

Conclusions

The above historical reconstruction of Polish philosophical research on Plato over a period of one and half centuries allows us to formulate several conclusions. First of all, it is important to note that neither a common Polish image of Plato nor a common Polish interpretation of Platonism was ever produced. The efforts of most researchers were scattered and as a result, it was impossible for any lasting school of research on Plato to be created. Nevertheless, those who studied Plato were outstanding individuals, and therefore in their confrontation with the dialogues they left their individual stamp on their interpretations. This was possible because of the multifarious content of the dialogues, which allowed each author to find motifs consistent with their own views, or those with which they could easily take issue. The relationship between the philosophical views of Plato scholars and their interpretations of Plato is often reciprocal, for the philosophical attitude of modern authors affects their interpretation of Plato, and at the same time their reading of Plato has an impact on various dimensions of their own philosophical thinking. This mutual impact is particularly evident in the works of the authors who were discussed in the third part of the book. Pawlicki turned Plato into a symbol of unspoiled ancient beauty, simply by supplementing Platonism with Christian thought to create the perfect essence of European culture. Lutosławski revered Plato as the predecessor of his own neo-Messianic philosophy. Lisiecki *expressis verbis* declared himself to be a Platonist, while Witwicki strongly identified himself with the vision of Plato he had created as simultaneously both scientist and artist. Both Jordan and Bornstein deemed Plato's interest in mathematics to be a distant precursor of their own research in various fields.

Our research into the subject of Plato's reception in Poland has revealed that many works devoted to Plato still remain in the form of manuscripts, though they constitute important evidence of the extent to which Polish scholars were acquainted with the dialogues. Some of these works, for example those of Lisiecki, have almost completely fallen into oblivion, while others, like Pawlicki's extensive manuscript legacy, in which numerous texts on Plato are included, are seldom consulted by historians of philosophy. It seems that this also reflects the situation as far as other areas in the history of Polish philosophy are concerned.

In summarising the findings of the particular parts of this work, we can claim that the reception of Plato sometimes ran parallel to Western currents then penetrating Polish philosophy. This was undoubtedly the case in Zabellewicz's work on Plato, which can be regarded as an instance of Polish reception of Kantianism in the field of Platonic studies. Similarly, F. A. Kozłowski's introduction to his translations of three dialogues clearly bears the hallmark of Hegelianism. These works, produced in the first half of the 19th century, are derivative studies, being almost entirely dependent on German philosophy. The contribution of these authors was therefore restricted to the transference of Plato's philosophy to Polish soil. However, as time went by and interest in the philosophies of Kant and Hegel began to wear off, giving rise to anti-Hegelian trends in the second half of the 19th century, the Plato studies of Zabellewicz and Kozłowski no longer attracted attention. Nevertheless, a closer examination of Zabellewicz's works calls for a re-assessment of his reputation as an eclectic Kantian philosopher. One dimension of his reflections that has usually been neglected is the ambitious, though unfulfilled, plan he outlined for studies in the history of philosophy.

Tatarkiewicz, though chronologically distant from Zabellewicz and Kozłowski, owed his interest in Plato to his influential teachers from Marburg and their interpretation of Platonism. Their neo-Kantian interpretation of Plato was Tatarkiewicz's initial frame of reference in Platonic studies, and he enthusiastically reported on this to Polish readers. This justifies classifying his study on Platonism within the same reception type as works composed in the first half of the 19th century. He later abandoned the one-sidedness of the Marburg interpretation of Plato when he started to prepare his *History of Philosophy*. There is no doubt that the requirements of the genre of academic handbook resulted in a more schematic treatment of Plato in volume I of Tatarkiewicz's book, bringing it more in line with other handbooks on ancient philosophy. At the same time, it should be emphasised that Tatarkiewicz's interest in Plato, ancient thought and the history of philosophy in general was inspired by the years he spent in Marburg, which is sometimes unfairly marginalised.

