
Diogène d'Apollonie. Edition, traduction et commentaire des fragments et témoignages. Deuxième édition revue et augmentée by André Laks

International Pre-Platonic Studies, 6. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2008. Pp. 336. ISBN 978-3-89665-440-3. Cloth € 44.50.

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The first edition of André Laks' book (his Lille dissertation) in 1983 was welcomed by all students of the Presocratics, and was generally reviewed favorably, although only once in English.¹ Long out of print, it now appears in a second edition (having lost the puzzling but attractive Jean-Cocteau-like line drawing on its cover) in the series International Pre-Platonic Studies, which has already published updated versions of Marcovich's edition of *Heraclitus* [2001] and my *Anaxagoras* [2005], as well as a reprint of Diels' *Parmenides. Lehrgedicht* [2003] and original monographs on (so far) Gorgias [Robbiano 2006] and Parmenides [Mazzara 1999]. No surprise to those who know the first edition or to those who know only his later work: Laks' text and commentary remains and will remain for years to come the best study of Diogenes of Apollonia, whose interesting teleology is often overlooked and who is often gently damned for being eclectic. The primary purpose of this review, therefore, is merely to acknowledge its publication and to record some changes between the two editions.

Laks has dropped, as too naïve, his original subtitle, *La dernière cosmologie présocratique*, although Theophrastus *apud Simplicium* (if it is not Simplicius himself) said much this very thing of Diogenes

¹ By George Kerferd [1990]. The other reviewers were Schwabl [1984], des Places [1984], Longo [1984], Duvernoy [1985], Romeyer-Dherbey [1985], Pasqua [1986], Janda [1987], and de Sousa Barbosa [1988]. Of those that I have seen, only Oddone Longo's is somewhat unfavorable, criticizing Laks for an introduction that is 'mediata, ma forse non sufficientemente svilupata' and for a commentary that is too 'tradizionale'.

[T4 Laks = Theophrastus fr. 226a in [Fortenbaugh, Huby, Sharples, and Gutas 1992](#)].² Between editions, however, he has given much thought to the nature and characteristics of Greek philosophy before Plato; note, e.g., the scare guillemets in the title of his *Introduction à la « philosophie présocratique »* [2006], and the question mark in the proceedings of a conference that he organized in Lille, ‘Qu’est-ce que la philosophie présocratique?’ (Villeneuve-d’Ascq, 2002).³ Little of this has been imported into the second edition, though: ‘des formulations ont été changées,’ but for the most part, these changes are more of emphasis. There are also additions to the original text, the introduction being particularly rich in additional thoughts, which are set off with double asterisks (**...**).

Most of the changes occur in the introduction and the additional notes, sometimes simply by moving from the latter to the former; thus, the assemblage of the texts from Simplicius, who not only, as often, is our main source of *ipsissima verba* (having explicitly said that Diogenes’ book *On Nature* has ‘come down to him,’ an odd phrase), but who also embeds these quotations into longish passages on Diogenes.⁴ Likewise, the chapter on Diogenes’ writings (how many, what titles?) has been moved to the front. Two new chapters have been added: ‘La question de l’ influence de Diogène’ and ‘Diogenes revisited,’ which is Laks’ (English) contribution to [Curd and Graham 2008](#) and which provides an *entrée* into Laks’ book for those more comfortable in English than French.

Laks has kept his rearrangement of the fragments (whose text is dependent on earlier editors, chiefly Diels’ edition of Simplicius). This rearrangement differs somewhat from Diels’ in properly downgrading B9 [see [Diels and Kranz 1951](#), §64] to testimony level and adding three one- or two-word fragments embedded in Simplicius’ and Theophrastus’ discussions of Diogenes:

² [Fortenbaugh, Huby, Sharples, and Gutas 1992](#) should be added to Laks’ bibliography for those less familiar with Theophrastus. Laks’ thorough commentary on this testimony foreshadows his important later work on Theophrastus.

³ The proceedings are published in [Laks and Louguet 2002](#).

⁴ Some readers will want to note they have been translated into English in Guthrie’s chapter on Diogenes [1965].

