Platonic and Ciceronian Studies

Platonic and Ciceronian Studies

By

John Glucker

Edited by Amos Edelheit and Ivor Ludlam

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

Platonic and Ciceronian Studies

By John Glucker

This book first published 2023

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-2508-2
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-2508-5

To Amos Edelheit and Ivor Ludlam

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reviews

Section 2: *Ciceroniana*

Articles

Reviews

PREFACE

This volume consists of essays which I published between 1987 and 2014 in various periodicals and collections of articles. What these essays have in common is that all of them are concerned, in various ways, with the philosophical heritage of two of the major figures in the whole of ancient Greek and Roman literature, Plato and Cicero. These two authors have always been near the centre of my attention as a student of ancient literature and, especially, of ancient philosophy.

The inclusion of Plato in any serious work concerned with ancient philosophy needs no excuse. Plato's dialogues have been, ever since their publication, among the most widely read, studied, commented on and discussed texts in the whole history of Western thought, and Plato's activities as a teacher, founder of an influential philosophical school, and a figure of admiration – what in today's jargon is called an icon – in most philosophical schools and communities is well attested. The literature about him and his philosophy began soon after his death and has continued unabated, in parallel with the continuous transmission of his own works. This is reflected in the structure of our Section I, in which almost all the articles deal with issues arising from Plato's philosophical writings, citing and analyzing sentences and passages from those works, but they are not, even partially, running commentaries on particular works or passages. Most of the articles in this section would be quite adequately described as dealing with problems in Platonism in the widest sense of the term – the study and interpretation of Platonic philosophy and its influence from the age of Plato's immediate pupils, through Greek and Roman antiquity and European and American modern times, to the study and interpretation of Plato and Platonism today "from China to Peru" – or from Japan to the United States.

Cicero is somewhat different. We are all aware of his major role in the development of Roman rhetoric and of Latin prose style. But his philosophical works have, until a generation or two ago, been studied mainly by 'antiquarian' historians of philosophy, as a treasure-house of information about philosophers and schools of philosophy in the Hellenistic-Roman age whose original works have reached us only at second-hand, through quotations and summaries ('fragments and testimonia') in the writings of later authors. In Cicero's philosophical works we are offered

extensive surveys of the thought of schools such as the Stoics and Epicureans, and philosophers such as Carneades and Antiochus of Ascalon, on some of the major areas of philosophical, political and religious thought. Cicero's status as a reliable reporter and presenter of such views was disputed and questioned for a long time, mainly due to unfair attempts to compare him with Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, whose one 'characteristic' which he shares with them – as a result of the vagaries of our transmission – is that many of his philosophical works have also reached us in a complete form. It has been claimed that this is due more to Cicero's standing as an orator, a rhetor, and an active political figure than to his philosophical acumen and discernment. More recently, however, scholars have become more appreciative of his ability to act as a communicator and purveyor of other people's philosophical views and arguments. Very few scholars would regard him as a philosopher in his own right – nor did he ever claim to be one. But more and more students of his philosophical writings have come to realize how close his summaries of the philosophical ideas of Stoics, Epicureans and Peripatetics are to the remains of the Greek sources. And all these works were produced in the time he could spare from a busy and active public life.

One major idea shared by both Plato he philosopher and Cicero the statesman is their emphasis on philosophy as an essential basis for proper political life. Every first-year student used to be aware of 'Socrates'' statement in Plato's *Republic* 5 that "until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy ... cities will never have rest from their evils." One can guess that Cicero may, on some occasions, have regarded himself as approaching that Socratic ideal: modesty was not always one of his virtues. But readers of the prefaces to his philosophical works will remember his recurrent statements about the need they came to fill by offering the Roman reader – for the first time – the best of what was available to his Greek counterpart in his contemporary philosophical literature. This promise he certainly fulfilled, with a vengeance. The history of 'philosophy speaking Latin' shows the major role of Cicero the philosophical author in developing a Latin philosophical language and in creating a Western philosophical tradition.

