

A Look into the “*Storia delle storie generali della filosofia*” and Its English Edition from a Global Perspective

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ABSTRACT | This article¹ presents an overview of the work *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia* (“*History of the General Histories of Philosophy*”) (1979–2004; 5 vols.) and its English edition *Models of the History of Philosophy* (1993–Present; 4 vols.) from the point of view of a philosophical historiography in a global perspective. First, I will show the structure of both works, briefly introducing the sections and chapters as well as important changes in the English translation. Second, I will show how the research field of both works is limited to the Eurocentric canon of philosophy by methodologically considering their focus on specific linguistic-geopolitical areas.

KEYWORDS | *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia* (Santinello, Piaia); Historiography of Philosophy; Eurocentric Canon; Mechanisms of Exclusion; Global Perspective

¹ The present article is largely based on my work published previously in *Polylog* (Greco 2021) which is presented here in English and supplemented with special attention to the English edition of the *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia* (*Models*).

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1 Introduction

Two of the most comprehensive projects on the history of the historiography of philosophy to date are the *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia* (1993–2022) [*History of the General Histories of Philosophy*]² and the Reinhart Koselleck “Geschichte der Philosophie in globaler Perspektive” (2019–2024) [“Histories of Philosophy in Global Perspective”] – in which I am a research member and from which this work arose. Despite their common orientation, these projects have quite different focuses: while the Koselleck project examines global perspectives on the historiography of philosophy with special regard to the diversity of languages – and hence also non-European languages – the aim of the SSGF has been to trace back to its roots a particular conception of philosophy and the theoretical disputes that accompany it within the framework of the dominant narratives in the historiography of philosophy in Europe.³ The aim of this paper is to critically revisit the approach of the SSGF from the perspective of a global historiography of philosophy, and thus to make visible important blind spots of the canonical historiography of philosophy, such as how the canonical approach has ignored or marginalized extra- and intra-European traditions of thought.

2 General Outline of the Work and Its English Translation

Giovanni Santinello conceived a project on the history of philosophy in the 1960s, which resulted in the five-volume, seven-tome work in the Italian language edition of the SSGF published from the 1980s onwards. More precisely, Gregorio Piaia recounts that “in the spring of 1975, at a meeting in Padua at the former Institute for the History of Philosophy [...], the research project on the ‘History of the General History of Philosophy from the Beginnings in the Renaissance to the Second Half

² Hereafter abbreviated as SSGF according to volume:page. The English edition has been published as Santinello et al. (eds.), *Models of the History of Philosophy* (hereafter abbreviated as *Models*). All quotations from *Models* are the work of its translators, while the English quotations from SSGF not provided in *Models* are my own.

³ Many authors of histories of philosophy have introduced their works with a review of writers and women writers of histories of philosophy. Johannes Jonsius, with his *De scriptoribus historiae philosophicae* (1659), was among those who first devoted themselves to philosophical historiography, showing how different histories of philosophy were handed down to us and from which sources. He was followed by Christoph August Heumann’s *Acta Philosophorum* (1715–25) in which we find references to women philosophers and non-European philosophies. As for the 20th century, this tradition is re-worked in a new way by Johannes Freyer in *Geschichte der Geschichten der Philosophie im 18. Jahrhundert* (1911), which was expanded and enriched after the 1970s in French (see Braun 1973; Gueroult 1992) and in Italian with the SSGF (see Elberfeld 2021b).

of the 19th Century’ was presented and launched” (SSGF, 5:ix)⁴ After Santinello’s premature death in 2003, Piaia took charge of the project until its completion a year later. The thick volumes, each with over 500 pages, were published in Italian by a group of experts over the course of more than 20 years. The first four volumes were translated into English over the last 30 years. It “has not been always an easy task, since many of the Italian words used still retain a meaning close to their Latin original, and unfortunately these rich connotations are often lost in the process of translation” (*Models*, 1:xxi), Constance W.T. Blackwell writes in the foreword to the English edition edited by her and Philip Weller as associate editor. The translation has been entirely revised and corrected, and in some areas integrated, and the bibliography has been duly updated. The translation project was developed with the full cooperation and help of the original team in Padua under the direction first of Giovanni Santinello and later of Gregorio Piaia and Giuseppe Micheli.

The aim of the work is to analytically reconstruct the emergence, establishment, and canonization of the specific genre of the general history of philosophy (*storia generale della filosofia*) as *historia philosophica*, and in doing so to reappraise a specific history of the historiography of philosophy, namely, as Santinello explains in the introduction to the first volume, “not in its entirety, but only the historiography produced by the specific genre defined as that of the ‘general histories of philosophy’” (*Models*, 2:vii; SSGF, 2:ix-x).⁵ The exact definition of the genre under study and the concept of philosophy behind the project are not further clarified in the SSGF, but it becomes increasingly clear in the course of the analysis of the selected works: the approach is based on a concept of philosophy that, since the 17th century, has been primarily guided by the idea that a certain rational-logical, systematic, and comprehensive treatise of philosophical thought took place exclusively in Europe. According to the approach of the SSGF, philosophy began in ancient Greece, was rediscovered during the European Renaissance, and experienced its greatest flowering in Germany between the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. Nevertheless, a similar approach seems to guide the completion of the SSGF, despite C.W.T. Blackwell’s claim in the introduction to the English translation of the first volume that, paraphrasing Bréhier’s words, “a new methodological approach that rejected Comtian and Hegelian constructs was nec-

⁴ “Fu verso la primavera del 1975 che in una riunione tenutasi a Padova nell’allora Istituto di storia della filosofia [...] venne illustrato e impostato il progetto di ricerca sulla ‘storia delle storie generali della filosofia dalle origini rinascimentali al secondo Ottocento’”

⁵ The quote concludes the following passage: “A true literary genre is thus established and developed, the ‘general history of philosophy’, with its own precise problems (periodization, the interpretation of schools and approaches, methodology, etc.), tackled with a theoretical awareness (there is frequent reflection and discussion on the ‘concept’ of the history of philosophy, the methods with which to write it, and the results achieved by writers so far). We can trace the history of this ‘genre’”

essay if a clear and philosophically useful study of the history of philosophy was to be made" which would, following the intention of Lucien Braun, "not impose an idea on the historical text as post-Kantian philosophers had done, but would examine the texts themselves" (*Models*, 1:xiii–xiv).⁶ The reference to Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann (1761–1819), one of the main proponents of this approach, made in the first line of the introduction to the first Italian volume leaves no doubt about the approach of *SSGF*.⁷ However, the work of examining the texts themselves, as is done in the *SSGF*, has no precedent and, so far, no successor either.

