

Péter András Varga
The ink and the spirit

Marginal notes on an approach to the philosophy of the history
of philosophy and metaphilosophy

It is fascinating to observe that present-day philosophy in Hungary is simultaneously characterized by a strong interest in metaphilosophy (i.e., the philosophy of philosophy) and a pervasive tacit disinterest in historical philosophizing (i.e., doing philosophy by the history of philosophy). This is all the more remarkable, since the last period of philosophy in Hungary before the watershed moment of regime change in 1989 is customarily described by reference to a “historical turn”, insofar as the apparently non-ideological pursuit of the history of philosophy allowed for higher degrees of intellectual freedom. In the present essay, I briefly survey some recent developments and cultural phenomena in contemporary Hungarian philosophy against the backdrop of the classical typology of problems in philosophy of the history of philosophy (as exemplified by, inter alia, G. W. F. Hegel, W. Windelband, W. Dilthey). It is hoped that the present essay could deepen our sensitivity towards the papers included in the present journal issue, which originated from an eponymous conference organized in late 2019 (without wishing to imperialistically monopolize them in the service of a certain understanding of philosophy and its relationship to its historicity and materiality). Finally, it must be mentioned as a sorrowful example of the latter aspect that the present paper by István M. Fehér constitutes one of the last, if not the very last text fully elaborated by him before his untimely death on June 17, 2021.

Keywords: philosophy of the history of philosophy, metaphilosophy, contemporary philosophy in Hungary, Balázs M. Mezei, János Tózsér, models of the history of philosophy, *philosophia perennis*

Balázs Mezei:
Creation of Canon as a Philosophical Task

In what follows I investigate the central problem of the creation of canons in the history of ideas as well as in philosophy. The creation of a canon is indeed a philosophical task which cannot be arbitrary but must be rooted in the genuine nature of thinking. Such a nature entails not only a certain list of authors and works, but more importantly the systemic nature of thinking as such, an intrinsic systematization that must be thoroughly studied, understood and explained. That is the main reason why the *prima facie* uncomplicated problem of the creation of a canon in philosophy proves to be the fundamental philosophical question, a question that is approached here not only from the perspective of the history of art or the sciences or philosophical thinking, but rather and most importantly from the dimension of originality or newness as the central power in any kind of canonical thinking in philosophy.

Keywords: History of philosophy, history of arts, canon, canonicity, originality, newness, Miklos Vető

Béla Mester:
Reconstructions in Philosophical Historiography,
Editions of Complete Works, and the Sources

A Case Study on the Construction of the Authorial Self
in the History of Philosophy

Philosophical historiographies often use a hidden presupposition that history of philosophy consists of *series of separate œuvres of philosophical authors*. Methodologies of the historiography of philosophy based on this common presupposition usually intend to (re)construct complete philosophical systems from the papers of the œuvres, but have a blind spot toward the reconstruction of *debates and controversies* of the philosophical past; what are more interesting and more relevant in the historical understanding of philosophy, in many cases. An often observable naivety within the framework of the same methodology that the historian of philosophy takes the *edition of complete works* of a classic as *given data*, found in the nature, and disregards the circumstances of the publication

process, including a tendency toward a posthumous system-making by the disciples and editors. The present paper offers examples for these impasses of the historiography of philosophy, from the history of the Hungarian thought. They are focussed on two important controversies of the 19th-century Hungarian philosophy, namely the *Controversy on Kant* (1792–1822), with its protagonists József Rozgonyi and István Márton, and the debate between the Hungarian followers of Hegel and the Hungarian common sense philosophers in the 1850s; the most referred authors are here János Erdélyi, Gusztáv Szontagh, and János Hetényi.

Keywords: common sense, János Erdélyi, Hegelianism, János Hetényi, Controversy on Kant, István Márton, Gusztáv Szontagh, József Rozgonyi

Péter András Varga: The materiality and history of philosophy

Lessons of an obscure chapter from the history of philosophy
in Hungary (the genesis of Cyrill Horváth's philosophical system
“fully elaborated in manuscript form”)

In the wake of G. W. F. Hegel's claim that the “medium” of the history of philosophy is “neither canvas, paper, marble, nor representation or memorial” (trans. by E. S. Haldane); the history of philosophy is often conceived as a bodiless dynamic entity, devoid of any materiality. As a counterweight to this widespread diffuse idea, the aim of the present paper is to develop a case study in the history of nineteenth century Hungarian philosophy in order to highlight the extent to which the material aspect of the history of philosophy, namely the idea of philosophical manuscript, could be inextricably interwoven in systematic philosophy.

