

Diogenes Laertius on the Stoic definitions of κόσμος

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Among numerous reports of the Stoic distinctions between several applications of certain terms¹ there is one which specifies the three senses of the word κόσμος:

D.L. vii: (137) λέγουσι [sc. the Stoics] δὲ κόσμον τριχῶς· αὐτόν τε τὸν θεὸν τὸν ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιόν, ὃς δὴ ἀφθαρτός ἐστι καὶ ἀγέννητος, δημιουργὸς ὢν τῆς διακοσμήσεως, κατὰ χρόνων ποιάς περιόδους ἀναλίσκων εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὴν ἅπασαν οὐσίαν καὶ πάλιν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ γεννῶν. (138) καὶ αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν διακόσμησιν τῶν ἀστέρων κόσμον εἶναι λέγουσι· καὶ τρίτον τὸ συνεστηκὸς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν.²

The apparent difficulty of the report is that ἀμφοῖν in the third definition must refer to the two preceding meanings of κόσμος, so that the third sense of the term appears to be τὸ συνεστηκὸς ἐκ τοῦ ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιοῦ καὶ τῆς διακοσμήσεως τῶν ἀστέρων. This is an impossible notion, and Arnim proposed excising τῶν ἀστέρων.³ Yet his solution is difficult.

Arius Did. fr. 29 Diels (= *SVF* ii 169.17): τὸ γὰρ ἐκ πάσης τῆς οὐσίας ποιὸν προσαγορεύεσθαι <κόσμον καὶ>⁴ τὸ κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν τὴν τοιαύτην διάταξιν ἔχον. διὸ κατὰ μὲν τὴν προτέραν ἀπόδοσιν αἰδίου τὸν κόσμον εἶναι φασι, κατὰ δὲ τὴν διακόσμησιν γενητὸν καὶ μεταβλητὸν κτλ.

Thus in its broader sense the term κόσμος signifies the eternal qualified individual comprising all substance and at certain periods possessing 'an arrangement such as this', i.e. διακόσμησις (to put it otherwise, it has alternating

¹ Two senses of οὐσία (H. v. Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* [Stuttgart, 1905; hereafter *SVF*], i 25.2; ii 114.19) and ἀδιάφορον (*SVF* iii 28.20, 29; 29.17); three senses of στοιχείον (*SVF* ii 136.26), ποιόν (*SVF* ii 128.33), πόλις (*SVF* iii 81.10), ἀρετή (*SVF* iii 19.23), etc.

² The same report is found in Suda, s.v. κόσμος.

³ Arnim, *SVF*, ii 168.9. Arnim is followed by A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1987), ii, 268.

⁴ κόσμον καὶ add. Diels; θεόν, οὐ add. Arnim.

arrangements, διακόσμησις and ἐκπύρωσις);⁵ in its narrower sense the term κόσμος denotes 'an arrangement such as this', i.e. διακόσμησις, of the eternal κόσμος (as distinct from its other arrangement, ἐκπύρωσις). These senses amount to Diogenes' first (τὸν θεὸν τὸν ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιόν) and, on Arnim's reading, second (τὴν διακόσμησιν [τῶν ἀστέρων]) definitions; accordingly, τὸ συνεστηκὸς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, i.e. Diogenes' third definition, would be: a composite of the eternal κόσμος and its 'arrangement such as this', viz. διακόσμησις.⁶ This is scarcely a tenable notion which furthermore adds nothing to Diogenes' second definition of κόσμος (on Arnim's reading of the Greek) as διακόσμησις. This becomes even more apparent when the distinction is phrased in the terms of the Stoic genera:

Clement *Strom.* v 104 (= *SVF* ii 182.6): (1) σαφέστατα <δ> Ἡεράκλειτος ὁ Ἐφέσιος ταύτης ἐστὶ τῆς δόξης τὸν μὲν τινα κόσμον αἰδίων εἶναι δοκιμάσας, τὸν δὲ τινα φθειρόμενον, τὸν κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν εἰδὼς οὐχ ἕτερον ὄντα ἐκείνου πῶς ἔχοντος.⁷ (2) ἀλλ' ὅτι μὲν αἰδίων τὸν ἐξ ἀπάσης τῆς οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιὸν κόσμον ἤδει, φανερόν ποιεῖ λέγων οὕτως κτλ.

The διακόσμησις referred to in Arius Didymus and Simplicius as a διάταξις of the eternal κόσμος is termed here as the category πῶς ἔχον: 'not other than it [sc. the eternal world] disposed in a certain way'. Accordingly, Diogenes' third sense of κόσμος would be τὸ συνεστηκὸς ἐκ τοῦ ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιού καὶ ἐκείνου πῶς ἔχοντος. I doubt that the Stoics would have approved of such a notion; Arnim's excision of τῶν ἀστέρων does not seem to be a correct solution of the problem.