The essays gathered into this volume are far from being an attempt to provide the reader with a consistent and complete picture of either Plato or Cicero the philosopher. They are studies written over a long period, and answering various needs. Some of them deal with a general methodical and historical issue, such as Plato's afterlife in various countries and periods, or Cicero's stratagems as a conveyor in Latin of Greek ideas. Some arise from

discussions of a certain passage or passages in one of Plato's or Cicero's writings, but continue in the manner of what, in past generations, was known as *adversaria.* None of these articles is meant for 'the general reader' with no philological or philosophical background whatsoever. But various readers who have some background preparation will find various articles more or less appealing to their own interests and suitable to their own pursuits. This is how it should be. I hope that different types of readers will get each his larger or smaller share out of these articles, which are the result of many years of living in the shadows of two great men of the past whose relevance to all things human has never faded, and of sharing our study of their writings and influence with generations of scholars on whose shoulders we have attempted to stand.

The idea of collecting articles I have publisher over the years into a book or books was suggested to me many times by Amos Edelheit. He and Ivor Ludlam have helped me in the choice and preparation of my previous volume, *Classics and Classicists*, published by Cambridge Scholars Publishers in 2020, and in my work on collecting the articles included in the present volume and preparing them for print. I dedicate the book to them.

John Glucker

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SECTION 1: *PLATONICA*

ARTICLES

1. "Plato in England, the Nineteenth Century and After", in H. Funke (ed.), *Utopie und Tradition*, *Platon's Lehre vom Staat in der Moderne*, Würzburg1987 : 149-210.

With the editor's and publishers' permission.

2. "A Charitable Interpretation: Meletus as Idea in Plato's *Euthyphro*", *Classical Outlook*, 76.2, 1999: 49-51 (with I. Ludlam

With the co-author's and the editor's permission.

3. Mortal Combat: Plato, *Critias* 107b4", *Elenchos* XXXV, fasc. 1, 2014: 149-156.

With the editor's permission.

4. "Plato's Ion: Difficulties and Contardictions", in Philosophia 47,4, 2019, pp. 943-958.

With the present publishers' permission, Springer Nature.

5. "Ποιὲς ἀπόψεις ἐκπροσωποῦν ὁ Γλαύκων καὶ ὁ Ἀδείμαντος", Ἑλληνικὴ φιλοσοφικὴ ἑταιρεία, *Περὶ Δικαιοσύνης,* Athens 1989: 188-192 (in Greek. English Summary).

With the permission of the editor, Professor Konstantine Budouris.

6. "Plato in the Academy: Some Cautious Reflections", in Paul Kalligas, Chloe Balla, Effie Baziotopoulou-Valavani, Vassilis Karasmanis (eds.), *Plato's Academy, Its Workings and its History*, Cambridge 2020, pp. 89-107.

Reprinted with permission of the publishers.

7. "A Platonic Cento in Cicero", *Phronesis* XLIV,1, 1989: 30-44.

With the permission of the editor of *Phronesis*.

8. "Images of Plato in Late Antiquity", in Sabetai Unguru (ed.), *Physics, Cosmology and Astronomy, 1300-1700*, Dordrecht and London (*Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 126) 1991: 3-18.

With the editor's permission.

9. "The Two Platos of Victorian Britain", in Keimpe A. Algra, Pieter W. van der Horst, David T. Runia (eds.), *Polyhistor, Studies in the History and Historiography of Ancient Philosophy, Presented to Jaap Mansfeld*, Leiden 1996: 385-406.

With the editors' permission.

10. "Plato in Eretz-Israel", in Yosef Z. Liebersohn, John Glucker and Ivor Ludlam (eds.), *Plato and His Legacy*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2021, pp. VI-X.

With my own permission as editor, and with my co-editors' permission :

11. "Πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα – Sources and Credibility of *De Stoicorum Repugnantiis* 8", *Illinois Classical Studies* XIII: 473-489.

Reprint allowed under SUBMISSION GUIDELINES of Illinois Classical Studies, subject to acknowledgement.

12. Theophrastus, the Academy, and the Athenian Philosophical Atmosphere", in Johannes M. Van Ophuijsen and Marlein van Raalte (eds.), *Theophrastus, reappraising the Sources* (Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities VIII), New Brunswick and London: 299-316.

With the editors' and publishers' permission.

REVIEWS

13. Review of S.A. Beg, *Plato's Esoteric Logic of Dialogue-Writing. A New Exegesis of his Seventh Epistle*, *Philosophia* 15, 1985: 199-201.

With the publishers'permission, Springer Nature.

