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ON EDITING ERNST CASSIRER'S UNPUBLISHED PAPERS : TECHNICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

Part 1 of the essay gives basic information about Ernst Cassirer's unpublished papers and a brief history of their transmission. Part 2 contains a description of the physical nature of Cassirer's papers, their organization and the general ideas guiding the plan of the edition. Part 3 examines the intellectual content of Cassirer's unpublished papers and the intellectual and historical circumstances when they were written. Particular attention is drawn to Cassirer's reception of and reaction to the Vienna Circle of Logical Positivism and his reaction to Heidegger's philosophy. The relationship between Cassirer's published and unpublished writings is also discussed. Attention is drawn to the breadth of topics found in the unpublished papers, which includes work on systematic philosophy, the history of philosophy, and the history of ideas. Part 4 deals with the dating, identification, and organization of the papers for the edition. Part 5 offers concluding remarks.

1. Background

Ernst Cassirer published much during his lifetime : original philosophical works on a variety of topics and writings on the history of philosophy[1]. At his death in 1945 in New York a large quantity of his writings remained unpublished. Most of them had been left behind in Sweden when he came to the United States in 1941, but a goodly number of the texts he had written in America also remained unpublished at his death[2]. His widow, Toni

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1. The largest bibliography of Cassirer's writings is : Walter EGGERS and Sigrid MAYER, *Ernst Cassirer : An Annotated Bibliography*, New York and London : Garland Publishing, 1988.

2. Cassirer left Göteborg for New York on May 20, 1941 ; his manuscripts were left behind in the care of his son Georg. As late as March 27, 1941 Cassirer was still uncertain about where to deposit his manuscripts. He wrote on that date to the Philosopher Åke Petzäll in Lund : «Die Frage der Bibliothek ist jetzt

Cassirer, visited Sweden in the Summer of 1946 and returned to New York with her husband's papers[3]. She intended to organize them with the help of émigré scholars and American friends of Cassirer[4]. Her letters to various scholars whom she wanted to have help organize the papers show that she was reticent about doing this job by herself[5]. She was unsuccessful in obtaining the help she needed, and so she limited her efforts to copying the titles of the manuscripts onto the covers of the packets into which they were bundled. That she was unsuccessful reflected neither upon her nor those whom she contacted, all of them persons in the middle of their own careers. The quantity and character of Cassirer's manuscripts is such that the time needed to organize and identify them far exceeded the resources Mrs. Cassirer could have expected anyone to invest.

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einigermassen geklärt; die Bücher werden in den Räumen der Högskolas untergebracht werden können. Schwieriger ist es für die fertigen, aber noch ungedruckten Manuskripte eine Vorsorge zu treffen». Cassirer's letter to Astrid and Åke Petzäll, Göteborg, March 27, 1941, is in the Lund University Library, Åke Petzäll private correspondence.

3. See Charles Hendel's «Preface» to Ernst CASSIRER's *The Problem of Knowledge*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1950, p. vii: «It was only after his [Cassirer's] death that the copy of the manuscript was obtained by Mrs. Cassirer on a visit to Sweden in 1946».

4. Toni Cassirer wrote from Göteborg in a letter to Theodor Litt dated July 12, 1946 about her plans for the future and adds: «Zuerst gehe ich jedenfalls nach New York zurück, wo ich für meines Mannes Nachlass wichtige Dinge zu ordnen habe und wo meine Tochter und Schwester leben und viele unserer Freunde, die meinem Manne gerade in letzter Zeit sehr nahe gestanden haben». The letter is in the Theodor Litt Archive, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf.

5. In a letter dated 24. April 1945 to Edgar Wind, Toni Cassirer writes: «Dass Sie mir sehr viel werden helfen und raten können ist sicher. Sie wissen ja selbst, wie gering meine wissenschaftlichen Fähigkeiten sind und es gibt viel zu entscheiden und zu ordnen». The letter belongs to Mrs. Margaret Wind, Oxford; it will be housed in the «Edgar Wind Papers» in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. In a letter from April 30, 1945 to Erwin Panofsky she writes: «Wind schreibt mir, dass Saxl Mitte Mai erwartet wird. Dann würden wir an die Ordnung des Nachlasses gehen. Ich allein kann es auch mit Hilfe der hiesigen Collegen meines Mannes nicht». This letter is in the «Erwin Panofsky Papers», Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. Finally, in a letter to Fritz Saxl from May 17, 1945 Toni Cassirer writes: «Ich weiss nicht, ob Sie schon hier sind und ob Sie [. . .] in Columbia [University] sein können, wo eine Trauerfeier für meinen Mann abgehalten wird. Auf alle Fälle brauche ich Sie dringend und bitte ich Sie mich so bald als möglich wissen zu lassen, wo Sie wann sind». The letter is found in the «Archives of the Warburg Institute», London. Saxl, who visited America in 1945 and 1946 as Director of the Warburg

2. *The Cassirer Papers*

Toni Cassirer died in New York on January 5, 1961. After her death Charles W. Hendel, who as chairman of Yale's philosophy department had been instrumental in bringing Ernst Cassirer to the United States, obtained his papers from the family and took them to Yale. They were kept — inaccessible — in the basement of Sterling Library[6]. A contract, signed on February 20, 1964 by a representative of Cassirer's heirs and the university, legally transferred the ownership of the papers and the literary rights to Yale University Press. With this, Cassirer's American publisher also became his literary executor. Today the papers are housed in Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library where they occupy 1141 folders in 59 Boxes, constituting 26.5 Linear Feet. About two thirds of this mass of papers consists of manuscripts of Cassirer's published works and the other third of unpublished materials: invited lectures, course lectures, and drafts for larger works, as well as research notes, a small collection of correspondence, and a few personal papers.

