

Bryn Mawr Classical Review

[BMCR 2013.05.24](#) on the BMCR blog

Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2013.05.24

Luc Brisson (ed.), *Platon. Oeuvres complètes (nouvelle édition revue; first published 2008)*. Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 2011. Pp. xxi, 2198. ISBN 9782081249370. €39.00 (pb).

Reviewed by José C. Baracat, Jr., Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (baracatjr@hotmail.com)

This 2011 edition of the French translation of Plato's works published under the general editorship of Luc Brisson exhibits few alterations compared to the 2008 edition. Since the first edition was not reviewed for BMCR, I will provide a succinct description of the work and then make some observations on the alterations to be found in the second edition. [1](#)

Both editions handily gather together all forty-five works ascribed to Plato, be they genuine, spurious, or dubious. Flammarion had published separately the twenty-nine dialogues of Plato which are usually considered genuine, and also all the letters, between 1987 and 2006: these translations were compiled for this book, with the addition of sixteen spurious and dubious works. All translations are preceded by short introductions and receive a very modest number of narrowly-focused notes. Since the chronology of Plato's works is a matter of some disagreement, Brisson arranges them in alphabetical order, instead of chronologically or according to the Stephanus pagination.

In its thirteen pages, the general introduction briefly surveys Plato's life and writings, modern editions of his work, the apocryphal and dubious dialogues, the chronology of his works and the doctrine they set out. Thirty annexes (genealogical trees, maps, Athens' political and economic organization, etc.), an index of concepts and names, an index of passages containing quotations from ancient authors, and finally an index of the authors quoted complete the volume.

Thirteen scholars were involved in this project,[2](#) but Luc Brisson's name is most prominent. He has translated twenty-six works and written both the general and the individual introductions (with the exception of that for the *Phaedo*, which was written by Monique Dixsaut).

In the 2011 edition I was able to identify only two alterations from the 2008 one. The first is the transference of the four pages with photographic reproductions[3](#) from the middle of the translation of the *First Alcibiades* to the end of the introduction. However, the pages with the reproductions remain unnumbered, so that when Brisson

refers to them in the introduction (p. XI-XII) he has to refer to p. XXIV, which is actually a blank page. The second alteration is the substitution of the title page and that of some of the annexes, which seemed to be enlarged photocopies and were of poor quality.

As Dufour already complained in his review of the 2008 edition, one misses, among the many annexes, a chronology of Plato's life, which was regularly printed in the individual Flammarion translations.

Some remarks regarding details of translation could be made,⁴ but they would not be numerous, grave or significant enough to cast a shadow over the magnitude of this work.

Notes:

1. For a proper review of the first edition, see Richard Dufour, *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 65 (2009), 562-4 (available at: [Érudit](#)).

2. Besides Brisson, the translators are: M. Canto-Sperber, N. L. Cordero, C. Dalimier, M. Dixsaut, L.-A. Dorion, F. Fronterotta, F. Ildefonse, G. Leroux, D. Loayza, C. Marboeuf, M. Narcy, and J.-F. Pradeau.

3. They show images of a second-century BC wooden tablet, a first or second-century AD papyrus, the ninth-century AD codex *Parisinus Graecus* 1807, and Stephanus' sixteenth-century edition of Plato's works.

4. I have the (possibly mistaken) impression that the translations published individually by Flammarion were reprinted in this single volume without revision, so that errors that occurred there persist here. Deviations from the Greek text of standard editions of Plato made by the translators are not noted here as they were noted there; consequently one has to return to the individual editions in order to know what they are (as Brisson himself advises us to do, p. XXIII). However, it is impossible to know where there are deviations in the translations of apocryphal and dubious works. As an example of an uncorrected error, or rather slip, we could note Monique Canto-Sperber's translation of the *Gorgias*: both her 1987 and 2008/2011 translations leave aside from text, without any warning, the καὶ μάχης of the dialogue's first sentence (πολέμου καὶ μάχης φασὶ χρῆναι, ὃ Σώκρατες, οὕτω μεταλαγχάνειν: "C'est le bon moment, Socrate, pour rejoindre le combat, à en croire la diction!"), although καὶ μάχης is in the texts of Burnet (OCT), Croiset (Belles Lettres), and Dodds (Oxford).

[Read comments on this review or add a comment](#) on the [BMCR](#) blog

Home	Read Latest	Archives	BMCR Blog	About BMCR	Review for BMCR	Commentaries	Support BMCR
----------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------

BMCR, Bryn Mawr College, 101 N. Merion Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA 19010