



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Principles of selection and organisation

The aim of this collection is to bring together papers that represent the range and richness of the work on Frege that has been undertaken over the last two decades. Interest in Frege's philosophy has blossomed over this period, reflected not only in the large number of papers that are now being published every year in the various journals of philosophy, but also in the extent to which Frege's ideas are core elements in university courses in philosophy in many of its central areas – especially the philosophy of language, logic, mind and mathematics, epistemology, metaphysics and the history of philosophy. The analytic tradition in philosophy has firmly established itself as the central tradition in the English-speaking world, and increasingly across the rest of the world, and Frege's importance as one of its founders is now widely recognised. Frege's ideas have been developed and criticised in many different ways so that Fregean, neo-Fregean and anti-Fregean elements are all part of the complex mix that constitutes modern analytic philosophy – and indeed related traditions such as phenomenology. We have not attempted to do justice to all the twists and turns that have taken place in the reception of Frege's philosophy, since the subject of this collection is Frege's own ideas, but critical assessment of those ideas is very much part of the majority of the papers included.

There have been a number of Frege collections published over the last forty years. The first was Klemke 1968 and the second, the first multi-volume collection was Schirn 1976 (in three volumes). Wright 1984 and Haaparanta and Hintikka 1986 were the two influential collections of the 1980s. Since then, new collections, often on specific aspects of Frege's philosophy, have been appearing regularly: Sluga 1993 (in four volumes), Biro and Kotatko 1995, Demopoulos 1995, Max and Stelzner 1995, Schirn 1996, Gabriel and Kienzler 1997, Gabriel and Dathe 2000, Newen *et al.* 2001 and Greimann 2003b, to mention just those published in either English or German. There have also been special issues of the *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* (1987, 2000), *Mind* (1992) and *Manuscrito* (2003) devoted to Frege, and Dummett (1991b), Boolos (1998, Part II), Hale and Wright (2001) and Burge (2005) have published collections of their own papers on Frege. Collections on early analytic philosophy more broadly, such as Bell and Cooper 1990,



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Tait 1997, Floyd and Shieh 2001 and Reck 2002, have also included a number of articles on Frege.

There are excellent papers in all of these collections and our first problem was to decide what policy to adopt in respect of them. Sluga's four-volume collection, *The Philosophy of Frege* (1993), was the obvious point of reference, since it contains many of the classics from earlier years. Because of this, and the astute selection Sluga made, our task became easier, since it freed us to concentrate on more recent articles. Only Ricketts 1986a and Bell 1987, which are in Sluga's collection, are reprinted here (Ricketts 1986a (Chapter 50) for the reason given below and Bell 1987 because of the response it prompted from Dummett, whose 1989 reply is included with it here in Chapters 63 and 64 Volume IV). Sluga's volumes were published in 1993 but, in fact, they do not contain anything published after January 1998. Much has happened since then and this made it natural to restrict ourselves to material that has appeared later, with just a slight overlap. 1986 was chosen as our starting date. This is still, of course, somewhat arbitrary but it was the year in which two of Thomas Ricketts' papers were published (1986a, 1986b), papers which have provoked much debate in recent years.

This still left the decision as to what to do with respect to later collections and here we felt free to make selections on the grounds that articles contained in existing collections were more likely to be known and their value recognised. We have tried to minimise overlap where alternatives have been available, however. The quality and intrinsic interest of the individual papers has been our main criterion but we have also sought to provide as representative a selection as we can of the wide range of work on Frege that has been done over the last twenty years. This has not been easy. Over 120 articles on Frege have been published in the main philosophy journals. Together with the papers published in the collections already mentioned, along with other collections not specifically devoted to Frege, the number of papers published on Frege over the period rises to over 200. Even with 1,600 pages at our disposal, we have been unable to include all that we would have liked. However, we hope that the selection we have made fulfils our aim of representing the breadth and depth of recent work on Frege.

Most of the articles included here have been published before elsewhere, although in some cases they appear in a shorter and revised form as agreed and edited by the authors themselves. There are also some papers published here for the first time, drawn on earlier work by the author. One aim has been to make some of the best recent material in the German language known more widely. There has been a flowering of interest in Frege's philosophy throughout the world but, in Germany in particular, there has been concern with the historical roots and context of Frege's work, which have all too often been undervalued by English-speaking commentators. In the newly commissioned essays by Dathe and Thiel, and in the translations of





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papers by Gabriel, Greimann, Thiel and Wehmeier and Schmidt am Busch, we hope that the important contribution and ongoing activities of German scholars will be appreciated more fully.

As far as the organisation of these volumes is concerned, we have sought to reflect the nature and range of current interest in each of the main aspects of Frege's philosophy. In this regard, a comparison with Sluga's collection is instructive. That collection is divided into the following four volumes:

- Volume 1: General assessments and historical accounts of Frege's philosophy
- Volume 2: Logic and foundations of mathematics in Frege's philosophy
- Volume 3: Meaning and ontology in Frege's philosophy
- Volume 4: Sense and reference in Frege's philosophy

While this division reflects accurately the state of play in Frege scholarship prior to 1988, over the last two decades there has been growing interest in Frege's philosophy of logic and mathematics and we felt it necessary to have two volumes here where Sluga had just one. This is not to say that interest in Frege's philosophy of thought and language has diminished; for from it. However, Frege's views here are now seen much more as rooted in his philosophy of logic and mathematics, so investigation of the latter is in fact to deepen our understanding of the former. It is also the case that much current activity in the philosophy of mind and language, while drawing inspiration from Frege's work, either by developing it or reacting against it, has gone beyond Frege in significant ways. Since, as mentioned above, this is a collection of papers on Frege rather than Fregeanism (or neo-Fregeanism or anti-Fregeanism), we have not attempted to do justice to the developments of Frege's work that have occurred over the last twenty years.

We have divided the present collection into the following four volumes:

- Volume I: Frege's philosophy in context
- Volume II: Frege's philosophy of logic
- Volume III: Frege's philosophy of mathematics
- Volume IV: Frege's philosophy of thought and language

Volume I is concerned with the historical context of Frege's work, his relationship to other philosophers and the broader epistemological and metaphysical aspects of his philosophy. Volume II focuses on Frege's development and conception of logic and their epistemological implications. Volume III considers Frege's place in the history and philosophy of mathematics and the nature and significance of his conception of number. Volume IV explores the extent to which Frege is a philosopher of language and the relationship between his views on language and thought. Details of how





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each of these volumes is divided, and their main themes, are provided in the introductions to each volume.

Bibliography

For the works cited in this general introduction to the collection as a whole, see the bibliography at the end of the introduction to this first volume.