2.1. *The Cassirer Papers' Organization*

Cassirer had kept his manuscripts in an orderly condition. He wrote in a Latin hand, which is easy to read. He wrote on DIN-A-4 sheets, which he folded to make DIN-A-5 booklets in which he wrote on all four sides of the paper. He kept the booklets together, numbering them to create packets of booklets around which he usually wrapped a sheet to keep them together. These packets were then tied together with string or held together with rubber bands or (often) stored in old envelopes in which Cassirer had received mail. He usually wrote something on the outer sheets as well as on the envelopes to identify them. These identifications were sometimes cryptic, but they were clearly his. The identifica-

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Institute, could have had little time to visit with Toni Cassirer, let alone have been able to organize Cassirer's papers. This is evident from a letter Panofsky wrote to William Heckscher dated June 4, 1945, in which he complains that Saxl was too busy during his official travels in America to meet with him. The letter is in the Panofsky Collection in the «Archives of the History of Art», The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Los Angeles, California. Friends of Cassirer and the Cassirer family whom I interviewed knew of no attempts to order Cassirer's papers.

6. According to information from John Bacon and John E. Smith.

tions in Toni Cassirer's hand on the outside of some of the large packets or envelope were copied from her husband's titles on the inside. Sometimes numerous manuscripts were combined in larger packages, consisting of many hundreds of pages. These belonged together in some cases, in others they were of diverse content. Yale University Press had an inventory of the papers made in October 1965 by Dr. John Bacon, then a graduate student at Yale and now a faculty member at the University of Sydney in Australia. He numbered the packages as he found them, using red ballpoint. The numbering was not intended to have any significance regarding either the chronology or subject-matter of the manuscripts in the 219 packages, but it lets us be relatively sure of the state of the papers at Cassirer's death[7].

The actual contents of the papers, however, was still unknown. Even Charles Hendel conceded in a letter to me dated August 16, 1970 that he was himself unaware of what was actually in Cassirer's *Nachlaß*. It was not until Donald Verene (my teacher at the Pennsylvania State University in the early 1970s) inspected the Cassirer papers in 1972 that a scholar familiar with Cassirer's work was able to access the nature and significance of their contents. At his suggestion, the packets were all put into manila envelopes to prevent them from becoming disorganized. This was the state of the Cassirer papers when I first saw them in the Beinecke Library in 1973. By the time that Verene consulted the papers they had been moved to Yale's new Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, where they were kept as a "deposit" of Yale University Press. This meant that they were kept under proper climatic conditions but unaccessioned : neither archived in boxes, organized nor catalogued. In 1985 Yale University Press had a more detailed descriptive list of the manuscripts made by a graduate student of German history, Timothy Kircher. His list used Bacon's numbers ; he did not alter the organization of the papers themselves, but his list organized them according to content.

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7. According to John Bacon, who has kindly responded to my various letters, the manuscripts were «without recognizable order» in the basement of Yale's Sterling Library. Some of the manuscripts were in old envelopes, other were tied up with string or held together with rubber bands. Ultimately there were 221 packets ; the typescript of an essay on Pico della Mirandola (a Holograph of the essay was in envelope 79) was not numbered and later Charles Hendel contributed the manuscript of Cassirer's *Philosophie der Aufklärung* to the Beinecke collection.

On January 19, 1987 the Cassirer papers became the property of the Beinecke library (the literary rights remained the property of Yale University Press) and at the end of 1989 the process of archiving and cataloging the papers began. A catalogue was completed in the fall of 1991. The old numbering was (partially)[8] retained, in addition to the new folder numbering. The Cassirer papers were then organized alphabetically by title.

Donald Verene edited a group of Cassirer's unpublished English papers in a volume entitled *Symbol, Myth, and Culture*, which appeared in 1979[9]. The bulk of the unpublished materials, however, were in German; some larger English course lectures remained as well. It seemed clear that many of Cassirer's other unpublished papers should be edited and published as well. I had worked since the early 1980s on the project of reconstructing the unfinished fourth volume of the *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, but it was not until 1988, when Oswald Schwemmer, then was a professor at the University of Marburg, suggested that the *Nachlaß* should be published in its entirety that steps were taken to obtain funding for this long-range project. After initial support from the Henkel-Stiftung, the project was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. It is now established at the Institut für Philosophie at the Humboldt University in Berlin, the institution where Cassirer spent the first 13 years of his career.

2.2. The General Tasks of the Edition

The Cassirer Edition Project has as its primary aim the edition and publication in book form of those manuscripts which are (1) *unpublished*, meaning in nearly all cases: not published in any form, some have appeared in translation or in abbreviated form, (2) *complete*, i.e. not fragmentary (exceptions can appear in an appendix), and (3) have a *content warranting publication*. The third criterion is taken to mean that they add significantly to Cassirer's published philosophical or historical work. This excludes his *juvenilia*, although some of this, such as Cassirer's detailed class notes taken in Hermann Cohen's course lectures will

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8. The numbers from Bacon's list were retained, but not the lettered subdivisions of the convolutes.

