

# Lewis Campbell's Studies on Plato and their Philosophical Significance

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# Lewis Campbell's Studies on Plato and their Philosophical Significance\*

Tomasz Mróz

Lewis Campbell (1830-1908)<sup>1</sup> was a recognized Scottish classical scholar and historian of philosophy, whose most fruitful years of study on Plato's dialogues were spent at St Andrews University (1863-1894). Born in Edinburgh, Campbell started his education at Edinburgh Academy, then studied at Glasgow University, before continuing his studies in Oxford, where he met Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893), who exerted a lasting influence on Campbell's studies, and whose papers Campbell posthumously edited. In 1863 he moved to St Andrews, where he was appointed professor of Greek, and where he remained for three decades, conducting research in Classics, studying great Greek authors, especially Plato and Sophocles, and editing their texts. Meanwhile in 1875 he received an honorary LLD from Glasgow University. Campbell's student and assistant in St Andrews, who eventually succeeded him there as professor of Greek, was John Burnet, famous historian of Greek philosophy and editor of Plato's dialogues. According to historians of Greek philosophy, Campbell's most significant achievement was his contribution to the debate on the stylistic features of Plato's late dialogues. He invented a philological method to solve the riddle of the chronology of Plato's dialogues. Although on the surface, his method of language statistics appears to be a purely philological investigation and the chronological order of Plato's dialogues a mere historical question, both were to have philosophical consequences. Campbell's method, its application and its results provided instructive chronological guidelines for historians of philosophy to interpret Plato's evolution within the framework established for the order of the dialogues. The aim of the present paper is to abstract from Campbell's detailed philological investigations those philosophical remarks and conclusions which were significant for interpreters of Plato and contributed to the evolutionist view on Plato. The focus is on his editions of the *Theaetetus* (two editions), *Sophist* and *Politicus*.

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\* Language editing of this paper was done by Una Maclean-Hańćkowiak.

<sup>1</sup> The most comprehensive general account of Campbell's life and works can be found in a very informative paper by Elizabeth M. Craik (Craik 1996).

The chronological order of Plato's dialogues is certainly not a purely philological or historical issue, but is essential for the interpretation of Plato's philosophical development. Establishing the chronological order of the dialogues could be helpful in determining whether Plato, after some unsuccessful dialectical attempts in *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*, arrived at the mystical visions of *Symposium*; or perhaps the reverse: starting with enthusiastic mysticism and ending up with dry and dull dialectical research in his later years. This was one of the core chronological problems regarding Plato's dialogues at the time when Campbell was publishing his works.

Campbell's first important work on Plato was his edition of the *Theaetetus*. Although it lacked explicit chronological investigations and conclusions, it was here that Campbell expressed an important premise on which the chronological investigations themselves were founded. According to Campbell, Plato's work was the crowning achievement of Greek philosophical life of the time, and he synthesized the results of all previous thinkers. This synthesis did not, however, form any system, for Plato's works did not expound one unaltered philosophical view. "The philosophy of Plato – says Campbell – is one long dialogue, in which Socrates (its moving centre) becomes the pupil of each school, and teaches where he seems to learn".<sup>2</sup> Plato's Socrates wears the gowns of various philosophical schools and while pretending to be taught by them, he himself taught by refuting them. Such an idealized image of Plato's Socrates is quite tempting, and Campbell's opinion appears to hold true for many of the dialogues. It would be unnecessary to point out any counterexamples at this juncture, for what is important here is that there is one substantial premise in this *Introduction* – Campbell clearly states: Platonism as a system does not exist. The Scottish researcher therefore directly and consciously called into question the views of the then predominant Plato scholar and translator, Friedrich Schleiermacher, who translated and commented on almost all of Plato's dialogues in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In his general introduction to the entire *corpus Platonicum*, Schleiermacher claimed that Plato's first dialogue was *Phaedrus*, in which the ideas are presented with the passion of the first love. Moreover, on the pages of this first-born child of Plato, in this initial philosophical and literary product, all the features of the opinions from the later dialogues can be found. They

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<sup>2</sup> Campbell (1861) IX.

appeared there in an undeveloped form, in germ, and were subsequently presented in an order resulting from the necessary succession of the teaching contents. What was at first expressed by myth, had to be later taught in dialectical form.<sup>3</sup>

Campbell's premise that Plato's views were not static but changed over time raises a question concerning the possible direction in which Plato's thoughts were evolving. This question was not answered by Campbell in the introduction to the *Theaetetus*, nor did he use words like 'evolution' or 'development' at this stage. By accepting the idea of development, one accepts the view that the earlier is undeveloped, that it is somehow worse than the later. Campbell, however, did not make such evaluations. What he said directly was that Plato's mind was growing and his views altered over time as his philosophical dialogue lasted for about five decades.

