

BIBLIOGRAPHIA CARTESIANA

GREGOR SEBBA

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A CRITICAL GUIDE TO
THE DESCARTES LITERATURE

1800-1960



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NOTES TO THE USER

1. To survey the literature in a major area of research, begin with the pertinent section in Part I, then consult the Systematic Index as a guide to the Analytical Index.
2. To locate a given author's work on Descartes, consult Part II under his name; check the Analytical Index under his name for discussions of his contribution.
3. To find the literature on a special topic, consult the Analytical Index, then follow up cross references, and scan the Systematic Index for other pertinent headings.
4. Where the place of publication of a book is not listed, the place is Paris.
5. German *ä, ö, ü* is treated as *ae, oe, ue* in the alphabet. Thus: *Rodriguez, Röd, Rogers*, not: *Röd, Rodriguez, Rogers*.
6. For Descartes literature published since 1960, consult the *Répertoire bibliographique de la philosophie* for titles and reviews, the *Bulletin signalétique* for notices.

PREFACE

This book offers a new type of working tool for Cartesian studies. It presents the literature of the last 160 years in alphabetical order (Part Two), combined with a systematic analytical survey (Part One) and a detailed topical index to the whole (Part Three). This organization makes it possible to turn bibliography from a repository of references into a workshop of research. The systematic survey of Part One and the topical index of Part Three, together, offer a *mise au point* of Descartes studies over their full historical and topical range. The results have often been surprising and illuminating to the author, and if his experience is any guide, the reader, too, will begin to wonder about certain seemingly well-settled points, or marvel at the Protean shapes which our elusive philosopher assumes when mighty commentators force him to reveal his true nature.

A work which has been in the making for fifteen years must show the traces of expansion in scope, and changes in evaluation. *Bibliographia cartesiana* amends my Descartes chapter in *A Critical Bibliography of French Literature*, v. 3, 1961 (see no. 19a), and supersedes an earlier version of Parts One and Two, published in 1959 under the main title *Descartes and his Philosophy*, v. 1 (see no. 18a).

Part I (Introduction to Descartes Studies) divides the field into eleven broad areas. It offers critical notices and references to the bulk of significant contributions, covering as much as one-fifth of the whole literature. Other useful items which could not be incorporated in Part I for technical or other reasons will be found annotated in Part II; they are of course fully indexed. Each main title in Part I is annotated; in addition I have listed all reviews I could locate, discussions in books and articles as well as book reviews proper; condensed but detailed tables of content indicate the scope of works that cover a great variety of topics. If I could rewrite Part I in the light of the understanding I gained by making the detailed topical index, selection and emphasis as well as my evaluations of some contributions would be different. But the changes would not be decisive. Part I would still include every undoubtedly indis-

pensable work, and most of the works I did select as being exceptionally useful. I would still add important older works of no great current value because they give the necessary historical perspective to the picture of Descartes scholarship. And I would still emphasize contributions neglected because they appeared where the Descartes scholar would hardly look for them, because they were written in a minor language, or because they just had bad luck. Nor would I tone down the language of my notices: I do not think that grey is the only color suitable for painting the Cartesian rainbow. As to my critical evaluations, they are no better than my judgment: caveat emptor. The user will form his own better judgment anyway, and to him the literature will look different, if only because there will be even more of it: “majoremque habemus rerum experientiam,” as Descartes said when he was a very young man.

Part II (Alphabetical Bibliography) is a comprehensive listing of all the literature on Descartes from 1800 to 1960 which I could locate, including the material contained in Part I. The total is close to 3000. I doubt that anything of major significance has been overlooked, but complete coverage cannot be claimed; besides, the limits of this type of compilation cannot be precisely drawn.