According to the findings of the *SSGF*, the special genre of the "General History of Philosophy" begins somewhere between the first half of the 16th and the 17th centuries ("From its Origins in the Renaissance to the '*Historia Philosophica*'")⁸ with the rediscovery of ancient philosophical schools and the practice of erudition, i.e., the extensive and detailed collection of knowledge and data from different fields of knowledge. Vol. 2 ("From the Cartesian Age to Brucker")⁹ examines the canonization of philosophical historical narratives between the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th centuries. Vol. 3 ("The Second Enlightenment and the Kantian Age")¹⁰ describes pre-Kantian and Kantian influences on philosophical historiography as major turning points between the second half of the 18th century and 1820 in two tomes (vols. 3.1 and 3.2, collected as one volume in the English translation). Vol. 4 ("The Hegelian Age")¹¹ in Italian is published also in two tomes according to linguistic-cultural and political spaces (vols. 4.1 "The Historiography of Philosophy in the German Area"; and 4.2 "Histori-

⁶ See Bréhier 1926–1928, 1:10; Braun 1973, 4). This is not meant to undercut the work of Santinello and his group, which produced a severe critique of the categories that had been typical of the idealist modes of thought in Italy. It is meant to emphasize how difficult, if not impossible, it is to unearth one's blind spots and obvious customs on one's own, in this case, without the oblique glances from different regions outside Europe and ideally in communication with each other. A hint of the diversity of perspectives coming exclusively from within Europe can be spotted by comparing Santinello's work with those of Braun and Gueroult regarding their assessment of the discussions between the 15th and the 17th centuries on the history of philosophy and the very different descriptions of the contribution of early modern philosophy on how Western philosophy developed the way it did until the 19th century (see Braun 1973; Gueroult 1992).

⁷ "When the Kantian philosopher Tennemann, observing that the very concept of the history of philosophy is in itself a compound notion, proceeded to give an analysis (*Zergliederung*) that reduced it, with great simplicity and an intuitive sense of clarity, to the two distinct notions of 'history' and 'philosophy', he brought into sharp focus a basic interlinking of ideas that is fundamental to an understanding of the theoretical aspects of the historiography of philosophy." *Models*, 1:xxv; *SSGF*, 1:vi.

⁸ Original title: *Dalle Origini rinascimentali alla 'Historia Philosophica'*.

⁹ Original title: *Dall'età cartesiana a Brucker*.

¹⁰ Original title: *Il secondo illuminismo e l'età kantiana*.

¹¹ Original title: *L'età hegeliana*.

ography of Philosophy in the Neo-Latin, Danubian, and Russian Area”),¹² while the English translation gathers them in one volume, focusing on the most important contributions to the genre from the beginning of the 19th century to the 1860s. Vol. 5 (“The Second Half of the 19th Century”),¹³ which has not yet been translated into English, covers more recent developments and the slow fragmentation of the historiographical genre into specific genres of the history of philosophy.

A look at the tables of contents of the individual volumes makes it evident that systematization has varied. A fixed outline is intended to serve as a basis for unifying the collected material when describing the authors of histories of philosophy and their works. The schematic treatment of individual historians of philosophy and their works is framed by the more general presentation of the historical period in which they wrote, while such introductions – some of which are very detailed – also briefly introduce some authors who do not find a place in the schematic presentation. The detailed presentation of individual historians of philosophy represents the final stage of a more complicated division of the field of research. Only within the national and thematic frameworks are the individual historians of philosophy treated according to this fixed scheme in chronological order of the publications of their works. The focus was essentially on historians of philosophy; exceptions were made for authors who did not write “histories of philosophy” in the strict sense and yet who contributed significantly to the theoretical development of a particular conception, such as Pierre Bayle, Christoph August Heumann, and Immanuel Kant. Thus, Santinello describes the schematic classification of the SSGF in the introduction of the first two volumes in the following way:

The rigidity with which the above scheme is applied aims at guaranteeing the homogeneity of the treatment in a collective work like this, and intends to give a certain objectivity to the narration. Indeed the framework used is not so much the product of a theoretical re-appropriation of the past, but aims to reflect the historical and theoretical framework [– condensed exemplarily in Jakob Brucker’s approach –] which is the subject of these first two volumes. It corresponds, as we will see, to the problematic raised in some of the great ‘histories’ described here (*Models*, 2:ix; *SSGF*, 2:xi).

The authors¹⁴ and their works are examined in terms of six factors: 1) the biography

¹² Original titles: *La storiografia filosofica nell’area tedesca* and *La storiografia filosofica nell’area neo-latina, danubiana e russa*. The titles are translated literally here, while in the English translation other partitions and consequently other designations are taken, which I will analyze below.

¹³ Original title: *Il secondo ottocento*.