14. Review of Julius Moravcsik and Philip Temko (eds.), *Plato on Beauty, Wisdom and the Arts*, *Classical Review* XXXVII, 1987: 210-213.

With the editor's permission.

15. Review of Kent F. Moors, *Platonic Myth*, *Classical Review* XXXVII, 1987: 310-311.

With the editor's permission.

16. Review of Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *Plato's Socrates*, Oxfod-New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. xiv + 240 pp.

Scripta Classica Israelica XVI, 1997: 264-271.
With the editors' permission.

17. Review of Harold Tarrant, *Thrasyllan Platonism, Scripta Classica Israelica* XVI, 1997: 271-278.

With the editors' permission.

18. Review of Roslyn Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied: An Analysis of Plato's Crito, Classical Outlook* 76, 1999: 117-118.

With the editor's permission.

19. Review of Gretchen Reydams-Schils, *Demiurge and Providence Stoic and Platonic Reading of Plato's Timaeus, Scripta Classica Israelica* XX, 2001: 288-293.

With the editors' permission.

20. "Meta-Platonism" (Review article of Samuel Scolnicov, *Idea and Method: 33 Platonic Studies, Magnes*, 2008 [in Hebrew]), *Katharsis* 19, 2013: VI-X. {Add a note: This is an extended English summary of a Hebrew review article published in the same volume, pp. 18-42.}

With the permission of the editor, Professor Doron Mendels.

SECTION 2: *CICERONIANA*

ARTICLES

21. "Chapter and Verse in Cicero", *Grazer Beiträge* 11, 1984: 103-112.

With permission of the editor.

22. "Cicero's Philosophical Affiliations", in *The Question of "Eclecticism"*, ed. J. Dillon and A. A. Long, *California,* 1988: 34-69.

With the editors' permission.

23. "Cicero's Philosophical Affiliations Again", *Liverpool Classical Monthly*, 17.9, 1992: 134-138.

The periodical has been defunct since the editor's and 'onlie begetter's', Professor John Pinsent's, death in 1992.

24. "Cicero, Orator 63, 65, 80", *Latomus* XXVII,1968: 904-906.
With the editors' advance permission under the conditions of *Latomus*.

25. "Some Passages in Cicero's Orator", *Giornale Italiano di Filologia* V (XXVI), 2, 1974: 170-179.
With the editors' permission:

26. "*Ciceroniana*", *Eranos* LXVIII, 1970: 231-233.
With the co-editor's permission:

27. "Ἡ ἀπολογία τῆς εὐδαιμονίας· Κικέρων, Περὶ Τελῶν (*De Finibus*), 5.27-33 καὶ συγγενικά", in Κ. Βουδούρης (ed.), Ἑλληνιστικὴ Φιλοσοφία, Athens 1994: 92-105 (in Greek).
With the permission of the editor, Professor Kosntantine Bouodris.

28. "*Probabile, veri simile*, and Related Terms", in J.G.F. Powell (ed.), *Cicero the Philosopher*, Oxford 1995: 115-143.
'© the several contributors 1995'

29. "Socrates in the Academic Books and Other Ciceronian Works", in Brad Inwood and Jaap Mansfeld (eds.), *Assent and Argument in Cicero's Academic Books*, Leiden 1997: 58-88.
With the editors' permission.

30. "The Philonian/Metrodorians: Problems of Method in Ancient Philosophy", *Elenchos* 25, 1), 99-154.
With the editor's permission:

31. Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *Plato's Socrates*, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. xiv + 240 pp. Scripta Classica Israelica XVVI, 264.
See on 19.

32. "Stoics, para-Stoics and anti-Stoics: Methods and Sensibilities", *Philosophia* 3 (1-2), 2003, 221-324.
With the publisher's permission: Springer Nature.

33. "Cicero's Remarks on Translating Philosophical Terms – Some General Problems", in John Glucker, Charles Burnett (eds.), *Greek into Latin from Antiquity until the Nineteenth Century*. Warburg Institute Colloquia, 18. London; Turin: Nino Aragno Editore, 2012: 37-96.
With the co-editors'and the publishers'permission:

34. “Cicero as Translator and Cicero in Translaion”, *Philologica* (Japan) X, 2015: 37-53
With the permission of the President of the journal *Philologica*.

