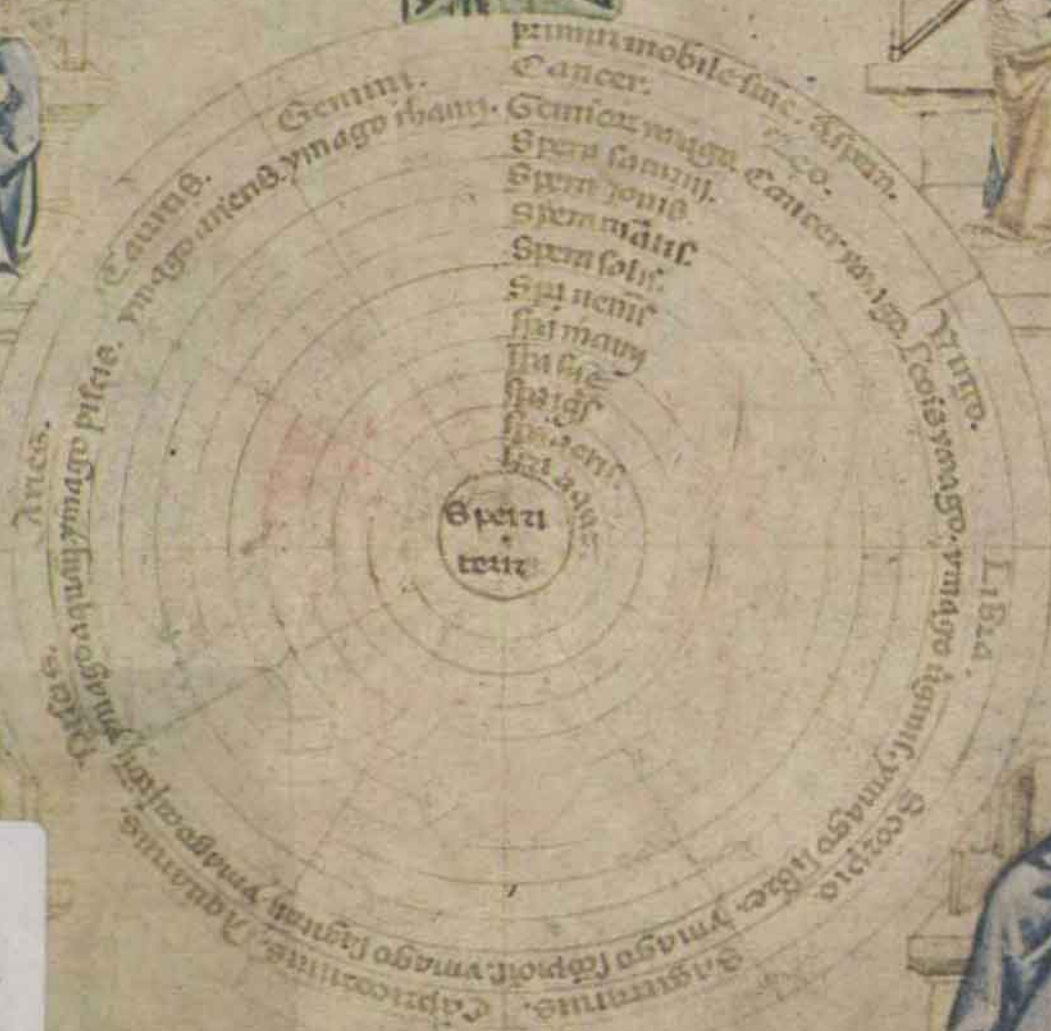
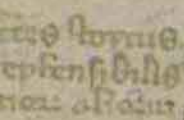


historias pypathetic.
den den ad uai seiar

Philos. Phil.

Sicut metaphysico. i.
censendo. n. in unum.



Seneca
moralis





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PLATO

PROTAGORAS AND MENO

TRANSLATED BY W. K. C. GUTHRIE

Plato, the most brilliant of Socrates' pupils, held that philosophy must be a product of living contact between mind and mind, and his dialogues afforded him the means of reaching a wide audience. *Protagoras*, possibly his dramatic masterpiece, deals, like *Meno*, with the problem of teaching the art of successful living and good citizenship. While *Protagoras* keeps to the level of practical common-sense, *Meno* leads on into the heart of Plato's philosophy, the immortality of the soul and the doctrine that learning is knowledge acquired before birth.

