

# THE PRESOCRATICS IN THE DOXOGRAPHICAL TRADITION. SOURCES, CONTROVERSIES, AND CURRENT RESEARCH\*

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## Abstract

In this paper I present a synthetic overview of recent and ongoing research in the field of doxography, that is, the study of the nature, transmission and interrelations of sources for ancient Greek philosophy. The latest revisions of the theory of Hermann Diels (*Doxographi Graeci* 1879) regarding the historiography ought to be known more widely, as they still influence our understanding of the Presocratics and their reception. The scholarly study on the compilations of Greek philosophical views from Hellenistic and later periods has received a major boost by the first of a projected three-volume study by Mansfeld and Runia (1997). Taking their work as a firm basis I also describe my own work in this area and how it can be related to, and fitted into, this trend by outlining how two important sources for the historiography of Greek philosophy, Theophrastus (4th–3rd c. BCE) and Simplicius (early 6th c. AD) stand in a special relation to each other and form an important strand in the doxographical tradition.

## Introduction

In this paper I present a review of recent research on the study of the Presocratics in the doxographical tradition, and how my own work in progress is connected to this area of research. By setting out recent, ongoing and forthcoming research I hope to make a contribution to mapping out some important characteristics of the field by way of a critical study of its main sources, since it is quite important that these new insights are more widely known. For a far more detailed account of the more important sources for the doxographical tradition the study by Mansfeld and Runia, *Aëtiana* (1997), is the best place to start.

In the past two decades the monumental work of Hermann Diels dealing with the transmission of Greek philosophy has become the subject of pertinent criticism and re-evaluation, in particular regarding the methodology in his *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin 1879) and the selectivity in his *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Important proposals have been made to correct the weaknesses and reassess the influence of these pioneering works. My work has gravitated towards two crucial sources of the Greek philosophical tradition, Theophrastus and Simplicius. They not only stand near the beginning and end

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of the historiography of Greek philosophical tradition (4th c. BC and 530 AD), but they also stand in a quite special relationship to each other. Simplicius had access to Theophrastus' work (in what form is not quite clear) as well as the Presocratics and was thus able to combine sources of unusual quality. Given the complexities of this body of evidence, it will be of considerable importance to discuss the broader outline of the debate in parallel with the nature of the relationship of these sources. I shall first give a brief assessment of the *status quaestionis* on the field of doxography and its latest developments regarding the works of Diels. This can only be a highly selective account of this long period nearly covering the whole of Greek philosophy. Anyone who participates in this debate will stand on the shoulders of giants from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I cannot claim competence in all aspects of the debate.<sup>1</sup> But whatever the odds, I shall offer the outline of the subject sufficient to indicate the new contributions that are being made (including my own). Thus it is crucial to cover the methodological issues, which constitute an integral part of the investigation: a study of the doxographical tradition must include analysis of its formal aspect, that is, the problems posed by multi-layered texts, their structure and their provenance, and also the way in which they need to be approached.

Secondly, the foregoing background will put us in a position to have a closer look at one of the most important sources for the Presocratics in this network of texts, the collection of Greek philosophical views attributed (mistakenly) to Plutarch, now labelled as pseudo-Plutarch, who is still awaiting much needed research, as has been indicated by J. Mansfeld.<sup>2</sup> Diels showed that this collection must draw on a lost work by the compiler of doxai by the name of Aëtius (the name is found only in the Christian author Theodoret, who also used his work; see Mansfeld-Runia ch. 2 and ch. 5). I shall here concentrate on the question to what extent recent publications and their conclusions regarding Aëtius and doxography can inform our understanding of the Presocratics.

The final section sets out to discuss Theophrastus' role in the doxographical tradition, again on the basis of more recent studies. Its aim is a modest one, as work on his role in the doxographical tradition is still in progress. Apart from a summary review of my own recent investigations on him and especially his relation to the late Platonist Simplicius, I shall offer analyses of a few passages from the latter, in which he refers to Presocratic thinkers. The connection with Aëtius (or pseudo-Plutarch) might also have a place in this context and how this source helps us in understanding the organisational principles of Theophrastus' work, but current research does not yet allow firm conclusions. The road that lies ahead can only be sketched by outlining some of the challenges that await us.

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<sup>1</sup> It will be clear that my discussion depends heavily on the important and pioneering work of others, in particular J. Mansfeld and D. T. Runia (see bibliography) who are engaged in a thorough reevaluation of Diels' work.

<sup>2</sup> Mansfeld 1992.

## 1. Doxography: Context and Methodological Issues

Until twelve or fifteen years ago, the study of the Presocratics was not often connected to the study of doxography. The Presocratic philosophers received attention individually, and translations were available.<sup>3</sup> But more recently the Presocratics have been experiencing a renewed interest, including the doxographical sources: to name but a few examples, the Budé series published a French text and translation of ps.Plutarch (G. Lachenaud, 1993, repr. 2003), Cambridge University Press has published a new *Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (see Long 1999b); the Reklam edition *Die Vorsokratiker* (Greek with German translation, ed. J. Mansfeld) has been re-issued, and a fresh introduction has appeared from the Oxford Press (Osborne 2004). There is also the new Empedocles papyrus (Martin & Primavesi 1999), which has caused quite a stir and is bound to keep scholars busy sorting out the details for some time to come.<sup>4</sup> On doxography a survey study appeared by J. Mejer in the context of an analysis of the history of philosophy (Copenhagen 2000).

The study of 'doxography' as a genre, in the sense in which Diels initially envisaged it, owes much to a small number of scholars, and most of all to J. Mansfeld and D. T. Runia. Their important study *Aëtiana*, published in 1997 (hereafter M-R), is the first of a projected three-volume study and presents a penetrating and lucid analysis of Diels' hypothesis regarding the structure and development of the tradition we refer to as 'doxographical'. Their conclusions will have an impact on how we view the transmission and shape of the evidence for Greek philosophy, esp. that for the Presocratics.

Moreover, several studies have appeared which deal with the Presocratics as presented in Diels-Kranz' *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Scholars have pointed out a number of weaknesses in the set-up of this collection. For instance, A. Laks has remarked that the sections labelled 'C' in DK, which have "the function to bring together passages from non-philosophical texts ... illustrating the *influence* which a work may have had" (89–90) lack consistency, reflected in the headings used for the 'C'-section.<sup>5</sup> Walter Burkert has recently found reasons to criticize Diels (an example to be discussed below).<sup>6</sup>

In sum, research into the genre of doxography is in the process of reassessing the most fundamental assumptions and building blocks of the pioneering works of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is within this revisionist enterprise that I present my own contribution, in part by offering a synthesis, and in part by adding certain observations and elaborations.

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<sup>3</sup> For these important studies and translation see e.g. Denis O'Brien for Empedocles (1969), David Sider for Anaxagoras (1981), André Laks for Diogenes of Apollonia (1983).