9. See Donald Philipp VERENE «Appendix: A Description of Cassirer's Papers», in Ernst CASSIRER, *Symbol, Myth, and Culture*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, p. 293-98.

be published by Helmut Holzhey in vol. 19 of the edition. It also excludes most of Cassirer's notes for his early lecture courses given in Berlin as a Privatdozent — these are also usually fragmentary. It excludes, too, his extensive notes and research materials. Here again exceptions will be made, such as in the case of Cassirer's notes on Goethe, which Barbara Naumann is including in vol. 10. Items too fragmentary to publish in book form we hope to make available in a CD-Rom version of the Edition. Norbert Henrichs at the University of Düsseldorf, is working with Oswald Schwemmer and me on this project.

The majority of the unpublished matter in the Cassirer papers, however, is written out and was either delivered publicly or written with eventual publication in mind. The Edition *Ernst Cassirer: Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte* will consist of these writings. The edition will have a total of 20 volumes of writings including one volume of correspondence and a further supplementary volume containing "Research materials" (*Forschungsgrundlagen*). These materials include lists of: all of the courses Cassirer taught throughout his career, his invited lectures, a detailed biographical chronology, photographs, documents, and indices.

In order to date and identify Cassirer's papers, his correspondence has been systematically collected from libraries in many countries as well as from private collections. These letters will be edited in conjunction with several scholars, particularly with Massimo Ferrari (Milan) who first initiated the edition of Cassirer's correspondence, as well as with Fabien Capeillères (Paris), Claudia Naber (Berlin), and Enno Rudolph (Heidelberg)[10].

3. Contents of Cassirer's Unpublished Papers

One of the most striking features of Ernst Cassirer's work is the great variety of fields in which he made important contributions. As a historian he is best known for his work in the area of Renaissance studies, the Enlightenment, and the history of the problem of knowledge. In the area of systematic philosophy he is

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10. I would greatly appreciate it if persons with information concerning any letters to or from Cassirer would inform the Cassirer Edition at the Humboldt University about them.

best known as the author of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, as a philosopher of language and theoretician of culture, a contributor to philosophical anthropology and to political philosophy. He is widely read as a theoretician of mythology and his works on German literature have entered the canon of secondary writings on Goethe, Schiller, and Kleist. Cassirer's unpublished writings cover all these different areas as well.

Scholars who have read these unpublished texts have all attested to their importance, so the question arises why they were never published. The answer is clear. Cassirer left Germany early in 1933 and spent the remaining 12 years of his life in England, Sweden, and the United States during which time he simply did not have the opportunities to publish many things which otherwise would surely have appeared in print. Moreover, he lacked the continuity in his working conditions to see all his works through publication. Some he did not even complete. A large manuscript for a monograph with different chapters on systematic philosophy entitled « Ziele und Wege der Wirklichkeitserkenntnis » was very close to completion in 1937, as Cassirer himself indicated in a letter to the publisher Gottfried Bermann-Fischer, whom he hoped to have publish the work. Nonetheless the manuscript remained unfinished, even though it needed relatively little further work. It will appear as the second volume of the edition.

One might argue that unfinished or unpublished writings by a philosopher who published as much as Cassirer did, could only reproduce what we already know, but this conclusion is mistaken. The most significant feature of Cassirer's unpublished writings is that in many cases they develop his most mature views of the topics in question and often deal with problems and thinkers unexamined in his published work. This is not surprising, for the unpublished papers consist mostly of texts from late in Cassirer's life, written at the height of his intellectual development. An unproportionally large amount of the unpublished papers stem from Cassirer's years in Sweden, i.e. from 1935 to 1941. These writings touch on philosophical thinkers and questions rarely or not at all mentioned in his published writings, particularly figures from the Vienna Circle. Most interesting of all, they explore the basis of Cassirer's own "Philosophy of Symbolic Forms" more thoroughly than he did in any of his published work.

This reexamination of his own philosophical position stems in part from Cassirer's reaction to the philosophy of the Vienna Circle. Cassirer's correspondence reveals many close ties with

persons associated with the *Wiener Kreis*. Schlick and Cassirer corresponded since 1920. Schlick wrote Cassirer among other things about Wittgenstein and the importance of the *Tractatus* for the members of the *Wiener Kreis*[11]. It is significant that Cassirer, in a letter to Schlick, explains that he has recommended to his cousin, the publisher Bruno Cassirer, that he publish Carnap's *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt*, which Cassirer knew in manuscript[12]. Cassirer's lifetime friend Hans Reichenbach wanted him to contribute a study on the *Wiener Kreis* to *Erkenntnis*, but after Schlick's death Cassirer decided not to publish the essay. The resulting text on « Die Ausdrucksfunktion und das Problem des Fremdpsychischen » explores the mind-body problem along lines first sketched in the third volume of the *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, but it does so in greater depth, even entering into the philosophy of biology. (Cassirer also developed this line of thought in different unpublished lectures on « Kant und die moderne Biologie » in 1939 and 1940.) Cassirer's reaction to physicalism is less significant however than that he developed his own theory of metaphysics in reaction to the criticisms of metaphysics put forth in the Vienna Circle. These criticisms, in conjunction with Cassirer's reactions to Heidegger, brought Cassirer in the 1930s and 1940s to examine the basis of his own philosophy. As a result, Cassirer's *Nachlaß* contains his most important theoretical work on the foundation of the « Philosophie der symbolischen Formen » (to appear in volumes 1 and 5). In a text from about 1940 devoted to Cassirer's previously unknown doctrine of «*Basisphänomene*[13]», he gives his answer to Carnap and Heidegger and a systematic reconstruction of the history of metaphysics. This «*Basisphänomen*» doctrine is a topic in a number of Cassirer's writings from this period. I cannot summarize this work here, except to say that Cassirer criticizes Kant's conception that metaphysics transcends all possible experience and instead develops a phenomenological "first philosophy", whose central doctrine Cassirer calls "*Basisphänomene*". At the risk of doing