The second half of the 19th century moved the reception of Plato into another dimension, no longer directly bound up with specific philosophical currents then dominant in Europe. Scholars of this type confronted Plato with their own philosophical views and, while reading Plato's dialogues, they evaluated his philosophy from their own philosophical standpoint. They recognised the obvious fact that Plato was a philosopher who could not be overlooked, but also, and more importantly, that it was pre-

cisely because of his greatness that he had become a problematic thinker. Plato came to be seen as an ambiguous philosopher, and given the broad scope of his philosophical legacy, his works underwent a widespread and diverse reception process, ranging from criticism to enthusiasm. The main aspects of his work that were targeted were the ethical and political issues.

One of the reception currents that was firmly embedded in Polish philosophical disputes comprised works on Plato created by Catholic thinkers, who initially presented various approaches to Platonism, sometimes radically diverse. It took some time for them to develop a widely accepted framework for thinking about ancient, pagan philosophy, with particular emphasis on Plato. After this initial period, when Catholic authors merely noticed the problem of Plato's accordance with Christianity, they subsequently started to express a more balanced attitude to Plato, as did, for example, F. Kozłowski and Semenenko in their pioneering works. The most important issue for them, then, became the connection between Platonism and Christian thought. Although it proved difficult to reach a unanimous evaluation of Plato, a number of issues were judged positively, such as the concept of innate knowledge or the belief in ethics as the purpose of philosophy in general. On the other hand, Plato's idea of pre-existence and his exclusion of the phenomenal world from the area of philosophical knowledge were not assessed positively. While some Platonic concepts underwent criticism, it was noted that many of his ideas were sophisticated and close to Christianity in spirit, though they had been formed in the pre-Christian era. In this way Christian thinkers justified their interest in the pagan author.

As far as his political thought was concerned, Plato became an inspiration for the socialism of Limanowski while simultaneously being criticised as a revolutionary ideologist from the conservative position of Dzieduszycki. A little later, at the beginning of the 20th century, Plato's political project met with the enthusiastic reception of Sinko and Jarra, who assessed *Politeia* from the viewpoint of the needs of a future independent Poland. Their search for the answer to questions about the shape of the future Polish state could be found in Plato, who seemed to Jarra to be a precursor of modern democracy founded on sophocracy, where someone's place in the social hierarchy depended solely on their merits.

The next stage and type of reception of Platonism in Polish philosophy begins at the turn of the 20th century. Scholars of this stage were familiar with Western studies on Plato and sometimes even influenced these studies. They still assessed Plato's dialogues, but what distinguishes these scholars from their predecessors is the fact that the dialogues constitute the

source and material for their own works in philosophy. While in the earlier stages of reception Plato did not essentially affect the philosophical reflections of the authors under consideration, the third stage is distinct from the preceding ones because the researchers integrated the Platonic material into their own reflections. In fact, without taking into account their meeting with Plato, which sometimes extended over half a century, it might be impossible to understand the origins of their thoughts or their intellectual biographies. It can therefore be claimed that, starting with the late 19th century, Plato began to take roots in the fabric of Polish philosophy, and recognised philosophers incorporated substantial and multidimensional elements of Plato's dialogues into their own works.

Christian philosophers found grounds and justification for taking up studies on ancient philosophy in the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, since Thomism and its historical context could not be understood without Aristotle, and Aristotle in turn, could only be presented correctly in the context of Plato's philosophy. The first impulse to research Plato within neo-scholasticism came from Adamski, but it was Pawlicki who was the most important author of this current. In the early stages, his works on Plato concerned only biographical and historical issues, but in his mature, though unfinished, synthetic study on the history of Greek philosophy Plato occupied the most important place. The impressive study on the philosophy of Plato produced by Pawlicki, in part available only as a manuscript, bears testimony to his erudition and insightful knowledge of the subject, but many of Pawlicki's conclusions, especially those that were directly critical of Lutosławski's works, such as his criticism of stylometry or his adherence to the chronological precedence of the *Phaedrus*, were subsequently refuted. In his interpretation of Plato, Pawlicki emphasised, above all, those ideas that brought Plato closer to Christian thought. These included the polemic against relativism, recognition of the purposefulness of the world, the existence of its wise and good creator, the emphasis on the primacy of the spiritual realm in human nature and on the need to improve individuals as members of society. Pawlicki did not agree with the claim that Plato was a socialist; he criticised, but also tried to justify, Plato for several issues in the dialogues that were of dubious moral value and were difficult for Pawlicki's contemporaries to accept. Pawlicki's work is the most comprehensive – yet the most favourable – presentation of Plato's philosophy to originate within the Polish neo-scholastic movement. Pawlicki did not disguise his enormous enthusiasm for Plato, so it is not surprising that a decade after his death a study was published in which its author, Potempa, provided a synthetic and concise revision of Pawlicki's

