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## *Gebäude auf Abbruch?* The digital archive of Kant's *Opus postumum*

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**Abstract.** Over two hundred years after Immanuel Kant's death, the first full, critical, and digital edition of his last manuscript is currently being completed by the *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften*. This edition stands in institutional continuity with Wilhelm Dilthey's monumental *Akademieausgabe* of Kant's writings that was grounded in Dilthey's lastingly influential concept of the national, literary-philosophical archive. The new edition showcases Kant's dynamic writing process as a matter of investigation in its own right. As I argue here, it brings into view the constitutive role of the archive for both texts and interpretative practices. A historical perspective that links the legacy of the *Akademieausgabe* with the digital edition of the *Opus postumum* highlights the changing role of the archive in emphasising or de-emphasising the manuscript's resistance to certain appropriations and stylisations of Kant as a thinker.

**Keywords.** Immanuel Kant, *Opus postumum*, Wilhelm Dilthey, digital edition, philosophical archive.

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The shock is palpable when Julius von Pflugk-Harttung, a historian known above all as an expert on medieval papal documents, has before him the manuscript on which Immanuel Kant was working during the last years of his life. The papers were in a state of disarray, but this much was to be expected when von Pflugk-Harttung visited Pastor Albrecht Krause in Hamburg to inspect the autograph that Krause had purchased in 1884, eighty years after Kant's death. The thirteen bundles of mostly folio-size sheets and some octavo inlays that had covered Kant's desk in 1804 disappeared initially, were found again in the 1840s and went through many different hands before they ended up with Krause – hands that ordered and reordered them, removed some pages and misplaced others. The paleographer von Pflugk-Harttung was trained to restore order to papers that had been assembled and reassembled, or fallen apart through the centuries. But when he analyses Kant's autograph in 1887, the trouble isn't just that he finds a draft rather than a complete

manuscript in these these disorderly pages. Rather, the clearly «unfinished manuscript» is testimony of an «overwhelming» process of being worked and reworked all over again. Instead of «carrying his thoughts to maturity in his head», Kant wrote them down in preliminary fashion. And this «written record, the first text, gradually took the shape of a building in the process of demolition [*Gebäude auf Abbruch*], a building he reconsidered later to tear down some pieces, and leave others standing» (Pflugk-Harttung [1889]: 37)<sup>1</sup>.

It was a striking metaphor to reach as the result of this early investigation of Kant's working process. In von Pflugk-Harttung's paleographic analysis, Kant's writing appears as a perpetual construction site, constantly being built and rebuilt. If the metaphor were to slide from the description of Kant's autograph to that of his philosophical endeavour, it might suggest the potential for destruction within the architectural imagery that is so central to his work in the *Critiques*, and that corresponds to his pivotal notion of systematicity. While some present-day readings of Kant's architectural metaphors stress precisely this dynamic aspect of strain, demolition or collapse, and reconstruction (see Purdy [2011]: 65)<sup>2</sup>, a rather different public image of Kant's philosophical system had come to dominate by the late nineteenth century, and through yet another slide of architectural metaphors. To the extent that his critical system could be portrayed as a building, it took on the shape of a national monument, culminating in the complete edition of Kant's works by the Prussian Royal Academy of the Sciences begun in 1894 as both research resource and monument, *Denkmal*. And accordingly, von Pflugk-Harttung takes great care to keep separate the image that emerged from his analysis of Kant's writing process from his published works. Throughout this first textual-material analysis of what has come to be known as Kant's *Opus postumum*, von Pflugk-Harttung emphasises the autograph's draft charac-

ter<sup>3</sup>. As markers of a process of genesis of thought, he clearly distinguishes the folio sheets covered in handwriting from an imagined end result that Kant did not live to complete and sanction – thereby leaving intact, reassuringly, the image of Kant's systematic oeuvre as a building meant to last, be it understood as foundational or as a document to a system overcome by subsequent ones.

And yet, the sheets von Pflugk-Harttung analysed in the late nineteenth century are among the few surviving manuscripts of Kant's, and the most extensive among those (see Förster [1993]: XXV; Stark [1988]: 13). The *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (BBAW), successor institution to the Prussian Academy of Sciences, has been working on a digital edition of the manuscript of the *Opus postumum*, or O.p., since 2001. Part of a major revision of the entire *Akademieausgabe* initiated a century earlier by Wilhelm Dilthey, the digital reproduction and transcription of Kant's last manuscript invites us to return, with regard to one of the archetypical «great white men», to some of the long-standing questions connecting manuscripts and archives: questions regarding the status of the handwritten text between both carrier of semantic meaning and graphic material trace, the stability of the boundary between the genesis of a work and its final status, and the institutional role of the archive in the «transform[ation] of documents into monuments» (Weigel [2005]: 5).

The new, digital edition opens up access to Kant's working manuscript to those unfamiliar with his hand, and without the time, skills, and patience to decipher multiple layers of writing often crossed out or overwritten, wrapped around page corners and connected by a complex hierarchy of symbols and markers. As far as digital edi-

<sup>1</sup> All translations are the author's.

<sup>2</sup> See also Eichberger (1999), Brodsky (1988), Morgan (2000).

<sup>3</sup> The title choice is problematic but it has stuck, brief and memorable as it is. Further confusion has arisen from the fact that the papers in Krause's possession also contain notes that are unrelated to the drafts of what has come to be known as the *Opus postumum*, and from a frequent lack of distinction between the term's referent of either manuscript or the «work» it is taken to contain (see Brandt [1991]: 5, 9).

tions go, it is very much a conservative project in the sense that it uses the digital medium to display the results of traditional philological research rather than aiming for new research methods associated with the digital humanities such as corpus building and data mining. But this conservative digital approach nevertheless provokes new reflections on Kant's work, and on the interpretative practices associated with editorial and archival practices. As Jacqueline Karl, head of the BBAW's *Kant-Arbeitsstelle* in Potsdam, has demonstrated, the edition gives unique insights into Kant's working procedure (Karl [2007]). These insights have produced new perspectives also on Kant's earlier work, such as Stephen Howard's compelling observation that the formal differences between a completed canonical work like the *First Critique*, and the preliminary character of the *Opus postumum* mask previously underappreciated similarities in their dynamic material form and open-ended «process of philosophising» (Howard [2018]: 86).

And as I argue in what follows, the BBAW edition's showcasing of Kant's material working processes marks these processes as a matter worthy of investigation in their own right. The decision to highlight them as such, rather than merely as a resource to refine hermeneutical tools, is in resonance with a recent emphasis in edition philology to present and analyse manuscripts not merely as forerunners to imagined final products but as «testimony *sui generis*» (Giuriato, Kammer [2006]: 18). The dynamic, constantly deconstructing and reconstructing character of Kant's material working process brings into focus the ambivalence of the architectonic metaphors used to refer to his autographs, to his systematic philosophy, and to his legacy as a thinker portrayed as both national figure and of universal significance. Despite its emphasis on the institutional continuity with its Royal Prussian predecessor, the BBAW edition places under some strain the monumental picture of the thinker Kant. What is digitally reproduced here is the «search for text» (to borrow this expression from Reuß [1999]: 16), wrapped by the bundle in newspaper pages and announcements of prizes and deaths.

