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CARTE POSTALE

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M ^{An der} Herrn Professor Feichmüller
Universität Dorpat



Kuprie

Pension Tinner, Villa Belfield Menton 5/2/82

Dear Sir - Received your kind and interesting
letter - which I hope to answer soon more at
length - just as I was inserting some refer-
ences to the 1st Feb. in the notes to the
collection of essays which I am just sending to
you. With regard to your most friendly
offer, I do not think it would be fair on
my part to avail myself of it until I
have more leisure for studies unconnected
with my present work, which is to prepare
a succinct account of the Neo-Platonic Philosophy.
But if there is anything in your French &
Esp. bearing on them I should like ex-
tremely to see it. I note the writings
which from their titles I think would
afford the most agreeable relief from my
more technical studies are the "Muster-
buch" and the "Wesen d. L." These
I feel very anxious to see, and could
always find both time & space for.
With kindest thanks, I am truly yours
Alfred Bressan

Do you recommend Müller's Platonism?

I send you a little thing of mine reprinted from Mind

Pension Turner, Menton, France 109
23 Feb. 1882

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for the books you have so kindly sent me, as also for the interesting remarks contained in your letter.

I have read the Anzeigen through, but as yet only the first 40 pages of the *Monatsschrift* - enough however to appreciate the simplicity and charm of the style.

I am to a certain extent prepared for your philosophical standpoint by what I have read of Lotze - the first volume of his *Microcosmos*, his *Logik*, and (in French) his *Psychologie Physique*, to say nothing of Leibniz. Herbert I know only through Zeller's and other histories and Trendelenburg's *L. U.* I can promise at any rate to make a careful study of your *Metaphysik*, whether it convinces,

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me or not.) My philosophical training
has not been of a kind very favorable
to the acceptance of any new metaphysical
system, derived as it was mostly from Home
and his successors in England France and
Germany. The result of all inquiry seemed
to be absolute phenomenism - if that can be
called phenomenism which looks on ap-
pearances as the sole reality. It always
seemed to me that thinkers like Auguste
Comte and Herbert Spencer had some of
the old Scholastic's shell sticking to them
in the shape of an 'unknowable reality' and
I have with satisfaction that their younger
successors are getting rid of this. But, as
Lithers is interpreted, paradoxical has not
attracted me. It seemed not only an
unverifiable hypothesis, but also one which
tried to make us swallow the difficulty by

chopping it up into very small pieces. The
difficulty I mean is that one subject should
become the object of another. Whatever em-
braces the bones and brings them together
will end by suppressing their real individ-
uality, and so we return to the old pan-
theism. I should also be disposed to de-
ny the especial modernness of this conception.
Did not Leibniz reach it by combining the
subjective and stoic tendencies of the
17th century with the individualism of re-
vived Aristotelianism? If it came to him
from Gerdano Bruno (as was the case according
to Dühring who is fond of discovering things)
the derivation from Atomism combined with
Aristotelianism would be still more obvious.
I hope to get some light on these topics from
your book. My work on the Greek Phil-
osophers, of which the article I sent you
together with its sequel will form the

including chapters, will, I hope, appear
next July or August, when I will send
you a copy. It will be extremely flattering
to me should you write a notice of it.
With regard to Albertus and Aquinas I
followed Hauréau in designating them
as Thomists. Before reading his Philo-
sophie Scolastique I was under the impression
that Aquinas at least stood as far from
William of Ockham by virtue of his conceit
realism as he was removed from Duns
Scotus on the other side by his Aristotelian-
ism. Hauréau, however, persuaded me
that the fundamental distinction was
between Realists and anti-Realists, Ock-
ham being merely the most consistent and
thoroughgoing of the latter; so that Thom-
ism might be used as a convenient
name for them all. Before reprinting

The passage in question, I must look up
what he says and relieve myself of the
responsibility by a reference to him. For
my own purpose it is quite enough that
the Schoolmen should have been divided
into a Platonist and an Aristotelian camp.
With regard to what I said about the
less maturity of the Greek mind, or what
is the same thing its absence of precocity,
I did not mean to deny that it might
produce abundant fruit at an early
age, but only that this fruit was of a very
ripe flavor. Whatever Euripides wrote
at 25, the earliest piece of his which
the grammarians thought worth selecting
for more careful preservation &c., if I
remember rightly the Alcædis written at
48; and to me it seems that the character
the quality of his poems does not shine

out in full splendour before the Greeks
must his best work. So with Sophocles,
there is still a certain awkwardness and
immaturity visible in the Antigone though
he wrote it at 50. Thucydides too cul-
minates in his 7th book but even the
characteristic excellences of Demosthenes, such as
they were took many years to develop.
Now the Orator is written in a thoroughly
Aristotelian style and one as it seems
to me widely different from that in
which he must have been trained - so
indeed we have good reason for believing
in Cicero's authority that he began
with popular dialogues, rhetorical exer-
cises and the like written in what
we English should call a rather gushing
style. His lectures on Rhetoric were
probably very different from our Rhetoric,

he need only have heard them on the
Academy to produce something quite dif-
ferent from the teaching of Demosthenes.
Now, let us suppose him not to have heard
that the Laws were published until his
return to Athens - even if we place that
event so early as you do, in 342 or 1, the
Orator as we have it might have been
written just before which would give his
mind 16 years more to ripen; if we agree
with the traditional account there would
be 5 years more; and he might very well
have written it at Pella. With
regard to the Octonies I can very well
believe it to be a school exercise, but
only if it came out of the Peripatetic school.
Plato's pupils were if I mistake not em-
ployed in making dichotomous divisions
in the style of the Sophists; and one

Must imagine such a revolutionary
idea as that of the Pterosaurs being,
so to speak, laid like a cuckoo's egg in
the Altonic nest - and in such a dry,
Arivelled form too. But I must
remember etc. non sis Minervam,
Amem inepte quingis Minervam docet
Place mine with cordial thanks

Yours very sincerely

A W Benson