Christian August Crusius (1715–1775)

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Frank Grunert, Stefan Klingner, Udo Roth
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Frank Grunert, Andree Hahmann and Gideon Stiening

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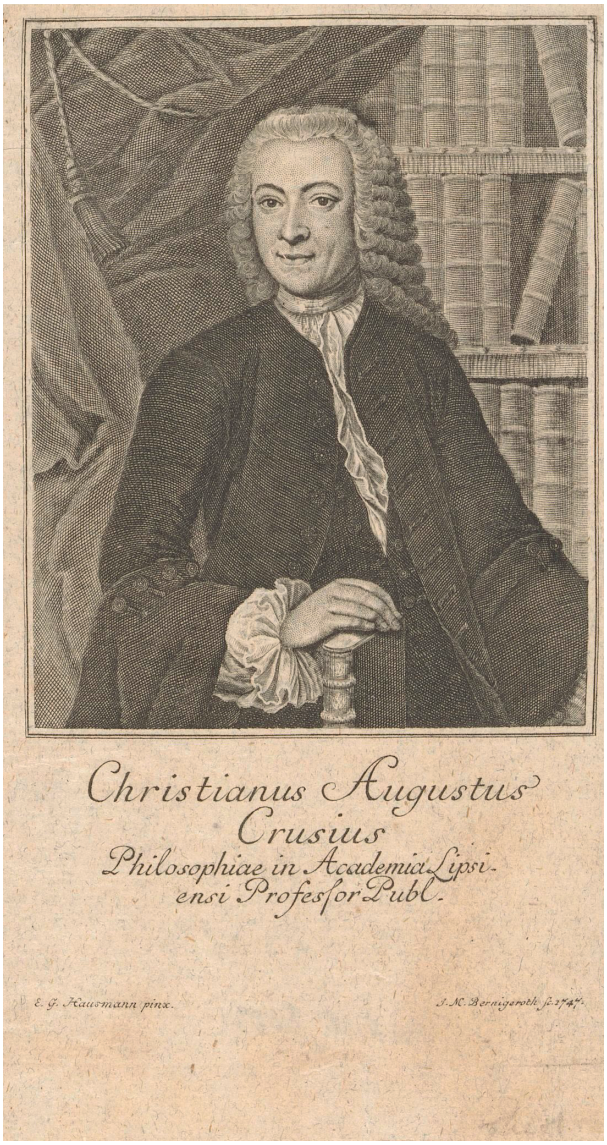

Christian August Crusius, 1747
Copper Engraving by Johann Martin Bernigeroth (1713–1767)
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Introduction

Christian August Crusius is notorious for being appreciated only as an influence on the development of Kant's philosophy. As a consequence, a large number of studies have been carried out to investigate this influence in more detail for a wide range of different topics. Admittedly, it is no small merit, especially for research on Kant, to consider the extent to which Kant's philosophy depends on the approaches of his predecessors and thereby contribute to the contextual and conceptual clarification of Kant's own philosophical development. However, this must not mean that German philosophy before Kant, and especially 18th-century philosophers, should be considered exclusively from a Kantian perspective. Rather, they also deserve an independent consideration from a philosophical-historical point of view. This assessment is particularly true of Christian August Crusius.[1] As Giorgio Tonelli pointed out in 1969, a comprehensive study of Crusius' philosophical and theological works remains an urgent task for scholars. Although the situation has changed slightly since the publication of two monographs by Magdalene Benden and Martin Krieger,[2] many aspects of Crusius' thought remain obscure even among historians of philosophy.

This is even more surprising given that Crusius is said to have been one of the most influential philosophers during his lifetime, a judgement that is confirmed not least by Kant. The effects of his philosophical and theological works are evident in numerous problems and debates. His extraordinary position in the philosophical development of the 18th century is primarily due to his decisive and in part also very successful opposition to Christian Wolff. Not only does Crusius belong to the fiercest critics of Wolff's philosophy but also to the first anti-Wolffians who developed a serious systematic opposition to Wolff's rationalism. However, as a closer reading quickly reveals, Crusius shares more than just his first name with his famous opponent. Despite his firm rejection of some of Wolff's central ideas, one can also find numerous, in part significant, similarities. In detail, however, the problematic rela-

1 As Tonelli complains in his *Preface* to Christian August Crusius: Die philosophischen Hauptwerke. Vol. 1. Hildesheim 1969. Crusius is often made the representative of a mere prehistory to Kant, which makes the recognition of his independent philosophical standing almost impossible: See, for example, Heinz Heimsoeth: Metaphysik und Kritik bei Chr. A. Crusius. Berlin 1926, who explicitly conceives of Crusius' metaphysics as a »Beitrag zur ontologischen Vorgeschichte der Kritik der reinen Vernunft«. More recently, Chang Won Kim: Der Begriff der Welt bei Wolff, Baumgarten, Crusius und Kant. Eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte von Kants Weltbegriff von 1770. Frankfurt a. M. u. a. 2004, places Crusius in Kant's prehistory alongside Wolff and Baumgarten.

2 Magdalene Benden: Christian August Crusius. Wille und Verstand als Prinzipien des Handelns. Bonn 1972 and Martin Krieger: Geist, Welt und Gott bei Christian August Crusius. Würzburg 1993.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110647563-001

tionship with Wolff is far from being sufficiently clarified. Equally inadequate remains the clarification of numerous other aspects and central concepts of Crusius' philosophy. At the same time, it should be clear that even clarifying Crusius' influence on Kant can only be adequately accomplished if Crusius' own philosophical approach has been sufficiently grasped and analyzed beforehand. It is one of the major aims of this anthology to contribute to this goal. Therefore, this volume builds on existing approaches and at the same time tries to open up new perspectives for further research into one of the most enigmatic and innovative thinkers of 18th-century German philosophy.

1 Short Biography and Intellectual Development

Crusius was born on the 10th of January, 1715 in Leuna, a small town in Saxony, near Merseburg where his father was a pastor.[3] It is reported that he was a bright and intelligent boy whose talent was noticed early on.

Crusius first attended the *Domschule*, a grammar school, in Merseburg. The *Domschule* was a well-known and highly respected institution at that time. Until 1738 it was the only secondary school in the duchy. The former rector Christoph Cellarius, who was in office from 1688 to 1693, was an important scholar of his time and wrote scientific texts on a wide range of subjects. Probably only a vestige of this splendour was left in 1729, when Crusius came to Merseburg. As was customary at the time, the focus of his education was the acquisition of ancient languages. In 1734 Crusius then moved to the nearby University of Leipzig, where he studied theology, philosophy, experimental physics, mathematics, and history. In Leipzig he obtained his doctorate and then his habilitation in 1740. In 1744 Crusius was appointed extraordinary chair of philosophy. Only a few years later, in 1750, he accepted a chair of theology. Crusius had several offers of various positions from the University of Göttingen: as a professor of philosophy, a professor of theology and even as a chancellor. But he rejected these offers as well as other offers from Schleswig-Holstein, Coburg, and Rinteln. Instead, Crusius stayed in Leipzig where he was awarded highly respected and distinguished honorary positions. He was still unmarried when he died on October 18th, 1775, at the age of 60. The cause of death was said to be an advanced pulmonary disease.

It appears that Crusius' early Latin academic works laid the foundation for his later philosophical career. In fact, the main features of his later philosophy are pre-

3 The only comprehensive printed account of Crusius' life is the *Kurzgefasste Lebensgeschichte Herrn Christian August Crusius*, an anonymous necrology published in Acta historico-ecclesiastica nostri temporis, oder gesammelte Nachrichten und Urkunden zu der Kirchengeschichte unserer Zeit. XVII. Weimar 1776, pp. 970–993.

figured in these early writings, and most of the ideas later considered to be particularly innovative can be traced back to his earlier writings. His first text *De praecipuis cognoscendae veritatis obstaculis commentatio logica* (Leipzig 1737) is probably most influenced by his teacher Adolph Friedrich Hoffmann. In this work, Crusius aims to emphasize the significance of sensibility for cognition. Thus, the anti-Wolffian and anti-Leibnizian character of his philosophy already comes to the fore, and this is clearly affirmed by *De usu et limitibus principii rationis determinantis vulgo sufficientis* published in 1743. The text was translated into German twice and to some extent made Crusius known as Wolff's opponent. It also provoked some reactions.[4]

Two earlier published texts – the *Dissertatio philosophica de corruptelis intellectus a voluntate pendentibus* (Leipzig 1740) and the *Dissertatio philosophica de appetitibus insitis volantatis humanae* (Leipzig 1742) – are devoted to topics from practical philosophy. In his *Anweisung, vernünftig zu leben* – published in 1744 – Crusius worked out his Ethics and provided the voluntaristic and incompatibilistic framework of his philosophical work, thereby taking up two essential topics of his previously published Latin writings. This and the following three texts were primarily intended for use in philosophical teaching. It should be noted that Christian Wolff's textbooks dominated philosophical education at German universities until then. With his systematic textbooks Crusius actually provided a viable alternative to Wolff. All of his textbooks appeared in a fairly short period of time, between 1744 and 1749.

Only one year after his Ethics Crusius published his Metaphysics, *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunftwahrheiten* (Leipzig 1745), which is divided into ontology, theology, cosmology, and pneumatology. Remarkably, rational theology directly follows ontology. For Crusius the existence of God is a necessary condition of cosmology and pneumatology. However, God's existence can only be proven by moral evidence. Crusius' Logic followed in 1747 with the title *Weg zur Gewißheit und Zuverlässigkeit der menschlichen Erkenntnis* and in 1749 he finally published his Physics with the title *Anleitung, über natürliche Begebenheiten ordentlich und vorsichtig nachzudenken*. His philosophical system – comprising four textbooks – was completed before Crusius accepted a chair in theology in 1750; a reprint of his Latin texts

4 This text has been translated into German by Christian Friedrich Kraus and appeared also in a second edition: Ausführliche Abhandlung Von dem rechten Gebrauche und der Einschränkung des sogenannten Satzes Vom Zureichenden oder besser Determinirenden Grunde. Leipzig 1744; Ausführliche Abhandlung von dem rechten Gebrauche und der Einschränkung des sogenannten Satzes vom Zureichenden oder besser Determinirenden Grunde. Aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen und einem Anhange begleitet von Christian Friedrich Krausen, bey dieser zwoten Ausgabe mit anderweitigen Anmerkungen des Herrn Verfassers und einer andern hierher gehörigen Schrifft des Uebersetzers auch einem Vorberichte vermehrt von Christian Friedrich Pezold. Leipzig 1766.