In contrast to the extensive problematisation of the archival constitution of historical «sources», or of the museal constitution of «cultural heritage» both arising largely out of the investigation of colonial disciplinary pasts, much of academic philosophy has not followed the push by Derrida and others to question the «exteriority» of the sign to the signified (Giuriato, Kammer [2006]: 9)<sup>4</sup>. The default working assumption is that of the disembodied idea «that is an idea, even if no writing tool succeeds in gouging the skull it is born in»; consequently, the material text is taken to reflect such ideality more or less unproblematically (Stingelin [2004]: 14)<sup>5</sup>. The philosophical archive is associated more firmly with the philological tradition of restoring such ideal content where required than with the constitutive role that the process of collecting itself, and the process of selecting and editing material for publication have for philosophical texts. In the case of Kant's O.p., its publication in the *Akademieausgabe* (AA) is very much part of an edition project that is, in turn, «intricately connected with the political developments of the German state» (Stark [1993]: 4).

At the outset of my argument below, I return to the well-known history of the editorial debacle of the O.p.'s initial publication within the AA so as to stress its subsumption under Dilthey's approach of portraying Kant's intellectual development towards the system of the *Critiques*, and his association of that system with an imagery of secure foundations. In contrast, the BBAW's foregrounding of Kant's writing process aligns the O.p. manuscript with different readings of Kant's architectural metaphors, readings that emphasise the limits of knowledge, and the architectonics as the result of working and reworking. The editorial choice of making as tangible as (digitally) possible the autograph's «constellation character» (Reuß [1999]: 19) marks its difference from a «text» associated with some degree of finality. It brings into view the

<sup>4</sup> See Thiel (1990) for an extended reflection on the problem of the genesis and editorial status of philosophical texts.

<sup>5</sup> A prominent philosophical counterexample to the default position of keeping material carrier and ideal content apart is Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of symbolical forms; see Schubbach (2008).

constitutive role of archival and editorial decisions for both texts themselves, and for the interpretative practices that structure academic disciplines. Therefore I suggest in my concluding section that the BBAW's edition of the O.p. amounts to a desacralisation of the thinker Kant in the archive – despite the seemingly pious detailed reproduction of the result of each and every movement of his pen on the page, and despite the institutional continuity with the Royal Prussian Academy that played an important role in stabilising that very sacralisation at the turn of the twentieth century.

### 1. PIETY: THE O.P. MANUSCRIPT IN DILTHEY'S AKADEMIEAUSGABE

In one crucial respect, the O.p. manuscript's history was fortuitous. The manuscript remained largely intact, while the bulk of Kant's autographs ended up in a state of *Verzettelung* (Stark [1991]: 286) after his death: of being separated into many single, short pieces and distributed among friends, acquaintances and publishers<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, even after the manuscript's – by now legendary – geographical and legal odyssey that started on Kant's desk in Königsberg in 1804, there *was* something substantial enough to be published as part of the AA, the critical edition of Kant's complete writings begun under Dilthey's direction at the Royal Prussian Academy of the Sciences in 1894<sup>7</sup>. The O.p. eventually appeared as volumes 21 and 22 in 1936 and 1938. Despite manifest editorial problems, these volumes have been the textual basis for interpretations of the O.p. and the assessment of its place within Kant's work more broadly<sup>8</sup>, and

<sup>6</sup> Some parts of the manuscript nevertheless are lost (see Förster [1993]: XXIV).

<sup>7</sup> On the questions regarding the publication of the manuscripts after Kant's death, see Brandt (1991: 1-2). For detailed accounts of the manuscript's history, see Förster (1993: XVI-XXIII), and Basile (2013: 459-498). On the AA, see Stark (2000).

<sup>8</sup> The edition was both internally inconsistent, and guided by editorial principles that conflicted with those used in other volumes of the *Nachlass*; more details below. See Förster (1993: XXIII).

also for Eckart Förster and Michael Rosen's 1993 English translation of selected parts of the texts that is widely acknowledged as the best edition currently available<sup>9</sup>.

Kant's manuscript bears the initial title *Transition from the Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science to Physics*, and most of its philosophical reception history has focussed on questions related to this transition – a transition required, if we are to believe Kant in a famous 1798 letter, to complete his philosophical system, «or else a gap will remain in the critical philosophy»<sup>10</sup>. So while the manuscript is unfinished, the philosophical stakes are high. Does the *Transition* achieve its goal of completing the critical philosophy, and how so? Or does Kant's attempt to bridge transcendental philosophy and empirical science result in abandoning the critical project altogether? It is not my goal here to weigh in on these ongoing discussions<sup>11</sup>; rather, I seek to highlight the changing role of the archive in emphasising or de-emphasising the manuscript's resistance to certain appropriations and stylisations of Kant as a thinker. My focus in this section is on the AA of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; the following two sections turn to the BBAW digital edition currently in the process of completion.

For Wilhelm Dilthey, who succeeded in convincing the Royal Prussian Academy of taking on the «honourable duty» of publishing Kant's complete works (Dilthey [1889a]: 569), the «shipwreck» (Dilthey [1889b]: 11) that were to him Kant's scattered papers, «some of them ending up at a grocer's to be used for wrapping coffee and herrings» (Dilthey [1889a]: 568) had been the prime example of the documents that should be kept in the new kind of institution he lobbied

<sup>9</sup> On Kant (1993), see Sturm (1999: 101).

<sup>10</sup> This announcement comes eight years after Kant had declared his «critical undertaking» complete with the *Critique of Judgment*, Förster (1993: XVI). The title changes over the course of the years Kant was working on the manuscript.

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of the extensive literature on the O.p. see Basile (2013); another recent book-length intervention in the debate is Hall (2015).

for from late 1890s onward: the literary archive. Dilthey's definition of literature was broad, and it was framed in nationalistic terms. Literature was to be understood as comprising «all of a people's [Volk] lastingly valuable expressions that reach beyond the demands of practical life», including «poetry and philosophy, history and science» (555). And in retrospect, this project was extraordinarily effective both in producing demarcations of what counts as such "literature", and in pre-figuring interpretative approaches to it – hence the need to historicise the practice of philosophy through its archives<sup>12</sup>. Dilthey's twofold rationale for such literary archives guided the AA, based as it was on a massive effort of at least approximating the idea of an archive of all of Kant's extant writings by gathering those that could be brought to Berlin, and establishing access to those that couldn't<sup>13</sup>.

Why such archives? In a pair of speeches in 1889 now often cited to mark the *Ur*-scene of the history of the modern archive, Dilthey outlined the «political» and the «archive-theoretical» (Kopp-Oberstebrink [2018]: 121) need he saw for literary archives, to borrow these terms to distinguish Dilthey's methodological aims from his nationalistic rhetoric. To begin with the latter, Dilthey places the need for literary archives in the historical context of the unification of the German states into an empire in 1871. Though some of Dilthey's nationalistic pathos is surely owed to his lobbying efforts to gain political and financial support for his practical goal of establishing such archives, his gesture at a historical argument to justify his portrayal of literature as «the prime expression of the German spirit» seems as sincere as it is troubling at least in hindsight. For Dilthey, there is a «spiritual continuity» between Greco-

Roman antiquity and the modern sciences that accounts for the «peculiar universality of the German spirit», acting as the unifying element during centuries of political, economical and military disunity and «misery» (Dilthey [1889b]: 1-2). Therefore, collections of «our great writers' autographs, above them their busts and portraits» would be «places to cultivate the German ethos [*Gesinnung*]», an «alternative Westminster, gathering not the mortal bodies but the immortal ideal content of our great writers» (16)<sup>14</sup>.