Let us compare Diogenes' report with Philo, *De incorrupt. mund.* ii 488 Mang. (*SVF* ii 189.4, quoted in part): λέγεται τοίνυν ὁ κόσμος καθ' ἕν μὲν [πρῶτον] σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἄστρων κατὰ περιοχὴν <καὶ> γῆς καὶ τῶν ἐπ' αὐτῆς ζώων καὶ φυτῶν, καθ' ἕτερον δὲ μόνος οὐρανός⁸ ... κατὰ δὲ τρίτον, ὡς δοκεῖ τοῖς Στωϊκοῖς,

⁵ Simpl. *de caelo* 294.13: κόσμον γάρ φησιν [sc. Alexander of Aphrodisias] ἐνταῦθα [sc. in Heraclitus B 30] οὐ τήνδε λέγει τὴν διακόσμησιν, ἀλλὰ καθόλου τὰ ὄντα καὶ τὴν τούτων διάταξιν, καθ' ἣν εἰς ἑκάτερον ἐν μέρει ἢ μεταβολῇ τοῦ παντός, ποτὲ μὲν εἰς πῦρ ποτὲ δὲ εἰς τὸν τοιόνδε κόσμον κτλ.

⁶ Cf. Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, ii, 268: 'In fact διακόσμησιν refers to the present world-order as a whole, and ἀμφοῖν to the combination of κόσμος in this sense and κόσμος in the first sense = god'.

⁷ Cf. Plotin. *Ennead.* ii. 4.1 (= *SVF* ii 115.22): [according to the Stoics] τὸν θεὸν ὕλην ταύτην πῶς ἔχουσιν εἶναι.

⁸ 'Heaven' is a well established sense of the Greek κόσμος, though not one sufficiently acknowledged in scholarly literature. The use is first attested in Isocrates *Paneg.* 179 (c. 380 B. C.). Among later examples are: *Epinomis* 987B7; Arist.

διήκουσα⁹ ἄχρι τῆς ἐκπυρώσεως οὐσία τις ἢ διακεκοσμημένη ἢ ἀδιακόσμητος, οὐ τῆς κινήσεώς φασι εἶναι τὸν χρόνον διάστημα. Diogenes' τὸν ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιόν, ὃς δὴ ἀφθαρτός ἐστι καὶ ἀγένητος corresponds to Philo's third sense, οὐσία τις ἢ διακεκοσμημένη ἢ ἀδιακόσμητος, and Diogenes' τὴν διακόσμησιν τῶν ἀστέρων seems to correspond to Philo's second sense, μόνος οὐρανός. If so, Diogenes' τὸ συνεστηκὸς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν should correspond to Philo's first sense, σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἄστρον κτλ. This conclusion is supported by the fact that Diogenes' τὸ συνεστηκὸς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν resembles Philo's description of the differentiated world as σύστημα of its main components, a description much favoured by the Stoics.¹⁰ On the assumption that the phrase refers to the differentiated world, the latter appears to be described as a composite made of two previously mentioned principal components, but the second definition mentions only 'the arrangement of the stars' which presumably stands for the heaven. We should assume, then, that the Greek is corrupted: the second definition lacks a reference to the other principal world component which can hardly be other than the earth.¹¹ Considering that the most plausible reason for mentioning the earth in connection with the heaven seems to be the description of the latter as rotating round the earth,¹² the minimal addition to Diogenes' second definition needed in order to make the third one intelligible would be: καὶ αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν διακόσμησιν τῶν ἀστέρων <τῶν τὴν γῆν περιφερομένων> κόσμον εἶναι λέγουσι· καὶ τρίτον τὸ συνεστηκὸς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν.

Yet even though this would render Diogenes' third definition understandable, the proposed conjecture does not solve the difficulty of the second definition itself. In the Stoics διακόσμησις is a *terminus technicus* for world-arrangement and as such is a synonym of κόσμος in the sense of 'world'. Consequently, while Diogenes' first definition is Stoic and the third alludes to the σύστημα definitions well instanced in the Stoics, the second is of foreign provenance.

Meteor. 339b18; Euclid *Phaen.* 6.15 (Menge); Diod. i 173.6, see further my 'On the History of the Greek κόσμος' forthcoming in *HSCP*.

⁹ διήκων MSS: διήκουσα Bernays.