<sup>4</sup> For the incentive it has given Presocratic scholarship see van der Ben 1999; O'Brien 2000; Sedley 2003; Osborne 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Laks 1998. See also below p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Burkert 1999.

Before I discuss Theophrastus' relation with the doxographical tradition, and the role of Simplicius in this web of texts, we should briefly look at the context and background of the *Doxographi Graeci*. Starting with some of the conclusions from the *Aëtiana* book can give us a handle on the problematic aspects of transmission—an essential methodological problem which is particularly significant in fragmentary textual evidence.

Diels has presented a general hypothesis regarding the interconnections between the most important sources for ancient Greek philosophy, most of which had already been collected by his *Doktorvater* Hermann Usener.<sup>7</sup> Diels succeeded in establishing this hypothesis in an ingenious way, even if it contained certain weaknesses. His tree diagram (*stemma*) to illustrate the dependence and interconnections may be a familiar one, suggesting that these texts could be represented as if they were manuscripts (cf. M-R 1997: 328). One should however add other authors to this schematic representation of the tradition, such as Cicero, ps.Plutarch in Eusebius, Diogenes Laertius and Hippolytus; all of these were somehow connected with one or the other of the branches of this 'tree'.<sup>8</sup>

Diels represented the interconnections of sources in the following way. On the basis of Usener's study (1858), he attempted to show that the tradition as a whole goes back to one source. In addition, he argued that the similarities between Simplicius and Theophrastus' *De sensibus* indicated that the original work owed its *organisational* structure to Theophrastus, which he claimed was a systematic one, esp. from Simpl. *In phys.* 28.30–2 on physical principles (more on this point below p. 19). Further correspondences in *content* between Aëtius and Theophrastus Diels chose to present by printing parallel columns with ps.Plutarch on the left and Stobaeus passages on the right. This approach strongly suggests that these columns will allow us to reconstruct a shared source where they exhibit *similarities* to reconstruct the text of Aëtius. But this expectation is not fulfilled, because Diels misrepresented the textual relations at times, by moving lemmas from their original position—a conclusion one can infer from the *differences* between ps.Plutarch and Stobaeus.<sup>9</sup>

More recently Mansfeld has summarized the main weaknesses of the Dielsian hypothesis in a convenient way:<sup>10</sup>

- (1) Diels has ignored many details while arranging the testimonies in his *Vorsokratiker* chronologically, instead of systematically (as was the case in Theophrastus).

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<sup>7</sup> See Kern 1927. I note that Mansfeld & Runia (Introd.) acknowledge the important groundwork T. Tieleman has done for their ch. 1 by unearthing the Renaissance predecessors of the Dielsian hypothesis concerning the role of Aëtius.

<sup>8</sup> Diels was aware of these, *DG* 185 ff. (Mansfeld 1992, 63n., Mansfeld 1999b). For the link with Lucretius, see Sedley 1998, ch. 3, §5; ch. 5–7, and Baltussen 2003a.

<sup>9</sup> This is clearly shown by Mansfeld & Runia 1997: 188.

<sup>10</sup> Mansfeld 1999a: 25–6.

- (2) He ignored the fact that the long fragments (e.g. those on physical principles) were taken from the *Physics*, not from a collection of philosophical views called *Physicorum Opiniones*.<sup>11</sup>
- (3) He never asked the question what purpose the lists of opinions (*placita*) might have served, and why they had undergone continuous additions and changes.

His aim to arrive at a pure origin of the Theophrastean tradition seems to have stood in the way of acknowledging that the tradition was much more varied and diverse.

Four points in the analysis of Mansfeld need to be highlighted: (i) a major objective emerging is his attempt to avoid reductionist constructs in the assessment of the tradition. Not only can it be shown that there were several doxai-collections preceding Aëtius, but the tradition as a whole is simply not as neat as Diels wants us to see it; (ii) Diels ignored a number of important questions because he was very much preoccupied with the reliability of the sources; (iii) it is very important to see that the principles of organisation in the transmitted texts differ, and that during transmission views could get moved around.<sup>12</sup> (iv) Certain essential characteristics of the constitutive sources for Aëtius should be taken into account, namely Plutarch, Stobaeus and Theodoret:

- Plutarch (M-R ch. 3) is very much an abbreviator of the material taken from the *placita*, and many omissions are the result; he also seems to have had a preference for the Presocratics.
- Stobaeus (M-R ch. 4) joins up lemmata, often citing views in groups, and in general is seen to use specific criteria to reorganise the materials.
- Theodoret (M-R ch. 5) is far less accurate in his rapportage, and places himself in a sceptical and Christian tradition, in which it is a major aim to reveal the contradictions in pagan philosophies.

Mansfeld (1990a) has also emphasized that the collection of opinions taken from Theophrastus has undergone many changes and influences: it would be rather naïve to assume that the collection could have remained fixed for such a long time. We should not forget that the sophists already assembled lists of opinions: Gorgias pointed mostly to disagreements and differences, while Hippias collected them with a view to showing similarities (Mansfeld 1986). And there are other tendencies visible in the sources, whether driven by dialectical motives, or, as in Christian authors, aiming at showing inconsistencies and contradictions (*diaphonia*) among the views cited. For Theophrastus we can assume there was a mixture of approaches (see section 3), but in later authors we would find many variations and permutations.

These results are relatively new and force us to change our view about, and use of, Aëtius. In particular, it has become clear that the text of Aëtius' collection as found in

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<sup>11</sup> On the title see also section 3.2.

<sup>12</sup> For an instructive example see Mansfeld & Runia 1997: 225 ff.

Diels' *DG* is less than ideal for our assessment of the original arrangement and textual constitution. It is expected that the re-evaluation of the Aëtian evidence as envisaged by Mansfeld and Runia will have an impact on the way in which we assess the material regarding the Presocratics. But given the state of research, it would be irresponsible to say more about it here and now.

This brief summary so far has presented the main points only of the general backdrop to the investigation into the doxographical tradition. Mansfeld and Runia have discussed a great deal of other issues, including the one left open by Diels, namely, what purpose the collection of *placita* might have served. The answer is to a large extent based on an improved understanding of Peripatetic dialectic and its influence upon the sceptical and doxographical tradition.<sup>13</sup>

One could therefore say that in Diels-Kranz the foundations of the hypothesis and the original sources have become hidden from view<sup>14</sup>, while most quoted passages have been taken out of context. The current view of fragment editions is quite different: instead of treating them like precious stones to be excavated from their environment, the original context receives considerable attention. This is one of the reasons why doubts have been voiced as to whether a new edition of Diels-Kranz would be conceivable today.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Key figures in the early transmission: Theophrastus, Aëtius, ps.Plutarch

It has become clear that the edition of Diels-Kranz, despite its immense importance, has certain problematic features. In order to establish what the relation is between Theophrastus and ps.Plutarch, I have examined those passages for which Diels assumed that they were derived from each other. The important question here is to what extent the format is influenced and determined by each work at issue. This is another point to be examined in section 3.

