Summary. We now look briefly at lists of principles in physics and their attributes that are to be dated before Aristotle and Plato, and discuss examples in a Hippocratic work and in Isocrates. It is important to recognize that collecting and arranging these items began at an early date. Brevity of expression is the norm, as later in Aristotle and the chapters of the *Placita*. In Isocrates we already have lists of principles arranged according to number; with hindsight we may find the category of quantity applied here. Though several ingredients of the doxographical technique of presentation are earlier, it is Aristotle’s methodology that is the watershed dividing what is in Isocrates, Plato and others from what is found in later works.

Several authors to be dated to the fifth–fourth centuries BCE, i.e. the period before Aristotle and Theophrastus, also cite and present philosophical tenets. They do so almost always in a manner that may rewardingly be compared with the organizational logic of the *Placita*. For they present such tenets in *clusters* that emphasize the range of similar options as well as the conflicts to be noted when one considers and compares views of a plurality of persons concerned with a specific topic. These views may be cited anonymously as in the Hippocratic example cited below, for as already noted in such circumstances it is the views that matter, but the name of the persons holding them (or supposedly holding them) may also be added, as in the Isocratean passages to be cited. What we find are lists that are made to serve a specific purpose, as can be seen from the manner in which their contents are presented and discussed. We cannot here study the available material in full, and so shall only quote a few brief overviews that may be put alongside the series of tenets in A’s chapter on the principles, 1.3.320

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320 The evidence is studied in more detail in Mansfeld (1986b), arguing from Aristotle and Plato to Gorgias’ presentation of contrasting and Hippias’ of related views (for Hippias cf. below, n. 335), and also discussing e.g. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 1.1.14 and [Arist.] *De Melisso Xenophane Gorgia* 5.979a14–18 on Gorgias; further in Mansfeld (1990a) 3157–3161, esp. 3159–3160 on pre-Aristotelian examples. The overview and discussion of tenets concerned with the flooding of the Nile at Herodotus 2.20, of which the first
In the first chapter of the Hippocratic treatise *Nature of Man* (probably ca. 400 BCE) there is a brief list of monist views (no names) concerned with the principle or element: ‘one of them says this One-and-All is air, the other fire, another water, and another earth’ (λέγει δ’ αὐτέων ὁ μὲν τις φῶσων ἥψαται εἶναι τοῦτο τό ἕν τε καὶ τό πάν, ὁ δὲ πῦρ, ὁ δὲ ὕδωρ, ὁ δὲ γῆν). They cannot all be right, it is argued; in fact, all they achieve is ‘to uphold the argument of Melissus’ (τὸν δὲ Μελίσσον λόγον ὄφθαλμον). What this argument is we are not told here, but fortunately we do know what it is: yes, there is one thing which is one-and-all, but this is not ‘earth and water and air and fire and iron and gold’, Melissus fr. B 8 DK. Melissus had listed the same elements except in a different order, and reduced the tenets of the targets of his critique to absurdity by adding iron and gold as elements, although of course these had never been proposed. Who these monists are we also know (though we are not so certain about earth), since these tenets, but then inclusive of name-labels, are also to be found in the overview of the *Placita* (A 1.3) and similar literature, and long before the *Placita*, of course, in Aristotle and Theophrastus.

In a work to be dated ca. 352 BCE, the *Antidosis*, Isocrates provides a list of six ‘tenets of the experts of some time ago’ (τοὺς λόγους τοὺς τῶν παλαιῶν σοφοτῶν), which are enumerated in a descending series according to number:321

One of them [who remains anonymous] said the quantity of really existing things (τῶν ὄντων)322 is infinite,
Empedocles four, and Strife and Love in them,
Ion not more than three,
Alcmeon only two,
Parmenides and Melissus one,
and Gorgias absolutely none.

There is no deep reason for this sequence. An ordered series of items is far easier to remember than a random one. Listing elements according

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321 *Antid*. 268.
322 The earlier texts have ὄντα where Aristotle and others say ‘principles’, or ‘elements’: cf. Plato, *Sph.* 242c, and Arist. *Phys.* 1.2.183b22–25; on the latter passage see, e.g., Mansfeld (1986b) 8–9. For the tradition regarding Aristotle’s contacts with Isocrates see Düring (1957) 299–314, and now Blank (2007) 16–22, 26–27; there is no evidence that Aristotle knew Isocrates’ lists of principles, but in our view it is likely that he had seen them, as he will have seen those of others beside Plato.