

Plato's Alleged Epitaph

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IN HIS BIOGRAPHY of Plato, which occupies Book III of his lives of ancient philosophers, Diogenes Laertius has preserved three epigrams inscribed, he says, on the philosopher's tomb. To these he adds two which are his own work.¹ These last, however, are not relevant for the purpose of this paper, which is to determine whether or not any of the extant epitaphs is likely to be the original inscription carved on Plato's tomb. For the same reason it is not necessary to discuss the third epigram; it is an obvious example of a purely literary epitaph, and even Diogenes himself says that it is later than the first two. It will be useful for the discussion that follows to transcribe the first two epigrams and the context in which they occur.

ἐπεγράφη δ' αὐτοῦ τῷ τάφῳ ἐπιγράμματα τάδε· πρῶτον
σωφροσύνη προφέρων θνητῶν ἦθει τε δικαίῳ
ἐνθάδε δὴ κεῖται θεῖος Ἀριστοκλῆης·
εἰ δέ τις ἐκ πάντων σοφίης μέγαν ἔσχευ ἔπαινον
τοῦτον ἔχει πλείστον καὶ φθόνος οὐχ ἔπεται.

ἕτερον δέ

γαῖα μὲν ἐν κόλπῳ κρύπτει τόδε σῶμα Πλάτωνος,
ψυχὴ δ' ἀθάνατον τάξιν ἔχει μακάρων
υἱοῦ Ἀρίστωνος, τόν τις καὶ τηλόθι ναίων
τιμᾶ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς θεῖον ἰδόντα βίον.

καὶ ἄλλο νεώτερον
αἰετέ, κτλ.

7 γαῖα . . . Πλάτωνος over erasure in Plan.^a κόλπῳ Diog. Laert.:
κόλπους *Anth.Pal.* and Plan.^a

8 ἀθάνατον Diog. Laert. **B** and *Anth.Pal.*: ἀθανάτων Diog. Laert.
FP and Plan.^a

These two epigrams, and the third as well, have also been preserved in the *Palatine Anthology*² in the same order and with minor

¹ Diog. Laert. 3.43–45. The edition cited is that of H. S. Long (Oxford 1964). The MSS. referred to below are: **B** = *Neapolitanus Bourbonicus* iii B 29 (XII cent.); **F** = *Laurentianus* 69.13 (XIII cent.); **P** = *Parisinus gr.* 1759 (early XIII cent.).

² 7.60–62. The ms., which once belonged to the Palatine Elector, is now divided between Heidelberg and Paris (*Palatinus* 23 + *Parisinus Suppl. gr.* 384). On the history

variant readings.³ Moreover, the first epigram is there ascribed to Simias. The three appear also in Plan.^a, where, however, the first epigram is anonymous (as it is also in Diogenes and in the Arabic life of Plato, about which see *infra*); and in Planudes it occurs earlier than the second and the third epigrams.⁴ The two latter ones appear together and in the same order as in Diogenes and in *Anth.Pal.* On the other hand, Plan.^b (3.26.7) has preserved a two-line epitaph, the same, but with some significant variants (discussed *infra*), as lines 1–2 of the second epigram in Diogenes Laertius, and with ascription to Speusippus. (Undoubtedly the Speusippus meant is Plato's nephew and his successor as head of the Academy, whose approximate dates are 410–339 B.C.)⁵ This two-line epitaph has also been preserved in E (= *Sylloge Euphemiana*) 56 but without any ascription at all.

Σπευσίππου

σῶμα μὲν ἐν κόλποις κατέχει τόδε γαῖα Πλάτωνος
ψυχὴ δ' ἰσόθεον τάξιν ἔχει μακάρων.

1 Σπευσίππου Plan.^b: om. E 2 κόλποις Plan.^b: κόλπω E

3 ἰσόθεον E: ἰσοθέων (from ἰσόθεον) Plan.^b: ἰσόθεος Bergk

A majority of the scholars who have concerned themselves with this question have held that the distich preserved in Plan.^b was written by Speusippus and that it is in all probability the very epitaph inscribed on Plato's tomb. The second epigram in Diogenes Laertius would in that case be merely an expansion, with modification in the

of this MS. and of the *Anth.Pal.* see A. S. F. GOW and D. L. PAGE, *The Greek Anthology, Hellenistic Epigrams I* (Cambridge 1965) xxxiii–xxxviii, and A. D. E. CAMERON, *The Greek Anthology: From Meleager to Planudes* (forthcoming, the Clarendon Press); these works are cited hereafter by authors' names alone. I should like to thank Alan Cameron both for reading this paper and for permitting me to consult the typescript of his new book. I have referred a few times to this work, but because it is still in the press I have stated my points in full wherever I considered it appropriate. I cite the *Anth.Pal.* from H. Beckby, *Anthologia Graeca*².

³ A glance at the critical apparatus will suffice to show that the variants for the second poem in Diog. Laert. (the only ones that are relevant to the purpose of this paper) are of minor importance and are such as often occur in MSS. of one and the same author. On the readings for the first and the third epigrams see Beckby II 46, 48. They may all be explained by the hypothesis that the epigrams in Cephalas (whose own anthology was excerpted by the scribes of the *Anth.Pal.*) which ultimately come from Diog. Laert. were derived from a MS. different from the exemplar of the extant MSS. of Diogenes. Cf. P. Waltz, *Anthologie grecque*² IV (Paris 1960) 15–16.

⁴ The references are Plan.^a 3.1.1, 28.2, 28.3. On the two editions of Planudes' anthology see 73f *infra*.

⁵ For the dates see my *Speusippus of Athens, A Critical Study* (Philosophia Antiqua 39 [1981]) 7. There I briefly discussed and dismissed Planudes' ascription of the distich to Speusippus, but the whole question requires a detailed analysis of the sources, which I offer here. The Speusippean texts are cited from my edition.

first two lines, of Speusippus' original distich. Among those who subscribe to this interpretation one may mention F. Osann, G. Kaibel, T. Preger, T. Bergk, H. Stadtmüller, P. Lang, J. Geffcken, W. Peek, and M. Isnardi Parente.⁶ These critics, however, have accepted Planudes' version as the original Plato epitaph and his ascription of it to Speusippus without offering any detailed discussion of the issue. To the best of my knowledge the only scholar who has treated the whole question at length is J. A. Notopoulos, in a paper published some forty years ago.⁷ His conclusion is that Planudes' two-line epitaph was written by Speusippus and was the actual epigram inscribed on Plato's tomb. D. L. Page, for his part, in his posthumously published *Further Greek Epigrams*,⁸ maintains that Planudes' ascription to Speusippus, though possible, is insufficient. Moreover, he believes that the related four-line epigram in Diogenes Laertius is a later remodelling and expansion of the distich preserved in E and in Plan.^b

However, as will be argued below, Page's discussion is indecisive; he does not take into account the evidence of the Arabic life of Plato by Ibn al-Ḳifṭī, nor does he seem to have been acquainted with Notopoulos' paper.⁹ Since my interpretation radically differs from that of Notopoulos, I shall here discuss at some length the arguments he has advanced. At the same time I shall offer probable proof that none of the extant epigrams is likely to be the original epitaph inscribed on Plato's tomb (if there was one) and that Planudes' ascription of the two-line epigram to Speusippus is probably merely a conjecture of his or of his source, but that in any case it cannot be traced back to classical antiquity, let alone to the fourth century B.C. Finally, I shall discuss the question whether the two-line epitaph or that in four lines is likely to be the earlier one, as well as Page's arguments in favor of the priority of the Planudean distich with its peculiar readings.