As indicated above, one of our most important sources for reconstructing the doxographical tradition, esp. regarding the Presocratics, is ps.Plutarch. Here we have a collection of philosophical opinions, arranged thematically and with clear structural dependence on the Aristotelian works in physics.<sup>16</sup> This text has had a rather varied existence. Comparison with Stobaeus and Theodoret shows that it is the preferred source for establishing content and structure of the Aëtian work. Mansfeld and Runia (p.185) have

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<sup>13</sup> See Mansfeld 1996, Baltussen 1992 and Baltussen 2000a, ch. 2, and forthc. [d].

<sup>14</sup> Mansfeld & Runia 1997: 69–70, 73.

<sup>15</sup> Mansfeld in Burkert 1999: 204 (discussion to Burkert): "sicher hat es keinen Zweck Diels' *VS* neu zu machen, und zwar aus mehreren Gründen, wie zu hören war. Es sollte aber möglich sein und wäre gewiss sehr nützlich, einen Band mit *Paralipomena* zu erstellen, in dem Neufunde (z.B. Empedokles), Berichtigungen (z.B. zu Philolaos und dem Material papyrologischer Herkunft) und Übergangenes (z.B. zu Heraklit) bequem greifbar wäre."

<sup>16</sup> See Mansfeld 1992 and Baltussen 2000b.

argued plausibly that ps.Plutarch's books have retained much of the order and content of the separate parts, as follows:

- I principia
- II cosmos et caelestia
- III meteorologica et terrestria
- IV soul (part 1)
- V human soul (part 2) and other animals

The sections in ps.Plutarch are shorter, representing a summary version of the Aëtian books. And despite the fact that Stobaeus often gives us more complete lemmas than 'Plutarch', overall the latter (left hand column in *DG*) gives us more information than the former (right hand column in *DG*) for all five books of Aëtius. Stobaeus may give us more details in books 1–3, and Theodoret often provides additional details.

In what follows I present a brief overview which illustrates the importance of ps.Plutarch / Aëtius, with particular focus on points of interest for the Presocratics.

(1) The Presocratics constitute a substantial part of the collection and represent a stable layer across the intermediate sources under review; here one may refer to the statistics already mentioned by Runia in the chapter on ps.Plutarch. The regular appearance in the main sources for DK (an indicator of selection) and their distribution across the A and B fragments can be represented as follows:

DK	Aëtius	D.L.	Sextus	Plut.	Simpl.	other
(A+B)	A/B	A/B	A/B	A/B	A/B	A/B
Thales 23	7/-	1/-	-/-	-	1/-	
Anaximander 30	12/2	1/-	1/-	-	4/1	
Anaximenes 23	8/2	1/-	-/-	-	2/-	
Xenophanes 52	10/2	5/-	-/5	1/1	1/2	
Heraclitus 23	9/1	1/12	-/3	-/17	2/-	
Parmenides 54	11/-	5/-	-	3/2	6/9	Thphr. 1
Melissus	-	-	-	-	-/10	
Anaxagoras	24/-	5/-	1/-	8/2	5/16	Ar. Thphr. Hipp. Alex. Galen Clem.
Empedocles 98	34/2	1/4	1/7	2/37	1	Ar. 17
Democritus 170	25/-	4/19	9/10	4/11	7/3	Suidas 3; Clem. 2; Ar. 36; Thphr. 10; Ael. 6

This table only specifies the most important sources, but clearly shows how the Presocratic thinkers are distributed among these. I have highlighted the sources towards the outer ends of the tradition (Aëtius, Simplicius) to give some indication of how the transmission of material has undergone some change over 400 years: Aëtius has testimonia only for Thales, Anaximenes, Xenophanes, Parmenides (all testimonies in DK, i.e. A fragments);

Simplicius on the other hand abounds in references to Anaximander (A fragments), Anaxagoras (B fragments!) and Melissus (B fragments!). Such statistics are of some interest in evaluating the different sources and the routes by which the information was transmitted.

(2) Ps.Plutarch (P) has favoured well-known philosophers. The frequency of Presocratics in P in comparison to Stobaeus (S) and Theodoret (T) taken together in the *Placita* (on the basis of M-R 190) is as follows (P / S+T):

• Alcmaëon	64/69	• Diogenes	13/24	• Parmenides	12/31
• Anaxagoras	28/44	• Empedocles	45/62	• Pythagoras	35/43
• Anaximander	16/23	• Heraclitus	17/28	• Thales	20/26
• Anaximenes	16/23	• Melissus	1/7		
• Democritus	38/69	• Metrodorus	15/22		

Clearly P by himself does very well compared to the two other sources combined.

(3) Ps.Plutarch has imposed abbreviation on some earlier views, which leads to changes in the order of the *Placita*. Would this have influenced the transmission of the text? From comparison with the material from Stobaeus (facilitated by the Dielsian columns) we can detect the omissions in P quite clearly.

In order to illustrate the process of re-organisation, some further statistics are of interest. A significant case has been presented by Runia 1989, which will give us a good impression of the differing methods in the *sources for Aëtius* and Aëtius himself. Lemma 25 in book 2 of Aëtius presents views on the nature of the moon. We can see here the methodological characteristics of both authors, if we place the information in a table, which integrates the different *sequences* of both authors as inferred from Runia's analysis (1989, 261). I have added here the sequence in P compared to S, without the extra material in S (column 1) and the *reconstructed* sequence for Aëtius as worked out by Runia (square brackets):

P	S	Aëtius (conjecture) [ <i>Placita</i> II.25-DG]	nature of the moon
1	1	Anaximander [1]	fire
(6)		Anaximenes [2]–Parm[3].– <u>Heracl.</u>	fiery
2	2	Xenophanes [4]	condensed cloud (?)
3	7	Posidonius/Stoics [5] <u>Empedocles</u> [15]	fire and air air mixed with fire
4	6	Plato [6] Aristotle [7] Thales [8]	mostly fiery(?) fifth element earthy
5	3	Anaxagoras–Democritus [9] Diogenes [10] Ion [11] Berosus [12]	red and hot solid body ignited masse, kind of stone transparent body sphere, partial fiery
	4	Heraclides–Ocellus [13]	earth covered in cloud
7	5	Pythagoras [14]	(?)

The extent of reorganisation is quite clear (1–7): P has the sequence “Anaximander – Xenophanes – Posidonius/ Stoics – Plato – Anaxagoras/ Democritus – Anaximenes/ Parmenides/ Heraclitus – Pythagoras”. In S one would find “Anaximander – Xenophanes – Anaxagoras/ Democritus – Heraclides / Ocellus – Pythagoras – Plato – Posidonius/ Stoics”.

