

SOME NOTES ON THE ‘NEW APULEIUS’

In 2016 Justin Stover published an important *editio princeps* of a fragmentarily preserved text that was originally discovered by Raymond Klibansky in the first half of the twentieth century: a kind of *Summarium librorum Platonis* which Klibansky took as a Latin translation of a lost Greek original, whereas Stover argues it was written by Apuleius, namely as the third book of his *De Platone*.¹ The following notes deal primarily with details pertaining to the constitution of the text, but I will start with one remark on a detail of Stover’s translation and close with a discussion concerning the alleged medieval reception of the so-called ‘New Apuleius’. Chapters, pages, Latin text, apparatus criticus entries, and translations are quoted according to Stover’s edition; all bold highlights are mine, as are all translations from works other than the ‘New Apuleius’ if not indicated otherwise.

1.15 (PAGE 96)

placet illi **maiores natu** ... honoribus fungi.²

He is of the opinion that **those who are greater by birth** should receive honours.

This is not about ‘those who are greater by birth’ but about ‘those who are **older**’, the usual meaning of *maior natu*. If there is any need for additional confirmation, cf. the Platonic source of the passage, as indicated by Stover, *Resp.* 3.412c: *πρεσβυτέρους τοὺς ὅρχοντας δεῖ εἶναι*. See also 17.6 (page 114) *parentes liberis suis imperare, maiores natu minoribus*, which is translated as ‘... the elder by birth command the younger’. Furthermore, *honoribus fungi* here certainly means ‘to hold office’, not ‘to receive honours’.

¹ J.A. Stover, *A New Work by Apuleius. The Lost Third Book of the De Platone* (Oxford, 2016). Many reviews have appeared so far, the most important of which in my opinion is by G. Magnaldi, *ExClass* 21 (2017), 367–76. See also M. Bonazzi, ‘Plato systematized: doing philosophy in the imperial schools. A discussion of Justin A. Stover (ed.), *A New Work by Apuleius*’, *OSAP* 53 (2017), 215–36; J.G. Rheins, ‘The arrangement of the Platonic corpus in the newly published *Compendiosa Expositio* attributed to Apuleius of Madaura’, *Phronesis* 62 (2017), 377–91; G. Hays, ‘Notes on the “New Apuleius”’, *CQ* 68 (2018), 246–56; M. Shumilin, ‘A conjecture on the “New Apuleius”’, *CQ* 68 (2018), 351–2; id., ‘A note on the “New Apuleius” (3.20 Stover, p. 100)’, *CQ* 69 (2019), 456–7. I think that the text was not written by Apuleius but by a Middle Platonist who might well have had some connection to Apuleius or his work, but I will not enlarge upon this subject in the present paper.

² As for the transmitted *cum eo et ut optimi sint* omitted in my quotation, I prefer bracketing the *et* as a false anticipation of *ut*, as suggested by Hays (n. 1), 246–7, to writing *tamen* instead of *et*, as does Stover.

2.1 (PAGE 96)

placet illi in optimo statu esse ciuitatem cuius ciues medium quendam tenorem fortuitorum habeant ita ut <nec> ultra modum diuites sint nec **intra** necessaria pauperes.

He is of the opinion that a city is in the best state whose citizens hold a certain middling level of goods, such that they are not rich beyond moderation nor in poverty **below** the level of what is necessary.

The translation renders the sense of this passage properly but ‘below’ does not really match the Latin *intra*. One should emend *intra* to *infra*, the latter balancing the preceding *ultra* to the result of *medium*. For a parallel in another philosophical text, cf. Boethius, *Cons. 4.7.21* (Bieler, CCSL 94, page 87.43–5): *firmis medium uiribus occupate: quicquid aut infra subsistit aut ultra progreditur habet contemptum felicitatis* (‘keep the middle with all might: whatever stands below it or goes beyond it holds contempt of happiness’).

My first thought was that *intra* could be a typing error or perhaps even a reading error on the part of the editor, but a look into the online reproduction of the one relevant manuscript, Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 1572 (= R),³ confirms that the thirteenth-century scribe actually wrote *intra*. The confusion of *t* and *f*, especially in the case of *intra* et *infra*, is so trivial that it does not tell us anything about the type of script in which it happened.

There is another passage in the text, which at first sight may seem to suffer from the same corruption: 16.14 (page 112) *intra duodeviginti autem annos agenti aetatem <uinum> uniuersum denegat*, rendering Leg. 2.666a τοὺς παιδας μέχρι ἐτῶν ὀκτωκαίδεκα τὸ παράπονον οἴνου μὴ γεύεσθαι.⁴ However, Latin usage confirms the authenticity of *intra* here; see some of the examples collected in *TLL 7.2.40.35–73* as well as the *Regula magistri* 27.41 (De Vogüé, SC 106, page 148.87–8): *infantuli uero intra duodecim annos agentes in hieme binas caldos accipient*.