– *Opvscvla Philosophico-Theologica* – published in 1750, combined philosophical and theological texts and indicated Crusius' transition from philosophy to theology. With the exception of the *Epistola ad Ioannem Ernestum L. B. ab Hardenberg de summis rationis principiis* (1752) Crusius devoted his later publications exclusively to theology. His *Abhandlung von dem wahren Begriffe der Frömmigkeit* (1763) and his *Kurzer Begriff der christlichen Moraltheologie* (2 vol. 1772–1773) are also noteworthy in this context. Crusius' main theological work *Hypomnemata ad theologiam propheticam* – published 1764–1778 in three volumes – shows him to be a biblical-prophetic theologian who was influenced by the pietist Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687–1752). However, this brought Crusius into strict opposition to neologist theologians like Johann August Ernesti, professor of theology at the University of Leipzig. Ernesti was a colleague of Crusius, who developed a historical grammatical method of Bible exegesis which demands that the biblical texts conform to logical, historical and grammatical requirements. The contrast between the two methods – the historical-grammatical method of Ernesti and the biblical-prophetic approach of Crusius – divided the theologians at the University of Leipzig into two parties. Both were influential during the later decades of the 18th and even into the 19th century.

After his death, the interest in Crusius' philosophy quickly vanished. He had only direct successors in theology.[5] This does not mean, however, that certain aspects of his philosophy did not become very influential during his lifetime and in the aftermath. This is demonstrated not least by Kant's statements, who at a young age speaks very highly of Crusius,[6] even if this assessment eventually changed.[7] The latter was probably also due to Crusius' later theological publications, which partly called into question his contributions to the German Enlightenment. In any case one may assume that the reception of his philosophical and theological works did not take place independently of one another, as later research suggested. This research concentrated almost exclusively on his philosophical work despite the fact that Crusius' immediate influence in theology appears to be even more impactful. This perspective probably also led to the fact that Crusius' philosophical and the theological works were separated from each other in the later edition, which, in turn, may

5 For a comprehensive list of all of Crusius' followers, see Franz Delitzsch: Die biblisch-prophetische Theologie, ihre Fortbildung durch Chr. A. Crusius und ihre neueste Entwicklung seit der Christologie Hengstenbergs. Leipzig 1845.

6 Kant very positively speaks about Crusius in some of his pre-critical texts. So, for example, he praises Crusius for having discovered the difference between formal and material principles (Immanuel Kant: Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral. In: AA II, p. 295, see also Immanuel Kant: Kritik der praktischen Vernunft. In: AA V, p. 40).

7 In later writings mocking remarks about Crusius are frequent. See, for example, Immanuel Kant: Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können. In: AA IV, p. 319.

have been one of the reasons why the close relationship between philosophy and theology in the work of Crusius has been underestimated.

2 Philosophical Influences and Crusius' Methodology

As Giorgio Tonelli has already pointed out, in elaborating many of his metaphysically basic theses, Crusius follows a path that Adolph Friedrich Hoffmann had previously embarked upon or rather had shown to his students. Unfortunately, Hoffmann himself did not have the chance to publish most of his thoughts because he died at an age of thirty-eight.[8] Crusius does not conceal his debts towards his teacher and refers openly to his teacher's lectures as an important source of inspiration for his own metaphysical conceptions.[9] During his lifetime Hoffmann published just a couple of texts including his *Vernunft-Lehre* (1737).[10] This work was considered by contemporaries to be an innovative and high-quality work, quite able to compete with Wolff's philosophy. Crusius' own Logic clearly bears the signature of this work. Unfortunately, Hoffmann died shortly thereafter and was unable to realize his plan to address the other areas of philosophy in the form of textbooks.

The connection between Crusius and the ›school‹ of Christian Thomasius is also seen in Hoffmann's work. In this context Sonia Carboncini speaks emphatically of a »Thomasian-pietistic tradition«[11]. Hoffmann was a student of the philosopher and doctor of medicine Andreas Rüdiger, who studied philosophy in Halle and was instructed by the jurist and philosopher Christian Thomasius. The close relationship between Rüdiger and Thomasius is evidenced by the fact that Rüdiger was a tutor for Thomasius' children. So via Rüdiger and Hoffmann there exists indeed a certain line between Crusius and Thomasius. Since Thomasius was first and foremost a legal scholar whose philosophy, without a strict theoretical foundation, was heavily influenced not least by his legal interests, Thomasius' followers as a whole did not

8 See the biographical note by Robert Theis: Adolph Friedrich Hoffmann (1703–1741). In: Aufklärung 21 (2009), pp. 275–278.

9 Crusius states in his *Vernunftlehre* that he adopted these thoughts from his teacher Hoffmann, as he had presented them in lectures. Christian August Crusius: Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft-Wahrheiten wiefern sie den zufälligen entgegen gesetzt werden. In: Die philosophischen Hauptwerke. Vol. II. Ed. by Giorgio Tonelli. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 1964, p. XI.

10 Adolph Friedrich Hoffmann: Vernunft-Lehre, Darinnen die Kennzeichen des Wahren und Falschen aus den Gesezen des menschlichen Verstandes hergeleitet werden. Leipzig 1737.

11 Sonia Carboncini: Die thomasianisch-pietistische Tradition und ihre Fortsetzung durch Christian August Crusius. In: Werner Schneiders (ed.): Christian Thomasius 1655–1728. Interpretationen zu Werk und Wirkung. Hamburg 1989, pp. 287ff.

form a school in the strict sense, as the Wolffians did. Nevertheless, there are remarkable similarities between Thomasius and Crusius, such as the asserted independence of revealed philosophy from theology, the emphasis on the importance of experience, and the methodological emphasis on the limits of human understanding. We can also find the claim, later adopted by Kant, of the general unrecognizability of the essence of substance as well as the rejection of the ontological proofs of God.[12] Regarding the opposition to Wolff's philosophy, it is important to note that both emphasize the real as opposed to the possible, accept the idea of a physical influence between body and soul, assert the independence of the will from the understanding, and stress the dependence of moral laws on the free will of God.

Crusius' philosophical approach stands out from the philosophy of his time mainly because of a number of methodological features. At first it is striking that Crusius, again following Rüdiger and Hoffmann, dismisses the mathematical method in philosophy. Instead Crusius emphasizes that philosophy should be based both on moral certainty and some basic facts of reason that cannot be further analyzed. These facts form a natural limit to analysis and thus human knowledge. It is therefore crucial to Crusius' approach to assume that a fundamental theoretical insight into the inner nature of all things remains impossible. Crusius even goes so far as to claim that the last secrets of revealed religion are not only beyond reason, but can also oppose it.

For Crusius the fundamental principle of human knowledge is neither the principle of identity nor the principle of contradiction, but a principle concerning what we can and cannot think. He believes that what cannot be thought at all is false, and what cannot be thought as false must be true. The principle of identity and the principle of contradiction, however, are both based on this principle, which he called the principle of cogitabilitas. He conceived of the principle of cogitabilitas as an inner criterion that depends on the nature of human understanding. The starting point of human knowledge, however, is provided by internal and external experience.

3 Questions and Problems

As mentioned above, Crusius' oeuvre remains, to a large extent, terra incognita. Looking at the bibliography of the present book,[13] one immediately notices that the problems of research on Christian August Crusius listed by Gert Röwenstrunk in

12 See Tonelli: Vorwort (see note 1), pp. XVIIf.

13 Bibliography, pp. 424ff.

1981[14] are far from being solved. It remains therefore a pressing task to map out various aspects within the philosophy of Crusius, its relationship to Crusius' theology, Crusius' debts to his predecessors, and his reception by later philosophers and theologians. Since these questions mark a vast field of research, it is obvious that the present volume can only be one small step towards completing the research that needs to be done by both historians of philosophy and theology. Against the background of previous and current research it is only possible to focus on a few questions at this point: namely, the relationship between philosophy and theology, Crusius' criticism of Wolff, and his influence on Kant. Almost all of the following contributions deal with one or more of these questions.

3.1 Philosophy and Theology

The exact relationship between theology and philosophy is without any doubt a problematic aspect of Crusius' work. Strikingly, Crusius stopped publishing in philosophy after having accepted a chair in theology. This is remarkable in that he wrote and published his main philosophical works during a fairly short period of time between 1744 and 1749. Since we know that Crusius continued his teaching in philosophy even when he was holding his position as professor of theology, we cannot assume that Crusius simply lost his interest in philosophy, especially since his philosophical works were still published – improved and increased – several times after 1750, which indicates that Crusius was still convinced of the theoretical value of his philosophical books. Since Crusius always emphasized in his introductions to the later editions of his philosophical works that he did not change the substance of his books, it seems obvious that Crusius considered his philosophical ideas to be sufficiently clear and worked out. Nevertheless, the striking division between philosophy on the one hand and theology on the other raises the question of whether Crusius stopped his philosophical production for purely academic or practical reasons, or whether he continued his philosophical work in a theological vein after 1750. This may have been intended from the outset or his philosophical work was at least open to theological expansion or reshaping. So the question is how the relationship between Crusius' philosophical and theological writings should be understood. Is it a real change or a consistent continuation or development of philosophical thoughts or conceptions already laid out in the earlier philosophical writings? In this regard, it should be noted that Crusius makes conspicuous use of theological assumptions in important philosophical contexts, especially in

14 Gert Röwenstrunk: [Art.] Crusius, Christian August (1715–1775). In: Theologische Realenzyklopädie. Vol. 7. Berlin, New York 1981, pp. 242–244, see also Krieger: Geist, Welt und Gott (see note 2), pp. 6–8.

his practical philosophy. For Crusius, it is possible that theological findings may be against or outside the realm of theoretical rational insight. The anonymous author of the *Kurzgefasste Lebensgeschichte Herrn Christian August Crusius* may be right in stating not long after Crusius' death that Crusius' philosophy aimed to show that true philosophy demonstrates, affirms, and defends the truth of the revealed Word of God.[15]

3.2 Crusius und Wolff

Crusius' fame rests most of all on his distinctive opposition to Christian Wolff. Crusius adopted this opposition very likely from his teacher Adolph Friedrich Hoffmann, to whom he also owned some of his crucial methodological ideas.[16] Hoffmann had excellent knowledge of Wolff's philosophy. This is also true for his student Crusius. Both can therefore also be counted among the first to uncover serious weaknesses in Wolff's philosophy, so that their attacks – according to Giorgio Tonelli's assessment – contributed not insignificantly to the downfall of Wolffianism.[17] What is however remarkable is that, despite all the criticism, Wolff's philosophy nonetheless positively influenced Crusius. Thus his textbooks (like those of Hoffmann) are based on the writings of Wolff in their structure and share the same ›scholastic‹ mode of presentation. As a matter of fact, the similarities even go beyond the mere form of presentation. Tonelli points out, for example, that the division between cosmology and physics seems to be grounded in a similar division by Christian Wolff. Crusius' opposition to Wolff thus requires much closer examination in order to properly grasp not only obvious differences between the two but also to reveal underlying similarities shaping their respective philosophical approaches.