This result gives us a good idea of the degree of abbreviation in P (note that Aëtius had 15 positions). At the same time it is very likely that the *Placita* had a systematic arrangement, for as Runia (1989) has persuasively shown, the ordering of views in S goes from fire (position 1) down to the earthy in the last place. In P the arrangement is far less systematic.<sup>17</sup> At any rate, Runia’s analysis makes clear that *the order of the sections in Aëtius is in fact different from that presented by Diels in DG*. This conclusion will be of considerable importance in the reconstruction of the lost *Placita*. Moreover, once such a reconstruction has been achieved, we shall be able to reassess the argument from analogy used by Usener and Diels regarding the connection between the *Placita* and Theophrastus’ *De sensibus*.

Two further examples will show the problematic nature of the Aëtian texts in DK, a collection which owes its foundations to the reconstruction of the doxographical tradition in the *Doxographi Graeci*. The first example is discussed by Burkert in his recent critical assessment of DK.<sup>18</sup> Burkert here signals an unexpected problem with the presentation of texts in DK, one which he says is rather deceptively certain. The text he adduces is Leucippus B1, which by its synthesis of P and S gives a misleading picture of a text which is Democritus’ work *On mind (Peri Nou)*. In addition, Burkert points out that in this case it is the text from Theodoret (often relegated to the apparatus in DG), which helps us to understand the error.

My second example is meant to bring out the highly artificial distinction between the testimonia (“A” fragments) and quotations (“B” fragments) in the reconstruction of the thought of the Presocratics in DK.<sup>19</sup> A text from Anaxagoras, found under A74 DK (= [Arist.] *Probl.* 903a8 ff.), might actually have stood in a context which resembles the (in)direct transmission of Theophrastus’ *De sensibus*.<sup>20</sup> This text provides us with remarkable information on sense perception absent from the *De sensibus*; and it is *remarkable* because it is evident that the information is very relevant to that found in the Theophrastean text (below), the capacity of animals to perceive objects in degrees. We know that the *Problemata* are originating in the Peripatos and contemporary to Theophrastus.<sup>21</sup> There is no reason for surprise, then, when we find that the work includes references to

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<sup>17</sup> Runia 1989: 246 ff.; cf. Mansfeld & Runia 1997: 194. There are other details of interest, but these are not relevant here (e.g. S has inserted Stoic views from Areius Didymus, see Runia 1996b). Diels (often rightfully) follows P, but this example and e.g. Aëtius II.4 (see Runia 2005) do not allow for that.

<sup>18</sup> Burkert 1999.

<sup>19</sup> A problem I discussed also in Baltussen 2002b.

<sup>20</sup> See Baltussen 2002c.

<sup>21</sup> Flashar 1983: 333–341 (esp. p. 336).

the Presocratics. I have therefore suggested (n. 22) that fr. A74 DK in fact provides us with genuine information on Anaxagoras' views, even if we do not have a so-called direct quotation<sup>22</sup>:

Διὰ τί εὐηκοωτέρα ἢ νύξ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐστίν; πότερον ὥσπερ Ἀναξαγόρας φησί, διὰ τὸ τῆς μὲν ἡμέρας σίζειν καὶ ψοφεῖν τὸν ἀέρα θερμαινόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου, τῆς δὲ ἢ νυκτὸς ἡσυχίαν ἔχειν ἅτε ἐκλελοιπότης τοῦ θερμοῦ, εἶναι δὲ μᾶλλον ἀκουστὸν μηθενὸς ὄντος ψόφου;

Why are sounds better heard at night? Is it as Anaxagoras wants us to believe, because during the day the air warmed up by the sun sizzles and emits sounds, while at night calmness reigns on account of the disappearance of the heat, and that it is easier to hear when there is no sound?

To be compared are *DS* 8, 18, on the one hand, and 27 on the other, where Empedocles and Anaxagoras, according to Theophrastus, claim that we *see* better during the day than at night—clear parallels to the passage quoted above. Although there is no secure evidence for a link between this passage and *De sensibus* (we should note that there is no mention of the sense of hearing in the *Problemata*), we are still in a position to posit a likely connection, in particular because of one specific aspect highlighted in Theophrastus' treatment of Anaxagoras: the importance of the role of *degrees* and *accuracy* of sensory experiences. In addition, we should note that Anaxagoras also discussed the relation between size and efficacy of sense organs: in *De sensibus* 30 he seems to claim that “large animals hear loud sounds better”. He even thought that there is a connection between the intensity of colour and the size of the surfaces on which they make their imprint (*DS* 28). From these indications we can infer that there was a strong link between the Anaxagorean testimony and a Peripatetic context. Such a conclusion reflects well on the quality of the information found in Anaxagoras fr. A74, and the most likely source would be Theophrastus.

One could give other examples in authors who are important for the transmission of ancient philosophical views.<sup>23</sup> In other words, there are strong arguments for placing the fragments together as suggested by the foregoing discussion instead of keeping them separate in two or three sections. In Diels-Kranz the privileged position of the B-frag-

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<sup>22</sup> Analysis based on Baltussen 2003a. In another section of the *Probl.* Anaxagoras is also mentioned talking about the klepsydra, which confirms his view that air can be an active agent on water (914b9–10: Τῶν περὶ τὴν κλεψύδραν συμβαινόντων τὸ μὲν ὅλον (10) ἔοικεν εἶναι αἴτιον καθάπερ Ἀναξαγόρας λέγει· ὁ γὰρ ἀήρ ἐστὶν αἴτιος). I have discussed both passages in Baltussen 2000a: 174n.

<sup>23</sup> Certain important passages from Diogenes Laertius (D.L.) were already included by Diels in his reconstruction of the tradition, and often he has to assume a plurality of sources: for instance, as Richard Goulet has shown (1992 = 2001: 70 ff.), in the first book of D.L. there are some good indications that Diogenes has used two traditions to describe the life and thought of Thales, one belonging to the lives of sages, the other to the doxographical tradition (emphasis on opinions). And in fact the doxographical elements appear in section 27 (compare also II.1, II.3, II.8–9, II.16–17—Goulet 1992 = 2001: 71, n.8).

ments, depending on the invidious label of “direct quotation”, tends to overshadow the value of A-fragments. But one can ask the question (as did Laks 1998) whether it is justified to hold on to this division. The more recent fragments editions have opted for a more promising arrangement which is systematic and contextual, where the privileged position of ‘citations’ is merely one of first place in each thematic section (e.g. Edelstein-Kidd for Posidonius), so that their importance is clear in an instant, but without the loss of context or other valuable material. One might add that Diels would probably have agreed with such an approach. Burkert and others have pointed out that Diels’ methodology in the *Vorsokratiker* owed much to his earlier edition of philosopher-poets, *Philosophorum Poetarum Fragmenta* (1903). This holds especially for the extraction of passages from their context: passages written in verse are easily isolated, but this should not have led (as it may have Diels) to emphasize so strongly the supposed difference between ‘quotation’ proper (B-fragments) and paraphrase (A fragments) in all other texts.