Not just national monuments, however, these autograph collections are to serve a specific methodological function, which is to trace the developmental history of «great thinkers» in order to «illuminate their systems» (Dilthey [1910]: VIII; a looser usage of the word than Kant's specific notion of a system). As far as philosophical writers are concerned, Dilthey leaves no doubt that their «systems» are what makes them immortal. But although, for example, the *Critique of Pure Reason* contains «Kant's genius without residues» (Dilthey [1889b]: 3), although a «history of systems» could conceivably be written from the well-known books alone, this approach misses the person behind the book and therefore makes it impossible to understand philosophy as an «active force in human life [*Lebensmacht*]» rather than just a sequence of perhaps impressive, but otherwise ineffective thought constructs (Dilthey [1889a]: 561; see Jacobs [2006]: 135). The archive's role is to avoid the – misguided – stork's approach to the history of philosophy, to use Dilthey's vivid imagery. Rather than picking out «with a stork's beak» only the systems from the many surrounding material remnants of a writer's life, we must consult the «plans, sketches and drafts, letters» that preserve the traces of the system's making. Gathering these materials makes it possible to «go back from the book to the *person*» (Dilthey [1889a]: 562), and from there again to the books that

<sup>12</sup> In Michel Espagne's words, the question "What is literature?" ceases to be a rhetorical one for French and German literature in the nineteenth century, as processes of archival canonisations set in (Espagne [1996]: 102).

<sup>13</sup> In the context of 19th-century historicism, the Royal Libraries in Berlin and Königsberg were expected to collect Kant's autographs even before Dilthey's edition initiative (Stark [1991]: 287).

<sup>14</sup> Fridthjof Rodi argues that Dilthey uses this nationalistic appeal strategically, but that it should be read in the context of Dilthey's broader, and ultimately anthropological research interests (Rodi [1996]: 110).

shaped this person in turn – an infinite hermeneutical circle made of «Paper and more paper!», as Dilthey conceded but justified as the escape from «sterility» (Dilthey [1889b]: 15)<sup>15</sup>.

In his 1902 preface to the AA, Dilthey reiterates the function of his developmental-historical approach to illuminate the «unfolding of genius» (Dilthey [1910]: VIII)<sup>16</sup>. He both inscribes Kant into his specifically German historical arc connecting ancient philosophy with the modern empirical sciences, and he associates Kant's systematic philosophy with an imagery of secure foundations and universality:

*Kant's developmental history is an example of the kind [where, once gathered, a rich Nachlass of autographs makes it possible to illuminate his systematic achievements], and at the same time it is of utmost human and historical importance. In a highly intricate process, Kant's mighty genius dissolves the long-standing German tradition of metaphysics, establishes the critical position, and finds in the acting, pure "I" the unshakable foundations for the validity of the empirical sciences, and unconditional validity of the moral laws. (VIII-IX)*

Accordingly, the AA is structured around the goal of «illuminating» Kant's system of the *Critiques* via his developmental history – by «resurrect[ing] the Kant of his middle years», as its secretary Paul Menzer recalls Dilthey's aim (Menzer [1957]: 337). The edition's first part, *Works*, reproduces the «pre-critical writings» followed by the critical «main work [*Hauptwerk*]», with the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* presented as its crowning achievement in volume 3 and followed by the first edition in volume 4. Part II is devoted to Kant's correspondence, Part III to the other so far unpublished autographs, and Part IV to his lectures<sup>17</sup>. But, and for

<sup>15</sup> On this move beyond the individual, see Kopp-Oberstebink (2018: 134), and on the wider context of the temporal concept of generation, Parnes, Vedder, Willer (2008).

<sup>16</sup> Dilthey's preface is dated 1902; the first volume is dated 1910.

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed discussion of Part III, where the O.p.

telling reasons, it remained unclear for years if the O.p. manuscript was to be included in the AA.

To begin with, the content of the O.p. manuscript was not well understood during the years when the AA was conceived, and it was controversial whether this late manuscript was importantly related to the critical philosophy, or rather an embarrassing departure from it. An initial attempt to secure the manuscript from its (then) owner, Pastor Krause in Hamburg, ended in a protracted lawsuit over Krause's demand to be involved in the choice of editors, and consequently in the failure to include the O.p. in Part III of the planned edition (see Basile [2013]: 473-474). When the manuscript became accessible in 1916, the neo-Kantian Benno Erdmann, chairman of the Academy's *Kant Commission*, argued against its inclusion: «I can only see the expression of piety run amok in the suggestion to print in its entirety a work that bears the traces of senility of thought» (477)<sup>18</sup>. Piety and senility: in the absence of a clear understanding of the manuscript's philosophical content, much of the discussion of the manuscript's fate hinged upon these notions. Erich Adickes had made a thorough case against the charge of senility by reconstructing the chronological order of the manuscript's fascicles, and arguing that much of it was written during a period in which Kant's cognitive abilities were not to be doubted – but his subsequent attempt to convince the Academy to include the manuscript did not make it past Erdmann's hostility<sup>19</sup>.

«Piety» was not just used as a dismissive charge by those who, like Erdmann, were opposed to further engagement with a manuscript that seemed to contribute little to the neo-Kantian reception of Kant's works. Rather, there was a precarious balance between the Academy's goals of including all material that would «illu-

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manuscript was published eventually, see Stark (1993: 90-188).

<sup>18</sup> On the long history of tensions between Erdmann and Adickes, see Stark (1993: 96-102).

<sup>19</sup> The results of Adickes's initial, four-week attempt to determine the manuscript's chronological order are considered largely valid to this date (Basile [2013]: 476; Förster [1993]: xxvii).

minate» Kant's development, and the pious desire on behalf of some collectors of Kant's scattered writings for the edition to include whatever Kant had written. Traces of exasperation are evident in Paul Menzer's recollection of his negotiations with the Königsberg-based researcher Rudolf Reicke, even though he rightly credited Reicke with saving the O.p. manuscript from oblivion<sup>20</sup>. «Filled with love for his greatest compatriot» Kant, Reicke fought hard against the Academy's selective approach to some of Kant's correspondence and papers. For example, Dilthey and Menzer had reservations about including a letter sent to Kant by his acquaintance Plessing. Plessing's letter contained «peculiar descriptions of his intimate relations» with a «woman willing to be of service». But Reicke – «characteristically», as Menzer drily comments – insisted it must be included, since it made Kant appear «saint-like in his support for a miserable man» (Menzer [1957]: 341-342). In this case, Reicke prevailed; with regard to the question whether it was permissible to print only one of the fifteen identical Latin ancestry book dedications that Kant used for as many different occasions rather than print the same text fifteen times in a row, Dilthey and Menzer did. Little wonder Dilthey likened his task of editing «holy Kant» to that of a stage director in charge of a troupe of unruly actors each being after the main role (340-341).

Certainly not for reasons of piety, Erich Adickes was foremost among those who wanted the O.p. published as part of the AA. To his mind, there was no doubt that Kant's last writings merited serious philosophical attention, as he demonstrated in a 1920 monograph on Kant's *Nachlass* (Adickes [1920]). But on the basis of his extensive work with the manuscript, Adickes argued that its interpretation hinged upon the reconstruction of its different phases of writing – particularly since, as he had emphasised in his remarks

on his chronological arrangement, the manuscript consists of a series of drafts, and any interpretation will have to make choices regarding their relations of complementing or superseding each other. While, doubtlessly, Adickes's chronology removed much unnecessary confusion, his argument nevertheless anticipates a problematic, but persistent editorial attitude towards the manuscript that leans toward the teleological, and assumes that a combination of thorough textual-genetic analysis and interpretative work can construct an approximation of the «text» that was not completed. For the sake of enabling interpretation of such an approximate text, Adickes insists on the necessity of a fine-grained study of the drafts that comprise the O.p. manuscript, and for their publication in chronological order as a prerequisite for relating its contents to Kant's broader developmental history.