In the introduction to the *Theaetetus* the reader can find some remarks on the 'Megarian' character of the dialogue. Socrates is wearing his Megarian gown here, for the dialectical method is applied, but Campbell concludes that there are no firm grounds to assume that Plato spent a great deal of time in Megara as a refugee after Socrates' death.<sup>4</sup> Though not expressed explicitly by Campbell at that time, the claim that the *Theaetetus* was written in Megara should therefore be brought into question. The philosophical material in the dialogue seems to provide evidence that Plato did spend some time in Megara, but there is not sufficient evidence to assume that a dialogue as mature as the *Theaetetus* was written there. It must have required years or even decades for the philosopher to develop his ideas. Campbell regarded the earliest possible period for the dialogue to have been written as a few years after 390 BC. The *Sophist* and *Politicus* need not have been written immediately after the *Theaetetus*, even though they formed a trilogy (or tetralogy if the unwritten *Philosopher* is considered). Moreover, Campbell did not refute the assumption that the essential, philosophical part of the dialogue was of an earlier date than its "preface"<sup>5</sup>.

Campbell also provided a short outline of the history of pre-Platonic philosophy, the purpose of which was to include a survey of the views reflecting "the phases of thought by which his [=Plato's] mind had

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<sup>3</sup> Cf.: Kobusch (1997), Lamm (2000).

<sup>4</sup> Campbell (1861) XV.

<sup>5</sup> Campbell (1861) LXXIV.

been attracted or repelled, and with some of which it had been perhaps almost identified; but to each of which he could now [=while writing the *Theaetetus*] assign its due place and value in the progress of the mind towards true ideas, or, to use his own image, in its conversion out of the dark cave and prison of sense to mount upwards towards the world of Being”.<sup>6</sup> Plato’s work, then, marks a point of progress in the history of Greek philosophy, and at the same time his own thoughts were also progressing since he – at different stages of his philosophical investigations – was able to reassess more critically the results of his predecessors. In his summary of the dialogue, Campbell showed himself to be a devoted Plato admirer: “Although it would be too much to say that he [=Plato] possessed the idea of the History of Philosophy in the modern sense, he approaches more nearly to it than any ancient writer except Aristotle. [...] Each theory, though negated, is not annihilated, it has a real importance assigned to it as a stage in the progress of the human intellect”.<sup>7</sup>

When the 19<sup>th</sup> century dispute on the chronological order of Plato’s dialogues is examined, it appears that Campbell’s *Introduction* has been overlooked. Admittedly, it does not contain any chronological remarks, but the views on the lack of system and lack of unity in Plato’s philosophy form an essential basis for the later chronological research and constitute a broader philosophical framework for Campbell’s subsequent detailed philological investigations. At the time of writing the *Introduction* to the *Theaetetus*, Campbell was, however, not greatly concerned with the question of chronology, “towards which little progress has been made”,<sup>8</sup> as he said, but in his attempt towards a comparative study of the *Theaetetus* and Plato’s other dialogues, a careful reader can find some chronological hints. In contrast to Scheleiermacher, Campbell seems to have preferred to consider the *Theaetetus* as closer to the *Sophist*, and *Philebus*, and to the later books of the *Republic*, and to the later dialogues in general rather than to the *Gorgias*. Campbell considered the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* as complementary, and along with the *Politicus*, they provide evidence of Plato’s “dialectical growth”.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Campbell (1861) LV.

<sup>7</sup> Campbell (1861) LV-LVI.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell (1861) LXIII.

<sup>9</sup> Campbell (1861) LXVI.