### 3. *Recentiores non deteriores*: Simplicius

I come now to the question what lies ahead in this area. It has become clear that it will be essential to start with fresh ideas regarding certain assumptions and preconceptions about texts, sources and the mechanism of transmission, continuing and expanding the approaches reviewed above. One view in particular needs to be revised: the idea that later sources are less important than older ones. This position, taken over from stematology for manuscripts, has been quite an obstacle in reassessing the doxographical tradition and is only now returning to the scholarly attention in conjunction with renewed interest in later Platonic texts (commentaries). The outer limits of the Dielsian doxographical universe consist of Aristotle and Theophrastus (4th-3rd c. BC) and Simplicius (6th c. AD). It was Usener who first suggested that Theophrastus is the single source of the philosophical tradition of doxai-collections.<sup>24</sup> This position was never seriously challenged by Diels, based in part on the correct assumption that Theophrastus made a collection of views in physics. When we consider all the texts relevant to the tradition, discussed in the *Doxographi Graeci*, the hypothesis seems too neat and unrealistic.

#### 3.1 Theophrastus and his value for the Presocratics

In his *De sensibus* Theophrastus has given an overview and critical discussion of the views of the Presocratics on sense perception.<sup>25</sup> Many of his criticisms can be fruitfully

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Mansfeld 1990a, 1992, 1994, 1999a; Baltussen 2000b.

<sup>25</sup> In the sixth chapter of my 1993 PhD thesis (not republished in the 2000 commercial edition) I have made some progress into studying the problem of how Theophrastus’ account is related to the *placita* (see also Baltussen 2000b). A revised and extended version will appear in my forthcoming commentary on FHSG 224–45.

compared to the dialectical strategies laid out in Aristotle's *Topika* (Mansfeld 1996; Baltussen 2000a). For a number of reasons (too complicated to give here) that analysis did not explain all aspects of Theophrastus' critical attitude, but it did bring out that there is a highly formal aspect to his approach, which casts doubts on the commonly held view that he is always fully committed to the positions expressed through these criticisms (even if one can detect broader Peripatetic assumptions underlying some of the critique).

In a more recent attempt to push this analysis further (Baltussen 2002c, 2003a), I have analysed the Platonic material in the *placita* and reconsidered the role of the Academy in the doxographical tradition. One reason to do so is that here we are better informed about Theophrastus' methodology. The result was surprising in at least one respect: there is a marked difference between his discussion of Plato and the passages from Theophrastus' work preserved in Platonist works. And this creates a new conundrum for which a satisfactory explanation is still outstanding. Some texts of the latter category are placed among the doxographical fragments<sup>26</sup>, others have ended up among fragments for his *Physics*.<sup>27</sup> Comparing the two groups of passages produces some interesting insights:

- (1) In the fragments mentioning the *Timaeus*, Theophrastus is presented as a reliable source of information. Many of these come from Platonists, so clearly they viewed him as someone who had expressed worthwhile views on Plato.<sup>28</sup>
- (2) On the other hand, as A. A. Long (1996) and I had been forced to conclude, Theophrastus' analysis of Plato in the *De sensibus* is biased and full of gaps, thus presenting us with many exegetical problems.

This creates a paradox: how are we to explain the fact that Theophrastus was capable of giving such an inaccurate and at times superficial treatment of Plato's views, while he had access to the *Timaeus* (beyond doubt given *CP* 6.1, *De sensu* and the passages in nn. 27–8)? Moreover, if we take his methodology regarding Plato as typical, we embark on a risky exercise of extrapolating results, which may not be fully understood: the discrepancy noted above makes one suspect that Theophrastus *might* have used different argumentative modes, which originate in totally different contexts and from different motives. One possibility is that the *De sensibus* contains dialectical exercises presented within the framework of Aristotelian doctrine. If so, this would force us to reassess the nature of the text as well as its value for Theophrastus' doctrinal and methodological views.

Finally, if one takes Diels' arguments about the close links between Theophrastus and the *Placita* seriously, we arrive at an impasse. The link with the *Placita* is an integral part of Diels' hypothesis on the early doxographical tradition, but it would seem that this

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<sup>26</sup> Fragments 230, 241A, 241B, 242, 243 in FHSG (cf. 556).

<sup>27</sup> Fragments 142, 150, 161A in FHSG.

<sup>28</sup> I am thinking, e.g., of Taurus, who has preserved the title of the work *Physikai Doxai* (see next section).

part of his reconstruction cannot stand in the form he presented it. As Mansfeld has insisted, Aristotle's influence on the tradition has been neglected and deserves more attention.<sup>29</sup> For instance, the Aristotelian imprint on the architecture of the placita tradition can be revealed in book I of Aëtius, where the Peripatetics are mentioned in the introduction as a major component of the general approach to natural philosophy. Further evidence is found in book IV. Firstly, the sequence of items in IV 13, 16–18 answers to Aristotle *On the soul* B.7–10, and one might also compare *Plac.* IV 22 (on respiration) with Aristotle, *De resp.* 470b6 ff. Only sections IV 9 (reliability of the senses) and 10 (number of sense organs) form an exception, corresponding neither to Aristotle nor to Theophrastus, even if the latter refers to the number of senses in *DS* 5 (admittedly a singular case). In addition, the Aëtian sections seem to follow a general Peripatetic layout as known from the so-called *Parva Naturalia*:

*Placita* IV 8–12 general questions on perception and its objects:

§8	perception and its objects
§9	reliability of the senses
§10	number of senses
§11	<i>phantasia</i> and <i>ennoia</i> (Stoic)
§12	<i>phantasia</i>

*Placita* IV 13–23 individual senses, in particular:

§14	mirrors (a kind of 'appendix' to §13)
§22	respiration
§23	bodily affections

Secondly, another plausible indication of a link with the Peripatetic school are the groupings of names: IV 13.1, 5, 11, 12 on Empedocles, Plato, Alcmaëon (those who explain sense perception on a like-by-like principle) is very close to the ordering in *DS*: Plato (5–6), Empedocles (7–24), Alcmaëon (25–6); also, IV 16.1–3 presenting views of Empedocles, Alcmaëon and Diogenes resembles *DS* 24–25–27; and IV 17.1–2 on Alcmaëon and Empedocles resembles *DS* 24–5. In short, the overall structure does seem to show signs of Peripatetic influence, even if rather broad. If, however, one tries to look more closely at the details brought forward by Diels, one runs into difficulties.

