
Karl Rosenkranz's 'Life of Hegel' 10/24 - First edition of the Encyclopedia

An abridged and commented translation into English

Stephen Cowley

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(The article below is reproduced at hegel.net with the kind permission of its author, Stephen Cowley¹. It first appeared 8/2012 on the [hegel.net](https://groups.io/g/hegel/topics) Hegel mailing list² and was then published 10/2012 as article with the pictures below on his blog 'Hegelian News & Reviews'³)

There follows a complete translation of the very brief chapter on the first edition of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* (1817) in Karl Rosenkranz' *Life of Hegel* (1844) taken from his coverage of Hegel's time in Heidelberg. The standard English translations of the *Encyclopaedia* are of the later editions rather than of this edition of which Rosenkranz speaks so highly. William Wallace translated the later editions of the *Encyclopaedia Logic* (1873) and *Philosophy of Mind* (1894), with the *Encyclopaedia* translation only completed in the 1970s with AV Miller's *Philosophy of Nature*. In this light, Rosenkranz' preference for the first edition is worth pondering.

BOOK TWO Chapter 25 - The Encyclopaedia

"It was only at Heidelberg that Hegel presents himself for the first time with his philosophy as an integrated whole and this was very necessary to defend the third part of the Logic against gross misunderstandings. For use in his lessons, he had the course on the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* printed, that he had composed between Michaelmas [Fall] 1816 and Easter 1817. As a comparison with the *Philosophical Propaedeutic* [first edited by Rosenkranz] shows, his gymnasium notebooks gave him the best basis for this work, except that with the greater clarity he had achieved, he could allow himself this time a more elevated form.

In the Preface, he announced his very clear opposition on the one hand to the philosophy that wishes to impose itself but which is disordered; on the other hand to lack of thought, to the superficiality of scepticism, to the immediacy of knowledge that strands itself in feeling. Neither a random exposition of the adventure of thought, nor the vanity of an absence of ideas, which have for too long turned the German profundity to ridicule, leaving its need of philosophical development unsatisfied, can favor progress. Only demonstration can achieve this, as it has previously been called: the method that would still, so he hoped, be recognised as the only true one, because it is identical with its content.

This first edition of the *Encyclopaedia* still contains the freshness of the first flow of composition. The subsequent editions are more involved in their elaboration of detail, above all in polemical and defensive remarks, but to have Hegel's system in its concentrated totality, such as it came forth with all the strength of first appearance, one must always return to this first edition and therefore also reprint it."

¹ <https://edinburgh.academia.edu/StephenCowley>

² <https://groups.io/g/hegel/topics>

³ <http://scottish-hegelian.blogspot.com/2012/10/first-edition-of-encyclopedia.html>

[Osmo notes that there is a French version of this first edition in the comprehensive version edited by Bernard Bourgeois – Parts I and III having appeared and Part II in process in 2004. In English however, we still have only full translations of the later editions by Wallace and Miller. Another version of the *Logic* (trans. Geraets, Suchting, Harris) has appeared since I had cause to look for copies. **Update:** an English translation of the First Edition of the *Encyclopaedia* (ed. Behler; trans. Taubeneck) appeared in The German Library: Continuum, 1990.]