¹⁴ As far as I know, female authors of histories of philosophy are not covered in *SSGF* or *Models*.

of the author; 2) the list of his works; 3) the presentation of his concept of the history of philosophy; 4) the analysis of his historiographical work(s) according to structure, proposed periodization, historiographical theories, and methodological choices; 5) the reception of the work(s); and 6) the bibliography on the author. This basic scheme is enforced throughout the five volumes, replaced occasionally by running text without schematic divisions for the treatment of specific topics such as: the age of the encyclopedists (vol. 3.1 of *SSGF*; vol. 3 of *Models*); the Kantian turn (vol. 3.2 of *SSGF*; vol. 3 of *Models*); the historiography of philosophy in Italy in the first half of the 19th century (vol. 4.2 of *SSGF*; vol. 4 of *Models*); the Austrian and Hungarian historiographies of philosophy (vol. 4.2 of *SSGF*; yet not translated in *Models*); and the British (vol. 4 of *Models*), French, Italian, and Russian historiographies of philosophy in the second half of the 19th century (vol. 5 of *SSGF*). The discursive format in which some topics and authors are presented – in contrast to the schematic presentation of the majority of authors – has the effect of partially losing track of some of the topics and regions covered.

In what follows, I offer a brief overview of the volumes as a basis for the subsequent critical analysis.

3 Survey of the Individual Volumes

3.1 Volume 1: *From Its Origins in the Renaissance to the “Historia Philosophica”* (1981/1993)

The first volume of the Italian work was published two years after the second, and in 1993 Blackwell introduced the translation in English. The volume contains, after an extensive introduction, two main parts embracing the period from the middle of the 16th to the end of the 17th centuries, with emphases on England, the Netherlands, and Germany. In the first section of the introduction, Luciano Malusa clarifies the context of philosophical historiography in the Renaissance period, which was characterized by a revaluation of ancient thought (§1), the genre of ‘*Prisca Theologia*’ and ‘*Perennis Philosophia*’ (§2), the concordism (§3), a significant reference to Sextus Empiricus (§4) and the reformation period (§5). In the subsections of the second part of the introduction, Ilario Tolomio lists several prominent figures who contributed to the establishment of the genre of *historia philosophica* between the 16th and 17th centuries regarding: the literature of polyhistory (§1) with six authors, the pedagogical tradition (§2) with seven authors, religious pressures (§3) with four authors, the anti-Aristotelianism (§4) with ten authors, and finally the editions of Diogenes Laertius (§5) in the 17th century. Part one of the book deals with Thomas Stanley’s *History of Philosophy* (1); four works of *historia*

philosophica in the Netherlands (2), including Georgius Hornius; and the histories of philosophy of the Cambridge Neoplatonists (3) such as Theophile Gale and Thomas Burnet, written by Luciano Malusa. In the second part of the volume, Giuseppe Micheli treats, in seven subchapters, seven historians of philosophy of the second half of the 17th century in Germany (4), including the works of Johannes Jonsius (1659) and Jakob Thomasius (1665) among others.

Regarding the origins of philosophical historiography in the Renaissance period, Santinello wonders in the introduction: "why should the origins of general histories of philosophy be traced back to the Renaissance, rather than to classical antiquity?" Here Santinello refers to Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Philosophers* from the 3rd century CE to argue that, for the purposes of the SSGF project, one work on the history of philosophy "became relevant only at the point when it is discovered, studied, translated and imitated in the light of the highly evolved historical awareness and understanding of the humanists" (*Models*, 1:xxviii; SSGF, 1:x).

3.2 Volume 2: From the Cartesian Age to Brucker (1979/2011)

The second volume – published at first in the Italian edition and translated only in 2011 with an introduction by Gregorio Piaia – is divided into two parts that cover the period from the second half of the 17th century to the first half of the 18th century, focusing on France, Italy, and Germany. In the first part, Piaia deals with the general histories of philosophy in France in the age of Descartes (1) with eight authors, the philosophical historiography in France from Pierre Bayle to André-François Boureau-Deslandes in France (2) with six authors, the "critical" history of philosophy and the Early Enlightenment in Deslandes (3), and the general histories of philosophy in Italy in the late 17th and early 18th centuries (4) with six authors. In the second part, Mario Longo – supported by Francesco Bottin for the English translation of this chapter – addresses in detail the histories of philosophy in Germany from Eclecticism to Pietism (5) with eight authors, including Johannes Christian Wolf and Johannes Franz Buddeus among others; the theory of "*historia philosophica*" (6) in Ephraim Gerhard and Christoph August Heumann; the textbooks from Heumann to Jakob Brucker (7) with five authors; and finally Brucker's titular "*historia critica*" and the Early Enlightenment (8).

The earlier publication of the second volume of the Italian work fits into the narrative of the SSGF, since this volume describes the significant phase in the development of modern philosophical historiography which, according to Piaia in his introduction to the English translation,

abandoned its philological and erudite guise and took on the form

of a 'critical' and 'philosophical' history of philosophy, in a complex and problematic interchange with the concerns of modern philosophy (represented in particular by Descartes, Leibniz, and Locke), but also with the nascent *histoire de l'esprit humain* [...]. We see a true change in intentions and methods which was fundamentally to influence modern cultural sensitivity and was to develop finally into the Hegelian apotheosis of the unity of philosophy and history of philosophy, but also, in another sense, into the methodology of 'intellectual history' (*Models*, 2:v).

Through the contributions of Deslandes' *Histoire critique* (1737) and Brucker's *Historia critica philosophiae. A mundi incunabulis ad nostram usque aetatem deducta* (1742–44), who was Heumann's student, the genre of the "general history of philosophy" was established, raising theoretical questions of periodization, interpretation of schools and directions, and methodology.¹⁵ From this perspective, the narratives of earlier authors such as Stanley (1655), Horn (1655), and Thomasius (1665) are described and analyzed, giving these early approaches a certain unity and an identity.