REVIEWS

35. Review of Carlos Lévy, *Cicero Academicus. Recherches sur les Académiques et sur la Philosophie ciceronienne, Gnomon* 68, 1996: 218-221.
With the editor’s permission.

36. Review of Terence J. Hunt, *A Textual History of Cicero’s* Academici Libri, *Scripta Classcia Israelica* XX, 2001: 306-309.
With the author’s permission, conveyed to me in a personal message.
With the editors’ permission – see on 19.

SECTION 1:

PLATONICA

ARTICLES

PLATO IN ENGLAND, THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER

Readers of most of the recent standard accounts of the influence of the Classics on modern civilization, or on English civilization in particular, would hardly fail to receive the general impression of a position of great preeminence occupied by Plato in English life and letters of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. The latest study of this subject, Mr. Richard Jenkyns' *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, devotes a whole long chapter to Plato.[1] In it, we are treated to a guided tour through an impressive gallery of eminent Victorians, each of whom stood in some relation to Plato and his philosophy: Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Jowett, Thomas and Matthew Arnold, John Addington Symonds, William Cory, James and John Stuart Mill, Macaulay, George Eliot, the English Hegelians – and before we have completed our tour, in the course of which we were asked to return to some of the pictures for more detailed observations, we are provided with a lecture within a lecture on Walter Pater's *Plato* and *Platonism*.[2] followed by a brief account of "Plato's decline" in the present century,[3]– heralded by "a diminution of interest in Greek philosophy in general" since the 1930's, and delivered its *coup de grâce* with the two strokes of doom dealt to Plato's popularity by the attacks of Richard Crossman in 1937 and Sir Karl Popper in 1945. We shall have an opportunity to see that Plato's 'fall from grace' in the present century is far from being such a final and decisive fact as presented by Mr. Jenkyns – or from being a fact altogether. But what is more disturbing is the general impression the reader is left with at the end of the chapter. One could, perhaps, describe it as 'the varieties of Victorian as experiences of Plato'. It is essentially an impressionistic picture of a number of Victorian personalities reacting to Plato each in his own way. No general scheme emerges and no historical development is discernible.

---

[1] Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece,* Oxford 1980, Ch.X, *Plato,* pp.227–263.
[2] *Ibid.* pp.253–261.
[3] *Ibid.* pp.261–3.

The late Professor R.M. Ogilvie regards Plato and Thucydides as the two major Classical influences on the Victorians, and his chapter on these two Victorian heroes[4] does much to show the effect of their writings on education in the Public Schools and the Ancient Universities, and on the life and activities of some of the writers, statesmen, civil servants and scholars who passed through the portals of these venerable institutions. But even in his account, the historical outlines are blurred by the author's tendency to consider Oxford, Cambridge and the Public schools as the chief – if not the sole – repositories of Victorian culture. The result is that we have three pages devoted to the cult of organized rowing in these ancient institutions,[5] but only about one page dedicated to the Utilitarians, in which Grote's *Plato* is mentioned in one laudatory sentence – most of which records Harriet Martineau's words of rapture on reading the book.[6] Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley are dealt with cursorily on one page of a previous chapter, but only Coleridge's debt to Plato is acknowledged.[7] No mention is made of Thomas Taylor, and Lewis Campbell's epoch–making work on Plato is briefly chronicled in one clause, in a sentence dealing with some Platonic studies by Balliol men who were pupils of Jowett.[8] The picture is very partial, hardly historical, and highly slanted.

But the history of Plato in nineteenth–century England is hardly just another instance of "the Victorians and..." It is a story of discovery and rediscovery, in the course of which a central Classical author, who was almost entirely lost sight of for a century or more, returns to the stage of English culture in a series of scenes, each different from its predecessor, enacted by a number of prominent individuals of some distinct and particular character and appealing to larger and more diffuse audiences. In what follows, I shall attempt to trace these various stages of Plato's arrival in England in the nineteenth century, building my narrative at each point around some of the more representative ambassadors of Platonism at that stage. My discussions of the late nineteenth century and of the twentieth century will be, in the nature of the case, somewhat less historical, both because of the greater complexity of Platonism in England after Jowett and his generation and because of the lack of sufficient distance and perspective

[4] R.M.Ogilvie, *Latin and Greek, A History of the Influence of the Classics on English Life from 1600 to 1918,* London 1964, "Plato, Thucydides and the Victorians", pp.91–133.
[5] *Ibid.* pp.115–117.
[6] *Ibid.* pp.108–9. Grote's book receives another brief laudatory mention in two very general sentences on p.129.
[7] *Ibid.* p.81.
[8] *Ibid.* p.131.