If Plato's dialectics was growing and his thoughts were developing, is there any specific and determined doctrine which could be labelled 'Platonism'? Once aware of Campbell's anti-systematic approach to Plato's dialogues, we should not be surprised to read that, in Campbell's view, thanks to a comparative study of the dialogues: "we become more cautious in speaking of 'Plato's view' of this or that point".<sup>10</sup> The following corresponding remarks on the theory of ideas confirm Campbell's approach to Plato: "It has been common to speak of the Ideas of Plato as if they were the beginning and the end of his philosophy; not only its consummation, but its foundation. But to see them as they were presented to him, we must learn to place ourselves behind them, and to regard them as a goal aimed at, but hardly reached. In the *Theaetetus* he traces some of the steps by which he had arrived so far. He leads us upwards from the dark valley of sense, into which however some light from the upper region is allowed to penetrate, and makes us feel the difficulty of the ascent. We are not lifted at once to the ideal height, from which we can look down upon the world (*Sophist*, p. 216, *καθορῶντες ὑπόθευ τὸν κάτω βίον*): every inch of advance is disputed, and we have the firm ground of experience beneath our feet".<sup>11</sup> Therefore the famous "theory of Ideas" or "theory of Forms", which has sometimes been referred to as synonymous with Platonism, can be considered only *in statu nascendi*; it has to be seen as a dynamic theory stemming from the nature of the dialogic medium in which the ideas are presented by Plato.

To conclude our analysis of the *Introduction*, let us turn to the final pages, where Campbell attempts to compare ancient and modern philosophies, their different starting points, and common expressions adopted by modern philosophy but taking on new meanings. The classics scholar believes that ancient philosophy was concerned with objective issues, *i.e.*: nature, eternal ideas, whereas modern philosophy starts with a subjective doubting consciousness. Given this belief Campbell argues that the *Theaetetus* appears to be very modern in character. The theory of perception and sensations is to be found there, as well as the doctrine of motion; the subjectivity of Protagorean philosophical views and religious criticism could be also highlighted: "Protagoras may [...] be regarded as the type of a class, – the utilitarian or common sense sceptics, – of which Hume is in modern

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<sup>10</sup> Campbell (1861) LXIII.

<sup>11</sup> Campbell (1861) LXVIII.

times perhaps the most brilliant example”.<sup>12</sup> Campbell also compared the psychological considerations of the *Theaetetus* to Locke’s *Essay on the Human Understanding*. Another feature is the tendency towards detailed logical analysis. All of these common points of ancient and modern philosophies could be disputed, because philosophy in general considers the origins of knowledge, is critical towards religious beliefs, and its inquiry applies logical instruments. Nevertheless, the absence of strong metaphysical tendencies, the cosmological considerations or the philosophy of nature from the pages of the *Theaetetus* provide some justification for Campbell’s remarks. In the final sentence of the *Introduction* Campbell expresses his grief that modern philosophy has become a remote reflection of its ancient origin: “This Attic prime of intellectual manhood is beautiful to contemplate, even if philosophy may not hope from such fountains to renew her youth”.<sup>13</sup>

Six years after the *Theaetetus*, Campbell’s editions of two subsequent dialogues, the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, appeared in print in one volume. His considerations on the chronology of Plato’s works were refined, and his research was broadened within the framework developed earlier. The *Sophist* and *Politicus* closed the trilogy, dialogues which were intensely speculative in form, yet dealt with real and even practical matters. Both dialogues were polemical, because “Plato saw a twofold counterfeit of his ideal educator and governor in the professors of wisdom and the public men of his time. The one corrupted inquiry with controversy, the other spoiled politics in faction”.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, neither of the dialogues dealt with abstract notions, justice, knowledge, piety etc., but with real figures, the typical sophists and statesmen that Plato observed in Athens and whose behaviour was a far cry from his ideas on teaching and governing.

Among Campbell’s list of features common to both dialogues there is one of special importance for the current issue: “Both dialogues are pervaded, or rather haunted, by the idea of scientific method. Every inquiry, even that concerning Government, is held to be important, chiefly as an exercise by which the dialectical faculty may be improved”.<sup>15</sup> The chief method applied in both dialogues is classification, διαίρεσις. In contrast to modern philosophers, or modern

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<sup>12</sup> Campbell (1861) LXXXIV.

<sup>13</sup> Campbell (1861) LXXXVII.

<sup>14</sup> Campbell (1867) I.

<sup>15</sup> Campbell (1867) VI.

logicians, Plato “never imagines a form of thinking as separable from thought. His dialectic is not a dead organon, but an inspiration, a divine gift, which may be imperfectly described in words, and by oral teaching may be awakened and stimulated in the philosophic nature, but cannot be once for all embodied in a book of aphorisms or a Chrestomathy”.<sup>16</sup> This confirmed the dynamic character of Plato’s philosophy.