¹⁰ σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις φύσεων (Arius Did. fr. 29, 31 Diels = *SVF* ii 169.39; 168.11; D.L. vii 137); σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν μεταξὺ φύσεων ([Galen] xix 160K = *SVF* ii 192.35); σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἀέρος καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς φύσεων (Arius Did. fr. 29 Diels = *SVF* ii 169.21); τὸ ἐκ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων σύστημα καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἔνεκα τούτων γεγονότων (Arius Did. fr. 29, 31 Diels = *SVF* ii 169.23, 168.13; D.L. vii 138); πόλις ἐκ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων συνεστώσα (Arius Did. fr. 29 Diels = *SVF* ii 169.26).

¹¹ Cf. Philo's definition and the first three definitions quoted in the previous note.

¹² See esp. Arius Did. fr. 31 Diels (= *SVF* ii 168.15); cf. Philo *Quest. et solut. in Exodum* ii 81 (= *SVF* ii 176.40); cf. also [Arist.] *De mundo* 2.391b11.

This definition being omitted, our passage resembles a number of reports on the Stoics' contrasting of the eternal and the perishable κόσμοι:

Arius Did. fr. 29 Diels (= *SVF* ii 169.17 [quoted above in briefer form]): τὸ γὰρ ἐκ πάσης τῆς οὐσίας ποιὸν προσαγορεύεσθαι <κόσμον καὶ> τὸ κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν τὴν τοιαύτην διάταξιν ἔχον. διὸ κατὰ μὲν τὴν προτέραν ἀπόδοσιν αἰδίων τὸν κόσμον εἶναι φασι, κατὰ δὲ τὴν διακόσμησιν γενητὸν καὶ μεταβλητὸν κατὰ περιόδους ἀπείρους γεγυίας τε καὶ ἐσομένας. καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐκ τῆς πάσης οὐσίας ποιὸν κόσμον αἰδίων εἶναι καὶ θεόν.¹³ λέγεσθαι δὲ κόσμον <καὶ> σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἀέρος καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς φύσεων.

Clem. *Strom.* v 104 (= *SVF* ii 182.7): (1) ... τὸν μὲν τινα κόσμον αἰδίων εἶναι δοκιμάσας, τὸν δὲ τινα φθειρόμενον, τὸν κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν ... (2) ... ὅτι μὲν αἰδίων τὸν ἐξ ἀπάσης τῆς οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιὸν κόσμον ἦδει, φανερόν ποιεῖ λέγων οὕτως ... ὅτι δὲ καὶ γενητὸν καὶ φθαρτὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐδογματίζεν μηνύει τὰ ἐπιφερόμενα κτλ.

Arius Did. fr. 31 Diels (= *SVF* ii 168.14): λέγεται δ' ἑτέρως κόσμος ὁ θεός, καθ' ὃν ἡ διακόσμησις γίνεται καὶ τελειοῦται.¹⁴ τοῦ δὲ κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν λεγομένου κόσμου τὸ μὲν εἶναι περιφερόμενον περὶ τὸ μέσον, τὸ δ' ὑπομένον περιφερόμενον μὲν τὸν αἰθέρα, ὑπομένον δὲ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰ ἐπ' αὐτῆς ὕγρα καὶ τὸν ἀέρα κτλ.

Philo, *De incorrupt. mund.* ii 489 Mang. (*SVF* ii 188.41): δύναται δὲ κατὰ τούτους [sc. Stoics] ὁ μὲν τις κόσμος αἰδῖος, ὁ δὲ τις φθαρτὸς λέγεσθαι, φθαρτὸς μὲν ὁ κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν, αἰδῖος δὲ ὁ κατὰ τὴν ἐκπύρωσιν παλιγγενεσίας καὶ περιόδους ἀθανατιζόμενος οὐδέποτε ληγούσας.

The parallels suggest that Diogenes' report was produced by expanding a text which described the Stoic distinction between the two senses of κόσμος, that of the eternal god and that of the transitory world-arrangement, by adding the third sense of the word, namely, 'heaven'. Now though 'heaven' is an established sense of κόσμος found also in the Stoics,¹⁵ so far as our evidence indicates the regular Stoic term for heaven was οὐρανός.¹⁶ That is why a compiler, who presumably wished to account for occasional instances of the Stoic use of

¹³ Diels' colon seems to be preferable to Arnim's full stop.

¹⁴ I follow Diels' punctuation.

¹⁵ Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus* (= *SVF* i 122.3-4): σοὶ δὴ πᾶς ὅδε κόσμος, ἐλισσόμενος περὶ γαῖαν, // πείθεταί; Arius Did. fr. 33 Diels (= *SVF* i 34.27): τὸν δ' ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην δύο φοράς φέρεσθαι, τὴν μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ κόσμου ἀπ' ἀνατολῆς ἐπ' ἀνατολήν, τὴν δ' ἐναντίαν τῷ κόσμῳ ζῳδῖον ἐκ ζῳδίου μεταβαίνοντας.