This broader developmental history had been a long-standing concern for Adickes, who was both convinced of the lasting philosophical importance of Kant's «system», in particular his *Critique of Pure Reason*, and dismayed by the «spectacle» its reception history had become: «Thousands of books, hundreds of thousands of pages have been written about this work, this system – but in the end no one even knows what its author's intentions were, and where this system's centre of gravity is to be found» (Adickes [1897]: 9). The difficulty of Kant's thought is only partly to blame for this state of affairs. Adickes is adamant that it could be overcome were it not for Kant's

*[...] contemptuous neglect for the outer appearance of his writings, for the fact that he avoids—with unequalled recklessness—to define his terms or to stick with them once defined, were it finally not for the fact that his own remarks about the purpose of his philosophy diverge wildly. (9)*<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> On this stage of the manuscript's odyssey and the politicised debates between Reicke, Emil Arnoldt, and Krause, see Basile (2013: 465-471), and Förster (1993: XX).

<sup>21</sup> Dilthey opens his introduction to the AA with a similar claim (Dilthey [1910]: V). Although by now a staple of «Kant philology», the claim that Kant showed little interest in the printed editions of his work is not unproblematic and must be placed in the context of 18th-century publishing practices (Stark [1988]: 7, 25).

Unsatisfying as these material appearances were to him, the Kant scholar Adickes remained on the search for the ideal “system” itself they must contain. The remedy to the difficulties in understanding Kant’s work that result from his «neglect» lies in connecting the «study of the completed system with the study of its developmental history» so as to establish the internal consistency of final results and intermittent strivings despite their careless presentation (Adickes [1897]: 9). Just like he demanded such studies on the larger scale of Kant’s critical system, he called for a small-scale genetic approach to the O.p. manuscript as the basis for its interpretation, and its eventual integration into the Kantian system more broadly.

But when the manuscript eventually ended up in the possession of De Gruyter, the press that published the AA, piety prevailed not with respect to the figure of Kant, but with respect to the manuscript’s history. The AA edition reproduced not the chronological order of Kant’s drafts, but the order they acquired in «the hazards of drawers and cupboards in [Kant’s heirs residence in] Mitau» (Brandt [1991]: 14). This was despite the fact that Erich Adickes was the editor in charge of Part III, and therefore responsible for the editorial approach to Kant’s unpublished autographs. But because of De Gruyter’s demand that the valuable manuscript remain in Berlin rather than join the remainder of Kant’s *Nachlass* papers, and Adickes himself, in Tübingen, the editorial role for the O.p. manuscript was effectively split between Adickes and Artur Buchenau, the press’s Berlin-based consultant. The ensuing tensions culminated in Adickes’s resignation from his role as «superintendent» for the O.p. when he learned of Buchenau’s decision to publish the manuscript largely in the order in which the fascicles (and pages within them) had been received rather than following the chronological order Adickes had established, and that he considered crucial as the basis for the text’s philosophical interpretation<sup>22</sup>.

Instead, this diplomatic edition sanctified in print the random order imposed on the manuscript during its journeys. This editorial approach to the handwritings’ order both on the large scale of the manuscript as a whole, and on the smaller scale of the arrangement of the words on specific pages led to a «text collage» that in fact amounted to a now embarrassing *lack* of piety for Kant, as Reinhardt Brandt has described the debacle: «By blindly reproducing his notes, the editors create the impression that the ageing philosopher was no longer capable of distinguishing between an aether deduction and his bottles of red wine» (8). The words that fill Kant’s last manuscript had at last become accessible in their entirety in print, but the autograph’s transformation into the material resemblance of a text relegated it to a precarious place in Dilthey’s editorial monumentalisation of Kant. Framed by Dilthey’s emphasis on Kant’s «system» understood as foundational and complete with the *Critiques*, his last manuscript appears irrelevant to readings of the systematic endeavour; the problem of the proper editorial and philosophical approach to the «search for text» of Kant’s final years remained.

## 2. THINKER PEN IN HAND: THE BBAW EDITION OF THE OPUS POSTUMUM

At a conference in 2000 that marked the beginning of the AA’s major and long overdue revision, Brandt compared the edition initiated by Dilthey to a «windy, dilapidated palace badly in need of restoration» (Brandt [2000]: VI). The architectural metaphor is aimed at the monumental, editorially created entirety of Kant’s works than his philosophy itself; after all, the grand palace doomed to crumble was one of Kant’s images for the old and derelict metaphysics to be overcome by the more modest, but «stable dwell-

<sup>22</sup> This decision also meant a break with the editorial guidelines for Part III; see Förster (1993: XXIII) and Stark (1993: 152-188). For a thorough documentation

of the dissent between Adickes and Buchenau, see Stark (1993: 109-115); on the decline in editorial standards particularly from 1933 onwards that «bears distinctive traces of the political system in which [the relevant volumes] were produced», see Stark (1993: 5, 166-169).



ing» of his critical philosophy (Purdy [2011]: 59). But the palatial aspirations have certainly been endorsed by the BBAW itself. Tanja Gloyna, coordinator of the new edition of Kant's three *Critiques*, takes up Brandt's image as a structuring metaphor for describing the Academy's editorial approach of «restoring the palace»: «partially» in the case of the three *Critiques*, «from the ground up» for the O.p. (Gloyne [2007]: 109-110).

And the BBAW doesn't shy away from a lobbying rhetoric in direct historical and institutional continuation of Dilthey's. «Completing a Great Work» is the title of a 2014 article outlining the goals and achievements so far of the new edition, and it opens with a description of the busts occupying the five upper floors of Shanghai's Fudan University's philosophy department. Kant's is located on the fourth floor, right underneath Plato's – an illustration of his «international significance», and a reminder of the BBAW's «privilege and responsibility to oversee the world-leading edition of the works of its member Immanuel Kant» (Gerhardt, Karl, Essen [2014]: 28). The vocabulary of national monuments is replaced with that of «cultural heritage» to justify the considerable monetary and professional efforts required to restore the AA to its former status of being the «international reference edition for scientific research». In continuation of Dilthey's editorial aim of including all autographs that document Kant's intellectual development, the new edition can only be considered complete and «leading» once texts found in the last five decades have been included. Should funding difficulties prevent this from happening, «Kant research in German would have recklessly given away the aim of securing, making accessible for research, and rendering visible in the present [*Vergegenwärtigung*, no longer quite Dilthey's «resurrection»] important cultural heritage» (30).

But the new edition of the O.p. within this newly restored «palace» marks one important difference between Dilthey's early monumentalisation, and the BBAW's ongoing project. Where Dilthey's edition was concerned with Kant's developmental intellectual history leading towards

what it portrayed as a complete, foundational system, the new edition of the O.p. subordinates the detailed, and unprecedentedly fine-grained documentation of the chronological genesis of the O.p. manuscript to its showcasing as a working site rather than «text» or «work». In this section and the following, my point is that the O.p.'s new edition therefore offers more than merely a hermeneutical tool. Rather, the manuscript's detailed reproduction draws attention to its character as a series of «autographic drafts» that are positively distinguished rather than marked as defective by their ever recurring «indecisiveness» of crossing out and rewriting, adding and deleting and starting all over again (Reuß [1999]: 16). Despite the monumental rhetoric of «completing a great work», and in productive tension with the interpretative focus on the question of the O.p. filling a «gap» in the critical system, the sheer amount of page facsimiles that document an intricate writing process in full detail suggests different ways to approach this new edition. In keeping with recent critiques in literary theory and edition philology of the teleological «understanding of the labour of writing as an approximation of an ideal work», and of the corresponding notion of authorship coupled to the subjectivity of the «genius» (Kammer [2003]: 17), the newly constructed, digital O.p. highlights the extent to which these ideals are themselves products of Dilthey's archival project.