The internal grounds on which Notopoulos bases his ascription to Speusippus of the distich Planudes has preserved can be quickly

⁶ F. Osann, *Beiträge zur griechischen und römischen Literaturgeschichte* (Darmstadt 1835) 307ff; G. Kaibel on *Epigrammata Graeca* 56 (p.19); T. Preger, *Inscriptiones Graecae Metricae* (Leipzig 1891) 9–11; T. Bergk, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*⁴ II (Leipzig 1882) 329f; H. Stadtmüller, *Anthologia Graeca Epigrammatum* II.1 (Leipzig 1899) 44; P. Lang, *De Speusippi Academici Scriptis* (Bonn 1911) 86; J. Geffcken, *Griechische Epigramme* (Heidelberg 1916) 52 *ad no.* 141b; W. Peek, *Gr. Vers-Inschr.* 1756; M. Isnardi Parente, *Speusippo, Frammenti* (Naples 1980) 123, 389–90.

⁷ "Plato's Epitaph," *AJP* 63 (1942) 272–93 (hereafter 'Notopoulos').

⁸ *Further Greek Epigrams*, edd. R. D. Dawe and J. Diggle (Cambridge 1981; hereafter 'Page') 305–07.

⁹ This may be due to the author's death before he was able to complete his work. The editors (p. vii) transcribe a pencilled note by Page: "Ready for the Press, except that it would be better for a critical eye."

dismissed. Such arguments are seldom decisive in cases of positive ascription, since one must always take into account the possibility that a given poem may be the work of a skilful imitator. But in the present instance the question does not really arise, as only one epigram, of a completely different nature, is known to have been written by Speusippus.¹⁰ One will readily concede that there is nothing in the wording, motifs, and contents of the distich that is incompatible with a date of composition in the fourth century B.C. But neither does anything in it make it necessary or likely for that epigram to have been written then rather than later. Moreover, even if written in the fourth century, nothing in the poem requires us to suppose that it was written by a philosopher, let alone by Speusippus.¹¹

The issue, then, must be decided on the basis of the external evidence alone. In this connection Notopoulos' main argument is as follows. In Plan.^b 3.26.7 and in the Arabic life of Plato by al-Ḳifī (A.D. 1172–1248)¹² one finds an epitaph in one distich only. (This Arabic life of Plato goes ultimately back, in part at least, to Porphyry's life of Plato and to another Greek source, or sources, *different* from Diogenes Laertius, who does not appear to have been known to the Arabs.)¹³ On the other hand, Diogenes, the *Palatine Anthology*,

¹⁰ Notopoulos fails to refer to the only extant epigram almost certainly written by Speusippus. This is found in the *Academicorum Philosophorum Index Herculanensis*, where it is cited on the authority of Philochorus (Speusippus τ.2.3–11, F86): τὰ[σδε] θεῶ[σι] θεὰς Χάριτας Μ[ο]ύ[σαι]ς ἀνέ[θη]κεν / Σπεύσιππος λο[γ]ίων [εἶ]νεκα δῶρα τελῶν.

¹¹ The contrast between the destiny of the body and that of the soul after death is a commonplace even in inscriptional epitaphs (*cf.* nn.46–47 *infra*), and the notion that the place of the soul is in the immortal rank of the blessed, though held by Plato, was not peculiar to him or to philosophers in general. In fact it is in lines 3–4 of the related four-line epitaph in Diog. Laert. that we find implied some knowledge of Plato's thought; but even apart from the fact that it is the Planudean distich, not the final two lines of the epigram in Diogenes, that is ascribed to Speusippus by Notopoulos and others, nothing in the lines in question requires us to ascribe them to Speusippus or even to a philosopher.

¹² Notopoulos did not himself use T. Roeper, *Lectiones Abulpharagianae Alterae: De Honaini Vita Platonis* (Gdansk 1866), but relied on Preger's summary of this work (*supra* n.6: 10–11). Both Preger and Notopoulos follow Roeper in ascribing the Arabic life of Plato to Hunain ibn Ishaq (IX cent.), and Notopoulos makes use of a translation of Bar Hebraeus' Chronicle, Bar Hebraeus himself having made use of the Arabic biography of Plato (*cf.* nn.44–45 *infra*). But Roeper's ascription of that life to Hunain is mistaken, *cf.* D. A. Khvol'son, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus I* (St Petersburg 1856) 787 n.2, and M. Steinschneider, *Al-Farabi: Des arabischen Philosophen Leben und Schriften* (Mémoires St Petersburg VII.xiii.4 [1869]) 186 n.1. The biography in question is by al-Ḳifī, in whose *Ta'rikh al-Hukama'* it occurs. Roeper (9–22) gives an annotated translation of al-Ḳifī's life of Plato, both in the version given by M. Casiri, *Bibliotheca Arabico Hispana I* (Madrid 1760) 301f, and in a longer recension, as well as of Bar Hebraeus' statements on Plato. For the Arabic text see the edition of J. Lippert (n.17 *infra*).

¹³ In his life of Plato al-Ḳifī cites Theon (probably Theon of Smyrna, II A.D.). He is dependent also on another Greek source, probably Porphyry's life of Plato (*cf.* n.45

and Plan.^a 3.28.2 all give a four-line epitaph (the second in Diogenes). It is well known that for the classical epigrams the *Palatine Anthology* and Planudes ultimately depend on Cephalas' anthology,¹⁴ and that Cephalas, who was *πρωτοπαπᾶς* of the palace at Constantinople in A.D. 917, and who composed his anthology *ca* 900, drew the epigrams now found in *Anth.Pal.* 7.60–62, 83–133, and others as well from a source which got them from Diogenes Laertius.¹⁵ Hence the ultimate source of the four-line epitaph with which we are here concerned, of its peculiar readings, and of its anonymous character is Diogenes Laertius himself.¹⁶ But in Plan.^b 3.26.7 the two-line epitaph ascribed to Speusippus occurs independently of the group of epigrams on Plato's tomb found in Diogenes, in the *Anth.Pal.*, and in Plan.^a Moreover the distich in Plan.^b presents some readings different from those of the first two lines in our three sources for the four-line epitaph: *σῶμα* and *γαῖα* have exchanged places; *κατέχει* appears instead of *κρύπτει*, and *ισόθειον* or *ισοθέων* instead of *ἀθάνατον* or *ἀθανάτων*. Notopoulos then concludes (274):

Finally the epitaph [*sc.* in Plan.^b] shows its independent source in the authorship. Plan. III^b 26, 7 gives Speusippus as its author whereas all the other sources, including Plan. III^a 28, 2 give it as *adespoton*. The existence therefore of the second epitaph in the *Planudean Anthology* as *adespoton*, enlarged by a second distich, as part of the general group of Plato epitaphs also found in Diogenes Laertius and the *Palatine Anthology*, and the existence of this same epitaph under the name of Speusippus, independent and different in text, position, and size, show a source which ultimately contained the Speusippus epitaph alone, before its inclusion with other Plato epitaphs.

