



Mittelstraß, Jürgen (Ed.): Enzyklopädie Philosophie und Wissenschaftstheorie. 2. neubearbeitete und wesentlich ergänzte Auflage. 8 vols., Stuttgart & Weimar 2005–2018: J. B. Metzler, € 639,60

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Quite a long time ago, when I was working on my doctoral thesis in an area that has existed since the 19th century, but nowadays comes under the somewhat fashionable label ‘integrated history and philosophy of science’, I had to struggle with a number of conceptual problems. In the vast majority of cases, my supervisor Gert König – an exceptional scholar with a profound philosophical and scientific background – was able to help. In the cases left, he usually gave me the advice: “Look up Ritter!” when it came to more historical problems, or: “Look up Mittelstraß!” when the problems were more systematic in nature. By ‘Ritter’, he meant the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, founded by its first editor Joachim Ritter and published in 12 volumes from 1971 to 2004. By ‘Mittelstraß’, he meant the *Enzyklopädie Philosophie und Wissenschaftstheorie*, founded and edited by Jürgen Mittelstraß in four volumes from 1980 to 1996. The *Wörterbuch* is today still the most important and most detailed philosophical dictionary in the German tradition of *Begriffsgeschichte* (conceptual history). The *Enzyklopädie* pursued the goal of bringing philosophy and the sciences into a more intensive and fruitful exchange under the auspices of a newly strengthened philosophy of science from the late 70ties of the 20th century onwards. It was therefore both systematically and historically oriented. While the attempt to update ‘Ritter’ failed (for unfortunate reasons), ‘Mittelstraß’ has been available for a few years now in a new and substantially expanded edition: With roughly the same format, the number of volumes has doubled, and the number of pages has increased by about a third to more than 5000 overall. This increase reflects the concern described by Jürgen Mittelstraß in the preface of the new edition to revise and supplement the first of the older volumes especially, which resulted in

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the reworking of the entire *Enzyklopädie*. It is the most comprehensive general reference work on philosophy in the German language.

However, philosophers are more interested in content than in extent. Hence the question here, too: What is new in the ‘new Mittelstraß’, and where has the *Enzyklopädie* not changed, or changed only slightly? The editor and many of the principal authors of the first edition were committed to the ‘Erlangen–Constance Constructivism’, although from the beginning they pursued the goal of also giving other well-founded approaches their due. It seems that this general editorial principle has been adhered to in the new edition: In comparison to other philosophical dictionaries, we find many ‘Proto-entries’, reaching from ‘Protobiologie’ to ‘Prototheorie’, which are typical of the constructivist, i.e., ‘proto-empirical’ approach in question. The fact that in comparison to the first edition relatively little new research literature was added in *these* articles also indicates that this approach has lost its former momentum. It should be noted, however, that related articles such as ‘Konstruktivismus’ have been expanded and updated more.

With the second edition, new authors joined the great project, and a number of new articles have been added, reflecting new developments and emphases in philosophy and the sciences. Here are just a few examples of completely new entries: ‘Aggression’, ‘emergent/Emergenz’, ‘Friessche Schule’, ‘Gehirn im Tank’, ‘Hawking’ (Stephen William), ‘Kognitionswissenschaft’, ‘Lewis’ (David Kellogg), ‘Logik, parakonsistente’, ‘Macht’, ‘Markt’, ‘Medizin’, ‘Neurowissenschaften’, ‘Prinzip, anthropisches’, ‘Risiko’ and ‘Risikotheorie’, ‘Semantik, beweistheoretische’, ‘Semantik, denotationale’, ‘Simulationstheorie/Theorientheorien des Mentalen’, ‘Strukturalismus, mathematischer’, ‘Tierethik’, ‘Weltbild, elektromagnetisches’, or ‘Wertrealismus’. As was to be expected, not all new developments were (and could be) taken into account. In the case of biology, for example, a new article ‘Genetik’ was added, but an entry on the current field of ‘Epigenetik’ would have suited the *Enzyklopädie* well. In the articles on quantum physics, the reader will find nearly nothing on modern quantum field theory and its philosophical problems. Of all things, the article ‘Wissenschaft’ hardly represents current perspectives on this key concept. Likewise, entries such as ‘Wissenschaftssoziologie’ or ‘Wissenssoziologie’ do not sufficiently address more recent trends such as ‘Science and Technology Studies’ (STS).

These are minor criticisms at a high level because the vast majority of articles provide comprehensive and up-to-date information for the reader. It seems that the greater part of the *Enzyklopädie*’s expansion to eight volumes has to do with the extension and updating of already existing entries. This is particularly visible in articles such as ‘Abbildtheorie’, ‘actio in dinstans’, ‘Fries’, ‘Informationstheorie’, ‘philosophy of mind’, ‘Qualia’, ‘Rabanus Maurus’, ‘Schmitt’ (Carl), ‘scientific community’, ‘Sprache des Denkens’ or ‘Trugschluß’. These and many other extended articles provide the reader with valuable new insights and topical research literature. The number and quality of articles on logic is unique. Errors of the first edition were carefully corrected, e.g., Ernst Mayr’s *Principles of Semantic Zoology* (vol. 3, p. 369; first edition) are now rightly referenced as *Principles of Systematic Zoology* (vol. 6, p. 465; second edition).

As far as I can see, no entries of the first edition were deleted. This is pleasing overall, but in times of joyless academic culture clashes especially with regard to the legendary ‘Uboot-Artikel’ (‘submarine entries’) of the *Enzyklopädie*: They remind us that research should not always take itself deadly serious, and that curiosity about what will (or will not) stand up to scrutiny is quite beneficial to research. The (curios) reader who is interested in

history might consult, for example, the learned article on Johann Jakob Feinhals (1702–1769), while the more systematically oriented reader will enjoy, among other articles, the entries “subthiel/Subthielität” or ‘Gethmanscher Doppelschluß’ (with slightly corrected title compared to the original ‘Gehthmanscher Doppelschluß’, but *now* misplaced between ‘Gehlen, Arnold’ and ‘Geiger, Moritz’; see vol. 3, pp. 48–49).

All in all, even a cursory passage through the impressive eight volumes shows that the *Enzyklopädie* has once again made considerable gains over the first edition. It may well be that this printed monument of philosophical and scientific erudition is the last of its kind and that the future belongs to online reference works like the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. This, however, does not diminish the value of the new edition of Mittelstraß’s *Enzyklopädie*: It keeps what the editor promises in the foreword, namely that it “seeks to build a bridge between philosophy and the sciences, to bring disturbed relationships between philosophy and science back into balance and to expound what – with respect to foundational matters – are touch points of philosophy and science today or were touch points on long historical paths” (vol 1, p. VI). The ‘new Mittelstraß’ is a ‘must have’ for every university and research library. The publisher may perhaps wish to consider that a paperback edition would make this important reference work more accessible to individual researchers and people with general interest in philosophy and the sciences.

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