– but wherever possible, I shall pay special attention even there to some of the more outstanding or representative milestones. Having dealt in a historical order with some of the main stages of Plato's arrival in modern England and with some of the chief protagonists in this drama of discovery and rediscovery, we may find ourselves in a better position, in the later stages of our journey, to appreciate the undiminished vitality of one great Classical author as a moving force in the life and civilization of a great modern country. For our protagonists – or most of them – are not some obscure antiquarians languishing in the twilight of their garrets in the company of their ancient folios and writing *sibi et doctis* but people who stood at the centre of crucial developments in literature, philosophy, education – and occasionally even men who were near enough to the arena of political life.

I have spoken of "discovery and rediscovery", and I have done it advisedly. Nineteenth–century England does not merely rediscover some neglected aspects of Plato and reinterpret some of his writings: it rediscovers Plato's writings *tout court* – but with a vengeance. The reader of the two books I have just mentioned, or of Gilbert Highet's admirable work,[9] may well feel that there was a 'continuity of the Platonic tradition' in England ever since the Renaissance, and that in the nineteenth century Plato simply came to his own and was more widely read and better understood than he had been in the eighteenth century or before. Nothing is further from the truth than this impression. It is true that Plato had never been popular in England before the nineteenth century. Those writers of the English Renaissance and later periods who could be regarded as 'Platonists' were not, as a rule, widely read. Shakespeare, Marlowe and Ben Jonson show no evidence of a close acquaintance with Plato. Sir Philip Sidney quotes much Plato in his learned *Apologie for Poetrie,* but not in his more popular writings. Lyly and his friends were called in their own age "the University Wits"; and the Cambridge Platonists were far more influential on the Continent than among the incipient reading public in England. But at least, until the end of the seventeenth century, some familiarity with Plato – either in the original Greek or in Ficino's Latin translation – was taken for granted in a man of learning. The eighteenth century changed all that.

Professor M.L. Clarke[10] has already noted that Plato was virtually

[9] Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition,* Oxford 1949, pp.411–12; 419–20; 675–6.

[10] M.L.Clarke, *Greek Studies in England 1700–1830,* Cambridge 1945, pp.112–117. On pp.117–122, Clarke deals briefly with Thomas Taylor and with Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley – without, however, connecting Taylor's work with the Romantics.

unknown – except at second–hand or superficially – to most educated Englishmen in the eighteenth century. The few exceptions only confirm the rule. Thomas Gray "lost all patience when he talked of the neglect of his favourite author at the Universities", and wrote notes for his own private edification on some of the dialogues;[11] and William Cowper was interested in Plato and his Neoplatonic commentators.[12] But Gray and Cowper, however central they may have been to the development of eighteenth–century poetry, were lonely figures who did not fit into the general climate of opinion of their age. James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, was indeed a votary of Plato, Aristotle and the Neoplatonists,[13] and in the eighteenth century, Monboddo had some reputation – but it was mostly a reputation for learned eccentricity. As for James Harris of Salisbury[14] or Ebennezer MacFaite[15] – no one would seriously claim that they represent popular eighteenth–century attitudes: their very names are now remembered only by the expert. Far more representative of what the average educated reader was expected to know and think of Plato is the much–quoted passage of Alexander Pope:

> "Go soar with Plato to th' empyreal sphere,
> To the first good, first perfect and first fair;
> Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod,
> And quitting sense call imitating God."
>
> (*Essay on Man,* II, 23–26),[16]

