Aëtius *Placita* 2.20

Περὶ οὐσίας ἡλίου

**Witnesses**

Ps.Plutarch 2.20, Eusebius 15.23, ps.Galen 62, Quṣṭā Ibn Lūqā 2.20
Stobaeus 1.25.1a–g, 3a–1
Theodoret 4.21
Cf. Achilles 19, *Isagoge bis excerpta* 17

**Analysis**

1. The following five chapters in the book (20–24) deal with the most prominent of the heavenly bodies, the sun. As in the parallel sequences on the stars and the moon, the first on the οὐσία of the sun is by far the longest. As already noted, this chapter, together with the parallel chapters 13 and 25 on the stars and the moon respectively, is the longest chapter in Book II. It is also one of the more difficult chapters in the entire book to reconstruct, even though our evidence is relatively copious. Before we can tackle the difficulties, we must set out the evidence.347

2. The manuscript tradition of P preserves nine doxai:

χ’. Περὶ οὐσίας ἡλίου καὶ ὅτι δύο καὶ τρεῖς εἰσίν

P2.20.1 Ἀναξίμανδρος κύκλον εἶναι ὀκτωκαιεικοσταλασίονα τὴς γῆς, ἀμάτιο τροχόν (παραπλήσιον), τὴν ἄφιδα [παραπλήσιον] ἐγόντα κοίλην, πλήμη πυρός, [ἡς] κατὰ τὸ μέρος ἐκφαίνουσαν διὰ στομίου τὸ πῦρ ὀσπερ διὰ προστήρος αὐλοῦ καὶ τοῦτ’ εἶναι τὸν ἡλίον.

P2.20.2 Ξενοφάνης ἐκ πυρίδιων τῶν συναθροίζομένων μὲν ἐκ τῆς γηράς ἀναθυμήσεως συναθροίζοντων δὲ τὸν ἡλίον ἢ νέφος πεπυρωμένον.

P2.20.3 οἱ Στοικοί ἀναμμα νοεσθέν ἐκ θαλάττης.

P2.20.4 Πλάτων ἐκ πλείστου πυρός.

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347 A detailed treatment of this chapter, with particular emphasis on the role of Xenophanes and Theophrastus, was presented in Runia (1992). The present analysis refines elements of that treatment and has led to some revisions, particularly in our view of how the chapter commences. See further the text at n. 363 below.
We note that four of the doxai are quite long. The Xenophanean doxa unusually appears to combine two separate views. Epicurus, as often, brings up the rear, but this time his view resembles Presocratic views and does not privilege the epistemological aspect. P also deviates in his long title. Compare:

EG    Περὶ ἡλίου
Q     ‘Über die Substanz der Sonne’
cf. S  Περὶ οὐσίας ἡλίου

It is clear that the second part of P’s title derives from the doxai of Empedocles and Philolaus, both of which involve multiple suns (cf. the longer title in ¶19, which is also based on a doxa). The title in EG, however, is altogether too short, since it omits to mention the οὐσία which is vital to Aëtius’ systematics in this book. The title as found in SQ is to be preferred.

E writes out the entire chapter, with a good deal of textual variation in the longer doxai (see the apparatus). The same occurs in Q.

348 The question of multiple suns raises in fact relates to the category of quantity; cf. the combination of essence (or nature) and quantity in 2.1*. To ask the question whether there is more than one sun is consistent with the method of the Πλατ. cita.

349 Daiber (1980) 398–400 notes that there is an Arabic translation of approximately