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THE NATURE OF APULEIUS' *DE PLATONE*

Justin A. Stover

Apuleius is a puzzling author, and amid his vast output, his introduction to Plato is a puzzling text. So puzzling, indeed, that almost a century of scholarship was unwilling to accept its attribution to the sophist of Madauros.¹ In the first stage of the renaissance of Apuleian studies of the past few decades, his Plato remained overlooked, in the shadow of his brilliant *Metamorphoses* and his dazzling rhetorical works, his *Apology*, the *Florida*, and the *De deo Socratis*.² The last years have seen a turning of the tide, with renewed attention to both the 'whole Apuleius' and his specifically philosophical work.³ One important development has been the conclusive demonstration of the work's authenticity. But, just because it has been demonstrated to be authentically Apuleian, does not mean that we have actually comprehended the nature of the work. In this study, I return to the manuscripts of the text

¹ The lineaments of the debate have been traced by S. J. Harrison, *Apuleius: A Latin Sophist*, Oxford, 200, 174–80. The most substantial analyses remain those of J. Redfors, *Echtheitskritische Untersuchungen der apuleischen Schriften De Platone und De mundo*, Lund, 1960, who concludes that the problem is an *unlösbares Echtheitsproblem*, and A. Marchetta, *L'autenticità apuleiana del De Mundo*, Rome, 1991, who supported the authenticity of the *De mundo*. In 2016, M. Kestemont and I published a computational sylometric study demonstrating definitively the authenticity of the *philosophica*: 'Reassessing the Apuleian Corpus: A Computational Approach to Authenticity,' *CQ* 66, 2016, 645-672.

² E. g. J. J. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius' Golden Ass*, Berkeley, 1985; C. Marangoni, *Il mosaico della memoria: Studi sui Florida e sulle Metamorfosi di Apuleio*, Padua, 2000; R.H.F. Carver, *The Protean Ass: The Metamorphoses of Apuleius from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Oxford, 2007; and J.H. Gaisser, *The Fortunes of Apuleius and the Golden Ass: A Study in Transmission and Reception*, Princeton, 2008.

³ Pioneering in this regard were B.L. Hijmans's two lengthy studies in *ANRW*, 'Apuleius philosophus Platonicus', II 36.1, 1987, 395–475 and 'Apuleius Orator: *Pro se de Magia* and *Florida*', II 34.2, 1994, 1708–84; followed by G. Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius: Apuleius and the Second Sophistic*, Leiden, 1997; and Harrison, *Apuleius: A Latin Sophist*. The last few years have seen R. Fletcher, *Apuleius' Platonism: The Impersonation of Philosophy*, Cambridge, 2014; C. Moreschini, *Apuleius and the Metamorphoses of Platonism*, Turnhout, 2015; my own *A New Work by Apuleius: The Lost Third Book of the De Platone*, Oxford, 2016; R. Fowler, *Imperial Plato. Albinus, Maximus, Apuleius*, Las Vegas, 2016; C. Hoenig, *Plato's Timaeus in the Latin Tradition*, Cambridge, 2018;

commonly known as the *De Platone* to show how little we actually know of its structure and nature. It has been taken for granted for more than a century of scholarship that the work is entitled *De Platone et eius dogmate*, and that it was structured in two books covering physics and ethics respectively, with a prolegomenon on Plato's biography, and that it may have lost a third book in transmission, which would have covered logic. None of these assumptions, in fact, are well founded. I first demonstrate that *De Platone et eius dogmate* is not the archetypal title of the work, and then that the archetypal title is not authentic. I then show that the first book was subject to a codicological mutilation, and show that the idea of a third book goes back to the archetype of the corpus. Hence all we know for certain is that the work's title is *not De Platone et eius dogmate*, that book 2 is complete, and that it originally had a third book. I then make a tentative suggestion toward a new understanding of the work's nature and architecture, grounded in what the text actually says. Finally, I conclude with a brief consideration of the impact of this theory on the Latin summary of fourteen Platonic dialogues which I edited and attributed to Apuleius in 2016.⁴

* * *

First, a summary of the manuscript evidence.⁵ The work on Plato, which I will refer to as *De Platone* as an accurate enough description of the contents, is transmitted as part of a

⁴ Stover, *A New Work*. See also J. Stover, Y. Winter, M. Koppel, and M. Kestemont, 'Computational authorship verification method attributes a new work to a major 2nd century African author', *JASIST* 67, 2016, 239-42 (doi:10.1002/asi.23460); M. Bonazzo, 'Plato Systematized: Doing Philosophy in the Imperial Schools,' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 73, 2017, 215-36; and my 'Roger Bacon and the New Apuleius', *Classical Philology* 115, 2020, 109-12.

⁵ I rely on the catalogue R. Klibansky and F. Regen, Frank Regen, *Die Handschriften der philosophischen Werke des Apuleius. Ein Beitrag zur Überlieferungsgeschichte*, Göttingen, 1993, for the manuscripts I have not personally examined; hereafter, this catalogue will be cited as Klibansky/Regen. On the text and transmission of the *philosophica*, see P. Thomas, "Étude sur la tradition manuscrite des oeuvres philosophiques d'Apulée", *Bull. Acad. Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres*, Brussels, 1907, 103-47; L. D. Reynolds, 'Apuleius. Opera philosophica', *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, Oxford, 1983, 16-18; G. Magnaldi, 'Antiche glosse e correzioni nel De deo Socratis di Apuleio', *RFIC* 139, 2011,

corpus of Apuleian and ps-Apuleian philosophical works, consisting of the *De deo Socratis*, the work under discussion, the *De mundo*, and the pseudonymous *Asclepius*. Unlike Apuleius' literary works, which are transmitted by the slimmest of threads, this corpus has a fairly robust and early transmission. The manuscripts fall into three families, as I have argued elsewhere. The first, **α**, is the earliest, consisting principally of:

B – Brussels, KBR 10054-56.⁶ Dating to the ninth century, this is the oldest and long held to be the most authoritative manuscript of the corpus.

M – Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 621, s. xii⁷

V – Vatican, BAV Vat. lat. 3385, s. x⁸

The second family, **δ**, is later, less reliable, although more widely disseminated.

F - Florence, BML S. Marco 284, s. xi⁹

L - Florence, *BML* plut. 76,26, s. xii/xiii¹⁰

101-17; eadem, 'Antiche note di lettura in Apul. Plat. 193, 223, 242, 248, 253, 256 e Socr. 120', *RFIC* 139, 2011, 394-412; eadem, 'Tracce di antiche omissioni-integrazioni nel De Platone di Apuleio', in *Vestigia notitiae. Scritti in memoria di Michelangelo Giusta*, Alessandria, 2012, 351-65; eadem, 'Usus di copisti ed emendatio nel *De Platone* di Apuleio', *MD* 68, 2012, 153-72; eadem 'Antiche tracce di apparato nel testo tradito di Apuleio filosofo', *Lexis* 30, 2012, 478-92; eadem 'Il *De Platone* di Apuleio: lezioni tradite e congetture', *BStudLat* 42, 2012, 570-7; eadem, 'La parola-segnale nel cod. Laur. plut. 76.36 (L) di Apuleio filosofo', *Lexis* 31, 2013, 347-357; eadem, 'Loci vexati nel *De Platone* di Apuleio (190, 194, 206, 219, 229, 230, 241, 247, 252)', *Exemplaria Classica* 18, 2014, 55-71; eadem, 'Verità e apparenza nella tradizione manoscritta di Apuleio filosofo', in P. Galand and E. Malaspina (eds.), *Vérité et apparence. Mélanges en l'honneur de Carlos Lévy offerts par ses amis et ses disciples*, Turnhout, 2016, 517-535; eadem with M. Stefani, 'Antiche correzioni e integrazioni nel testo tradito del *De mundo* di Apuleio', *Lexis* 34, 2016, 329-339. My own views are laid out in 'Apuleius and the Codex Reginensis' *Exemplaria Classica* 19, 2015, 131-54, and *A New Work*.