enthusiastic Christian approach to Plato. He expressed a warning for any future Christian readers, discouraging them from following Pawlicki's exuberance for Plato since Plato's spiritual proximity to Christian thought was only apparent and could be misleading.

A separate and unique position in the history of Polish reception of Plato is occupied by Lutosławski, who proved to be influential by publishing his studies both in his homeland and also, or perhaps even primarily, in the English- and German-speaking academic world. Unlike other Polish Plato researchers, such as Pawlicki or Jezienicki, who only incidentally announced their results in Western languages, for the most part in German, Lutosławski made a point of publishing his works in English, German and French. Having begun his research on Plato from rudimentary historical works on the history of manuscripts and editions and studies on Plato's dialogues, Lutosławski then took up the problem of the chronology of the dialogues. When he announced his results to the international public, he proposed both a complex method of linguistic statistics and the solution to the problem of the chronology of the dialogues based on this method. The legitimacy of the method, its premises and results were internationally discussed and continue to be discussed to this day. *Stylometry*, as he called his method, was rejected by some, while others accused its author of plagiarism, and still others modified the method and used their modified versions to refute Lutosławski's chronological findings. Most scholars, however, accepted its most general conclusions, thus indirectly also confirming the efforts of many of Lutosławski's predecessors whose works had contributed to the development of his method. Lutosławski's inclusion and acknowledgement of their work on such an unprecedented scale was to play a part in bringing about a rapprochement between Plato scholars in German- and English-speaking academic circles. In the light of his erudition in this work, many scholars came to realise their own ignorance of the achievements of their predecessors. Although, for his Western critics, the chronology of the dialogues provided by Lutosławski was an autonomous and crucial issue, for Lutosławski himself, it became merely the foundation of his own philosophical thought, which also drew on the Polish Romantic tradition. Lutosławski's interpretation of the late dialogues as evidence of Plato's spiritualism became an argument for the ancient roots of Polish philosophy and, in particular, 19th century Polish Messianism as a spiritualistic conception, thus confirming the universal nature of Messianism, as well as the historical continuity of philosophical tradition from Plato to the philosophy of Polish Messianism and Lutosławski's neo-Messianism. In his philological and historical studies, Lutosławski inter-

preted Platonism as an evolution from idealism to spiritualism and provided an analogical, evolutionary interpretation of the development of Plato's theory of ideas as the transition from transcendent entities in the mature dialogues to concepts in mind in the late works of Plato. The only field of Plato's reception in which Lutosławski did not participate was the translation of the dialogues, with the exception of some short passages. His work, as a whole, represented an attempt to introduce Polish historians of philosophy to international discussions on Plato, but unfortunately, in this respect he did not find creative followers in Poland. Nevertheless, he sought to transfer his passion for Plato to the next generation of researchers and to educate his successors. The outbreak of World War II seemed to Lutosławski to provide a confirmation of his vision of Plato's philosophy as a distant precursor of modern spiritualism, thus also confirming Messianism and personalism, or more generally, Christianity. For Lutosławski, Plato, the philosopher, who had travelled the long road from communism and idealism to spiritualism, thus creating the foundations for personalism and Christian thought, was seen as a remedy for the problems of totalitarianism and communism with which Europe was at that time afflicted.