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11. The letter is dated «30. März 1927».

12. This follows from Cassirer's letter to Schlick dated «4.3.27» in which he tells Schlick that he has put in a good word to his cousin and publisher, Bruno Cassirer, about Carnap's book. Cassirer refers to the work many times in his unpublished papers.

13. It is included in volume one of the edition: Ernst CASIRER, *Zur Metaphysik der symbolichen Formen*, J. M. Krois Hg., Hamburg : Meiner, 1995, p. 111-95.

Cassirer and Charles Peirce both an injustice, it seems to me that Cassirer has — without knowledge of Peirce — in his own way developed a doctrine in some respects close to Peirce's «firstess», «secondness», and «thirdness». Cassirer's three *Basisphenomena* inevitably recall the Peircean triad to mind, and both philosophers works are centered upon a doctrine of signs and symbolism.

Carnap's *Aufbau* is discussed in several of Cassirer's unpublished writings, particularly the aforementioned text on the Vienna Circle. One complete manuscript is devoted to Cassirer's criticisms of Heidegger. This manuscript consists of a lecture (or lectures) written for presentation at the "Davoser Hochschulkurse" in 1929.

Among Cassirer's papers on the philosophy of science one finds a special lecture on the problem of causality, probably written for the 2nd International Congress for the Unity of Scince in Copenhagen in 1936, a completely written out set of course lectures on the theory of relativity independent of his book on the subject, and his most extensive and detailed study of the epistemological significance of the theory of groups (written in 1937), a topic Cassirer was long interested in. Cassirer was close to persons at the center of the new physics. He was a long-time friend of Albert Einstein with whom he also corresponded, just as he also corresponded with Niels Bohr, Max Born, and Werner Heisenberg. This correspondence and the above mentioned correspondence with Schlick and Reichenbach will be included in the edition of letters.

The unpublished writings also include much on the history of science, among them invited lectures, written in English, on «The Origin of the Modern Concept of Nature in the Philosophical and Scientific Thought of the Renaissance» given at the University College in London in 1934 and another lecture series given there in 1936 on «Leibniz and Newton». These well-written lectures on «Leibniz and Newton» are over 250 pages long and should not be confused with Cassirer's brief published article on the topic[14]. Another unpublished lecture on the history of science entitled «Galileo und die Renaissance» was delivered in 1932.

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14. Ernst CASSIRER, «Newton and Leibniz», in *Philosophical Review*, (1943), p. 366-91.

Numerous other texts are devoted to historical topics on which Cassirer was an acknowledged expert. Among them are a study of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, written in 1938 for publication in the *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, but which was not published after that publication ceased bringing articles written in German. During his years in Oxford and in the United States Cassirer wrote out course lectures on Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel, something he rarely did when he taught in Germany. These combine his erudition and mastery of the subject with an unusual clarity of presentation. Among Cassirer's regular listeners at his Oxford lectures, incidentally, were: Alfred Jules Ayer, Isaiah Berlin, and Wilfred Sellars. As an unintended consequence of needing to express himself in English we have been left with rare examples of Cassirer as a teacher. In Germany Cassirer normally gave his lectures without any notes at all. One particularly interesting benefit of this need to write his lectures brought Cassirer to write — and even have typed — a complete cycle of lectures at Yale on Ancient Philosophy, a topic about which he published relatively little but upon which he lectured regularly during his entire career. These lectures cover aspects of ancient thought about which he left no publications, such as Neo-Platonism and Aristotle. The text on Aristotle alone is 120 pages.

Cassirer's *An Essay on Man*, which appeared in 1944, seemed to represent a new development in his thought, since in his earlier publications philosophical anthropology appeared to be a topic Cassirer wrote about because others — such as Scheler — wrote about it. But Cassirer's papers reveal that the unpublished concluding section for volume 3 of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* — mentioned in the preface as too long for inclusion in that volume (it is 284 handwritten pages) — had already developed this philosophical anthropology. Theoretical biology plays an even greater role in its 210-page chapter devoted to anthropology than it does in *An Essay on Man*. Cassirer evidently planned to incorporate this text into a fourth volume of the *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* along with the aforementioned text on *Basisphänomene*, but they were both left behind in a package with other drafts for this fourth volume when Cassirer left Sweden for the United States in 1941. These texts will appear in the first volume of the edition as well as in an English translation[15].