Apart from features of a philosophical nature, Campbell emphasizes the “retirement of Socrates”,<sup>17</sup> and the prevailing didactic tone of the conversation, in contrast to the free discussions and artistic lightness of the earlier dialogues. The language has also evolved. The participants in the conversation follow certain rules, which they appear to have been acquainted with; the atmosphere of a spontaneous, lively chat on the Athenian streets, in Agora, is absent from the *Sophist*. Another striking mark of Plato’s style, which was hardly ever present in the Socratic dialogues, is his peculiar terminology. While in the early dialogues the most philosophically advanced terms may be reduced roughly to εἶδος and ἰδέα, with occasional διαλεκτική, in the later dialogues, in the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist* and others, well-defined terms can be found, as well as familiar words with new, more precise meanings. Campbell produced a detailed list of words which were peculiar to the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, and appeared nowhere else, except in the *Laws* and sparsely in the remaining works of Plato. In short: the new methods of Plato’s late philosophical research required new technical instruments, namely new words and new meanings for familiar ones.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from the lists, Campbell classified the new phenomena of Plato’s style into five groups of characteristic facts: “1) An extreme minuteness of distinction, giving rise to new compounds and derivatives, and to the employment of old words with new shades of meaning. 2) An affectation of variety, leading to different modes of expressing the same thing. 3) Combined with these a learned fulness of diction, commanding the resources of the written as well as the spoken language, and moulding old words to the expression of new ideas: e.g. *νυμφευτής*, ‘one who brings together with marriage’; *ἀγράμματος*,

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<sup>16</sup> Campbell (1867) XI.

<sup>17</sup> Campbell (1867) XIX.

<sup>18</sup> An essential exposition of the statistical aspect of Campbell’s research can be found in Brandwood (1990) 3-8.



‘unwritten’; ἄστροφος, ‘without twisting’. 4) The frequent and familiar use of words denoting physical and mathematical as well as ethical conceptions. To which may be added 5) the tendency to fix in language some of the leading generalizations of philosophy”.<sup>19</sup> Plato must then have adapted his language to accommodate new philosophical purposes.

It is not necessary to quote Campbell’s listings extensively, but some numbers may be useful to highlight the peculiar character of Plato’s late style. In the 108 pages of the Stephani edition of the *Sophist* and *Politicus* Campbell counted 270 words not found elsewhere in Plato and upwards of 90 not found in other Greek writers. Other late dialogues, namely the *Timaeus*, *Critias* and *Laws* (covering 436 pages of the Stephani edition), contain 1492 words occurring nowhere else in Plato, of which 427 appear in the *Timaeus* and *Critias* only. In the *Laws* Campbell counted nearly one thousand words unique to this dialogue only. The Scottish philologist was aware of the relation between the subject and the vocabulary of the dialogues, but his calculations proved that even the *Sophist*, in which physical and ethical terms are poorly represented, shares more vocabulary with the *Timaeus*, *Critias* and *Laws*, than does the *Republic*. The dialogues whose vocabulary was closest and which were most stylistically similar to the *Timaeus*, *Critias* and *Laws* were then, according to Campbell’s calculations, the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, *Phaedrus*, and the *Republic*. The position of *Parmenides* was quite remote: it was placed among the Socratic dialogues. The surprisingly late position of the *Phaedrus* and early position of *Parmenides* stemmed from their exceptional stylistic character. Campbell’s lexical calculations were based on *Lexicon Platonicum* by Friedrich Ast, and though the lexicon itself was far from being completely accurate, Campbell checked it carefully.

Vocabulary was not the only stylistic feature investigated by Campbell. He researched grammatical peculiarities, redundancies and sentence rhythm as well, and concluded: “They [=sentences in the late writings of Plato] have less of a spontaneous movement of conversation, and in the *Politicus* especially are often more redundant and complicated. While the reader’s ear is filled with a peculiar stately

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<sup>19</sup> Campbell (1867) XXX.

rhythm, his attention is quickened by artificial or poetical collocations of words".<sup>20</sup>

In the *Introduction to the Sophist* Campbell continued to emphasize the similarities between the developments of ancient and modern philosophies: "a modern reader can hardly imagine the effect which the impressive lines of Parmenides must have produced on the mind of Plato, when already convinced by Cratylus of the utter changeableness of 'all that seems'. Something analogous may have been experienced by individual students of Spinoza, Kant, or Hegel; but philosophical belief in modern times presents for the most part but a faint image of the heaven of contemplation into which Plato must have been carried away on hearing reiterated with the eloquence of energetic faith, and proved as a necessary truth of Reason, the absolute Existence of One Being, inseparable from thought, equable, unchangeable, without beginning and without end, with no past or future, but an everlasting Now".<sup>21</sup> Though some philosophers may object to the names of Spinoza and Hegel being uttered in the same breath as that of Kant, Campbell's intention is clear: it must be shocking, but at the same time attractive, for an ordinary, common sense type of reader to dive into the philosophies of Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel, for they all attempted to prove, on various grounds, that the truth is far beyond ordinary human experience.

