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978-1-107-10588-1 - Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science: Histories of Philosophy in England, c. 1640–1700

Dmitri Levitin

Frontmatter

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ANCIENT WISDOM IN THE AGE OF THE NEW SCIENCE

Seventeenth-century England has long been heralded as the birthplace of a so-called ‘new’ philosophy. Yet what contemporaries might have understood by ‘old’ philosophy has been little appreciated. In this book Dmitri Levitin examines English attitudes to ancient philosophy in unprecedented depth, demonstrating the centrality of engagement with the history of philosophy to almost all educated persons, whether scholars, clerics, or philosophers themselves, and aligning English intellectual culture closely to that of continental Europe. Drawing on a vast array of sources, Levitin challenges the assumption that interest in ancient ideas was limited to out-of-date ‘ancients’ or was in some sense ‘pre-enlightened’; indeed, much of the intellectual justification for the new philosophy came from re-writing its history. At the same time, the deep investment of English scholars in pioneering forms of late humanist erudition led them to develop some of the most innovative narratives of ancient philosophy in early modern Europe.

DMITRI LEVITIN is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. Previously, he was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and of the Centre for Research in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, also in Cambridge. He has also held positions at the Folger Library and at the University of Edinburgh.

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Acknowledgements

This book began life as a doctoral thesis, researched and written while I was a member of Selwyn College, Cambridge, between October 2008 and September 2010. But as with any first monograph, its gestation lies further back, with the teachers who first inspired me to pursue the study of early modern intellectual history. In that respect, I am deeply grateful to David Smith, Richard Serjeantson, Quentin Skinner, Sylvana Tomaselli, and the late István Hont. Selwyn College quite rightly has a fine reputation as a centre for early modern history, and I was fortunate to be based there as both an undergraduate and graduate student. As I completed my PhD research, I was appointed to a Research Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge – in an age when specialised research in the humanities is increasingly threatened, that institution has offered a near-ideal venue for scholarship, which it is my pleasure and privilege to acknowledge.

While at Trinity, I have been particularly fortunate to have unrestricted access to the shelves in the Wren Library, and I must offer my deepest thanks to David McKitterick and his brilliant staff at the Library for all their assistance. As the list of manuscripts and *libri annotati* in the Bibliography indicates, I am also extremely grateful to the staff of many other libraries for affording me access to their collections and for assistance in using them. Special thanks are due to the staff in the Rare Books Room in Cambridge University Library, the Rare Books and Manuscripts Reading Rooms in the British Library, and the Special Collections section of the Bodleian Library. Final tweaks have been made while a Fellow at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities in Cambridge; many thanks are due to Simon Goldhill and everyone else at the Centre for allowing me to continue to pursue my research.

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Abbreviations

<i>Alum. Cantab.</i>	<i>Alumni Cantabrigienses</i> , part I: <i>from the earliest times to 1751</i> , eds., J. Venn and J. A. Venn (4 vols, Cambridge, 1922–27)
<i>Ath. Ox.</i>	Anthony à Wood, <i>Athenae Oxonienses</i> , ed. J. Foster (4 vols, London, 1891–92)
<i>BJHP</i>	<i>British Journal for the History of Philosophy</i>
<i>BJHS</i>	<i>British Journal for the History of Science</i>
BL	British Library, London
Bod.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
<i>Boyle Correspondence</i>	<i>The correspondence of Robert Boyle</i> , eds., M. Hunter, A. Clericuzio, and L. M. Principe (6 vols, London, 2001)
<i>Boyle Works</i>	<i>The works of Robert Boyle</i> , eds., M. Hunter and E. B. Davis (14 vols, London, 1999–2000)
<i>BUH</i>	<i>Bibliothèque universelle et historique</i> , ed. J. Le Clerc (26 vols, Amsterdam, 1686–1702)
CKS	Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, Kent
CMG	<i>Corpus Medicorum Graecorum</i> (Leipzig and Berlin, 1907–)
<i>CTC</i>	<i>Catalogus translationum et commentariorum: Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin translations and commentaries</i> , eds., P. O. Kristeller et al., (Washington, DC, 1960–)
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DK	<i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , eds., H. Deils and W. Kranz, 11th edn (3 vols, Zurich and Berlin, 1952)
DL	Diogenes Laërtius, <i>Lives of eminent philosophers</i> . Unless otherwise stated, all English translations are from <i>Lives of eminent</i>

