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Hegel and the Ancient World

A journey to Italy was still in his thoughts. He said, ‘A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great empires of the world: the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean.’ The General observed, that ‘The MEDITERRANEAN would be a noble subject for a poem.’

—Boswell, Life of Johnson, 11 April 1776.

1.1. Between Old and New

*Habent sua fata libelli pro captu lectoris.* The proverb that fate carries books far beyond the lifetime and intentions of their authors had become a cliché even in antiquity. And yet when he described a book as an orphan thrown among strangers, could Plato have anticipated his handling by later Church Fathers, Renaissance humanists, or German Idealists? Could Catullus have guessed that his ‘trifles’ would be translated by Raleigh in the Tower of London, and given over to a romantic Yeats or Modernist Pound? Such stories could be multiplied indefinitely, as the works of a Homer, Pheidias, or Tacitus were carried through such ‘dark places of the earth’ as Germania or ‘strange and distant’ Britannia.¹ Indeed, if every event has its afterlife and ‘fate’, then the trajectory of each ancient phenomenon can become an object of investigation, as it is summoned and re-summoned before the judgment of memory, used and reused in the most unexpected ways: a temple-column supports the roof of a church, mythic exemplars haunt the imagination of an

¹ McPeek’s title, *Catullus in Strange and Distant Britain* (1939).
avant-garde rebel. The rise of ‘reception studies’ tracking each detail and nuance would have surprised the ancients, no matter how mindful of the caprices of fate.

If so, they might have been doubly astonished by the Faustian ambitions of one man to sum up the books, art-works, ideas, and actions of all the past, to show the inner unity of all world-history hitherto and so to rewrite all books, including the ‘book’ of Nature, into one comprehensive volume. Yet one might thus characterize the ambitions of George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831).² As he ordered his thoughts in lectures and published books, it would seem that nothing less than an exposition of all modes of consciousness, nothing less than an encyclopedia of all knowledge, nothing less than a science of the whole would suffice. Such a synthesis would be Janus-like, at once the founding act of a new order and a recapitulation of all that had gone before, marking its end and culmination, a ‘revolution-making work’.³ This book of books and key to all histories would a fortiori embrace all essential truths from the Greek and Roman worlds, integrating them into a compact whole to educate subsequent generations, and orient later reworkings and deeper syntheses.

Despite his ambitions, Hegel did not ‘take Fate by the throat’. His difficult synthesis became a bone of contention among Left, Middle, and Right Hegelians; his ideas were divided among admirers and mockers, his words ‘modified in the guts of the living’. Questions of what is ‘living and dead’ in Hegel’s thought have been asked for over a century,⁴ yet before each wave of scepticism, his ideas seem to revive, Phoenix-like, and surprise with their continued relevance. Or to switch metaphors, Hegel like Socrates often re-emerges as a ‘midwife’ for new ideas, even while his system loses its direct appeal. Hegel’s continued relevance stems partly from the fact that his age was very much the crucible of the modern world. Its preoccupations—revolution, progress, nationalism, romanticism, secularism, historicism, evolution, science—continue to resonate into the present. In synthesizing many voices of his time, Hegel has been characterized as the first to take modernity itself as his theme, as if his main question were, ‘What is this

³ For T.S. Kuhn, a ‘revolution-working text’ is ‘at once the culmination of a past tradition and the source of a novel future tradition’ (1957: 135).
modern world now coming to birth in the death-throes of the *ancien régime*?\(^5\)

Yet as a thinker of modernity Hegel is peculiar, for to the revolutionary’s zeal for novelty he adds an abiding reverence for the past.\(^6\) This duality might be symbolized by the fact that he entered the Stuttgart Gymnasium in the eventful year of 1776. That single year, in which a six-year-old Hegel was launched on a curriculum of ancient texts, saw the publication of the American Declaration of Independence, Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the second edition of Winckelmann’s *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, the third and final voyage of Captain Cook, the conception of Gauss, the births of Niebuhr and Constable, the death of Hume. Each of these events signals in its own way a revolution and opening of a new world: a new republic in the Americas; a new science of political economy; a new discipline of documentary history; a new discipline of art history; a new era of European colonization; new algebraic perspectives and non-Euclidean geometries; a new critical historiography, a new impressionistic naturalism, and, most generally, a mushrooming confidence in the human understanding— its power to surpass limits and know all things.

This Enlightenment self-confidence grew in strength, not least among those for whom Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and later critiques had effected not only a ‘Copernican Revolution’ but a final liberation: the heteronomous authorities of God, nature, and tradition were replaced by the autonomous reason and spontaneous imagination of the human self; no longer would mankind search external nature or sacred custom for fundamental laws, purposes, and beauty, for these arise only in dependence on the transcendental self. Kant thus seemed to sum up the tendency to enthrone the human mind as the creative centre of experience—and even to apotheosize mankind. His ideas seemed to herald the culminating revolution in human affairs: the ‘meagre, stale, forbidding ways/of custom, law and statute’ would be swept aside, the Age of Criticism would usher in a fully free, rational society, and mankind would perfect itself in the audacity of thought.\(^7\) Only a few contrarians felt in Kant’s tracts the drops of the coming storm: the nihilistic egoism, the rage against objective value, the violence and


\(^6\) ‘He is a revolutionary with his eyes fixed on the past’ (Mure 1940: x); ‘between tradition and revolution’ (Riedel, 1984).

revolutionary terror of this brave new world.⁸ Such ambiguities would not be lost on the mature Hegel, who recognized his age as both a ‘birth-time’ and a time for death: as Hegel was in the throes of bringing forth his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the Holy Roman Empire was dissolving before revolutionary forces.⁹

‘Philosophy is its own time summarized in thought’, and as a thinker of modernity, Hegel was well aware of the complexities and contradictions of his time—a veritable battlefield between new and old. But the battle lines were not immediately obvious, and it is remarkable how resolutely Hegel turned to the past, even to forgotten or despised moments of the distant past, to understand what might be of enduring worth in the present. A sometime student of Winckelmann, Hume, Smith, Gibbon, Kant, Niebuhr, and many others, he made titanic efforts to harmonize the many voices of his time into a more perfect union. Yet his own sense of historical relevancy stretches far beyond the pressing clamour of the day. In his vision, Being is one, the present grows organically out of all the past, and modern peoples can know and be themselves only when fully cognizant of the pasts that still constitute them. Therefore, Hegel will go as far back as he can, seeking the inner relation between the most ancient traditions and their most up-to-date heirs. This essential continuity between past and present endures even through shattering revolutions: in reflecting on different aspects of modernity, Hegel will draw richly and insistently on the four epochs into which he divides history—the Oriental, Greek, Roman, and Germanic worlds. Here ‘Germanic’ is typical shorthand for post-classical medieval and modern Europe, ‘Oriental’ for pre-classical eastern cultures from the Levant to China. At the centre of this fourfold are the terms ‘Greece’ and ‘Rome’: two terms that were becoming increasingly, almost inevitably, coupled, and that Hegel too will join intimately—and sharply differentiate.

### 1.2. A Historical Trio: Germany, Italy, Greece

To set the background for the theme of this book—Hegel’s complex appropriation of Greece and Rome in relation to his times and thought—let us look at the trio of places that have loomed so large in the modern German

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⁹ His own age as ‘a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era’: *PS* §11.
imagination. Lombardy is closer to Bavaria than to Sicily and from times immemorial northern peoples have been crossing the Alps into Italy, for booty, land, salvation, beauty, or a break. Teutones and Cimbri first unsettled the Romans with the threat of blonde giants bursting forth from the forests of the ‘populous North’. Fifty years later, Caesar reported of certain Germani across the Rhine, and Tacitus’ Germania would shape their modern image as noble savages whose indomitable freedom shamed the decadence of Rome. The terror cimbricus returned to terrorize Marcus Aurelius’ reign when the Marcomanni crossed the Alps and besieged Aquileia—the first drop of the coming storm, when during the Völkerwanderung, Goths, Vandals, Lombards, Franks, and all the North’s ‘barbarous Sons / Came like a Deluge on the South, and spread / Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands’,¹ even sacking Rome itself in 410 and 455 AD. The city of Rome would diminish, yet the idea of Rome endured, and in centuries to come, after Gallia Cisalpina became Lombardy, and Charlemagne took its Iron Crown, the Holy Roman Empire would continue to straddle, uneasily, the Alps, with jurisdictions fluctuating from the North Sea to Sicily. Italy still pulled northerners south—Carolingians, Saxons, Salians—and along with warriors and kings came traders, pilgrims, and priests.

A new era begins to open in 1510 when Luther visited the Papal States: his anger at Roman extravagance would contribute to the sack of the city in 1527 by an army of renegade Lutheran Landsknechte. Lutheran rage against the Papacy’s beautiful idols would be replaced, in turn, by a different kind of Drang nach Süden from the Baroque era, as northern nobles trooped south on their English grand tours or German Kavalierreisen, armed with guide-books and baggage trains, invading palaces, churches, and private collections for glimpses and trophies of Italian art.¹¹ Artists themselves were drawn to the holy ground where Giotto, Michelangelo, and Raphael had worked. Dürer blazed a trail to Italy and, in coming centuries, Germans like Friedrich Müller, Tischbein, Schinkel, and the Nazarenes followed Bruegel, Rubens, Velázquez, Reynolds, Turner, and so many others to visit the hallowed artistic spaces of Italy. Campo Santo, Pisa, Florence, Siena, Venice, Naples, and, above all, Rome were such treasure-hoards of masterpieces that Canova was only stating a fact when he called Italy ‘the land of art’, or when Hegel made Renaissance Italy the land of painting. It was also the ‘land of music’ and opera, though in the 1700s the baton was passing

¹ Milton, Paradise Lost 1.353–5.
slowly north: in the free movement of Italians north and Germans south, Mozart visited Italy three times, Haydn spoke fluent Italian, Rossini (Hegel’s favourite composer) was nicknamed ‘little German’ (il Tedeschino) for his admiration of Mozart, while Liszt would still opine that ‘the yearning for Italy will always be an affliction for beautiful souls’.¹² From Cimbrian ‘barbarians’ to Romantic culture-vultures: given the rich history of interactions across the Alps, one can appreciate why Hegel and his contemporaries tended to take the pairing of ‘German’ and ‘Roman’ as a natural one.¹³

More specific to the years around 1776 are associations of Italy with the ‘beautiful South’. For (it was often said) once the sublime Alps are crossed, a beautiful new world opens up. Gone are the pines, mist, wooden houses, and dour faces: the sky brightens to sunshine, the plains and valleys are filled with fruit and vines, the people are lively and sensuous, talking, singing, playing music, and dancing, in piazzas, churches, and mountain villages—the most beautiful landscapes and cityscapes. Even in its poverty, chaos, and ruins, this Italy seemed alternately beautiful and sublime, ‘the land of wonders’ where travellers might refresh themselves with beakers ‘full of the warm South, full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene’. Whether this marvellous South existed in Umbria, Provence, Helicon, or the viewless realms of Poesy would be too pedantic to ask, and a rounded country squire like Brooke of Middlemarch was not overly fastidious in his recollections of what he saw, when as an adventurous youth in Italy he ‘went into’ the study of the antique—ruins, statues, ‘that kind of thing, you know’.¹⁴ This Brooke of Middlemarch always knew ‘when to pull up’, as he was fond of saying, and didn’t take Italy too much to heart. For others, by contrast, Italy was an epiphany and an affliction: the ‘Stendhal Syndrome’ takes its name from the dizziness and heart palpitations that Stendhal suffered when he first visited Florence and found himself surrounded by such sudden, ubiquitous beauty.