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15. The English translation will appear in: Ernst CASSIRER, *The Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms: Texts for a Fourth Volume of "The Philosophy of Symbolic*

Cassirer died while he was on the faculty of Columbia University. One of his last projects there was to write the general introduction to a volume on *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* which he was editing with Paul Oskar Kristeller and John Herman Randall, Jr. These two men expressed sorrow in their preface to that volume that Cassirer's contribution was not written before he died. Yet while he was in Sweden Cassirer also wrote out some of his course lectures even though he delivered them in German, presumably in order to better communicate with non-native speakers. Included among these lectures is a two semester course on the history of philosophical anthropology, the second half of which was devoted to the Middle Ages and Renaissance. These latter lectures (to appear in vol. 6) provide that missing general introduction to the Renaissance Philosophy of Man.

Cassirer's papers also include a number of lectures on political philosophy and the philosophy of law (vol. 9) as well as Cassirer's most detailed and extensive treatments of the philosophy of history (vols 2 and 18). These consist of a draft in German from 1937 for a work on the philosophy of history (in vol. 3) and a typed set of Yale course lectures from 1941-42 on this topic. Different parts of these Yale lectures on the Philosophy of History have been published, some in English, others in French translation[16]. The Cassirer *Nachlaß*-Edition will include them all in their entirety.

In her book *Mein Leben mit Ernst Cassirer*, Toni Cassirer often emphasized Ernst Cassirer's great personal attachment to Goethe,

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Forms", Ed. J. M. Krois, D. P. Verene, forthcoming from Yale University Press.

16. The two most important of these publications are: Ernst CASSIRER, *Symbol, Myth, and Culture: Essays and Lectures of Ernst Cassirer 1933-1945*, ed. D. P. Verene, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979 and Ernst CASSIRER, *L'Idée de l'histoire: Les inédits de Yale et autres écrits d'exil*, Pr., tr. et notes F. Capeillères, Paris: Cerf, 1988. See also Jens-Peter PETERS, *Cassirer, Kant und Sprache: Ernst Cassirers «Philosophie der symbolischen Formen»*, Europäische Hochschulschriften 20, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1983, with the appendix: «Ein Fragment aus dem Nachlaß Ernst Cassirers. Cassirers Entwurf zum Schlußkapitel von Bd. IV». — See also Ernst CASSIRER, *Symbol, Technik, Sprache: Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1927-1933*, ed. E.W. Orth, J. M. Krois unter Mitwirkung J. M. Werle, Hamburg: Meiner, 1985, which contains an expanded version of «Die Sprache und der Aufbau der Gegenstandswelt» (Abschnitte 4.2 bis 8) never before published in the original German.

and as any reader of Cassirer's German will notice, his very style and frequent allusions to Goethe verify this as much as do his numberous publications on Goethe. Toni Cassirer regretted in particular that Cassirer only wrote out the first three lectures of a lecture cycle he gave in Göteborg in 1940 on Goethe, and that he delivered the others without notes. She adds that they would have amounted to the book on Goethe that he had always wanted to write[17]. It was therefore a great surprise when in April of 1991 I by accident found a 500 page text of lectures on Goethe, which had somehow been forgotten among the Cassirer family's belongings. In the meantime I have identified these as an invited lecture series given at the Lund New Society of Letters in 1941, shortly before the Cassirers left Europe for the United States. It was Cassirer's last German work and it constitutes his most systematic and comprehensive work on Goethe. It was given under the title « Goethes geistige Leistung ». This previously unknown work constitutes the book on Goethe that Cassirer always wanted to write, and it will appear in volume 11, along with the three Göteborg lectures mentioned by Toni Cassirer, which are part of the Beinecke collection.

4. Present State of the Work on Edition

4.1. Dating and Identification

Although I have visited the Beinecke regularly since 1973 to consult the Cassirer papers, and prepared my own guide to their contents, many items lacked identification and dates. In order to determine just what was worth inclusion in a *Nachlaß*-Edition, it was necessary to read and examine them more closely. For this Xerox copies were needed. Unfortunately, our wish for copies coincided with the archiving and cataloging of the papers. Then, in the midst of this, and to our dismay, the Beinecke was closed

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17. See Toni CASSIRER, *Mein Leben mit Ernst Cassirer*, Hildesheim: Gerstenber, 1981, p. 272-74. On 274 she says: «Leider sind nur die ersten drei Vorträge des ganzen Kurses im Manuskript vorhanden. Von der vierten Vorlesung an sprach Ernst, wie er immer gewöhnt war, wenn er deutsch vortrug, frei und durch ganz wenige Notizen unterstützt. Hätte er diese ganze Serie ausgearbeitet, hätten wir das Goethebuch, das er sich immer vorgenommen hatte zu schreiben.»

for half a year for major renovations, greatly delaying the archiving and cataloging. The Beinecke staff made every effort to obtain us copies as well as they could but under these conditions and with limited personnel it was inevitable that we had to wait a long time before we finally received all of our massive order[18].

Once in possession of the materials it was finally possible to read, date and identify them. Although most of the unpublished materials have titles in Cassirer's hand, many have only incomplete identification, some have none at all. Cassirer's correspondence, which is scattered in libraries around the world, has been collected and checked for information about the papers. Work in progress was a constant theme in Cassirer's correspondence, which has proven to be an invaluable resource of information not only for identifying the manuscripts but also for determining what he wanted to accomplish in his different writings.