[11] Clarke (note 10), pp.112; 120; with references.
[12] George Mills Harper, *The Neoplatonism of William Blake,* Chapel Hill 1961 (henceforth: "Harper, *Blake*"), p.265.
[13] Clarke (note 10 above), pp.116–117.
[14] Clarke, *ibid.* pp.115–116.
[15] Harper, *Blake* pp.8–9.
[16] Both Pattison (Pope, *Essay on Man,* edited by Mark Pattison, B.D., Oxford 1899, pp.90–91) and Mack (Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man,* edited by Manfred Mack, London 1950, pp.57–58, notes on 23–6 and 26) do not supply any exact Platonic references. The first two lines are obviously – in the last resort – a reference to *Phaedrus* 246d–e, perhaps with τὸ παντελῶς ὄν of *Republic* V, 477a2, thrown in. As to the last line of our quotation, despite its ascription to Plato's *followers,* it is a clear echo of *Theaetetus* 176b1–2: φυγὴ δε ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν. In the wider context of the dialogue, this "flight" is clearly a flight from the phenomena of this world, which are perceived by the senses. Pope, needless to say, was unlikely to have remembered his Plato, even if he had read *Phaedrus, Republic* and *Theaetetus,* and he most probably obtained his materials for this caricature from some more accessible contemporary sources. Professor Mack's notes supply the more general background and atmosphere. Further research may detect more precise sources.

The Plato caricatured here by Pope is still essentially the other–worldly philosopher of the Neoplatonic tradition of the Renaissance. But in the last line we can discern both the subtlety of Pope's craftsmanship and the spirit of the *siècle des lumières.* For Plato and his followers, the ideal of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ is achieved, among other things, by abandoning as far as possible the world of *sense–perception,* of αἴσθησις. For Pope and his century, this has become plainly "quitting *sense*" – and for the eighteenth century, philosophy must, first and foremost, 'make sense'. (The Scottish 'philosophers of common–sense' merely made use of a concept which had been available for some time and was now in fashion). For the philosophically–minded, the ancient philosopher whose writings 'made sense' was not Plato, not even Aristotle – but Cicero. *Les Romains* – wrote Voltaire – *ont leur Cicéron, qui seul vaut peut–être tous les philosophes de la Grèce.*[17] This was only natural in a century most of whose writers and men of education regarded the ancient Romans as more civilized than the *Graeculi* and found their literature more congenial to their own world–picture and more appealing to their own sensibilities.

But the eighteenth century was not just – or chiefly – the century of Roman common sense or of Cicero.[18] By this time, people no longer chose their world–view to suit the Classical authors who appealed to them: rather, they tended to read the Classical authors who supported prevalent views or, as in the case of Lord Monboddo, their own eccentric views. In the history of ideas, the eighteenth century celebrates the triumph of the new English philosophy. Voltaire's *Lettres sur l'Angleterre* of 1733 spread the gospel of English good sense, English tolerance – and the philosophy of Locke and Newton – on the Continent, and the basic philosophical and scientific orientation of most French *philosophes* was that of Baconian and Newtonian science and of the empirical and associationist psychology of Locke and Hartley. When David Hume came to France on his second visit, he was feasted by Voltaire and Rousseau and treated as a celebrity. Later on in the century – only a few years after Hume's death in 1776 – it was a

[17] Voltaire, *Dictionnaire Philosophique,* s.v. PHILOSOPHIE. For the dominant position of Cicero in the English Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries and the French Enlightenment of the 18th, see Tadeusz Zielinski, *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte,* 3. Aufl., Leipzig 1912, pp.210–257.

[18] Ogilvie (note 4 above), pp.34–73 ("Horace and the Eighteenth Century") considers Horace as the most influential Classical author in that century. Beside the simplification involved in having one or two 'dominant authors' for each period, one could argue (and adduce enough evidence) for Juvenal and Cicero as equally popular at the time, both in England and on the Continent. Tacitus, too, was far from being neglected, and one could make a good case for Euripides among readers of Greek.

reading of his *Treatise on Human Nature,* written during his first sojourn in France in 1734–37, which awakened Immanuel Kant – until then a follower of Wolf and Baumgarten (and thus, at one remove, of Leibniz, ridiculed in the name of "sense" in Voltaire's *Candide)* – from his famous "dogmatic slumbers", and gave the first impetus to his Critical Philosophy. Much of the work of developing and popularizing the new scientific and philosophical ideas was accomplished by the *philosophes, idéologues* and *encyclopédistes* in France – but the spirit was not that of Descartes, Malebranche or Leibniz, but of Bacon, Locke, Newton, Hartley, Hume, and minor British luminaries of the last two centuries, many of whom – like Lord Shaftesbury and Baron Herbert of Cherbury – are remembered today, by one of those ironies of history, mainly for their influence on French literature and thought.

