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Edited by Heiner F. Klemme and Manfred Kuehn

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- Auszug der Geschichte zur Erklärung der Offenbarung Johannis*: [Nebst einem Anhang, welcher einige Anekdoten zur neuern Braunschweigischen Kirchengeschichte liefert] (Leipzig, 1776).
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Grammatica universalis ... exhibet Johannes Henr. Toennies . . . defendit Petrus Theophilus Kirchhoff (Kiel, 1768).
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ATI

TRÄGER, Ludwig Martin (1742–72)

Ludwig Martin Träger was born in February 1742 in Saarbrücken, where he received his early education before moving in 1762 to Jena to study theology and philosophy at the local university. There he attended the classes of Immanuel WALCH, Justus Christian HENNINGS, Christian Friedrich Polz (1714–1782) and Joachim Georg DARJES. Given his difficult financial situation, instead of following Darjes to Frankfurt an der Oder (1763), Träger moved to the University of Halle, where he spent the rest of his short life. He completed his studies in theology on 27 May 1767, with a dissertation entitled *De conscientia erronea*, which was directed by Johann Friedrich STIEBRITZ, and which had as respondents the main leading figures of the new cultural scene in Halle, Georg Friedrich MEIER and Johann Salomo SEMLER, both of whom exercised a deep influence on his intellectual development. Between 1769 and 1772, the year of his untimely death, Träger was a Privatdozent at the University in Halle, where he taught history of philosophy (on the basis of C. G. W. Lodtmann's and BÜSCHING's handbooks), logic (according to Darjes), metaphysics (initially from Darjes's *Elementa metaphysices*, but from 1770 using his own *Metaphysik*) and occasionally philosophical encyclopedia, practical logic, philosophical methodology and natural law. After his death on 23 October 1772, his metaphysics class was taken over by his former student Christian Gottfried SCHÜTZ, who opened his lectures with an inaugural address *Ueber verschiedene widrige Schicksale der deutschen Philosophie*, which amounted to an exhaustive tribute to Träger's intellectual perspective.

In this *Gedankenschrift* Schütz called attention to Träger's idea of philosophy. As a tireless promoter of the free use of one's own reason, and an inflexible opponent of any philosophical sectarianism, Träger identified the goal of philosophy with the edification and guidance of one's

own natural skills in order to develop 'the natural ability to think according to the rules of logic', as well as 'the free spirit of investigation'. The leading idea of *Selbstdenken* also lies at the core of his programmatic text *Über das Nutzen des Examinierens auf Universitäten* (1771), originally conceived as the inaugural lecture of his course in metaphysics at the University of Halle. Träger celebrates here the ideal of 'autonomous knowledge' rooted in Wolff's distinction between historical and philosophical knowledge, and at the same time introduces the more well-known Kantian caveat concerning the misleading confusion between learning a system of philosophy and learning to philosophize.

Metaphysics is the centre of Träger's philosophical activity, since according to him it rests on the natural inclination of human beings to investigate the first grounds of things by means of the light of reason. But Träger's idea of metaphysics has nothing to do with any form of abstract and infertile speculation; as he states in his *Metaphysics* (1770), the 'philosophical fundamental science' is 'the final result of every human philosophy, which presupposes the broadest and the most grounded intuitions in every philosophical realm, most of all in empirical philosophy (*Erfahrungsphilosophie*)' (Preface). According to Träger, Leibniz and Wolff earn the merit of having introduced into the philosophical scene the idea of a metaphysics which realizes a genuine *connubium rationis et experientiae*, that is, which combines its very general concepts with observations and experiments. This consideration leads Träger, on the one hand, to reconsider the boundaries of rational knowledge, and, on the other, to pay due attention to the realm of natural sciences. On this basis he integrates his metaphysical studies with investigations in the field of physics, chemistry, empirical and experimental psychology and, most of all, of medicine, revealing a special connection with the environment of the so-called 'philosophical physicians' (*vernünftige Ärzte*) originally based in Halle, like Johann Gottlob KRÜGER and Johan August UNZER.