8.25 (PAGE 106)

nam **et** uniuscuiusque hominis proprium δαίμονα, quem nos genium appellamus.

For there **is** also an individual *daimon* (which we call Genius) of each person.

Of course, in Latin it is not impossible to omit *esse* in a sentence like this, and the transmitted *et* might be understood in the sense of *etiam*. However, the author of our text normally does not dispense with *esse* (cf., for example, 3.14, 3.27, 5.6, etc.), and I could not find any definite instance for its omission in a comparable case.⁵ So my first idea was to conjecture *esse* instead of the transmitted *et*. On the other hand, the combination *nam et* is found as an introduction to a sentence also in 1.13 (page 96), where its authenticity can hardly be doubted.⁶ So perhaps it is preferable to leave the

³ https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.lat.1572 (last accessed 3 December 2019). All passages discussed in the present paper have been checked against this reproduction.

⁴ Cf. also Hays (n. 1), 251–2 on the constitution of the text.

⁵ The one apparent exception I noticed disappears when punctuation is modified (and, I believe, improved): in 23.3 (page 120) *bonos homines praeterea formosos esse existimat. et solum honestum quod bonum* (‘furthermore, he thinks that good men are beautiful, and that only what is good is decorous’) the full stop should be discarded.

⁶ I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for the hint.

nam et in 8.25 as it stands, and to insert *esse* later in the line. Since the language of the so-called ‘New Apuleius’ tends to be nearly as repetitive as its contents,⁷ the parallel 19.17 (page 116) *denique uniuscuiusque hominis esse propria genium et fortunam* both serves as corroboration for the conjecture and also indicates the place where *esse* should be added in 8.25, namely after *hominis*, which gives: *nam et uniuscuiusque hominis <esse> proprium δαίμονα, quem nos genium appellamus.*

14.1 (PAGE 110)

Socratae igitur philosophiae, quae eadem est **uerae philosophiae**, in his maxime libris quos supra nominaui auctorem habuimus Platonem.

philosophiae: philosophia R

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.⁸

From Stover’s apparatus criticus one cannot determine which of the two *philosophiae* in the first line is actually transmitted as *philosophia*. A look into the online reproduction of MS R (cf. n. 3 above) makes it clear that it is the second *philosophia*, the manuscript reading *socratice igitur philosophie que eadem est uera philosophia . . .*. On a more conservative approach, the transmitted *est uera philosophia* could be defended (‘which truly is philosophy’). However, in view of the parallels adduced by Stover,⁹ and also in view of Latin usage in general, I agree that *uera* here should be taken as an adjective and be brought into congruence with *philosophia*. If so, I would find it more natural to change the transmitted *uera* to *uera* to get *quae eadem est uera philosophia*.

From two short notes in works by Albert the Great (†1280), claiming that Apuleius had translated Plato’s *Republic* into Latin, Stover infers that the scholastic master had some knowledge of our text, although, going through the available pieces of information, he finally has to conclude that Albert did not possess a copy ‘or even knew the text in any detail’.¹⁰ There are problems with this view which deserve to be pointed out.

The first of the two passages in question reads as follows (*Commentarii in octo libros Politicorum Aristotelis* 2.1; Borgnet, pages 91e–92a; transl. Stover [n. 1], 7–8):

⁷ Cf. Stover (n. 1), 61: ‘More than two-thirds of the dogmata . . . are repeated at least once, often using the same or closely related wording.’ I offer only two examples, a number which could easily be amplified: 3.31 (page 100) *etiam solum bonum esse quod honestum est* ~ 32.39 (page 134) *et solum bonum esse quod honestum*; 11.3 (page 106) *placet illi solem et lunam et cetera sidera deos esse* ~ 24.1 (page 120) *placet solem et lunam et cetera sidera et terram uisibiles deos esse* ~ 32.19 (page 132) *sed solem et lunam et cetera sidera deos esse loquitur.*

⁸ Rheins (n. 1), 382–3 discusses Stover’s translation and interpretation without mentioning the textual problem.

⁹ Stover (n. 1), 156. Cf. also August. *C. Iul.* 4.72 (Migne, PL 44.774): *non sit honestior philosophia gentium quam nostra Christiana, quae una est uera philosophia.*

¹⁰ Stover (n. 1), 7–9, at 9, following a short remark in J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance. Volume 1* (Leiden, 1990), 4 n. 3. In Stover’s footnote 15, ‘Alfred’s works’ is a typing error for ‘Albert’s works’.

et est attendendum, quod Politia Platonis est altera pars libri, qui dicitur *Timaeus*, et tractauit in ea de iustitia positiva et ordinatione ciuitatum, sicut in prima parte de iustitia naturali; quae apud Latinos rara est, quamvis habeatur a quibusdam, et **transtulit** eam Apuleius philosophus, **sicut** primam partem de iustitia naturali **transtulit** et commentatus est Chalcidius.