In such an atmosphere, one can still understand why some of the leading spirits of the century admired Socrates, seeing in him the open–minded, critical, sceptical martyr of religious fanaticism and ignorant persecution.[19] But Plato, the Divine Plato, identified by much of the earlier modern tradition with the mysticism of Plotinus and Porphyry, the magic of Iamblichus and the theurgy of Proclus, could hardly be congenial to the eighteenth–century mind. Nor could the Christian compromise purveyed by the Cambridge Platonists appeal to the sensibilities of what was essentially an anti–Christian century. It is no accident that "from 1602–1804 only one complete edition of Plato, an Italian edition, appeared in any modern language, and only one Greek edition, the Bipont ten–volume complete text with a Latin translation (1781–87)."[20] Plato was clearly not in his element in the *siècle des lumières.* Before he could be allowed on the stage once more, a change of mood and intellectual scenery had to take place: either a reaction, or rebellion, against the narrow, excessive and more than a little smug (despite Voltaire's continuous strictures on other people's optimism) common–sense rationalism of the eighteenth century; or a separation between Plato and his Neoplatonic interpreters, and an emphasis on the more critical and dialectical side of the Platonic dialogue; or a new image of Plato – mainly as a teacher of important moral and political precepts or as a great, inspiring poet and artist – or, finally, an endeavour by highly–trained Classical and philosophical scholars to approach his writings with all the required humility of a patient and exact listener and with all the respect due to one of the greatest philosophers that ever lived, but with the

[19] Raymond Trousson, *Socrate devant Voltaire, Diderot et Rousseau, la conscience en face du mythe,* Paris 1967.
[20] Harper, *Blake* p.55 and note 23 on p.289, citing Evans (note 24 below).

smallest possible degree of dogmatism, party spirit, hostility or servitude. What is fascinating about the various returns of Plato to England in the nineteenth century and after is that all these different alternatives are realized in successive stages and that some, at least, of these stages represent one alternative each, almost in its pure form.

Much of English poetry at the turn of the century was a rebellion against the *siècle des lumières* and what it stood for, and prominent in this literary rebellion are the Romantic poets and Blake. Their espousal of a full, proper expression of feelings as against the clever, formal, didactic and often somewhat cynical tendencies of much of 'Augustan' literature, and their preoccupation with nature as a revelation of something far more profound and fundamentally human than anything provided by city life, with the growing urban civilization of the Industrial Revolution encroaching more and more on nature in the countryside and nature in man – all this is commonplace now, but was new and revolutionary when this kind of poetry was first written. The Romantics needed no ancient poets or philosophers to make them create what they created and change the course and orientation of English poetry and English intellectual life. But their revolt against the 'Augustan' rationalism of their predecessors made it easier for them to rediscover and reappreciate some neglected aspects of Greek civilization. Aeschylus, an author generally passed over in the eighteenth century in favour of the more clever and "rational" Euripides, was coming to his own, and his influence on the Romantics is by no means restricted to Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound:* the new climate of opinion made more people more prepared to absorb and appreciate his elemental force and larger–than–life conception of life.[21] In this new and less "rationalistic" intellectual climate,

[21] See the materials presented and discussed by Jenkyns (note 1 above), Ch.V, *Tragedy,* pp.87–112. The Aeschylean revival of the turn of the century is not restricted to England alone. Between Thomas Stanley's edition of Aeschylus of 1663 and the various editions by Gottfried Hermann, starting with his *Eumenides* of 1799, no important edition of Aeschylus was published. Porson and Heath produced emendations to Aeschylus (as well as to the other tragedians), but Porson edited Euripides, and his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture Was on Sophocles and Euripides. On the state of Aeschylean scholarship in the eighteenth century, see Fraenkel's *Agamemnon,* Vol.I, pp.44–47. Goethe's *Prometheus* of 1773 antedates by a whole generation the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798, and is symbolic of the difference in the rediscovery of Greece between the two literatures, the German side of which has been so beautifully described by E.M. Butler in *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany,* Cambridge 1935. In Germany, the rediscovery of Greece began with Winckelmann, while in England one had to wait until the Romantics came. Aeschylus, still largely neglected by Winckelmann and Lessing, was rediscovered by Goethe and his generation. A study of the process of the rediscovery of