One scholar who has been almost totally forgotten in Polish philosophical culture is Lisiecki. Even in his own times Polish audiences were only aware of his translation of the *Republic*, his studies on Plato's *Phaedo* and on the concept of the pre-existence of souls. Lisiecki did not share the enthusiasm that some researchers expressed for Plato's political philosophy prior to World War I. He was disappointed by the economic conditions in independent Poland after the war, and Plato's political project did not seem to him to be achievable at all. Because of his complicated biography, Lisiecki was relegated to the margins of academic life in interwar Catholic Poland, though his diligence and skills should have predestined him to take up an academic position. He considered himself to be a Platonist, published on Platonic issues, and translated dialogues, but most of his work remained unpublished, which is regrettable, because his works could have competed with those of Witwicki. It was Plato that was the main subject of Lisiecki's works and research interests, yet his extensive monograph book on Plato was, unfortunately, never published, for the manuscript was destroyed during World War II.

Plato also became the main subject of interest for Witwicki, a philosopher, psychologist, translator and artist, whose systematic work on the translation of Plato's dialogues stemmed from literary premises, with the aim of making Plato available to the general public. Witwicki is unique in the reception of Plato in Poland because of his versatility, being influential

as a translator, commentator and promoter of Plato's work. His method of explaining the texts of Plato's dialogues was based on psychological analyses, which endeavoured to find the sources of Plato's ideas in his biography, in his reconstructed psyche, in his type of sensitivity, and finally in his homosexuality. Witwicki deliberately used his commentaries to the dialogues to point out the relevance of Plato's works to modern times, thus transforming them into an instrument for criticising negative aspects of Christianity, modern philosophy, or simply – human stupidity. He compared the irrationality of religion to the rationalism of philosophy, and took the side of the latter. He compared the empty verbosity of analytic philosophy and philosophy of language to the colourful philosophy that touches on the most essential problems of human life, and again, of course, he took the side of the latter. While criticising Plato, Witwicki took advantage of the opportunity to express his own views on science, ethics and art, and indeed the image of Plato produced by Witwicki is primarily the image of an artist and thinker, a poet and philosopher, who, while attempting to reconcile his own conflicting aspirations, produced work that was excellent in terms of both art and philosophy. This image of Plato dovetailed with Witwicki's own psyche. In fact, it was ideological considerations that provided the first incentive for Witwicki to focus his interests on Plato; then came his intense reading of Plato during his stay in Germany, and finally Staff's encouragement for him to translate the *Symposium*, encouragement which was in the following years reinforced by Twardowski, who had been Witwicki's teacher. His interest in Plato was not, however, shared by Twardowski's other disciples, who treated Witwicki's Platonic works as literature rather than philosophy. The image of Plato created by Witwicki cannot, therefore, be seen as a product of the Lvov-Warsaw school, but as the work of an isolated scholar whose creative individuality went far beyond the typical set of interests of the representatives of this school. Witwicki's reading of Plato was affected by World War II, but unlike Lutosławski, he did not regard Plato as a remedy for what had happened in 20th century Europe, but tended to blame Plato for the disasters of war and totalitarianism. According to Witwicki, Plato was to some extent responsible for the appearance of oppressive state institutions modelled on the institutions of the *Republic*, but in Plato's favour, Witwicki added that these institutions had been the inevitable outcome of Plato's holistic vision of man and society, which Witwicki tried to justify. The application of Plato's social and political institutions in post-war Poland lacked Plato's universal vision, and without any attempt to improve human beings their results were extremely negative. It is interesting to ob-

serve how the extreme experience of war and the political conditions in post-war Poland resulted in two conflicting assessments of Plato's philosophical and political heritage, produced by the two most eminent Polish experts on Plato, Lutosławski and Witwicki.