No modern people have proved so susceptible to an Italian syndrome as the Germans. So many travellers went forth, or came back, intoxicated with

¹² Tieck’s yearning for Italy as ‘das gelobten Land der Kunst’ and as the ‘Kunstheimat’ (Herzensergießungen) is amply reflected in Mahr 1996. ‘Land of music’: e.g. ‘Music in Italy’ in Foreign Quarterly Review (1842, April–July), pp. 260–6.
¹³ See, for example, LH 400 or the cultural vision in Ranke’s Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514 (1824).
¹⁴ ‘Land of wonders’: Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, Chapter 1. Eliot’s Middlemarch was published in 1872 but set in 1829–32. For German fascination with Italy (as with Eliot’s Naumann), see e.g. Hausmann, Knoche, and Stammerjohann 1996, Wiegel 2004, and Hachmeister 2002; Barzini 1996: 1–40 offers a humorous Italian perspective on ‘Romantic’ tourists (including an earnest Goethe).
Italy—or with images of Italy—that the German language gained a specific term for the malady: *Italiensehnsucht*, the ‘ache for Italy’. Indeed, the type was recognizable enough that George Eliot’s Rome features Naumann and other ‘long-haired German artists’, whose ‘vigorous enthusiasm’ threatens to revolutionize taste across Europe.¹ From the year of Hegel’s birth, such ‘German-Romans’ (*Deutschrömer*) could go forth armed with Johann Volkmann’s best-selling guidebook, with its expert tips for finding the most beautiful spots.¹⁶ Not all those who went to the ‘land of longing’ (*Land der Sehnsucht*) were ‘aesthetic’ or ‘modern pagans’, and yet—against Mengs, the Nazarenes, Eichendorff, Liszt, and others who yearned for the beauties of Catholic Italy—the two travellers who did most to disseminate the longing for Italy were indeed regarded as ‘pagans’, so thoroughly epitomizing and inspiring German experiences and expectations about antiquity that they were said to be animated by Greek souls.¹⁷ What has come to be called the *Goethezeit* was named by Goethe himself (1749–1832) the ‘Century of Winckelmann’. So in order to further tease out the historical trio of Germany–Italy–Greece that so informs Hegel’s concept of antiquity, let us dwell a moment on these two northern travellers and the South they celebrated.

Winckelmann compared his early life to that of Aeneas. Tormented by fate,¹⁸ he struggled through boyhood poverty but succeeded in teaching himself Greek and much else besides, and by November 1755 finally made it to the shores of his spiritual ‘homeland’. In Rome as a converted Catholic, he worked ultimately for Clement XIII as Prefect of Antiquities (the post held once by Raphael) and German secretary; he met Mengs, Jacques-Louis David, and Robert Adam, like-minded evangelists of neoclassicism; in the villas and palaces of Rome and Naples, and the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, he gathered the materials and ideas that would be published most influentially in his seminal work of art-history, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764). A strange figure, Winckelmann was driven by a mania for a beauty that he could hardly see in Gothic, Baroque, or Rococo—nor even in Renaissance or Roman art, except insofar as they gave a glimpse of the Greek ‘original’. And yet those glimpses came to him

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¹ Middlemarch Chap. 19.
¹⁵ ‘Certainly the most popular “guidebook” of its time’ (Hachmeister 2002: 31), Volkmann’s *Historisch-Kritische Nachrichten von Italien* (1770) sounds its keynote with an introductory chapter on ‘The Beauty of Italy’.
¹⁷ For ‘aesthetic’ and ‘modern paganism’, see Hatfield 1964 and Gay 1966.
only in Rome and Italy, for he refused several opportunities to travel on to Greece itself, and the closest he came to the ‘pure’ Greek was in the temples of Paestum. Winckelmann’s ambivalent stance towards Italy, Rome, and Greece is captured by Wilamowitz: ‘It was his longing for ancient Greece, and for the freedom and beauty for which it stood, that drove him to Italy’.¹⁹

A similar ambiguity attends on Winckelmann’s great admirer, Goethe, whose travels to Italy from 1786–8 were published some thirty years later as the *Italienische Reise* (1816, 1817, 1829).²⁰ Aching for release from little Weimar, longing to emulate his father’s Italian journey and batten his soul on beauty there, Goethe made his secret preparations and then, one night, without warning, fled, hurtling south across the Alps, travelling incognito and not communicating his whereabouts until safe on the other side, in Verona. According to his own account, he seems to have studiously avoided the beauties of Catholic Italy and went straight for antique sites instead: at Assisi, for example, he sought out only the site of the ancient Temple of Minerva; his ‘greatest yearning (Sehnsucht) was to read Tacitus in Rome’.²¹ Initially at least, Rome was (as in Volkmann’s guidebook) the goal of all journeys, end of all roads, the ‘capital of the world’, and itself ‘a world’.²² In this universal city, Goethe spent three and a half months immersing himself in ancient art and mythology and forming a quasi-Platonic theory of divinity, humanity, and artistic creation. But as he hunted for sources of inspiration, it grew on him that Rome was not Greece and that fora, aqueducts, and architecture of ‘form-confusing Rome’²³ did as much to obscure as to reveal the deeper spirit of the Greeks. Concluding that the Romans for all their political greatness were only imitators in art, he struck out again for ‘the South’. Naples seduced him, with its bend of bay and animated people—as did the frescoed houses in nearby Pompeii and Herculaneum. These lively Neapolitans seemed to Goethe unburdened by so many centuries of history: surely among these southern Italians one could glimpse what mankind was like in the beginning? Surely their cheerfulness, song, their Kunst- and Bilderlust, their sensuous spontaneity were redolent of the ancient Greeks themselves, who had first colonized the place as Nea Polis? Much seemed to confirm in Goethe’s imagination that he was nearing

²¹ IR, 130–1, 27 October 1786.
²³ Das gestaltverwirrende Rom: IR, 12 April 1787.
his goal: the Neapolitans were almost Greek, he only needed to travel a little further to touch the heart of things.  

At Paestum, the Doric temples first shocked him with their rough elementality. But reflection allowed him ‘in less than an hour’ to accept them as ‘lofty’, in deference to Winckelmann’s categorization. Venturing even further south, he sailed from Naples to Sicily— to Palermo, and thence to Monreale, Alcamo, and Castelvetrano, the temples of Segesta, Selinus, and Agrigento; he climbed through the centre of the island to Caltanissetta, and continued on east to Catania, Taormina, and Messenia. Throughout this leg of the Italian journey, the Odyssey was his constant companion, and what Homer described so beautifully, he read aloud and strove to see in the Sicily around him. The luxuriant vegetation, mistless skies, and wine-dark sea conjured images of the Phaeacians’ gardens and Poseidon’s storms; the colourful peasantry brought to mind Nausicaa and the Phaeacians, who also took such spontaneous delight in their ‘banquets, music, dancing, changes of raiment, warm baths and the couch’. At Palermo, Goethe was unable to find his quasi-Platonic Urpflanzen among the specimens of the public gardens, but he stocked his mind with images of the Urlandschaft and Urmenschen of the South: a wealth of memories for future poetry. He wrote some 175 lines of a tragic Nausikaa, but more important were the conclusions that Sicily inspired him to draw about Homer, literature, art, humanity, divinity. Nursing a brew of notions—about the original Forms (Urformen) that find variations (Abweichungen) in particular species, about Beauty and other Platonic Ideas made manifest in art, about the Urmenschen so exhaustively revealed in the circle of gods and heroes in Homer and Greek sculpture, about the superiority of the direct, unadorned Classical style to the sentimental, belaboured modern—in Italy and above all in Sicily, Goethe came to his famous verdict and manifesto: ‘Romanticism is sickness, Classicism is health’. Or at least this is how he formulated his ideas in retrospect: Classical and especially ‘Greek’ Italy had cured him of the laboured Sturm und Drang, his own Werther and the self-indulgent ‘Romanticism’ that they presaged. A decisive jolt for the new ‘Classicism’ he

24 See IR entries for Naples, March 1787, with Trevelyan 1941: 151.
25 IR, 23 March 1787.
26 Odyssey 8.246–9, a passage marked by Goethe (cited in Trevelyan 1941: 162).
would develop with Schiller in Weimar, the Italian journey was the turning point of Goethe’s life and career—with Sicily as its climax and culmination: ‘To have seen Italy without having seen Sicily is to not have seen Italy at all, for Sicily is the clue to everything’. 

Goethe’s *Italienische Reise* is both a personal document and a cultural phenomenon. It captured and inspired that longing for the ‘beautiful South’ so characteristic of the time. Yet, initially at least, Goethe did not quite know whether his goal lay in Italy, or Rome, or Sicily, or Greece, or elsewhere. ‘Do you know the land where the lemon-trees blossom?’ The question of Goethe’s Mignon had become proverbial enough by 1826 that it was parodied by Eichendorff, as he set his Taugenichts (‘Good For Nothing’) scurrying vaguely southwards and asking a bewildered farmer for directions to ‘Italy, to Italy, where the pomegranates grow!’ As with the young Goethe, the credentials of this Taugenichts are impeccable: he had often listened to the Porter, who ‘knew a tremendous deal about world history’ and informed him that:

> Italy is a beautiful land. There God in His goodness takes care of everything and you can lie on your back in the sunshine and let the raisins fall into your mouth, and if the tarantula bites, you dance with fantastic flexibility, even if you never learned to dance before.

So thoroughly tutored, Taugenichts sets off, keeping his eyes wide open so as not to fall asleep or miss even a single second of this marvellous ‘Italy’ whenever it might first appear. When at length he nears the fabled city of Rome, he remembers the stories he heard as a boy about its golden gates and glimmering towers, how Venus was buried there and how the old heathens would sometimes rise from their graves to roam about, confusing hapless wanderers.

Eichendorff’s parody strikes home, for one could say that the legends, sights, tarantella music, and mischievous spirits of Italy did indeed inspire a divine confusion in travellers like Taugenichts, Goethe, and Winckelmann: a yearning conviction that *there*, in some temporal Arcadia, accessible to the

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29 *Der Schlüssel zu allem: IR*, 13 April 1787; cf. 12 May 1797 (Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans were all in Sicily); for more on Goethe’s guidebooks to Sicily (by Biscari, Riedesel), see Ceserani 2000: 188–92.

30 On the influence of IR on Eichendorff, Platen, Heine, and generally, see Hachmeister 2002.

31 ‘Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn?’ (Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, III.1).

32 Chapter 3 (my translation; all translations are mine unless otherwise stated).
determined traveller, all is or was perfect. This Arcadian ‘South’ was perhaps most often associated with Italy—a dominant mood captured by the poster-paintings for the time: Tischbein’s Goethe in the Roman Campagna (1787), in which Goethe in traveller’s garb reclines on a fallen column, ancient ruins behind, his gaze extending to infinity; and, even more, Overbeck’s Italia and Germania (1828) in which Germania gazes full-eyed at Italia, who bends her head, laurel-crowned, towards her lap, engrossed in her own rich memories.

Yet the spell of Italy was not absolute. At other times, the earthly Arcadia was descried further off—in medieval Christendom, India, or in even more exotic Tahiti. But most of all it was found in Greece, and in the crucial cases of Winckelmann and Goethe, the ‘real’ South would not be in Italy and Rome, but in Greek Italy and Greece itself.³³ The enthusiasm they felt and caused, together with the French Revolution and ‘Greek’ spirit of liberty, the longing for authenticity, the craving for some this-worldly salvation—all converged in the late 1700s to make Germany the centre for a new philhellenism. The burst of enthusiasm for Greek studies in Germany has been called a second Renaissance, yet it remains a curious fact that such ardent philhellenes as Winckelmann, Herder, Heyne, Goethe, Schiller, Wolf, and Hölderlin never travelled to Greece—some not even to Italy—and fed their imaginations instead on books, journals, reproductions, traveller’s reports, and rumours of radiance.³⁴ Yet out of these broken images, they forged a myth that would haunt the German and European imagination down to the twentieth century: sun-washed Aegean islands, lively people, cities like artworks, and a spirit and way of life in perfect harmony with nature, the divine, and, most of all, itself. This beautiful Greece would long beckon as a refuge from the ugly anomie of modern life, its cities teeming with nameless masses, powered by pitiless machines.

³³ ‘No other geographic location outside of Germany itself plays such a large role in the annals of German literature than does Italy’ (Hachmeister 2002: 3). Butler 1935 and Hatfield 1964 disagree, pointing to the hegemony, even ‘tyranny’, of Greece over the German imagination, though Hatfield equivocates by concluding that ‘the German needs the “otherness” of the Mediterraneane element’ (4–5, italics added). Tahiti: Georg Foster (cf. Hatfield 1964: 2 and 1943: 139ff). Medieval Christendom: e.g. Novalis’s Christenheit oder Europa (1799). India: F. Schlegel’s Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier (1808); cf. Willson 1964, Rothermund 1986, Feldman and Richardson 1972: 349–64. The ideal of Einheit des Lebens pervading these Romantic arcadias Beiser regards as ‘essentially a revival of the classical ideal of the polis’ (2003: 36).