Borrowing Roland Reuß's technical, and narrow, notion of a text, I'll describe the O.p. as *not* a text, at least in its entirety – and as an object worthy of investigation as something other than just «not yet a text»<sup>23</sup>. The new edition foregrounds the complex material constellation of Kant's writing process, and through the contrast with this constel-

<sup>23</sup> Informed by editorial practice, the notion of a text as linear and delimited (Reuß [1999]) opposes broader notions of the «text» that include different stages of drafts. A sharp distinction between text and non-text has been the subject of much debate (for brief overviews, see Kammer [2003]: 18-19, and Thiel [1990]: 72 ff.); however, I find the clarity of Reuß's distinction helpful for my argumentative purpose of foregrounding the writing process in itself rather than a real or imagined final product.

lation brings into view the interconnected processes of archival collection and editorial process that are constitutive for the texts that do end up on desks and library shelves. I begin with the tensions that the O.p. edition's reconstruction of Kant's writing process consequentially places on the architectural metaphors to describe Kant's work and its status; the following section returns to the constitutive role of the archive for both texts themselves, and for the interpretative practices established in using them.

Jacqueline Karl, head of the *Kant-Arbeitsstelle's* editorial team in charge of the O.p., has described in detail how an understanding of the minutiae of Kant's working process has guided the new editorial approach, and how in turn the manuscript's online readers can retrace the dynamic and iterative production process reflected in its pages. Based on other extant autographs from the 1780s and 1790s, Werner Stark had already characterised Kant's elaborate, multi-stage writing process. The text on any given page holding drafts rather than clean copies, usually on a folded folio sheet, is clearly separated into a main block of text surrounded by external margins to be filled with notes later. There are at least three distinct phases of writing. First, Kant fills the main part of the page with text leaving the margins blank. In a second step, he adds stylistic corrections both between lines and in the margins (from bottom to top, as it happens), using long vertical lines to indicate references. In a third phase, the content is revised by adding reflections and alternatives, crossing out parts of the text and adding a wide range of other symbols and graphical elements (Kant had «unlimited imagination» for coming up with such symbols (Karl [2007]: 131)<sup>24</sup>.

The O.p. manuscript, as the rare instance of having escaped the *Verzettelung* of Kant's papers, confirms these preliminary observations in more detail. The result of the editorial «geology» work of reconstructing the different strata of Kant's text is publicly accessible on the BBAW's O. p. website<sup>25</sup>.

Have a look to get a sense of the complexity of the editorial task<sup>26</sup>: many of the manuscript pages are densely covered in text, due to Kant's habit of aligning the material unit of a sheet of paper with one «thought» as far as possible, often crowding in smaller and smaller letters the fourth and last page of the folded folio sheets he used (this might have served the purpose of comparing different drafts more easily)<sup>27</sup>. Increasingly smaller and denser lines as well as wrap-arounds offer further cues regarding the chronological sequence of the text written. For example, third-phase revisions have to wrap around second-phase stylistic corrections. Based on this editorially inferred chronological order, the edition also distinguishes between the different status of Kant's marginal comments. Such distinctions are «indispensable for understanding Kant's text», as Karl points out. At the very least, there are «continuations or complements to the main text, replacements, alternatives, remarks on the main text, and independent reflections» (Karl [2007]: 132). A colour code reflects these distinctions as made by the editors, highlighting different layers of writing as you hover over them on the screen. As Karl sums up the character of the manuscript, and as is exemplified by the edition's facsimile reproductions of its pages, Kant's «working manuscript contains clean copies but also keeps starting all over again. Filled as it is with edits and deletions, insertions of texts on other topics and notes, it expresses even in its linguistic attitude the movement of Kant's thought» (128).

Parts of the manuscript, then, fulfil what was Kant's usual criterion for a text to be sanctioned as ready for publication: there are clean copies by his own hand, or by amanuenses<sup>28</sup>. These parts of the manuscript also fulfil the criteria that literary

<sup>26</sup> See <http://kant.bbaw.de/online-editionen/opus-positumum>.

<sup>27</sup> Vittorio Matthieu has drawn attention to this «cell-like» structure as a distinctive feature of Kant's manuscripts rather than the result of «miserliness» as von Pflugk-Hartung had surmised in his initial investigation (Karl [2007]: 134).

<sup>28</sup> I am following Stark (1988) here. See Kammer (2017).

<sup>24</sup> My description of Kant's working process follows Karl (2007: 129); see also Stark (1988: 25-26).

<sup>25</sup> Adickes's metaphor as quoted in Karl (2007: 130).

theorist Roland Reuß puts forward as demarcating a “text”, namely strict linearity of all symbol and letter sequences, and the existence of a distinct beginning, middle, and end; as such, «text» is transferrable between different media (and can e.g. be printed in different colours without losing its status as text)<sup>29</sup>. Most of the O.p.'s pages, however – and this is apparent as you click through, and hover over the many different layers of writing and their complex arrangement on the page – display the contrasting features of an autograph as distinct from text, and in which,

*on the search for a text, the law of linear succession [...] is suspended. In it, there is writing higgledy-piggledy, inserting, overwriting, multiple underlining and crossing out. [...] Words jotted down far apart in time on autograph paper enter constellations of syntagmatic succession and paradigmatic synchronicity that call for being perceived as such. This unique constellation of symbols on paper [...] is not detachable from its materiality, because it cannot be transformed without the loss of information.* (Reuß [1999]: 16-17)

What is gained by such a distinction between «text», set apart by its linear successiveness and openness to transfer from one medium to the other, and the materially bound constellation of the autograph is an escape route from the teleological temptation to see layers of drafts as nothing but preliminaries to a work that happens, in the case of the O.p., to remain unfinished.

There is a hint of such teleology in Erich Adickes's characterisation of Kant as a «thinker writing his way towards the right expression». As he observed on the basis of his extensive studies of Kant's autographs, rather than conceiving of both content and form of representation mentally first, Kant would work out the broad strokes

in his head but subsequently «thinks the details through pen in hand» (Karl [2007]: 127)<sup>30</sup>. Jacqueline Karl borrows the image of the thinker pen in hand, but her concluding remarks in her 2007 exposition of the new edition place the emphasis not on the imagined final text to be produced in writing [*erschrieben*], but on the dynamic process of Kant's writing, overwriting and rewriting. Pflugk-Harttung had stopped short of drawing conclusions regarding Kant's published texts from his investigation of the O.p. autograph as a document of rebuilding and demolition. In contrast, Karl, as a result of her own extensive work with the same autograph, suggests that «even [Kant's] printed works are, strictly speaking, not complete works but stages of a thinking that remained philosophically in motion [*unterwegs*]» (135). The O.p. as the document of Kant's dynamic writing process invites a reading of those texts Kant had sanctioned for publication as more «in motion», and less in keeping with a notion of completeness that corresponds to the monumental image of stable foundations<sup>31</sup>.