Now, to begin with, it is necessary to distinguish clearly three things which have become somewhat confused in Notopoulos' argument: (a) whether the two-line epitaph is likely to be earlier than the related four-line epigram; (b) whether the two-line epitaph is likely to be the epigram actually inscribed on Plato's tomb; (c) whether the two-line epitaph is likely to have been written by Speusippus. But

infra). Porphyry's *History of Philosophy*, where Plato's biography occurred, was available to the Arabs in a Syriac translation (*cf.* A. Müller, *Die griechischen Philosophen in der arabischen Überlieferung* [Halle 1873] 5, 25, 30 n.1, 57 n.46), whereas they do not seem to have been acquainted with Diog. Laert. (Müller 42). *Cf.* also n.35 *infra*.

¹⁴ *Cf.* Gow/Page xiv–xviii and Cameron's exhaustive study. See also n.21 *infra*.

¹⁵ *Cf.* R. Weisshäupl, *Die Grabgedichte der griechischen Anthologie* (AbhArchEpiGWien 7 [1889]) 34–38; Stadtmüller (*supra* n.6) LXIII–LXIV; Notopoulos 277–80.

¹⁶ On the variants in these three sources see *supra* n.3.

even if one could establish (a), that the two-line epitaph is earlier than the related one in four lines, this by itself would not be decisive regarding points (b) and (c): for how early need the two-line epitaph be? On the other hand, if one could establish (c), that the distich in question was written by Speusippus, then (a) must surely be answered affirmatively and, with good probability, also (b). Finally, even if one could prove (a) and (b), that by itself would not suffice to establish that Speusippus was the author of the two-line epitaph. For that to be the case one would have to produce strong arguments in support of the reliability of Planudes' ascription of the distich to Speusippus, since he is the only source for this ascription. As it is, however, it seems that Notopoulos has failed to prove, or to make a likely case for, any of these three points.

It is therefore most important to discuss first of all the possible Speusippean authorship of the two-line epitaph. Notopoulos bases his attribution of this distich to Speusippus on three interrelated grounds: first, that in Plan.^b the epigram is explicitly ascribed to Speusippus; second, that the transmission of the two-line epitaph with its ascription to Speusippus and with its characteristic readings is independent of Diogenes Laertius (and of the sources which ultimately depend on him), and so it is also independent of the transmission of the related four-line epigram with its peculiar readings and its anonymous character; third, that the two-line epitaph is independent of the transmission of the group of epigrams allegedly inscribed on Plato's tomb. The question arises, then, whether the ascription of the distich in Plan.^b is likely to go back to Speusippus himself or, in any case, how early is it likely to be. However, it is regrettable that in his discussion Notopoulos kept a discreet silence concerning the evidence and the implications of two sources. For in the Arabic life of Plato by al-Ḳiftī, and so presumably also in its Greek source (not later than the fourth century A.D.), which was *not* Diogenes Laertius, the two-line epitaph is transmitted as *adespoton* and is transmitted as part of the epigrams allegedly inscribed upon Plato's tomb. Since in the discussion that follows the evidence of the Arabic life will be of importance also in connection with several other points, I give a translation of the pertinent passage of Lippert's text of al-Ḳiftī:¹⁷

There is written on his [sc. Plato's] tomb in Roman [Rumi = Byzantine Greek] (this) of which the translation into Arabic is: "Here is the place of a man who was Aristocles the divine. He stood before men and above them in virtue and a character of

¹⁷ J. Lippert, *Ibn al-Qifti's Ta'rih al-Hukama'* (Leipzig 1903) 24–25.

justice. Whoever praises wisdom (as) greater than all the other things praises this (man) very much because in him is the greatest [or most] wisdom."¹⁸ This is on one side of the tomb, and on the other side: "As for the earth, it covers the body of Plato; on the other hand, as for his soul, it is in the rank of one who does not die."¹⁹

Moreover, in addition to the Arabic life of Plato, the two-line epitaph is also transmitted as *adespoton* in E. Now E is the *Sylloge Euphemiana*, a selection of epigrams from Cephalas' anthology made for a certain Euphemius "by a native of Hypata living in Constantinople in the reign of Leo the Wise (886–911) and therefore a near contemporary of Cephalas."²⁰ It is a well established hypothesis that the *Palatine Anthology*, E, Plan.^a, and Plan.^b all go back ultimately to Cephalas' anthology,²¹ compiled *ca* A.D. 900. Hence the occurrence of the two-line epitaph in both E and Plan.^b would probably mean that it was found in Cephalas' anthology (but see the *caveat* in the next paragraph). Since the distich is *adespoton* in E, a *Sylloge* that in general is well equipped with ascriptions, it is surely illegitimate simply to infer, as Notopoulos implicitly does, that Planudes found the distich's ascription to Speusippus in Cephalas himself. And so, concerning this question, we would at best have had to be satisfied with a *non liquet*. Yet if we take into account *all* the facts it seems more probable than not that the distich's ascription to Speusippus is a conjecture of Planudes or of another author probably later than Cephalas, but that it was not found in the latter's anthology. In fact, as I shall argue, it is quite possible, in the light of the evidence, that the distich itself was not part of Cephalas' own anthology at all.

To begin with, we must bear in mind three things. First, had the two-line epigram really been by Speusippus, this would mean that it was in all likelihood the very epitaph inscribed on Plato's tomb. Second, both in antiquity and in Byzantine times Plato was, together with Homer, the most famous of all classical authors. Third, Speu-

¹⁸ This first epigram is clearly the same as the first of the group of Plato epitaphs in Diog. Laert., even if some of the readings of al-Ḳifṭī's Greek source are different from those in Diogenes.

¹⁹ The Arabic text was kindly translated for me by Professor David Pingree of Brown University (*cf.* also n.50 *infra*).

²⁰ Gow/Page xli. On the *Sylloge Euphemiana* *cf.* also Stadtmüller (*supra* n.6) xxix–xxx. The preservation of the distich in Iriarte 105 = *Matritensis* XXIV is of no consequence, since that *Sylloge* was made by Constantine Lascaris, who frequently took his epigrams from Planudes himself (*cf.* Stadtmüller LXIV–LXVI).

²¹ *Cf. supra* n.14. Aubreton's attempt to deny this ("La tradition manuscrite des épigrammes de l'Anthologie grecque," *REA* 70 [1968] 32–81) is unconvincing and has been refuted by Cameron in his forthcoming book.

sippus' relation to Plato was well known even in Byzantine times through Diogenes Laertius (*cf.* nn.30–34 *infra*), Hesychius of Miletus, and others. Is it therefore likely that, had the ascription of this distich to Speusippus been found in Cephalas, the scribes of the *Palatine Anthology* (composed *ca.* A.D. 930–950)²² would have failed to preserve this epitaph altogether, and that E, which has preserved it, would have failed to transcribe its ascription to Speusippus? And there is also evidence—negative, but nevertheless as significant as the previous item—from an additional source not hitherto cited in connection with the point at issue here.