Hegel never visited Italy or Greece, yet he too absorbed and adapted the myth of the South. He would never relinquish Winckelmann’s argument that ancient Greece was ‘the land of beauty’,³⁵ where geography, climate, political freedom, and world-historical situation conspired to create a pre-eminently aesthetic people. His modern Italians are the people of song, his Venetians rival the Dutch as masters in painting, and his Raphael revived classical perfection in a more Christian guise, but Hegel does not admire Florence or Naples as ‘political works of art’ like the Greek poleis. He does not extol the Italian ‘Renaissance’ as the pinnacle of artistic achievement.³⁶ He does not praise aesthetic Catholicism as one of the richest cradles of art. He fairly ignores the architectural triumphs of imperial Rome. In general, he makes a sharper distinction between Greece and Italy than Winckelmann or Goethe had, and when he turns to ancient Rome, the distinction takes on the appearance of a stark, dialectical opposition: harmonious Greek poleis versus the predatory Roman Leviathan, Greece’s organic pluralism versus Rome’s mechanical unity, Greek imagination versus Roman law, spirited Greek geniuses versus their plodding Roman imitators, beautiful Olympian personalities versus faceless Roman numina, Greek Heiterkeit versus Roman gravitas, Greek ‘poetry’ versus Roman ‘prose’. This dichotomy has been a dominant one, persisting from Horace’s Graecia capta to the present day.³⁷ In giving his own variation of it, Hegel reflects not only a long cultural consensus, but also the spreading nationalism of his time, with its accent on difference: in the 1820s, while Hegel was professor in Berlin, Mazzini and others were renewing Machiavelli’s call for the ‘barbarians’ to be expelled,

³⁵ LA, 1.514.
³⁶ ‘The Renaissance’ as a revival of antiquity and catalyst for modernity was first properly conceptualized by Michelet, Voigt, and Burckhardt (Watson, 2010: 91–2).
³⁷ Comparisons (synkriseis) of Greek and Roman hail from antiquity and typically sharpen the difference between Greek high culture (art, literature, philosophy, science) and Roman practical wisdom (morality, politics, law, work, war): Sallust Bellum Catilinae 8, Cicero Tusculan Disputations 1.1–3, Virgil Aeneid 6.847–53, Horace Epistles 2.1.156–7 (cf. E. Fraenkel 1957: 265–6, 388–92); cf. Pliny Naturalis Historia 3.5, Aristides’ On Rome and Tertullian De Anima 30. The trope finds modern variations in Voltaire (Essai sur les moeurs, I.89); Herder (2002: 289); Gibbon (‘the wisdom of Athens…firmly established by the power of Rome’ (1994: Chapter 2)); P.B. Shelley (Hellas, ‘Preface’); Mommsen (History of Rome, 1.11); Joyce (Ulysses, ‘Aeolus’); and Whitehead (2017 [1911]: Chap. 3 ad fin). Though it lingers in the popular imagination, the contrast has faded from recent scholarship, as it explores many ‘practical’ sides of Greek, and ‘creative’ dimensions of Roman civilizations (e.g. Morton-Braund 2005: 262–3). Yet when MacMullen 2011 sketches ‘the Roman character’ as not only conservative, tolerant, practical, and aggressive, but also as nationalistic (not speculative), practical (not ‘logical’), political (not moralizing), legalistic (not mystical), historical (not storytelling), and religious through rituals (not myths), does he offer a veiled synkrisis with the Greeks, that ‘race of thinkers’ (Heath 1981: 1.6)?
and an Italian nation to be founded on an old ideal of Romanità; at the same
time, Greece was struggling towards freedom through its long War of
Independence (1821–32).

The fact that independent Greece was given a Bavarian (Otto I) as its first
king highlights the intensifying sense in German-speaking lands that there
existed an almost unique spiritual bond between modern Germany and
ancient Greece. Here selective enthusiasm could make real similarities
seem overwhelming. Both Greek and German languages are inflected and
form compounds readily; both teem with particles for nuances of emphasis
and mood.³⁸ Both Classical Greek poleis and German states were unified
culturally but politically disparate. What Schiller quipped about Germany
(and Metternich about Italy) could easily be adapted to Archaic or Classical
Greece: where on the map are they?³⁹ A mosaic of kingdoms, duchies,
principalities, free cities, bishoprics, and abbeys, straddled by the Holy
Roman Empire, the Austrian Empire, and Prussia, and spilling out into
cities and communities from the Baltic to the Balkans, and from Strasbourg
to the Volga, ‘Germany’ existed more as idea than reality, and before such
centralized powers as Napoleonic France, its peculiar powers had to be
spiritual rather than material. Germany is the ‘land of poets and thinkers’,
the Greeks were ‘the people of art’, and so the correspondence between the
two seemed almost exact: Kulturvölker, loose confederations before an
aggressive empire (Rome, France), yet destined to conquer its conquerors
by force of innate spiritual energy. Here, not only German literature and
philosophy seemed more home-grown, more alive, than the products of
French classicism and rationalism; the culture of Protestantism also seemed
to recall the freer spirit of Greek religion, in which individuals identified
directly with their deities, unhindered by priestly hierarchies. Such simplifi-
cations lay behind the widespread intuition that Protestant Germany was
to Catholic France what Greece had been to Rome: organic cohesion to
mechanical codes of control; creative spontaneity to artificial canons of

³⁸ Among the many contemporary comparative studies of Greek and German listed by
J.C. Adelung (1809: 2.441) is J.G. Trendelenburg’s Vergleichung der Vorzüge der deutschen
Sprache mit dem Vorzüge der Lateinischen und Griechischen (1788). Hellenomania could lead
to such extraordinary titles as J.W. Kuithan’s Die Germanen und Griechen: Eine Sprache, ein
Volk, eine ausserwekte Geschichte (1822–6). Its argument ‘that ancient Greeks and modern
Germans were the same people and spoke the same language’ (Lloyd-Jones 1982: 22) could,
under the influence of later ethnology, take on a more racial dimension (see Lloyd-Jones
1982: xviii).
³⁹ Schiller: ‘Deutschland? Aber wo liegt es?’ (Xenien 1796). Metternich: Italy is a mere
‘geographical expression’.
‘classical’ taste; living piety to a ritualistic, statist religion. *Das griechische Reich deutscher Nation*, the Greek Empire of the German Nation: Rehm’s phrase captures the sense that, for some of Goethe’s time, a Greek Germany was replacing the old ‘Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation’.⁴⁰

The assumed continuities and differences encoded in the ratio Greece : Germany :: Rome : France also surface, multifariously, in the dynamic that Hegel places at the heart of world-history.⁴¹ In his fourfold division of history into Oriental, Greek, Roman, and Germanic civilizations, Hegel explores all the various possible couplings of our ‘trio’: Greek–Roman, Greek–Germanic, and Roman–Germanic. We have seen how his dialectic tends to oppose Greek ‘poetry’ and Roman ‘prose’. By contrast, his Greek and Germanic worlds are more obviously alike, for, in Hegel’s repeated phrase, the Spirit finds itself first ‘immediately at home’ in Greece.⁴² To translate: educated modern Germans—and not only modern ‘pagans’ like Winckelmann and Goethe—feel themselves almost immediately at ease with things Hellenic, but need studied imagination to penetrate ancient Persia, India, China, and even imperial Rome. At the same time, there were stereotypical differences posited between Greece and Germany which Hegel also sometimes adapts: Greek spontaneity versus German seriousness, Greek exuberance versus German interiority, Greek aestheticism versus German duty, Greek particularism versus German cosmopolitan universalism.⁴³ As for Rome and Germany, Hegel understands imperial Rome as the

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⁴¹ The ratio is perhaps most succinctly illustrated in Ludwig II’s Valhalla memorial (1842, but conceived in the early 1800s), with its neo-Hellenic pediments trumpeting the victories of Arminius over the Romans, and of Germania over Napoleon. This Valhalla is open to all ‘Germans’, i.e. those who speak German: a coupling of language and nation that recalls Isocrates’ coupling of ‘Greekness’ and knowledge of the logos, i.e. Greek language and literature (*Panegyricus* 49–50). Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808) similarly privilege language when praising Greek–German authenticity over the ‘neo-Latin’ (neulateinisch) languages and peoples (i.e. the French). For more on such associations, see e.g. Pinkard 2000: 274–5, Law 2000: 125–6, Hatfield 1964: ix–x, and Rehm 1936. On the French Enlightenment’s fascination with Rome, see Parker 1937: 17–20, Shorey 1938: 153–68, and Norton 1995: 101–4. By contrast, pointing to a different Zeitgeist, Yavetz explores why German historians from Niebuhr turned to the history of Rome, not Greece (1976).


⁴³ Greek spontaneity, Germanic seriousness: e.g. *LA* 2.1221, *LP* 1.427 (on Aristophanes); analogously, A.W. Schlegel contrasts ‘the animation of the South’ with ‘our German seriousness’ (1876 [1809]: Preface), and Nietzsche recommends Aristophanes (with Petronius and Bizet) as (Southern) antidotes to Wagnerianism and the (Northern) ‘spirit of gravity’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 28). Greek trickery versus German honesty is a stereotype Hegel does not exploit: he finds in Luther a paragon of German Redlichkeit (*LH* 414–15), but does not contrast it with Socrates’
immediate opposite and ground of Germanic Christendom. The Romans’
utilitarian religion and force-based politics are opposite to the spirit of
Christian harmony, but at the same time Roman discipline, purposiveness,
law, and deepening subjectivity prepare for Christianity, which ‘Germanic’
peoples are destined to perfect into its modern Lutheran form. In exploring
these three pairings, Hegel’s world-history will be more scholarly and subtle
than the creative classicism of Winckelmann and Goethe: Hegel seeks to
articulate more precisely both the radical differences and deep continuities
between each element of the ‘triad’ of Greece, Rome, and Germany. In the
end, his logical system posits that differences presuppose a deeper ‘identity’,
and so sharp cultural differentiations subsist within a greater, single whole.
A single World-Spirit evolves into each national spirit in turn, and these into
spirited individuals, who contribute unwittingly to the successive meta-
morphoses of the greater whole, until comprehensive German minds
begin to grasp it more consciously—not least Hegel himself, as he attempted
to survey everything and find himself at home there.

1.3. Hegel’s Life and Intellectual Development

The Germanic world as the synthesis of Greece and Rome: this central
aspect of Hegel’s thought can be traced from his Berlin lectures back through
his positions in Heidelberg, Nürnberg, Frankfurt, and Bern and even to his
student days in Tübingen and Stuttgart—years of much intellectual ferment
and experiment. It would be too much to say that he was born at a
crossroads of North and South, but it has been remarked that his native
Württemberg was a zealously Protestant duchy surrounded by more
Catholic Bavaria and Baden. In any case, his education in the classics
began early: his mother taught him some Latin at home; he attended a ‘Latin
school’ from ages 5 to 7, and thereafter until age 17 the Stuttgart
Gymnasium Illustre (1776/77–1788). Now the Eberhard-Ludwigs-
Gymnasium, the school had been founded in 1686 but by the late 1700s

irony; nor does he pit the Kantian imperative against lying with admired Greek tricksters such as Hermes, Odysseus, Histiaeus of Miletus, or Themistocles of Athens.

