

ACADEMY, ROMAN PLATONIC — a humanistic school, one of many scholarly communities, a sort of scientific society, founded in the fifteenth century by Peter of Calabria (Pomponius Laetus). It was one of many scholarly circles in the epoch of humanism that cultivated the philosophy of Plato, neo-Platonism and Pythagoreanism. After the community created around George Gemistus Plethon, it was the second circle of propagators of anti-Christian Platonism (Platonism as cultivating pagan traditions).

The Roman Platonic Academy propagated *studia humaniora*, as they were called, and historical studies in the spirit of encyclopaedism. The Academy was made up of Peter of Calabria, Bartolomeus Sacchi (Platina), Callimachus (Philipp Buonaccorsi) and a disciple of Ficino — Conrad Celtes, among others.

The aim of the Roman Platonic Academy was to propagate Platonic ideas and to establish societies of a similar character in other centers throughout Europe. Callimachus, for example, was very active in Poland, and in 1490 he founded a scientific society in Kraków under the name of the *Sodalitas Vistulana* which was composed of professors from the University of Kraków. He also played an indirect role in establishing Platonic views in Hungary where he stayed in 1483 and 1484.

Conrad Celtes, a typical wandering humanist, was fascinated by the idea of establishing small learned communities. He was active in Heidelberg, Mainz, Vienna, Ingolstadt and Kraków. His disciples included John Aesticampianus and Lawrence Corvinus, who in turn were the teachers of Copernicus. Wherever possible, he created societies resembling the Academy of Florence. Over the years these societies would take in their net the entire life of scholarly Latin Europe, developing the ideas outlined in Ficino's writings. Celtes received his philosophical and philological formation in Italy. He studied in Florence under Ficino, in Padua under Marco Musuro, and in Rome under Peter of Calabria. He thought that the proper line in philosophy had been indicated by Plato and Pythagoras; only neo-Platonic philosophy provides the right model for establishing the relations between the domain of natural knowledge and the domain that can only be accessed on the plane of grace, namely, the relations between metaphysics, and theology or mysticism. He was convinced that this conception was in reality the one most in harmony with Christian spiritualism. The philosophy of being, according to him, would be the best introduction to theology and mysticism. He was also strongly influenced by Seneca's Stoicism. Celtes, like many other humanists of the fifteenth century, was critical of scholastic philosophy and accused it of not studying what is real but rather studying mere abstractions and the mind's fictional constructs. An invitation to Celtes' first lecture at the University in Ingolstadt has been preserved, and it appears to be a kind of antischolastic manifesto (some of his texts suggest that he identified scholasticism with the *via moderna*). Celtes also worked in Hellenistic and Hebrew studies. To this end, he taught Hebrew and Greek with Rudolf Agricola in Heidelberg (in 1486), then taught the fundamentals of these languages in Leipzig until the arrival there of a Greek teacher — Prianus Capotius. In 1493 he took the position of rector of the cathedral school in Regensburg.

The next academic from Peter of Calabria's school was the philosopher and philologist Bartolomeus Sacchi (Platina). In his view, we may find many of the Platonic and neopagan views characteristic of the Roman Platonic Academy. Platina was Marsilio Ficino's teacher of Greek. He regarded practical questions, especially questions of law and morality, as the most important philosophical questions. He sung the praises of the Romans, since he saw

them as the most zealous spokesmen for useful knowledge.

The Roman Academic Academy was an organization whose program included being open to contacts with other centers. It maintained contact with the Florentine Academy through Callimachus whom Ficino called a "brother in Plato", and with Cardinal Bessarion, Marsilio Ficino, and Pico della Mirandola.

The *sodalitas quirinalis* was a group of persons around Peter of Calabria who apparently supported a materialistic philosophy. Plato's radical spiritualism was regarded critically by all who were dissatisfied with Plato's positions on the grounds of anthropology. Callimachus did not accept radical Platonic spiritualism as he could not accept the division and radical opposition of soul and body that is fundamental to Platonism. He did not completely deny it, however, but rather he was a disciple of Plato who put question marks on some of Plato's doctrines. We may see in Callimachus' views, as in the youthful Ficino, a certain inclination to Epicureanism.

Peter of Calabria's Roman Academic Academy was criticized and persecuted in 1458 by Church authorities because its opinions were perceived as neopagan. The authorities drew on a work by George Trebizond (Georgius Trapezuntius), *Comparationes duorum philosophorum*, which was written earlier (in 1464 — perhaps written by order).

G. Bauch, *Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Ingolstadt*, Mn, L 1901; E. Garin, *La filosofia*, I, Mi 1947; idem, *L'umanesimo italiano. Filosofia e vita civile nel Rinascimento*, Bari 1947, 1965³; J. Zathy, *Jak patrzeć na Kallimacha. Uwagi w związku z wierszem do Bessariona* [How to look at Callimachus. Remarks in connection with the verse to Bessarion], *Kwartalnik Historyczny* [Historical Quarterly] 73 (1966) n. 1, 111–113.

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