A number of marginal notes in the manuscript of the *Palatine Anthology* show that for books VI and VII the corrector C, a careful scholar, collated the Palatine ms. against the ms. of an anthology written by one Michael Chartophylax (a title which at this time designated the head of the Patriarchal Chancellery),²³ who was a contemporary of Cephalas. And yet C did not transcribe the distich Planudes ascribes to Speusippus. This probably means that the distich's ascription to Speusippus was not found in Michael either. The importance of this is seen from a note C wrote on *Anth.Pal.* 7.432: *ἕως ὧδε τὰ τοῦ κυροῦ Μιχαήλ τοῦ μακαρίου περιείχον ἐπιγράμματα ἄτινα ἰδιοχείρως αὐτὸς ἔγραψεν ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τοῦ Κεφαλᾶ κτλ.* For the implications to be drawn from this text are: (a) C had not a copy of, but Michael's own autograph; (b) Michael took his epigrams from the book of Cephalas; (c) the words *ἔγραψεν ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τοῦ Κεφαλᾶ* most probably mean that Michael took his epigrams from Cephalas' own copy or from Cephalas' own autograph.²⁴ For Cephalas was not

²² This date for the composition of the ms. containing the *Anth.Pal.* is earlier by 50 to 30 years than that generally accepted until a few years ago. But there are strong reasons, both palaeographical and from the contents of the marginal notes, for thinking that the ms. is not much later than Cephalas. *Cf.* A. Diller, "The Age of Some Early Greek Classical Manuscripts," *Serta Turyniana* (Urbana 1974) 514–24, esp. 520–21; J. Irigoien, *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études* 1975/6, 281–95, esp. 281–89; and ch. 5 ("The Palatine ms. and its Scribes") of Cameron's forthcoming book.

²³ Therefore an important person: most scholars take *ὁ χαρτοφύλαξ* to mean 'the archivist', but see Cameron.

²⁴ From several remarks by scribe C it is to be inferred that he had good reason to think that Michael had access to a complete copy of Cephalas' anthology; and, given C's note on 7.432, it follows that he thought Michael to have had access to Cephalas' own copy or to Cephalas' own autograph. Thus in his note on 7.428, C, after making corrections in the text of the Palatinus from Michael's copy, states that "even Michael's text contained errors." On 6.269 C states *εἰς τὸ ἀντιβόλιον οὐ κείται τοῦ κυροῦ Μιχαήλου· πῶθεν οὖν ἐγράφη οὐκ οἶδα*: that is, assuming Michael to be a better witness to Cephalas than the *Anth.Pal.*, C infers that 6.269 was interpolated in the Palatine ms., since it is absent from Michael's autograph. Finally, in the Palatine ms. there are gaps after both 6.125 and 6.143, and C says, respectively, *οὐ λείπει, ὡς οἶμαι*, and *οὐ λείπει, ὡς οἶμαι, οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα*. From this we may infer that there was no lemma after

the 'author' of the *Anthology* except in the sense that he himself compiled the definitive Byzantine anthology of classical epigrams. If this is so, then it is possible that even the distich itself preserved by **E** and by Planudes was not to be found either in Michael or in Cephalas himself. There is no reason to think that Planudes had access to a complete copy of Cephalas' anthology. Rather it is clear that neither of the two mss. of the anthology he used was a complete copy of Cephalas, since Plan.^a lacks most of the epigrams found in Plan.^b And both Plan.^a and Plan.^b together lack epigrams found in the *Palatine Anthology* and in other sources, all of which go *ultimately* back to Cephalas' anthology.²⁵

The compiler of **E**, for his part, given the fact that the *Sylloge Euphemiana* must have been produced only a few years after Cephalas' own compilation, may very well have had a complete copy of the latter's anthology. But apart from the fact that **E** has *not* preserved the distich's ascription to Speusippus, there are a few instances in which **E** has included epigrams which in all likelihood were not to be found in Cephalas.²⁶ On the other hand, the scribes of the *Palatine Anthology*, given the date of the Palatine ms. and the marginal remarks of the corrector **C**, in all probability did have a complete copy of Cephalas, and the same thing is true also of Michael Chartophylax.²⁷ Hence, it is possible that the distich itself, which only Planudes ascribes to Speusippus, was written in the margin or in the body itself of a ms. of the anthology, but that it was not found in Cephalas himself. Moreover, even if the distich was included in Cephalas, then **E** must have got it from him, whereas Planudes did not have a complete copy of Cephalas. In that case, the fact that in **E** the distich is *adespoton*, as it was also in the Greek source of the Arabic life of Plato by al-Ḳifṭī, makes it appear likely that the ascription to Speusippus was added by Planudes himself or in any case by another author later than Cephalas. It is well known that Planudes was not averse to making conjectures of all sorts, including ascriptions.²⁸ And it is not at all difficult to see why

either of these poems in Michael's autograph. For Michael's copy as **C**'s only exemplar for collation cf. Gow/Page xxxv f and Cameron ch. 5.

²⁵ The fact that Planudes in Plan.^b transcribed once more some of the epigrams already included in Plan.^a shows that he was trying to make his copy of the anthology as complete as possible. (In the case of the repeated epigrams Plan.^b contains additional information.) On the other hand, Planudes did not have access to the *Anth.Pal.*, cf. Gow/Page xxxviii with n.3.

²⁶ Cf. Cameron ch. 11.

²⁷ Cf. **C**'s note on *Anth.Pal.* 7.432 (cited above), and *supra* n.24.

²⁸ Cf. Gow/Page xxxi–xxxii and xxxix. Concerning Planudes' ascription of the distich in question to Speusippus, Page says (306): "To say that the evidence for the ascription

he—or another Byzantine scholar—may have come to ascribe the distich in question to Speusippus: he knew the longer, four-line epigram in comparison with which the distich appears to be the original ‘inscription’.²⁹ Then mere acquaintance with Diogenes Laertius would suggest Speusippus as the most likely candidate for its authorship, if one was looking for one. For in Diogenes we find the following information about Speusippus: he was Plato’s nephew³⁰ and his student,³¹ he succeeded Plato as head of the Academy,³² he was one of the executors of Plato’s last will,³³ and—most important for the point at issue here—he wrote a “Funeral Banquet” on the death of the philosopher or an “Encomium of Plato” or both.³⁴

However that may be, even if Planudes found the distich’s ascription to Speusippus in Cephalas himself, it is highly improbable that this ascription goes back either to classical antiquity or even to Hellenistic times. And it is also unlikely to go back to a good and reliable source. For it is hardly credible that such a source for the ascription was still available to Cephalas but was not known to Diogenes Laertius and to the Greek source of al-Ḳifṭī’s life of Plato, both of which probably go back to an earlier biography of Plato.³⁵ (In connection

to Speusippus is insufficient is certainly not an overstatement of the case against it.” To my mind the extant evidence justifies the conclusion that that ascription is with good probability a conjecture of Planudes or of a source later than Cephalas. Sometimes we find conjectural ascriptions also in the *Anth.Pal.* For example in 7.60 the first Plato epitaph is ascribed to “Simias.” This ascription has rightly been rejected by most scholars because that epitaph is anonymous not only in Diog. Laert. and in Plan.^a but also in al-Ḳifṭī’s life of Plato. The evidence of the first two sources indicates that the ascription to “Simias” was probably not found in Cephalas either. All in all Cephalas seems to have compiled his anthology with more mechanical methods and seems not to have been prone to making conjectures, including ascriptions.

