

THE FLY IN THE BOTTLE*
(In Memory of Jean van Heijenoort)

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14 May 1986

"I pondered my doubts, and for several years the study of mathematics was all that allowed me to preserve my inner equilibrium. Bolshevik ideology was, for me, in ruins. I had to build another life." These simple and moving lines end Jean van Heijenoort's book of recollections.¹ That other life was, among others, activity as a philosopher and historian of mathematical logic.

To a mathematical logician Jean van Heijenoort is primarily the author of the monumental *From Frege to Gödel*;² this book offers a unique panorama of the stammering of logic, from the *Begriffsschrift* of Frege (1879) to Gödel's theorem (1931). It is made up of a selection of articles by the leading logicians of that half century, carefully annotated and above all provided with introductions allowing the disentanglement of various facts which would obscure their meaning for a reader knowing what happened "later." Along the same line one must clearly mention his edition of the logical writings of Jacques Herbrand³ and his very recent participation in the editing in progress of the works of Kurt Gödel. Jean van Heijenoort's work has contributed quite a bit to the modification of our

* From the French original, "La mouche dans la bouteille (En Mémoire de Jean van Heijenoort)", The Paris Logic Group (editors), *Logic Colloquium '85* (Amsterdam, North-Holland/Elsevier Science Publishers, 1987), 9-12, by permission of North-Holland and the Author. English translation by Thomas Drucker, approved by the Author.

¹ Jean van Heijenoort, *With Trotsky in Exile: From Prinkipo to Coyoacán* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 149.

² Jean van Heijenoort (editor), *From Frege to Gödel: A Source Book in Mathematical Logic, 1879-1931*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967.

³ Jean van Heijenoort (editor), *Jacques Herbrand, Écrits logiques*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968.