In this respect, Crusius' rejection of the unlimited validity of the principle of sufficient reason certainly assumes a special status in the investigation. For Wolff, every existing thing must have a sufficient reason from which follows why it is so and not otherwise, and on the basis of which it must also be understood. In particular, Crusius opposes the resulting consequence of this principle that everything happens necessarily. But if this were true, free will would be undermined, and so too would the very prospect of moral behavior. However, Crusius does not dismiss the principle of sufficient reason altogether. Rather, he distinguishes between a preceding and a sufficient reason. Free will must be able to move in different directions at the same time. Crusius claims therefore that free will must provides a sufficient reason whereas cognition requires a preceding reason. As a consequence of

15 [Anon.] Kurzgefasste Lebensgeschichte Herrn Christian August Crusius (see note 3), p. 979.
16 Tonelli: Vorwort (see note 1), p. XVIII.
17 Ibid., p. XX.

this classification, however, it follows that the effects of free will can never be fully understood.

Crusius developed and elaborated his voluntaristic conception of the will already in his first published Latin texts. Based on these first texts, it is therefore necessary to trace back the various aspects of Crusius' opposition to Wolff. Remarkably, as mentioned above, it is always necessary to note in detail what exactly Crusius adopted from Wolff and what exactly he rejects in the end. This is the only way to arrive at a balanced judgement about the relationship between Crusius and his famous predecessor.

3.3 Crusius and Kant

Our judgement about the relationship between Crusius and Kant was and still is determined by the perspective of the development of Kant's philosophy. However, the exact nature of Crusius' impact on Kant's philosophical development still raises numerous questions, and only recently have less obvious issues and aspects increasingly received more attention. After all, the relationship between Crusius and Kant is not easy to characterize. First of all, it should be noted that Crusius himself, as far as we know, was not aware of Kant's early writings. This is not true of Crusius' students, however. Two of them were involved in an academic dispute that flared up over a prize question announced by the Berlin Academy of Sciences in 1753. In 1755 the Academy invited a discussion of Pope's philosophical system and a comparison with the so-called »Systeme de l'Optimisme«. It was clear that Leibniz' *Theodicy* and the idea that this world is the best possible world was the real target of the prize question. The philosophical prize questions of the Berlin Academy of Sciences were not only addressed to a wider public but also pursued a strategic goal, ever since the first question from 1747, which was concerned with Leibnizian monads. At least the early questions all asked for a critical discussion of core topics of the so-called Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy.[18] Responsible for this was Maupertuis, an explicit opponent of Leibnizian metaphysics. In the end, the work of Adolph Friedrich Reinhard, a student of Crusius, who in his work advocated Gods absolute freedom of choice claimed by Crusius, was awarded the prize in 1755. The German translation of the work, originally written in French, appeared in 1757, and we know that Kant owned a copy.[19] In a letter to Johann Gotthelf Lindner – dated October 28, 1759 – Kant explains that he intervened in this debate and that he was addressed by Daniel

18 Cornelia Buschmann: Philosophische Preisfragen und Preisschriften der Berliner Akademie 1747–1768. Ein Beitrag zur Leibniz-Rezeption im 18. Jahrhundert. In: Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie 35.9 (1987), pp. 779–789.

19 Kant had this edition in his personal library (see Arthur Warda: Immanuel Kants Bücher. Berlin 1922, p. 53, Non. 95).

Weyman, another Crusian philosopher in Königsberg, whom Kant, however, did not consider worthy of any further critical engagement. Of course, we cannot draw any immediate conclusions about Crusius' rejection of Kant's philosophy from this debate, which has only recently come into the focus of research.[20] However, at least certain anti-Kantian tendencies are evident among those who draw on Crusius' philosophy.[21]

As far as Kant is concerned, however, his view on his predecessor's philosophy and his judgement of the value of this philosophy seem to have changed over the course of his own philosophical development. Initially, Kant overtly venerated Crusius. In his early writings he counts Crusius among »the most penetrating philosophers of our age«.[22] However, from the *Träume eines Geistersehers* onwards, he started to scornfully reject Crusius and refers to him as a »Luftbaumeister« and dreamer.[23]

Although it remains unclear why Kant decided to turn away from Crusius, the changing relationship between Kant and his predecessor has increasingly attracted the attention of Kant research in recent years. A burning question is what influence Crusius had on the development of Kant's philosophy, especially regarding crucial aspects of Kant's Critical philosophy. Apparently, there are many similarities between the two thinkers, already mentioned by Tonelli.[24] Given the importance of Crusius' rejection of the principle of sufficient reason both for Crusius' own philosophical development but also 18th-century German philosophy in general, it is not surprising that this criticism attracted a lot of scholarly attention. It has been asked, for example, how exactly one has to determine the extent and nature of the influence Crusius exerted on Kant's own account of the principle of sufficient reason in his pre-Critical work and his later discussion of causality in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[25] Only recently have related questions come into focus as well. Accordingly, the practical consequences of this discussion have been addressed and more specific issues concerning the development of Kant's conception of freedom which is crucial to his overall philosophical development from pre-Critical to his mature Critical

20 See Alexei N. Krouglov: Kant and the Crusians in the Debate on Optimism, in: Kantian Journal 37.2 (2018), pp. 7–31.

21 Christian Friedrich Pezold, for example, wrote a book against Kant (Progr. de argumentis nonnullis, quibus, Deum esse, philosophi probant, observationes adversus Imman. Kantium. Leipzig 1787). It is remarkable that Pezold was later also a teacher of Fichte.

22 Immanuel Kant: Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio. In: AA I, p. 397, see also p. 405.

23 Immanuel Kant: Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik. In: AA II, p. 342.

24 Tonelli: Vorwort (see note 1), pp. Lf.

25 See Eric Watkins: Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality. Cambridge 2005 and Adriano Perin: The Proof of the Principle of Sufficient Reason: Wolff, Crusius and the Early Kant on the Search for a Foundation of Metaphysics. In: Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia 71.2–3 (2015), pp. 515–530.

writings. We can see that Kant's account of freedom moved away from a Leibnizian-Stoic-inspired conception as inner spontaneity, visible in the *Nova dilucidatio*, towards a conception of absolute freedom as self-legislation in his later work. It has been suggested that this development might have been inspired by Crusius' critique of Wolff. This raises the question to what extent Kant might have taken up elements of Crusius' thought into his mature conception in practical philosophy.[26]

Considered again from a different perspective, Crusius' opposition to Wolff's and also Leibniz' theory of freedom as spontaneity, understood as inner causation, could also have provided the starting point for a debate on spontaneity more generally. Up until that point it was common among scholars of 18th-century German philosophy to consider it Kant's achievement to distinguish the spontaneity of the understanding from the receptivity of sensibility. However, it is likely that this alleged Kantian innovation too is heavily indebted to Crusius who laid the foundation for this view with his conception of the mind.[27]

This also shows that we still know too little even about important debates that shaped post-Wolffian philosophy in Germany. Things are only slowly beginning to change, and current research becomes more and more interested in questions that have not received much attention so far. As a result, many other of Kant's key philosophical conceptions have come under close scrutiny, such as the nature of consciousness.[28] Again, Crusius stands out among Kant's predecessors because he set forth a theory of consciousness as inner sense, which placed him in fierce opposition to Wolff but also offered an alternative to Wolff and his school. Given the controversial and long-lasting debate on the nature of consciousness in Kant, it appears very promising to turn to Crusius in order to find new incentives to tackle this question. This also applies to two closely related questions in psychology. It is well known that the question of the union of body and soul counts among the big controversies of the 18th century. Kant contributed to this debate already in his pre-Critical work. In fact, Kant modified his view on the nature of this union from his early work in the 1750s to his *Inauguraldissertation*. Crusius famously claims that simple substances can fill a space but still are not extended. It is on this ground that he could argue for his concept of influxus physicus. Apparently, Kant adopted this

26 See David Forman: Appetimus Sub Ratione Boni: Kant's Practical Principles Between Crusius and Leibniz. In: Kant und die Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Absicht. Ed. by Stefano Bacin, Alfredo Ferrarin, Claudio La Rocca and Margit Ruffing. Berlin, Boston 2013, pp. 323–334.

27 See Corey W. Dyck: Spontaneity Before the Critical Turn: Crusius, Tetens, and the Pre-Critical Kant on the Spontaneity of the Mind. In: Journal of the History of Philosophy 54.4 (2016), pp. 625–648.

28 See Jonas Jervell Indregard: Consciousness as Inner Sensation. Crusius and Kant. In: Ergo: An Open Access Journal of Philosophy 5.7 (2018), pp. 173–201.

view at least at one point in his philosophical development.[29] A further important issue of 18th-century psychology is the problem of the immortality of the soul. Here, too, Crusius took an independent path that distinguishes his account from that of his predecessors. Strikingly, his argument for the immortality of the soul is strictly based on moral grounds, which puts him in sharp opposition to most of his contemporaries, but not to Kant. This alone gives reason enough to warrant a closer inspection of Crusius' account in order to determine more sharply what Kant might have adopted from his predecessor.[30]

As new topics emerge in Kant scholarship, the perspective on Kant's predecessor also shifts. Inspired by recent work on Kant's novel ideas on faith and the epistemic status of faith, this conception, central to Crusius as well, has also become a subject of more thorough examination, and Crusius has been recognized as a possible source of Kant in this respect as well.[31] Admiteddly, the extent of influence in this regard is rather limited, especially with respect to Kant's Critical philosophy; for there is nothing comparable to the postulate doctrine to be found in Crusius. Nevertheless, one will have to acknowledge Crusius as an important precursor of Kant once more.