²⁹ Note the absence of lines 3–4 in Diogenes’ version and the occurrence of the antithesis *σῶμα μὲν . . . ψυχὴ δέ*, which is common in true sepulchral epitaphs from the fourth century B.C. onwards. Cf. n.47 *infra*.

³⁰ Speusippus T1.2–4 (Diog. Laert. 4.1) and T4 (Diog. Laert. 3.4).

³¹ Speusippus T5 (Diog. Laert. 3.46).

³² Speusippus T1.4–5 (Diog. Laert. 4.1).

³³ Speusippus T37 (Diog. Laert. 3.43).

³⁴ Speusippus T1.58 (Diog. Laert. 4.5) and Fla (Diog. Laert. 3.2); cf. Tarán (*supra* n.5) 228–35.

³⁵ Since Diog. Laert. was not known to Arabic authors (cf. *supra* n.13) and since the ultimate Greek source of al-Ḳifṭī’s biography of Plato did not use Diog. Laert., the fact that both he and the Arabic life have preserved the first two Plato epitaphs (that the second epigram in the Arabic life is two lines long, whereas in Diogenes it has four lines, is not relevant to the point at issue here) shows that the two lives ultimately go back to an earlier biography of Plato which already contained the two epitaphs in the same order as they appear in the extant sources. (A comparison of the Arabic life with Diogenes’ biography of Plato shows that the Greek source of the former was not Diogenes at all.)

with this, it is noteworthy that al-Ḳifṭī's Greek source for the Plato epitaphs was either Porphyry or a source earlier than Porphyry.) Moreover, Notopoulos says nothing about this difficulty: if the distich is the text Speusippus had inscribed on Plato's tomb, how was the author's name transmitted? It was almost certainly not written on the stele, and the epigram itself does not contain its author's name as does the only epigram attested for Speusippus (see *supra* n.10). Page (306) says that "it might nevertheless have been remembered that the author was Speusippus." But he can scarcely mean to say that the ascription to Speusippus had an oral transmission from 348/7, the year of Plato's death, to *ca* A.D. 900, the approximate date of Cephalas' anthology. And the evidence seems to show that Speusippus' works were not available even to Porphyry or Diogenes Laertius.³⁶ Hence Cephalas' likely source for the distich as preserved in E and in Plan.^b could hardly have been anything but a biography of Plato, for example that by Hesychius of Miletus.³⁷ Is it at all likely, however, that the distich's ascription to Speusippus in such a late biography of Plato could come from a good source which was not known to Diogenes Laertius, to the Greek source of the Arabic life of Plato, and even to the earlier biography of Plato which was the source of both? To me the obvious answer is in the negative. Moreover, as I have argued above, it is more likely than not that even if the distich was in Cephalas, the ascription to Speusippus was not.

Nor is Notopoulos justified in his inference that the distich preserved by E and Plan.^b is attested independently of the group of epigrams on Plato's tomb in Diogenes Laertius, in the *Anth.Pal.*, and in Plan.^a It is well known that Planudes' autograph manuscript of the anthology is extant; it is *Marcianus gr.* 481 (coll. 863). He dated the end of the composition of Plan.^a to September 1299, and he arranged the epigrams he preserves in seven books, now customarily referred to as I^a, II^a, etc. After writing out these seven books Planudes obtained another ms. in which he found epigrams absent from his source for Plan.^a He wrote out these epigrams—as well as some already included in Plan.^a—as supplements to each of the first four books of Plan.^a It is now customary to refer to these supplementary books as I^b, II^b, etc.³⁸ In addi-

³⁶ Cf. Tarán (*supra* n.5) 233, 407–08.

³⁷ On Hesychius and his work, which was available to Suidas/the *Souda* (roughly contemporary with Cephalas), cf. Suidas s.v. Ἡσύχιος Μιλήσιος (II 594.15–25 Adler); H. Schulz, *RE* 8 (1913) 1322–27 s.v. "Hesychios 10"; A. Adler, *RE* IV A (1931) 706–09 s.v. "Suidas."

³⁸ Cf. Gow/Page xxxviii–xxxix, Cameron's forthcoming study, and Irigoin (*supra* n.22) 289–95.

tion, merely from Planudes' separation of the first Plato epitaph (in Diog. Laert. and in the *Anth.Pal.*) from the second and the third it is clear that he introduced changes into the arrangement of epigrams in Cephalas. Hence it is impossible to know in what context Planudes found many of the epigrams that are in Plan.^b, and so it is unwarranted to infer, as Notopoulos does, that Plan.^b 3.26.7 was transmitted independently of the group of epigrams allegedly inscribed on Plato's tomb.³⁹ Similarly, in the case of the *Sylloge Euphemiana* nothing can be inferred as to the context in which its compiler found the two-line epitaph. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that in al-Ḳifṭī's life of Plato and hence also in its Greek source, which was *not* Diogenes Laertius, the two-line epitaph is transmitted together with, not independently of, another Plato epitaph, which is clearly the same as the first epitaph in Diogenes.⁴⁰ In short, from the extant evidence there is no reason to believe that the transmission of the one-distich epitaph is independent of the group of epigrams allegedly inscribed on Plato's tomb. Moreover, it appears that the preservation of the two-line epitaph is not necessarily connected with its ascription to Speusippus found in Plan.^b, since in E the epitaph is anonymous, as it is also in al-Ḳifṭī's life of Plato.

It is highly improbable that either the two-line epigram or the related one in four lines is the original epigram inscribed on Plato's tomb. Nor is it likely that the ascription of either version to Speusippus fell off from the source ultimately common to Diogenes Laertius and the Greek source of al-Ḳifṭī. Diogenes explicitly tells us that the epigram in 3.43 came first, *i.e.* before the four-line epitaph in 3.44, the epigram related to the distich that Plan.^b ascribes to Speusippus. And Diogenes also states that the third epigram is "more recent" (*νεώτερον*). The same position relative to each other of the first two epigrams in Diogenes may be inferred for the Greek source of al-Ḳifṭī. For the latter states that on one side of the tomb (*i.e.* of the stele) there was one epigram (the same as the first epigram in Diog. 3.43) and on the other side another epigram. This is the Arabic translation of a Greek distich roughly identical to the first two lines of the second epigram in Diogenes (more about this *infra*). And this means that in the Greek source of al-Ḳifṭī the two epigrams were given in the same order as in Diogenes.