Another major source of information was university and municipal archives at the various stations in Cassirer's career in Germany, England, Sweden, and the United States. Visits to all of these archives have given a clear picture of Cassirer's activities. To give you an idea of the value of this work, the papers are catalogued in alphabetical order, hence, since there is no identification on them, a text entitled « The Relations of Philosophical and Scientific Thought in their Historical Development » in folders [38,748-49] is separated by nearly two hundred folders from another text [49,983-85] entitled « The Development of the Modern Concept of Nature in the Philosophy and Science of the Renaissance ». It was only by means of the archives of the London-based Academic Assistance Council that it was possible to show that these belonged together as the two main parts of the aforementioned lectures on « The Origin of the Modern Concept of Nature in the Philosophical and Scientific Thought of the Renaissance » held in June of 1934 at University College in London.

In some cases personal recollections have been the only way to positively identify some papers. Here Raymond Klibansky has been especially helpful. Mrs. Anne Appelbaum, Ernst Cassirer's daughter, also has been extremely helpful in many ways, making accessible to me various letters and other papers that have been an invaluable aid to the work on the edition.

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18. We have especially been helped by the Curator of Modern Manuscripts, Vincent Curator, and by Lori Misura of the Beinecke staff.

In some cases the texts still require more precise dating and identification. For example, one text is obviously an invited lecture, in German, without a title. It is about « the concept and problem of democracy » and so falls into the German debate about the value of democracy typical of the later Weimar Republic. Cassirer, who was no mere "*Vernunft-Republikaner*", argues in it that democracy was not a given, and so rather than considering it as it is, the correct attitude would be to regard it as a process, calling for dedication to certain ideals. The other untitled lecture is also on politics. It is about « european reactions to German culture » and was probably held in 1917 / 1918 in Berlin while he was working in the newspaper section of the *Kriegspresseamt*. It includes Cassirer's first examination of Propaganda techniques, a topic he examined more thoroughly in his last book, *The Myth of the State*. The reader is reminded of Goethe's cosmopolitanism, for even though Cassirer's topic deals with news reporting in France, his complete refrain from chauvinism — something for which he was criticized during his time as rector of the University of Hamburg — stands foremost in the reader's mind. Unfortunately, the archives documenting Cassirer's activities for the *Kriegspresseamt* during this time have all been destroyed.

4.2. The Organization of the Edition

Cassirer's unpublished papers include essays, course lectures, invited and official lectures given, e. g., when he was rector of the University of Hamburg. A strictly chronological edition would make little sense since the resulting volumes would contain writings on greatly disparate topics, e. g. one might have a volume devoted half to the theory of relativity and half to the poet Friedrich Schiller[19], and what is worse, Cassirer's various lectures on particular topics which needed to be read together, such as his different lectures dealing with political philosophy and the crisis of the Weimar Republic, would then be scattered throughout different volumes. Grouping the writings according to their intended audience, i. e., separating the course lectures from essays also makes little sense. During most of his career Cassirer did not write out his course lectures at all. Hence, they form no recognizable body of work. The most detailed course lectures stem from

19. That Cassirer himself worked this way does not mean make it good policy for an edition to reproduce this chronology.

his later years, when he had to face a communications barrier — either speaking German to a non-German speaking audience or himself speaking what was not his mother tongue. Also, these course lectures read with much the same grace as Cassirer's books. We decided to treat the different types of texts equally, publishing them instead in topical volumes organized by an *internal* chronological order without regard to whether they were written for oral or written presentation.

The immense breadth of topics provided a natural four-part classification for the edition :

Division I: will contain « Writings on the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms » (Schriften zur Philosophie der symbolischen Formen — 9 volumes), by which I mean writings containing Cassirer's original systematic philosophy ;

Division II: will contain « Writings on the History of Ideas » (Schriften zur Geistesgeschichte — 3 volumes); and

Division III: will contain « Writings on the History of Philosophy » (Schriften zur Geschichte der Philosophie — 7 volumes).

Division IV: will contain « Selected academic correspondence » (Ausgewählter wissenschaftlicher Briefwechsel).

A final, supplementary volume will include a research materials and a general index.

The texts will appear in the language in which they were written, but the commentary will in all cases be in German.

The titles of the different volumes give an idea of the variety of topics covered.

Division I : Writings on the « Philosophy of Symbolic Forms », contains :

Vol. 1. *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen*
Vol. 2. *Ziele und Wege der Wirklichkeitserkenntnis*
Vol. 3. *Geschichte, Form, Mythos*
Vol. 4. *Zur Sprache und zum Begriff der symbolischen Formen*
Vol. 5. *Zur Kulturphilosophie und zum Problem des Ausdrucks*
Vol. 6. *Zur philosophischen Anthropologie*
Vol. 7. *Zu Mythos, Sprache und Kunst*
Vol. 8. *Zur Logik, Erkenntnistheorie und Wissenschaftstheorie*
Vol. 9. *Zur Philosophie und Politik*

Division II : Writings on « Geistesgeschichte », contains :