⁴⁴ For Hegel, southern, Catholic Germany ‘mingles’ Romanic and Germanic: *LH* 419–21. Such stereotypes can linger: for E. Wilkinson, Goethe united through his paternal and maternal stocks ‘those opposing tendencies that have always prevailed in German lands: the intellectual and moral rigour of the north and the easygoing artistic sensuousness of the south’ (1991: 133).
was adapting itself to the prevailing fascination with reason and human perfectibility.⁴⁵ In Rosenkranz’s oft-quoted summary, Hegel’s education there ‘belonged entirely to the Enlightenment with respect to principle, and entirely to classical antiquity with respect to curriculum’.⁴⁶ Certainly this gymnasium education gave him a lasting facility with the two ancient languages. In Latin he wrote a kind of study diary (from roughly 29 July 1785 to 22 March 1786) and an essay De Utilitate Poesos. The remaining records of his book purchases, library borrowings, word-lists, text-preparations, translations, excerpts, and other notes indicate study of a wide range of authors and works, including Homer’s Iliad, Tyrtaeus, Herodotus, Sophocles, Euripides, Thucydides, Isocrates, Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, Demosthenes’ On the Crown, Plautus, Catullus, Cicero, Tibullus, Propertius, Livy, Virgil, Tacitus’ Agricola, Epictetus’ Enchiridion, Longinus’ On the Sublime, Gellius, Ausonius, Claudian, as well as Wieland’s translation of Horace’s Epistles.⁴⁷ Rosenkranz saw the fullest evidence of Hegel’s industry and concluded that ‘one of the largest of these excerpt collections [contains descriptions in Latin of the] life, writings and editions of almost all the ancient authors’, including more minor ones such as Polyaenus.⁴⁸ In all, Hegel’s early linguistic education would allow him later to read both languages easily, to scatter his writings with classical references, to correspond and even to converse in Latin, and to find philosophical depth in individual words; indeed, as a mature pedagogue and thinker he would recommend the ancient languages as propaedeutics to abstract logical thought.⁴⁹ Along with the classics, Hegel studied German

⁴⁷ For more details and discussion, see Teyssèdre 1960.
⁴⁸ Cited in H.S. Harris 1972: 47.
⁴⁹ Casual references: e.g. Letter to Niethammer, October 1808, quoting Virgil Aeneid 1.204 (in Hoffmeister and Nicolin 1961–81: 1.254, Butler and Seiler 1984: 179). Living Latin, conversation: during his gymnasium days, Hegel visited a local Catholic mass in August 1785—perhaps to improve his Latin (Stepelevich 1992: 674–5); in negotiating about possible employment in the Netherlands in December 1809, Hegel was willing to lecture in Latin, ‘at least in the beginning’ (Butler and Seiler 1984: 588); Pinkard recounts an incident in Berlin where speaking Latin (at midnight, in a rowboat on the Spree) proved handy (2000: 449–50); more respectably, he delivered two Latin public lectures as Rector in Berlin (Butler and Seiler 1984: 446–7). Convinced of the indirect, ‘spiritual’ influence of the ancient languages, he defended the classical gymnasium to the Royal General Commissioner of Bavaria (19 September 1810; in Butler and Seiler 1984: 212–13). On the other hand, ‘The Kingdom of God is not to be won merely by the incantation of the words of Latin and Greek’ (to Niethammer, 7 May 1809; in Butler and Seiler 1984: 198). If language is a means to spiritual ends, Hegel decries (in a letter discussing Thucydides’ Pericles) how ‘philology has presently entangled itself in such an erudite cobweb-spinning and labour of barren industry’ that it risks becoming as useless as the ‘science’ of heraldry (29 April 1817: in Butler and Seiler 1984: 365). Nevertheless, he continues to
literature, mathematics, physics, philosophical works like Mendelssohn’s *Phaedo*, and aesthetical ones such as Batteux’s *Einleitung in die schönen Wissenschaften*, whose section on ‘epic’ was well-thumbed, seemingly. Industrious, earnest in the pursuit of Bildung, yearning for a vocation as a scholar and ‘educator of the people’ (Volkserzieher) like Lessing, he was treated as a kindred soul, almost as a peer by teachers like Löfler. Hindsight thus can discern in his school compositions the seeds of later, broader interests: a dialogue between the triumvirs Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian, exploring republican ideas; an essay ‘On the Religion of the Greeks and Romans’; a translation of Sophocles’ *Antigone* into German; reflections on Socrates’ last words. Among Hegel’s favourite books at the time were Schröckh’s *Lehrbuch der allgemeinen Weltgeschichte* and Meiners’s *Grundriss der Geschichte der Menschheit*—precursors of his later style of holistic, world-historical thinking.

Upon graduation, Hegel spent five somewhat discontented years in the Tübingen Stift (1788–93). This bastion of conservative Lutheranism did not fully inspire him, and though always first in the gymnasium, his marks in Tübingen were mediocre, while Renz and Schelling were primi. His official curriculum for the Baccalaureate included Greek, Latin, history, logic, arithmetic, and geometry; for the Magister (1790), he took the regular curriculum of Greek, Hebrew, logic, mathematics, metaphysics, moral philosophy, natural law, and physics; there were lectures on Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum*; Plato was probably included in Bardili’s class on ‘The Use of Profane Authors in Theology’, while the professor of mathematics and physics, Pfleiderer, had a side interest in Greek mathematics. The higher ministerial degree in theology took him into biblical and theological studies, sometimes interpreted along Kantian lines: the most influential man at the Stift was G.C. Storr, who filled the space that Kant had made for a ‘rational faith’ by placing scriptural revelation beyond the merely phenomenal, and so safely beyond the emerging ‘higher criticism’. Through much of this, Hegel recommend Greek and Latin grammar as a propaedeutic to logic (Butler and Seiler 1984: 254, 263–4; SL 36–7, EL §24A2). Individual words: e.g. Greek *historia* (LH 60), Latin *aliud aliud* (SL 90–1, EL §92A) and *tollere* (SL 81–2); cf. Mure 1950: 1–27, Surber 2006 regarding Hegel on language and philosophy.

50 H.S. Harris 1972: 53.
51 *Über die Religion der Griechen und Römer* (August 1787) was, in H.S. Harris’s view, ‘the most important and original piece of work that Hegel produced in his school years’ (1972: 31).
52 For more, see H.S. Harris 1972: 7–8, 28–9.
pursued his own less structured path. Along with the late nights of drinking and playing cards, there were late-night studies and a studious manner that gained him the nickname ‘the Old Man’ (der Alte). He also gained the reputation of being something of an eclectic, as his interests ranged from Greek tragedy, Aristotle, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Herder, and Schiller to botany and astronomy. With Hölderlin and others, he read (and translated) Plato, and the company were inspired by Jacobi’s work on Lessing to take up the Spinozistic and ultimately Neoplatonic motto *hen kai pan*.⁵⁵

In the context of the Tübingen Stift, these were fighting words: a pantheistic catchphrase that conjured up such demons as Rousseau, the revolution in France, and pagan Hellenic culture. For some students, dogmatic theology or Kantian interpretations of Scripture were less compelling than the thought that the ‘Hellenic ideal’ of a unified, harmonious life—where all are one and all in all—was being revived with the new spirit of equality and fraternity across the Rhine. This keynote of the Tübingen years rings through Hegel’s first-semester essay, ‘On some advantages which the reading of ancient classical Greek and Roman writers secures for us’. The main advantage (he argues) is that it liberates us from the shackles of the staid present: ancient literature emerged immediately from experience, was uncluttered by stale abstractions, and so can be read with profit by those who have not known true spontaneity; in particular, the Greeks lived and thought freely, while the imitative Romans already represent a decline, presaging medieval Catholicism and institutional Lutheranism. This opposition of ‘natural’ ancients and ‘artificial’ moderns—typical of Goethe, Schiller, and other contemporaries—‘increasingly dominated’ his thinking at Tübingen, particularly when the Greek *polis* was associated with the spirit of liberty erupting anew in republican France.⁵⁶ Such an association may illuminate why in Tübingen Hegel was ‘perhaps more deeply devoted to the classics than anything modern’.⁵⁷ He would himself later claim, in an official *curriculum vitae*, that he chose theology in Tübingen and teaching positions

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⁵⁵ On the Neoplatonic provenance of the term, see Assmann 1998: 80–1, 139–41.


⁵⁷ H.S. Harris 1993: 25.
in Bern and Frankfurt because they allowed him to continue to devote himself to ‘classical literature and philosophy’.58

The mix of ideas preoccupying Hegel at this time, and his inner rift between Hellenophile and seminarian, are even more evident in his ‘Tübingen Fragment’ (1793). Like the first-semester essay, this piece turns around a postulated dichotomy between the ‘objective religion’ of dogmatic theology and fixed ceremonies that have drained worship of joy and self-confidence, and the ‘subjective religion’ that is the true core of religious life. This is not the ‘subjectivity’ of merely personal desires or fears, but rather the confident joy of the heart that knows God—via the Kantian practical postulates of personal immortality and divine justice, which dwell as ‘ideas’ in every heart, including pagan hearts like Coriolanus’ or Socrates’. These bring a living faith beyond the ersatz knowledge of the theological understanding (Verstand), and all those Enlightenment ‘babbling quacks peddling shop-worn panaceas’, ‘cold cognitions and deft displays of verbal dexterity’. Though their stale formulae inspire little real Christian faith, Hegel does accept the need for a rational theology, by which the truths of the ‘heart’ can be bodied forth in ‘objective’ ceremonies and customs. He thus introduces his long-cherished ideal of a ‘folk religion’, which expresses the universal ideas in the people’s heart through aesthetic forms, which in turn elevate sensations, imagination, mind, will—the whole being of the worshipper—to consciousness of God.

Such ideas look forward to the ‘mythology of reason’ of the Oldest System Programme, as well as to Hegel’s mature notion of Sittlichkeit—the will of a community objectified in its customs and institutions—which the Phenomenology of Spirit (PS) will detect first in the ‘aesthetic democracies’ and ‘artistic religion’ of the Greeks. So too, the Tübingen Fragment invokes the Greeks as proof that a quasi-Kantian ‘folk religion’ is possible. For rational conceptions of the divine were reflected in the Greeks’ joyful customs and beautiful festivals: the Greek deities rewarded the good, and Nemesis punished the bad; pain was a contingency to be endured with ‘strength of soul’ and simple ‘trust in divine providence’; suffering was not falsified with abstract consolations of theodicy. Equally rational was the absence of a Greek sense of guilt or sin, and the happy gratitude marking their festive sacrifices. Thinking wearily of the dour Lutheran Eucharist, Hegel cries out in rapture: ‘How different were the Greeks! They approached

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58 Nohl 1907: viii–ix.
the altars of their friendly gods clad in the colors of joy, their faces, open invitations to friendship and love, beaming with good cheer. Between these Greeks and their gods there intervened no meddling mediators: their religious life was wholly their own, and was not imposed as a duty by some ‘nagging schoolmarm’. Most important, religion was not limited to Sunday worship but pervaded all life, every activity from war to drinking being sanctified by some deity or festival. The Fragment closes with a strained adaptation of Socrates’ myth of Poros and Penia in Plato’s Symposium. In place of Plato’s Eros there arises now the ‘Spirit of Nations’, son of Fortune and Freedom. Natural Religion herself

reared this child without fear of the rod or ghosts in the dark, without the bittersweet honey bread of mysticism or the fetters of words which would keep him perpetually immature. Instead she had him drink the clear and healthful milk of pure sensations. With the flowers of her fine and free imagination she adorned the impenetrable veil that removes the deity from our gaze, conjuring up behind it a realm inhabited by living images onto which he projected the great ideas his heart brings forth in all the fullness of its noble and beautiful sentiments.

Hegel was probably not fully aware of how such dithyrambic effusions to Natural Religion and the Spirit of the Nations echoed the propaganda of Revolutionary France and its ersatz festivals to Reason and the Supreme Deity. But the Fragment’s ambiguous ending must surely be consciously modelled on the melancholy close of Winckelmann’s History of Ancient Art: the happy time of Greek folk religion is past, we know of it only by ‘hearsay’, and though its scanty memories are enough to ‘awaken a painful longing for the original’, in reality its spirit has ‘fled from the earth’.

After Tübingen, Hegel’s Wanderjahre as a house-tutor in Bern and Frankfurt gradually weaned him off his nostalgia for the fair ruins of Greece. His horizons and studies broadened even further. In Bern (1793–6), he saw at close hand the culture and hothouse politics of a small, aristocratic city-state; he read Thucydides, Montesquieu, Spinoza,
Hume, political economists (James Steuart, Adam Smith, Ricardo), and Gibbon. At one level, he would accept Gibbon’s ‘philosophic’ thesis that the Roman Empire dissolved before Germanic ‘barbarism’ and early Christian ‘superstition’; yet his later, longer world-historical vision coupled the decline of Rome with the more profound progress effected by the spirit of ‘Germanic’ Christendom. He experimented too with ideas about the metamorphosis of Greek folk religion into the ‘positive religion’ of the early Church, and yearned still for a return to the holistic civic religion of the Classical _polis_. With such somewhat unorthodox thoughts in mind, he dreaded becoming a Lutheran minister—a legal obligation, if a position were found—and hoped still to make his fortune as Lessing had, making Kant’s ideas accessible to all, as an ‘educator of the people’.

In Frankfurt (1797–1800), he returned to a more varied urban existence and to the welcome company of his friend Hölderlin. Anticipation of reunion with his old roommate inspired a long poem ‘Eleusis’ in August 1796: the Eleusinian mysteries in which they were initiates are not to be defiled by scholarly curiosity or fixed concepts of chattering ‘Sophists’, for it is the imagination, not abstract thought, that melds finite mortals with divine infinity. With Hölderlin Hegel thus felt his way through Romantic-idealistic ideas that would become more systematically ‘scientific’ in later years. Two works in particular mark a turning point. _The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate_ (1798–9) has been called ‘in many respects…the birthplace of Hegel’s mature philosophy’, while a more Romantic voice appears in the fragmentary ‘Oldest System Programme of German Idealism’ (c.1797). The manuscript is in Hegel’s hand, but the contents have been attributed to Schelling, Hölderlin, Hegel himself, or combinations of the three. In any case, it presents a new variation of his Tübingen philhellenism: a Kantian morality bodied forth in an aesthetic way of life. Namely, in the ‘German Idealism’ proposed, the Idea of the absolutely free mind will be shown to produce the natural world out of itself (the true _creatio ex nihilo_); from nature arises man and all his works, which in the course of world-history will become progressively more beautiful; in this long

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61 See _EM_ §549 for a clear allusion to Gibbon’s theme. In Bern and Frankfurt, he also read Böhme, Eckhart, and Tauler—what Rosenkranz calls his ‘theosophical phase’ (Magee 2001: 3).

