HEGEL AND ARISTOTLE

Hegel is, arguably, the most difficult of all philosophers. To find a way through his thought, interpreters have usually approached him as though he were developing Kantian and Fichtean themes. This book is the first to demonstrate in a systematic way that it makes much more sense to view Hegel’s idealism in relation to the metaphysical and epistemological tradition stemming from Aristotle.

This book offers an account of Hegel’s idealism and in particular his notions of reason, subjectivity, and teleology, in light of Hegel’s interpretation, discussion, assimilation, and critique of Aristotle’s philosophy. It is the first systematic analysis comparing Hegelian and Aristotelian views of system and history; being, metaphysics, logic, and truth; nature and subjectivity; spirit, knowledge, and self-knowledge; ethics and politics. In addition, Hegel’s conception of Aristotle’s philosophy is contrasted with alternative conceptions typical of his time and ours.

No serious student of Hegel can afford to ignore this major new interpretation. Moreover, because it investigates with enormous erudition the relation between two giants of the Western philosophical tradition, this book will speak to a wider community of readers in such fields as history of philosophy and history of Aristotelianism, metaphysics and logic, philosophy of nature, psychology, ethics, and political science.

Alfredo Ferrarin is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Boston University.
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HEGEL AND ARISTOTLE

ALFREDO FERRARIN

Boston University
To my parents

Luciana Marchetti Ferrarin and Giuseppe Ferrarin
During the meal Goethe was comparatively quiet. No doubt so as not to disturb the free speech of his very voluble and logically penetrating guest, who elaborated upon himself in oddly complicated grammatical forms. An entirely novel terminology, a mode of expression overleaping itself, the peculiarly employed philosophical formulas of the ever more animated man in the course of his demonstrations – all this finally reduced Goethe to complete silence without the guest even noticing. The lady of the house likewise listened in silence, no doubt somewhat taken aback, and glanced at “father” – as she always called Goethe. After the meal had ended and the guest departed, Goethe asked his daughter: “Now did you like the man?” “Strange,” she replied, “I cannot tell whether he is brilliant or mad. He seems to me to be an unclear thinker.” Goethe smiled ironically. “Well, well, we just ate with the most famous of modern philosophers – Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.”

—From Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen
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I defended my doctoral dissertation at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa in 1990 and published it soon thereafter (*Hegel interprete di Aristotele*. Pisa: ETS 1990). Many friends and professors read my manuscript and helped me with their suggestions and criticisms at the time: from the members of my examining committee (Massimo Barale, Remo Bodei, Franco Chiereghin, Walter Leszl, Giuliano Marini, Adriaan Peperzak) to Claudio Cesa, Leo Lugarini, Vittorio Sainati, Alberto Calabrese, Stefano Fuselli, Alessandra Fussi, Vladimir Giacché, Andreas Kamp, John Protevi, Gaetano Rametta, Leonardo Samonà, and Giuseppe Varnier. I had also taken advantage of two DAAD fellowships allowing me to pursue my research in Germany, at the Hegel-Archiv in Bochum (1987–8) and at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München (1989–90). The conversations I had with Walter Jaeschke in Bochum and with Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Dieter Henrich in München were valuable and instructive.

However, I soon became dissatisfied with that work. My postdoctoral research at Pennsylvania State University (1990–2), and especially the work with Stanley Rosen and David Lachterman, urged me to reconsider my general approach to the relation between Aristotle and Hegel. After a few years, I decided to write a new book in English on the topic.

In this book I have used some of the philological and scholarly work of my 1990 research, especially the analysis of Hegel’s *Lectures* and unpublished manuscripts and the study of the Aristotle edition he used. But this book has a much broader scope, takes into account many more aspects of Hegel’s relation to Aristotle, and comes to more thorough, radical, and forceful conclusions.

I was helped in the writing of this book by several friends who kindly read the manuscript and provided their feedback and criticism. Klaus
Brinkmann, Dan Dahlstrom, Luca Illetterati, and Pierre Kerszberg read parts of the work and made useful remarks. Rémi Brague offered very valuable suggestions, as did the anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press. James Dodd read and edited the whole manuscript.

A special thanks to Ken Dove, who read an earlier version of this essay with a care, passion, and acumen that are rare. His comments were very sharp and helpful; most of the time they made it obvious to me that I had to rephrase my interpretation with greater clarity or rigor. I am afraid we still disagree on most of the substantial points he raised. I wish that once he makes his work public our divergences will be taken as a tribute to the richness and interest of a topic that philosophers and scholars have never examined systematically or taken seriously enough before.

I learned more from teaching the demanding, thoughtful, and keen graduate students at Boston University than in years of research. I have a deep gratitude to the students who took my classes on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (Fall 1995), Hegel’s *Encyclopædia* (Spring 1997), and Aristotle’s *De anima* (Fall 1998).