Part III contains the indices that serve as key to the material presented in Part I and II. The *Systematic Index* gives a synopsis of the Analytical Index and draws attention to useful entries that might be overlooked. The *Analytical Index* is quite detailed. Every topic that appears in a title, notice, or table of contents (but not under reviews) has been indexed, with extremely few exceptions (*minima non curat praetor*). In addition, many books and articles of importance have been indexed from the original, including major works by Alquié, Bouillier, Gilson, Gouhier, Gueroult, Norman Kemp Smith, Thijssen-Schoute and others. The user should not be dismayed if a reference given in the Analytical Index leads him to an entry in Part I or II which does not mention the subject at all; if he will consult the book or article itself, he will find what is promised – unless a typographical error has occurred, in which case I humbly beg his pardon. Needless to say, completeness is impossible in indexing; the user will have to make his own way from the point to which the Analytical Index takes him. He will certainly wish to consult the fundamental works of the literature, whether the Index refers to them or not. This means the ABC of Descartes biography (Adam, Baillet, Cohen), and the Three Cartesian G's (Gilson, Gouhier, Gueroult).

Convenience, not formal consistency, has been the principle adopted in this bibliography. I regret certain minor discrepancies in style and serial numbering;

some material was originally prepared for publications using a different bibliographical style, and new items were added to the very last. The typography has been kept as simple as possible, on the assumption that the user will recognize titles as titles, and foreign words as foreign words, even though they are not typographically distinguished from the rest. And since English is likely to be a foreign language for many – probably for most – users of the work, I have taken the liberty of using philosophical terms freely in their Cartesian form, in French or Latin. Quotations, too, have as a rule been left in their original language.

Moreover, I have used French terms to distinguish their Cartesian from other meanings, and to avoid ambiguity in indexing. Thus, the term *morale* always means the moral philosophy of *Descartes*, as distinct from other philosophers' *ethics*. *Méthode* means the *méthode* of *Descartes* which, properly speaking, is more than *method* and *methodology*. *Sagesse* and *générosité* have been left in *Descartes*' own language, and “*conscience*” (always given between quotation marks) means French “*conscience*” (awareness, self-awareness, *Selbstbewusstsein*, *autocoscienza*), not English “*conscience*” (a bothersome awareness of right and wrong). *Âme* and *volonté* and *libre-arbitre* stand for *soul*, *will*, *free will*; *pensée* means *pensée*, whether *thought*, *thinking*, *mind*, *understanding*, or that linguistic horror “*thinking-self*” is implied. *Connaissance d'autrui* has not been converted into *The Other Self Problem*; nor did it seem useful to translate *esse & nosse* or *lumen naturale*.

One last word of caution. Condensing means falsifying. Brief notices cast sharp light, and sharp light casts deep shadows that often engulf important areas. In indexing, condensation becomes almost brutal: one word must sum up what a scholar developed, explained, and importantly qualified on perhaps a hundred pages. I hope that no user will treat this bibliography as a source of authoritative information *on* a work, instead of a guide *to* that work. The only claim made for it is that it attempts to be a conscientious if fallible guide; and that it reveals the enormous span, diversity, and depth of *Descartes* studies in the past 160 years.

Emory University, May 1962

G.S.

FROM THE PREFACE TO

DESCARTES AND HIS PHILOSOPHY (1959)

Johann Nestroy, speaking of the sumptuous private balls of his time, said that he had no trouble understanding people who went to a ball; what he found utterly unexplainable was the existence of people who gave balls. Bibliographies like the present one are in the same category, except that in this case even the existence of people who go to the ball cannot altogether be taken for granted. The very bulk of this bibliography suggests that many writers about Descartes are not readers of what other writers wrote about him. The fact that the Cartesian cogito is (is not) an immediate experience seems to need to be freshly established year after year; there is no end to the flow of irrefutable proofs that Descartes did (did not) commit the Cartesian circle; even the rationalism (antirationalism) of Descartes comes as a surprise to a host of authors who stumble upon it in the course of their original research.