62 From the Bern years come the _Bern Fragments_, a Kantian _Life of Jesus_ (1795), and _The Positivity of the Christian Religion_.

63 Language of ‘the mysteries’ reappears in _PS_, Preface: punning on _Geist_ (spirit, alcohol) Hegel pictures Truth as ‘the Bacchanalian revel in which no member is not drunk’ (cf. Magee 2001: 130–2).

64 Beiser 2005: 12.
upward evolution, poetry holds pride of place as the ‘teacher of mankind’, for what the poet was for early societies, he will become again in fully enlightened times—the one who speaks the Idea sensuously. The ‘highest act of Reason’ will therefore be an ‘aesthetic’ one, and under the tutelage of its philosopher-artists society will enjoy a true ‘religion of the senses’. The ‘mythology of Reason’ created by these poet-thinkers will be ‘monothesism of reason and heart, polytheism of the imagination and of art’. Speaking to sage and superficial alike, it will bring about an ideal freedom, equality, and brotherhood. It will be the ‘last <and> greatest work of mankind’.

Whoever wrote such a sentence was ambitious—and naïve: the ideal of a philosophical art, with images to mediate between mind and sense, stretches from Plato’s myth-making Guardians to Augustine’s thoughts on Christian art, from Dante’s theological lyrics to Nietzsche’s ‘music-making Socrates’ and Zarathustra; in Hegel’s lifetime, Schiller advocated an ‘aesthetic education’ and many Romantic artists longed for a new mythology to replace or revive Christianity. Hegel’s own ambitions were somewhat eclipsed during his years in Jena (1801–7). He arrived too late to experience the exciting atmosphere of the so-called Frühromantik. Fichte had resigned his post as Rector amid great controversy; his student admirers were drifting away; the Schlegels had gone, as had Novalis, Tieck, and Schleiermacher. But Schelling remained, and under his patronage and encouragement, Hegel hurriedly completed his Habilitation (in Latin), De Orbitis Planetarum (1801), to be able to secure a position as Privatdozent. With Schelling, he edited the Critical Journal of Philosophy, and his Differenzschrift (1801) defended the ‘objective’ idealism of Schelling’s philosophy of nature against the ‘subjective’ idealism of Fichte. The work inspired the quip that out of Württemberg had come a ‘stout warrior’ to defend Schelling. Despite appearances, however, he was no mere henchman. In 1807 his Phenomenology of Spirit seemed to burst forth as a declaration of philosophical independence. Its snide description of Schelling’s Absolute as ‘the night in which all cows are black’—as mysterious as Novalis’ Night or Jacobi’s vaguely felt infinite—was a cutting criticism that Schelling never quite forgave. The sense of difference was sharpened by an enthusiastic review that contrasted Hegel

68 PS Preface §16.
as ‘the German Aristotle’ to Schelling’s Plato: here was serious, scientific prose to supersede Schelling’s more poetic essays.⁶⁹

Hegel’s first published book, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is often taken as his most insightful and challenging. It is also one of his most difficult, as it attempts to condense individual experience, and even all human history, into a single trajectory from immediate sensation to absolute knowledge. It begins not by postulating some criterion for reality and truth, but by throwing the reader in medias res, into the immediacy of the most rudimentary ‘form of consciousness’—the sensuous certainty of present objects. This, it argues, rests on the rudimentary universals, *this*, *here*, *now*, and *I*. Acts of sensation rest on an implicit ‘I experience this here now’, and even the sheer act of pointing gains sense only from a complex of universals implicit in but not derivative from sense certainty.⁷⁰ Thus language proves more primordial and ‘divine’ than sensation, which is reduced to a special case of the next, higher form of mind—perception. The analysis of perception, in turn, and of understanding, self-consciousness, reason, and of the spirit of art and religion, each gives way to an ever higher form of mind—until in the end, mind recognizes itself, in the fullness of ‘Absolute knowing’.

The laborious path to this absolute knowledge lies through antiquity and its successors, and *PS* weds history to analysis almost at every stage. It immerses the reader in significant stages of ancient life—Greek statuary and athletics, Homeric religion, the *polis*, Sophocles’ *Antigone*, the master–slave relation, the Stoicism and Scepticism that ushered in the world-weariness and ‘unhappy consciousness’ of late antiquity. These, along with moments of the Middle Ages, seventeenth century, Enlightenment, and French Revolution exemplify the concluding thought of *PS*: history preserves in memory that which seems merely contingent and discrete, but the ‘comprehended history’ (*begriffene Geschichte*) that constitutes absolute knowledge recognizes the inner unity of past contingencies, and sees in the whole trajectory a ‘slow procession and succession of spiritual shapes (*Geistern*), a gallery of pictures, each of which is endowed with the entire wealth of Spirit’.⁷¹ In the past, this succession of spiritual forms was slow and laborious because individuals needed time to ‘assimilate all this wealth of its substance’. In philosophical memory, by contrast, time speeds up, and in

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⁷⁰ Cf. *EL* §20 on how all words are implicit universals.

⁷¹ *PS* §808 (tr. Baillie).
infinite Mind is altogether sublimated: the whole is grasped in an instant. The exact correspondences between chronological epochs and moments of PS may be difficult to specify. Yet because the ideal of an almost one-to-one correspondence between the contents of ‘pure’ mind and their historical instantiations would hover as a will-o’-the-wisp before Hegel’s SL and Berlin lectures, one surmises that he was groping towards it in PS also: the ideal of a world-history logically organized so that all salient facts are shown to be pervaded by a single intelligible structure. This is not just an intellectual ideal, let alone an exercise in mere scholarship. To immerse one’s mind in the evolving phenomena of Mind entails ethical and religious metamorphosis: ‘comprehended history’ is Erinnerung—memory, anamnesis, interiorization, meditation; it is the ‘Calvary of the Absolute Spirit’ (Schädelstätte des absoluten Geistes).

Hegel’s own description of PS as a Golgotha of the spirit and a ‘way of the soul’ has been supplemented by many other interpretive labels. It has been called a ‘voyage of discovery’, a Bildungsroman with Spirit as hero, a tragedy, a comedy, a Gesamtkunstwerk, a palimpsest, a propaedeutic to his system, or the first part of that system itself. Equally or even more appropriate (yet less frequent) are comparisons with various ancient works. An epic of sorts, PS partially resembles the Odyssey as a panorama of experience: Homer tells of ‘the man’ who ‘saw the cities of many people and learned their minds’ (Odyssey 1.3), while Hegel follows ‘the Spirit’ as it wanders through its own past, encountering again the Geister and forms of consciousness that compose it; Odysseus is much-enduring and cunning, while Geist endures the terror of history, dialectically adapting to and mastering circumstances; both return home to triumph. In a different vein, PS could be partially assimilated to Platonic schemes of education: like Plato’s Divided Line, PS points the reader out of the ‘Cave’ of shadowy sensation towards the Idea of the Good, educating the mind to ‘rely on ideas only and progress systematically through ideas’. Similarly, PS retracts in its own idiom the Neoplatonic

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73 PS §808.
75 Republic 501b (αὐτοῖς ἐιδέσι δὲ αὐτῶν τῇ μέθοδον ποιουμένη, Shorey translation slightly adapted). Other partial comparisons to Plato include Kojève 1980: 183 (PS resembles a Platonic
curriculum that ascends from the protreptic *Alcibiades* I through to the *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, and *Parmenides*; it offers a modern version of St Bonaventure’s *itinerium mentis in Deum.* Like such schemes, *PS* is a work of protrepsis, and Hegel was as aware as any Socratic evangelist that Nürnberg schoolboys, Berlin students, aesthetes, the worldly-wise, and others need to be prodded into thought.

Ancient too is the principle ‘like knows like’, which *PS* shares with so many Greek and Roman thinkers for whom man, as microcosm, does and should reflect the macrocosm. In Hegel’s variation of the epistemological principle, each form of consciousness is innerly related to its object: the two are mutually constructive, for a particular mental outlook is constituted by what it thinks, while what it can think is a congeries of those universals accessible to it; as the mind grows in knowledge of itself and objects, it recognizes the limits of both its present perspective and present objects, and so ‘what first appeared as the object sinks for consciousness to the level of its way of knowing it’ (*PS* §87), and thinking opens out to a broader perspective; or again, as the mind disciplines itself to observing and thinking the object ‘objectively’, it grows conscious of how its own categories transcendentally determine the object as phenomenon, recognizes the inner unity of itself and the phenomenon, and so graduates to a sense of a new whole including both. Ultimately, ‘in the limit’ (to use the language of mathematical analysis), when the mind matures to absolute self-consciousness it can recognize the nullity of the distinction between thinking and being: all ‘objects’ are recognized as not only related to mind, but essential components and expressions of it—concrete individuals themselves wholly intelligible and therefore organic moments of Absolute Mind.

Even if it raised Hegel to the level of absolute knowledge, *PS* did not land him an academic job. After Jena he reverted to his old ambition to become an educator of the people of sorts, first as a journalist and editor of the local *Bamberger Zeitung* (1807–8), then as rector and philosophy teacher in the Aegidien-Gymnasium in Nürnberg (1808–16). Here, in line with dialogue ‘between the great Systems of history’); Stace 1955: §6 (*PS*’s analysis of sense-certainty reveals the sensual object as ‘a congeries of concepts or universals’, i.e. objective Platonic Ideas); Hartnack 1998: 3 (sense-certainty recalls the mind-set of prisoners in Plato’s Cave, while negative Socratic dialectic resembles Hegel’s use of negation in *PS* and *SL*); and Speight 2008: 38 (formulations in *PS* §§105–6 recall Cratylus’ silent pointing).

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Niethammer’s educational reforms, Hegel stressed Greek, philosophy, and their importance for humanistic Bildung. He rewrote the curriculum, taught Greek, calculus, philosophy, and religion, and promoted Homer and ancient literature over German, still convinced of the ‘advantages’ offered by Greek beauty and wholeness of life. His rectoral address of 1809 (‘On Classical Studies’) is interesting reading for a classicist.⁷⁷ Accepting the dethronement of the older, narrower, Latin-based education, he argues that the newly constituted gymnasium still offers the best grounding for life.⁷⁸ Studying the ancient world in depth is essential for many reasons, practical, ethical, metaphysical: narrowly utilitarian states falter and lose even their wealth when their citizens fail to cultivate their souls and inner freedom, forgetting that nothing is more stimulating and many-sided than ancient literature, for ‘in the compass of no other civilization was there ever united so much that was splendid, admirable, original’ (ETW 326); language is the key to a less mediated experience of antiquity, and here even the seemingly mechanical study of grammar offers the first lessons in logical thought, for in learning the parts of speech and their lawful combinations, in applying general rules to particular cases or recognizing the general in the particular, the young student in fact gains an acquaintance with the categories of the understanding itself—lessons in abstract thought that cannot be gained except in a foreign language, and particularly one not spoken; such immersion in ancient grammar, language, literature, and history transports the student out of the present, but far from being a useless academic exercise, studying the glories of antiquity satisfies the most profound need of selfhood, if it is indeed true that a necessary stage in maturation is a self-estrangement from one’s immediate present, and that the further one ‘travels’ the richer one returns ‘home’:

This centrifugal force of the soul explains why the soul must always be provided with the means of estranging itself from its natural condition and essence, and why in particular the young mind must be led into a remote and foreign world. Now, the screen best suited to perform this task of estrangement for the sake of education is the world and language of the ancients. This world separates us from ourselves, but at the same time it grants us the cardinal means of returning to ourselves: we reconcile

⁷⁷ T. Knox includes a full translation in ETW 321–30.
⁷⁸ LH 419 suggests that the neglect of Greek after the Counter-Reformation helped consign the Catholic world (in Hegel’s view) to anachronism.
ourselves with it and thereby find ourselves again in it, but the self which we then find is the one which accords with the tone and universal essence of mind. (ETW 328)

The passage is rich with the seeds of future thoughts on the inner affinity of mind, nature, and world-history, but it also clearly affirms Hegel’s dedication to a living tradition. History forms a single whole, the past is prelude to the future, and so the young should study the ancient world because that is the ‘best’ means for becoming fully integrated, modern selves. Indeed, a gymnasium education is the prerequisite of future progress: like Antaeus, ‘every revival and reinvigoration of science and culture has emerged into the light out of a return to antiquity’.