Plato found the same attraction in Socrates' refutation of common opinions. Inspired by the Eleatic school, and by Socrates, Plato produced his famous theory of ideas. Campbell presented this theory traditionally, metaphysically, and then went on to point out some difficulties which were mostly of Aristotelian origin: 1) How can the ideas, the perfect subject of absolute knowledge, be the aim of an imperfect human erring mind? 2) How are these universal beings able to embrace particulars? 3) Since eternal ideas of justice, good and beauty exist, what about ideas of mud or dirt? Do they exist eternally as well? 4) Given that unchangeable ideas are the cause of the changeable particulars, of the *phaenomena*, shouldn't they have any inherent capability to move?

The interest of the Neo-Platonist school and of Hegel in the *Sophist* did not escape Campbell's attention. Hegel, in particular, claimed to find "in the *Sophist* not only the highest point reached by Plato, but an

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<sup>20</sup> Campbell (1867) XXXIX.

<sup>21</sup> Campbell (1867) LXII.

anticipation of his own dialectic”.<sup>22</sup> Plato’s dialectic resembled the Hegelian one thanks to a ‘curious mistranslation’ of the *Sophist* 259 c-d, as Campbell pointed out. Let us now quote a lengthy passage from Hegel’s *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*: “Of this Plato says, ‘If anyone thinks he has made a wonderful discovery in ascertaining that he can drag thoughts this way and that, from one determination to another, he may be told that he has done nothing worthy of praise; for in so doing there is nothing excellent or difficult’. The dialectic that annuls a determination because it reveals in it some defect, and then goes on to establish another, is thus wrong. ‘The point of difficulty, and what we ought to aim at, is to show that what is the other is the same, and what is the same, is another, and likewise in the same regard and from the same point of view to show that the one has in them come into existence if the other determination is revealed within them. But to show that somehow the same is another, and the other also the same, that the great is also small’ (e.g. Protagoras’ dice), ‘and the like also unlike, and to delight in thus always proving opposites, is no true inquiry (ἔλεγκος), but simply proves that he who uses such arguments is a neophyte,’ in thought, ‘who has just begun to investigate truth’”.<sup>23</sup>

One phrase in the above passage was of special interest to Campbell. Hegel says that the right aim of true dialectic is “to show that what is the other is the same, and what is the same, is another”, while the Eleatic visitor in the *Sophist* declares the reverse<sup>24</sup>. Let us quote two translations of this passage defining the true dialectics (*Sph.* 259 c-d): “to be able to follow our statements step by step and, in criticizing the assertion that a different thing is the same or the same thing is different in a certain sense, to take account of the precise sense and the precise respect in which they are said to be one or the other” (tr. F. M. Cornford<sup>25</sup>); “to be able to follow what someone says step by step, and when someone says that what is different is the same in a way and that what is the same is different, to refute his argument by examining on which point and in which respect he says that each of these is such and

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<sup>22</sup> Campbell (1867) LXXXIX.

<sup>23</sup> Hegel (1995) 64.

<sup>24</sup> Düsing supposes that Hegel’s reading of this passage of the *Sophist* could have resulted from his acquaintance with Ficino’s latin translation (Düsing (2007) 55).

<sup>25</sup> Cornford (1970) 297.

such” (tr. N. Notomi<sup>26</sup>). Hegel’s dialectical thinking of the same and the other could have, thus, emerged from the *Sophist*, but only from such a reading of this dialogue which was preceded and influenced by philosophical presumptions remote from Plato’s intentions.