- fr. 2 σοφισταί
 3 πολλή νόησις
 11 διασκίδνασθαι

all of which Diels had already put within quote marks. Fr. 2 σοφισταί and fr. 3 πολλή νόησις deserve this new status, the former also its low number, although the latter need not have come so early in Diogenes' work as Laks argues. I am less convinced by fr. 11 διασκίδνασθαι, which is not quite as purely Ionic as Laks argues [cf. Thucydides, *Hist.* 6.98.4, Euripides, *Hec.* 917, [Aristotle] *Prob.* 933a31, 943b7].

In the longer fragments there are some few places where one can disagree or prefer another way of explaining things; e.g., B7 Diels = Fr. 5 Laks καὶ αὐτὸ μὲν τοῦτο καὶ αἰδῖον καὶ ἀθάνατον σῶμα, τῷ δὲ τὰ μὲν γίνεται, τὰ δὲ ἀπολείπει. Laks may be right to maintain τῷ Simplicius^{DE} (τό Simplicius^F) against the Aldine's τῶν (approved by Diels), but is he right to regard its reference as αὐτό? ὁ δέ even without a preceding μὲν, almost always signals a new reference.⁵ Laks' vague reference to 'l'emploi épique' [see, e.g., Homer, *Il.* 2.188] is insufficient to justify taking τῷ δὲ to have the same reference in such a prosaic prose author as Diogenes. Yet, after resisting Laks (who, like Guthrie, follows Diels in his edition of Simplicius) for a while, I now think that he is right and that the way to explain this is not so much by recourse to standard Greek, but to take full account of Diogenes' notably primitive prose style. Here, first, as he does elsewhere, he oddly employs a neuter pronoun to refer to ὁ ἄηρ; but, more important for the fragment's meaning, the contrast lies not in αὐτὸ and τῷ having distinct references, but rather between the unchanging 'selfness' of the former and the role it plays in bringing about (apparent) change, as shown by the dative case of the latter. One might also note in support Simplicius' θαυμαστόν in introducing this fragment, which probably is occasioned by his amazement that *aer* could have the characteristics stated in both μὲν and δέ clauses.

I agree with Laks and others who place Diogenes after Anaxagoras—the former's νόησις does indeed look like a conscious advance on the latter's νοῦς—but when it comes to the writing of Greek, one

⁵ See Ruigh 1971, §§130–132, which surveys usages of δέ in prose as well as poetry. There is much fascinating stuff in this modestly titled book.

would think the order was reversed. Indeed, Diogenes' use of repetition (*kyklos*), exegetical *καί* and hendiadys, explanatory apposition, and amphiboly is both frustrating, fascinating, and a challenge to the reader. This can best be illustrated by B2 Diels = Fr. 4 Laks, where attention to style leads me to disagree slightly with Laks' *plan du fragment*. What follows is largely his text; but the slashes (/) indicate where I would add commas, the setting of one phrase in parentheses is mine, and I have added superscripts to facilitate reference. Letters in boldface are Laks', to indicate the logical division of the argument: **H**/**h**(ypothesis = protasis) and **C**(onsequence = apodosis).

ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ/ τὸ μὲν ξύμπαν εἰπεῖν/ πάντα τὰ ὄντα ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἑτεροιοῦσθαι^a καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ εἶναι. καὶ τοῦτο εὐδῆλον/ **H**, **h1** εἰ¹ γὰρ τὰ ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ ἑόντα νῦν, γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ ἄηρ καὶ πῦρ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὅσα φαίνεται ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ ἑόντα, εἰ² τούτων τι ἦν ἕτερον^b τοῦ ἑτέρου^b (ἕτερον^b ὄν τῆ ἰδίᾳ φύσει), **h2** καὶ/ μὴ τὸ αὐτὸ ἐὼν/ μετέπιπτε πολλαχῶς καὶ ἡτεροιοῦτο^b, **C** οὐδαμῆ οὔτε μίσησθαι ἀλλήλοις ἠδύνατο, οὔτε ὠφέλησις τῷ ἑτέρῳ <γενέσθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου> οὔτε βλάβη, **C*** οὐδ' ἂν οὔτε φυτὸν ἐκ τῆς γῆς φῦναι οὔτε ζῶον οὔτε ἄλλο γενέσθαι οὐδέν, **H*** εἰ³ μὴ οὕτω συνίστατο ὥστε ταῦτα εἶναι. ἀλλὰ πάντα ταῦτα ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἑτεροιοῦμενα^a ἄλλοτε ἄλλοῖα γίνεται καὶ εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ ἀναχωρεῖ.