The subtle idealism of Hegel’s address must, one imagines, have largely been lost on his audience: how far from then forethought of the famed Berlin Rector, when as headmaster he had to oversee the boisterous banalities of a boys’ secondary school! He was (Rosenkranz writes) like Pegasus ‘harnessed to the plough’. And yet Hegel himself recognized that the labours of teaching taught him to articulate his ideas more clearly than he had in PS. Life also grew more settled and solidly bourgeois: Hegel and Marie von Tucher married in 1811. Yet through it all, his inner Pegasus ploughed on. In three laborious volumes, the Science of Logic (SL, 1812–16) argues audaciously for the inner unity of all fundamental concepts and laws of thought, both with each other and with extra-logical actuality. As an ontological and even temporal logic, SL claimed to prove and make concrete the unity of thought and being with which the Eleatics had inaugurated philosophy itself. Detailing this unity would become for Hegel the project of modernity, which he laboured to complete as a university professor: the deduction from thought of the most concrete structure of nature and human history.

An overview of this project appeared in the three volumes of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences (EPS, 1817), which Hegel published as professor of philosophy at Heidelberg (1816–18). Before he had taken up this post, however, the patronage of Niethammer bore sudden fruit in August 1816 when Hegel learned of his appointment as His Royal Majesty’s Professor of Philology in Erlangen University, with additional titles as ‘Professor of Poetry, of Eloquence, of the Greek and Latin languages’. In June Hegel had tentatively proposed himself for some such university post, even expressing his desire to give lectures in philology as well as philosophy. But the offer came after his acceptance of a chair in philosophy in Heidelberg, and in extricating himself from an awkward
situation, he offered, among other reasons, his preference for a philosophy professorship and an unwillingness ‘to burden myself with a renewed study and elaboration of a subject outside the science of my professional expertise’. How different his career might have been had Hegel gone to Erlangen rather than Heidelberg!

Yet Heidelberg also offered colleagues and friends intimately involved with the ancient world. The jurist Anton Thibaut (1772–1840) would become an ally in Hegel’s quarrel with Savigny on historical method and Roman law. Other associates were Johann Voss (translator of Homer) and his son, Heinrich, professor of classical philology. Most important of all was Georg Friedrich Creuzer (1771–1858), professor of philology and ancient history from 1804, and author of Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen (1812). Hegel would advertise Creuzer as his ‘honoured friend’, link his theory of symbolism with Neoplatonic allegory, adapt his thesis of an Oriental basis for Greek religion, and even develop his own notion of a ‘symbolic’ mode of art. In all, though Heidelberg was not the intellectual and cultural centre that it had been in the early 1800s, it still suited Hegel’s ambitions: remade in the image of Jena, it was an ancient yet ‘modern’ university, rooted in tradition yet hospitable to progressive ideals of Bildung and Wissenschaft—the formation of autonomous selves through disciplined ‘science’—and with its various disciplines united theoretically under the philosophical (rather than the theological) faculty.

When in 1818 the call came to Berlin and to Fichte’s old chair of philosophy, Hegel could hardly refuse, persuaded by Karl von Altenstein, the reforming education minister, that Berlin would indeed be the appropriate centre from which to disseminate his ideas to Germany and a wider Europe. Berlin in the 1820s would be an exciting place intellectually: Wilhelm von Humboldt was active in linguistics, Böckh in philology, Ritter in geography, Savigny in law, Schleiermacher in theology, Schopenhauer in philosophy, Felix Mendelssohn in music, while younger luminaries like Droysen and Ranke were on the rise, and after 1827 the famed explorer and polymath Alexander von Humboldt was about town. In Berlin Hegel finally came into his own. The Philosophy of Right (PR) appeared (1820), as did EPS (1827, 1830) and revisions of the SL (1831); at the time of his death a new edition of the PS was under way. But his main

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energies went into lecturing. Hegel himself writes of how hard he worked on them, and it would seem that after the foundational *PS* and *SL* and the comprehensive outline of the *EPS*, he essentially laboured to fill in the details—particularly to fill out the concluding paragraphs in *EPS* on Objective and Absolute Spirit. This would only be consistent with his frequent assertion that *the* task of modern philosophy is not to discover the fundamental ideas (which had been the Greeks’ task), but to unify and exemplify them in actuality. *Qua* modern thinker, then, Hegel labours in his lectures to interpret all known finite particulars as moments within a single, rational system, and so reveal how each phenomenon is a unique refraction of Spirit. His lectures were clearly a work in progress, and we have only the uncompleted (and controversial) fragments of a complete system: Hegel’s sudden death by cholera in 1831 prompted his followers to combine his manuscripts with student notes into the neat, readable form now represented by the published *Lectures on Fine Art*, *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion*, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, and *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*.82

1.4. One System in Four Formulae

From 1776, when he entered the gymnasium, to his death in 1831: a lifetime of continuous study informs the twenty hefty volumes of Hegel’s collected writings as published by Suhrkamp. Could one sum it all up in a phrase?83 Despite Hegel’s repeated warnings, many remain content with formulaic clichés. ‘Absolute idealism’, ‘thesis-antithesis-synthesis’, ‘the real is the rational’, ‘the state is the march of God on earth’, or ‘Oriental nations knew that one is free; the Greeks and Romans that some are free; whilst we know that all men are free’ and so forth—such phrases can be repeated glibly, without appreciation of the considerations behind them.84 Kant

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81 See e.g. Butler and Seiler 1984: 603.
82 Abbreviated henceforth as *LA*, *LR*, *LP*, and *LH*, respectively. See Abbreviations for further details of the editions whose translations I quote (unless otherwise indicated).
invokes Virgil’s Latin to keep the lazy drones from the honeypot of science.\textsuperscript{85} while Hegel for his part complains how many skim the preface or table of contents without proceeding to the book itself. His early ambition to ‘educate the people’ therefore gave way to a later vocabulary and style that are much more challenging, even forbidding.\textsuperscript{86} At the same time, thought is ‘the most trenchant epitomist’ as it distils much into little, and accurately concentrates the diffuse into its essence.\textsuperscript{87} Four formulae do helpfully epitomize Hegel’s method and ideas; they feature constantly in all his lecture series, and I will draw on them regularly.

The first of these formulae is that \textit{The true is the whole} (\textit{Das Wahre ist das Ganze}). Each entity exists and can be understood only in relation to the wholes in which it is situated, from immediate neighbours to the all-embracing totality of which they are constitutive moments. As for Aristotle, empirical particulars are known first ‘to us’, and we must know particulars before graduating to universals; conversely, particulars derive their intelligibility ultimately from universals, which are known first ‘in themselves’. Aristotle’s distinction is thus intimately related to Hegel’s own ‘circular epistemology’ by which particulars and universals, parts and wholes, ‘lower’ and ‘higher’, and even past and present exist and are intelligible only through each other. The holistic method and ontology of this first formula can be traced back to his student essays, but its first obvious triumph is \textit{PS}, as it strives to articulate the whole underlying each form of consciousness: Absolute Knowing is that whole which creates and heals the subject–object divide, down to sense-perception. Hegel’s synopsis of \textit{PS} is often taken to epitomize his whole philosophical project: ‘In my view…everything depends on grasping the true not merely as Substance

\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Ignavum, fucos, pecus a praesepibus arcent} (\textit{Georgics} 4.168), quoted in \textit{Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics}.

\textsuperscript{86} This is true even as his mature style consciously rejects Greek and Latin vocabulary for a more Germanic idiom: ‘it belongs to the highest cultural development of the people to say everything in their own language’ (1804 lecture, cited in \textit{EL} xv; cf. Butler and Seiler 1984: 212–13, \textit{LP} 3.114), while Greek and Roman words encourage verbal juggling—the shallow thinking of the understanding (\textit{Verstand}). So too in an 1805 letter to J.H. Voss: ‘Luther has made the Bible speak German; you, Homer—the greatest present that can be given to a people; for a people is barbarous and does not consider the excellent things it knows as its own property until it gets to know them in its own language;—if you would forget these two examples, I should like to say of my aspirations that I shall try to teach philosophy to speak German. Once that is accomplished, it will be infinitely more difficult to give shallowness the appearance of profound speech’ (in Butler and Seiler 1984: 107).

\textsuperscript{87} \textit{LH} 5 (thought exemplified by Livy’s concision).
but as Subject as well.\textsuperscript{88} With this phrase, Hegel aims to cap his generation’s ambition to reconcile Spinoza’s monism of substance with Fichte’s subjective idealism, Newtonian nature with free mind—the split that Kant’s critical philosophy had established and decried in equal measure.\textsuperscript{89}

*Substance evolves into subjectivity*: this second formula can be read into the trifold division of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, the book that Hegel published (1817) and rewrote (1827, 1830) as an overview of his system. Here the Stoic traid of logic–physics–ethics is explicitly carried over into its three parts of Logic–Nature–Spirit, envisioned as a trinity of equals, a circle in which each part implies and is implied by all others, with no absolutely privileged entry point or foundational principle. The *Encyclopedia* presents Hegel’s sense of the logical (i.e. non-historical) evolution from the abstract Concept of Logic through its progressively more complex embodiments in the phenomena of external Nature and of Spirit—the realm of human psychology (‘subjective spirit’), politics (‘objective spirit’) and culture (art, religion, philosophy: ‘absolute spirit’). The progression from the foundational and substantial to the spiritual gives us a third formula: Logic–Nature–Spirit.

Our fourth and final formula is at once the most abstract and widely applicable. This is the first triad defining Hegel’s logical Concept and basic to his theory of the syllogism—the triad of *universality, particularity, and individuality* (henceforth abbreviated as UPI).\textsuperscript{90} Kant had argued that the stuff of sense experience comes shaped by the transcendental forms of time, space, and the categories of the understanding. Phenomena are the synthesis of two elements: the sensual and *a posteriori*, and the categorical or synthetic *a priori*—in Aristotelian terms, the matter of intuition comes shaped by the *a priori* forms of the experiencing subject. Hegel, for his part, stresses the

\textsuperscript{88} PS Preface, §17. The phrase has a distinct importance for Hellenic studies, in that it underlies Snell’s application of it to Greek culture: from Homer’s substantial ‘objectivity’ to Platonic dialogue of deliberate selves, Snell’s Greeks slowly ‘discovered’ self-consciously subjective *Geist* (1953). His thesis has been rehabilitated by Jeremiah (2012), whose linguistic focus concludes with avowedly Hegelian interpretations of e.g. Platonic Ideas, *auta kath’ auta*—self-articulated wholes. In this regard, Gill’s promotion of an ‘objective-participant’ model of the self (over Cartesian ‘subjective-individualist’ ones) knows of (1996: 40 n.34) but does not pursue parallels with Hegel’s many-sided (logical, political, historical) contrast of abstract, ‘atomistic’ versus concrete, ‘ethical’ selves: Hegel’s conception of *Sittlichkeit* takes prime inspiration from his Greece, just as Gill’s ‘objective-participant’ self is ‘framed with Greek thinking in mind’ (1996: 10). Note also (*pace* Gill 1996: 14–15) that ‘Romantic’ thinkers like Hegel insist upon the dialogic interplay of self and other (nature, history, God).

\textsuperscript{89} On this ambition, see Beiser 2003: 131–52.

\textsuperscript{90} For a synopsis, see Inwood 1999: 136–9.
unity of these two analytic elements of intuition and the synthetic a priori. For him, sensual Anschauung provides the particular filling of experiences, while subjective categories provide their universal framework. Particular and universal thus become abstract aspects of the concrete reality—the phenomenal individual. As a result, each entity or phenomenon is recognized to exhibit the same fundamental ‘life-cycle’: a universal notion or essence evolves or unfolds its inner determinations, thus particularizing itself into a plurality of parts, each of which manifests the entity’s whole essence, and which together constitute the entity as an individual. As the inner structure of reality, the UPI triad is thereby the key to knowledge also. Any scientifically organized study should begin with a universal concept (Begriff) which broadly delimits the subject matter. From this it should proceed to relevant particulars (Besondere), relating them to each other, and to the universal concept that unites them. The result is a holistic understanding of phenomena as concrete individuals (Einzelnhe) in whose particularity the concept is uniquely manifested. Most concisely, then, each entity is to be understood as a ‘concrete universal’, at once uniquely particular and yet shot through by universal categories that define it in relation to every other. Hegel deploys this UPI triad constantly, and it may well articulate what is for him the inner pattern, law, ‘code’, or ‘deep structure’⁹¹ that pervades all thinking disciplines, all objects of all thought. Logic, inanimate nature, animate life, the will, family, state, art-works of all genres, religions, philosophies and their histories—all these reflect to the knowing mind the UPI dynamic of the Concept. Thinking subject and thought object share the same inner structure. Hence Hegel’s idealistic proclamation: ‘all things are a judgment’ and ‘everything is a syllogism’.⁹² Or, more precisely, all that exists exists inasmuch as it is ‘the Idea’—the logical Concept made individually actual. Hegel is able to discern his UPI dialectic in an impressive range of disciplines and phenomena, both large-scale and miniature, both modern and ancient. His ingenuity and virtuosity have been seductive to admirers, and should at least give pause to those critics who glibly dismiss his Absolute Idealism as ‘a priori’.