Even though all these studies have repeatedly shown that the influence Crusius had on the development of Critical philosophy remains problematic in detail and, if ascertainable, then rather limited, these investigations nevertheless proved to have had a considerable effect even now: the more or less common disdain for Kant's immediate predecessors turns out to be untenable in the light of more recent research. For what is becoming increasingly clear is that the philosophy of the 18th century did not only begin with Leibniz and Wolff and then end by Kant's masterful throw. After all, Crusius seems to belong to those German philosophers who contributed a significant set of new ideas to the development of an entire epoch. That is what the present volume may demonstrate.

29 See Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter: Putting Our Soul in Place. In: Kant Yearbook 6.1 (2014), pp. 23–42.

30 See Paola Rumore: Kant and Crusius on the Role of Immortality in Morality. In: Kant and His German Contemporaries: Volume 1, Logic, Mind, Epistemology, Science and Ethics. Ed. by Corey W. Dyck and Falk Wunderlich. Cambridge 2017, pp. 213–231.

31 See Brian A. Chance: Kantian Non-Evidentialism and its German Antecedents: Crusius, Meier, and Basedow. In: Kantian Review 24.3 (2019), pp. 359–384; and Gabriele Gava: Kant and Crusius on Belief and Practical Justification. In: Kantian Review 24.1 (2019), pp. 53–75.

4 Contributions to this Volume

Tinca Prunea-Bretonnet (*Crusius and Kant on Distinctness, Certainty, and Method in Philosophy*) analyses Crusius' methodological remarks in his treatises on logic and metaphysics and their reception in Kant's *Preisschrift* of 1764. She claims that the importance of analysis is emphasised by Crusius' novel and influential division of distinctness and certainty, which, in addition to his discussion of probability, plays a major role in the controversies on method up to the 1760s. Then, she discusses Kant's *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* in the light of his explicit endorsement of Crusian views. However, she argues that despite an undeniable influence of Crusius' work, Kant substantially revises Crusius' position by adopting an independent perspective on the role of analysis as an appropriate philosophical method and rejecting Crusius' supreme principle of truth.

Andree Hahmann (*Crusius' Critique of the Leibniz-Wolffian Ontology and Cosmology*) addresses some crucial differences between Crusius' and Wolff's metaphysical approaches. He argues that Crusius sharply distinguishes between Leibniz and Wolff and points with remarkable acuity to where they differ from each other. He shows that Crusius' critique essentially draws on these differences, providing the foundation for his own aim of establishing an alternative metaphysics to both Leibniz and Wolff.

Sonja Schierbaum (*Crusius and Wolff on the Mind and (Self-)Consciousness*) argues that a conception of higher-order self-consciousness can be ascribed to both Crusius and Wolff insofar as both authors hold that we can become conscious of our mental acts through second-order acts. Nevertheless, there are crucial differences between their accounts that can be attributed to differences in the underlying metaphysical conception of the human mind and its powers. She argues that Crusius conceives of consciousness as a higher-order cognition of one's mental acts, whereas for Wolff, thinking in general implies consciousness. However, this does not preclude Wolff from allowing for the possibility of higher-order cognition as a kind of self-consciousness. In his later Latin works, for example, Wolff explicitly distinguishes between perception and apperception. For this reason, Schierbaum assumes that one can also attribute a kind of higher-order conception of self-consciousness to Wolff.

Andree Hahmann wonders in his second paper (*Crusius and the Fundamental Powers of the Soul*) whether a simple substance can have more than one kind of power. He shows that Crusius' understanding of fundamental powers heavily influenced the debate concerning cognitive capacities and the structure of the human mind in the 18th century. Although Crusius adopts simple substances he does not want to rule out that they can have several fundamental powers despite their simplicity.

KAY ZENKER's contribution (*Crusius' Naturphilosophie*) is devoted to the significance of Crusius' philosophy of nature within the framework of his overall philosophical approach. Starting with Crusius' own conception of philosophy as set out in *Weg zur Gewißheit und Zuverlässigkeit der menschlichen Erkenntniß*, Zenker stresses the systematic relevance of Crusius' largely forgotten major work on physics. He argues that Crusius' doctrine of nature is essential for understanding the complete systematics of Crusius' overall project.

ANSGAR LYSSY (*Crusius on Human Nature – An Interpretative Take on His Telematology*) outlines the unique aspects of the conception of human nature underlying Crusius' doctrine of the will and his theory of basic human desires. Lyssy shows that there are several methodological and systematic approaches to human nature at work in Crusius, whose philosophical approach is thus best understood in light of the newly emerging interest in anthropological research.

MICHAEL H. WALSCHOTS' paper (*Crusius on Freedom of the Will*) aims at providing an accurate account of how Crusius understands the freedom of the will. Some argue that what is most notable about Crusius' view on freedom is his claim that this must entail a capacity to choose between given alternatives. Walschots argues that, although this is one feature of how Crusius understands freedom of the will, it is only one piece of a much more detailed view. As Walschots shows in his paper, Crusius reserves the notion of *libertas indifferentiae* for a very specific situation.

GIDEON STIENING addresses the Counter-Enlightenment character of Crusian philo-theology in his text (*The »Human Weakness« of Wolff's Secret Recommendation. Crusius' Philosophical-Theological Critique of the principium rationis sufficientis*). Stiening concentrates on Crusius' critique of the Leibniz-Wolffian conception of sufficient reason. The principle of sufficient reason was subjected to vehement criticism early on, both in its Leibnizian-axiomatic as well as in its Wolffian-demonstrative version with regard to its logical as well as its ontological validity. It is only by paying adequate attention to these critical positions that one can achieve a complete historical reconstruction of the philosophical meaning of this principle as it was reflected throughout the 18th century. In this critical context, Christian August Crusius plays a prominent role, as Stiening examines in detail.

STEVEN TESTER discusses in his paper (*Crusius on Liberty of Indifference and Determinism*) Crusius' criticism of the Leibniz-Wolffian conception of freedom in his *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft-Wahrheiten* and his *Weg zur Gewißheit und Zuverläßigkeit der menschlichen Erkenntniß*. Both Leibniz and Wolff argue that man has no freedom of indifference, although a certain freedom of spontaneity can be attributed to him. In his contribution Tester shows in detail how exactly Crusius can hold on to the freedom of indifference without completely abolishing the principle of sufficient reason.

SONJA SCHIERBAUM discusses in her second contribution (*Crusius on Moral Motivation*) how precisely Crusius conceives of the relationship between cognitive and conative states as central aspects of moral motivation. She shows that for Crusius

moral motivation is conceived in analogy to motivation in general, how conscience plays a role here and how exactly it is to be understood that the representation of the content of desire functions as a motivating reason (moving ground). As Schierbaum claims, the dependence of man on the will of God as the reason for the binding or normative power of divine law deserves special attention in this context.

Martin Sticker (*Sleeping Conscience – Crusius on Moral Fallibility*) takes a closer look at Crusius' conception of conscience and discusses its functions within Crusius' practical philosophy. According to Crusius, conscience is a basic human instinct and of central importance for an actor to recognize duties, to get to know what is required in concrete situations and to be motivated to follow this commandment. One of the central characteristics of conscience in Crusius, especially in contrast to Kant, is his adherence to the traditional idea of the erring conscience. Sticker reconstructs the cause of such errors in more detail and explains how Crusius could deal with the phenomenon that actors can act conscientiously but immorally at the same time.

Gabriel Rivero's contribution (*Dependence and Obedience. Crusius' Concept of Obligation and Its Influence on Kant's Moral Philosophy*) concentrates on the influence of Crusius' conception of obligation on the development of Kant's mature conception of this concept. Rivero argues that the extent of Crusius' influence becomes clear if one considers more closely how the concept of dependence ties into both Crusius' and Kant's ideas on obligation.

Dominik Recknagel (*Pflicht aus Liebe zu Gott. Prinzipien und Inhalte des Naturrechts bei Christian August Crusius*) reconstructs Crusius' conception of the law of nature. Remarkable is, for example, how Crusius combines human striving for perfection with obedience to divine command and how this results in the unconditional validity of natural rights.

Jutta Heinz (*»Unter allen Wissenschaften eine der unumschränckte*sten*«. Die Klugheitslehre in Crusius' ›Anweisung vernünftig zu leben‹*) examines the position of Crusius' doctrine of prudence as he conceives it in the last part of his *Anweisung vernünftig zu leben*. Heinz recalls that since Aristotle, prudence has been considered one of the cardinal virtues, which is necessary to discern in every concrete situation the right and useful behaviour to achieve certain ends. Heinz wonders whether Crusius contributed to the long tradition of theories of prudence with his remarks.

Stefan Klingner's paper (*The Systematic Place of Natural Theology in Crusius' Work*) is devoted to the question of the systematic place of natural theology in Christian August Crusius' philosophical system. Indeed, natural theology assumes a peculiar place in Crusius' major philosophical works. On the one hand, Crusius emphasizes up until his late theological writings the necessity of an orientation towards the revealed divine truths for every piece of knowledge. On the other hand, in his Ethics but especially in his Metaphysics Crusius ascribes a distinctive position to natural theology and gives reason an unique insight into the existence, the characteristics and the will of God. As Klingner shows, natural theology is not only an

integral part of Crusius' philosophy, but also a fundamental part of his philosophical system as a whole.

Hans Peter Nowitzki (*»… man müste denn schon ein so apocalyptisches Auge haben, wie Bengel«. Christian August Crusius' ›finstre Philosophie‹*) discusses whether Crusius should be counted among the representatives of the German Enlightenment or whether his work rather bears the marks of a Counter-Enlightenment thinker. Strikingly, the latter reflects the judgement of Crusius' contemporaries, who in part associated Crusius with the Counter-Enlightenment. Accordingly, Crusius' main theological work, the *Hypomnemata ad Theologiam Propheticam,* has been repeatedly characterized as ›dark‹ or ›obscure‹ and Crusius has been accused of promoting prophecy and miracle healing. Particularly instructive in this respect, as Nowitzki shows, is Crusius' approach in the case of the notorious Johann Schröpfer, who caused a great stir among his contemporaries with his necromancy.