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	<i>philosophers</i> , ed. and trans. R. D. Hickeys (Cambridge [MA], 1931). Greek is taken from <i>Lives of eminent philosophers</i> , ed. T. Dorandi (Cambridge, 2013)
<i>ESM</i>	<i>Early Science and Medicine</i>
<i>ESTC</i>	English Short Title Catalogue
Folger	Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC
Hankins and Palmer	<i>The recovery of ancient philosophy in the Renaissance</i> , eds., J. Hankins and A. Palmer (Florence, 2008)
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>Hobbes Correspondence</i>	<i>The correspondence of Thomas Hobbes</i> , ed. N. Malcolm (2 vols, Oxford, 1994)
<i>IHR</i>	<i>Intellectual History Review</i>
<i>JHI</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
<i>JHP</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Philosophy</i>
<i>JWCI</i>	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
K	<i>Κλαύδιον Γαληνοῦ Ἄπαντα</i> = <i>Claudii Galeni opera Omnia</i> , ed. C. G. Kühn (20 vols, Leipzig, 1821–33) [=CMG, 1–20]
<i>LL</i>	<i>The library of John Locke</i> , eds., J. Harrison and P. Laslett (Oxford, 1971)
<i>Locke Correspondence</i>	<i>The correspondence of John Locke</i> , ed. E. S. de Beer (8 vols, Oxford, 1976–89)
Malcolm	Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , ed. N. Malcolm (3 vols, Oxford, 2012)
<i>Newton Correspondence</i>	<i>The correspondence of Isaac Newton</i> , ed. H. W. Turnbull (7 vols, Cambridge, 1959–77)
<i>Newton Library</i>	<i>The library of Isaac Newton</i> , ed. J. Harrison (Cambridge, 1978)
<i>NRRS</i>	<i>Notes and Records of the Royal Society</i>
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>OFB</i>	<i>The Oxford Francis Bacon</i> (2000–)
<i>Oldenburg Correspondence</i>	<i>The correspondence of Henry Oldenburg</i> , eds. and trans., A. R. Hall and M. B. Hall (Madison, 1965–86)
Pines	Maimonides, <i>The guide of the perplexed</i> , ed. and trans. S. Pines (2 vols, Chicago, 1963)
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1857–1912)

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Santinello I	<i>Models of the history of philosophy, vol. 1: from its origins in the Renaissance to the “historia philosophica”, eds., G. Santinello, C. W. T. Blackwell, and P. Weller (Dordrecht, 1993)</i>
Santinello II	<i>Models of the history of philosophy, vol. II: from the Cartesian age to Brucker, eds., G. Santinello and G. Piaia (Dordrecht, 2010)</i>
SHPS	<i>Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science</i>
System 1845	Ralph Cudworth, <i>The true intellectual system of the universe</i> , ed. J. L. Mosheim, trans. J. Harrison (3 vols, London, 1845)

For the books of the Bible, standard abbreviations are used, and references and citations are from the Authorized Version, unless stated otherwise. Classical texts cited in the notes are only referred to by their short titles, usually as given in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, eds., S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (4th edn, Oxford, 2005), and the appropriate book/section number (the editions used were those of the Loeb, Teubner, or Oxford Classical Texts series). Only in those cases when the text is relatively obscure, or when I have relied on a specific translation, have I offered a full reference to the relevant modern edition, which is then also listed in the ‘Printed primary sources’ section of the Bibliography.

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Dates are in the Julian calendar (with the year dated from 1 January).

Quotations are given in the original spelling (with expanded contractions signalled), with the exception that medial ‘u’ (for ‘v’) and initial ‘v’ (for ‘u’) have been normalised. Manuscript transcriptions are diplomatic, with the following symbols used: insertions are signalled by <chevrons>, deletions with a ~~striketrough~~, underlining as in the original.

Bibliographical references are all repeated in the Bibliography. First references to primary sources are given in full, with the short title used thereafter. In the interests of economy, first references to secondary sources are given in a contracted version, with a short title used thereafter. So what appears in the Bibliography as: Allen, D. C. ‘The predecessors of Champollion’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 104 (1960), 527–47, appears first in the text as: Allen, ‘Predecessors of Champollion’ (1960), and thereafter as: Allen, ‘Predecessors’.

Style is academic, but I have attempted, to the best of my ability, to avoid the jargon that is so prevalent in the modern humanities. I make no apologies for the extensive scholarly apparatus, but I have attempted to confine discussion of secondary literature to the footnotes, unless it is particularly significant for my interpretation. An exception to this is the introductory first chapter: since many of my subsequent arguments depend on a revisionist account of seventeenth-century European and English intellectual culture more generally, it seemed preferable to set out that account at the start, rather than to allude to it constantly in the chapters themselves.