A brief look at a selection of examples will clarify what the problems are and where the remaining challenges lie. These passages allow us to focus on claims made by Diels regarding Empedocles, and add some broader comments on the wider implications. Six examples feature in the discussion of Empedocles (*DG* 222 f.<sup>30</sup>), of which two at least are unconvincing as parallels with *DS*. The strong parallels are these:

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<sup>29</sup> Mansfeld 1996; cf. Baltussen 2000b.

<sup>30</sup> I note that Diels ignored the lemma "on respiration and the lungs" (*Plac.* [P+S] IV 17.2) which resembles *DS* 9.

<i>Plac.</i> [P]	IV 5.8 constitution of the blood	<i>DS</i> 10
<i>Plac.</i> [P+S]	IV 9.6 pores	<i>DS</i> 9, 12–15
<i>Plac.</i> [S]	IV 9.15 effluences	<i>DS</i> 8 (and 14?)
<i>Plac.</i> [P+S]	IV 16.1 hearing	<i>DS</i> 9

But there are clearly passages with no correspondence at all:

<i>Plac.</i> [P+S]	I 13.1	? <i>DS</i> 11 (Diels gives κατὰ μικρὰ τεθραυσμένα as evidence)
<i>Plac.</i>	I 15.3 on colours	? <i>DS</i> 9 (general definition of colour <sup>31</sup> )
<i>Plac.</i> [P+S]	IV 13.4–5 περὶ ὀράσεως; [P] has πῶς ὀρῶμεν	[no parallel]
<i>Plac.</i> [S]	IV 22.1 on respiration	? <i>DS</i> 9, 22 <sup>32</sup>

It is also worth mentioning that the small section on mirrors (IV 14), which forms a kind of appendix, contains views of Empedocles, Democritus and Epicurus, and the Pythagoreans. There is of course nothing like that in Aristotle or Theophrastus, and one has the impression that, if Aristotle discussed mirrors anywhere, this discussion has not survived.<sup>33</sup>

One further example is worth noting. Anaxagoras was not included in Diels' treatment of the connections with *DS*—which is not surprising given his limited presence in Aëtius (above p. 7). He often occurs among a group of thinkers linked to one particular view, e.g. on the soul, the reliability of the senses, the central tenet on perception being accompanied by pain, and the nature of the voice (see IV 5.11; 9.1; 9.6; 3.2; 5.11; 7.1 [Theodoret]). What is surprising, of course, is that Anaxagoras features quite prominently in Theophrastus' account, as he does in other doxographical sources, including views on meteorology, or as we saw earlier, in the *Problemata* on sense perception.

This selective set of examples exposes the problematic nature of Diels' comparison between Aëtius and *DS*: it would seem that Diels has for the most part emphasized those passages which enable him to find confirmation for his thesis, but chose to ignore the ones which create problems for a neat solution. Here is a summary of Diels' analysis:

<sup>31</sup> Colour is described as something which adapts to pores and four colours are given: this is in fact closer to Aristotle *De sensu* 437b9 (cf. Plato *Meno* 76c).

<sup>32</sup> Mention of the *klepsudra* makes one suspect the influence of Aristotle *De resp.* 473a15 ff. (= fr. B100 DK).

<sup>33</sup> There are some passages in *Meteor.* Bk 3 and in the *Problemata* to assume such a discussion might have existed.

#### A. Mentioned in Diels

<u>Name</u>	<u>Correspondences</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Empedocles	6	only 1 close to <i>DS</i>
Alcmæon	3	compressed form, updated language
Diogenes of Apollonia	several	many inaccuracies in Aëtius

#### B. Not mentioned in Diels

<u>Name</u>	<u>Correspondences</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Anaxagoras	7 (in group)	4 probable links to <i>DS</i>
Democritus	Few (in groups)	1 possible parallel
Parmenides	3 (in groups)	1 possible parallel
Plato	6	1 good parallel <sup>34</sup>

These results clearly indicate that, at least in Book IV of Aëtius, Diels' analysis is seriously flawed, and that there is considerable room for further analysis in order to obtain a better reconstruction of the transmission of Presocratic material.

### 3.2 Theophrastus and Simplicius

The argument so far has aimed to present a general picture of the most important sources which provide us with information on the Presocratics and which are connected to the doxographical tradition. We have seen that it is crucial not to rely on Diels-Kranz without taking into account the method, intentions and context of used sources in this collection. It is obviously a very thorny issue to evaluate this type of transmission, as Mansfeld has consistently pointed out in his pioneering work in this area.<sup>35</sup>

The most urgent problem concerning the *Placita* is to establish what its purpose and function are in relation to the major work Theophrastus is thought to have written about his predecessors. Usener thought he had shown that we can distinguish between Theophrastus' 'history' of philosophy and the doxographical collection (Usener 1858: 25–6). But Steinmetz (1964: 335 ff.) and others have shown that this interpretation, for the most part based on a specific reading of book titles, rests on a misunderstanding. Usener and Diels seem to have been convinced that the *De sensibus* was part of a work they refer to as *Opinions of the natural philosophers*. Their arguments are not very convincing, but it would take too long to go into this 'battle of titles', so I will only mention those points which can help understand the importance of the issue. I am sure it is superfluous to explain how difficult it is to deduce anything about the content of a work from a title. The

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<sup>34</sup> Fully discussed in Baltussen 2000b, see also Mansfeld 2005a.

<sup>35</sup> A glance at the bibliography makes clear how important his contribution has been.

relevant texts—subsumed under the label *Physicorum Opiniones* by Usener and Diels—are of varied provenance and do not allow any firm solution to the problem. They can be classified into three groups: they belong to *Physics*, to the *Physikai doxai*, or they are impossible to attribute to either or both.

A quick perusal of the (incomplete) evidence may suggest that a solution would seem impossible. Here are the crucial passages:

(a) Taurus *ap.* Philoponus *Against Proclus* vi 8. 27 [*Phys.op.* fr. 11 Diels = fr. 241A FHSG]:

And Theophrastus in his <work> *On the physical opinions* (Περὶ τῶν φυσικῶν δοξῶν) says that according to Plato the universe has a beginning and he construes objects on the basis of this premise. He also adds that Plato perhaps made this assumption for the sake of clarity (σαφηνείας χάριν).

(b) Galen *In Hippocr. de nat. hom.* XV.25 Kühn [*Phys.op.* fr. 5a Diels = fr. 231.8–11 FHSG]:

Theophrastus has also written down in his summaries of physical opinions (ἐν ταῖς τῶν φυσικῶν δοξῶν ἐπιτομαῖς) the view of Xenophanes ... and, if <you were to study> these things, these books of Theophrastus, of which he made a summary of physical opinions (τὴν ἐπιτομὴν ἐποιήσατο τῶν φυσικῶν δοξῶν), are available for perusal [DG 482.20–483.1–4].