⁶ Klibansky/Regen no. 8, pp. 60-2.

⁷ Klibansky/Regen, no. 51, pp. 90-1.

⁸ Klibansky/Regen, no. 100, pp. 119-20.

⁹ Klibansky/Regen no. 27, pp. 74-5.

¹⁰ Klibansky/Regen no. 23, pp. 71-2

N - Leiden, VLQ 10, s. xi¹¹

P - Paris lat. 6634, s. xi¹²

U - Urb. lat. 1147, s. xiii¹³

C - Cambridge, CCC 71, s. xiii¹⁴

H - London, Harley 3969, s. xii/xiii.¹⁵ **C** and **H** are both contaminated and related to one another.

There is a third family of a manuscripts, **φ**, which consists solely of one manuscript and its two derivatives. This family is distinguished by alone including the summary of fourteen Platonic dialogues after the *De mundo* (in **R**, the first lines only in **Z**, omitted in **z**).

R – Vatican, Reg. Lat. 1572, s. xiii¹⁶

Z – Venice, Marciana, lat. VI. 81 (3036), s. xiv.¹⁷ **Z** is an apograph of **R**, but with numerous omissions, which were later supplied from a **δ** manuscript.

z – Venice, Marciana, lat. Z. 467, s. xv (1557).¹⁸ **z** was copied from **Z**, supplements and all, and hence offers a hybrid **φδ** text.

This, in general, is the manuscript basis on which the recent critical edition of the text, Giuseppina Magnaldi's 2020 *OCT*, was produced.¹⁹

* * *

¹¹ Klibansky Regen, no. 42, pp. 83-84.

¹² Klibansky/Regen, no. 65, pp. 99-100.

¹³ Klibansky/Regen, no. 92, pp. 112-3.

¹⁴ Klibansky/Regen, no. 10, p. 63.

¹⁵ Klibansky/Regen, no. 47, pp. 85-7.

¹⁶ Klibansky/Regen, no. 90, pp. 110-1.

¹⁷ Klibansky/Regen, no. 102, pp. 120-22.

¹⁸ Klibansky/Regen, no. 103, pp. 122-23.

¹⁹ G. Magnaldi, ed. *Apulei Opera Philosophica* (Oxford 2020).

We can learn less from these manuscripts than is generally thought. The first myth is that we know the original title of the treatise. We have no explicit reference to the text from antiquity, and therefore no secure knowledge of the title under which the text was known for the first centuries of its circulation. Instead, we are dependent on the manuscripts. The text has been edited for a long time under the title *De Platone et eius dogmate*, including in Magnaldi's edition. This is not, however, an archetypal title. It occurs first in the oldest and most authoritative manuscript, **B**. This ninth-century codex is remarkable for its fidelity to its exemplar, including, for example, *scriptura continua* for most of the *De Platone*. As a scribal production, it was carefully thought out. The main scribe left four lines blank at the beginning of the *De deo Socratis* on f. 2r, to leave space for the rubricator to add the title and first line, which he did capitals and uncials respectively. After the so-called 'False Preface', he left another four lines, for the explicit/incipit and the first line of the text proper (f. 3v). Three lines are then left blank at the end of the text on 16v, into which the *explicit* of the *De deo Socratis* and the *incipit* of the *Asclepius* was subsequently added, either by the scribe, the rubricator, or another corrector (the ink is the same dark brown as the main text). The end of the *Asclepius* comes just four lines into f. 38r. The rest of the folio is left blank, and later hand has added a simple *Explicat* [sic] to the last line of the text. That brings us to the *De Platone* (f. 38v). The scribe left no space whatsoever for a title, beginning the first line of the text with uncials. It seems likely that these were executed by the main scribe, since he left no indentation for the initial P, as he had for the initial on f. 2r. In the top margin, however, we find a fairly crude rubricated title in rustic capitals, DE PLATONE ET EIUS DOGMATE. Importantly, the writing of this title slopes slightly downward, as it is not written on a ruled portion of the page. The hand is also absolutely not that of the rubricator of the *De deo Socratis*: every letter-form is different, especially the *L*, the *T*, the *D*, the *I*, and the *S*. What

this means is plain: the archetype from which **B** was copied and which **B** faithfully represents did not have a title or incipit at the beginning of our text.

When we arrive at the end of book 1 on 47r, there is no division whatsoever or signal that a new book has begun, a feature that we will discuss further below. At the end of book 2, however, on f. 60v, the main text ends just five lines into the page. The rest is devoted to a large and calligraphic explicit/incipit:

APULEI MADAU
RENSIS DE HABITU^DNE PLATONIS
LIBER II EXPLICIT
INCIPIT LIBER III FELICITER

Unlike the title at the beginning, this was undoubtedly a planned feature of the manuscript. It must also be archetypal: there is no way anyone could have known that this represented the *end* of book 2, since at the time the manuscript was written there was no evidence whatsoever for the *beginning* of book 2. (Note also that the *H* of *habitudine* has the archaic *K* form). Two manuscripts related to (and likely derived from) **B**, **V** and **M**, solve this problem by manipulating the book numbers, transmit the same title. Hence, we do have an archetypal title transmitted in α , but it is not *De Platone et eius dogmate*, but rather *De habitudine Platonis*.

This is backed up by other manuscripts. First we have Reg. lat. 1572 (**R**), whose status remains under considerable debate. I have argued that it represents an independent witness to the archetype of the corpus; Moreschini saw it merely as a ‘learned recension’; and Magnaldi views it as the work of editor, but one who must have had some access to the archetype.²⁰ Moreschini’s view is clearly untenable, for the reasons adduced by both Magnaldi and me. Whether or not we count **R** as truly independent is not relevant to the

²⁰ Magnaldi, ed. cit. xi-xii. See also M. Stefani, ‘Il contributo del Ms. Vat. Reg. Lat. 1572 (R) alla constitutio textus di Apul. *mund.* 369 e 372’, *Rivista di Cultura Classica e Medioevale* 59, 2017, 343-356.

discussion at hand, since it must have had access in some form to the archetype and shares some unique features with **B** alone. At the beginning of the text (f. 47r), it contains a planned and rubricated title *Apuleii Madaurensis liber de Platonis dogmate*.²¹ On f. 64r, at the end of book 2, **R** contains (once again planned and rubricated) the same explicit/incipit as **B**: *Apulei maudarensis [sic] de habitudine platonis liber secundus explicit. incipit liber tertius feliciter*.