Paola Rumore's contribution (*Crusius' Gedanken über Geister, Teufel und Aberglaube*) points in a similar direction. Rumore demonstrates that Crusius' approach is exemplary for divergent and partly incongruent currents of the Enlightenment itself. Thus, on the one hand, she identifies a sharp criticism of superstition, as it is also found in Crusius. On the other hand, however, there is equally strong scepticism of the explanatory possibilities of reason. Rumore states that the reflections on superstition run like a red thread through Crusius' entire theological and philosophical activity. She argues that Crusius, with his unique combination of psychological and anthropologically oriented investigation of superstition, ultimately makes a significant contribution to the anthropological discussion of the »Hochaufklärung«.

This volume ends with a biographical note, a bibliography of the works of Christian August Crusius and the research literature published to date, prepared mainly by Ronny Edelmann, and an index of persons.

The core of this anthology goes back to a conference that took place in Göttingen in March 2015 with the generous support of the *Fritz Thyssen Foundation* as a cooperation between the Department of Philosophy at the University of Göttingen and the Interdisciplinary Centre for European Enlightenment Studies at the University of Halle. Our thanks go to all the institutions involved. For valuable practical and administrative assistance before, during and after the conference, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the Lichtenberg-Kolleg Göttingen. The conference was held as a purely German-language conference. As interest in Crusius is currently increasing internationally, the editors have subsequently decided to publish the proceedings of the conference in two languages, together with additionally solicited contributions. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those colleagues who have taken the trouble to translate their contributions. The linguistic conver-

sion meant a considerable additional effort, which unfortunately also had an effect on time. Without the proven and not always easy patience of the contributors, the volume could not have been published, at least not in its present form – the authors involved therefore deserve special thanks in this respect as well. Many thanks are also due to all those who contributed to the direct production of the book with great commitment: Elena Haase (Münster), Ronny Edelmann and Paula Anaid Sturm (Halle), who produced the index of persons and undertook a substantial part of the corrections. Finally, special thanks are due to the publisher Walter de Gruyter – especially to Marcus Böhm and Anne Hiller –, who has supported our anthology on Christian August Crusius with interest and unceasing vigour.

Halle, Münster, and Siegen January 2021

1 Metaphysics und Natural Philosophy

Tinca Prunea-Bretonnet

Crusius and Kant on Distinctness, Certainty, and Method in Philosophy

In 1761 the Berlin Academy published one of its most famous prize questions, which focused on the problem of method in philosophy and asked for a detailed account of certainty and distinctness (»evidence«) with respect to »metaphysical truths in general«.[1] It had a huge impact on the philosophical community, not only in Prussia but in Europe in general, as had the prize essays that won two years later and were published in 1764, namely Moses Mendelssohn's *Abhandlug über die Evidenz in metaphysischen Wissenschaften*,[2] which endorsed a Wolffian perspective and won the first prize, and especially Kant's *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral*, which advanced an anti-Wolffian standpoint and was awarded the *accessit*.

Favourable to English, Scottish and French enlightened ideas, Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, the influential president of the Academy after its reorganization by Frederick the Great in 1744–1746, had promoted these movements in Prussia while attempting to discredit the ›Leibnizian-Wolffian‹ philosophy. Several significant members of the Academy supported Maupertuis in this endeavour, albeit without reaching a consensus within the Academy, where Wolffian disciples, such as Jean Henri Samuel Formey or Johann Georg Sulzer, were also active. [3] Nevertheless, the institution regularly rewarded anti-Wolffian responses and favoured competing

This essay draws on my article *Crusius et la certitude en 1763* (Astérion 9/2011). I am very grateful to Antony McKenna and Pierre-François Moreau for their invaluable support in the publication of the present chapter.

1 »On demande, si les vérités métaphysiques en général et en particulier les premiers principes de la Théologie naturelle et de la Morale sont susceptibles de la même évidence que les vérités mathématiques, et au cas qu'elles n'en soient pas susceptibles, quelle est la nature de leur certitude, à quel degré elle peut parvenir, et si ce degré suffit pour la conviction?« (»One wishes to know whether the metaphysical truths in general and the first principles of natural theology and morality in particular, admit of distinct proofs to the same degree as geometrical truths; and if they are not capable of such proofs, one wishes to know what the genuine nature of their certainty is, to what degree the said certainty can be brought, and whether this degree is sufficient for complete conviction«).

2 Dissertation qui a remporté le prix proposé par l'Académie royale des sciences et belles-lettres de Prusse sur la nature, les espèces, et les degrés de l'évidence avec les pièces qui ont concouru. Berlin, 1764; reprint in Moses Mendelssohn: Gesammelte Schriften. Jubiläumsaufgabe. Vol. 2. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1972, pp. 267–328. For a summary in English, see Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770. Transl. and ed. by David Walford and Ralf Meerbote. Cambridge 1992.

3 On this debate, see Tinca Prunea-Bretonnet: La méthode philosophique en question. L'Académie de Berlin et le concours pour l'année 1763. In: Philosophiques 42.1 (2015), pp. 107–130.

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views. By 1761, however, after both Wolff's and Maupertuis' demise (in 1754 and 1759, respectively), the standpoints defended within the speculative philosophy class had reached a certain balance and common ground.[4] As regards the philosophical method, scholars no longer supported the exclusive relevance or even preeminence of the synthetic method, unless it had at least been preceded by an analytical section. Indeed, analysis emerged as the method of choice for philosophy and theology in most of the essays submitted for the 1763 academic prize;[5] furthermore, with respect to the exclusive use of the synthetic (›demonstrative‹ or ›mathematical‹) method in philosophy, an explicit anti-Wolffian attitude prevailed on the philosophical scene. This is why, despite the fact that Sulzer managed to award the academic prize to Mendelssohn's essay that was clearly inspired by Wolff, it is Kant's anti-Wolffian *Untersuchung* that embodied the novel take on method and effectively closed the era of the demonstrative method promoted by Wolff and his disciples. Interestingly enough, Kant claimed to defend a Crusian viewpoint in his essay.

In this chapter, I will examine the role played by Christian August Crusius' conception in the controversy about method in philosophy around the mid-century, and its reception in Kant's *Preisschrift* of 1764. I argue that Crusius' treatment of distinctness (»Deutlichkeit«) and certainty (»Gewißheit«), and his views on the distinction between mathematics and philosophy had a decisive influence on Kant's account in the *Untersuchung*. In order to shed light on this relationship, I will first examine Crusius' account of the task, specificity, and appropriate method of philosophy (Sections 1 and 2), and his treatment of distinctness and probability (Section 3), as elaborated in his treatises on logic and metaphysics. I will then analyse the reception of these methodological theses in Kant's *Preisschrift* by discussing Kant's aims in the *Untersuchung* (Section 4), views on the distinction between mathematics and philosophy (Section 5), and the role granted to principles (Section 6). I will conclude with a general assessment of Kant's relationship to Crusian philosophy.

4 See also Tinca Prunea-Bretonnet: Eclectic Philosophy and »Academic Spirit«. The Berlin Academy on Metaphysics and the Thomasian Legacy. In: Philosophy at the Berlin Academy in the Reign of Frederick the Great. Ed. by Peter Anstey and Tinca Prunea-Bretonnet. Oxford Studies in the Enlightenment, forthcoming.

5 See Giorgio Tonelli: Der Streit über die mathematische Methode in der Philosophie in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts und die Entstehung von Kants Schrift über die ›Deutlichkeit‹. In: Archiv für Philosophie 9 (1959), pp. 37–66.

1 The Definition and the Division of Philosophy according to Crusius

From 1743, Crusius became one of the main challengers of the Wolffian system. Representative of the Thomasian school, he was the heir of the more intellectualist movement supported by Andreas Rüdiger (1673–1731) and a disciple of August Friedrich Müller (1684–1761) and Adolph Friedrich Hoffmann (1703–1741), as he explicitly declares in the prefaces to his main treatises on logic and metaphysics. Crusius gave a consistent and in many respects original expression to Hoffmann's anti-Wolffian methodological stance. Like his teacher, he was very familiar with Wolff's works, and the controversy against Wolff shaped the way in which he articulated his own writings. Scholarship agrees in considering Crusius' critique as decisive for the decline of Wolffianism.[6] For many years, even after 1752 when he devoted himself almost exclusively to theology, Crusius' philosophy represented a competing doctrine to Wolffianism and enjoyed an indisputable longevity in university education as well.[7] As his philosophical system was founded on his opposition to Wolff and structured by the – sometimes implicit but always present and precise – criticism of his theses, one can surely speak of an indisputable »contamination« at the doctrinal level.[8]

The activity of the Academy did not seem to have attracted Crusius' attention, not even in its combat against Wolffian philosophy. Nevertheless, he was indirectly present in the Academy at least twice: first in 1755, when his disciple Adolf Friedrich Reinhard won the prize for an essay on optimism, and in 1763, when Kant's essay on distinctness was awarded the *accessit*.[9]

Crusius' opposition to Wolff is manifest from the first paragraphs of his treatise on logic, titled *Weg zur Gewißheit und Zuverläßigkeit der menschlichen Erkenntniß*. He mentions the Wolffian distinction between historical and philosophical knowledge,[10] while arguing against Wolff that philosophy cannot be defined as

6 See, for instance, Giorgio Tonelli: Introduction. In: Christian August Crusius: Die philosophischen Hauptwerke. Hildesheim 1999, vol. 1, p. xx.

7 For details on the University Albertina in Königsberg, see Martin Oberhausen and Ricardo Pozzo: Vorlesungsverzeichnisse der Universität Königsberg (1720–1804). Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1999.

8 See Sonia Carboncini-Gavanelli: Christian August Crusius und die Leibniz-Wolffsche Philosophie. In: Autour de la philosophie wolffienne. Ed. by Jean École. Hildesheim 2001, pp. 263–278.

9 Three other memoirs for 1763 (nos. 2, 13 and 25) refer implicitly or explicitly to Crusian doctrines. I thank Paola Basso for this information.

