

W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz

# The Presocratics in the Thought of Martin Heidegger



PETER LANG  
EDITION

**W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz**

## **The Presocratics in the Thought of Martin Heidegger**

The book focuses on Heidegger's thoughtful repetition of early Greek thinking, and his receptive attention to the fragments of the Presocratics from our contemporary age. Their thought has a special value for him as the heritage which must be repeated anew in order to bring us back to the question of being and to open before us new avenues for existence. The author raises questions which help us to understand Heidegger as a thinker. He presents a deep analysis of Heidegger's interpretations of the Presocratics and contributes to a new, insightful understanding of Heideggerian philosophy.

«The book deserves a wide reception among scholars who are interested in the Presocratics, Heidegger and contemporary philosophy.»

Dr. Katherine Morris (University of Oxford)

«Prof. Korab-Karpowicz (...) develops a consistent reading of Heidegger's historical studies, thereby significantly contributing to a new approach for the study of Heideggerian philosophy.»

Dr. Michał Bizoń (Jagiellonian University, Kraków)

### **The Author**

W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz is Professor at Lazarski University in Warsaw and Zayed University in Dubai. He received a doctorate from the University of Oxford and has taught at a number of universities, including the Anglo-American University of Prague and Texas State University.

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For my wife and children





Lets us also in the days ahead  
remain as wanderers on the way  
into the neighbourhood of being.

Martin Heidegger



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# Preface

During his long engagement with philosophy, spanning nearly seventy years, Heidegger devoted considerable attention to the study of the Presocratics. His growing interest in Presocratic thinkers can be noted especially in the later period of his thought. At that period, he delivered lecture courses on Anaximander, Heraclitus and Parmenides. In addition, in a number of his later writings, he presented interpretations of individual Presocratic fragments. Since Martin Heidegger is acknowledged to be one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, whose thinking has contributed to such diverse fields as phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty), existentialism (Sartre, Ortega y Gasset), hermeneutics (Gadamer, Ricoeur), political theory (Arendt, Marcuse), psychotherapy (Boss, Binswanger, Rollo May), theology (Bultmann, Tillich), and postmodernism (Derrida), it may be of substantial interest to both Heideggerian and Presocratic scholars to learn more about the place of the Presocratics in his philosophy. In this respect, several questions can be asked. Why does Heidegger undertake an inquiry into Presocratic thought? How does his study of the Presocratics relate to his concepts of history and philosophy? In what way do his interpretations of the fragments differ from traditional, standard scholarly interpretations? What are the conclusions of his study? How do they help us to get a better view of the overall thought of Martin Heidegger? These questions provide a guide for my book.

There are only a few publications devoted to the subject of Heidegger and the Presocratics, some of them already outdated, most of them embedded in Heidegger's obscure philosophical jargon, and none of them treating the subject exhaustively. Therefore, there is a need for a new, critical presentation of Heidegger's account of Presocratic thought. However, the purpose of my book is not only to provide such a critical presentation. I raise questions which help us to understand Heidegger as a thinker. The Presocratics provide access to his lifework.

This book is a revised version of my doctoral dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Literae Humaniores at the University of Oxford. Parts of it were published earlier in *Existentialia: An International Journal of Philos-*

*ophy*. I wish to thank Mr. Michael Inwood of Trinity College, Oxford for his direction of my research and for his most generous help in all matters. Also, I thank Prof. Seweryn Blandzi, Prof. Cezary Wodzinski and Prof. Katarzyna Rosner, all three of the Polish Academy of Sciences, as well as Mr. Edward Hussey of All Souls College, Oxford for their valuable comments and suggestions. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Michael Senter, OBE, President of Poland's branch of the English Speaking Union, for his invaluable help in the translation of large parts of Heidegger's lectures on Heraclitus, to Dr. Michal Bizon of the Jagiellonian University for editing Greek words, and to Ms. Linda Marshall of Zayed University for proofreading. The support of my wife Katherine is incalculable. To her and to our three children, Jasmine, Adam and Julius, two of whom were born during my work on Heidegger, the book is dedicated.

# Abbreviations

Abbreviations for frequently cited Heidegger's works

A	'Aletheia (Heraklit, Fragment 16)' in Vorträge und Aufsätze (Stuttgart, Neske, 1954)
BH	'Brief über Humanismus' in Wegmarken (Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1967)
BPP	The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, tr. by A. Hofstadter (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982)
EM	Einführung in die Metaphysik (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1958)
EP	'Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens' in Zur Sache des Denkens (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1969)
G	Grundbegriffe (Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1981)
GA	Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie (Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1993)
GP	Die Grundfragen der Philosophie, (Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1984),
H	Heraklit (Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1979)
L	'Logos (Heraklit, Fragment 50)' in Vorträge und Aufsätze (Stuttgart, Neske, 1954)
M	'Moira' (Parmenides, Fragment VIII, 34–41) in Vorträge und Aufsätze (Stuttgart, Neske, 1954)
MP	'Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie' in Zur Sache des Denkens (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1969)
P	Parmenides (Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1982)
SA	'Der Spruch des Anaximander' in Holzwege (Tübingen, Klostermann, 1950)
SI	'Der Satz der Identität' in Identität und Differenz (Pfullingen, Neske, 1957)
SZ	Sein und Zeit, 7 <sup>th</sup> (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1953)
WD	Was Heisst Denken? (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1954)
WP	Was ist das-die Philosophie? (Pfullingen, Neske, 1956)
WW	'Vom Wesen der Wahrheit' in Wegmarken (Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1967)



- Z 'Seminar in Zähringen 1973' in Seminare (Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1986)
- ZG 'Der Zeitbegriff in der Geschichtswissenschaft' in Frühe Schriften (Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1972)
- ZS 'Zeit und Sein' in Zur Sache des Denkens (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1969)