the surprising results of studying Brentano's work in this connection is the manner in which his interpretation of Aristotle engages mind-theoretical themes and assumptions from British Empiricism, all while defending Aristotelian metaphysics against such a tradition. The inevitable tensions of this interpretation are ultimately the price Brentano has to pay for maintaining Aristotelian positions on certain definitively post-Aristotelian questions in the theory of mind.

¹⁹ See Paul Ziche, “‘Aristoteles und Mephistopheles’ – Debates about the Formation of Scientific Concepts in the 19th Century”, pages 131–148, below.

Perhaps one of the more exotic cases in the history of the reception of Aristotle in the 19th century is discussed in Christof Rapp's contribution on Georg von Hertling as an interpreter of Aristotle. Von Hertling, a prominent member of the Catholic Centre Party (and a relation of Franz Brentano), would go on, after studying with Trendelenburg and writing his dissertation on Aristotle's notion of the one, to ultimately become a leading member of the German Reichstag. Toward the end of his life he became Chancellor of the German Reich, a post he held for less than one year before resigning it in protest against the introduction of democratic reforms (he was a monarchist). Von Hertling's reception and interpretation of Aristotle is interesting not only because of the theory of individual forms which he attributed to the author of the *Metaphysics* (a perpetual issue of contention among Aristotelians), but also for the confessional and political debates in which his interpretation of Aristotle's texts played a role – notably on the topic of the immortality of the human soul.

In his contribution on Trendelenburg's critique of Kantian ethics through an Aristotelian lens, Philipp Brüllmann offers a critical appraisal of Trendelenburg's attempt, well before the virtue ethics of the 20th century, to make Aristotelian ethics a viable alternative to Kant's deontological theory. The difficulty in Trendelenburg's interpretation, as Brüllmann argues, is that he makes Aristotle's ethics out to be precisely what most interpreters think it is not: an ethics based on principles. The Kantian assumptions of what a proper theory of morality must involve would seem, in this case at least, to hold sway even when one is using Aristotle to criticize Kant (as if to say Aristotle were the better Kantian). Still, Trendelenburg's attempt to rehabilitate Aristotle's ethics may serve as an early example of what would later become a larger philosophical movement in English-language philosophy.

In his study of Ernst Havet's rehabilitation of Aristotle's rhetoric in post-revolutionary France, Denis Thouard explains how Aristotelian texts would be appropriated in another way. In post-revolutionary France, Victor Hugo echoed the sentiments of many in declaring a "war on rhetoric" and in particular on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. This, Thouard argues, was part of a levelling of discourse which was meant to inculcate truthfulness and eliminate power differentials tied to variations in the power to persuade: an ambitious program tied to the ideals of the French Revolution. Tracing the fate of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and the theory of rhetoric from Romanticism to Positivism in French literary theory and culture in the long 19th century, Thouard localizes the currents and movements which determined the reception of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in a wider cultural context.

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