The Piarist monk Cyrill Horváth (1804–1884) was a long-standing member of the nascent Hungarian Academy of Sciences and an influential professor of philosophy at the University of Budapest (for a while, Horváth had been the only professor of philosophy in Hungary). Yet, he is remembered, if at all, by the historians of philosophy in Hungary mainly because he failed to deliver on the promise of producing a philosophical system his contemporaries widely expected of him to develop. Based on a wide range of ephemeral historical sources from administrative correspondence and research reports to newspapers and lexicons, I aim to reconstruct the complex interplay between internal and external, philosophical and non-philosophical ideas that gave rise to this almost

unique non-posthumous fame of having produced a philosophical system – “fully elaborated in manuscript form,” yet not available to anyone –, an expectation that understandably turned into the opposite immediately upon Horváth’s death.

I generally believe that Cyrill Horváth’s philosophical merits are underestimated (especially if assessed against the backdrop of the general course of post-Hegelian academic philosophy, respectively the history of confessional Catholic philosophy before the sweeping rise of Neo-Thomism). Yet, the results of the present paper point toward another aspect of Horváth’s modern relevance: namely his contemporaneous reception history (*Rezeptionsgeschichte*) could epitomize the materiality of the history of philosophy. All the more so, since – in a further twist to Horváth’s story – his literary estates (*Nachlass*) turn out to be one of the richest among those preserved from history of philosophy in Hungary in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (cf. the paper by Barnabás Székér in the present journal issue). It is only that none of Horváth’s philosophical manuscripts is entitled *My Philosophical System* and postfixed with an *Index of Subjects* (as it was strangely expected by his contemporaries).

Keywords: Cyrill Horváth (1804–1884), history of philosophy in Hungary, post-Hegelian academic philosophy, Christian Martin Julius Frauenstädt (1813–1879), reception history, philosophical manuscripts, philosophy of the history of philosophy, metaphilosophy

Gábor Boros: Spinoza’s mind and the ink of the Holy Inquisition

Considerations about the new critical edition of Spinoza’s *Ethics*

In 2020, there appeared the new critical edition of Spinoza’s *Ethics*. The Latin text had largely been established by the late Dutch neo-Latin scholar F. Akkerman and his disciple and colleague P. Steenbakkers whereas the French translation is the work of the doyen of the today French Spinoza-scholars P.-F. Moreau, who made use of the unfinished translation of J.-M. Beyssade and the collaboration of A. Matheron – both excellent dix-septiemists departed before the publication of the volume. The texts and the *apparatus* had been composed with unrivalled philological *acribia*. However, the sensational novelty of the edition is that the editors systematically evaluated and made use of the hand-written copy of the

Ethics that was found in the Vatican Library in 2010 among the documents from the archives of the Holy Inquisition.

On the one hand, the paper presents the decisions of the editors concerning the architecture of the volume, the texts and the *apparatus*, and on the other hand, it summarises the circumstances of the genesis and the history of the copy. It gladly draws the attention to the development that the new Hungarian translation of the *Ethics* is already underway and it is going to be based on this new edition similarly to the *Theological-political treatise* that was made following its new critical edition in the same French series.

Keywords: Spinoza's Ethics, Vatican manuscript, P.-F. Moreau, P. Steenbakkers, N. Steno, E. W. von Tschirnhaus

József Simon: The completeness of mind

A case study on a debate concerning Cartesianism in Transylvania (1685)

The present paper examines some sources relating Cartesian philosophy in Transylvania. János Pósaázi (?–1686) published his *Syllabus* (Cluj 1685) as a censure of 44 propositions of Johannes Coccejus' theology and 32 propositions of René Descartes's philosophy. Transylvanian followers of Coccejus and Descartes formulated an answer to Pósaázi's criticism; the defense of the Cartesian propositions bears the title *Vinidicae Assertionum Cartesianarum* [...]. The latter text was never edited and has been handed down to us only in one manuscript copy located today at the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The paper identifies István Pataki (ca. 1640–1693) as the author of the *Vindiciae* and investigates the Cartesian argument for the real distinction of mind from pure conceivability as developed by him.