3.3 Volume 3: *The Second Enlightenment and the Kantian Age* (1988/2015)

The third volume of the Italian edition published in 1988 contains four parts in two tomes and covers the period from the second half of the 18th century to the first decades of the 19th century, focusing on France, Italy, Britain, and Germany. The tomes appeared in English in 2015 as one volume with some changes to the Italian work, such as the removal of the list of subchapters of the rich introductions in the table of contents. In the first part of the first tome, Piaia discusses the histories of philosophy and the *histoire de l'esprit humaine* in France in the *Encyclopédie* (1), the impact of the *esprit des lumières* on the history of philosophy (2) with five authors, and the relation between religious apologetics and historiographical practice (3) with three authors. In the second part, Ilario Tolomio presents the historiography of philosophy in Italy in the second half of the 18th century in three chapters related to: the Enlightenment, erudition, and religious apologetics (4) with four authors; the transition from the school textbooks to works for a wider readership (5) with five authors; and a whole chapter devoted to the theism of Appiano Buonafede (6). The second Italian tome begins with Francesco Bottin's

¹⁵ These authors also draw on the philosophical contributions of Descartes, Leibniz, Bayle, and Vico, whose approaches are advanced during this period. See *Models*, 2:ix; *SSGF*, 2:xi.

treatise on the historiography of philosophy in Great Britain, focusing on the Scottish Enlightenment (7) with four authors. The fourth and final part of the Italian edition covers in detail the German philosophical historiography of the second half of the 18th century with contributions by: Italo Francesco Baldo on the textbooks after Brucker (8) with seven authors, Mario Longo on the Göttingen School (9) and five of its representatives, Giuseppe Micheli in a long contribution on the Kantian turning-point (10), and Giovanni Santinello on the Kantianism of Johann Gottlieb Buhle (11). While the Italian edition of the 3rd volume ended – due to editorial issues – with Gottlieb Buhle’s *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie* and *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, the English translation includes in its ch. 11 the first chapter of the subsequent vol. 4.1 (*The Hegelian Age*) in the Italian edition and covers another three representatives of Kantianism: Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann, Jakob Friedrich Fries, and Ernst Christian Gottlieb Reinhold. The decision to anticipate the chapter about Kantianism was made to provide the reader with a complete picture of the developments of the German philosophical historiography in the second half of the 18th century, presenting “a full account of the concept of an a priori history of philosophy, deriving from a psychological interpretation of the Kantian notion of ‘transcendental’” (*Models*, 3:v).

This volume focuses on the influences of the Enlightenment and Kantian philosophy on the historiography of philosophy, which, according to Santinello, can be exemplified in the works of Dieterich Tiedemann (1791) and Johann Gottlieb Buhle (1796). Although Kant did not write a history of philosophy, his philosophical approaches had a major impact on contemporary historians of philosophy. Santinello considers the category of progress to be the common orientation of the histories of philosophy that appeared between the 1750s and the 1820s, a concept which is now applied to the field of philosophical thought. “The need for a systematic structuring,” Santinello argues, “also involved reflection on the rhythms of progress and on how to give a historiographical description of them: a division by ‘revolutions’ or ‘centuries’, or a linear process, albeit at an inconstant speed (Tiedemann), or again a process by dichotomies of contrasting systems, as in the case of Kant’s outlines and the more extensive discussions by the Kantians (Buhle, Tennemann)” (*Models*, 3:xiii; *SSGF*, 3.1:xii). During this period, the thesis of the beginnings of philosophy in ancient Greece also solidifies, and “Oriental” or “barbarian” philosophies are no longer considered. The category of progress, in the sense of the succession of systems, from this point on becomes the leading factor in the historiography of philosophy.¹⁶

¹⁶ See *Models*, 3:xiii–xiv; *SSGF*, 3.1:xii–xiii.

3.4 Volume 4: *The Hegelian Age* (1995–2004/2022)

The fourth volume of the Italian edition is divided into two tomes that are published nine years apart and which cover the first half of the 19th century in the German, Neo-Latin, Danubian, and Russian areas, while the English translation collects in one volume the topics regarding the Germanic,¹⁷ French, Italian, and Anglo-Saxon regions. The first tome of the Italian edition is subtitled *The Historiography of Philosophy in the German Region* (4.1) and contains detailed contributions on the developments of Kantianism (SSGF, 4.1/1; Models, 3/11). It also contains contributions by Giuseppe Micheli on Tennemann, Bruno Bianco on Fries, and Mario Longo on Reinhold (these entries are in the previous 3rd vol. of the English translation).¹⁸ Further, Mario Longo presents the relation between hermeneutics and the history of philosophy (SSGF 4.1/2; Models 4/1), and Larry Steindler presents the school of Schelling (SSGF 4.1/3; Models 4/2). In the last chapter of the first tome, Santinello deals intensively with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (SSGF 4.1/4; Models 4/3). The second tome is subtitled in Italian *The Historiography of Philosophy in the Neo-Latin, Danubian, and Russian Areas* (4.2) and is divided into three parts. In the first part, Piaia focuses on the French area with special regard to Joseph-Marie Degérando (SSGF 4.2/1; Models 4/4) and Victor Cousin (SSGF 4.2/2; Models 4/5). In the second part, Luciano Malusa presents the Italian historiography of philosophy (SSGF 4.2/3; Models 4/6) in the form of a continuous text, with the exception of schematic representations of the works of Pasquale Galuppi and Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (SSGF 4.2/4; Models 4/7). The third and final part – whose absence or probably displacement in the English translation is neither commented nor mentioned – presents the contributions to the history of philosophy from Spain (SSGF 4.2/5) by Antonio Jiménez García, Austria (SSGF 4.2/6) by Franz Martin Wimmer, Hungary (SSGF 4.2/7) by Larry Steindler, and Russia (SSGF 4.2/8) by Marija Torgova. The English edition of the 4th volume ends with the anticipation of the chapter on the British history of philosophy in the 19th century (Models 4/8), which in the Italian version is already a part of the fifth and final volume.