R confirms what we had deduced about the archetype from **B**: it did not contain the title *De Platone et eius dogmate* at the beginning, while the *explicit* of book 2 transmitted the title *De habitudine Platonis* along with an incipit for a mysterious book 3.

Let us turn now to the δ tradition. This tradition, which encompasses the majority of manuscripts, is independent of **B** and its relations. It offers us no additional clarity. Of the seven manuscripts of this family used by Magnaldi, one is imperfect at the start, **H**, and four offer no title at all in the original hand, **NPUC**. That leaves only **L** which transmits *Incipit apuleus de dogmate platonis*, and the deeply contaminated and extensively emended **F**, which has APULEII MADAURENSIS DE HABITUDINE DOCTRINAQUE ET NATIVITATE PLATONIS PHILOSOPHI LIBER .II. [sic] INCIPIT FELICITER. **F** shares material and readings with both **B** and **R**. On the surface it looks very much like this is a learned carryover from their explicit to book 2, with the word *habitudine*, with the clever idea of solving the third book problem by making the whole of the text book 2, or a sequel to the book 1 of the *De deo Socratis*.

Taken together, all of this evidence suggests that there was no titles, incipits or explicits present in the exemplar of the δ tradition. At any rate, it certainly did not have the title *De Platone et eius dogmate*. Hence, there is no reason whatsoever to believe that the archetype of the tradition generally transmitted the title *De Platone et eius dogmate*, but instead probably transmitted no title at all the beginning. Indeed, it may well have been

²¹ Incidentally, this title is not in capitals as presented in Magnaldi's *apparatus criticus* (ed. cit. p. 37).

mutilated at the beginning of book 1, since it contains no address to Faustinus, unlike the openings of book 2 and the *De mundo*; but if it was supposed to transmit a title, that title was *De habitudine Platonis*, as found in the undoubtedly archetypal explicit to book 2. *De Platone et eius dogmate*, *De dogmate Platonis*, and the like, probably all came from deduction from the text itself, namely the important passage toward the beginning of book 1 (1.4): *Quae autem consulta, quae δόγματα graece licet dici, ad utilitatem hominum vivendique et intellegendi ac loquendi rationem extulerit, hinc ordiemur.*

So far we have established that *De habitudine Platonis* is the only transmitted archetypal title. Unfortunately there is no way it is the original title, not only because it is not exactly appropriate for the text that we have, but also because it is patently copied from the first two words of the transmitted text (1.1): *Platoni habitudo*. This means that the text was already lacking its original title at the time the archetype was copied, and either the scribe of the archetype or that of a prearchetypal manuscript concocted a new title from the incipit of the work. This fact may lend further support to the idea that the text is in fact mutilated at the beginning of book 1: a minor calamity which cut off a short preface addressed to Faustinus could well have eliminated the title as well.

The foregoing discussion may well seem to be merely niggling and pedantic, but it has broader ramifications for our understanding of the text. Thinking of it as the *De Platone et eius dogmate* has naturally lead readers into thinking of the text as a two-part production: a section on Plato's life (*De Platone*) and a section on his doctrine ([de] *eius dogmate*). If however there is no way that that title is original, there is consequently no reason to assume that the text takes that structure.

* * *

Let us turn now to a closely related question, the division of books 1 and 2. Indeed, perusal of Klibansky and Regen's catalogue reveals that the division of the *De Platone* into two books

is rare across the manuscript tradition. **B** is not as helpful a guide here, as it has suffered evident textual tampering. As it stands now, the text of the ending of book 1 and beginning of book 2 reads as follows:

f. 47r: verumenimverotuncexitio *conrumpit*; Mora lisphilosophiae

The words in italics are a later edition, replacing a text which has been thoroughly abraded and replaced (to judge from the script) at a considerably later date. The other α manuscripts give us a clue as to what **B** originally contained.

M, f. 58v: enim vero tunc ex initium copo· (with *ris* added in a much later hand to make *corporis*) and then a new line with *Moralis* beginning with a capital letter.

V, f. 50r: vero tunc exitium cōpo·Moralis ...

What all the α manuscripts share is the capital *M* as the sole mark of division, and **MV** suggest that the abraded text in **B** was *umcōpo*. The δ manuscripts contain the same reading:

P, f. 90v: copomoralis philosophiē caput est fasutine fili

F, f. 24r: Verum enimvero tunc exitium copomoralis philosophiē caput est faustine fili

Significantly, **P** and **F** do not even preserve the relic of a division with the nonsense word *copomoralis*. Just as we saw with the later hand in **B**, some δ manuscripts attempted to restore some sense. To give one example:

L, f. 51r: Verumenimvero tunc exitum cupio moralis philosophie caput...

Obviously the suicidal *exitum cupio* does not make a tremendous amount of sense, but at least it is construable Latin phrase. More radically, the unreliable pair **CH** do transmit a division between the books, but not a book division. At the end of book 1, **H** transmits a sort of *explicit/incipit*, albeit one which deletes the last four and a half words of book 1: *Superior de naturali philosophia locutus est. Et modo de philosophia morali* (f. 77v).²² But it is clear that

²² C only transmits a *hinc* before the *moralis* with which the text begins (f. 32r).

this is not intended to be a book division, since it has Apuleius' *liber* on Plato end with the conclusion to bk 2 (f. 83v): *explicit liber primus de secta Platonica*, followed by the the *De mundo* beginning *Incipit secundus secundum Theophrastum*. This clarifies that the earlier quasi-explicit of book 1 was not in fact an explicit of all, but a mere transitional statement, meant to divide what the editor thought was two different sections of a single book.

The only stemmatically significant manuscript that preserves some form of division between the two books is **R** (54ra):

tib; dividitur.verumenimvero
tunc exitium corporis.

[3 lines blank]
/f. 54rb/
Moralis philosophiae caput
Est faustine filii

Corporis instead of the nonsense *copo* is almost certainly scribal innovation as we have seen with *cupio* in **L**. The fact that the beginning of book 2 commences with a new column is not on its own significant, but only when paired with the fact that the manuscript leaves three blank lines following *corporis*. Such lacunae generally indicate either missing rubrics or missing material in the exemplar.²³ Since all the other rubrics in the manuscript are in fact supplied, the latter explanation is preferable.

The only manuscripts to actually transmit a book division are late. Leiden, Gronovius 108, which Klibansky and Regen claim is closely related (if not derived from) **B**²⁴, contains on f. 33v the title to book 1:

²³ See Stover, "Space as Paratext: Scribal Practice in the Medieval Edition of Ammianus Marcellinus", in Mariken Teeuwen & Irene van Renswoude (eds.), *The annotated book in the early Middle Ages: practices of reading and writing*, Turnhout, 2017, 305-322.