³⁹ The distich in question may well have appeared in Cephalas or in a later copy of Cephalas as a marginal addition or in the text together with the other Plato epitaphs.

⁴⁰ *Cf. supra* nn.18 and 35.

Now Notopoulos himself rightly thinks that the first epigram in Diogenes cannot be earlier than the Hellenistic age, for it presupposes the notion that Plato's original name was Aristocles. And Notopoulos himself has shown that Plato was the original name of the philosopher and that the legend about his name being Aristocles originated in the Hellenistic age.⁴¹ Therefore there is no reason to think that the second epigram's ascription to Speusippus fell off from the Greek source ultimately common to Diogenes and al-Ḳifṭī. Nor is it likely that the second epitaph in Diogenes, whether in the two- or the four-line version, was the original epitaph inscribed on Plato's tomb. For had it been, it would be hard to explain how this epitaph came to occupy the second place—after an obviously Hellenistic epigram—in the group of epitaphs allegedly inscribed on Plato's tomb. Surely it is impossible to take at face value the statement in Diogenes and in al-Ḳifṭī that the epigrams were inscribed on Plato's tomb, especially when it is seen that the first epitaph is a literary epigram written not earlier than the Hellenistic age. It is clear that only if Planudes' ascription of the distich to Speusippus were reliable would there be a probability that the epitaph on Plato's tomb (if there was one) had survived. But I trust it has been shown that Planudes' ascription, whether his own or not, is probably nothing but a late conjecture. To summarize: so far as our evidence goes, the conclusion seems unavoidable that both the two-line epitaph and the related one in four lines were known in antiquity as anonymous epigrams and that there are no good grounds for thinking that either version was the original epitaph inscribed on Plato's tomb.

There is an additional point against Notopoulos' interpretation which is also telling. The most important variant reading in the distich preserved in E and in Plan.^b is that in line 1 *σῶμα* and *γαῖα* are found in places different from those in which they appear in Diog. Laert. 3.44 and in the sources dependent on him. Thus one finds *γαῖα μὲν . . . σῶμα* in Diogenes but *σῶμα μὲν . . . γαῖα* in E and in Plan.^b But the Arabic life by al-Ḳifṭī, and hence also its Greek source for this epigram, has *γαῖα μὲν . . . σῶμα*, *i.e.* the same reading as in Diogenes. (Nothing can be inferred with certainty from the Arabic text concerning the other variant readings, though in line 2 the Arabic, as will be argued later, favors Diogenes' *ἀθάνατον* over the

⁴¹ J. A. Notopoulos, "The Name of Plato," *CP* 34 (1939) 135–45, and A. Riginos, *Platonica. The Anecdotes Concerning the Life and Writings of Plato* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 3 [Leiden 1976]) 35–38.

ἰσόθεον in E and in Plan.^b) This shows, *pace* Notopoulos, that not even the transmission of the variant readings in E and in Plan.^b need be connected with the alleged independent transmission of the distich as it appears in these two anthologies, or even in Cephalas. The likely inference is that the variant σώμα μὲν . . . γαῖα is merely the conjecture of a late or, more probably, of a Byzantine scholar prompted either by the desire to emphasize the contrast between the destiny of Plato's body and that of his soul after death and/or by acquaintance with some genuinely sepulchral epitaphs where one finds σώμα μὲν . . . / ψυχὴ δ' (see *infra*).

In view of the preceding discussion, the fact that the first epigram in Diogenes and in the Arabic life is Hellenistic at the earliest suggests that so too is the second. What with good probability can be ascribed to the Greek source ultimately common to these two authors is the preservation of two of the epigrams allegedly inscribed on Plato's tomb, written during Hellenistic times. It is well known that it had then become a topos to write literary epigrams on the tombs of famous men.⁴² The second epigram in either its four-line or its two-line version is neither a variation nor an imitation of the first epigram found in both Diogenes and al-Ḳifṭī. Whichever of the two versions is the original or earlier, one must infer that it is a purely literary exercise in which its author tried to reproduce the simplicity and almost formulaic character of the true sepulchral epitaph. The main idea of the distich and of the first two lines of the related epigram in Diogenes is the contrast between the fate of Plato's body and that of his soul after death, a motif well attested in true sepulchral epitaphs from the fourth century B.C. on.

In what precedes I have discussed the issue on the assumption that the Arabic life of Plato by al-Ḳifṭī gives a translation of the second epitaph as it appeared in its Greek source. There are good reasons for doing so even despite the fact that we do not have the original version of al-Ḳifṭī's *Ta'riḫ al-Hukama'*, the work in which Plato's biography appears, but an epitome of it by al-Zawzani written in 1249,⁴³ al-Ḳifṭī himself having died in 1248. For one thing, as Professor Franz Rosenthal of Yale University tells me in a private communication, even if al-Zawzani really abridged al-Ḳifṭī's original, he probably did not shorten, nor modify, Plato's biography. One cannot assume that he did abbreviate, unless good grounds are adduced in favor of

⁴² Book VII of the *Greek Anthology* (i.e. the *Anth.Pal.* supplemented by Plan.^a, Plan.^b, and the *Syllogae Minores*) provides sufficient evidence of this.

⁴³ Cf. Lippert (*supra* n.17) 11–13, 16–17; A. Dietrich, *Encyclopedia of Islam*² 3 (1971) 840 s.v. "Ibn al-Ḳifṭī."

such a hypothesis. Secondly, as J. Lippert, the editor of al-Ḳifṭī, says,⁴⁴ Bar Hebraeus (died A.D. 1286) seems to have made use of a complete text of al-Ḳifṭī's work, and it is noteworthy that the two Plato epitaphs as they appear in Bar Hebraeus' Chronicle are identical to the version found in al-Ḳifṭī.⁴⁵ Nor is there any reason to think that al-Ḳifṭī himself would have abbreviated the second epitaph to two lines if his Greek source had had the four lines found in Diogenes Laertius. Nevertheless, since there is a remote possibility that he may have done so, it is well to consider the consequences this would have for both Notopoulos' arguments and my own.

The strongest argument that scholars from Osann and Preger to Notopoulos have advanced in support of the independent existence in antiquity of a two-line epitaph related to the first two lines of the second epitaph in Diogenes is the occurrence of that distich in the Arabic life of Plato. But if in the Greek source of al-Ḳifṭī's biography the second epigram also was in four lines, then the epitaph preserved by E and by Plan.^b would at best find its earliest attestation in Cephalas' anthology composed *ca* 900. Hence, there would be no evidence of the distich's independent existence before that date. Moreover, its ascription to Speusippus would still rest entirely on the authority of Planudes, since in E the epitaph is *adespoton*. And the fact that the epitaph was not included in the *Palatine Anthology* either by the scribes of the Palatine ms. or by the corrector C would still create a strong presumption against the possibility that the ascription to Speusippus was to be found in Michael Chartophylax and hence also in Cephalas. However, even if the epitaph and its ascription to Speusippus had been found in Cephalas, that epitaph could scarcely be regarded as anything but the work of a late or Byzantine scholar who shortened and modified the first two lines of the epigram in Diogenes or in a similar source both in order to differentiate it from the second epitaph in the group of the Plato epitaphs and in order to make it appear more genuinely inscriptional. And its ascription to Speusippus would have been prompted by the same reasons as those given above. On the other hand, suppose that the epitaph in al-Ḳifṭī's

⁴⁴ Lippert (*supra* n.17) 17.