Nevertheless, Träger's metaphysics departs on a number of crucial points from the Wolffian mainstream. First of all, going back to Leibniz he grounds his system on a general monadology, which underlines the dynamical structure of substance. Like Darjes, Träger conceives the *philosophia prima* as the science of the first and general principles, which is then divided into ontology (the science of the general principles of substance) and its internal articulations: general monadology (the science of simple substances) and special monadology (pneumatology, psychology and natural theology). In contrast to Wolff, cosmology is here distributed among ontology, somatology and mechanics.

Second, following Crusius's suggestions and KANT's statements in the *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie* (1764), Träger rejects the identification of philosophical and mathematical methods. This tendency, which he traces back to the very beginning of the Western philosophical tradition (Thales and Pythagoras), ignores the essential difference between the two disciplines, and compels philosophy to imitate a method which doesn't suit its contents. Indeed the mathematical method cannot gather correctly the intrinsic dynamism of substance and its internal principium vitale that Träger describes in accordance with Kant's formulation in the *Gedanken von den wahren Schätzungen der lebendigen Kräfte* (1746). In Träger's view the dynamism of substance represents a turning point in the history of philosophy, and the starting-point of modernity. Even if Descartes and the Reformation already contributed to the liberation of philosophy from the yoke of medieval scholasticism through the introduction of the principle of evidence and a properly scientific method in philosophical investigations, it is only Leibniz who seems to inaugurate a completely new philosophical era with the introduction of a system of monads whose internal development is governed by the principle of sufficient reason. In Träger's view Wolff plays the role of a 'systematizer' of Leibniz's philosophy; but far from being a servile repeater of someone else's ideas, he is here presented as 'a genius in the proper meaning of the term', as the one who 'confined his great spirit' to the effort of organizing Leibniz's system in order to educate human understanding by means of a proper way of thinking (Denkungsart) and to prevent the generation of philosophical sects. In Träger's attempt to sketch a general history of philosophy, Wolff and Darjes, both of whom also promoted the birth of a German philosophical terminology, are the representatives of the 4th philosophical period – after the ancient, the medieval and the modern ones. They endorse a new way of understanding philosophy, according to which experience represents the 'axiom' of every scientific investigation. Träger therefore plays an important role in the development of post-Wolffian German philosophy: according to Kant's *Träume eines Geistersehers* metaphysics is no longer conceived as the science of what is possible, but as the science of the limits of human reason (*Metaphysik*, p. 28). Its method is not the deductive method of mathematics, but the analytic and inductive method of natural science: 'like physics, metaphysics is not unruly and wild; it only swings on a higher level and throws light on everything else; that's why it still remains beneath our horizon' (*Metaphysik*, p. 33s.). The central role of experience, the dynamic nature of substance, the replacement of the mathematical with the inductive

method are innovations which Träger introduces in his *Metaphysik*, all of which contribute to the diffusion of a new model of philosophy in the late phase of the German Enlightenment. Given his continuous reference to Kant's precritical writings Träger also contributes to their circulation in the milieu of the University of Halle, acting as a point of convergence of a group of supporters of the early Kantian philosophy among which one should mention at least Johann Christian FÖRSTER, Johann Christlieb Kemme (1738–1815) and especially the already cited Christian Gottfried SCHÜTZ, the leading proponent of the so-called 'Kantian Gospel' that he would proselytize in Jena following his departure from Halle.

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PR

TRALLES, Balthasar Ludwig (1708–97)

Balthasar Ludwig Tralles was born on 1 May 1708 in Breßlau, where he died on 7 September at the age of ninety-one, at the height of his extraordinary fame as a medical doctor and a *grand savant*. Already in the years of his education at the local Gymnasium, Tralles showed a very precocious and intense inclination towards natural sciences and any form of higher culture. Thus under the influence of a close relative, who was a successful physician in Breßlau, he abandoned the business career of his father in order to pursue his studies at the University of Leipzig. In 1727 he matriculated in the Theological Faculty, but after a short while he gave up his original plan and began