²⁴ Klibansky/Regen, no. 37, pp. 81-2.

apulei madaurensis platonici discipuli de platone et eius dogmate liber incipit i,
This is followed by an *explicit primus. Incipit secundus* on f. 42v, and *apulei madaurensis de
habitudine platonis liber secundus explicit. incipit tertius* on 56v. **Zz**, the two Venice
manuscripts, both contain an actual explicit/incipit marking the book divisions, but **Z** is
derived from **R**, and **z** from **Z**.

What then was in the archetype? The **δ** manuscripts' reading is most suggestive:
nonsense on the order of *copomoralis* can hardly be attributed to scribal incompetence.
Instead, meaningless portmanteaux of this sort are a particular manuscript feature. Compare,
for example, a line in our principal Carolingian manuscript of the historian Ammianus
Marcellinus (Vat. lat. 1873, f. 92r, at Amm. 22.8.14)

tur. Imbusquem admaxionem bosporithracuexceptit bithyniae latus...

Maxionem at first blush looks vaguely like it could be a Latin word, but no such word is
attested. Fortunately this manuscript had a contemporary corrector with access to the
exemplar, who deleted *ad maxionem* and supplied in the top margin with a *signe-de-renvoi*
the following *ad mare ionium permeavit dextrum igitur in fle*. What this means is that the
exemplar read as follows:

. . . ad ma
re ionium permeavit; dextrum igitur infle
xionem . . .

The eye of the manuscript's copyist had skipped the line beginning *-re ionium* and thereby
concocted the nonsense word *maxionem* with the *ma* from *mare* and *xionem* from
inflexionem.²⁵ Similar problems also resulted from larger scale omissions and dislocations.
For example, as is well known, our chief manuscript of the *Historia Augusta* (Pal. lat. 899)

²⁵ See G. Kelly and J. Stover, "The Hersfeldensis and Fuldensis of Ammianus Marcellinus: A Reconsideration" *Cambridge Classical Journal* 62 (2016) 108-29 at 116.

was copied from an exemplar in which the gatherings were disarranged. On f. 120r, we come across the following line:

He]liogabalo ubiprimumfecisset &templarereliqua deserenda

While these are all Latin words (with the exception of the simple mistaken duplication of *re*), they do not offer any sort of cogent sense. This because the two halves come from completely different parts of text, lives of two different emperors:

Maximin. 5.3: ...Heliogabalo ubi primum...

Alex. 43.7: ...fecisset et templare reliqua...

A similar phenomenon is found in our early manuscripts of Sallust's *Jugurtha* which contain a long lacuna from 103.2 to 112.3.²⁶ For example on f. 87v of Paris lat. 6085 we find:

iugurthareliquerat ex omni copia necessariorum pacemvell&

No amount of ingenuity can extract sense from these words, since *Iugurtha* . . .

necessariorum comes from *Jug.* 103.2 and *pacem vellet* picks up from 112.3, a loss of more than eight thousand words, that is, a gathering in the archetype.

Returning, then, to Apuleius, the most likely solution is that the archetype was physically mutilated at the end of book 1. *Moralis* would have been capitalized in the archetype as the beginning of a new book. α recognized this, and simply left *copo* with a capitalized *Moralis* as a separate word. δ , by contrast, recognized that *copo* was not a complete word, and so ignored the capitalization to make a single nonsense portmanteau, *copomoralis*. The scribe of **R** or its exemplar – with access to the archetype itself – recognized that something was physically missing from the manuscript, left the remainder of

²⁶ On the lacuna, see L. D. Reynolds, 'The lacuna in Sallust's *Jugurtha*', *RHT* 14-15 (1984-5), 59-69 and J. Stover and G. Woudhuysen, 'Aurelius Victor and the ending of Sallust's *Jugurtha*', *Hermathena* 199 (2015) [published 2020], 93-134.

the column blank and began with a capitalized *Moralis* on the next column, perhaps in the hope of finding another source that would complete the sentence.²⁷

This explains why there is no *explicit* to book 1 and *incipit* to book 2. If we turn back to f. 60v of **B**, discussed at length above, we see how, after just five lines of text, the rest of folio is taken up simply with the calligraphic *explicit/incipit*. The beginning of what we know of as the *de mundo* proper has just an initial C in *Consideranti* and the first line in uncials, but no other indication of a new book. To give a contrafactual, if f. 60, which covers *Plat.* 2.27 to the end, had been lost due to some mishap, we would have the following text (f. 59v-61r):

...*si consilio et suadela de//Consideranti mihi et diligentius intuenti...*

Copyists and readers would thus be in the unenviable position of either going with the vaguely plausible but non-existent word *deconsideranti* or punctuating after *de* and neither would result in sense. Hence an astute scribe might note in addition the different script of the first line indicating a textual division, and leave a blank space before *Consideranti*.

This is what most likely happened to the end of book 1, and explains the different readings across the three manuscript families. And this, in turn, has significant ramifications for the text. If **B** and **R** in their original had no division between books 1 and 2, how can both of them transmit an *incipit liber tertius*? Just as we saw with the titles above, this must be an inherited archetypal feature.

Considerable ingenuity was expended to solve the problem. The **α** manuscripts **MV** solve this problem by manipulating the book numbers, transmitting for our book 2 the *explicit* APULEI MADAURENSIS DE HABITUDINE PLATONIS LIBER PRIMUS EXPLICIT. INCIPIT LIBER SECUNDUS. **H**, as we have seen, makes a similar move (*explicit primus de secta Platonica. Incipit secundus secundum Theophrastum*), as does Gronovius 105 (*explicit primus. Incipit*

²⁷ Stover, 'Space as paratext'.

secundus). This makes the whole work a sort of anthology of philosophy, with the *De Platone* 1 and 2 as merely its Platonic section (a comparand might be the third book of Diogenes Laertius), and the *De mundo* its Theophrastan section, based on the mention of Theophrastus in the preface. The most radical solution, adopted by **F** and its apograph Bern 136²⁸, was to simply make the whole *De Platone* book 2. This was simple enough, since the archetype did not transmit a title, and **B** itself gave no indication of the book numeration in the title, as we have seen. Book 1 would thus be the work that precedes the *De Platone* in the manuscripts, that is the *De deo Socratis*. Accordingly, the copyists have created a three-book *corpus philosophicum*: the *De deo Socratis* is book 1, the whole *De Platone* book 2, and the *De mundo* book 3.²⁹

These solutions devised show unmistakably that the existence of a third book has left a deep impress on the manuscript tradition. Indeed, all we really know for certain about the textual architecture of the work and its paratextual apparatus – now that we have shown that neither the transmitted title nor the ending of book 1 is authorial – is that book 2 is complete and is followed by a third book. It is worth stressing that this third book is a *codicological* feature – there is no external evidence witnessing its existence nor is it directly attested or mentioned in the transmitted text.

* * *

Let us summarize our findings thus far. The **α** hyparchetype (whether or not it is identical to **B**) contained the title *De Platone et eius dogmate* (with no book indication), at the

²⁸ Klibansky/Regen no. 6, pp. 58-9.

