

WILAMOWITZ'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH BRITISH COLLEAGUES

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Abstract: Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931) wrote surprisingly often to British colleagues. Usually it was a matter of a letter or two. The prolonged exchange with Gilbert Murray is the exception. More typical is the brief but important one with Sir James George Frazer. Extant evidence attests that he corresponded with some forty Englishmen and Scots. I omit Anglo-Irish: J.B. Bury, J.P. Mahaffy, L.C. Purser and the papyrologist, J.G. Smyly. The evidence is incomplete because most letters after the letter N were stolen and burned in the Berlin winter 1945–6. A first catalogue of his British correspondents is assembled. Because of the remoteness of much published biographical material, I include references to the important published sources and occasionally publish a document which otherwise would be forgotten. For the first time Wilamowitz's influence on the English scholars of his time is precisely documented.

Introduction

The influence of the writings of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931) on subsequent work in Greek philosophy and politics is in a word incalculable; and it is abiding. This is in good part because it was fundamentally historical and philological. The second volume of *Platon* is largely the precise exegesis of controversial passages in the dialogues by arguably the best knower of ancient Greek in modern times. Responsible discussion of Plato's ideas must depend on texts correctly understood. Upon the publication of his *Platon* in 1919 my teacher Werner Jaeger wrote to him: 'You have restored the man Plato to the world.'² The historian Wilamowitz sought to understand Plato in the context of his life. The intensity of his interest derived from the fact that he was a believer. 'Fidem profiteor Platoniam', he confessed in an address on his sixtieth birthday.³ Jaap Mansfeld in the standard and consistently brilliant evaluation of Wilamowitz's contribution to ancient philosophy argues that fundamentally he was unphilosophical.⁴ His *Platon* in interesting ways is an autobiography. Hence its intensity.⁵ Contrarily his interest in Aristotle was more distant. Aristotle was an arid albeit highly

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² The text is at *Antiqua*, 23 (1983), p. 190.

³ See Eduard Norden, *Kleine Schriften zum Klassischen Altertum*, ed. Bernhard Kytzler (Berlin, 1966), p. 668.

⁴ Jaap Mansfeld, 'Wilamowitz' Ciceronian Philosophy', *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren*, ed. W.M. Calder, H. Flashar, T. Lindken (Darmstadt, 1985), pp. 178–221. The volume is henceforth cited as *Wilamowitz*.

⁵ See my discussion of the book in this context at *Wilamowitz*, pp. 101–107.

intelligent scholar. He reminded Wilamowitz of his close friend and longtime colleague, Hermann Diels (1848–1922).⁶ As men both were dull. The discovery and publication of Aristotle, *Athenaion Politeia* by F.G. Kenyon in 1891 caused Wilamowitz to lecture at Göttingen Winter Semester 1891–2 on this extraordinary new text. In 1893 he published what is often called the most frequently cited book about Aristotle, *Aristoteles und Athen*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1893).⁷ We must not forget the flood of epigraphical discoveries not least by German and Austrian excavators in Turkey during the last decades of the nineteenth century. One senses the excitement in Wilamowitz's correspondence with the epigraphist Max Fraenkel.⁸ He had taught Thucydides at Greifswald first in 1876 and ancient history since 1879. *Aus Kydathen* is the lasting contribution from this period.⁹ Mortimer Chambers has treated his long concern with Greek history.¹⁰ We have further evidence for his encouragement of ancient history from his decisive participation in the appointment of ancient historians at the universities where he taught. I mention only Eduard Meyer (1855–1930).¹¹ Wilamowitz's permanent contributions to our understanding of Greek philosophy and history will make his British connections particularly relevant to readers of this volume.

The Correspondents

Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff wrote rather often to British colleagues.¹² Usually it was a matter of a letter or two. The prolonged exchange

⁶ See my 'Hermann Diels (1848–1922) et la Science de l'Antiquité', *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique*, ed. William M. Calder III and Jaap Mansfeld, 45 (Vandoeuvres/Geneva, 1999), p. 5.

⁷ See Mortimer Chambers, 'The *Athenaion Politeia* after a Century', *Transitions to Empire: Essays in Greco-Roman History, 360–146 B.C., in honor of E. Badian*, ed. Robert W. Wallace and Edward M. Harris (Norman/London, 1996), pp. 211–25.

⁸ See William M. Calder III and Robert Kirstein, "'Der geniale Wildling" Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff und Max Fränkel Briefwechsel 1874–1878, 1900–1903', herausgegeben mit Kommentar, *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen I. Philologisch-Historische Klasse* (Jahrgang 1999), Nr. 5. The forthcoming edition of the Wilamowitz-Kaibel correspondence will reveal much of these interests.

⁹ See Mortimer Chambers, 'Wilamowitz on Thucydides', *Wilamowitz in Greifswald: Akten der Tagung zum 150. Geburtstag Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorffs in Greifswald, 19–22 Dezember 1998*, ed. William M. Calder III, Markus C. Dubischar, Martin Hose and Gregor Vogt-Spira (Hildesheim, 2000), pp. 504–23 and for *Aus Kydathen* Calder, 'Heroes Need Sewers Too: Wilamowitz' *Aus Kydathen*', *ibid.*, pp. 564–85.

¹⁰ Mortimer Chambers, 'Wilamowitz and Greek History', *Wilamowitz*, pp. 222–38.

¹¹ See my "'Credo gegen Credo; Arbeit gegen Arbeit; Anschauung gegen Anschauung" Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff contra Eduard Meyer', *Eduard Meyer Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers*, ed. William M. Calder III and Alexander Demandt (Leiden, 1990), pp. 41–73.

¹² For Wilamowitz and the English see George Huxley, 'Wilamowitz: Some Connexions with Britain and Ireland', *Wilamowitz*, pp. 538–57 with the remarks of