There is a reason for this. When a thinker thinks about Descartes, it is to find out whether Descartes is right or wrong. To this end he must read him and examine his arguments; this is necessary, and sufficient. The greater a philosopher, the less he reads *about* Descartes before writing about him. The greatest and most original among them have as much use for a Descartes bibliography as Descartes himself had for the collected writing of St. Thomas Aquinas. Cartesian method is the enemy of Cartesian bibliography.

However, there are people less interested in finding out whether Descartes was right than in establishing “wie es eigentlich gewesen”: the historians of philosophy and of ideas, the biographers, the editors, the exegetes. This bibliography is addressed to them.

The chief limitation of this bibliography is that it does not cover the *literature before 1800*. After considerable efforts I became convinced that only international cooperation among scholars with access to the great European collections can successfully deal with the Cartesian era.

Descartes editions are listed if they are indispensable or exceptionally useful. Even within these limits, only a sample of annotated and commented editions

could be included. We still need a good critical list of commentaries and translations of Descartes' works, and a modern bibliography of original editions.

Chapters in *general works* on the history of philosophy, mathematics, science, etc., have been listed only if there was some special reason for it. But *ephemeral literature* has been generously treated regardless of its intrinsic value; someone may look for it some day, trying to trace the changes in Descartes' fortunes, or studying the ever-changing Descartes image and the ways in which Descartes scholarship filters down to popular levels.

The *reliability* of references varies. A large number of items were verified from the originals, and Professor Jules Brody independently verified many hundred of titles and reviews now included in Part I. Where the item was not available, I have followed the best sources I could find. In a few cases, question marks after the title indicate that the title could not be checked. Where a notice had to be written without seeing the contribution, I give my source.

My debt to others is recorded elsewhere. But this is the place to acknowledge my gratitude to the Descartes scholars upon whose work this bibliography rests: Francisque Bouillier, Francesco Olgiati, Jean Boorsch, Henri Gouhier, Ernst Cassirer, Paul Schrecker, Geneviève Rodis-Lewis, Louise C. Thijssen-Schoute, Paul Dibon, and those anonymous workers at Louvain and elsewhere who, over the decades, have raised philosophical bibliography to an enviable degree of perfection.

August 22, 1959

G.S.

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For permission to use their Descartes checklists I am indebted to Professor Norman N. Douglas, and to the late A. G. A. Balz who generously placed his collection of some 900 titles at my disposal. To Professor Nathan Edelman I am deeply grateful for his invitation to contribute to the third volume of *A Critical Bibliography of French Literature* and for his superb editorial guidance in this venture; Part I of the present work shows the benefits of our happy collaboration. Professor Jules Brody meticulously verified every reference in the more than 330 items I originally prepared for Professor Edelman's volume; this independent check was most appreciated. To the Syracuse University Press I am grateful for permission to incorporate material that appeared first in the *Critical Bibliography*. Professor Edgar Lehrman directed me to a hitherto overlooked source for Soviet items. My friend and colleague, Professor Thomas R. Hart, and my wife, Helen Sebba, helped me in checking the accuracy of certain foreign language titles and quotations. Needless to say, the responsibility for errors of all kinds remains entirely my own, but this compilation is much the better for their help.

A generous grant-in-aid from the Research Committee at Emory University made the completion of *Bibliographia Cartesiana* possible. I am thankful for this well-timed assistance. From 1947 to 1959 the University of Georgia unfailingly supported my Descartes research; special thanks are due to its excellent staff of librarians. During the same period, grants-in-aid for travel, received from the University Center of Georgia, the Carnegie Foundation, and the Modern Language Association of America, enabled me to use the resources of some twenty great libraries in the Eastern United States and in Europe. I gratefully acknowledge these grants and the library courtesies received on these occasions. To Professors Paul Dibon and Richard H. Popkin I wish to express my appreciation of the honor of being invited to contribute this Descartes bibliography to the *Archives internationales d'histoire des idées*. It is a pleasure to thank the publishers for their cooperation, Mr. G. H. Priem for his service as editor, and the printers for their exceptional care and skill.