²⁹ E.g. Bern 136 f. 7v: *apulei madaurensis de deo socratis liber primus incipit*; f. 23r: *apulei madaurensis de habitudine doctrinaque et nativitate philosophi platonis liber secundus incipit*; and f. 34r: *apulei madaurensis de habitudine doctrinaque platonis liber ii explicit. incipit iii de eadem re*.

beginning of the work, no division between books 1 and 2, *De habitudine Platonis explicit liber II* as explicit of book 2, and *incipit liber tertius* as the incipit of the *De mundo*. **R** has nearly all the same features.

The δ hyparchetype probably had no title: only two of the principle δ manuscripts transmit titles, **F** and **L**, and these share nothing in common (*De dogmate Platonis* in **L**, *De habitudine doctrinaque et nativitate philosophi* in **F**). **F**, at any rate was contaminated, and shows signs of extensive manipulation and editing, as in the structuring of *De deo Socratis*, the *De Platone* and the *De mundo* into a three book corpus. The rest of the principal δ manuscripts (**NPU**) have no title at all. None of the δ manuscripts show any original division between books 1 and 2, save **CH** which are both extensively reworked and contaminated and are, at any rate, explicit that it is not a book division. The δ hyparchetype also probably had no explicit of book 2/incipit of *De mundo*. **FNPUC** transmit no division at all, while **L** has a simple *Incipit Apuleus de philosophia*, and **H** has the *secundum Theophrastum* title discussed above. The same might be said of explicit. Only **HZ** offer a subscription: **H** has a parallel explicit to that of the *De Platone: EXPLICIT LIBER SECUNDUS DE SECTA PLATONICA*, while **Z** has *Explicit apuleus de dogmate platonis liber tercius*.³⁰ Hence, even though in terms of content, the *De mundo* is almost certainly complete, we do not have codicological certainty as to its ending, nor do we an archetypal title transmitted in the explicit.

This leads to some rather radical conclusions, but ones consistent with our analysis of **B**: the archetype did not transmit any title at the beginning. Stemmatics (**NP** vs. **LU**) suggests that it is unlikely that **L**'s title is archetypal, and its identity with the title in **R** could be chalked up to independent derivation from the text itself. The archetype likewise transmitted no book division between 1 and 2. At the end of book 2, however, the archetype did transmit

³⁰ **Z** does as well, although it has no stemmatic importance: *L. APULEII PLATONICI MADAURENSIS PHILOSOPHI COSMOGRAPHIA FINIT.*

the full *Apulei Madaurensis de habitudine Platonis liber ii explicit Incipit tertius*, on the evidence of **BR**, but this was not copied into **δ**. As a result, the archetype transmitted no title for the *De mundo* beyond *Liber III*, and **δ** transmitted no title at all for the work.

This bears a brief excursus. If the title *De mundo* is not a transmitted feature of the Apuleian text, where did it come from and what explains its wide diffusion in later manuscripts and in later additions to earlier manuscripts? The transmitted title of the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise it translates is Περὶ κόσμου, although the earliest manuscripts of the texts are from the twelfth century. We have external evidence that the text was known under this title at least from the sixth century.³¹ In addition, we have the evidence from Augustine, who is the first (and only) ancient Latin author to cite the Apuleian translation (*civ.* 4.2): *Apuleius . . . in eo libello quem de mundo scripsit*. It is not immediately clear from the Latin whether this is a title or a description (*liber de ... scriptus* can be used for either), but given that this is a translation of the plausible title of the Greek text, it seems likely that Augustine considered *De mundo* the title of the work. This is important because of the influence of Augustine on the formation and reception of the Apuleian corpus. I have discussed elsewhere how the *Asclepius* was inserted into the Apuleian corpus in the Middle Ages under the influence of Augustine. It is very likely then that the title *De mundo* was imported from Augustine. That Apuleius titled his translation *De mundo* is likely enough, if not entirely certain; at the least, this title was attached to the treatise by the time Augustine read it. But during the vicissitudes the Apuleian corpus suffered during the protohistory of its text, this title was entirely lost, only to be restored to some much later and derivative copies from the text of Augustine. (Something similar can be said for the other common title of the work, *Cosmographia*: no extant examples of this title predate the influential prosimetrum of Bernardus Silvestris

³¹ J. Mansfeld, 'ΠΕΡΙ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ: A Note on the History of a Title', *Vigiliae Christianae* 46, 1992, 391–411.

entitled the *Cosmographia* from the first half of the twelfth century, and it is likely that it was transferred to the *De mundo* from Bernardus given the similarity of the scope of the two treatises).

What we learn from the *De mundo* is the weight of different species of evidence. The title *De mundo* is likely correct, and certainly the title under which modern scholarship should treat the work. But this is not because of the work's manuscript transmission, but in spite of it: it is what we know of the Greek original and the way in which Augustine refers to it that warrants us to use this title. For the *De Platone* we have no such evidence, and while it is necessary to use *some* title to refer to the work, it is essential to bear in mind that whatever title that is does not tell us anything about the nature of the work distinct from what we can deduce from the manuscripts.

What then of book 3? Modern scholarship is also probably correct to reject as impossible the manuscript arrangement which makes the *De mundo* the third book of Apuleius philosophical work. While the fact that it is a translation/adaptation of an existing Greek work is not itself dispositive, nor is the fact that it does not treat Plato's doctrines, since we do not know the scope of the original work, the fact that Augustine seems to cite it as a separate *libellus* carries more weight. But rejecting that the *De mundo* is the third book leaves unexplained how it came to be transmitted as the third book in the manuscripts. Fortunately, a plausible solution is ready at hand.

I have already discussed at some length the calligraphic explicit/incipit on f. 60v of **B**. This, as I have argued, must represent an archetypal feature, due to its well-planned layout and the archaic features it transmits. What this means is that in the archetype book 2 terminated with a page division. All we need to hypothesize is physical damage to the archetype in which the next book was lost, leaving the beginning of the *De mundo* as the next item following this explicit. What might that third book have contained? Here scholars have

(rightly) had recourse to the text itself to deduce something about its architecture. The first essential passage is *De Platone* 1.4.3: “Nam, quoniam tres partes philosophiae congruere inter se primus obtinuit, nos quoque separatim dicemus de singulis, a naturali philosophia facientes exordium.” Apuleius clearly claims that he is going to cover all three branches or *partes* of philosophy. And yet between them, the two books of the *De Platone* only cover physics and ethics, or natural and moral philosophy. Hence, what at first blush seems a reasonable conclusion: the missing third book covered logic.

But even leading aside the almost certainly spurious *Perihermeneias*, there are problems. First, this is not a programmatic statement about the work as a whole, but only about the dogmatic section. This is clear from its placement, after the initial sections on Plato’s life. What this means is that the three-fold division of philosophy does not correspond to the three books, even in what survives of the work. The first book covers Plato’s life and his doctrines on natural philosophy, while the second is wholly devoted to moral philosophy. While the extensive treatment of *philosophia moralis* is more than justified, a roughly equivalent treatment of Platonic logical doctrines would be vastly disproportionate. Further, the order: when Apuleius had first introduced the threefold division of philosophy at 1.3.5, he had given them in the order of *naturalis*, which Plato learned from the Pythagoreans, *rationalis*, from either the Eleatics or the Heraclitans – the text is corrupt – and then *moralis* from Socrates himself.³² This must be a deliberate arrangement since just a few lines above, when Apuleius had traced the contours of Plato’s education, he says that he studied with the *secta Heracliti* first, and then with Socrates, and only then, after his master’s death, with the Pythagoreans, with a particular study of the doctrines of the Eleatics at an unspecified point. Hence the order at 1.3.5 cannot represent the ‘historical’ order in which Plato studied the

³² While the text is undoubtedly corrupt (see Magnaldi’s apparatus *ad loc.*), the order is not in dispute.

disciplines. Further, the fact that Apuleius makes the specific point that he is beginning with *philosophia naturalis* (1.4.3: *a naturali philosophia facientes exordium*), which is the branch he had listed first at 1.3.5 suggests that his arrangement there has a programmatic function.