The emphasis on such a reading as it results from a material encounter with the constellation of the autograph resonates with other recent approaches to Kant's work. As Daniel Purdy argues, Kant borrowed much of his architectural vocabulary more directly from contemporaneous architectural theory than has previously been recognised. Purdy's study is based entirely on Kant's published works, and yet, the resonances with the dynamic image presented by Kant's O.p. manuscript are striking. In Purdy's analysis of Kant's wide range of architectural metaphors in the context of eighteenth-century architectural theory, these metaphors' guiding associations are emphatically not

<sup>29</sup> Reuß [1999]: 14, 16. As Reuß emphasises, clean copies are an exception among autographs in that they fulfil the criteria of a text. Reuß is after the characteristics of poetic text, but the distinction between a linear text sequence sanctioned to some degree by authorial decision, and a draft's constellation character lends itself to Kant's texts as I discuss them here.

<sup>30</sup> Similarly, the O.p. manuscript has been characterised as a «thorough documentation of the genesis of a Kantian work (that was nevertheless never completed)» (Tuschling [1971]: 13).

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Howard, drawing on Jacqueline Karl's work, spells out this suggestion in a reading of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that foregrounds material continuities with the O.p. manuscript, and therefore appreciates it «as a more open, dynamic text» (Howard [2018]: 67).

those of stable foundations and completeness. Rather, many of them stress the *limits* placed on «the weight [a] foundation could bear», and «collapse and reconstruction» as the «temporal aspects of any construction» (Purdy [2011]: 60, 65):

*Buildings are not permanently complete, nor are philosophical systems. [...] Construction is ongoing throughout the Critique; if there is anything lasting in Kant's opinion, he would claim it is the overall layout, yet a more modernist position would state that Kant's legacy lies in his insistence on always tearing down and rebuilding. He does not emphasise the laying of permanent foundations so much as the examination of what are purported to be secure foundations, in order to find the inevitable flaws and limits. (71)*

Against alignments such as Adorno's of Kant with a philosophical tradition suffering from «foundational delusion [*Fundierungswahn*]», Purdy argues that Kant «incorporates just this process of change into the supposedly stable image of philosophy as a foundation and an edifice» (Purdy [2011]: 80, 65). The architectonics metaphor in the *Critique of Pure Reason* differs from most of Kant's architectural imagery, e.g. that of the crumbling palace of metaphysics, in that it serves a specific philosophical function, and is indeed supposed to represent secure knowledge. Purdy argues for a different emphasis in reading this «security» as well. He shows that «classical architectural theory, most importantly Vitruvius, provides Kant with a model for describing the integration of knowledge towards human ends», thereby offering a reading that understands security in terms related to human ends rather than standing in the legacy of searching for the cosmologically given (Purdy [2011]: 66-67). And in the tradition of commentators from Pflugk-Harttung to Howard Caygill<sup>32</sup>, Purdy too straddles the line between architectural metaphors within Kant's philosophy, and the description of his writerly

process: «Kant's critical philosophy is the distillation of lifelong revisions. The house metaphor displays this writerly process. Far from presenting an eternal statement on foundations of knowledge, the philosophical house represents thought as it rethinks itself» (70).

### 3. DE-SACRALIZING THINKERS IN THE ARCHIVE

Musing on one of the many of the new edition's web pages that display illegible words crossed out multiple times, or transcriptions of cryptic abbreviations connected by a litany of different symbols, there is the odd whiff of Reicke's fifteen identical Latin ancestry book dedications. Isn't this hyper-detailed reproduction of each and every wiggle of Kant's pen a continuation of the pious approach to the thinker as monumental genius that Dilthey's editorial project had not solely produced, but stabilised on a national scale? Is there a need for this amount of detailed documentation of written traces of Kant's «ideas», or are we looking at a digital re-enactment of the AA's initial, historicist take on the «call to order: *ad fontes!*», as Hans Blumenberg has characterised tongue in cheek philosophy's long tradition of demanding returns to the alleged authority of sources, or of things (*ad res!*) (Blumenberg [2012]: 9)?

But accessing this digital edition on a web browser is not as easily romanticised as the archival moment of material encounter. It's not just that there isn't the distinctive smell of the paper, or its curious hue that may never quite make it onto the pages of the facsimile. Rather, the very obvious constructedness of the digital interface stands in the way of the fetishisation of the autograph as bodily relic (see Kammer [2006]: 138). The digital interface does produce an archival encounter of sorts, but one that foregrounds not the still moment of physical proximity, but the dynamic and generative work of the archive, its active role in selecting, maintaining, and to some extent constituting the objects of encounter. This role is not new; the digital mode of archival interaction sim-

<sup>32</sup> «The [O.p.'s] own rhapsodical assemblage – even if it fell into ruin before its completion – announced the season of systematic philosophy in Germany» (Caygill [2005]: 41).

ply makes it harder to ignore practically. Whether intentionally or not, these practical difficulties invite reflection on the ways in which «storage devices and archives [...] dictate and perpetuate the narrative from which they derive» (Brusius [2015]: 575), a reflection that is overdue not only for archaeological collections that are obvious examples of European imperial visions, but also for the Western philosophical canon preserved in archives such as the BBAW's.

The digital interface does not stage an object such as the manuscript to be handled with gloves. Instead, every step of interacting with the new edition very obviously and sometimes tediously depends on this object's constructedness: e.g. the colour-coding of the editors' conclusions regarding the status of a marginal comment, or the choice of multiple modes of juxtaposing different parts of the facsimile. Working with this object challenges the unproblematic idea of a «text that is simply there» (Reuß [2002]: 585) and awaits philosophical interpretation; instead, it is a reminder that the manuscript's very existence now in the possession of the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin is the result of specific historical constellations, as much as the linear and coherent sequence of «text» in its published form is the result of specific editorial decisions, and indeed constructions<sup>33</sup>. In keeping with this representational foregrounding of the constructedness of this new *Opus postumum*, I would like to suggest that this edition opens up the possibility of de-sacralising the monumental stylisation «Kant» that is, ironically, partly itself the effect of the archive. The question at stake is how the digital publication of the O.p., heralded on its website as a «unique document that cannot be overestimated in its significance for the history of philosophy», can offer ways of reframing the relations to a philosophical tradition that is invested in, and built upon the cultural prestige

to which it still owes at the very least its funding – but that also seeks to problematise its own history.

The new edition presents a writing constellation rather than «text» or «work». It sustains both moments, the temporal and dynamic aspect of the writing process as much as the constellation that is now frozen on the page – the new synchronicities produced by the specific arrangement on the page that emerged in the process. Taking seriously these constellations as such, rather than presenting them as mere forerunners to a finished product that alone is considered worthy of philosophical attention, invites new interpretative practices and questions. As literary theorists and edition philologists have pointed out for some decades now, «in congruence with the effects of recent methodological innovations in literary and cultural studies, such textual-critical modes of inquiry are more interested in the making [*Faktur*] of aesthetic objects than their monadic, as it were, existence» (Kammer [2003]: 19). At the very least, these approaches highlight the dependency of the hermeneutic practices that have dominated much of modern European history of philosophy certainly with respect to Kant, but also beyond him on specific archival traditions, and on the corresponding notions of texts.