⁴⁵ For an English translation of the epitaphs in Bar Hebraeus *cf.* E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj I* (Oxford/London 1932) 36. An English translation (due to J. Obermann) of the epigrams in Bar Hebraeus from the edition of Bedjan (Paris 1890) is found in Notopoulos, "Porphyry's Life of Plato," *CP* 35 (1940) 284-93, esp. 286. (In this paper Notopoulos, following Roeper [*supra* n.12], tries to ascribe to Porphyry's life of Plato the passage in Bar Hebraeus' Chronicle which was itself based on al-Ḳifṭī.) For a Latin translation of the epitaphs as they appear in al-Ḳifṭī and Bar Hebraeus see Roeper 13.

Greek source was originally of the same length as the second epitaph in Diogenes. Since its readings insofar as they can be inferred from the Arabic are basically the same as those in Diogenes, one would have to infer that it was the only version known in antiquity, that it was anonymous, and that it had four lines. In other words, neither the ascription to Speusippus of the distich in Plan.^b nor the independent existence of this distich (as preserved in E and in Plan.^b) in antiquity would be more probable than it was on the more reasonable hypothesis that in the Greek source of al-Ḳifṭī the second Plato epitaph was only two lines long.

Now D. L. Page (305–07), who does not take into account the Arabic life of Plato, argues on purely internal grounds that the distich preserved by E and by Plan.^b is the original version of this epigram and that the related four-line epigram in Diogenes Laertius is later. The latter would be a variation with subsequent expansion of the former epitaph. Page's arguments are: (a) The second distich of the four-line epitaph is obscure and ill-phrased, and looks like something tacked on. (b) In line 1 the antithesis demands *σῶμα μὲν . . . ψυχὴ δέ*, which we find in E and in Plan.^{b46} (c) In the second line, the author of the two-line epitaph put a very bad epithet before *τάξιν* (i.e. *ισόθειον* or *ισοθέων*). And so one must infer that the *ἀθάνατον* (or *ἀθανάτων*) in the four-line epigram was a deliberate change, which fact points to the priority of the distich in E and in Plan.^b

Page's second and third arguments are both based on a tacit assumption, similar to the principle of the *lectio difficilior* in textual criticism. It is therefore necessary to keep in mind that *lectio difficilior praeferenda* is not of universal application, or any mistake or absurdity would be a *lectio difficilior*. And similarly here. Take for example the problem of line 1. *σῶμα μὲν . . . ψυχὴ δέ* is apparently the more obvious antithesis, and it is a common antithesis found in sepulchral epitaphs of this type from the fourth century B.C. on.⁴⁷ But in none of the attested examples do we find anything like the difficulty Page

⁴⁶ For the conventional beginning Page cites Peek, *Gr. Vers-Inschr.* 1781, [σῶ]μα μὲν ἐν κόλποις [χ]άδε γαῖ' Ἰα[τρ]οκλείας / τὴν δ[έ] ἀρετὴν κτλ. (Athens, IV B.C.), and 1782, σῶμα σὸν ἐν κόλποις, Καλλιστοῦ, γαῖα καλύπτει, / σῆς δὲ <ᾰ>ρετῆς κτλ. (Peiraeus, mid IV B.C.). However, the epigraphical evidence is richer and more varied than Page supposed, cf. *infra*.

⁴⁷ Cf. Peek, *Gr. Vers-Inschr.* 1889.5–6, σῶμα μὲν ἐνθάδε σόν, Διονύσιε, γαῖα καλύπτει / ψυχὴν δὲ ἀθάνατον κοινὸς ἔχει ταμίης (Athens, second half IV B.C.); 1758.1–2, σῶμα μὲν ἦδε χθὼν κ[α]τέχει, Νικᾶς δὲ κέκλημαι, / ψυχὴ δ[έ] ἐγ μελέων κτλ. (Erythrae, III B.C.); 1766.1–2; 1773.1; 1774.1:3; 1776.1–3. In this connection, it is noteworthy that Diogenes Laertius himself composed an epitaph on Solon which contains the common epigraphic formula *σῶμα μὲν . . . ψυχὴ δέ* (1.63 = *Anth.Pal.* 7.87).

himself recognizes in the distich **E** and **Plan.**^b have preserved, viz. the word order *σῶμα μὲν . . . τόδε γαῖα Πλάτωνος*. Nevertheless, Page, taking for granted that the antithesis demands *σῶμα μὲν . . . ψυχὴ δέ* (and saying nothing of the fact that the beginning *γαῖα μὲν* is also conventional),⁴⁸ believes that the author of the original epitaph was therefore willing here to accept the juxtaposition of the words *τόδε γαῖα Πλάτωνος*. I submit, however, that it is at least as likely that the author of the original epitaph, knowing the standard formula *σῶμα μὲν . . . ψυχὴ δέ*, purposely wrote *γαῖα μὲν . . . τόδε σῶμα Πλάτωνος, / ψυχὴ δέ*, not only in order to avoid the awkward *σῶμα μὲν . . . τόδε γαῖα Πλάτωνος*, but also to avoid reproducing a trite formula. Thereby, moreover, the antithesis does not at all lose force, as Page appears to think, because the *μὲν* affects the whole of the first sentence and subordinates it, as is often the case, to the *δέ* clause as a whole: “Though the earth conceals in its bosom Plato’s body, his soul is in the immortal ranks of the blessed” (or “in the rank of the blessed, which is immortal”). And it is perfectly intelligible that a Byzantine pedant—acquainted or not with the inscriptional formula *σῶμα μὲν . . . ψυχὴ δέ*—wished to modify the line in order to bring it into agreement with the common antithesis ‘body/soul’. Similarly, in the case of the second line, it is just as probable that *ἀθάνατον* was changed to *ισόθεον* as *vice versa*. Moreover, it appears that *ισόθεον* is not “a very bad epithet,” as Page calls it. For, as he himself says, it modifies *μακάρων τάξιν*; but *μακάρων* here need not mean, as Page believes, “of the gods.” It probably means “of the blessed” and refers to all men who have attained perfect happiness in the after-life. And there is therefore no reason, *pace* Page, why *ισόθεον* cannot refer to Plato’s attainment of that rank. Hence the second line of the distich in **E** and **Plan.**^b means, “but his soul is in the rank of the blessed, which is equal to that of the gods.” (I agree with Page that Bergk’s *ισόθεος* for *ισόθεον* is unlikely to be right and is scarcely anything but a mere *lectio facillior*.) No doubt *ἀθάνατον* here is more appropriate than *ισόθεον*; but a Byzantine looking for a variant may have modified *ἀθάνατον* in order further to differentiate his epitaph either from the first two lines in the related four-line epigram or from a distich such as the Greek source of al-Ḳifṭī must have had.