Careful reading, then, of Apuleius' own claims about the work reveals (a) that the three parts of the dogmatic section do not correspond to the three books of the work and (b) that the order of treatment in the dogmatic section ought to be physics, logic, and then ethics. These conclusions accord perfectly with what we can independently deduce about the structure of the work from the codicological features of its transmission.

* * *

As discussed above, we are missing the end of book 1. The general assumption – even if rarely stated – seems to be that we are not missing much material. There is some good evidence for this, since the treatment of *philosophia naturalis* does seem to be generally complete. The problem is that the sort of codicological problem that would give rise to the two books being run together suggests a larger amount of material is missing.³³ We can rule out mutilation that affected a single folio, since that would have led to a loss of material either before or after the missing text (depending on whether our final sentence was on a recto or a verso) and there is no evidence for this in our text. Instead, what we seem to be looking at is the loss of a physical part of the manuscript. That part could be a mere folio, but it is more likely on codicological grounds that a whole textual unit, i.e. one or several gatherings, was lost. Fortunately, we are not left entirely to speculation. Instead, we can have recourse to what we know about the Apuleian book.

Apuleius lived in what may have been the last era of the book-roll. The practical exigencies of circulating long works when the medium of circulation were scrolls is what lead to the adoption of book division. Only so much material could be contained in a roll that

³³ This argument expands on the brief treatment in *A New Work*, 55-6.

was still usable, durable, and safe. Originally such divisions were ad hoc – as soon as a scribe ran out of papyrus on one roll, he simply moved on to the next. From the Hellenistic period onward, however, book division became an integral part of the composition and transmission of works. The Flavian-Antonine period – or roughly the second century AD – saw the greatest standardization of book lengths, and Apuleius’ own booklengths illustrate this standardization clearly. We are in the fortunate position of having fourteen books by Apuleius transmitted integrally – the 11 of the *Metamorphoses*, *De Platone 2*, *De mundo* and *De deo Socratis*.

Apul. <i>Met.</i> 1	24382	4046
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 2	29749	4846
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 3	25869	4132
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 4	33309	5193
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 5	28910	4637
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 6	28337	4545
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 7	26624	4117
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 8	31618	4855
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 9	42728	6567
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 10	37645	5745
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 11	32834	4980
Apul. <i>Met.</i> 1	22218	3449
Apul. <i>Plat.</i> 2	33169	5413
Apul. <i>Plat.</i> 3	28328	4892
Apul. <i>Mund.</i>	40945	6546
Apul. <i>Soc.</i>	28430	4656

In simple terms, we can see that these books average 31754 characters, with a median of 30683.5, and have a standard deviation of 5515.³⁴ But we can examine the data in a more granular fashion. We only have two philosophical books of Apuleius which we can be reasonably assumed to be complete: *De Platone* II and *De mundo*. (Both, one might add, begin with an address to Faustinus). For these purposes, we exclude the *De deo Socratis*, both because of its hybrid genre, and because we cannot be certain that it circulated as independent book. These two books, at 33169 and 40945 characters respectively, average 37057. Books of the *Metamorphoses* are shorter than the philosophical books, at an average of 31913 characters per book. This is probably due to genre, since novels tended toward shorter books: the two books of Lucian's *True History* average 30483 characters and the four of Longus just 26316.

This is exactly what we see in other contemporary Latin authors as well. Frontinus, who wrote two technical works in a total of five books perhaps five or six decades before Apuleius, has an average book length of 39030 characters, and the nine books of Pliny the Younger's letters, written a couple decades after that, average 38065 characters. (Book 10 is excluded since it was only added to the collection later). Closest of all to Apuleius, in terms of both chronology and genre, is Aulus Gellius, who was probably writing in the 170s: the 18 books of his *Noctes Atticae* which are preserved complete average 38029 characters. Among Greek philosophical or technical writers, Plutarch is obviously the best comparand to Apuleius. The question of his book lengths, however, is compromised by the fact that few of his works are transmitted in individual books. The exception is the *Symposium*, whose seven complete books average 39780 characters.

³⁴ I have used easily available electronic texts: given differences in processing (treatment of editorial deletions and supplements, for example, or choice of readings) different editions will give rise to slightly different totals; but these differences have no impact on the analysis presented here.

So we have ample justification for thinking that a philosophical book of Apuleius ought to be around 37000 characters in length, and somewhere in the range of roughly 28000 to 49000 (the range of Plutarch's books), or even 26000 to 59000 (the range of Frontinus and Gellius).

That brings us to *De Platone* 1. It has 3449 words, comprising only 22218 characters. This is even shorter than any of the books of the *Metamorphoses* and shorter than any of the books we have looked at of Plutarch, Gellius, Frontinus, and Pliny. Hence two independent indications - the evident codicological disruption at the end of book 1 and the length of book 1 as a whole - converge to suggest that some substantial amount of material is missing from this book. At a minimum, it seems, we are missing some four thousand characters, or perhaps a bifolium. But we could be missing quite a bit more: book 1 could be twice the length it is now, and it would still fall within the range we expect. Some of that material might have been lost at the beginning, both on codicological grounds, due to the lack of an *incipit*, and structural, since we might have expected an address to Faustinus and perhaps a general introduction to the work. But given that our surviving treatment of Plato's life does begin with his birth, indeed with his parentage and conception, it was probably not a substantial amount of text. A gathering could still have been lost at the end, and with it, a substantial amount of Apuleius' philosophical teaching. Further, based on the analysis of *De Platone* 1.3.5, we have a very good idea of what that teaching consisted of: the missing exposition of Platonic logic, which ought to have been placed after the treatment of physics in what survives of book 1 and before the treatment of ethics in book 2.

The problem of the transmitted *Incipit liber III* thus remains as formidable as ever. If book 3 did not contain the treatment of logic, what might it have held? Before we can venture an answer to this question, one more manuscript feature needs to be discussed: the additional text in **R** after the *De mundo*.

* * *

The *De mundo*, as shown above, has no archetypal subscription. In most of the manuscripts, the text simply ends with the words *dedit atque permisit*, and we know that this is the end since it corresponds to the conclusion of the Περὶ κόσμου. One of the only manuscripts to contain an explicit is **Z**, but in point of fact, it does not actually follow the words *dedit atque permisit*. Instead these words are followed by a paraph, and then the following text (f. 130v):

Quod virtutem habenti non remordeat itaque nec comedias acturum . nec tr^aedias . nec corrupta oracione usurum . et omnem modulationem quam canora compositio formaverit et nūc tunc esse recipiendam cum ad virtutem referatur. EXPLICIT APULEIUS DE DOGMATE PLATONIS LIBER TERTIUS.