In the period considered in this volume, “the results of more than two centuries of theoretical reflection and historiographical practice” are condensed (Models, 4:v; SSGF, 4.1:vii). The genre of the “general history of philosophy” reaches its climax only to dissolve shortly thereafter. During this period, the search for a model of the history of philosophy intensifies and different models develop,

¹⁷ In Italian work it is referred to as the “German Area” (*area germanica*).

¹⁸ Since the Italian and English editions differ in chapter count in this volume and its tomes, in what follows, the two tomes of vol. 4 are specified as 4.1 and 4.2 respectively and the ch. are indicated after the “/” sign.

for instance, those of the Kantians, Schleiermacher, the Schellingians, and Hegel. Thus:

The histories of philosophy produced in the German-speaking region between the last years of the eighteenth century and the first 40 years of the new century – although Ritter's vast work extends beyond, i.e. as far as 1853 – can be considered as a *continuum*, which, however, consists of a variety of theoretical positions and lines of interpretation. Common to all authors is a strong theoretical intent, namely their concern for determining the concept of the history of philosophy, viewed in itself and in its relation to philosophy as a science. [...] The perspective of a history of philosophy conceived as *a priori*, typical of the Kantians and particularly of Tennemann, thus yields place to the Hegelian identification of philosophy and the history of philosophy, which is conceived of as the self-manifestation of Reason (i.e. of the Absolute) viewed as the Spirit of the World (*Models*, 4:v; *SSGF*, 4.1:v).

In this volume it becomes clear that two approaches to the historiography of philosophy become particularly dominant: the Kantian and the Hegelian. The clarity of this occurrence is further underscored in the 4th volume of the English edition which temporarily sets aside the openness shown in the second tome of the Italian work with the broad inclusion of four other European areas. In line with the post-Hegelian dissolution of the identity of this genre, Piaia states that "with respect to the four linguistic-cultural areas considered in the previous volumes, the panorama is expanded here to include other areas selected for their representativeness" (*SSGF*, 4.2:ix).¹⁹

3.5 Volume 5: *The Second Half of the 19th Century* (2004)

The fifth and final volume of the (*SSGF*) is divided into two parts. In the first part, different authors contribute to the presentation of the histories of philosophy in Germany according to the usual scheme. In the second part are presented as running text: the British area (1) is addressed by Giuseppe Micheli, the French area (2) by Piaia and Ubiraja Rancan de Azevedo Marques, the Italian area (3) by Luciano Malusa, and the Russian area (4) by Marija Torgova. The volume deals with the last works of the genre of the "general history of philosophy": since this period,

¹⁹ "Rispetto alle quattro aree linguistico-culturali prese in considerazione nei precedenti volumi, il panorama è stato qui allargato ad altre aree, scelte per la loro rappresentatività."

publications on the individual epochs of the history of philosophy of antiquity, the Middle Ages, or modernity have increasingly been developing.

4 Critical Issues in the Research Approach of the SSGF from a Global Perspective

The *SSGF* offers a meticulous collection and analysis of the most important histories of philosophy from the 16th to the 19th centuries along with their authors, which clearly surpasses similar works in its systematicity and comprehensiveness. Even though the *SSGF* confines its treatise to Europe, no mention is made in reference to a “European” historiography of philosophy, neither in relation to the histories of philosophy treated nor to the historians of philosophy considered in all five volumes. This shows that an assumption of equivalence between “general” and “European” histories of philosophy is taken for granted. This goes parallel to the presupposition that philosophy is simply a European matter. This phenomenon can be seen in various forms in the historiography of philosophy as well as in the histories of the historiography of philosophy up to the 21st century. So far, in the majority of works on the history of philosophy, the term “philosophy” is usually understood to mean “European philosophy,” whereas philosophies of other traditions of thought are given additional adjectives such as “Japanese,” “Jewish,” or “African.” The same happens in the *SSGF*.

As can be seen from the titles of the volumes, the main subdivision is arranged both chronologically by century and thematically in terms of the Cartesian, Kantian, or Hegelian ages. The further subdivisions of the individual volumes follow a linguistic-cultural or national scheme (Germany/Germanic, Italy, etc.) within which are differentiated certain schools (the Göttingen School, the School of Schelling, etc.) and different approaches (polyhistorical, encyclopedic, etc.). In this classification, the languages in which the works are written carry no weight, although they are occasionally mentioned in some entries. This is in spite of the crucial role that language plays for philosophizing in general, something which is elsewhere recognized by the authors of the *SSGF*. Only in the amalgamation of France and Italy under the designation “Neo-Latin region” (*area neolatina*) is a linguistic reference used in the last volume; however, it disappears in the English translation without any consideration of the peculiar position Latin has had as a written intellectual language. In the first volume, the division of the historians of philosophy into countries such as “England” (*Inghilterra*), the “The Netherlands” (*Paesi Bassi*), and “Germany” (*Germania*) at least suggests a linguistic component which, however, is not further explored philosophically, geopolitically, or culturally. Since in

the aforementioned century “Germany” was not yet a political or national entity until 1871, it can be assumed that the research group referred to a linguistic division with this term. However, what is not problematized at any point is the fact that only historians of philosophy who wrote in Latin (the common academic language at that time) are presented in this chapter. The diversity and importance of the languages of the histories of philosophy covered in the *SSGF* (Latin, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Danish, and Hungarian) are not addressed in the work. This leads to the problematic attributions of Johannes Jonsius and Harald Høffding to the German tradition, whereby the former wrote in Latin and the latter in Danish. Moreover, it goes unnoticed that many Russian scholars wrote in German in the mid-19th century due to the state ban on teaching philosophy at universities; while this issue is not addressed, it would have been interesting to comment on what this could mean to those Russian scholars. Academic languages established themselves as canonical languages of philosophy in part precisely because of their use for histories of philosophy or science, and this phenomenon is not addressed in the extensive work of the *SSGF*. This was especially the case for Latin, French, German, and it is also the case today for English. From a global perspective in particular, the importance of languages for philosophizing should not be underestimated. They contribute simultaneously to shaping the processes of canonization and to the development and practice of philosophy itself as a discipline. Translation processes are often addressed in the *SSGF*, but without stressing the significant historical, political, and philosophical consequences of these processes.²⁰