Keywords: Descartes, real distinction of mind, conceivability, body-mind union, Hungarian Cartesianism

István Fehér M.:
Texts, Editions, Complete Editions

Philological-Hermeneutical Problems of Edition Science:
 The Case of Hegel

In the case of text editions, or critical editions of texts handed down by classical authors, philology seems to precede, and thus to have a priority over, hermeneutics. On the traditional (positivistic) view, first comes the reconstruction of texts through critical examination of the sources and the different text variants in order to establish an authentic, reliable, possibly canonical version; then follows, in a second step, the interpretation of the texts thus established. Interpretation is supposed to need something as a solid “Textgrundlage” so as to set itself into motion; it is thus seen to be parasitic upon pre-given philological work. Although this description of the way scholarly work is usually done in the humanities may be not wholly untrue, more often than not it does not hold, for the establishing and editing of texts is itself not something performed in a space entirely exempt from, and free of, pre-understanding and interpretation. The following paper illustrates this thesis through reference to Hegel and the edition of his work. It is not only the case that the edition of Hegel’s works preceded and affected the interpretations of his thought; the opposite is not less true: Hegel’s disciples edited and published Hegel’s texts on the basis of their image, or interpretation, of Hegel. In this paper I will confine discussion to the edition of Hegel’s work and its history as initiated by Hegel’s disciples.

Keywords: text, edition, complete edition, philology, hermeneutics

Gábor Gángó:
Political scientist or intellectual?

József Eötvös’s international profile

In this study, I seek to answer the question: to what extent can József Eötvös’s most significant work, the *Dominant Ideas*, be considered as a deed of an intellectual rather than a scholarly work in political science. Then I ponder the consequences of this new perspective for other aspects of Eötvös’s *œuvre*. Finally, I formulate some remarks concerning the

extensibility of this direction of research on 19th-century intellectual history in Hungary.

Keywords: József Eötvös, intellectuals, politics, public sphere, Frankfurt National Assembly

Deodáth Zuh: Primary, secondary, and tertiary sources

Correspondent roots of relevant works and the practice of theory-writing

This paper aims at having a closer look at the role of archival sources in starting a research in the history of philosophy as a part of intellectual history. The resolute effect of ‘archival gleanings’ has become some kind of triviality by dint of the growing respect paid to the history of ideas. Secondary (correspondences, manuscripts, diary remarks) and tertiary sources (posters, newsreels, and newspaper reports) are now basic compounds of an effort to reconstruct a network of concepts and thoughts. But perusing these sources has an even greater effect on the rational reconstruction of thoughts for theory-makers feel generally freer to express themselves in genres far from the official venues of academic writing. Theorists also frequently form an opinion on what they are doing. These meta-reflections are essential to understanding the theories made public in essays and treatises. In the following, I will bring some arguments to prove that secondary and tertiary sources are often the proper venues of making plain these so-called morals of theory-making. To cash out these arguments I will make several remarks on my own research to Hungarian intellectual history and, foremost, to Arnold Hauser’s theoretically informed social history of art.

Keywords: secondary and tertiary sources, theory-making, values and morals, rational reconstruction, professional agenda, Arnold Hauser

Barnabás Szekér:
“...merely notices and studies?”

The manuscript legacy of Cyrill Horváth SchP (1804–1884)
 from the archivist’s point of view

Cyrill Horváth was a Piarist religious priest, a university professor in Pest and a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His memory includes in a special way the fact that he did not publish a regular summary of his philosophy in his life, thus after his death his manuscript legacy was searched up for it, however, in vain. In the first part of the study, we analyse this post-mortem examination of his manuscript legacy on the basis of a previously untapped source, providing additions to how Imre Pauer, who formed the image of Cyrill Horváth as a “system-less” philosopher, relied on Horváth’s fellow-Piarists in collecting material. The second part presents the fate of the legacy in the 20th century and its recent archival arrangement.