This text – albeit corrupt and acephalous – is recognizable as a résumé of *Rep.* 3.394c and 399a. It is no mystery as to where this text came from: in **Z**'s parent, **R**, this text continues for nine more folios, providing a summary of fourteen Platonic dialogues: *Republic*, *Euthyphro*, *Menexenus*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Laws*, *Epinomis*, *Epistles*, *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Timaeus*, *Critias*. Elsewhere I have provided the *editio princeps* of this work, and a full discussion of its contents.³⁵ Here instead I would like to focus on the codicology of **R**. The work is *acephalous*, necessarily so, since it begins with a mere sentence fragment, and introduced in **R** (as in **Z**) by a simple paraph, separating it from the last words of the *De mundo*. As we have already discussed, this kind of nonsense is usually codicological in origin: the reason why a text would begin this way, with no title and without even a coherent

³⁵ Stover, *A New Work*. In this edition, I used the convenient term *Expositio compendiosa* which has some slight manuscript support to refer to the work, even though I argued that it was actually the *liber tertius* of the *De Platone*. Without prejudice to that title, I am here discussing the text as a manuscript feature of **R**, which gives the work no title at all, and so only refer to with a description and not a title to avoid confusion.

sentence is that in **R**'s parent, its beginning was lost. Given that the *De mundo* had no explicit in that parent manuscript, someone copying it serially would simply move directly from *dedit atque permisit* to *quod virtutem habenti*, although the fact of the paraph suggests that there may have been some empty space in between the two. Now this text is undoubtedly ancient, and **R** must have gotten it from somewhere. Since **R** had access to the archetype – as now generally acknowledged – the most economical solution is that it came from the archetype itself. One might object to this on the basis that it is found in neither of the other two families, but one just needs to look at the fate of this text in **R**'s descendants over two generations to see what might have happened. In **Z** the text is reduced to a mere rump of thirty-two words, and by the time we get to **Z**'s child **z** even that is gone. Acephalous fragments were fragile: unsecured by a title or other paratextual indications, copyists were understandably perplexed as to how to treat them. Given the chaos affecting the whole philosophical corpus we have documented here, with its missing titles, incipits, and incomplete texts, it would hardly surprising to find one more incomplete and untitled element.

It also offers a certain symmetry. One of the very few things we can be certain of about the archetype of the corpus is that it had an *incipit* for a third book, and that that third book cannot be the one that follows it in the manuscripts, the *De mundo*. At same time, in **R**, we have a book or part of a book that itself needs an *incipit*, and somehow got transmitted after the *De mundo* in **R**. It is possible that these two facts are unrelated, but given the evident proximity of some of **R**'s readings to the archetype, it is far more likely that these two problems are connected.

Indeed, they solve each other. If the additional text in **R** originally came after book 2 of the *De Platone*, it could have been displaced in the general chaos that precedes the archetype, and which we have everywhere demonstrated. Perhaps it lost its beginning, just as book 1 lost its end. We *know* that material in the archetype must have been disarranged, since

the *De mundo* cannot be book 3 of the *De Platone*; it seems plausible that in this disarrangement, the *De mundo* (itself lacking a title in the archetype) displaced the original book 3.

This suggests that the presence of this text is archetypal, even if it does not prove that it authentic. To deny that this addition is archetypal would require believing in a whole sequence of improbabilities and impossibilities – that the text in **R** came from somewhere other than the source of its good readings, that the *Incipit liber tertius* is some sort of scribal nonsense, or that the third book covered logic and is now lost, or that the *De mundo* is itself the third book, and that book 1 is not missing a substantial amount of material. Instead, regardless of what one thinks about the authorship of the Platonic summaries, it is reasonable to hold that they were transmitted originally as the third book of the *De Platone*.

* * *

To summarize the argument thus far, we know very little about the structure of the text from the archetype, beyond the inauthentic title *De habitudine Platonis*, the full extent of book 2, and that there was a third book. To go beyond these unsatisfying conclusions, we need to turn with fresh eyes to see what the text itself actually communicates to us to glean something about the nature of the work.

Our text of *De Platone* 1 begins in a rather unusual way (1.1.1): *Platoni habitudo corporis cognomentum dedit; namque Aristocles prius est nominatus*. Before discussing the philosopher's parentage, conception, and birth, Apuleius first draws attention to his name, and specifically how one feature of his body gave rise to it. This is not an especially rare fact: found before Apuleius in Seneca (*ep.* 58.30), and after him, in a large number of sources.³⁶ What is unique is its placement in the *De Platone*. Diogenes Laertius, for example, brings it

³⁶ See J. A. Notopoulos, "The Name of Plato" *CP* 34 (1939): 135-45; and A. S. Riginos, *Platonica: The Anecdotes Concerning the Life and Writings of Plato*, Leiden, 1976, no. 2.

up in connection with Plato's education (3.4), and begins his treatment of Plato's life in a normal and conventional fashion (3.1): Πλάτων, Ἀρίστωνος καὶ Περικτιόνης ἢ Πωτόνης, Ἀθηναῖος, ἧτις τὸ γένος ἀνέφερεν εἰς Σόλωνα. The *Anonymous Prolegomena* begins its life in almost exactly the same way, and only brings up the origin of the name Plato after discussing his parentage (*Anon. Prol.* 1, p. 2 Westerink), and the same can be said for Olympiodorus. So too, presumably, in whatever source Apuleius was drawing on for Plato's biography. Apuleius' displacement of this anecdote to so prominent a position needs explanation.

One reason might be deduced from his equally curious summary of Plato's philosophical achievement.

quamvis de diversis officinis haec ei essent philosophiae membra suscepta, naturalis a Pythagoreis, de Eleaticis rationalis atque moralis ex ipso Socratis fonte, unum tamen ex omnibus et quasi proprii partus corpus effecit.

Although these limbs of philosophy have been taken from different workshops, natural philosophy from the Pythagoreans, rational from the Eleatics, and moral from the founder himself, Socrates, he made a single body out of all them, as if they were his own productions.

Apuleius' Plato is, one might say, Victor Frankenstein, using body parts (*membra*) he has acquired from elsewhere to stitch up a new body. While the idea that Plato drew on the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, and Socrates, is hardly novel, expressing it in such somatic terms is. So once again we have something out of the ordinary which requires explanation, and just like the previous example, it has to do with Plato's body.

This may tell us something about the nature of the work. Now that we have dispensed with our notions about the nature of Apuleius' work which arose from the paratextual frame his treatise acquired in the course of its transmission, and have instead looked at internal features, it is clear that Apuleius is using the idea of Plato's corpus as a structuring motif. He begins with Plato's physical body – its name, its origins, its vicissitudes – and then proceeds to the intellectual body that Plato had fashioned. This intellectual body is a system of philosophy which integrates natural, rational, and moral philosophy into a harmonious whole.