It was only at the end of the interwar period in Poland that a current of research on Plato appeared that was not based on ideological premises and did not even touch upon Plato's philosophical outlook or ideology. Since this current was marginal, *ipso facto* the important role of the ideological factor in Polish philosophy is confirmed. The philosophical studies in question were focused on Plato's mathematics and logic and the most prominent representative of these studies was Jordan. Jordan did not consider Plato to be a mathematician, but he confirmed that Plato had extensive knowledge of the mathematics of his time. His interest in Plato was indirectly affected by Twardowski's influence on Polish philosophy, for Jordan's supervisor, Zawirski, had written his doctoral thesis under Twardowski's supervision. Jordan owed the methodological aspects of his thesis, as well as the theoretical premises concerning the relationship between the natural and formal sciences in their historical development, to Zawirski. This theoretical framework was applied by Jordan to the field of ancient thought, resulting in the thesis that the discovery of the axiomatic method could be ascribed to Plato. Plato's mathematical reflections were also developed by Bornstein on the basis of indirect testimonies. He sought the foundation of his own original and abstract philosophical and metaphysical constructions in his reinterpretation of Plato's unwritten teaching.

As has been indicated, with time Polish studies on Plato became increasingly autonomous, as did the discussions about Plato held in Polish academic circles. Although the dispute concerning different Christian approaches to Plato had been quickly replaced by a relatively homogeneous position in which arguments for and against Plato's compatibility with Christian thought were balanced, other contentious issues were not so easily settled. These include, above all, the argument about Plato between Pawlicki and Lutosławski, with its personal and ideological undertones. This concerned issues related to the chronology of the dialogues and the overall vision of Platonism, as well as more specific problems, including, Plato's alleged socialism. On the one hand, Lutosławski had appropriated Plato for the Polish Messianic tradition, and transformed him into a distant precursor of that tradition; on the other, Pawlicki presented Plato as a moral thinker close to Christianity. Other disputes of less importance were triggered by the reviews of the works of Tatarkiewicz, Bornstein, and a number of less-known authors. These disputes concerned chronological is-

sues, the presence of mystical elements in the works of Plato, or the possibility of basing knowledge about Platonism on indirect sources. Sometimes the disputes on Plato were only exemplifications of broader underlying issues, such as the dispute over the methodology of the history of philosophy between Pawlicki and Lutosławski or the metaphilosophical issues disputed between Witwicki and other representatives of the Lvov-Warsaw school, especially concerning the social and ideological functions of philosophy and whether it should have such functions at all. Plato's works were also material for non-philosophical disputes, such as those concerning the method of translating ancient texts (between Bronikowski, Witwicki and others).

Plato in Polish reception appears to have been plagued by unfulfilled projects and it seems that some kind of fate weighed heavily on Platonic studies in Poland. None of Plato's translators, neither Bronikowski, nor Lisiecki, nor Witwicki, was able to translate all of his legacy, though all of them declared such an intention. Lisiecki, the greatest rival of Witwicki in the field of translation, was rejected by Polish academia on non-scientific grounds, despite his talent, hard work and the style of his translations which would have attracted readers even today; moreover, his lengthy monograph on Plato was destroyed by the Germans during the war. Zabellewicz's study on Plato, which was intended to provide a philosophical benchmark for Polish philosophers, was only partly fulfilled. Woyczyński's doctoral thesis on Plato, written under the supervision of Lutosławski and defended in Vilnius, proved to be his swan song, though it was to have been the starting point for his subsequent Platonic studies. Pawlicki was unable to complete his synthetic work on Greek philosophy, managing only to get as far as the lengthy chapter on Plato, which he left unfinished. Although Plato was Pawlicki's greatest philosophical passion, it was also because of the charm of Plato and the author's polemical zeal that his book on Greek philosophy was never completed. Jarra, having written his Ph.D. thesis on the social and political philosophy of Plato, declared his intention of conducting further research on this subject, but after World War I he took a position at the Faculty of Law at the University of Warsaw and thereafter published works on the history of philosophy of law, never to return to Plato again. Both Jordan and Bornstein, philosophers who had drawn attention to mathematical issues in the dialogues before World War II, also had plans for further research, but they were unable to continue their studies after the war. Bornstein died in 1948 and Jordan remained in Great Britain as a political exile, still researching philoso-

phy, but, for reasons beyond his control, never returning to his Platonic studies.