⁹² Judgment: EL §167 (cf. Stace 1955: §325). Alles ist ein Schluß: EL §181; cf. EL §§24, 198. World-history as a judgment: PR §341. Most broadly: ‘The universe involves the logical idea (U), nature (P) and spirit (I): in his system, Hegel presents them in the order U-P-I, but any order would be equally appropriate, since each term mediates the other two’ (Inwood 1999: 139). Rescher 2007 gives a modern defence of dialectics (including Hegel’s version) as broadly applicable to thinking and objective phenomena.
1.5. The Encyclopedic Ideal: Hegel and Wolfian

Altertumswissenschaft

The last three formulae (substance-to-subject, Logic–Nature–Spirit, UPI) severely epitomize PS, EPS, and SL, and so risk seeming merely idiosyncratic to Hegel. In fact, they place him at the very centre of intellectual debates, both old and revolutionary. The formula ‘from substance to subjectivity’ sees the emergence of the complex and articulated from the simple and inchoate: an ascent from matter to mind, essentially. So too, the EPS categories see a non-temporal ‘unfolding’ of the Concept through Logic and Nature, graduating then to a temporal evolution at the level of Spirit and human history. Both formulae belong among early versions of historical evolution, the organizing idea that would itself evolve into perhaps the grand narrative of post-Darwinian modernity. Less hindsight is needed to appreciate how Hegel’s EPS categories resonate with the centrepiece of the Enlightenment’s modernity: the ideal of encyclopedia. Previous ages had their compendia and summae, going back to Pliny the Elder, but the modern spirit of the Encyclopédie grew in strength from Bacon to Christian Wolff and Diderot, and the various national academies, learned societies and architectonic systems from Hobbes to Kant inform Hegel’s ambition to give human knowledge its final, philosophical organization. In this regard, he eschews Diderot’s alphabetical and quasi-equalitarian ordering as a mere aggregate of discrete entries, and looks back rather to Wolff, and ultimately the Stoics, who first divide knowledge into its three proper divisions—logic, physics, and ethics. Indeed Hegel’s ‘circular epistemology’ can be seen as re-enacting the etymology of the word: this en-cyclo-pedia provides an integrated circle (kyklos) of knowledge, with parts mutually informing each other rather than simply juxtaposed externally.93

This holism of principle and fact is most evident in the ‘concrete universal’ of the UPI formula, and finds precedents in two monumental works of synthesis: Montesquieu’s Spirit of the Laws (1748) and Winckelmann’s History of Ancient Art (1764). Montesquieu’s Preface speaks of how years of empirical sifting yielded those ‘first principles’ from which ‘particular

cases’ could be deduced, organized, and thoroughly interrelated. Montesquieu’s holistic approach would inspire Winckelmann as he reflected on the influence of climates, customs, beliefs and political constitutions on specific ancient art-works. In both cases, the ‘spirit’ of a people is the universal that underlies and is revealed in particular laws or art-works—and yet this ‘spirit’ is known fully only after much reading of documents, much scrambling about sites, much Argus-eyed examination of art-works. Clearly much empirical knowledge went into the making of both books, yet their exposition is quasi-deductive. This is especially evident in Winckelmann’s History, as it moves from the universal notion of art (Allgemeiner Begriff) to the three particular stages (necessity, beauty, superfluity) by which all artistic traditions must allegedly develop.

The quasi-Hegelian language of universal Begriff and particular instantiations is also strikingly evident in the Altertumswissenschaft emerging in Hegel’s lifetime. This ‘science of antiquity’, integrating philology, history, philosophy, religion, material culture, and so forth, would become the regulative ideal for nineteenth-century research, but perhaps its greatest first impetus came from Winckelmann’s wayward enthusiasm. From his stubborn longing for Grecian beauty came a holistic history of ancient art, whose methods were promoted first by Heyne, and institutionalized more decisively through Wolf’s influence in the University of Berlin. Winckelmann’s holism lies behind Wolf’s broad definition of philology as the ‘knowledge of human nature as exhibited in antiquity’, while Wolf’s pupil Böckh refined the notion of a totius antiquitatis cognitio by specifying five subdisciplines—public life, private life, religion and art, philosophy and literature, and language. Most striking are the parallels between their programmatic statements and Hegel’s UPI dialectic: in defining the new ‘science of antiquity’, Wolf fastens on ‘the idea, or concept of philology’ (Die Idee der Philologie oder ihr Begriff); in Böckh’s hands, each science must have its leading Begriff encompassing and informing its constituent parts, while the most universal Begriff belongs now to ‘philosophy’, as the chief science which the others develop in ‘specific directions’.

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94 ‘I have laid down the first principles, and have found that the particular cases follow naturally from them . . . ’ (tr. Nugent).
95 For Montesquieu’s influence on Winckelmann, see Potts 1994: 33–46, Harloe 2013: 114.
bore fruit in 1839 when August von Pauly (1796–1845) published the first volume of the *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. After this, the deluge: through the nineteenth century, dissertations, articles, volumes, and compendia streamed forth from the state-funded mines of *Altertumswissenschaft*, as great teams of ‘scholars, many of them nameless, toiled like the Nibelungen under the direction of gigantic figures like Böckh and later Mommsen’.⁹⁷

By 1921, Wilamowitz would claim that ‘the conquest of the ancient world by science was completed’⁹⁸ and his *History of Classical Philology* looks back with pride at the heroic pioneers and champions of the great enterprise. Wilamowitz treats classical philology as if it were a self-enclosed world of thought, where editions and commentaries are produced, unaffected by wars, revolutions, theories, or discoveries external to scholarship itself. Intent on the Berlin of Wolf, Schleiermacher, and Bekker, for example, Wilamowitz does not mention Hegel. Yet as he paints his ‘grey on grey’, reflecting about a ‘form of life grown old’ after a century of precise scholarship, the knowing reader will sense the shadow of Hegel’s ghost hovering near. Wilamowitz opens with a defining universal: ‘The nature of classical scholarship is . . . defined by its subject matter: Graeco-Roman civilisation in its essence and in every facet of its existence’.⁹⁹ That civilization was a ‘unity’ (he goes on), and therefore its corresponding science must be unified. In practice, of course, that science must be divided up into particular specializations, but still every specialist should always maintain an ‘awareness of the whole’: this *History* aims to bolster the scholar’s awareness of his vocation within and contribution to the great tradition. Thus, like Böckh, Wilamowitz in his opening paragraph effectively revisits the ‘circular epistemology’ elaborated more complexly by Hegel: the ‘true is the whole’, which can be apprehended only by a systematic immersion in all its constitutive parts, while the parts in turn cannot be grasped without some ‘awareness of the whole’ informing them; objective material and subjective disciplines (or, expressed ‘in the Greek way . . . philosophy’) should correspond, as scholarship seeks to reflect the ‘unity’ of Greco-Roman civilization in a single organized whole, transforming initial, indeterminate wonder into a final, precise science. Indeed, even Wilamowitz’s naïve assumption that

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particular studies, conducted by scholars separated by language, culture, and time, will all somehow coalesce as contributions to the one, comprehensive science—this positivistic assumption is encoded in Hegel’s deeper argument that past advances in politics, art, religion, and philosophy must all converge on the one Idea, and that through the disparate efforts of spirited individuals the Spirit itself works to realize itself as their ultimate end. Certainly Hegel would not reject the contemplative ideal that Wilamowitz finds realized in classical philology, as it brings ‘that dead world to life by the power of science’ and attains a ‘pure, beatific contemplation of something we have come to understand in all its truth and beauty’. Here indeed is an Aufhebung of the ‘bustling life of market and port’, the ‘poet’s song, the thought of the philosopher’ into the still higher synthesis of systematic ‘science’. In all, antiquity and Altertumswissenschaft correspond to each other as perfectly as the Hegelian correspondence of object and subject, being and thinking, though Wilamowitz eschews any language of an ‘Absolute’ grounding both.

This juxtaposition of the German ‘science of antiquity’ and the Hegelian Idea is rarely made, even though Hegel was in Berlin a colleague of many of the early giants of German philology.¹ Foremost here is Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824). If as a schoolboy and theology student Hegel was teased as the ‘Old Man’ for poring over his extracts, Wolf too was known for a studious nature that ran even to asceticism. As a student (it is said), he read his way through all the ancient authors in six months, staying up late, and closing one eye to rest it while the other continued reading. If in 1795 Hegel was assimilating Gibbon and writing ‘Eleusis’, Wolf was finishing the Prolegomena in Homerum, the book that launched his career and is often seen as foundational for Altertumswissenschaft. Noting that writing is hardly mentioned in the Homeric poems, Wolf argues that they started as a collection of separate ballads, sung at appropriate occasions and handed down from illiterate poets to rhapsodes until the time of Pisistratus’ Panathenaea when, with the aid of writing, they were ‘stitched’ together into the continuous wholes that are largely what we now have. Wolf’s thesis fired the imagination of contemporaries like Goethe, and as the ‘Kant of philology’ he enjoyed a fame that the younger Hegel might have envied. Both fled the French advance in 1807, and in the same year that Hegel published PS, Wolf published Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft. He went on to a university professorship and thence promoted his new, more

¹ Hegel is not mentioned in Brill’s New Pauly, for example.
analytic approach to texts. Wolf’s dissections of Homer and Plato’s *Timaeus* did not impress Hegel, however, and he sharply criticized them as fundamentally wrong-headed.¹ Wolf was not the only object of Hegel’s barbed remarks. Niebuhr is also singled out as representative of the ‘higher criticism’, whose subjective assumptions are too often disparate and unanchored in a truly universal framework.¹² Not at all daunted by these ‘founding fathers’, Hegel also rounds on classical philologists, jurists, and others who merely turn over the ‘rust of antiquity’, stupefied by their own erudition.¹³ Could such jibes be aimed towards followers of Wolf and Niebuhr, men like August Bekker,¹⁴ August Böckh,¹⁵ and Karl Lachmann?²

Niebuhr, Wolf, Bekker, Böckh, Lachmann and many others contributed mightily to the revolution of German scholarship from the 1760s to the 1830s. In this revolution, the humanities gained a new prominence over the medieval, professional triad of law, medicine, and theology, and at the centre of humanistic studies and the ‘Faculty of Philosophy’ were *Altertumswissenschaft* and philosophy proper. Wolf postulated that ‘in ancient times there were only two nations that attained a higher spiritual

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¹ On Homer, Wolf is oblivious to the first principle of aesthetics, that art-works are unified—and by a single intelligence: *LA* 2.1049–50, 1087. His ‘unmethodical’ *Timaeus* interpretation is ignorant of the ‘deep inward reason’ of Platonic dialogues: *LP* 2.72. Despite such criticisms, Hegel remained on friendly terms with Wolf personally (Butler and Seiler 1984: 364, 444).

¹² Niebuhr (1776–1831), royal Prussian historian from 1810, Prussian ambassador to the Vatican from 1816, was not present in Hegel’s Berlin, but he was ‘the first commanding figure in modern historiography’ (Gooch 1913: 14) and his *History of Rome* ‘virtually created the modern study of Roman history’ (Momigliano 1982: 8). It was an important touchstone for Hegel’s views of early Rome, though he is critical—and hardly shares the general rapture at Niebuhr’s intellect.


¹⁴ Bekker (1785–1871) was a student of Wolf; professor of philosophy in Berlin from 1810 until 1871, where he edited Thucydides, Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, Attic orators, Livy, Tacitus, and Sextus Empiricus; he succeeded Niebuhr as editor of the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*.