The *Sophist* was considered by Campbell to be a crucial dialogue, for the entire interpretation of Plato’s development was dependant on its chronological position. The main outcome of the *Sophist* was summarized by Campbell in the following way: “the transition from a somewhat fanciful ontology to a true psychology, from a transcendental to a logical conception of Being; first as the sum of positive determinations, then as the sum or ideal of true determinations, whether affirmative or negative”.<sup>27</sup> After composing the *Sophist* with its penetrating dialectical investigations, it would have been impossible for Plato to return to the earlier, ‘fanciful’, theory of ideas from the *Symposium* or the *Phaedo*. Therefore – as Campbell stated – the *Sophist* and *Politicus* mark a late stage in Plato’s development, of which the final expression can be found in the *Laws*, where Plato completely abandoned metaphysical inquiries.

The final passages of the introduction to the *Sophist* indicate that it was on the basis of intuition rather than rational argument that Campbell asserted that the chronological position of the *Sophist* determined much more than Plato’s philosophical development alone, for in the bigger picture, Plato’s development could be translated into the historical development of philosophy in general and could even be helpful in answering the question concerning the nature of philosophy: “Both ancient and modern appreciation [of the *Sophist*] were influenced by preconceptions; and supposed a dogmatic and systematic intention which is not to be found in Plato. Whether the movement of modern philosophy, from Spinoza through Kant to Hegel, is in any respects analogous to that which has now been traced from Parmenides through the Plato of Phaedrus to the Plato of the *Sophist*, is a question which it belongs to the historian of philosophy to decide”.<sup>28</sup> Campbell was then fully aware of the philosophical significance of his work, but he was somehow unable to develop its philosophical consequences.

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<sup>26</sup> Notomi (1999) 245. *Sph.* 259 c-d: τοῖς λεγομένοις οἷόν τ’ εἶναι καθ’ ἕκαστον ἐλέγχοντα ἐπακολουθεῖν, ὅταν τέ τις ἕτερον ὄν πῃ ταυτὸν εἶναι φῆ καὶ ὅταν ταυτὸν ὄν ἕτερον, ἐκείνη καὶ κατ’ ἐκείνο ὃ φησι τούτων πεπονημένα πότερον.

<sup>27</sup> Campbell (1867) LII.

<sup>28</sup> Campbell (1867) XC.

In 1883 the second edition of the *Theaetetus* appeared with an amended text, but what is much more important, it was preceded by an improved and, to some extent, new *Introduction*. The whole book was also enriched with new appendices. These improvements have barely been noticed by historians of ancient philosophy, even though this book marks a development in the history of Campbell's studies on Plato. In the introduction to the first edition of the *Theaetetus* Campbell focused on Plato's allusions to contemporary thinkers and included a short history of pre-Platonic philosophy, whereas in the second edition, being aware of his own progress on the chronology, he started with an attempt to link the *Theaetetus* with other dialogues of a similar subject, instead of focusing on the single dialogue. He dealt with the problem of Plato's philosophical evolution in a more detailed manner, and again he discussed German interpretations.

Plato discovered the eternal, perfect, and abstract forms, and "to Plato that was a vision which enlightened all his subsequent thoughts: but on any theory except that which denies all growth and change in him, it must be acknowledged that there was progress also in his conception of Ideas".<sup>29</sup> Rejecting the Schleiermacherian denial of Plato's development, Campbell distinguished four stages in Plato's philosophical development, four stages of the theory of ideas, which are generally accepted as an outline. They are not listed *expressis verbis* or named by Campbell, but his hints and remarks allow us to construct the following division into periods:

1. Socratic: "detecting contradiction in others, and so bringing into strong relief at once their ignorance and his own"<sup>30</sup>; searching for the answer to the question of the nature of virtue and its teachability. This was the starting point for Plato's philosophy.
2. Metaphysical: "In destroying dogmatism Socrates had seemed to get rid of metaphysics; but he had only made more fruitful the metaphysics of the future".<sup>31</sup> And this was the Plato who brought the Socratic issues to metaphysics with his famous theory of ideas, which was dressed in a robe of enthusiasm and myth.

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<sup>29</sup> Campbell (1883) XXII.

<sup>30</sup> Campbell (1883) XXII.

<sup>31</sup> Campbell (1883) XXIII.