10 On this, see Christian Wolff: Discursus praeliminaris. Ed. by Günter Gawlick and Lothar Kreimendahl. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1996, §§ 1–12.

merely »the science of the reasons [Gründe] of things«.[11] He also rejects the Wolffian claim that we cognise something with certainty only if we are able to unveil its cause, hereby preparing the path for a redefinition of both certainty and the philosophical investigation of existence.[12]

On Crusius' account, philosophy in the broad sense should be understood as the science investigating »in as much as possible« (»so viel möglich«) the reasons of things »with evidence and certainty« *and* the existence of some things or states of affairs; as such, philosophy also relies on perception and experiences (»Erfahrungen«).[13] As some of its objects escape our capacity of investigation with regard to their causes (»Realgründe«), Crusius argues, they should be considered according to their existence. Therefore, philosophy, while being concerned with the unchanging truths of reason (»unveränderlichen Vernunftwahrheiten«), also addresses the truths that can be obtained through the consideration of the natural things (»natürliche Dinge«) in the world. Among these unchanged or necessary truths, Crusius mentions the necessarily given (or existing, *vorhanden[e]*) beings, or that which should happen in every world. In this endeavour philosophy should aim to be true and thorough (»gründlich«), to go beyond the mere existence of things, to be useful, insightful and rise above common sense.[14] Philosophy in the broad sense is said to comprise two sciences: one that deals with magnitudes of extension (»Grössen der Ausdehnung«) and is called mathematics, and the other, called philosophy in a narrow sense. He divides the latter into, on the one hand, metaphysics, which is concerned with the necessary theoretical truths of reason, and, on the other hand, *Disciplinalphilosophie*, which deals with the truths that are either contingent or practical.[15] We should note that metaphysics is said to also comprise »the highest reasons of all practical truths«.[16]

In his treatise *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft-Wahrheiten*, Crusius advances a negative definition of metaphysics as »the science of those necessary truths that are something else than determinations of extended magnitudes«.[17] He confers to metaphysics the eminence of the fundamental science containing the first reasons

11 Cf. Christian August Crusius: Weg zur Gewißheit und Zuverläßigkeit der menschlichen Erkenntniß. Leipzig 1747, §§ 1–4.

12 On Crusius' (and Rüdiger's) reception of Wolff, see Raffaele Ciafardone: Von der Kritik an Wolff zum vorkritischen Kant. Wolff-Kritik bei Rüdiger und Crusius. In: Christian Wolff 1679–1754. Ed. by Werner Schneiders. Hamburg 1983, pp. 289–305.

13 Cf. Crusius: Weg (see note 11), § 10.

14 Cf. ibid., § 3.

15 On his account, the *Disciplinalphilosophie* deals with three objects: bodies, the nature and the use of the understanding (Vestand), and the truths which concern our will (cf. Christian August Crusius: Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft-Wahrheiten. Leipzig 1745, § 13).

16 Cf. Crusius: Weg (see note 11), § 11.

17 Cf. Crusius: Entwurf (see note 15), § 4.

of all the other sciences.[18] Crusius takes up the common division of metaphysics in ontology (or general metaphysics) and the three disciplines of special metaphysics: natural theology, cosmology and pneumatology. However, he does not endorse the order advanced in this respect by Wolff (cosmology, psychology, theology);[19] rather, aiming to highlight the distinction between the theoretical and practical branches of philosophy understood in a narrow sense, he speaks of ›theoretical‹ natural theology and ›metaphysical‹ cosmology and pneumatology.

As a science based on the necessary and the actual – and no longer on the possible, as Wolff defines it[20] –, philosophy is determined by the limited nature of human understanding. It must, therefore, start from given existences or *individuata*[21] and be satisfied with probability. This is also why, according to Crusius, thought cannot account for the unity of the whole reality by applying a single principle, but it imperatively needs several principles (to the principle of contradiction, he adds the principle of inseparables and that of incompatibles). And this is also why, constrained to start from existence and to verify its conclusions in experience, philosophy has to deal with many unanalysable and indemonstrable concepts.

After having included mathematics within philosophy understood in a broad sense, Crusius seeks to highlight the distinction between mathematics and philosophy »in the narrow sense« and devotes several decisive paragraphs of his *Logic* to the crucial differences in the objects and methods of these two sciences. Notably, the differences listed in § 10 of the *Weg* would find a large echo in the 1760s owing to Kant's reception in the *Untersuchung*. On Crusius' account, mathematics is concerned with quantities or magnitudes and its objects are simple; their qualities are essential (not accidental). Thus the addition or removal of a quality produces a new being. In mathematics, it is therefore possible to abstract a definition from a single example, which is impossible in philosophy where we deal with qualities. Mathematics, through definitions, generates its object. Moreover, it disregards the moral consideration of final ends (»moralische Betrachtung der Endzwecke«) and the efficient causes (»wirkende Ursachen«), which is unthinkable in philosophy, where the essence (»Wesen«) of things most often depends on them. Mathematics seldom appeals to the division into species, as its objects are usually too simple for that, and proceeds by demonstration, drawing necessary conclusions from necessary principles – whereas in philosophy »one would be gravely mistaken« if one thought that it is necessary to proceed likewise or that it is profitable for the perfection of philosophy to always (»allezeit«) choose demonstration.[22] Mathematics is based on a single

18 Cf. ibid., § 6.
19 Wolff: Discursus (see note 10), §§ 55f.
20 Ibid., § 29.
21 Cf. Crusius: Weg (see note 11), §§ 3f.
22 Cf. idid., § 10.

principle, that of contradiction, while philosophy requires several principles; mathematics only uses syllogisms, something that is neither possible nor advantageous in philosophy.

This comparison allows Crusius to conclude that anyone who reflects on these crucial differences will understand that the use of the mathematical method has been only partially beneficial to philosophy and has also caused considerable damage despite the wish of »famous men« to help this science:

> Moreover, whoever properly reflects on these differences, will understand why philosophy, beyond the benefit that it has drawn in some [of its] parts, has also suffered prejudice in others, due to the fact that certain famous men thought to remedy the verbiage which has occasionally spread in philosophy, by making use of the mathematical method [in this discipline], but have not always paid sufficient attention to the distinct nature of the two sciences.[23]

2 Philosophy and its Methods

Any attempt to assess the proper method in philosophy ought to take into account this distinction, Crusius argues, and his elaborate reflection on methodology is indeed based on this initial comparison. He devotes a long chapter of his *Logic* (»Von dem Nachdencken und Lehrart«[24]) to a precise and subtle account of the analytical and synthetic methods. He claims that the aim of thinking (»Nachdencken«) is to widen (»erweitern«) our knowledge of truth; thinking is based on one or several fundamental thoughts (»Grundgedancken«) that constitute its beginning and object. Crusius defines thinking as the effort to reach a more distinct, more complete, more certain or more extensive knowledge of truth).[25] The way we proceed is crucial, he argues, and therefore a ›logical‹ theory of method is very helpful even if the common or ›natural‹ intellect (»natürliche Verstand«) is also apt to reflect on this issue. According to this logical approach, there are two main but inherently distinct kinds of thinking (»Hauptarten des Nachdenckens«). The first is the analytical (or ›decomposing‹, ›resolving‹ – »auflösend«, »zergliedernd«) method, which starts with fundamental thoughts and attempts to reach a more complete knowledge of

23 »Wer übrigens diese Unterschiede wohl überleget, der wird begreiffen, warum die Philosophie ausser dem Nutzen, den sie in einigen Stücken gezogen hat, in andern auch wiederum Schaden dadurch gelitten habe, nachdem einige berühmte Männer dem hin und wieder eingerissenen Gewäsche in der Philosophie dadurch abzuhelfen gedacht haben, dass sie sich in derselben der mathematischen Lehrart haben bedienen wollen, dabey sie aber auf die unterschiedene Natur beyder Wissenschaften nicht allezeit aufmerksam genug gewesen sind« (Crusius: Weg [see note 11], § 10).

24 Cf. ibid., §§ 566–584.

25 Cf. ibid., § 566.

these thoughts by »going back« to their simplest elements and increasing their distinctness, completeness and certainty.[26] The second kind is the synthetic or unifying (»zusammensetzend[e]«) method, which seeks to produce new knowledge by moving forth (»fortgehen«) from known truths towards truths that are not contained in the *Grundgedancken*. Crusius further distinguishes between a ›resolving‹ analytical method and a ›proving‹ one; the latter collects proofs while the former has two components: the ›merely resolving or pure‹ (»bloß zergliedernde oder reine«) method, which seeks to make the fundamental thoughts or concepts more distinct (»deutlicher«); and the ›determining‹ (»determinirend[e]«) method, which also aims to determine them further.[27] This last type of the analytical resolving method is in fact, Crusius argues, a mixt (»gemischt[e]«) procedure, because the synthetic way of thinking is involved in adding further determinations. He regards it as more important than other methods, especially for philosophical topics, and devotes two further paragraphs to the investigation of its features. On Crusius' account, distinctness is related to the analytical procedure – a point to which I shall come back.

The synthetic method is said to include three subdivisions: the geometrical or mathematical method, which deals with possible beings or with their relations,[28] the physical (»physikalische«) method and the »moral« one. The last two deal with existent beings, that is, with experiences or existences (the physical method), and with the final aims of things (the moral method).[29] Crusius proposes to call these two latter subdivisions the ›philosophical synthesis‹.[30] In the physical method we always start with experiences and examine their causes and further consequences; on his account, this is the proper approach in disciplines such as natural philosophy, medicine and revealed theology).[31] He emphasises here the limits of the geometrical method, which can be used only when we deal with possible beings or relations among possible beings (or essences), and not with really existing beings.

Two crucial aspects should be underlined here: the relationship between the analytical and synthetic methods and the specific use of each subdivision. Crusius insists on the fact that each discipline and topic should be assigned a particular kind of method according to its ›nature‹ (»Natur«). The correctness and fruitfulness of any scientific endeavour depend on the appropriate identification and application of these methods.[32] For instance, in § 584 of the *Weg* he explains that with respect to existences (»Existenzen«) we should employ either the analytical determin-

26 Cf. ibid., §§ 571f.
27 Cf. ibid., § 574.
28 Cf. ibid., § 578.
29 Cf. ibid., § 581.
30 Cf. ibid., § 578.
31 Cf. ibid., § 580.
32 »Eine iedwede Sache muß nach derjenigen Methode überdacht und abgehandelt werden, welche ihre Natur leidet« (ibid., § 584).

ing method or the synthetic physical or moral one, or a combination thereof. Essences, however, should be examined with the help of the mathematical method (which is synthetic) or of the analytic resolving or determining method.