Concerning Page’s first argument, it may be said at once that, even if valid, it would affect only the question of the original length of the epitaph (one or two distichs), not that of the readings of the first two

⁴⁸ For *γαῖα μὲν* at the beginning of the hexameter cf. Peek, *Gr. Vers-Inschr.* 1759 (Athens, first half III B.C.); 1750 (Ancyra, I A.D.).

lines; for the distich in the Arabic life presupposes, as we have seen, a Greek text basically identical to that of lines 1–2 in the related four-line epigram in Diogenes. In the latter Page objects to the expression *θεῖον ἰδόντα βίον* in line 4. He believes, rightly, that it means “because he [*sc.* Plato] saw that (man’s) life has some god-like quality.” But he contends that if this is what the author did mean, “he should have taken the trouble to choose a more suitable expression” (307). However, even if the objection were well taken, it would not constitute a cogent ground for arguing that lines 3–4 are later than lines 1–2. Surely it is at least as likely that the alleged inappropriateness of *θεῖον ἰδόντα βίον* and/or other problems in lines 3–4 could have caused someone to eliminate the second distich altogether. As it is, if one takes into account the context, the phrase *θεῖον ἰδόντα βίον* is neither vague nor inappropriate. The author is saying that *a good man*, even if he dwells afar, honors Plato because he has seen that man’s life has a god-like quality. One must bear in mind that Plato himself, whose thought may be presumed to have been known to the author of the epigram, considered that the *truly virtuous* and hence wise man is happy and divine.⁴⁹ Plato, then, having seen and taught what is divine in human life (*i.e.* virtue and wisdom), is honored by the good (*i.e.* the virtuous) man, for he too, following Plato’s teaching, will become a divine being. We must assume that the author of the epitaph was acquainted with Plato’s doctrine and gives its full value to *ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός*. Now in line 2 it has been said that after his death Plato achieved the immortal rank of the blessed, and it is noteworthy that Plato himself thought that happiness in this life (which is attained only through virtue) is the necessary condition for, and becomes perfect happiness after death. To my mind, it is the evidence of the Arabic life of Plato, which preserves the first two lines of the epitaph only, that suffices to leave open the possibility that lines 3–4 are a later addition. If they are, I should think that the only thing objectionable in lines 3–4, which is not mentioned by Page, is the emphatic position of *υἱοῦ Ἀρίστωνος* at the beginning of 3, for it comes immediately after what one feels should be a full stop: *ψυχὴ δ’ ἀθάνατον τάξις ἔχει μακάρων*. But it is not impossible that for this very reason the four-line epitaph was shortened to one dis-

⁴⁹ For the relation between virtue, wisdom, and happiness in Plato *cf.* *Leg.* 631B–632D, 660E–664B, 742D–743C, 960B–968A, with L. Tarán, *Academica: Plato, Philip of Opus, and the Pseudo-Platonic Epinomis* (Philadelphia 1975) 54 with nn.235–37. And for Plato any perfectly good soul, whether embodied or not, is divine (*cf.* Tarán 35 with n.159). *Cf.* also, in its context, *Leg.* 951B4–5 and the well-known *ὁμοίωσις θεῶν κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν* of the *Theaetetus* (175D–177A).

tich. Hence, I should pronounce a *non liquet* on the question of the original length of the epigram.

To come back to the question of the original readings of lines 1–2, I submit that in this case the matter cannot be decided merely on internal grounds. Once again it is the question of attestation that takes precedence. Now if the epigram preserved by al-Ḳifṭī is a non-shortened version of what his ultimate Greek source had—as there is good reason to believe—then the readings of lines 1–2 in Diogenes are probably the original ones. For the Arabic text implies that its Greek source had *γαῖα μὲν*.⁵⁰ This by itself creates a presumption in favor of *ἀθάνατον* as the original reading in line 2. Moreover, the Arabic version of line 2, “his soul is in the rank of one who does not die,” seems to presuppose that the Greek source had *ἀθανάτων* rather than *ισοθέων*. And the coincidence in the key readings between Diogenes and al-Ḳifṭī’s Greek source is decisively in favor of thinking that the text of the epitaph as it appears in **E** and **Plan**.^b is a later, modified version. But even if the epigram in al-Ḳifṭī’s Greek source also had four lines, it nevertheless follows that *γαῖα μὲν* is the only attested ancient reading, whereas *σῶμα μὲν* is not attested before *ca* A.D. 900 and need not be much earlier.

In concluding, I should like to stress the following points. (a) The ascription to Speusippus in **Plan**.^b is probably a conjecture of Planudes himself or of his source. But even if, as is possible though unlikely, he or his source found this ascription in Cephalas, the ascription is hardly likely to go back to early antiquity or to a good source. It is intelligible why a late or a Byzantine scholar made such a conjecture, and similar conjectural ascriptions occur often in our sources for the *Greek Anthology*.⁵¹ (b) It is highly improbable that the four-line epigram or the related distich either with the readings in Diogenes Laertius or with those in **E** and in **Plan**.^b is the original epitaph inscribed on Plato’s tomb. (c) In the light of the extant evidence the epitaph in question—whether in two or in four lines—was transmitted as the second of a group of epigrams allegedly found on Plato’s tomb. These were included in a biography of Plato that is ultimately the source both of Diogenes and of the Greek source of the Arabic life of Plato. This and the fact that the first epitaph is Hellenistic suggest that also the second epitaph is Hellenistic at the earliest. (d) The evidence does not suffice to ascertain whether originally the epitaph

⁵⁰ Professor Pingree tells me that there can be no question that the Arabic translator had *γαῖα μὲν . . . / ψυχὴ δ’* in his Greek source.

⁵¹ Cf. e.g. *supra* n.28 and Gow/Page xxviii ff with references.

with which we are concerned was in two or in four lines. (e) The readings *γαῖα μὲν . . . / ψυχὴ δ' ἀθάνατον* are probably the original ones. The very nature of the evidence has made it necessary to discuss in this paper several different possibilities in the transmission of the two versions of this epitaph. But in none of them does the common opinion gain likelihood that the distich which E and Plan.^b have preserved was written by Speusippus and was the epitaph actually carved on Plato's tomb.

Notopoulos cites Waltz's statement that of several epitaphs devoted to the same person only one can be the original inscription on his tomb.⁵² But it is also possible that none of them is the original epitaph. Such is the case with the epitaphs allegedly inscribed on Plato's tomb. And so the dogmatism of Wilamowitz, who refused even to comment on the Plato epitaphs,⁵³ turns out to be correct as an opinion, though not as an attitude towards the evidence. On the contrary, the analysis of the transmission of the Plato epitaphs shows that, apart from its interest to the Platonist, it is also of importance for students of the *Greek Anthology* itself.

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⁵² Cf. Waltz (*supra* n.3) 38–39.

⁵³ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Platon* I (Berlin 1919) 709, who, relying on Paus. 1.30.3, says: "Auch von seinem [sc. Plato's] Grabe wissen wir nichts weiter, als dass es nicht weit von der Akademie war."