Let me outline a sketch of such an approach focussed on the manuscript's constellation character in the case of the O.p. Among the many fine-grained details of Kant's writing process that have only become accessible to non-specialists thanks to this edition's juxtaposition of full-page facsimile and transcription is the wandering process of his words from margins and edges to the centre of his pages – such as «key words as reminders for a later, lengthier treatment» that would either drop away not to return, or be interwoven into the drafts' arguments (Förster [1993]: XXV). Especially in a work like the O.p., concerned as it is with the transition from the empirical sciences, tracing the journey of specific notions across the pages offers a research angle that complements the recent focus on Kant's simultaneously systematic and strategic concern with the demarcation of, and relation between, distinct areas of

<sup>33</sup> As Alois Pichler has put it with respect to the problem of producing machine-readable texts on the basis of Wittgenstein's papers, «Texts are not objectively existing entities which just need to be discovered and presented, but entities which have to be constructed», quoted in Robinson (2009: 45).

knowledge<sup>34</sup>. How does the writing process on the page reflect or prefigure disciplinary divisions or transitions as Kant articulates them in his writings? Integrating in this way the history of ideas – understood both as individual intellectual development and diachronic reception histories – with material histories of paper practices builds bridges between the «practical» concerns Dilthey had once deemed beneath the articulations worth preserving in an archive, and the ideal constructs he stylised into national heritage.

I'll choose a suggestive example that is both tantalising in the richness of its connotations, and frustrating because in fact the word in question doesn't travel across Kant's text: it is stuck, so to speak, on the wrapper of his last fascicle, written possibly as late as 1803 (and the only fascicle that is not yet publicly available on the BBAW website in late 2020). *Schädellehre in Wien*, Kant jots down, «doctrine of skulls in Vienna» (see the facsimile of the entire page on figure 1, and reproduced in detail in figure 2). It refers to Franz Josef Gall's phrenology, a major departure from the «sciences of the soul» that Kant's generation had grappled with. As is well known, Gall's approach was based on the assumption that different «faculties» – mental properties, sentiments, and inclinations – correspond to organs localised in different cortical areas, and shape the skull according to the degree of these faculties' expression in an individual<sup>35</sup>. Incidentally, Kant's own head was subjected to phrenological analysis after his death in February 1804; among the findings was the observation that the organ of «metaphysical ingenuity» had merged with that for factual memory into a particularly impressive bump, whereas the organ for sexual drive was entirely missing. The plaster bust

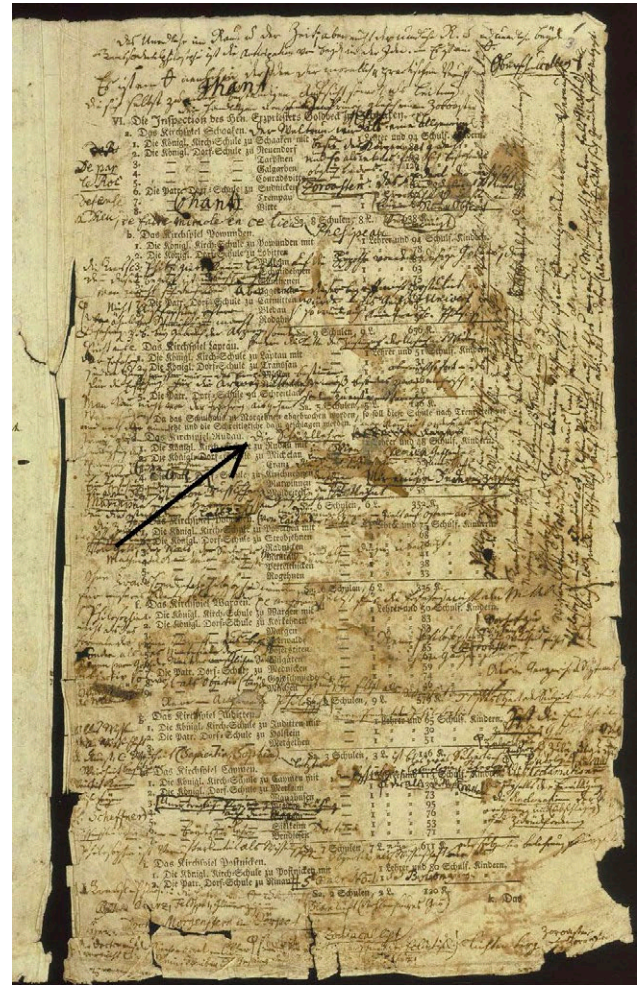


Figure 1. Immanuel Kant, *Opus postumum*, Ms.germ. fol. 1702, Conv. I, S.3. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Handschriftenabteilung BBAW / Kant-Arbeitsstelle. My arrow insertion. Reproduced with permission.

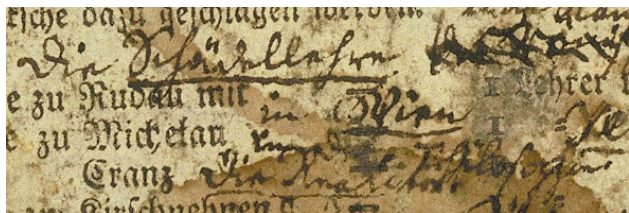
of Kant's head that was made in the process was sent to Gall himself as both relic and object of science, and served Gall to confirm the diagnosis of Kant's extraordinary «metaphysical profundity» (Hagner [2004]: 64-68).

The fate of the phrase «doctrine of skulls» illustrates the inevitable editorial choices that have to be made in any attempt to turn this page into a printed «text». In Artur Buchenau's diplomatic rendering in the 1936 AA volume, the phrase appears alongside all other words on the page, and it does so in a manner that is reminiscent of Brandt's worries about the editorial distinctions between wine bottles and aether deduc-

<sup>34</sup> An early example relevant in the context of the «organ of the soul» and Kant's famous postscript to Sommering is McLaughlin (1985). More recently, see Helbig, Nassar (2016), Goldstein (2018). On the broader context of Kant's strategic «separat[ion of] the cognitive orders science and religion through a peculiar third order, philosophy», see Bianco (2018: 13), Collins (1998: 650-654).

<sup>35</sup> As a starting point to the extensive literature see Wyhe (2002).