¹⁵ Böckh (1785–1867) also studied with Wolf; he knew Creuzer in Heidelberg before moving to Berlin in 1809 where from 1811 to 1867 he worked as professor of rhetoric and classical literature, publishing editions of Pindar and Sophocles’ *Antigone*, seminal books on Pindaric meter, Greek music, Pythagorean-Platonic science, and Athenian finance. He took up Niebuhr’s lead by inaugurating the *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*. His collected lectures between 1809 and 1865 appeared in 1877 as *Enzyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften*.

¹⁶ Lachmann (1793–1851) moved from Königsberg to Berlin in 1825 as professor of classical and Germanic philology. His work ranged from Scripture and Augustan lyric to medieval German lyric, the *Nibelungenlied*, and translations of Shakespeare; in classical philology, his most influential works are his Wolfian *Betrachtungen über die Ilias* (1847) and edition of Lucretius (1850).
culture (Geistes-Cultur), the Greeks and Romans’, and Greek studies gained particular prominence through the influence of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835). With his enthusiasm for comparative linguistics and a science of ‘universal symbolism’ as part of an even more universal science of ‘anthropology’, von Humboldt prized Greek in particular as the language of poetry and culture. The beauty of Greek literature would ward off a deadening erudition and creeping pragmatism, and so von Humboldt helped to make the gymnasium a university prerequisite, thus institutionalizing for a century or more the Graecomania of aesthetes like Winckelmann. As a young Hellenophile, Nürnberg gymnasium-teacher, and Berlin professor, Hegel also straddled this transition ‘from ideals to institutions’, from aesthetic ‘emulation’ of classical models to disinterested, ‘scientific’ contemplation of them as timelessly given realities. Hegel’s lectures offer a variation on von Humboldt’s ideal—humane Bildung through universal Wissenschaft. Indeed, he parallels Wolf by locating the emergence of a higher, self-conscious ‘spirit’ among the Greeks and Romans. At the same time, with Creuzer and biblical scholars he continues to relate the Greek world to its ‘Oriental’ predecessors, while with jurists and historians his Romans look forward to a ‘Germanic’ Europe. More succinctly, Hegel’s Greco-Roman Mediterranean is heir to an Oriental past, and progenitor of a Germanic, Christian future.

In many ways then, Greek and Rome form the centre of Hegel’s encyclopedia of human history and ‘Spirit’. This has not yet been explored in all its overlapping ramifications. Hegel is most often situated in relation to his many future disciples, revisers, enemies: the list of figures that claim him as a major influence—to think with or against—is astonishingly long. Hegel is also clearly a thinker of his own present: the

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107 Cited in Markner and Veltri 1999: 61.
109 On immediate followers such as Feuerbach, Strauss, Bauer, Ruge; on Schopenhauer, Heine, Wagner, Burckhardt, and indirectly Nietzsche, Ibsen, Soloviev, and Foucault; on Kierkegaard and later existentualists like Sartre; on Bradley, Bosanquet, and other British Idealists; indirectly on early analysts Moore and Russell, and more directly on later analysts such as Sellars and McDowell; on Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and hence on the later Frankfurt School; on process thinkers such as Peirce, James, and Whitehead who claimed to naturalize absolute idealism; on Dewey’s pragmatism, Gadamer’s hermeneutics, Bakhtin’s criticism, and Oakeshott’s conservatism; on Levi-Strauss’s binary structures and post-structuralists like Lacan and Derrida; on contemporaries like C. Taylor, Zizek, and W.J. Desmond—on all these, Hegel’s influence is felt, now a benevolent inspiration, now a hegemonic foe: it may be impossible,
Enlightenment, Kant, German Idealism, Romanticism, the French Revolution. His own times were the revolutionary forge of the modern world, and yet as he reflects upon them, he often sets himself self-consciously against the merely topical or fashionable. In thinking modernity, Hegel is self-consciously a thinker of the past—indeed, the deep past. His vast historical horizon throws his mind past the Reformation, over medieval Christendom, to ancient Rome and Greece, and the even more ancient cultures of the Orient. All these have borne a needful part in making up the modern present, and they continue to shape future revolutions: 'Just as Antaeus renewed his powers by touching Mother Earth, so has every revival and reinvigoration of science and culture emerged into the light out of a return to antiquity'.

These words of Hegel to the Nürnberg Gymnasium in 1809 bear repeating, being so very applicable to his own intellectual labours, from logic to aesthetics, for it is often not so much among the living as among the ancient dead that he finds his most vital interlocutors. The Greek polis, for example, first illustrates his innovative conception of ethical life (Sittlichkeit); his Socrates first heralds moral conscience; the dialectic of dogmatism and scepticism is profoundly resolved in the Roman world; Roman law first begins to reflect the absolute status of subjectivity; the Roman Empire first presages modern constitutional monarchies; Greek achievements in sculpture and poetry define those genres forever, while the 'classical' Ideal becomes definitive of art itself; Greek anthropomorphic religion and the Roman pantheon were the matrix of Christianity, the 'religion of truth'; Parmenides, Heraclitus, Plato, and Aristotle are vital teachers, whose wealth of thought has still not been fully mined; just as the Mediterranean 'middle sea' (Mittelmeer) unites Africa, Asia, and Europe, so the universal Greek genius and universal Roman empire received all the insights of ancient man, synthesized, improved, and bequeathed them to the even more comprehensive civilization of medieval and modern, 'Germanic' Europe.

1.6. Hegel’s Antiquity: Overview

In explicating such assertions, this study aims to situate Hegel’s mature thought in relation to the stretch of history that was arguably most important for him—the Greek and Roman eras. Why, and in what specific ways, was antiquity vital for Hegel? From Homer to Justinian, what did he say, and not say, about the ancient world? What did he know, and not know? What were his sources? What prejudices and self-conscious assumptions shaped his selection from them? What modern writers, scholars, or trends influenced his ideas? How did his own system influence his perspectives on antiquity? How did those perspectives shape or colour his system? How have Hegel’s ideas about Greek and Roman civilizations overlapped with those of classicists? Does his antiquity remain of living interest today?

In tackling questions like these, and in exploring the mutual entanglement of knower and known, as Hegel both shapes, and is shaped by, his antiquity, I will focus mainly on his Berlin lectures on art, religion, philosophy, and world history, as well as on PR (also based on his lectures). Revised continuously through the 1820s, collated and published posthumously, the lectures are a vast trove of explorations, assertions, insights, suggestions.¹¹ Indeed, they often contain more material than his published writings, and may well represent Hegel’s ongoing struggle to produce a fully ‘concrete’ encyclopedia of human knowledge. Certainly, they do for those sections on Absolute Mind in EM §553–77 what PR does for those on objective mind in EM §483–552, or what LH does for the appendix of PR—namely expand, fill in details, and so ‘individualize’ the wholeness of reality into ever finer, more integrated fact. In doing so (readers may be relieved to hear), the lectures are often far more accessible than PS or SL. The language is clearer, the ideas more vividly illustrated with historical examples or discussions. This pervasive historicity frustrates any purely analytical reading and exemplifies Hegel’s conviction that philosophy is not only the history of philosophy,

¹¹ Scepticism regarding editorial manipulation (Gethmann-Siefert 1984: 276–80, 1992: 9–39 on LA; Menn 2010: 98 n.8 on Michelet’s 1840 LP) is countered by e.g. Inwood 1983: 6 (‘I can see no significant divergence between Hegel and his editors’), McCarney 2000: 7–9, Barasch 1990: 179. The lectures were attended by the likes of Felix Mendelssohn, David Strauss, Heinrich Heine, Droysen, and so what Donelan writes of LA can be generalized: ‘however compromised it may be, this edition represents what has been considered Hegel’s thoughts for almost two centuries and as Stephen Bungay notes, will remain “an important historical document in its own right”, no matter how discredited’ (2008: 71, citing Bungay 1984: 7). For similar reasons, I have mainly used the older, traditional editions (e.g. Haldane’s LP, Sibree’s LH): newer critical editions (Brown 2006, Hodgson 2011) are exceptional resources, but remain less easily available.
but is the considered history of mankind itself, in *all* its multiform complexity.

The result is something different from previous studies of Hegel and antiquity. These have tended to focus, repeatedly, on a few hallowed topics or themes: Hegel and Sophocles’ *Antigone*, Hegel and Plato, Hegel and Aristotle, Hegel and the Sceptics, Hegel and Neoplatonism, Hegel and dialectic. Beyond these, his relations to many Greek artists, poets, historians, and philosophers remain relatively unexplored. Even less attention has been paid to Hegel’s Rome, even though Roman law, religion, and Gibbon are arguably as important for his system as the ‘Hellenic ideal’.¹¹¹ Some of my individual explorations are thus (to my knowledge) relatively new. While this book cannot possibly detail *all* the relations between *all* the multifarious dimensions of antiquity, of Hegel’s thought, of his contemporaries and times, and of later developments in classical scholarship and other fields, nevertheless the primary task that it sets itself is still ambitious: to synthesize, as objectively and holistically as possible, the salient features of Hegel’s grasp of most of the ancient figures and phenomena known to him.

In pursuit of this, my chapters follow Hegel’s own map for a modern *itinerarium mentis in Deum*, moving from themes of ‘objective spirit’ in the *Philosophy of Right* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (Chapter 2) to those of ‘absolute spirit’ in the *Lectures on Fine Art* (Chapter 3), *Lectures on Religion* (Chapter 4), and *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Chapter 5), and culminating with a look at the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* again, understood now as an evolutionary narrative, an attempted synthesis of everything. Each chapter can be read as a separate study, with readings of Hegel’s readings which I can alternately criticize and extend, as each seems to me limited or promising. At a higher level, the chapters are composed in dialogue with each other and draw on more global works like *PS*, *SL*, and *EPS*, in the conviction that the holistic dimension of Hegel’s thinking remains most valid and inspiring. Hegel’s global outlook brings figures, genres, and periods into connections that more parochial specialists cannot or dare not draw, and the results can remain insightful—or at least thought-provoking. Certainly he approaches individual phenomena from multiple historical and intellectual angles, and his reflections on the relation of art,

¹¹¹ Gray 1941 remains the main work in English, an excellent synthesis but too beholden to Hegel’s own perspective. Butler 1935, Trevelyan 1941, Hatfield 1964 also tend to accept versions of the Greeks as mediated by the German authors, a shortcoming partially overcome in Billings 2014 and Valdez 2014.
say, to politics, to religion, to philosophy, and to history, remain vital touchstones for many debates. Of course, even when striving to be objective, Hegel can do violence to antiquity—submitting it to his yoke and (like Blake) driving his ‘plow over the bones of the dead’. Or to take yet another favoured metaphor: of the many ‘stars’ from the many ‘constellations’ that enter into the universe of discourse, Hegel would tend to treat his own system as the absolute centre of gravity of the ‘galaxy’ of minds—the telos of the world, and ‘truth’ of the past.¹¹² Like many others, I have resisted this in the interests of pluralism, highlighting moments of discontinuity between antiquity and Hegel’s antiquity. Hegel’s corpus can be taken as a ktēma es aeí, treasure-trove and grab-bag, from which individuals may plunder whatever ideas they find intriguing, enriching, intelligent, insightful, or even right. At the same time, one must respect the fact that his work aims to be a system—holistic, consistent, encyclopedic, and even complete. While few now would accept that system as final, Hegel’s systematic formulae (e.g. ‘substance evolves into subjectivity’) remain resonant—for and beyond classical scholarship—and so they thread through all chapters, and are central to the last.

The book is titled Hegel’s Antiquity, but to capture its mixture of reconstruction, exposition, interpretation, contextualization, creative elaboration, and sympathetic critique, it might be dignified with a fuller nineteenth-century name. With a bow to Kierkegaard, then, let me modestly propose a more grandiloquent title, as an advertisement and warning to the buyer:

_Hegel’s Antiquity: or Hegel’s Theory of Everything, with continual references to the Greeks and Romans, not excluding allusions to Oriental and Germanic peoples, from Achilles to Zenobia and from Adam to Zwingli, being a compendium, defence and critique of the scientific attempt at a system that would consistently and fairly completely describe, explain, and account for the old Mediterranean peoples in their geographical, political, artistic, religious, philosophical, and world-historical contexts._

It is my hope that readers of the following will appreciate how Hegel’s Greece and Rome inform and are informed by his ideas, and therefore lie at the centre of a system that is alternately limited and insightful, idiosyncratic and scholarly, conservative and cutting-edge—a personal synthesis, a reflection of his times, a construct that remains in itself striking, stimulating, and who knows, perhaps even still somewhat seductive.

¹¹² For the concept and term Konstellationsforschung, see Henrich 1991; Mulsow and Stamm 2005.