Keywords: Cyrill Horváth, legacy, historical memory, archives, Piarist Order

Péter Turbucz:
Bernhard Alexander and the university investigations

In the light of the “Alexander Files” and defensive letters
 of the Eötvös Loránd University Archives

In my article, I process the history of university investigations conducted against the philosopher Bernhard Alexander (1850–1927) in 1919–1920, using sources preserved in the University Archives of Eötvös Loránd University. In my study, I am quoting in its entirety the letters written by the professor on this subject

Keywords: 1919, persecution of the intelligentsia, University of Budapest, justificative committee procedure, disciplinary investigation

Miklós Mesterházi:
 “The Time is out of Joint ...”
 “... O cursed spite ...”

This paper is a kind of plaidoyer for the indispensability of the *Lose Blätter* (loose sheets) – letters, fragments, unpublished or in another form published writings etc. – for the indispensability of papers, which cannot find their way to the *Collected* or *Selected Works*, and have only in *Critical Editions* their proper place. Specifically, this paper is a plaidoyer for the indispensability of a critical edition (or at least of a well edited *Collected Works*) of Lukács’s writings and of the preparatory work on it – formerly the central task of the now closed Lukács Archives, using some episodes of Lukács’s life and work as arguments, where without a reliable text edition there is no chance to get our editorial, biographical problems and problems of interpretation with Lukács right. All what is said in this paper, is said being aware of the fact, that the fate of an author (the fate of editions) depends on the mental state of the posterity – that is, all what is said, is perhaps said in vain.

Keywords: editorial problems with Lukács, the known and the unknown Lukács, Lukács and his Party, Lukács and the GDR, the hidden history of Lukács’s years in Moscow, Lukács and his posterity

Bettina Szabados:
 The circumstances of the career plans of Géza Révész
 and György Lukács in Germany in the light of their
 correspondence and contemporary documents

What if György Lukács stays a professor in Heidelberg? Could he dedicate himself to systematic scientific work? The theoretical question “What if...?” of the counterfactual history of philosophy seems paradox because it does not predict an alternative future, but it expands the circumstances of the historical events, which defines the direction of the future. The decision of György Lukács to become a Marxist has been defined by such external and internal factors like his philosophical persuasion, the unsuccessful habilitation, the xenophobia and the intellectual milieu at the turn of the century. His choices become much clearer when we compare his life path to Géza Révész. Géza Révész, the outstanding pioneer of the experimental

psychology was one of the contemporaries of Lukács, they shared the same intellectual circle, however their intellectual development was the opposite. In this paper I try to outline the circumstances of the career plans György Lukács and Géza Révész in the light of their correspondence in order to understand their possibilities at the turn of the 20th century.

Keywords: 20th century Hungarian and German history of philosophy, alternate history, Géza Révész, György Lukács, Max Weber, Franz Brentano, Great War

László Gergely Szücs

Philosophical Construction in the Post-Metaphysical Age

The Focal Points of Agnes Heller's oeuvre

After the death of the well-known Hungarian philosopher Agnes Heller the questions of how we can unfold the history of Heller's oeuvre in a consolidated narrative and how we can find its place in the history of philosophy can be raised. To draw up some possible answers, first I focus on the methodological questions of two international monographies. I show that John Grumley identifies the main tensions of Agnes Heller's philosophy in his monography and points out how Heller resolves these in the main periods of her thinking. Lucy Jane Ward follows other methodology: she extends the interpretation of Ágnes Heller as a new-leftist philosopher of society and she analyzes her life-work in the context of her debates with the Marxist, new leftist, and post-Marxist social philosophers. I put emphasis on Heller's own monography on her philosophical oeuvre: *The history of my philosophy*. I argue that Heller's aim in this work is to demonstrate that a systematic philosophical construction is possible also in a "post-metaphysical age". I demonstrate that this work is dominated by a teleological point of view because of this specific aim. On the other hand, I also argue that it is not only this interpretation – according to which Heller was a "systematic philosopher" – that appears in this work but another picture of the philosopher is outlined as well: a philosopher who pursues a lifelong discussion with herself. I argue that the main topics and contradictions of this discussion with the self can also be regarded as an important subject matter of the historian who aims to unfold Heller's oeuvre in a monographic form.

Keywords: Ágnes Heller, social philosophy, history of philosophy, philosophical oeuvre, post-metaphysical age