You must keep in mind that the *Republic* of Plato is the second part of the book which is called the *Timaeus*, and in it, he discusses positive justice and the ordering of cities, just as in the first part he discusses natural justice. It is rare among the Latins, although some people have it, and Apuleius the Philosopher translated it, just as the first part on natural justice was translated and commented upon by Calcidius.

This leaves little room for doubt that Albert was not thinking of some doxographic handbook, as our *Summarium librorum Platonis* is, but of a full translation of the Platonic *Republic* or at least of some major part of it, just as (*sicut*) the work of Calcidius, which Albert characterizes by the same verb *transtulit*, is a full translation of the first half of the *Timaeus* (17a–53c). Furthermore, what Albert here says about the relationship between the *Republic* and the *Timaeus* finds no parallel in the relevant chapters of the so-called ‘New Apuleius’.¹¹

Now for the second passage (*Summa theologiae* 2.tr.10.q.39.ad3; Borgnet, page 453; transl. Stover [n. 1], 8):

et hoc expresse dicitur a Platone in *Politegia*, quam **non de uerbo ad uerbum, sed per sensus et sententias transtulit** Apuleius philosophus.

And this is said expressly by Plato in his *Republic*, which Apuleius the Philosopher translated not word-for-word, but according to its meaning.

The preceding sentence in Albert finds no counterpart in the so-called ‘New Apuleius’,¹² so *hoc expresse dicitur a Platone in Politegia* can hardly refer to it. Moreover, this passage confirms that Albert was thinking of a full, albeit free, translation. For to render the *Republic* ‘not word-for-word, but according to its meaning’ cannot be interpreted as producing a kind of summary or doxographic handbook. What Albert describes is just the same as Jerome—in a text the *doctor uniuersalis* certainly knew—said he did with the *Book of Judith*, that is, to produce a full, albeit not literal, Latin translation: *magis sensum e sensu quam ex uerbo uerbum transferens* (Jer. *Jdt. prol.*).¹³

A third passage relevant to the topic apparently was overlooked by Stover. Commenting on the *Book of Job* 40.16 (*sub umbra dormit*), Albert states (*Commentary on Job* 40.16; Weiß, page 480.37–42):

unde Apuleius in libro, qui de politica Platonis est, Platonem inducit dicentem, quod concupiscentiam in infimis quasi in inferno sepeliuit, ubi umbra est ex caligatione rationis.

¹¹ Since the beginning of the work is lost in MS R, the extant text opening in the middle of a sentence which belongs to a summary of Book 3 of the *Republic*, one could hypothesize that Albert had access to a fuller copy that would have offered the relevant information at the beginning of the section treating the *Republic*—but this is mere speculation.

¹² *et dicitur ‘dominus’, qui ex superpositione pulchrorum et bonorum sibi et aliis sufficit ad actum bonae prouidentiae* (‘The one is called “master” who because of his abundance of beautiful and good things suffices himself and others for acts of good providence’).

¹³ Cf. also Jer. *Ep. 57.5.2: profiteor me in interpretatione Graecorum ... non uerbum e uerbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu* (‘I confess that in translating from Greek ... I do not render word for word but sense for sense’). On this letter, which is in fact a treatise on translating, giving many examples of translations *per sensum, non de uerbo* from classical and Christian literature, cf. G.J.M. Bartelink, *Hieronymus, Liber de optimo genere interpretandi (Epistula 57): Ein Kommentar* (Leiden, 1980).

Therefore, in his book on Plato's *Republic* Apuleius quotes Plato, saying that [God] buried concupiscence in the lower regions [of the body], like in an underworld, where there is shadow because of the eclipse of reason.

The title *De politica (Platonis)* can hardly refer to a text other than the *Politia/Politegia* mentioned in the two passages treated above. The words *Platonem inducit dicentem* may suggest at first glance that Apuleius in that work introduced Plato as a speaking character, but actually this is just a phrase Albert uses for 'to quote'.¹⁴ The idea expressed in the following 'quotation' is, of course, basically Platonic, but it resembles *Ti.* 70d–71a more closely than any passage of the *Republic* (see, especially, 4.439d–441c).¹⁵ Most importantly for our concerns, there is again no clear parallel in the so-called 'New Apuleius', the relevant part of the summary treating the *Timaeus* being much shorter and very different in its wording (32.36–7; page 134: *consistere ... desideria rursus in iocinere*).