Moreover, when combining the two main methods, one should always keep in mind that the analytic procedure grounds the synthetic one and must always be applied first: it is impossible to acquire new knowledge if the ›fundamental thoughts‹ are not distinct and properly known. In the ›orderly way‹ of thinking, the two methods go together, but the analytical one has epistemic primacy and can stand by itself. While the synthetic method definitely enriches the analytic procedure, Crusius argues, it cannot exist without it.[33] On his account, in philosophy the two methods are most of the time combined.[34] It is imperative to correctly discern, Crusius argues, what principles and axioms are involved in these procedures. For instance, the principle of identity and that of the indiscernibles are specific to analysis, while the principle of causality belong to the synthetic method.[35]

3 Distinctness and Probability

In his *Logic*, Crusius devotes an important part of the chapter »On the completeness of concepts«[36] to the question of distinctness (»Deutlichkeit«), advancing a nuanced classification that allows him to expand on the differences between mathematics and philosophy, to further clarify his understanding of the role of analysis and to denounce the most common errors committed by philosophers in this domain. The same topic is dealt with more succinctly in his *Metaphysics*,[37] where his main target is unsurprisingly the Wolffian school.

33 »Es ist vor bekannt anzunehmen, daß man nicht eher zu neuen Gedancken fortgehen soll, bis die Grundgedancken genugsam deutlich sind, und ihre Wahrheit untersuchet worden«; »[d]as synthetische Nachdenken kan nicht eher, wenigstens nicht gründlich, angewandt werden, als bis die Grundgedancken deutlich sind, und ihrer Realität oder Möglichkeit nach, welche man ihnen zuschreibet, vor bekannt angenommen werden können. [...] *Das analytische Nachdencken wird fruchtbarer, wenn das synthetische hinzu kommt. Das synthetische aber kan ohne irgend ein vorher gegangenes analytisches gar nicht seyn*« (ibid., § 573 and § 583, my emphasis).

34 On the methodological theories within the Thomasian school and in the first half of the eighteenth century, see Giorgio Tonelli: Analysis und Synthesis in the XVIIIth Century Philosophy Prior to Kant. In: Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte 20 (1976), pp. 178–213.

35 Cf. Crusius: Weg (see note 11), § 583.

36 Cf. ibid., §§ 166–199.

37 Cf. Crusius: Entwurf (see note 15), §§ 7f.

Let us look closer at this classification, as it will prove particularly influential in the debates on method up to the 1760s.[38] According to Crusius, human understanding has access to only three kinds (»Arten«) of distinctness.[39] At the lower limit of our cognitive faculty he situates the ›common distinctness‹ (»gemeine Deutlichkeit«), which is specific to unanalysed concepts issued from experience and representing the matter of our reflections. A concept that is distinct in this way can be differentiated (»unterschieden«) from any other concept. Crusius gives here the example of colours.[40] This kind of distinctness is sufficient for every-day life, he argues, and, if our conscience is not ignored or contradicted, it can also be attained in the moral domain.

At the higher end (»oben«),[41] Crusius places the »logical« or »abstractive« distinctness (»logikalische oder die Deutlichkeit des Abstractionsweges«), which is obtained through the analysis or resolution (»Zergliederung«) of compound concepts acquired through the senses. Our senses, he claims, are »touched« or moved (»rühret«) by composite things (»zusammengesetzte Dinge«); thus, our first representation is of a *concretum*.[42] All the determinations that do not belong to the concept in question are left out until we remain only with »what belongs to« it.[43] Thus, through analysis, we attain the simplest concepts. Crusius insists that this kind of distinctness is specific to ontology (defined as the science that must attain the ›most simple concepts‹, »allereinfachsten Begriffe«), as well as to metaphysics in general, and denies that the lack of definitions or the absence of an ascribable cause bring along obscurity in metaphysics.[44] Whether after having obtained the simplest concepts we should proceed according to the synthetic method remains to be established, he argues, in a statement that announces Kant's own apparent hesitation on this subject. Further clarifications in this respect will be brought by his theory of principles. Between these two limits (»extrema«), he situates the third type of distinctness, i. e. the distinctness ›of essential content‹ (»die Deutlichkeit des wesentlichen Inhaltes«). This latter kind makes it possible to become aware of what differentiates a concept from other concepts, that is, of its parts and determinations. It is obtained by decomposing the representation of the content of a concept and also – in other sciences than ontology – through the definition of a concept.

38 Cassirer regards this classification as the starting point of the ›fight‹ (›Streit‹) against Wolff's methodology; see Ernst Cassirer: Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit. 4 vols. Darmstadt 1974, vol. 2, p. 532.

39 Cf. Crusius: Weg (see note 11), §§ 171–173), cf. Crusius: Entwurf (see note 15), § 8.

40 Cf. ibid.

41 Cf. ibid.

42 Cf. Crusius: Weg (see note 11), § 172.

43 Cf. ibid., cf. Crusius: Entwurf (see note 15), § 8.

44 Cf. ibid., § 7f.

Crusius laments the errors and confusions that stem from the conflation of these types of distinctness and from the desire to attain one or the other type in domains that are not suited for that precise kind of distinctness. Ontology in particular, if it does not aim at logical distinctness but pursues other goals, becomes obscure, difficult (»schwer«) and futile: instead of grounding knowledge on simple and distinct concepts, it acquires »mere relative and negative« ones, which lead to »pure circles and empty words«.[45]

For a correct understanding of metaphysics, Crusius argues, we should moreover admit that we cannot rely exclusively on proofs and demonstrations: on the one hand, because of the limited character of our intellect, and on the other hand, because we are also dealing with concepts that stem from experience and do not rely on the principle of contradiction alone. As soon as we leave the realm of possibility and make use of the principle of sufficient reason or of another fundamental principle probability must be considered as satisfying and sufficient. Nevertheless, he holds, metaphysics should be regarded as capable of attaining certainty because »[c]ertainty is simply something in the intellect« (»Gewissheit ist bloss etwas im Verstande«.[46] Thus, Crusius disjoins certainty from necessity: not only does necessity belong to the thing (»Sache«) and certainty to our mind, he contends, but we are apt to reach certainty even if we do not have a distinct insight into the necessity of a thing or state of affairs.[47] Therefore, not strictly dependent on necessity and demonstration, as Wolff and his school advanced, certainty is perfectly compatible, on Crusius' account, with probability. This is a crucial statement for the decades to come, and especially for the 1763 prize essays.

While a detailed account of his rich and subtle analysis of probability developed in chapter 9 of the *Entwurf* is beyond the scope of this essay, Crusius' notion of »moral certainty«[48] must be mentioned here, because it will directly influence Kant's *Inquiry*. Experience provides only probable knowledge, according to Crusius, but we can sometimes be certain of it even if its opposite can be thought and is not contradictory. Probable knowledge (or the knowledge acquired through probability, »Erkenntnißweg der Wahrscheinlichkeit«) stemming from experience can be divided into three types: 1) the *verisimile*, which is probable in a narrow sense, that is, more plausible than its opposite; 2) the credible (»probabile« or »glaubwürdige«), which deserves to be considered true; and 3) the »morally certain«, which we cannot consider otherwise than true and certain. Thus, experience can provide a precise kind of knowledge that we take to be certain even if its necessity cannot be demon-

45 Cf. ibid., § 8.

46 Cf. ibid., § 10.

47 »Eine deutliche Erkenntniß der Notwendigkeit einer Sache giebt zwar eine Gewißheit; aber es folgt nicht umgekehrt, daß man nicht eher Gewißheit habe, bis man die Nothwendigkeit deutlich einsiehet« (ibid., § 10).

48 Cf. ibid., §§ 360f.

strated. Crusius gives the example of the existence of the city of Athens[49] and claims that this precise type of certainty founded on experience should be added to the types of certainty grounded on demonstration and analysed in § 359 in the *Entwurf*.[50]

A decisive element of Crusius' doctrine becomes manifest in this account, namely the fact that truth is founded on a *datum* of »inner sensation« (»innerliche Empfindung«[51]), also called the »highest mark of truth« (»obersten Kennzeichen der Wahrheit«[52]). It is this inner conviction that tells us that »that which cannot be thought otherwise than true is true«, while »that which cannot be thought otherwise than false is false«.[53] Interestingly, he explicitly associates logical or abstractive distinctness with a finer and more accurate inner sensation.

In a similar way, Crusius grounds the other ontological principles in the essence of the intellect (»Wesen des Verstandes),[54] and justifies this foundation by positing a »natural drive to perfection« inherent to our soul, of which the »drive to truth« (»Wahrheitstrieb«) is a consequence.[55] The principle of sufficient or determining reason applies to existing things, but the three ›highest‹ principles apply to both possible and actual or existing things; the principle of contradiction, the principle of inseparables (»Grundsatz des nicht zu trennenden«: that which cannot be thought without each other, can neither exist without each other) and the principle of incompatibles (»Grundsatz des nicht zu verbindenden«: that which cannot be thought with each other or next to each other, can neither be with or next to each other).

49 Cf. ibid., § 359.

50 Crusius establishes a distinction between geometrical demonstration and what he calls the »disciplinale« demonstration, which he explains as follows: »Dahingegen [haben] die Neuern die Erfahrungen, den Satz von der zureichenden Ursache, und andere Sätze, welche unter den andern und den dritten Grundsatz der Vernunft gehören, in der Demonstration zugelassen [...]. Sie haben nemlich wahrgenommen, daß sonsten der Begriff der Demonstration in den Wissenschaften, welche reale Objecte, und nicht bloß mögliche Begriffe, z. E. Grössen, betrachten, nicht nützlich werde; und daß doch, wenn man ihn nützlich machet, der Gewißheit nicht nothwendig etwas abgehe, sondern nur dasjenige beobachtet werde, was die Natur solcher Objecte nicht anders leidet« (Crusius: Weg [see note 11], § 521).