3. Critical: “The new vision of Truth, however inspiring, was sometimes felt to ‘raise more questions than it solved’”.<sup>32</sup> The new theory needed to be re-examined, and “in undertaking this new ‘Kritik of Pure Reason,’ Plato did not desert the Socratic spirit. He only carried into a region which Socrates had declined to enter, the same process of self-examination and of unwearied converse with others which Socrates practised and enjoyed”.<sup>33</sup>

4. Late: e.g. the *Timaeus*, wherein “crude unscientific notions tend to reappear”.<sup>34</sup>

In relation to these “unscientific notions” it is necessary to make a slight digression on Campbell’s allusions to German philosophers, most probably Kant and Hegel. Campbell abstained from philosophical conclusions and stated: “How far he [=Plato] was ever satisfied with the half-mythological presentation of them [=Ideas] [...] may be left for those to determine who seem to know him better than he knew himself”.<sup>35</sup> There are two important aspects to this comment: understanding the author better by subsequent writers and the mythological exposition of ideas as paradigms in the *Timaeus*. The first most probably refers to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he discussed the fundamental philosophical term *idea* and naturally referred to Plato, remarking casually: “it is by no means unusual, upon comparing the thoughts which an author has expressed in regard to his subject, whether in ordinary conversation or in writing, to find that we understand him better than he understood himself”.<sup>36</sup> The second aspect of Campbell’s statement may allude to Hegel. The German philosopher rejected the philosophic character of the mythical in the *Timaeus* as lacking truly philosophical material. He did this in a short and frequently quoted passage, to which most probably Campbell referred. To be just, let us now allow Hegel to speak, because his short statement has attracted the attention of Plato scholars. Hegel says: “all [in the dialogues] that is expressed in the manner of pictorial conception is taken by the moderns in sober earnest for philosophy. Such a representation of Plato’s philosophy can be supported by Plato’s own words; but one who knows what Philosophy is, cares little

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<sup>32</sup> Campbell (1883) XXIII.

<sup>33</sup> Campbell (1883) XXIII.

<sup>34</sup> Campbell (1883) XXIII.

<sup>35</sup> Campbell (1883) XXII.

<sup>36</sup> Kant (1929) 310 (B 370). Cf.: Bollnow (1979).

for such expressions, and recognizes what was Plato's true meaning [lit.: what Plato wanted]"<sup>37</sup> Who, then, is the one who knows what philosophy is, if not Hegel himself? The German philosopher thus boasted about understanding Plato's intentions and philosophy much better than did Plato or his contemporaries. Campbell's ironic remark quoted above was most probably a means of airing his grievances against German scholarship at a time when his work had been completely ignored by German scholars.

When referring to his own earlier research, namely to the *Introduction to the Sophist*, Campbell called his method "quantitative criticism"<sup>38</sup>, and declared that it proved that the *Sophist* and *Politicus* were later than *Theaetetus*. Previously Campbell had insisted that research on chronological issues should be devoid of any metaphysical preconceptions. Once the chronology had been established without their help, nothing stood in the way of sketching out Plato's philosophical development. And it was easy for Campbell to find a developing link between the three dialogues: the theory of knowledge, indeterminate and incomplete in the *Theaetetus*, was developed into the first principles in the *Sophist*, and applied in the *Politicus*, where the necessity of considering the material world was emphasized. Campbell, however, abstained from drawing further conclusions, leaving them for subsequent researchers, who could take up detailed investigations on the development of Plato's philosophy.

One more paper of Campbell should be referred to in order to provide evidence of his relation to German scholars and to see an example of how his works had gone unnoticed by them. In 1888 the book on Plato by Constantin Ritter appeared and was reviewed by Campbell. His opinion was generally positive, all the more so since Ritter's results

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<sup>37</sup> Hegel (1995) 21. This disputed expression in German goes as follows: "weiß man aber, was das Philosophische ist, so kümmert man sich um solche Ausdrücke nicht und weiß, was Platon wollte". Is it an example of "majestic self-confidence"? Of course, but still, "if we do not find Hegel ridiculous, it is because in his case there is no such disproportion between Plato and his critic [...]. A great thinker is talking about his equal" (Tigerstedt (1947) 69). On the other hand, it is also true that Hegel "misses the point of Plato's use of myth" (Lauer (1974) 31). Moreover, the affinities between Hegelianism and Platonism led Findlay to argue that both these philosophies "are [...] the same philosophy, with differences of emphasis and elaboration which make Hegelianism, all in all, its richer and more satisfactory version" (Findlay (1974) 62), though he realized the eccentricism of his view (Findlay (1974) 76).