Vol. 10. *Kleinere Schriften zu Goethe und zur Geistesgeschichte*

Vol. 11. *Goethe Vorlesungen*
Vol. 12. *Schillers philosophische Weltansicht*

Division III: Writings on the «History of Philosophy», contains:
Vol. 13. *Lectures on Greek Philosophy*
Vol. 14. *Zur Philosophie der Renaissance*
Vol. 15. *Zur Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza*
Vol. 16. *Courses and Lectures on Kant's Philosophy*
Vol. 17. *Zur Philosophie Kants*
Vol. 18. *Lectures on Hegel and the Philosophy of History*
Vol. 19. *Zur Philosophie Hermann Cohens*

Due to the amount of material and the diversity of the topics therein (ranging from the philosophy of mathematics to literature, from relativity to the interpretation of myth) Cassirer scholars with expertise in these various areas have consented to act as volume editors for many of the planned volumes, namely to edit the texts on Greek Philosophy (13); Renaissance Philosophy (14); Modern Physics and the Philosophy of Science (8); Friedrich Schiller (12); Goethe (10); Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz (15); Kant (16); Hermann Cohen (19); History as a Symbolic Form (3); Hegel (18), and on Myth, Language and Art (7).

4.3. The Nature of the Edition

Texts will be given in their entirety without any deletions. Cassirer's orthography is left as it is, e. g., his habit of using the letter "e" instead of an Umlaut and his avoidance of the German double-S (ß). His archaic spellings, such as "giebt" rather than "gibt" have been retained. Another oddity of Cassirer's writing is his apparently indiscriminate use of a variety of quotation marks; one finds German *Gänsefüsse* ("/"), as well as single quotation marks ('/') and single Guillements (>/<). These are all used for actual quotations and also sometimes merely for emphasis. That Cassirer did not put great stock in the differences can be seen in the fact that he on occasion starts a quotation with one type of mark and ends it with another. Because of their great frequency, we have left these different markings, but give the handwritten >< in a less irritating form (»«). Cassirer himself requested that this be done for his essay on the Cambridge Platonists after the typsetters took his pointed quotation marks literally and created an un-

readable text[20]. Corrections are indicated with brackets or given in a textual note. The author's footnotes appear at the bottom of the page and, following Cassirer's published works, they are numbered anew on each page. Notes about the text, emendations, etc., are given in a second footnotes series, numbered on each page with capital letters (A, B, C, etc.). Editorial notes giving the sources for quotations, biographical information, and the like appear in the end matter, and are numbered consecutively throughout the entire text.

The back matter includes: (1) a «description of the manuscripts», describing the physical character of the manuscript, its dating, and, where necessary, giving an explanation of the organization of the volume; (2) the editor's introduction, explaining the origin of the texts and their general place in Cassirer's work; (3) editorial notes, identifying persons mentioned or cited, giving the sources of quotations and annotating unexplained terms; (4) a bibliography; (5) a name index.

Variants. Cassirer did not like to rewrite, hence in almost all cases there is only one document for each text. In only one instance did Cassirer actually leave different versions of a text, and in that case he left four. I am referring to his reply to Bruno Bauch, which Cassirer wrote in late 1916 and early 1917 for the *Kant-Studien*, but which remained unpublished. Bauch, a professor of philosophy in Jena and also an editor of the *Kant-Studien*, published a long "reader's letter" in the June 1916 number of a "*völkisch*" journal called *Der Panther*[21] in which he questioned the ability of Jewish scholars, particularly Cassirer's teacher, Hermann Cohen, to understand Kant on the grounds that they were «foreigners». Shortly thereafter Bauch also published a "*völkisch*"interpretation of the concept of a "*Nation*" in the *Kant-Studien*[22]. That such a claim came from an editor of the *Kant-Studien* made it all the more intolerable. Cassirer's reply for the *Kant-Studien* went through different drafts as he tried to accomodate the editors of that journal and respond to the irrational and

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20. This incident is recorded in a postcard in the archives of the Warburg Insitute, London, which Cassirer sent to Fritz Saxl, dated «Pontresina / Chalet Palü /, 29. VI. 31».

21. Bruno BAUCH, «Leserbrief», *Der Panther*, 4 (Juni 1916), p. 742-46.

22. Bruno BAUCH, «Vom Begriff der Nation», *Kant-Studien*, 21 (1917), p. 139-62. The issue was distributed in August 1916.

insulting nature of Bauch's views. For this he drew upon intellectual and moral arguments and even humor. The Bauch-Affair ended, however, with Bauch resigning his post as editor of the *Kant-Studien*, so Cassirer's reply went unpublished. Cassirer's attempts to get his text to pass muster at the *Kant-Studien* provide a study in intellectual diplomacy and are an important historical document. Here it is important to provide all the variants from each of the earlier versions, and not just reproduce the final draft. Documents relating to this controversy (including Bauch's texts) will be provided in an appendix. Such appendices will be provided in other cases as well, if they are necessary to understand Cassirer's text.

First Drafts. Although most of the texts in the edition are in a fairly finished state, some are drafts. These use abbreviated punctuation — dashes instead of full stops, for example. If read aloud they would provide a running text. We have retained their unfinished character in order not to give the false impression that they are finished pieces. This means that Cassirer's practice in such drafts of interspersing his references to literature into the text has been retained. Although it is sometimes not attractive on the page, the reader sees in these drafts how Cassirer thought. Perhaps the most peculiar feature of Cassirer's way of thinking is his use of the history of philosophy in his systematic works. Cassirer uses citations from the history of thought in a way not unlike Wagner used *Leitmotive*. Only Cassirer's repertoire was much larger.

