9. Where Do We Put the Earth?  
Aëtius, Seneca, Lucretius, and Hippolytus

Summary. Questions relating to the earth are found at 3.9–15, which are extant in ps.Plutarch only. We summarize the argument of an earlier paper that these chapters are *grosso modo* dependent on Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 2.13, and analyze them one by one. Ch. 3.15, on earthquakes, is paralleled in the *Meteorology*. The location of the treatment of the earth is not uniform in the tradition. In the *Placita* its substance, location in the cosmos, and further attributes (including its movements during earthquakes) are found together after the meteorological part of the treatise. But Seneca argues that in physics one should speak of the earth in three different contexts: its location in the cosmos belongs in the context of the presentation of the heavenly bodies (found in Book II of the *Placita*), earthquakes are to be discussed in the context of meteorology (as in Aristotle), and the earth’s further attributes, such as its shape, follow in a final position elsewhere. A third possibility for placing this discussion is near the beginning of the cosmology, viz. in the cosmogony. The cosmogonical account found at 1.4, for instance, briefly refers to the substance and location of the earth. Parallels for this placement can be found among Aristotle’s references, and also in Book I of Hippolytus’ *Refutatio*. (Diels believed that the Hippolytan order of subjects goes back directly to Theophrastus, but his analysis is flawed. Theology does not come second in Hippolytus, although it does do so in the *Placita*.)

Chapters 9–15 of A Book III are about the earth, 16–17 about the sea. The chapters on the earth, which concern us in the present Section, are lost for S, with the exception of parts of chapter headings and the lemma S 1.36.1 ~ P 3.15.10. We should therefore keep in mind that as to method we are dealing with P’s understanding of A, but have noticed that P strives to preserve the main divisions and oppositions characteristic of A’s presentation.

The influence on A 3.10–14 of Aristotle’s chapter on the earth in *On the Heavens* 2.13, in which the views of others are thoroughly scrutinized, is clear. Grosso modo we find the same diaereses and the same views, that is to say the same forms of arrangement as well as the same, or similar, contents. Aristotle deals with the position of the earth—category of place A 3.11, cf. *Cael*. 2.13.293b15–16, ‘on the place of the earth some have this opinion’ (περὶ μὲν οὖν τοῦ τόπου τῆς γῆς...
ταύτην ἔχουσιν τινὲς τὴν δόξαν), and the summing-up at the end of the chapter, 296a21–23, where not only shape and motion versus rest but also place are said to have been dealt with. He further deals with the question of whether or not it moves (cf. 3.13)—category of place again; with its shape—category of quality (cf. 3.10); with the question of how many earths there are—category of quantity (cf. P 3.9.1–2); and with views about the coming to be of the earth (which involve its substance, another category) as given at Cael. 2.13–295a7–24, cf. P 3.9.4b–5. Aristotle shows in what way these issues are, or can be, interrelated, e.g. the earth may be believed to be at rest because of its shape, or at the centre because this is where it came to be at the time of the cosmogony.233

Fortunately we are able to adduce Aristotle’s account, for apart from the lemma S 1.36.1, as we noted above, and the headings of chs. 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13, and 3.15, the parallel Aetian tradition in S for the chapters on the earth is lost. The transmission of the chapters in P moreover leaves much to be desired. As to the further tradition, we may add the parallels found in a number of authors to the file, from Cicero via Lucretius, Seneca, and Cleomedes to Martianus Capella.234

In P parts of the lemmata 3.10.2235 and 3.14.1 are lost, and the remnant of 3.14.1 is the only extant part of the chapter. The lemma 3.11.4 is the final one in the chapter ‘On the position of the earth’ where it presumably does not belong; as Beck and Diels236 have seen, it should have been part of the now sadly mutilated ch. 3.14, ‘On the division of the earth’ in zones. Perhaps the text of A was already corrupt at this point, but the corruption may also have occurred in the tradition of P. The wrong placing of the lemma can perhaps be explained as a case of verbal association which shows the epitomator at his work: the Philolaus lemma at P 3.11.3 mentions the ‘inhabited earth’ (τὴν οἰκουμένην γῆν), and the Parmenides lemma attached at the end of the chapter as P 3.11.4 speaks of the ‘inhabited places of the earth’ (τῆς γῆς τοὺς οἰκουμένους τόπους).

234 Cf. below, n. 241.
235 Lost words preserved in Q’s translation.
236 DG 62.