51 Cf. ibid., § 172, cf. Crusius: Entwurf (see note 15), §§ 8, 16.

52 Cf. ibid., § 15.

53 Cf. ibid., cf. Crusius: Weg (see note 11), §§ 256, 261;

54 »[W]as sich nicht ohne einander denken läßt, das ist auch in der That mit einander verbunden: Man kan diesen den Grundsatz des nicht zu trennenden nennen. Und was sich nicht mit und neben einander denken läßt, das kan auch in der That nicht mit einander verbunden werden; Dieses kan der Grundsatz der nicht zu verbindenden heissen« (Crusius: Entwurf [see note 15], § 14). See also ibid., § 15: »Das allerhöchste Kennzeichen aber, der möglichen und wirklichen Dinge, ist das Wesen des Verstandes, daß nehmlich dasjenige nicht möglich oder wirklich sey, was sich nicht also denken läßt; und daß hingegen dasjenige möglich sey, was sich denken läßt; dasjenige aber gar nicht wirklich sey, bey dessen Leugnung man mittelbar oder unmittelbar etwas zugeben müßte, was sich nicht als wahr denken läßt«.

55 Cf. Crusius: Weg (see note 11), § 256.

Even if Crusius hereby maintains the homogeneity between the ontological and epistemological realms by positing that the same principles apply to both domains, he emphasises the foundational role of the intellect with respect to principles. To these fundamental principles, he adds not only the principle of sufficient or determining reason, but also numerous ›material‹ principles involved in the cognition of existing beings and indemonstrable by our intellect.[56] He highlights in his treatises the importance of experience, of the actual (»wirklich«) and the given, as well as the limitations of our cognitive powers – a rather common theme at the time. Nevertheless, his appeal to experience is not grounded on induction, but mostly on an abstractive and analytic procedure, as we have seen, and his emphasis on »inner sensation« does not testify to an empiricist commitment as such, his standpoint remaining within a rationalist framework. Despite this fact, his methodological views will have a large echo up to the 1760s, and this especially in a context where the new physics and empiricist theses were favoured. The significance granted to inner experience as a criterion of truth, however, will turn out to have a mixt reception and even be contested, notably in Kant's pre-Critical philosophy.

4 Kant's *Preisschrift* on Distinctness

Kant's prize essay titled *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral*, written in all likelihood during the last weeks of 1762, expresses his clearly anti-Wolffian convictions. Despite a hasty drafting, it summarizes a methodological perspective that had been long in the making and articulates the defining arguments of Kant's philosophy circa 1762–1764, thus belonging to a group of closely related writings whose chronological ordering remains controversial. Kant once again sides here with doctrines opposed to the Wolffian school, and namely to the use of the mathematical method in philosophy.[57] He shows a deep concern for the question of method, in which he had placed for more than a decade the only hope of »saving« metaphysics from the serious crisis it was going through.[58] If other influences are undoubtedly relevant for Kant's methodo-

56 Cf. ibid., § 259.

57 See Norbert Hinske: Zwischen Aufklärung und Vernunftkritik. Studien zum Kantischen Logikcorpus. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1998, pp. 108–111.

58 See Kant's letter to Lambert from December 31, 1765 (AA X, pp. 55–61). Lambert, who wrote a draft in response to the prize question but did not send the essay, told Kant: »The method that your writings exhibit, sir, is undeniably the only method that one can use with security and progress« (Letter to Kant, February 3, 1766, AA X, p. 63). Lambert's response was published by Karl Bopp in 1918 under the title *Über die Methode die Metaphysik, Theologie und Moral richtiger zu beweisen*. Kant's writings are cited according to the volume and page number in: Kants Gesammelte Schriften.

logical position – such as the perspective promoted by the Berlin Academy[59] – it is the role played at the time by Crusius' conception that seems particularly significant and will be addressed in the following sections.

Kant had been reading Crusius' works for at least a decade, without however abandoning all critical distance. Even if his admiration for him would not pass the test of Kant's mature philosophical thought, it is indisputable that Crusian philosophy was still decisive for Kant in 1762, and some of Crusius' intuitions would prove consequential in the elaboration of Kant's main critical theses. Kant came fairly early into contact with his writings: by 1755, he had read closely a Crusian text published in Leipzig in 1743, *Dissertatio philosophica de usu and limitibus principii rationis determinantis, vulgo sufficientis*. The *Nova Dilucidatio* discusses in detail the theses developed by Crusius in this work and takes up the criticism of the supremacy of the principle of contradiction in Wolffian philosophy. At the beginning of the 1760s, Kant also became aware of Crusius' main treatises, that is of his *Ethics*,[60] and of his *Metaphysics* and *Logic*.

In a 1760 letter to Ludwig Ernst Borowski,[61] Kant wrote that he wanted to keep for some time the copy of Crusius' *Metaphysics* that the latter had lent him, in order to read it more thoroughly before purchasing his own copy. It is thus legitimate to situate to the beginning of the 1760s the more attentive reading of Crusius' treatises and closely link the development of Kant's reflection of the time to certain central theses encountered there. Crusius' thought was familiar to Kant thanks to the previous reading of the dissertation *De usu*, but the overall picture and the finer and more diverse articulations of his conception became accessible to him only from 1760 onward. His admiration for Crusius was still intact in 1762, and Kant, who in the *Nova Dilucidatio* (1755) and in later works used to call him »the celebrated Crusius«,[62] »the most distinguished and penetrating Crusius«,[63] »this great man«, one of the »most penetrating philosophers of our time«,[64] pays him homage in the *Inquiry*:

> I have deemed it necessary here to mention the method of this new philosophy. It quickly became so famous and it has been so widely admitted to have been instrumental in clarifying

Ed. by Deutsche (formerly Königlich-Preussische) Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin 1900ff. I will use the English translation provided in Kant: Theoretical Philosophy (see note 2).

59 Mariano Campo: La genesi del criticismo kantiano. Varese 1953, especially pp. 312 sq.

60 Cf. Christian August Crusius: Anweisung vernünftig zu leben. Leipzig 1744.

61 Letter to Ludwig Ernst Borowski, June 6, 1760 (AA X, p. 33).

62 See for instance, AA I, pp. 393, 396, 397; AA II, p. 168.

63 AA I, p. 398, p. 405.

64 AA I, p. 128.

> many of the things we know that it would have been a major omission not to have mentioned it in a work which is concerned with metaphysics in general.[65]

The very core of the Kantian argumentation about philosophical method and the certainty attainable in metaphysics is related to the Crusian approach. Kant establishes a real kinship with his predecessor:

> I shall briefly indicate the true character of the first fundamental truths of metaphysics; at the same time, I shall offer a brief account of the true content of Crusius' method, which is not as different from that of the philosophy contained in this treatise as may, perhaps, be thought.[66]

Indeed, he invokes Crusius in the last paragraph of the third reflection devoted to metaphysical certainty and chooses to present his own conclusions in a double movement of endorsement and revision of Crusius' theses. In the introduction to his *Inquiry*, Kant sets himself the goal of showing »the true degree of certainty to which [metaphysics] may aspire, as well as the path by which the certainty may be attained«.[67] The method he wishes to establish is meant to achieve the highest possible degree of certainty in metaphysics and is regarded as an essential condition to fully grasp »the nature of this kind of conviction (»Überzeugung«).[68] As we can see, from the very first lines we come up against an ambiguity that will remain constant throughout the text: is metaphysical certainty (or philosophical certainty – Kant will unify the two) different in *kind* from other types of certainty, or only in *degree*?

To articulate this new method, which he considers apt to »unite reflective minds in a single effort«,[69] Kant implicitly appeals to two fundamental theses of Crusius' thought, namely the requirement to rely on the given, that is, on experience, and the conviction of the fundamental limitation of human understanding, incapable of grasping reality in its ultimate determinations. Kant presents his methodological reflection as grounded only on principles which he regards as »assured, based on experience and on the consequences which immediately follow«. The first step he takes is to distinguish carefully between the method proper to mathematics and the method suitable for philosophy, since, Kant argues, »nothing has been more detrimental to philosophy than mathematics, and in particular, the imitation of its method in contexts where it cannot possibly be employed«.[70] In order to illustrate this radical heterogeneity, Kant makes a detailed comparison between the two disciplines and their specific procedures, a comparison which presents an obvious kin-

65 AA II, p. 293n.
66 AA II, p. 294.
67 AA II, p. 275.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 AA II, p. 283.

ship with the paragraphs devoted to this question in Crusius' *Metaphysics*[71] and *Logic*.[72]

5 Philosophy and Mathematics

The differences between philosophy and mathematics are deemed »substantial and essential«[73] and they concern the acquisition of knowledge, the specific object and task of each science, as well as the features of the certainty that they can attain. On Kant's account, mathematics constructs its concepts through arbitrary combination and starts with the definition, which gives the concept of the object. Philosophy, on the contrary, where the concept of a thing is given at the outset but »confusedly or in an insufficiently determinate fashion« proceeds by abstraction »from knowledge that analysis has made distinct«.[74] Thus, the proper task of philosophy is to render given concepts determined and complete through analysis; the task of mathematics, whose approach is synthetic, is to combine and compare constructed concepts of magnitude in order to establish what can be further inferred. Mathematics uses signs instead of things and considers universal rules *in concreto*, while philosophy uses words and represents the universal *in abstracto*; it focuses on the »thing itself«. In mathematics, there are very few, if any, unanalysable concepts, because the mathematician »defines by arbitrary combination, and the thought of that object first becomes possible in virtue of that arbitrary combination«.[75] The approach is entirely different in philosophy and necessarily presupposes analysis. In the analysis of a confusedly-given concept, philosophy inevitably arrives at a considerable number of concepts that are unanalysable or partially unanalysable, and the indemonstrable propositions which constitute its foundation as a science are also infinite. In mathematics, on the contrary, there are only a few indemonstrable propositions, Kant argues. Philosophy deals with *data* that the intellect perceives immediately and that serve to form a primitive, indemonstrable judgement. The studied object is likewise distinct: in mathematics, it is magnitude, in philosophy, quality. »There are infinitely many qualities which constitute the real object of philosophy, and distinguishing them from each other is an extremely strenuous business«.[76]

71 Cf. Crusius: Entwurf (see note 15), § 115.
72 Cf. Crusius: Weg (see note 11), § 10.
73 AA II, pp. 280, 283.
74 AA II, p. 276.
75 AA II, p. 280.
76 AA II, p. 282.