As for the validity or topicality of the studies considered in this research, it must be admitted that only a few names are still cited as a source of sustainable results. These include Lutosławski's stylistic research, which, despite the criticism it has received, still presents synthetically and viably the results of research conducted by generations of scholars who preceded him. Lutosławski's work not only proved to be a reliable source for the reconstruction of the 19th century dispute on the chronology of the dialogues, but the results of his method are still treated as a starting point for further research or as an argument for specific chronological solutions, though the ongoing dispute about the validity and significance of the method itself continues. It is worth noting, however, that he is more frequently referred to by foreign authors than by those from Poland. Another relevant and constantly cited work, but only in Poland, is Jordan's dissertation. Polish contemporary authors of works on Plato's late philosophy, or those studying the history of the philosophy of mathematics, still refer to Jordan's results and confirm their validity. In yet another sphere of influence, it is the works of Witwicki that have proved to be without parallel, though Poles are not always aware of the widespread impact that his translations and commentaries have had on them. Due to changes in the education system after World War II, Plato ceased to speak to his readers in his original language. Instead, the reading public received the easily digestible translations by Witwicki, decorated with drawings, enriched with comments presenting Plato as an up-to-date philosopher, though perhaps the popular image of Plato that was presented was a little too simplified. Regardless of how Witwicki's Plato is assessed, his impact should not be underestimated. At the beginning of the 21st century it is quite unlikely that anyone in Poland (if anywhere) begins their meeting with Plato from reading the *Apology* or the *Euthyphro* in Greek, which was natural a century ago. Even professional scholars, who research ancient philosophy and study the original Greek texts, will still have the arguments of Socrates as they were rendered into Polish by Witwicki at the back of their minds. On the one hand, the wide circulation of his translations has helped to popularise the dialogues themselves to an extent previously unknown in Polish culture, and this is obviously significant; on the other hand, Witwicki, as the author who introduces Polish audiences to the world of Plato's dialogues, has come to monopolise Plato in Poland. It is only specialists who reach further and deeper. The small number of new translations that have

appeared, some of which are of debatable quality and usefulness, has not changed this situation significantly.

As for the significance of research on Plato's reception in Poland, it seems that, above all, by charting its development over a period of a century and a half, a rarely explored area of the history of native Polish thought has been revealed. One of the results of this work is that it has called for the inclusion and preservation, within the sphere of the history of Polish philosophy, of authors who were little-known or even forgotten, or unknown as philosophers, promoters or historians of philosophy, such as Zabellewicz, Semenenko, Limanowski, Potempa and Lisiecki, or those who belonged to the group of gymnasia teachers. These were people for whom Plato was simply their subject of interest, or whose expertise allowed them to introduce Plato into the philosophical interests of their times. For some Polish philosophers, Plato was an integral part of doing philosophy, often historically oriented, as was the case with Pawlicki, Lutosławski, Witwicki, and Bornstein. Without considering the direct influence from Plato, understanding their philosophical positions would be difficult, if not impossible. Plato's works were also one of the starting points for scholars who decided to focus on areas unrelated or indirectly related to his legacy, as in the case of Limanowski's studies on sociology and social philosophy, Jarra's interests in the philosophy of law, or Tatarkiewicz's devotion to the general history of philosophy. Research on Plato's reception in Poland has also made it possible to supplement or modify some persisting misconceptions about important and less important figures of Polish philosophy. These include the view on Zabellewicz as an eclectic philosopher, the rejection of the influence Lutosławski's work exerted on Western researchers, the disregard for Tatarkiewicz's Marburg inspirations, or the recognition of Witwicki's translation work as an outcome of the Lvov-Warsaw school.

Finally, it is worth asking another question: is the above review of Polish works on Plato over a period of one and a half centuries helpful in understanding Plato better? The answer to this question will not be unambiguous. It is impossible to expect readers at the beginning of the 21st century to accept any of the presented images of Plato as the only solution or final answer. At the same time, contemporary scholars may find in this account a reflection of current discussions on approaches to Plato and ways of treating his dialogues. It is also possible that the method of division and classification of various phenomena used in this work on Plato's reception in Polish philosophy may prove useful in other fields of reception in the history of philosophy.

