

Placita by Aetius

Post by "Cassius" of March 26, 2024 at 5:57 AM

We ought to add to this thread: What does "Placita" mean and who (and when) was Aetius?

And what would be a good link (or links) for someone wanting to read up on this further?

[Aetius \(philosopher\) - Wikipedia](#)

Aetius (/eɪˈiːʃjəs/; [Greek](#): Ἀέτιος) was a 1st-^[1] or 2nd-century AD^[2] [doxographer](#) and [Eclectic philosopher](#).

None of Aetius' works survives today, but he solves a mystery about two major compilations of philosophical quotes. There are two extant books named [De Placita Philosophorum](#) (Περὶ τῶν ἀρεσκόντων φιλοσόφοις φυσικῶν δογμάτων, "Opinions of the Philosophers") and [Eclogae Physicae](#) (Ἐκλογαὶ φυσικαὶ καὶ ἠθικαί, "Physical and Moral Extracts"). The first of these is [Pseudo-Plutarch](#) and the second is by [Stobaeus](#). They are clearly both abridgements of a larger work. [Hermann Diels](#), in his great *Doxographi Graeci* (1879), discovered that the 5th-century CE theologian [Theodoret](#) had full versions of the quotes which were shortened in the abridgements. This means that Theodoret had managed to procure the original book which Pseudo-Plutarch and Stobaeus had shortened. He calls this book "*Aetiou tēn peri areskontōn sunagōgēn* (Ἀετίου περὶ τῶν Ἀρεσκόντων Συναγωγὴν)"^{[3][4]} and therefore we ascribe the original *Placita* to Aetius.

Diels claimed that Aetius himself was merely abridging a work which Diels (1879) called *Oldest Tenets* or, in Latin, *Vetusta Placita*. Unlike Aetius, whose existence is attested by Theodoret, the *Vetusta Placita* is Diels' invention and is generally disregarded by modern classicists^[5]

Quotes which are ascribed to Aetius in scholarly essays were actually discovered in either the abridgements of Pseudo-Plutarch or Stobaeus, or Theodoret's full quotes in rare cases, or finally one of several ancient authors who provided corrections to misquotes in one of these works.