

## Obituary

### Karl-Heinz Ilting (1925–1984)

KARL-HEINZ Ilting died in Saarbrücken on 25 August 1984. He became known, beyond the confines of his profession, above all for his edition of the lecture transcripts of Hegel's philosophy of right and state. His academic work, which was increasingly concerned with problems of practical philosophy, aimed at systematic as well as philosophico-historical questions; since 1979 Ilting was editor of the *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*.

He was born in 1925 in Breholt. He obtained his doctorate in 1949 at Bonn University, under the supervision of Erich Rothacker, and after a ten-year long spell of secondary school teaching obtained his 'habilitation' at Kiel University, under the supervision of Walter Bröcker, for a book on Plato's theory of reality. Since 1966 he had held the chair of philosophy at the University of the Saarland in Saarbrücken. Through his work Ilting has won wide, even international, recognition. He had close academic relations and ties of friendship with France, Italy and the United States (he translated L. W. Beck's important commentary on Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* into German).

One may regard it as Ilting's greatest achievement that he was the first to recognize the necessity of taking the lectures more decisively into account when studying Hegel, and creating a reliable textual basis for such study by the publication of lecture transcripts, separated semester by semester. The first work to serve this purpose was the edition of Hegel's writings and transcripts on the philosophy of right in four volumes (1973/74). In 1979 this was followed by the first volume of the philosophy of religion; in 1983 appeared the text of the transcripts of the 1817/18 Heidelberg lectures on the philosophy of right. A work on the philosophy of history (the transcript of the Berlin lectures of 1822/23) was nearing completion at the time of his death. Also the edition of Hegel's philosophy of nature by M. Gies owes its origin in the last resort to Ilting. The 1817/18 lectures, together with the lectures on the philosophy of right of 1819/20 recently published by D. Henrich, seem to confirm the much discussed thesis of Ilting's that, despite his change of political standpoint following the Carlsbad Decrees and contrary to widespread opinions, Hegel was in no way the reactionary defender of the Prussian state for whom he is still sometimes but wrongly taken today.

Fate did not permit Ilting to complete his commentary on Hegel's philosophy of right which was to be volume V of his monumental *Rechtsphilosophie-Edition*; large parts of it remain still in manuscript. This was to be a part of the grand project, on which Ilting worked to the very end, viz. the systematic establishment and development of a practical philosophy on the basis of a critical reconstruction of past text.

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