Plato – both the dramatist and author of inspiring myths and the philosopher whose whole approach to the world was the antithesis of 'common–sense' in all its various meanings – could be appreciated again. It is no longer surprising these days to be told that original and revolutionary poets like Wordsworth, Shelley and Coleridge were steeped in Plato and highly influenced by his views of nature and reality. Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality* presupposes – as we all know now – Plato's theories of the immortality of the soul and of "reminiscence" (ἀνάμνησις). Shelley's poetry is full of Platonic ideas and reminiscences almost on every page. One only has to quote a few lines from that oft–quoted passage, *Adonais* XXXIX:

> "Peace! Peace! he is not dead, he does not sleep–
> He has awakened from the dream of life –
> 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
> With phantoms an unprofitable strife...
> ... *We* decay
> Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
> Convulse us and consume us day by day,
> And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living
> clay."

This is pure Plato: death is the real life of the soul; the phenomena of this world are visions and phantoms; the body is a corpse, or the living grave of the soul – almost like the Pythagorean σῶμα σῆμα of *Gorgias* 493a2–3. But even Keats'

> "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty' – that is all
> We know on earth and all we need to know."

ending his *On a Grecian Urn*; or the opening lines of his *Endymion*:

> "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
> Its loveliness increases; it can never
> Pass into nothingness: but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."

– however much they dilute and distort Platonic ideas of the relation between truth and beauty (Shelley's *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* is far

---

Aeschylus, both by poets and scholars, as a sign of change in the intellectual climate of Europe, would be worth the time spent on it.

nearer the Platonic – and Plotinian – mark) and of the eternity of the Beautiful (but also of any other Idea: the Good, the Just, the Similar, the Different, and the like) – would have been not only unthinkable in the poetry of the 'Augustan' age: they could only be written by someone who has read some Plato, and who could assume some familiarity with some Platonic themes – at least on a popular level – in some of his readers. 'Platonizing' passages of this kind from Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley could be easily multiplied. I shall not multiply them, since it is not my purpose to offer yet another anthology of Platonic purple–passage. In any case, most of the relevant passages will be easily found in the modern literature I shall cite in my notes.

That all the great Romantic poets, with the possible exception of Byron,[22] knew their Plato and made use of him is now universally acknowledged. Shelley's Platonism is ubiquitous, and was well known in his lifetime. It has been investigated in greater detail more recently by Professor James A. Notopoulos.[23] Coleridge, as usual, is the great eclectic,

---

[22] Bernard Blackstone, *Byron,* a *Survey,* London 1975, p.182: "Maps of Wordsworth's, Coleridge's, Shelley's, even Keats's metaphysical journeys have been drawn up, beginning with Godwin or Hartley and ending with Plato and Berkeley; simplifications, no doubt, of much more complex patterns, but with enough veracity to make them useful as pointers. No such route maps can be drawn up for Byron. "I am myself alone." What that self is has to be discovered not in progression, but in endless experiment from a centre which, while not fixed, is immutable, persistent." Since we owe much of what we know of Keats' 'metaphysical journey' and of his Platonism to Professor Blackstone, such a negative statement of his should carry all the weight of an expert opinion. Byron's background and the circles in which he moved in England are very different from those of the other Romantics. So also is much in his character, temperament, orientations and interests. He is far more concerned with concrete history, concrete beauty and the concrete realization of ideas than with intellectual beauty, the idea of liberty or Platonic love. His Greece is no abstract idea or a perennial civilization, but a concrete Mediterranean country which should be freed from Turkish yoke because its ancestors have taught us what freedom is – a country for which he fights in person and dies. Of all the Romantics, he is the least metaphysical and the most 'real' in a very un–Platonic sense – in some ways, he is almost an Elizabethan. I wonder if this is one reason for his great popularity on the Continent, beginning still in his lifetime, not very long after the German discovery of Shakespeare. Goethe who saw in Byron the greatest English poet since Shakespeare, knew his shortcomings as well: "Aber Lord Byron ist nur groß, wenn er dichtet; sobald er reflektiert, ist er ein Kind." (Eckermann, 1825, 12).

[23] James A. Notopoulos, *The Platonism of Shelley. A Study in Platonism and the Poetic Mind,* New York 1969. Apart from detailed studies of Shelley's direct and indirect knowledge of Plato and Platonism and of Platonic influences in his prose