rebus congruentes nominibus differebant. Cicero, Acad. 1.17

Starting with Plato, a thinker of manifold variety and fertility, there was established a philosophy that, though it had two appellations, was really a single uniform system, that of the Academic and the Peripatetic schools, which while agreeing in doctrine differed in name.

These thinkers (sc. Xenophanes and Archelaus), however, seemed to have handled the question incompletely, and, in comparison with them, the view of those who divide philosophy into Physics, Ethics, and Logic is more developed. Of these Plato is potentially the originator, as he discussed many problems of physics and of ethics, and not a few of logic; but those who most explicitly adopt this division are Xenocrates and the Peripatetics, and also the Stoics.

‘Old Academic’ Ethics

Polemo, and also before him Aristotle, held that the primary objects (sc. of desire) were the ones I have just mentioned. Thus, arose the doctrine of the Old Academy and the Peripatetics maintaining that the ultimate Good is to live in accordance with nature, that is to enjoy the first natural supplies with the use of virtue.

‘Old Academic’ Physics

In the domain of physics, they (sc. the ancient philosophers) divided nature into two principles, the one being the active, and the other the passive, out of which under the influence of the active force something comes to be. The active principle they deemed to be a force, the one acted upon a sort of matter.
Theophrastus, however, after giving his account of the other (natural philosophers), says: “After these came Plato, before them in reputation and ability though after them in date. He concerned himself chiefly with metaphysics, but also attended to phenomena, taking up the enquiry concerning nature; here, he wished to make the principles two in number, one underlying (things) as matter—and this he calls ‘receptive of all things’; the other being cause and source of movement, and this he attaches to the power of god and of the good”. (Trans. Fortenbaugh et al., 1992)

*The prejudice of ‘dissensio’*

Controversy about a word (sc. the orator) has long tormented those Greeklings, fonder as they are of argument than of truth.

*Antiochus’ Peripateticism*

This effect is produced especially by Theophrastus’ book ‘On Happiness’ in which a large influence is allowed to fortune, though if his statements were true, wisdom would not have the power to ensure happiness. This is in my opinion a softer and more delicate view than is required by the power and dignity of virtue. So let us stick to Aristotle and his son Nicomachus, whose carefully written treatise on morals is indeed reputed to be by Aristotle, but I see nothing to prevent the son from having been like the father.
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Re-inventing an old tradition: the ‘Old Academy’ of Antiochus of Ascalon

The ‘fifth’ Academy

According to most people there have been three Academies— the first and most ancient that of Plato and his school, the second or middle Academy that of Arcesilaus, the pupil of Polemo, and his school, the third or New Academy that of the school of Carneades and Clitomachus. Some, however, add as a fourth that of the school of Philo and Charmidas; and some even count the school of Antiochus as a fifth.

'Advertising' the ancients

Not only may you derive from their writings and teachings (sc. of ‘the ancients’) all liberal learning, all history, every choice form of style, but accomplishments in such variety that no one without such equipment can be properly prepared to approach any task of any distinction. From this school sprang the orators, from this school the generals and the governors of states.

Antiochus’ Platonic ‘disciplina’

Among the ‘Old Academy’ are to be reckoned, as you heard Antiochus say, not only those who are called Academics, Speusippus, Xenocrates, Polemo, Crantor and the rest, but also the ancient Peripatetics, whose chief is Aristotle.