As far as the national division of the *SSGF* is concerned, the individual volumes regularly examine Great Britain (vols. 1, 3, and 5), Germany (vols. 1, 2, 3, 4.1, and 5), France (vols. 2, 3, 4.2, and 5), and Italy (vols. 2, 3, 4.2, and 5) in particular. Isolated chapters also examine The Netherlands (vol. 1) as well as Spain, Austria, Hungary (vol. 4.2), and Russia (vols. 4.2 and 5), which are entirely absent from the English translation of vol. 4, probably because it is provided in vol. 5. Put in another way, in the Italian work the German histories of philosophy are represented by five sec-

²⁰ See, for example, Stanley's *History of Philosophy* which is the first, if still immature, example of a general history of philosophy in the *SSGF* and which did not have a wide circulation outside England. The work only became famous after the Latin translation (1690) of the fourth and final volume, *Historia philosophiae orientalis*, on the Eastern philosophies of the Chaldeans, Persians, and Sabaeans, which was published originally in 1662 as *History of Chaldaic Philosophy*. The translator Jean Le Clerc, who annotated the work extensively, added an explanation of the importance of this treatise in terms of the relationship between Eastern, Jewish, and Greek thought, as well as regarding many medieval theological controversies. A complete Latin translation of the work was not available until 1711, which led to the diverse distribution, citation, and expansion of the work over the centuries. See *Models*, 1:163–203; *SSGF*, 1:176–215.

tions in each volume, the French and Italian by four sections each, the British by three sections, the Russian histories of philosophy by two sections focused exclusively on the 19th century, and by one section each for the the other four regions: the Netherlands only in the 17th century, Spain, Austria, and Hungary only in the 19th century. Moreover, the selection of the extra regions considered in the 19th century was based on their relation to the German philosophical historiography.

Piaia writes about this issue in the introduction to vol. 4.2:

So to illustrate when and how General Philosophical Histories ‘entered’ and established themselves in a larger cycle, we have moved toward the Spanish sphere (*ambito spagnolo*) in the West, and toward the two great continental empires, the Habsburg and Tsarist monarchies, where the dependence on German and even French models (in the case of Russia) is accompanied by the persistence of the pedagogical tradition or by more autochthonous elements pointing to a ‘national’ philosophical tradition, in order to trace and valorize the spirit of the Romantic epoch. In fact, this kind of dialectic between German philosophical historiography, as inspiring instance (be it Brucker, Tennemann, Hegel or the Schellingians), and a real or presumed national speculative tradition, is to be understood as a general key to the reading of the present volume (SSGF, 4.2:ix).

What is meant here by “Spanish sphere” (*ambito spagnolo*) is exclusively the country of Spain. Other Spanish-speaking areas remain excluded from the treatise, as is also the case with French- and English-speaking areas outside of France and England.²¹ Here again it becomes clear that language, nation, and empire are not differentiated, and their relation to each other, or to geographical borders, is not interrogated. This is especially the case for the the nationalization of philosophies, a phenomenon which increases in Europe from the 19th century onwards as a result of the formation of the respective nations. Nevertheless, the influence of language on philosophical and political phenomena remains largely unnoticed in the SSGF.

The narrowness of the research field of the SSGF is further evident when individual works of historians of philosophy are considered, in which a number of philosophical traditions and peoples are mentioned which today no longer receive any attention. Indeed, some historians of philosophy, such as Stanley (1655) or Brucker (1741–44), discuss “antediluvian,” “Oriental,” or “barbarian” philosophies,

²¹ As far as I know, three works have been published in Spanish in Latin American countries in 19th century: Tennemann 1845, Pujol 1883, and Cardinal Dagorgne 1895.

or the specific philosophies of the Chaldeans, Persians, Phoenician, Egyptians, Chinese, Indians, Africans, and so on. Nevertheless, Santinello's research group is primarily concerned with the European regions. According to the prevailing understanding, philosophy begins with Thales. Although most of the historians of philosophy included in the SSGF admit that there was some form of exchange between Greeks and other peoples, or acknowledge that the peoples of Asia and North Africa possess(ed) traditions of wisdom, this intellectual material was usually not counted as philosophy. This seems also to be the case in the SSGF.²²

Starting from the late 18th century, the exclusion of non-European intellectual traditions proves to be a common approach in Latin, English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish languages (representative examples for the German-speaking world are Tiedemann 1791–97 and Tennemann 1798–1819).²³ Noteworthy in this framework is the work of Buhle, two of whose three works on the history of phi-

²² In contrast to the widespread tendency in the first sections of philosophical histories to mention oriental philosophies as religious, naturalistic, and unsystematic, some currents of philosophical historiography at the beginning of the 19th century show interest in the philosophies of other peoples and cultures. Among such currents we find, for example, the hermeneutic school (see *Models*, 4:3–130; *SSGF*, 4.1:183–448), the school of Schelling (see *Models*, 4:131–82; *SSGF*, 4.1:349–412), and later the approach of Dilthey (see *SSGF*, 5:328–63). Such philosophical-historical currents incorporate stronger cultural, linguistic, religious, and cosmological aspects into philosophical thought and are not as quick to exclude the development of reason in other philosophical systems. Some of these currents have developed in parallel with the Kantian approach to the historiography of philosophy, but have not been recognized as successfully as the Kantian and Hegelian approaches. The tradition of placing the beginning of the history of philosophy with ancient, oriental, or North African philosophies is carried on, for example, with the translations of Stanley (see vols. 1 of *Models SSGF*) and by some representatives of the Göttingen School (see vols. 3 of *Models* and *SSGF*).