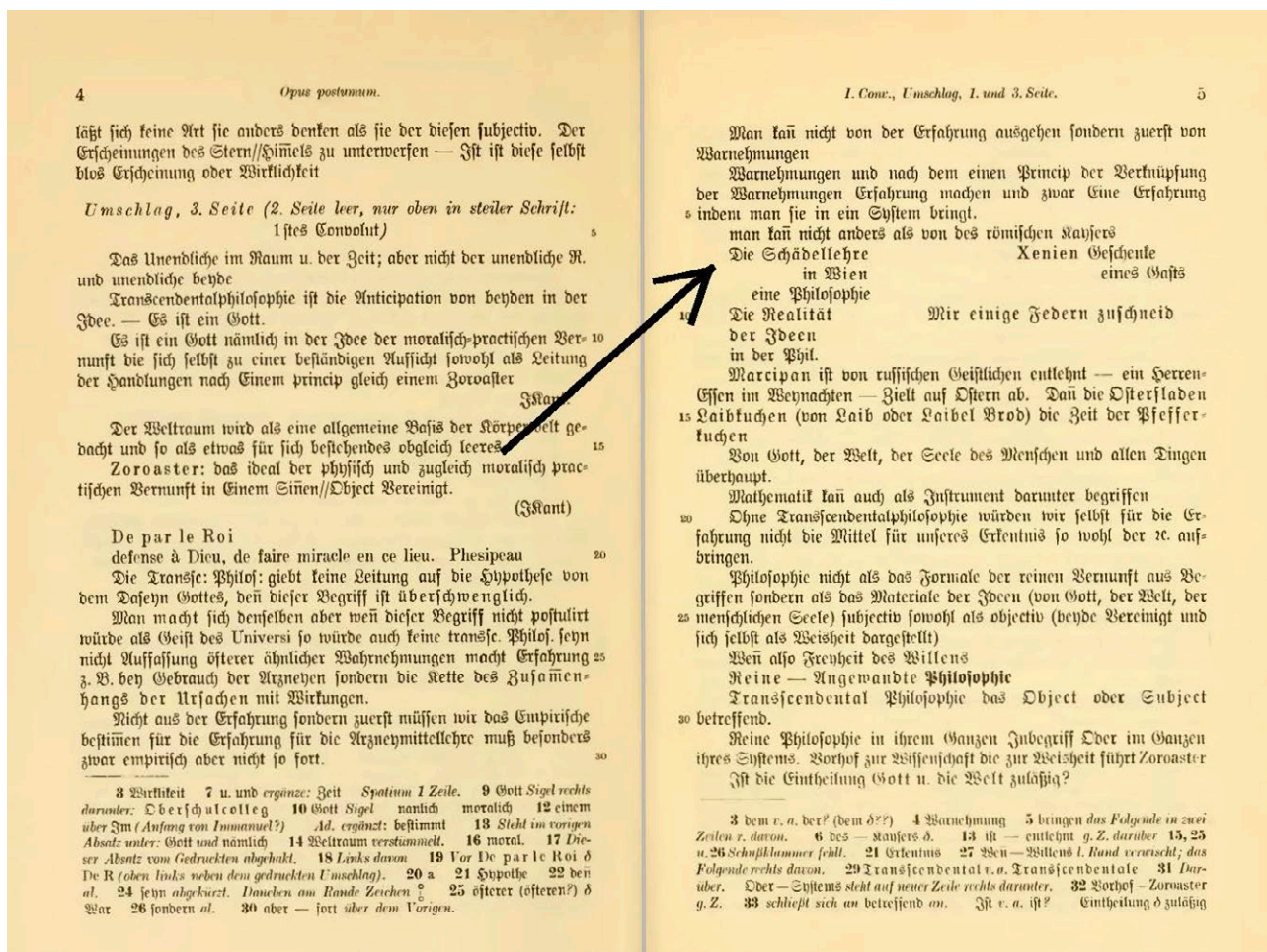




**Figure 2.** Detail from Immanuel Kant, *Opus postumum*, Ms.germ. fol. 1702, Conv. I, S.3. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Handschriftenabteilung BBAW / Kant-Arbeitsstelle. Reproduced with permission.

tions (figure 3): «the doctrine of skulls» (omitting Kant's underlining) appears right next to «Xenien, host gifts» (and a series of poems by Goethe and Schiller), and above the words «a philosophy», followed by «the reality\of ideas\in philoso-

phy», and then: «marzipan borrowed from Russian priests – gentlemen's food – [...] – gingerbread days» (Kant [1936]: 5). In the Cambridge edition, the textual basis of most current O. p. scholarship and itself an example of coherent editorial guidelines, the doctrine of skulls has vanished from the printed text along with marzipan and gingerbread. In this case, the so far definitive edition has made the choice that Gall's phrenology is unrelated to the contents of Kant's *Transition* work, that at this stage has morphed into a different project altogether. One of his last title variations in the manuscript's final fascicle links «The Highest Standpoint of Transcendental Philosophy» with «The Thinking Being in the World» (Kant [1993]: 237).



**Figure 3:** Kant's *Opus postumum*, *Erste Hälfte* (Convolut I bis VI), ed. by A. Buchenau and G. Lehmann, Berlin und Leipzig, 1936 (=Akademie-Ausgabe vol. XXI), 4-5; my arrow insertion.

It is worth asking whether the «doctrine of skulls» might have stood a chance to make the journey from the wrapper remarks into an imagined future text's contents (or what resonances it might have with Kant's earlier marginal notes). On the one hand, Gall's phrenology is part of a shift in the human sciences away from the introspective methods of the earlier sciences of the soul, and towards new objectifying practices that constitute these sciences' objects of study (e. g. skulls). Kant's interest in the human sciences was keen and lasting, and he developed his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* – completed in 1798 just before he embarked on the O.p. – as an alternative to both introspective methods, and to physiological anthropology studying the correlated action of body and soul<sup>36</sup>. On the other hand, we find an objectifying gesture in Kant's O.p. itself, in which the transcendental subject constitutes itself as an empirical object: in the doctrine of self-positing that is seen as its key part by most recent commentators, and which O.p. editor Eckart Förster interprets as the «progressive *empirical embodiment* of the pure a priori subject» (as summarised by Friedman [2010]: 219).

It amounts to «wild hypothesising», to borrow AA secretary Paul Menzer's worst fears for future research based on the edition he devoted most of his career to (Menzer [1957]: 350), to speculate whether Kant might have started his O.p. all over again yet another time to extend the transition from the a priori principles of physical nature to physics to an explicit transition from the transcendental foundations of subjectivity to the psychological subject – although such a move might have satisfied Dilthey, who not only described Kant's «I» of the first *Critique*, the synthetic unity of apperception, as providing «unshakable foundations» for the sciences, but who also complained that «there is no real blood flowing in the veins of the knowing subjects fabricated by Locke, Hume, and Kant, but only the diluted lymph of reason as mere intellectual activity» (Dilthey [1988]: 73). We

will not know what status Gall's doctrine of skulls, a scientific practice that rapidly became invested in stabilising notions of European racial superiority – some of them informed by Kant's anthropology – over the course of the nineteenth century, might have taken in Kant's system and its connections to thinking beings in the world. But the point of my example of the word *Schädellehre* in Kant's manuscript is just to draw attention to editorial choices (themselves inevitably informed to some extent by an interpretation of the text that they constitute) as markers of what is made to count as philosophical content and what isn't in the published “text”. The O.p.'s new edition enables its readers to see such editorial choices more clearly, but also to embark on the investigation of the manuscript's constellations, thereby tracing Kant's own, authorial such demarcation choices in the travels of his marginal notes into his arguments and occasionally back out again.

Between the editorial construction of text and its authorial prefiguration sits the archive, always already involved in an evaluative exercise by virtue of its function, as Michel Espagne has observed for the case of literary archives:

*Literary archives factually take on the immense responsibility of determining what is of literary relevance and what isn't. The inevitable process of drawing a boundary between literary and generally historical archival pieces, the duty to exclude irrelevant material, are continuously at work in spreading an implicit definition of literature.* (Espagne [1996]: 83-84)

The BBAW continues to fulfil this institutional function of sanctioning a philosophical corpus, but in its choice to produce and publish the O.p. as constellation rather than text the BBAW also places a question mark over the archive's second constitutive function: its generation of interpretative practices. Tempting as it may be to portray Dilthey's approach to the archive as a product of the nineteenth century and squarely left behind by now, its legacy has proved more lasting than we may wish to admit. As far as Kant scholarship is concerned, countless careers have been built on

<sup>36</sup> See Sturm (2009); for Kant's take on the scientific status of psychology, see Sturm (2011).



assessing consistencies and inconsistencies across Kant's work, or tracing continuities and breaks over the course of his career – precisely the type of inquiry that is predicated upon Dilthey's idea of the archive as a document of individual development. If the new edition of the O.p. showcases Kant as a thinker in motion, it also invites motion on the part of his readers.

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