To sum up: Albert is obviously thinking of a full translation (or, at least, of a translation of a major part) of the Platonic *Republic* by Apuleius; what he says about the contents of that text does not match up at all with the so-called 'New Apuleius'. Thus it seems far too rash to conclude that his words 'cannot but be a reference' to the latter.¹⁶ It should also be emphasized that Albert, *pace* Stover, nowhere says 'that a new text, a Latin translation of Plato's *Republic*, had been found', and that this text was 'a newly available work'.¹⁷ This is not to say that Albert, in the passages discussed above, could by no means have had our *Summarium librorum Platonis* in mind; but if he had, there were obviously some major areas of confusion.

Against this background, it is worth pointing out that there actually exists one passage in an earlier writer, which may suggest the existence of a Latin translation of Plato's *Republic* by Apuleius, and which has indeed been interpreted that way, at least in modern times.¹⁸ It is found in Fulgentius 'the mythographer': *celocem dicunt genus nauicellae modicissimum, quod bamplum dicimus, unde et Apuleius in libro de re puplica ait: qui celocem regere nequit, onerarium petit* (*Serm. ant.* 44; 'a very small kind of ship, which we call "bamplum", they call "celox"; thus Apuleius says in his book on the *Republic*: "He is unable to navigate a celox but desires a freighter"').¹⁹ Of course, from this single quotation one cannot readily deduce that the supposed translation was *non de uerbo ad uerbum, sed per sensus et sententias*, but it

¹⁴ Cf. e.g. Albert's *Super IV libros Sententiarum* 4.dist.37.art.1 (Borgnet, page 381): *Augustinus in libro de ciuitate dei inducit Apuleium dicentem, quod deum deorum uix aliquis, nisi maxime a carne separatus sit, mente conspicere possit* ('In his book *On the City of God* Augustine quotes Apuleius, saying that no one can spiritually see the highest god if not totally detached from the flesh').

¹⁵ Cf. also Apul. *De dog. Plat.* 1.13 (based on Pl. *Ti.* 70e): *cupidinem atque appetitus ... infernas abdominis sedes tenere ut popinas quasdam* ('lust and desire ... occupy the lower places of the belly like a kind of tavern').

¹⁶ Stover (n. 1), 8. Stover goes on to say that Albert's words do not reflect 'anything more than a general knowledge of part of the *Expositio*'s contents and its method of translation' (at 9), but actually they do not even demonstrate that.

¹⁷ Stover (n. 1), 7, 8. He seems to deduce this from Albert's words *quaes apud Latinos rara est, quamuis habeatur a quibusdam*, but this is hard to accept.

¹⁸ Cf. G. Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius: Apuleius and the Second Sophistic* (Leiden, 1997), 38; S.J. Harrison, *Apuleius: A Latin Sophist* (Oxford, 2000), 25.

¹⁹ Cf. Stover (n. 1), 45 and the literature cited there. Curiously, Hankins (n. 10), 4 n. 3 thought that already Fulgentius was referring to the so-called 'New Apuleius', although the quoted line is not found in the text as we have it. It cannot be excluded that both the quotation and the supposed *De re publica* are in fact inventions by Fulgentius 'the mythographer', but this would be irrelevant for the medieval reception.

is perfectly possible that Albert was not relying on his own reading but on second-hand information, coming from some murky source that had already misunderstood and embellished Fulgentius: his remark *habeatur a quibusdam* certainly points to second-hand knowledge. One must not forget that the *doctor uniuersalis* took a lot of his information concerning older literature not from the original texts but from (more or less obscure) medieval works of reference, partly based on dubious sources themselves, which sometimes resulted in serious distortions and errors, even when Albert was referring to the works of theological authorities one would expect him to know well.²⁰

As things stand, knowledge of the so-called ‘New Apuleius’ by Albert the Great cannot be assumed as naturally as Stover does, and the possibility of a serious confusion, ultimately rooted in the passage of Fulgentius ‘the mythographer’ quoted above, should not be prematurely excluded.²¹

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²⁰ To give just one example, he quotes from a supposed *Commentary on Romans* by Fulgentius of Ruspe, but there never was such a work nor can the quotation be found in the writings of the bishop of Ruspe (*sicut dicit Fulgentius super epistolam ad Romanos ‘Deus non potest facere, unde opus suum fiat deterius’*; *Summa theologiae* 1.tr.19.q.77.sol.; Borgnet, pages 799–800; ‘as Fulgentius says in his *Commentary on Romans*: ‘God cannot do anything to make his own work worse’).

²¹ J. Stover, ‘Roger Bacon and the New Apuleius’, *CPh* 115 (2020), 109–112 now points out that Roger Bacon most probably had access to MS R and was able to read the so-called ‘New Apuleius’ around 1260. This case is totally different from Albert the Great’s: whereas the latter’s references to an alleged translation of the Platonic *Republic* by Apuleius show no relation whatever to the so-called ‘New Apuleius’, as I hope to have demonstrated, Roger Bacon is clearly quoting from the text.