²³ What is striking in the editions of Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie* is that, in its first 12-volume edition, the history of philosophy begins directly with the Greeks. Yet the later 8th volume (1811) mentions the Arabs in light of their reception of Aristotle's work, and the 9th volume of 1814 examines the relation between the Greek and Oriental philosophies from the perspective of the 14th to 16th centuries. The second edition of 1816, in the 3rd part of the introduction, edited in one volume as *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie für den akademischen Unterricht* (1816), includes a "Brief Overview of the Religious and Philosophical Views of Oriental Peoples and the First Greek Culture" ("Kurze Uebersicht der religiösen und philosophischen Ansichten orientalischer Völker und der ersten griechischen Cultur"), as well as a section on Jewish philosophy and Gnosticism (§3.3). However, the reference to the Arabs and to the Oriental philosophy of the 14th–16th centuries disappears. In the second part of the introduction to the 3rd edition of the *Grundriß* edited by Wendt in 1829, the Oriental philosophies are given more space, addressing the Indians (§66), Tibetans (§67), Chinese (§68), Persians (§69), Chaldeans (§70), Aegyptians (§71), Hebrews (§72), Phoenicians (§73), even if they are not taken up as the first chapter, that is, as the beginnings of philosophy. The Arabs are in turn mentioned, but not in the context of the Oriental philosophy of the 14th–16th centuries. Interestingly, Wendt concludes his treatise with a new chapter on "Foreign Philosophy" ("Ausländische Philosophie") in which he discusses the philosophies of the English, French, Italian, and other nations, whereas in the earlier chapters these geographical areas were alternatively classified under the philosophical strands.

losophy are discussed in the SSGF. In the *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie* (1796), Buhle places at the beginning of his account the Egyptians (§§12–23), the Hebrews (§§24–28), the Phoenicians (§§29–31), the Chaldeans (§§32–33), the Persians (§§34–40), the Hindostans (§§41–7), the Chinese (§§48–50), and the Celts and Scandinavians (§§51–62). While their philosophies total 188 pages in this work, he alternatively starts his *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (1800–04) directly with Thales and the Greeks. From Heinrich Christoph Wilhelm Sigwart (1840), Friedrich Karl Albert Schwegler (1848), and Friedrich Ueberweg (1863) onward, the accounts have tightened toward a Kantian or Hegelian approach in which most histories of philosophy begin directly with Thales and with the innate talent for philosophy commonly attributed to the ancient Greeks. These common approaches lead to the fact that certain regions of the world, together with their philosophical contributions, were slowly forgotten or systematically excluded.

Considering that in the age of humanism, from the 15th and 16th centuries until the time of Hegel, explicit attempts were made to write a complete history of the wisdom of the human or absolute spirit,²⁴ the exclusionary approach of the historiography of philosophy we see between the 17th and 19th centuries is quite surprising. For in the majority of works from these centuries it is clear that numerous regions – such as America, Asia, and Africa, as well as modern Greece – are excluded. However, the same can be said of most histories of philosophy coming from the 20th and 21st centuries. As for America, the absence in the SSGF of histories of philosophy from the United States is conspicuous since they were present in the general historiography of philosophy, for example, in 1846 with the new edition of John Daniel Morrel, in 1857 with George Henry Lewes, in 1874 with Louis Eugène Marie Bautain, and so on. The United States is mentioned only in relation to a few translations, such as the 1856 English translation of the *History of Philosophy* (*Geschichte der Philosophie*) [1848] by Friedrich Karl Albert Schwegler. The stark disproportionateness of the focus on European traditions compared with those of other parts of the world remains uncommented on by the researchers of

²⁴ Interesting in this respect is the treatment of histories of philosophy in the context of the history of science and literature, whose interface, without a clear demarcation between the history of philosophy and the history of ideas, has flowed into the history of ideas. The SSGF repeatedly mentions the influences of philologies without distinguishing the different conditions that contributed to the development of *historia philosophica* in the 15th and 16th centuries. Moreover, the philologies of non-European languages, which have stimulated the production of more detailed treatises from non-European traditions of thought from the 19th century onwards, have been appraised and discussed more in the field of philology rather than in academic philosophy. This can be shown by the production of such works in the field of philology and the absence of such mentions in works of history of philosophy in respect to older histories of philosophy in which different non-European traditions were included. For accounts of this process, see Elberfeld (2021b), and Greco (2022).

the SSGF.

In the works discussed in the SSGF, it is clear that a certain tradition of philosophical historiography has been developed through practices such as the mutual praising or criticizing, evaluation, and acknowledgement of selected histories of philosophy. Among the authors who have become so influential are surely Jonsius (1659), Bayle (1697), Heumann (1715), Tennemann (1798), Cousin (1864), and Windelband (1892).²⁵ It becomes clear that the German historiography of philosophy, and from time to time the French historiography of philosophy, have strongly contributed to the formation of a traditional canon of philosophical historiography. Thus, it is not surprising that in the SSGF the German and French traditions of philosophical historiography were used as benchmarks for the selection of further areas. From the Enlightenment onwards, German philosophical historiography has been the standard for further analysis according to which authors from other European regions are included or excluded.²⁶ In their turn, the historians of philosophy involved in the SSGF project are manifestly guided in their selection and presentation by the concept of philosophy that is discussed above. By uncritically reproducing a certain line of tradition, the SSGF positions itself within the classical canon.

5 Conclusion

What the research group investigates and analyzes under the title *History of the General Histories of Philosophy* (SSGF) is thus a specific tradition of philosophical historiography that emerged in the heart of Europe and which is guided by a specific theoretical interpretation of the connection between “history” and “philosophy,” namely the progressive development of rational thought by almost exclusively white men.²⁷ In choosing a particular genre of philosophical historiography, namely the “general history of philosophy,” by clearly excluding other historio-

²⁵ Historiography takes an interesting turn when modern sources are used instead of ancient sources, such as Aristotle, Plato, or Diogenes, namely from the most prominent philosophical historians of the Renaissance (Morhof, Stanley, Horn) and especially of the Enlightenment (Bayle, Wolf, Heumann, Brucker, Tennemann). See *Models* and SSGF, vols. 1, 2 and 3.