There is another sense of the word *corpus*. A corpus is a collection of books – Vitruvius calls his ten-book work a *corpus architecturae* (e.g. 2.1.8), Quintilian calls the fifteen books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* a *corpus* (4.1.77), Justin calls his epitome of the forty-four books of Pompeius Trogus a *corpusculum (praef.)*, we have a legal work transmitted under the title of the *Tituli ex corpore Ulpiani*.³⁷ Hence, if *corpus* in its various senses is the guiding principle of the *De Platone*, it would make perfect sense for the third book to contain an exposition of Plato's third body, the body of his work.

Such a text we have in **R**, as we have seen, albeit following the *De mundo* and not the *De Platone*. Just like the *corpus* of Plato's doctrines, this *corpus* is also divided into three, the Socratic dialogues, the Platonic, and the Pythagorean/Parmenidean (14.1-6, p. 110):

Socraticae igitur philosophiae, quae eadem est uerae philosophiae, in his maxime libris quos supra nominaui auctorem habuimus Platonem. in reliquiis autem quamquam sub nomine aliorum et alio more disputantium decreta posita sunt nihilominus consensus intelligitur: sunt autem mixta de Pythagorae et Parmenidis praeceptis. Legum uero tresdecim libri ab ipsius Platonis persona uidentur induci.

³⁷ Cf *TLL* 4 1020.62 – 1021.39 (L.).

We have held therefore that the author of the Socratic philosophy – which is the same thing as true philosophy – found especially in the books I have named above is Plato. But in the remaining books, even though the doctrines are placed under the names of other speakers who argue in different ways, a consensus is nonetheless understood: they are a mixture of the precepts of Pythagoras and Parmenides. But the thirteen books of the *Laws* seem to be conducted under the persona of Plato himself.

Whether this threefold-division of Plato's corpus is meant to signify the speakers in the dialogues (as Rheins has interpreted it³⁸) or the philosophical influence (as I have), the links between this passage and the account of the development of the intellectual corpus of Plato's doctrines in the *De Platone* are strong. This suggests an internal solution for understanding how this fragment could fit into the *De Platone* as a whole:

De Platone 1 – Plato's physical body

De Platone 1-2 – Plato's doctrinal body

De Platone 3 – Plato's literary body

This would mean that Apuleius was using a preexisting tripartite convention in isagogical works – found, for example, in book 3 of Diogenes Laertius, possibly derived from Thrasyllus³⁹ – of life, doctrine, and works, but adapting it with a new and original conceit, of Plato's three bodies.

* * *

³⁸ J. G. Rheins, 'The arrangement of the Platonic corpus in the newly published *Compendiosa Expositio* attributed to Apuleius of Madaura,' *Phronesis* 62, 2017, 377-391.

³⁹ See H. Tarrant, *Thrassylian Platonism*, Ithaca, NY, 1993. On the genre see, besides the other papers in this volume, J. Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions to be Settled Before the Study of an Author or a Text*, Leiden, 1994, and M. Plezia, *De commentariis isagogicis*, Kraków, 1949, which emphasizes the tripartite structure, covering life, doctrine, and works of some isagogical texts. Cf. *A New Work*, 47-8.

This provides a new understanding of both the nature of Apuleius' work, and the possible way that the summary of Platonic dialogues might fit into it. It is not, and cannot be, definitive, but that is not of itself a weakness. Too many strident and bald propositions have been on the basis that we in fact know what Apuleius is doing in this work and how he is going about it. These propositions have arisen not from careful analysis of the text or examination of the manuscript tradition, but from sheer inertia. As recently as 2017 one scholar could claim that "the reason for postulating a third book was that it was meant to discuss Platonic logic", confusing a transmitted manuscript feature with a nineteenth-century hypothesis.⁴⁰ And that brings with it a broader point, with which I would like to conclude. As I mentioned at the beginning, the new attention to Apuleius' *philosophica* is a welcome development in Apuleian studies. At the same time, it has brought its own risks of distortion regarding the nature of Apuleius' *De Platone*. In the discussions since 2016 on the authenticity of the Platonic summaries, a number of scholars have commented on the philosophical disjunctions between the summaries and the two books of the *De Platone*.⁴¹ These are real, just as real as the philosophical connections between the two works, and if our frame of reference was Alcinous, for example, an author whose only surviving work is an introduction to Plato, or Olympiodorus, who was a professional philosopher and commentator, these disjunctions would be dispositive against authenticity. But the author of the *De Platone* is Apuleius – author of a myriad of works in every genre, as he tells us (*Florida* 9.27-8), just as capable of virtuosic originality as banal epitomizing. How much philosophical consistency and rigour are we right to expect? This is a genuine question. But it

⁴⁰ C. P. Jones, rev. Stover, *A New Work*, in *sehpunkte* 17, 2017 (<http://sehpunkte.com/2017/10/28809.html>).

⁴¹ E.g. C. M. Lucarini, 'Über das dem Apuleius zu Unrecht zugeschriebene vatikanische mittelplatonische Fragment' *ZPE* 211, 2019, 64-9.

is one that we must consider carefully if we want to understand the nature of Apuleius' project.

The same might be said of style. Much of the discussion about the Platonic summaries has focussed on individual words or expressions found in the text, and not in the two books of the *De Platone*, and vice-versa. Hays, for example, notes their lack of *ac*, while Jones noted their marked preference for *placet illi*.⁴² On the surface these look damning, but one needs to consider lexical evidence with particular care. *Tam*, for example, does not occur in the two books of the *De Platone* even though it is found 154 times elsewhere in Apuleius' corpus. This fact might look impressive, but as an isolate it has no probative value. The only way to determine through lexical means whether two texts are written by the same author is to look at their most frequent words in the aggregate. In other words, one needs stylometry, and preferably computational stylometry, which can count a far broader range of features than any manual method. Stylometric analysis has turned up compelling (indeed, dispositive) links between these summaries and the two books of the *De Platone*.⁴³ And if that is case, what would that mean for our understanding of Apuleius' style? While no one can deny the extraordinary vigour and power of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Apology*, a number of the other probably genuine fragments we have of Apuleian works look suspiciously like summaries of Pliny the Elder.⁴⁴ How expansive, then, was Apuleius' stylistic range?

All of these questions examined in detail would take us too far beyond the scope of the present study. This study has had two more modest goals: the first, the *pars destruens*,

⁴² G. Hays, 'Notes on the New Apuleius' *Classical Quarterly* 68, 2018, 246-56 at 246; Jones, as in previous note.

⁴³ Stover and Kestemont, 'Reassessing the Apuleian Corpus' and Stover et al. 'Computational authorship verification'.

⁴⁴ See Harrison, *Apuleius: A Latin Sophist*, 26-7.

was to tear down what we think we know about the nature of Apuleius' *De Platone* which is not based on a rigorous analysis of the transmitted texts and paratexts, while the second, the *pars construens*, was just to point forward to how one might rebuild based solidly on what the text itself tells us. This has bearing on the most important question regarding the nature of the work – are the Platonic summaries in **R** an integral part of the work, or not? I do not pretend to have answered that question to satisfaction here, but answering it at some point will be necessary to understanding the nature of the *De Platone*.