(c) Alexander of Aphrodisias *In Metaph.* 31.7–8 Hayduck [*Phys.op.* fr. 6 Diels; cf. fr. 7 = fr. 227C FHSG]:

On Parmenides and his view Theophrastus also speaks in his first book of the *Physics/natural philosophers* (περὶ Παρμενίδου καὶ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ καὶ Θεόφραστος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ περὶ τῶν φυσικῶν οὕτως λέγει ...)

(d) Plutarch *Adv. Colot.* 1114F–1115B (cf. D.L. V 46,48 περὶ φυσικῶν ἀ’-τη’) [= fr. 245 FHSG]:

when you made your accusations, you ignored to read or consult the works (τοῖς ἐκείνων συντάγμασιν) of Aristotle *On the Heavens* or *On the soul*, or even *Replies to the Natural Philosophers* by Theophrastus (Θεοφράστου δὲ τὰ πρὸς τοὺς φυσικοὺς), in which they are engaged in a continuous battle (μαχόμενοι διατελοῦσι) with Plato and formulate objections against him on the most pertinent and fundamental matters of natural philosophy?

(e) D.L. IX 22 [= *Phys.op.* fr. 6a Diels = fr. 227D FHSG] (on Parmenides):

... as Theophrastus reminds us in his *Physics* reporting the views of almost everyone. (Cf. *Phys.Op.* fr. 7 Diels.)

These passages give a good indication of the variety of titles and the difficulty of sorting out how many works are referred to (one, two, three?). My translations retain some of the ambiguities involved. Presumably a work with the opinions of the Presocratics was still in circulation among the Peripatetic and Platonic authors of the second century CE. But while the references give us the impression of a work referred to by a limited set of titles, describing a broadly defined area of research (physics), it is far less easy to make

any definite comments on its *content*. As it is likely that Theophrastus used materials of this kind in several different works, one text reporting the view of a Presocratic thinker (e.g. text (e)) could easily end up in different contexts or treatises; hence it would be rash to take one testimony as solid proof that Presocratic material could only have been found in one work. For now the most plausible (or least problematic) hypothesis concerning these titles is the one proposed by Mansfeld<sup>36</sup>: the genitive plural in Περί τῶν φυσικῶν δοξῶν (see above (a) and (e)) should be resolved as φυσικαὶ δόξαι—that is, taken as the title of a work with systematic content dealing with ‘physical’ views (i.e. views related to natural philosophy), which could be used in dialectical evaluations.

### 3.3 Simplicius’ role in the transmission

By concluding this overview with a brief discussion of Simplicius (AD 530) and his role in the transmission of Presocratic material we come to the far end of the chronological scale. What makes Simplicius special above all else is the exceptional quality of his writings, when it comes to source access and rapportage: he differs from most doxographical sources, because he had direct access to the Presocratics and Theophrastus, and because he has a remarkable methodology in quoting, selecting and using his sources. The importance of these two characteristics cannot easily be overstated: despite the considerable chronological distance between the two authors, they provide us with an unusual link between the two extremes of the textual transmission, one which straddles almost a thousand years.

Simplicius was a Neoplatonic philosopher, who—like many of his contemporaries—wrote commentaries on Aristotle’s works, combining philosophical erudition and finesse with high standards of scholarship. But he is quite unique in his scholarly sensibility, with an almost modern awareness of the value of accurate quotations.<sup>37</sup> This does not mean that he will always report the views of others in a neutral way, but rather that he was consciously using certain criteria, according to which he made an effort to let the text speak for itself, before he would express his disagreement or criticism.<sup>38</sup> Recent studies have revealed that Simplicius is perfectly capable of selective quoting if it serves his overall purpose.<sup>39</sup>

Simplicius’ role in providing pertinent information regarding the Presocratics is also exceptional and on this front considerable progress has been made to assess the quantity

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<sup>36</sup> Mansfeld 1989, 148–9 with n. 49 (his p. 157).

<sup>37</sup> See O’Brien 1969, Sider 1981 (revised repr. 2005), Baltussen 2002a, Hankinson 2002, 2004.

<sup>38</sup> A more detailed analysis of this aspect in Baltussen 2002a and forthc. [d].

<sup>39</sup> A case in point is the discussion by Marwan Rashed (1997), who discovered lost parts of the *Physics* of Alexander of Aphrodisias (AD 200) in the margin of a Paris manuscript. This allowed him to compare those marginalia with quotations in Simplicius, from which he inferred that Simplicius was deliberately omitting material. Alexander is one of Simplicius’ most important sources (see Baltussen forthc. [a] and [d]).

and quality of the material he provides.<sup>40</sup> But more work is needed to understand his methodology properly, and how this might advance our knowledge of his value for reconstructing Theophrastus' work. Long chunks of text from Empedocles, Parmenides and Anaxagoras are found in his commentaries, for example, but seldom are they treated within the original context and with attention for the intentions and idiosyncrasies of the source author.<sup>41</sup>

It would seem, then, that a contextualized approach towards the quotations in Simplicius would make a significant contribution. The complexity in the case of the Presocratics requires considerable care in interpreting the material: as mentioned earlier, he had access to Theophrastus' reports on the Presocratics *and* to the Presocratics themselves, which could cause contamination of the sources. In addition, it is quite remarkable that, despite certain specific reasons for quoting directly from the earliest philosophers, Simplicius chose to quote *more than was strictly necessary*; thus he clarifies his approach for Parmenides with the by now famous statement (*In phys.* 144,25–8 Diels) that the work is hard to get hold of:

In order not to seem too pedantic (εἴ τω μὴ δοκῶ γλίσχρος) I will here quote the verses of Parmenides ... in order to justify my comments on this matter (διὰ τε τὴν πίστιν τῶν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ λεγομένων) *and because his treatise is becoming quite rare* (διὰ τὴν σπάνιν) [my italics].

Apart from the sensible strategy to provide supporting evidence, we can see here the concerns of a scholar who is aware of his responsibility towards future generations of readers. On another occasion he may want to provide proof for his interpretation, after having provided paraphrases, as with Empedocles (*In de caelo* 140, 2–3; cf. 528, 32–3):

And to make sure that I do not seem to be making idle claims, I shall quote some of Empedocles' words (καὶ ἵνα μὴ δοκῶ τισιν κενὰς μακαρίας ἀναπλάττειν, ὀλίγα τῶν Ἐμπεδοκλέους ἐπῶν παραθήσομαι—then follows a citation of 6 full lines, 141,1–6).