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ABBREVIATIONS


**PLATO**

**ARISTOTLE**
ARISTOTELOUS HAPANTA. *Opera, quaecunque hactenus extiterunt omnia*, by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam. Basil 1531 (2nd ed. 1539, 3rd ed. 1550).
ARISTOTELOUS TOU STAGEIRITOU TA SOZOMENA, new edition in Greek and Latin, from the library of Isaac Casauboni, Lugduni apud Laemarium, 1590.
*Aristotelis opera*, edited by the Royal Prussian Academy. 5 vols., Berlin 1831–70.

**Single Works**
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<td>F. A. Trendelenburg, Aristotelis De anima libri tres, Berlin 2nd ed. 1877.</td>
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<td>De anima transl., with introduction and notes by R. D. Hicks. Cambridge 1907.</td>
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<td>Aristotele, Dell’anima, select passages and commentaries by V. F. Allmayer, Firenze 1963.</td>
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De Mem.

De somn.

Eth. Nic.

De Motu anim.
Aristotle’s *De motu animalium*, text with transl., commentary, and interpretive essays by M. C. Nussbaum, Princeton 1978.

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL COMMENTARIES ON ARISTOTLE

PORPHYRIUS = *Porphyrii Isagoge et in Aristotelis categorias commentarium*, Greek commentaries on Aristotle, edited by A. Busse, Berolini 1887.

THEMISTIUS = *Paraphrasis in libros Aristotelis De anima*, Greek commentaries on Aristotle, vol. 5, edited by R. Heinze, Berolini 1899.


PHILOPONUS = Philoponi Ioannis *In Aristotelis De Anima Libros Commentaria*, edited by M. Hayduck, Greek commentaries on Aristotle, vol. 15, Berolini 1897.


STOICS
ABBREVIATIONS

PLOTINUS

PROCLUS
Procli Diadochi in primum Euclidis elementorum librum commentarii, edited by G. Friedlein, Leipzig 1873.

DESCARTES

PORT-ROYAL

SPINOZA

NEWTON
Sir Isaac Newton’s Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy, transl. by A. Motte in 1729; revised by F. Cajori, Berkeley 1946.

LEIBNIZ

WOLFF

KANT
KrV = Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Ak. vols. 3–4).
KU = Kritik der Urtheiskraft (Ak. vol. 5).
### Abbreviations

#### Fichte


#### Schelling


#### Humboldt


#### Histories of Philosophy prior to Hegel

- **Buhle** = *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie und einer kritischen Literatur derselben*, Göttingen 1796–1804.

#### Hegel


**Single Works and Translations:**


- **Dok.** = *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung*, edited by J. Hoffmeister, Stuttgart 1936.

- **Dissertatio** = *Dissertatio Philosophica de Orbitis Planetarum, in Ja 1: 347–401*, in the following editions:
  - **Dissertatio Philosophica de Orbitis Planetarum, Philosophische Erörterung über die Planetenbahn**, German transl., introduction, and commentary by W. Neuser, Weinheim 1986.

$\text{GuW} = \text{Glauben und Wissen}, (1802)$, in $\text{Jenaer Kritische Schriften}$, in $\text{GW} 4$, edited by H. Büchner and O. Pöggeler.

$\text{JSE I} = \text{Jenaer Systementwürfe I}$, in $\text{GW} 6$, edited by K. Düsing and H. Kimberle.

$\text{JSE II} = \text{Jenaer Systementwürfe II}$, in $\text{GW} 7$, edited by R. P. Horstmann and J. H. Trede.

$\text{JSE III} = \text{Jenaer Systementwürfe III}$, in $\text{GW} 8$, edited by R. P. Horstmann and J. H. Trede.

$\text{PhS} (= \text{W} 3) = \text{Phänomenologie des Geistes}; \text{Phenomenology of Spirit}$, translated by A. V. Miller, with analysis and Foreword by J. N. Findlay, Oxford 1977.

$\text{WL} = \text{Wissenschaft der Logik} (= \text{W} 5–6)$; $\text{SL} = \text{Hegel's Science of Logic}$, transl. by A. V. Miller, with Foreword by J. N. Findlay, London and New York 1969.


$\text{NS} = \text{Nürnberger Schriften} (\text{W} 4)$.

$\text{PhR} = \text{Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts} (\text{W} 7)$.

$\text{Knox} = \text{Hegel's Philosophy of Right}$, transl. with notes by T. M. Knox, Oxford 1952.


$\text{ENZA} = \text{Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1817), in JA 6, followed by § (number of section), A (Remark, Anmerkung), Z (oral addition, Zusatz).}$

$\text{ENZB} = \text{Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1827),}$ edited by W. Bonsiepen and H. C. Lucas (GW 19).

$\text{ENZC} = \text{Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften (W8–10).}$

$\text{Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830),}$ edited by F. Nicolin and O. Pöggeler, Hamburg 1959.
ABBREVIATIONS


BS = Berliner Schriften (= W 11).


VPhG = Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie (W 18–20).


VPhG = Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte (W 12).
ABBREVIATIONS


Verzeichniss = Verzeichniss der von dem Herrn Dr. Hegel und dem Herrn Dr. Seebeck hintergelassenen Buchsammlungen, section 1, Berlin 1832.