THE LAST DAYS OF SOCRATES

TRANSLATED BY HUGH TREDENNICK

The trial and condemnation of Socrates, on charges of heresy and corrupting the minds of the young, forms one of the most tragic episodes in the history of Athens in decline. In the four works which compose this volume – *Euthyphro*, *The Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo* – Plato, his most devoted disciple, has preserved for us the essence of his teaching and the logical system of question and answer he perfected in order to define the nature of virtue and knowledge. The vindication of Socrates and the pathos of his death are admirably conveyed in Hugh Tredennick's modern translation.

PLATO

TIMAEUS AND CRITIAS

TRANSLATED BY DESMOND LEE

The *Timaeus*, in which Plato attempted a scientific explanation of the universe's origin, is the earliest Greek account of a divine creation: as such it has significantly influenced European thought, even down to the present day. Yet this dialogue and, even more, its unfinished sequel, the *Critias*, have latterly attracted equal attention as the sources of the Atlantis legend. Plato's exact descriptions of an antediluvian world have fermented the imaginations of hundreds of writers in this century and the last, and the translator has now appended an intriguing survey of Atlantis and of theories (crazy and plausible) about the vanished continent.

GORGIAS

TRANSLATED BY WALTER HAMILTON

To judge by its bitter tone Plato's *Gorgias* was written shortly after the death of Socrates. Though Gorgias was a Sicilian teacher of oratory, the dialogue is more concerned with ethics than with the art of public speaking. The ability, professed particularly by the Sophists, to make the worse cause appear the better, struck Plato as the source of all corruption. The dialogue's chief interest lies, not in Gorgias' courteous outline of his art, but in the clash between Socrates, the true philosopher, and Calicles, a young Athenian of the stamp of Alcibiades, who brashly maintains that might is right.

PLATO

THE REPUBLIC

TRANSLATED BY DESMOND LEE

Plato, finally disillusioned by contemporary politics after the execution of Socrates, showed in his writings the enormous influence of that great philosopher. *The Republic*, his treatise on an ideal state, was the first of its kind in European thought. For Plato, political science was the science of the soul, and included moral science. *The Republic's* emphasis on the right education for rulers, the prevalence of justice, and harmony between all classes of society, is as strong as its condemnation of democracy, which Plato considered encouraged bad leadership.

THE LAWS

TRANSLATED BY T. J. SAUNDERS

The reader of *The Republic*, Plato's best-known political work, may well be astonished by *The Laws*. Instead of an ideal state ruled directly by moral philosophers, this later work depicts a society permeated by the rule of law. Immutable laws control most aspects of public and private life, from civil and legal administration to marriage, religion and sport. The rigours of life in Plato's utopian Republic are not much tempered here, but *The Laws* is a much more practical approach to Plato's ideal.

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PLATO (c. 427-347 B.C.) stands with Socrates and Aristotle as ~~one of the~~ ^{one of the} shapers of the whole intellectual tradition of the West. He came from a family that had long played a prominent part in Athenian politics, and it would have been natural for him to follow the same course. He declined to do so however, disgusted by the violence and corruption of Athenian political life, and sickened especially by the execution in 399 of his friend and teacher, Socrates. Inspired by Socrates' inquiries into the nature of ethical standards, Plato sought a cure for the ills of society not in politics but in philosophy, and arrived at his fundamental and lasting conviction that those ills would never cease until philosophers became rulers or rulers philosophers. At an uncertain date in the early fourth century B.C. he founded in Athens the Academy, the first permanent institution devoted to philosophical research and teaching, and the prototype of all western universities. He travelled extensively, notably in Sicily as political adviser to Dionysius II, ruler of Syracuse.

Plato wrote over twenty philosophical dialogues, and there are also extant under his name thirteen letters, whose genuineness is keenly disputed. His literary activity extended over perhaps half a century; few other writers have exploited so effectively the grace and precision, the flexibility and power, of Greek prose.

WALTER HAMILTON has been Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, since 1967. He was born in 1908 and was a Scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained first class honours in both parts of the classical Tripos. He was a Fellow of Trinity College and a University Lecturer at Cambridge, and taught at Eton before becoming Headmaster of Westminster School (1950-57) and of Rugby School (1957-66). He has translated Plato's *Symposium*, the *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus* and *Letters VII and VIII* for the Penguin Classics.