He has yet other reasons to quote from Alexander and Philoponus, which I plan to deal with elsewhere. This may suffice to illustrate the quite special role Simplicius has in providing us with information on a range of Greek philosophers across seven centuries. And I would want to stress that his view on direct (literal) quotations seems unparal-

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<sup>40</sup> See references in note 4 above, in which it is shown that Simplicius alone has preserved 101 lines from Parmenides (from a total of 154), 150 lines for Empedocles (from a total of 450), and twelve citations from Anaxagoras (out of a total of 22).

<sup>41</sup> On Parmenides see Perry 1983: 6. For Empedocles we suspect that his poems contained 3000 lines. Cf. O'Brien 1969: 150, who on the basis of the Suda suggests 2000 lines for the poem on physics—but it is a moot point whether there were two separate works (one work: Osborne 1987b). For Anaxagoras see further Perry 1983, Tarán 1987, and Sider 1981.

leled for that period of Late Antiquity.<sup>42</sup> A passage which illustrates this nicely can be found in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, while he expresses a view on Aristotle's method (*In phys.* 1318, 10–15 Diels)<sup>43</sup>:

It is Aristotle's habit to introduce testimonies from his predecessors after his proofs, as if they were agreeing with these, with a view to, on the one hand, instructing and persuading his readers, but on the other, to render the beliefs of his audience more stable with the help of views from others; but he does not use such testimonies of his predecessors [*neôterôn* mss, *proterôn* con. Diels] as proofs, unlike more recent authors.

Two points emerge from this passage: according to Simplicius quotations serve to justify and reinforce proofs, not to replace them. In addition, with this judgement on his near contemporaries he seems to say that the combination of quotation and interpretation is the best strategy to be used in written discussions. Simplicius can thus serve a double purpose in our quest to reconstruct the works and method of Theophrastus with regard to his predecessors: (1) he provides a route to the recovery of the reports on the Presocratics, and (2) also has more direct information on the Presocratics.<sup>44</sup>

But how can we use him, for example, to disentangle the muddle regarding the titles, which refer to works or a work of Theophrastus? One example must suffice for present purposes to clarify this problem. We might actually argue along the same lines as we did regarding the resemblance between Theophrastus and Aëtius: if the arrangement and sequence in the first book of the commentary on the *Physics* reflects those in Theophrastus in any way, one would have a reasonable chance of acquiring a reliable result. Ussener and Diels already started this line of argument. In Simplicius' commentary, pages 22–28 Diels, we find a discussion of the first principles of physics, and Theophrastus is mentioned as a source. Near the end of the discussion, Simplicius remarks (*In phys.* 28, 30–32):

This brief summary of investigations into first principles has been arranged, not in chronological order, but by way of 'kinship' (*κατὰ συγγένειαν*).

If Simplicius claims a principle of kinship here, should we take that to mean that he is *changing* the arrangement of Theophrastus or *adopting* it? I think the term does not allow us to infer either option without further examination. The references in the first book of the commentary would point to Theophrastus' *Physics* as a source, but it is still debated whether that work is the only source at that point in his account. At any rate, the reports on the Presocratic opinions emerge as a parallel line of transmission: these are brief passages taken perhaps from a (richer) collection which Theophrastus could use at different

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<sup>42</sup> The attitude towards direct quotation as a conscious choice also requires further research: Plutarch and Eusebius come to mind as important earlier cases in whose works quotations play a special role.

<sup>43</sup> Passage discussed in Baltussen 2002a.

<sup>44</sup> "more direct" does of course not necessarily mean "more accurate".

times for different types of writings. And even though Simplicius was aware of a type of work which contained compilations, he is rather dismissive about them as unreliable sources.<sup>45</sup> So while Simplicius clearly had a vast array of excellent sources at his disposal (cf. diagram in Baltussen 2002a), what should we make of the fact that he never mentions a Theophrastean work entitled *Physikai doxai*?

#### 4. Epilogue

What picture emerges regarding the research into the doxographical tradition so far as it concerns the Presocratics? There are three (sets of) questions underlying my synthetic review which scholars working in doxographical studies have to face:

- (i) What kind of information do we have about the Presocratics, what is its provenance and how can we treat the sources in a responsible and sound way?
- (ii) What are the implications of the latest interpretation of the doxographical tradition for our understanding of Aëtius and the Presocratics?
- (iii) What is Theophrastus' role in this matrix of texts?

In one sense, the study of the Presocratics stands at the beginning of a new era. Recent research has led to several new approaches and attitudes, looking at pertinent questions (how to edit and present fragments?<sup>46</sup>), but also at the value of analysing traditions and sources with the help of more refined and varied methods.

So what does this all lead to? Research into doxography is a rather esoteric discipline, in which the attempts to improve our chances to reconstruct important (but lost) sources have not reached firm conclusions nor wider audiences. Yet we can say that it has already changed our perspective on the material, and will continue to do so, if we start implementing the conclusions from the kind of research reviewed here: research which is contextualized, source-conscious, and willing to question all basic assumptions of the pioneering edifice Diels constructed.

The future of doxographical studies looks bright, but the road ahead is also arduous and long. The fundamental study by Mansfeld and Runia on the principal sources is underway, with the first of three volumes having been published in 1997. The second volume will present a reconstruction of Aëtius book 2, which is almost completely preserved in Stobaeus; this reconstruction will allow a better view of Aëtius' working method. The third volume will aim to present, on the basis of the principles and results set out in volume one, the earliest stage of transmission, that is, the relationship between Theophrastus and the *Placita*, but also the similarities with sources which are independent of P, S and T and for which Diels had realised that they could not be derived from

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<sup>45</sup> He mentions ἀναγραφαῖς ἰστορικαῖς in the same context.

<sup>46</sup> See collection of papers edited by Most 1997 and Burkert 1998.

Aëtius. My current projects focus on Simplicius' methodology, in part within the framework of a short commentary on Theophrastus' fragments on doxography.<sup>47</sup>

Only after investigations of this kind have been completed will we be able to incorporate and fully implement the implications they will bring. Some might think that it looks as if the monumental work of Diels is going to be superseded by the monumental work of Mansfeld and Runia. But the scholarly community is already agreed upon the immense importance of their enterprise (Frede 1999, Long 1999a, Mueller 1999, Rubarth 1999) and the fact that they are criticizing Diels in such a meticulous and rigorous way is the best indication that he is worth the effort: they have never denied that Diels' work will remain of fundamental importance. It may be too early to say whether their work might lead to a new edition of the Presocratic fragments (see n. 15), but it is certain that the Dielsian reconstruction of the sources and their interrelations will undergo substantial renovation before long.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Baltussen forthc. [c] and [d].

<sup>48</sup> The revisionist movement was attacked in a controversial article (Zhmud 2001) claiming there is a 'Dutch school' of doxographical studies; it was countered in a detailed refutation by Mansfeld 2002.

<sup>49</sup> A small number of items in the bibliography, not referred to in the text, are included because they have made significant contributions to the field of doxography.

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