Annotations. Cassirer's intellectual repertoire raises a particular problem in editing his writings. The edition gives biographical notes about all the persons mentioned and authors cited, and, naturally identifies and verifies all of Cassirer's quotations and give annotations for unexplained terminology. But the combination of Cassirer's phenomenal erudition and fabled memory — he was able to quote whole texts *verbatim* after only one reading or less (even a glance was sufficient for his eidetic memory) — presents a considerable editorial task. Like many authors, Cassirer often does not give the sources for quotations or explain terms. But few authors do this as often or from such a bewildering variety of fields of research and learning. To illustrate, let me quote from Joseph Agassi's review (published in the *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*) of the English translation of Cassirer's *Determinism and Indeterminism in Modern Physics*: « It is doubtful whether many readers will flatter themselves that they understand Cassirer's occasional Greek, Latin, and French, and that they

are sufficiently well informed to comprehend remarks which involve so many terms and ideas mentioned by Cassirer with little or no explanation. These include transcendental analysis (p. 17), Russell's theory of types (p. 30), Maxwell's demon (p. 77), Boltzmann's H-Theorem (p. 79), "energetic" thinking (p. 117), the Eleatic critique of becoming (p. 144), occult qualities (p. 146), stereochemistry (p. 147), transcendental logic (p. 166), Dedekind's definition of the irrational number (p. 169), and Wilson's photographs of the α- and β-rays (p. 182)[23]». This list poses relatively few problems. But the cumulative effect in a work such as «Ziele und Wege der Wirklichkeitserkenntnis» is staggering, for here one finds a constant dazzling display of knowledge not only of the history and philosophy of science and mathematics, but also of texts from Renaissance philosophy available in only a few libraries in the world, as well a chapter dealing with such topics as the interpretation of literature in the nineteenth century, not to mention references throughout to every epoch of the history of philosophy from the Presocratics to the present. Verifying quotations and annotating terms in a text like this present no small task to an editor.

While Cassirer's published writings can serve to orient the editor, Cassirer's learning was so extensive in virtually every area in which he worked, that it is often not possible to find a quote by consulting his published works. To my amazement, I find again and again that Cassirer's unpublished writings often deal with thinkers and problems not found in his publications. One small example: Sir Herbert Read once commented that it was regrettable that Cassirer never mentioned Conrad Fiedler's little known but important work on the theory of art. Fiedler is not mentioned in any of Cassirer's publications, but his manuscripts contain several discussions of a number of Fiedler's writings.

One way we are attempting to deal with the sheer volume of literature Cassirer refers to is to cite only those editions of works that Cassirer himself cited in his publications or in other manuscripts or that he was known to possess in his own library. At the suggestion of Klaus Christian Köhnke (Berlin), and with his help, we have built up and are constantly adding to a databank called EC-ID-BI, which is a German abbreviation for "Ernst Cassirer's

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23. Joseph AGASSI, «A Hegelian View of Complementarity», *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science,* 9 (1959), p. 62.

Ideele Bibliothek" with which we hope gradually to be able to orient ourselves and assist volume editors in the daunting task of editing Cassirer. Cassirer's personal library, including even his collection of offprints, was sold after his death to the University of Illinois in Chicago. Our efforts to determine the contents of his library have been greatly aided by Michael Friedman at that institution, thanks to whom we now have a complete list of all the books in Cassirer's personal library. In addition, Gretchen Lagana at the University of Illinois has given us access to the unaccessioned collection of offprints and dissertations from Cassirer's library. With these materials to supplement the fragmentary sales list from the New York Booksellers who sold the library to the University of Chicago, we are now in a position to cite the works that Cassirer himself used in his work and so to create a historically authentic edition.

5. Conclusion

A project of this magnitude and complexity cannot be the work of one or two indivuduals. We have had the expert advice of many people ; we owe a particular debt of gratitude to the noted Simmel editor, Klaus Christian Köhnke. The preparations for the Cassirer *Nachlaß*-Edition are now finished. The first volume was published on the 50th anniversary of his death (April 13, 1995). The second volume will appear in 1997. The texts for numerous other volumes are being transcribed or annotated by volume editors. We have copies of the manuscripts for all the volumes in the edition and copies of much of Cassirer's correspondence for the edition of letters. The edition is being produced by the Felix Meiner Verlag in Hamburg in agreement with the Yale University Press. Thanks primarily to the tireless efforts of Oswald Schwemmer and to the faculty at the Humboldt-University in Berlin we should in the coming years see how Cassirer's later philosophy developed.

Until now, very little of Cassirer's *Nachlaß* had been published : briefer texts or parts taken from larger ones. The most remarkable aspect of Cassirer's voluminous *Nachlaß* is that it shows how even in the uncertain living conditions he faced during his years in exile, he not only managed to continue working productively in different fields of historical research, on Ancient, Renaissance, and Modern philosophy, but that he also worked as a

philosopher, and that instead of continuing his work along a predetermined path he explored new avenues of thought. The results of all these efforts have been largely unknown since his death even though the papers themselves have been waiting since 1964 at Yale University to be put into an appropriate form. Cassirer's *Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte* will at last make accessible the full range of Cassirer's contributions in various areas of learning and research.

John Michael KROIS