THE SYMPOSIUM

PLATO

*

TRANSLATED BY
WALTER HAMILTON



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Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia
Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 2801 John Street, Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 1B4
Penguin Books (N.Z.) Ltd, 182-190 Wairau Road, Auckland 10, New Zealand

This translation first published 1951
Reprinted 1952, 1956, 1959, 1961, 1962, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978

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by Hunt Barnard Printing Ltd, Aylesbury
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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In the literary form known as dramatic dialogue Plato has no rival, ancient or modern, and of all his dialogues the *Symposium* or *Dinner-party* is the most varied and the most perfectly finished. It is also the least technical of the great works of his maturity; the philosopher in Plato has not yet banished the artist and the poet, and nowhere else, save in the *Phaedo* and perhaps in the *Protagoras*, has he devoted such care to the setting in which he frames his conversation-piece. The conversation, dealing as it does with love, is itself of universal interest, but the pictures which are presented to us of Athenian social life and of the character of Socrates are almost more fascinating, and the two elements are welded together with such consummate art that to dissect them is likely to destroy the perfect balance of the whole. Yet the risk must be run if the dialogue is to be made intelligible, and in what follows the *mise-en-scène*, the content of the conversation, and the character of Socrates will be separately discussed, though an attempt will be made to indicate how these various themes are interwoven with complete apparent naturalness so as to shed light reciprocally upon one another.

I

Such evidence as there is for the date of the composition of the dialogue points to a period not earlier than 385 B.C., but the time of the party of which it purports to give an account is securely fixed in 416 B.C. by its connexion with the dramatic triumph of the host, Agathon. That the conversation which

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takes place at it is fictitious cannot seriously be doubted, but Plato has been at unusual pains to impart to the whole scene a deceptive air of authority. The direct speakers are only two in number, Apollodorus and an unnamed friend, to whom among others Apollodorus reports at second-hand and many years after the event, though before the death of Socrates in 399 B.C., an account which he has had of the party from a member of Socrates' circle called Aristodemus, who was actually present at it. Since one of the main objects of the dialogue is to praise Socrates, it is clear that Socrates himself cannot be the narrator, but that in itself hardly explains the use of such curiously elaborate machinery. The effect is much the same as that given by Boswell when he reports some incident in Johnson's life which took place before their meeting, and just as Boswell often states that he has confirmed what he tells us by direct application to Johnson, so Apollodorus asserts that he has questioned Socrates on some points in Aristodemus' account. Plato's motive in all this seems to be to heighten the plausibility of his historical fiction by appealing to the authority of apparently unimpeachable witnesses; both Apollodorus and Aristodemus are historical persons, whom we know from other sources to have been fanatical admirers of Socrates.

So too, the guests named as having been present at Agathon's party are real people, and the whole atmosphere is such as we may readily believe to have existed among the upper classes at Athens in 416 B.C., when nothing had yet occurred to impair the mood of carefree and almost insolent superiority which found its supreme expression in Alcibiades. A year later his ambition was to lead his city into the disastrous adventure of the Sicilian expedition, which began the long death-agony of the Athenian Empire and involved him in dishonour and ruin; but no hint of this is allowed to intrude, and the picture of Alcibiades in the last scene of the dialogue, brilliant, charming, and completely shameless, for all that it must be an imaginative

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reconstruction, is as valuable evidence for his character and for the nature of the spell which he cast over his contemporaries as the substance of what he says is for the character of Socrates.

At this point a brief account of the structure of the dialogue may be helpful. Aristodemus meets Socrates on his way to dine with Agathon, a tragic poet, who is celebrating his recent success in the dramatic competition. Socrates takes Aristodemus with him, but does not arrive till the meal is half over. Eryximachus, a doctor, whose fussy officiousness is portrayed with admirable humour, then proposes that instead of the usual entertainment by flute-girls the company shall amuse itself with talk, and that this shall take the form of a speech from each member of the company in praise of love. His proposal is adopted, and the main section of the dialogue consists of speeches delivered by Phaedrus, who is said to be the real author of the idea, Pausanias, who according to Xenophon was notorious for his devotion to Agathon, Eryximachus himself, Aristophanes, the great comic poet, Agathon, and Socrates, with interludes between them. At the conclusion of Socrates' speech a commotion is heard outside, and Alcibiades enters with some drunken companions and is warmly welcomed. The party becomes much less decorous; Alcibiades takes the lead, and, when he is invited to contribute to the original scheme, declares that the only subject on which he is willing to make a laudatory speech is Socrates. He proceeds to give at some length a sketch of the character of Socrates and of his own relations with him. Finally a fresh party of revellers bursts into the house; all restraint is cast aside; some of the guests become incapable, others go home, and Aristodemus falls asleep. When he awakes towards morning he finds only Agathon, Aristophanes, and Socrates still drinking and talking; shortly afterwards the two former succumb, and Socrates leaves as fresh and sober as when he arrived, with Aristodemus still in attendance.

II