ἐτερ^a = (only) apparent change/difference (possible)

ἐτερ^b = real change/difference (impossible)

TRANSLATION

(without angle brackets and with additional explanations)

To speak of the whole matter, it seems to me that all existing things change^a from the same thing and are the same. And this is quite clear: **H**, **h1** for if¹ the things now existing in this cosmos (earth, water, air, fire, and all the other things that seem to be existing [i.e., *scil. εἶναι*])—if² one of these were truly different^b, one from the other^b (being truly different^b in its own nature), **h2** and, were it not the same, it changed and altered^b in many ways, then **C** in no way would mixture of one with the other or mutual benefit or harm be possible, nor **C*** could a plant grow from the earth nor an animal

or anything (grow), unless **H*** it were so constituted as for (everything) to be the same. But (in fact), all these things are changed^a from the same thing and come to be different things at different times and return to the same thing.

Diogenes' prose proceeds in fits and starts, constantly going back on itself and clarifying, in part to acknowledge its ambiguous use of 'change'. Its model for both thought and style here seems to be Melissus B8 [see [Diels and Kranz 1951](#), §30]. As the superscripts indicate, sometimes the stem *έτερο-* indicates real change (*έτερον^b ὄν τῆ ἰδίᾳ φύσει*), other times only the false change that has led people, like Empedocles, to think that earth, air, fire, and water are absolutely different. **h1** begins with a general statement, *εἰ¹*, and then, before a verb appears, backtracks to apply itself to individual items, *εἰ²* (so far, largely Laks), which contains two clauses, the second of which contains its own subordinate protasis in the form of a negated conditional particle, *μη τὸ αὐτὸ ἐόν*, which does nothing but rephrase the first part of the protasis. Laks' rendering seems to miss this last point: 'et qu'il ne fût pas vrai que, étant le même, elle se transforme ...,' which seems to misplace the negative. (*μετέπιπτε* [as in Melissus B8] *πολλαχῶς καὶ έτεροιοῦτο* is a hendiadys.)

Given this manner of composition, I see no reason to follow Laks (who here follows Diels and Schneidewin) in adding logical clarity and syntactic regularity in the form of the clause inserted in angle brackets; Diogenes himself inserted this clause in his usual fashion in order to clarify the preceding one, in which *ἀλλήλοις* was probably thought sufficient to justify the use of only one instance of *έτερο-* in the next. *οὔτε ὠφέλησις ... οὔτε βλάβη* should be taken as a polar expression roughly equivalent to what later philosophers would term *πάθος*.

Nor is there anything wrong with the syntax: *μίσησθαι*, *ὠφέλησις*, and *βλάβη* are all subjects of the verb [cf. Homer, *Il.* 10.173 ἢ ὄλεθρος Ἀχαιοῖς ἤε βιῶναι, [Kühner and Gerth 1890–1904](#), 2.3]. One can now take issue with Laks' distinction between **C** and **C***. To me the latter seems like yet another of Diogenes' re- or paraphrasing, although Laks is right to note that **C** is from the point of view of the interaction of existing things, whereas **C*** is from that of the genesis of things.

One final, small, point: Laks follows Simplicius^F in printing ἕτεροιοῦτο, which might at first appear the better choice, but ἔτεροιοῦτο (Simplicius^{DE}, Diels) is probably correct [cf. Rosén 1962, 152]. My point here is to demonstrate that before finding advances in thought in Diogenes' work, one must first learn to appreciate his primitive prose style.

For me, one of the hallmarks of a good commentary is that it lays out the reasons for the editor's choices on all matters so thoroughly that it gives the reader all the evidence with which to disagree with these choices. Laks' book passes with flying colors.

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