<sup>38</sup> Campbell (1883) XXII.

were quite similar to his own. Reporting on Ritter, the Scottish scholar could not refrain from expressing a grudge against continental (*i.e.* German) scholars: „Now, *if not before*, it is clearly proved that the *Sophistes, Politicus, Philebus, Timaeus, Critias*, and *Leges* – in this order, or nearly so – form a separate group, and are the latest written”.<sup>39</sup> This was considered by Campbell as the first and most important result, and also as one to be taken as proved, though not on account of Ritter's efforts alone. Campbell additionally referred to his own *Introduction* to the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, where “the argument, if it has been little noticed, at least remains unrefuted, and while the tests employed [...] were different from those collected by Ritter, the conclusion to which they pointed, so far as it concerned the *Sophistes, Politicus, Philebus, Timaeus, Critias*, and *Leges*, was substantially the same with his. This fact is the more observable, as the volume in question has no place in his list of ‘Citierten Schriften;’ and it may therefore be assumed that inquiries wholly independent of each other have led to this coincidence of result”.<sup>40</sup> Campbell sadly realized that his work had gone unnoticed, but was satisfied to see that subsequent researchers confirmed his general results without being aware of them.

Campbell's works and the editions of the dialogues were followed by a series of papers devoted directly to the question of the chronology of the late group. These papers focused on clarifying, specifying and re-announcing his previous conclusions rather than further developing his research. His focus was on Plato's language and on specific issues connected to Plato's vocabulary. Among his numerous later Platonic works two have to be mentioned. These are: the three-volume edition of Plato's *Republic*<sup>41</sup> and another book on this subject composed for a wider audience.<sup>42</sup> The second volume of the monumental edition of the *Republic* consists of some thirty pages of short articles by Benjamin Jowett, but the remaining 340 pages were written by Campbell. These essential studies deserve a separate investigation, but suffice to say here that the Scottish scholar did not alter his views on Plato's late style or the Platonic chronology. Three valuable and extensive surveys enrich Campbell's conclusion on Plato's style in general, on the very text of the *Republic*, and on its relation to other

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<sup>39</sup> Campbell (1889) 29.

<sup>40</sup> Campbell (1889) 29, note.

<sup>41</sup> Campbell (1894) vols. I-III.

<sup>42</sup> Campbell (1902).



dialogues. The first essay is also accompanied with an excursus, and the second – with four appendices. He did not fail to mention the lack of reception of his earlier introductions to the dialogues but blamed this on his exposition of his investigations into Plato's style.<sup>43</sup>

Campbell's research received a late acknowledgment thanks to the efforts of Wincenty Lutosławski, who spared no energy in informing German academics of their ignorance of the excellent works by the Scottish scholar.<sup>44</sup> Campbell's disappointment was transformed into satisfaction, but Lutosławski's development of Campbell's method received a mixed reception, ranging from enthusiasm to rejection. Some of the criticism of the development of Campbell's method must have rubbed off on Campbell himself, but Burnet, as a grateful student of Campbell, insisted that his teacher should not be blamed for the excesses in the application of the statistical research made by Lutosławski.<sup>45</sup>

There is no need here to go more deeply into the evaluations of Lutosławski's research, which was regarded by the Pole as a natural continuation and development of Campbell's research. The latter's conclusions were, indeed, quite modest and sober: Plato evolved and this could be proved by the analysis of his style, lexica etc. Plato's chronology, according to Campbell, should on no account be established on the basis of philosophical or metaphysical preconceptions. Only philosophically neutral philological research, uninfected by metaphysical assumptions, could serve as an appropriate instrument to provide chronological conclusions. After the application of linguistic methods and after accepting their chronological results, the evolution of Plato's philosophy, the development of Plato's metaphysics or theory of knowledge could then be researched. Campbell's view of Plato was antidogmatic and antisystematic. In his view, Plato constantly and consciously exercised dialogue, involving various interlocutors, rather than establishing undisputable truths. Campbell should also be credited for his merits in attempting to overcome the unitarian interpretation of Plato's philosophy, and four stages of Plato's philosophical development can be inferred from his writings. Moreover, Campbell attempted to connect and to search for similarities in the developments of Greek and modern philosophies,

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<sup>43</sup> Campbell (1894) II, 47-48.

<sup>44</sup> Lutosławski (1895); *cf.*: Mróz, 2018.

<sup>45</sup> Burnet (1928) 11.

but he had some reservations about German scholars. He could not tolerate the declarations of Kant and Hegel on their better understanding of Plato and of philosophy in general. This reluctance towards German philosophy must have been strengthened by the fact that his work had been overlooked by German scholars.

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