²⁶ See SSGF, 4,2:ix.

²⁷ Although the SSGF takes into consideration works such as Menage’s *Historia mulierum philosopharum* (1690) and Heumann’s *Acta philosophorum* (1715) – with the latter containing Heumann’s *Nachricht von der Philosophie der Frauenzimmer* (*News from the Philosophy of Women’s Rooms*) in which he theorizes that perhaps the first author of a history of philosophy was a woman (see *ibid.*, 178; Elberfeld 2021b, 10) – the SSGF does not comment at all on the incredible imbalance between men and women, protagonists or writers in the histories of philosophy.

graphical methods such as a biographical or a doxographical approach,²⁸ and by identifying the genre's peak and dissolution in the 18th century – while other historiographical approaches continued to develop and emerge – Santinello and his group significantly limit the context of their inquiry. This was the case even if the general editor and originator of the Italian project of the *SSGF* was sincerely motivated by the anti-idealist impulses underlying the properly historical work they produced.²⁹ Nevertheless, this work is the product of an historical consciousness, and “to develop a historical consciousness as a history of one’s own past means to narratively appropriate one’s own past from a certain perspective. Through such a memory of one’s own past historical self-understanding develops, which can become the starting point for a possible future” (Elberfeld 2021a, 7, my translation). The *SSGF*’s research work represents a window to the past that reflects and thus makes clear the dominant perspective in the history of the last century’s philosophy. This perspective is now to be combined with the history of the exclusions in philosophy, namely with “a negative history, or a history of enmeshment (*Verstrickungsgeschichte*), of European philosophy that deals exclusively with the dark and repressed sides found in many philosophical approaches” (14). The goal is to let the dominant European narrative in the history of philosophy and the history of the exclusions produced by it reshape each other.

Santinello reflects on the *SSGF*’s framework of inquiry and the unfinished task of historians of philosophy in the opening lines of his introduction to the first volume: “Theoreticians of the historiography of philosophy have long discussed and continue to debate the problem, and show every sign of continuing to do so for a good while yet” (*Models*, 1:xxv; *SSGF*, 1:vii).³⁰ To quote Blackwell from the foreword to the English edition: “the history of philosophy is seen to have grown out of a constant reworking of the past instead of a rejection of it” (*Models*, 1:xxv; *SSGF*, 1:vii). The same is here proposed for us with this precious work on the history of

²⁸ In this the *SSGF* follows Braun: “By the end of ancient philosophical thought the only genres to have emerged, as Braun observed, were those of ‘doxography’, ‘biography’, and ‘diadochism’ – that is, the recording of the opinions and the lives of the philosophers, and the tracing of traditions and patterns of influence; whereas the outcome of Renaissance humanist thought was, precisely, the ‘historia philosophica’ and the *histoire critique*.” *Models*, 1:xxix; *SSGF*, 1:x.

²⁹ See *Models*, 1:xiv. Regarding the relationship between doing philosophy and doing the history of philosophy, Piaia elsewhere calls out a certain “habitus of openness to the various and manifold expressions of human thinking” rooted in the historical moment of globalization (Piaia 2020, 17; Piaia 2017).

³⁰ This is the second sentence which appears in the introduction of the first volume and is related to the above-mentioned reference to Tennemann as follows: “For us who have since witnessed the philosophies of Hegel and of nineteenth-century positivism, followed in the present century by the Hegelian renaissance, neo-positivism, and historical materialism, it is evident that the intersection of these two ideas (history and philosophy) remains a problem of crucial importance.”

philosophy: it is not a matter of rejecting its perspective as inadequate for the historical period we are dealing with, but rather of making visible the issues that have been overlooked and of investigating this massive collection of material from different perspectives. In 2022 we can no longer avoid looking at philosophies and their histories from global perspectives.³¹ Already from the 19th century onwards, treatises on the history of non-European philosophical traditions have been increasingly inspired by philological, ethnographic, and historical disciplines, and beginning in the 20th century first attempts were made to write a global history of philosophy that takes Asia, though not exclusively, into account.³² In the 21st century, in addition to Asia, such attempts can no longer ignore Africa, Latin America, Australia, and other parts of Europe as well. As such, a project like Santinello's can only be done by a team that is more international and interdisciplinary in order to examine an historiography of philosophy today. One of the most crucial tasks is to critically question the prevailing narratives of the historiography of philosophy in order to account for the intercultural entanglements and “enmeshments” (*Verstrickungen*)³³ of philosophical traditions within and outside Europe.

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³¹ Piaia seems to be fully aware of this when he drafts his article “Storia della filosofia” (2001) on the *SSGF*.

³² For the 19th century, see Schlegel (1808), Windischmann (1827–1834), and Powell (1877). For an overview of the histories of world philosophies, see Hildesheim University's *Geschichten der Philosophie in globaler Perspektive*.

³³ “*Verstrickung*” (enmeshment) is a philosophical term coined by Elberfeld in *Dekoloniales Philosophieren* (2021a). “Enmeshment” implies an active stance against the negative effects of one's own actions. From the perspective of our contemporary situation, it is particularly directed against the deliberate and ignored concealment and obfuscation of negative entanglements of power strategies, especially with regard to colonialism, through various strategies of negation and immunization. Elberfeld frames his work in the following way: “In the present book, I would like to begin [...] by preparing a philosophical response to the sometimes massive criticism that has been and is being brought to bear on European history and philosophy – primarily by non-European thinkers – that does not ward off this criticism but attempts to assume philosophical responsibility within the horizon of this criticism” (12, my translation).

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