¹⁶ Cf. D. L. vii 138: οὐρανός δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐσχάτη περιφέρεια ἐν ἧ πάν ἴδρυται τὸ θεῖον.

κόσμος in the sense of ‘heaven’,¹⁷ could scarcely find a suitable Stoic definition and therefore was compelled to create it by himself. A compiler’s use of the peculiarly Stoic διακόσμησις in a non-Stoic sense suggests that he picked up the word from his source, and hence the passage must originally have contained the phrase κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν which in the parallels cited above is regularly used to introduce the sense of ‘world-arrangement’ of κόσμος. Having created the phrase τὴν διακόσμησιν τῶν ἀστέρων, and presumably having expanded it by reference to the rotation of the stars around the earth, a compiler adapted the original σύστημα definition to the new design of the report. He replaced the world components specified in this definition by reference to the two he mentioned in his addition, viz. ἄστρα and, presumably, γῆ, which suggests that these were the same as specified in the original σύστημα definition. The peculiarity of a compiler’s couching the notion of heaven as ἡ διακόσμησις τῶν ἀστέρων instead of the more natural ἡ διακόσμησις τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,¹⁸ or simply οὐρανός,¹⁹ is, then, indicative of the original content of the σύστημα definition: it must have mentioned ἄστρα and presumably γῆ, but seems not to have contained the word οὐρανός. Now the stars are listed in Philo’s σύστημα definition, but the description of the world as a composite of the stars and the earth would be extremely odd, and the physical σύστημα definitions cited above all include the heaven. In these definitions heaven is designated by the word οὐρανός, but the reference to heaven as αἰθήρ seems not impossible.²⁰ If in the original definition αἰθήρ stood for heaven, a compiler could not utilize the word for his definition of the sense of ‘heaven’ of κόσμος: καὶ αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν αἰθέρα κόσμον εἶναι λέγουσι would not yield the meaning demanded. Accordingly, by replacing οὐρανός by αἰθήρ in Philo’s σύστημα definition we obtain the required wording: σύστημα ἐξ αἰθέρος καὶ ἄστρων κατὰ περιοχὴν²¹ <καὶ> γῆς καὶ τῶν ἐπ’ αὐτῆς ζώων καὶ φυτῶν. This description, like most of the σύστημα definitions cited, is basically binary with the earth and the heaven as its two principal components. Therefore, having mentioned both ἡ διακόσμησις τῶν ἀστέρων, which stands in his definition for the heaven, as well as the earth, the compiler could well rephrase the subsequent σύστημα definition as ‘a composite of both’, viz. of heaven and earth. Accordingly, the original text must have looked like this:

¹⁷ Another explanation, less favourable to a writer responsible for the addition, would be that he made it simply to complete the list of the word’s uses.

¹⁸ Cf. Arist. *Met.* A5.986a5; [Arist.] *De mundo* 6.400b31.

¹⁹ Cf. Philo’s καθ’ ἕτερον δὲ μόνος οὐρανός [sc. λέγεται ὁ κόσμος].

²⁰ Cf. Zeno’s definition of the heaven as αἰθέρος τὸ ἔσχατον (*Achilles Isag.* 129e = *SVF* i 33.28) and Arius Did. fr. 29, 31 Diels = *SVF* ii 168.26, 29; 194.4.

²¹ Cf. Arius Did. fr. 31 Diels (= *SVF* ii 168.29): ... αἰθέρα εἶναι, ἐν ᾧ τὰ ἄστρα καθίδρυται κτλ.

λέγουσι [sc. the Stoics] δὲ κόσμον [τριχῶς· αὐτόν τε] τὸν θεὸν τὸν ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιόν, ὃς δὴ ἀφθαρτός ἐστι καὶ ἀγένητος, δημιουργὸς ὧν τῆς διακοσμήσεως, κατὰ χρόνων ποιάς περιόδους ἀναλίσκων εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὴν ἅπασαν οὐσίαν καὶ πάλιν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ γεννῶν. [καὶ αὐτὴν] <κατὰ> δὲ τὴν διακόσμησιν [τῶν ἀστέρων <τῶν τὴν γῆν περιφερομένων >] κόσμον εἶναι λέγουσι [καὶ τρίτον] τὸ συνεστηκὸς ἐξ [ἀμφοῖν] <αἰθέρος καὶ ἀστέρων κατὰ περιοχὴν καὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν ἐπ' αὐτῆς ζώων καὶ φυτῶν >.

If my line of reasoning is correct, Diogenes' report is a result of the mechanical addition of the sense of 'heaven' of the word κόσμος to an account of the Stoic distinction between κόσμος in the sense of eternal god comprising all substance and κόσμος in the sense of world-arrangement. The way in which this addition was made distorted the original account: the phrase κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν, which explained the conceptual relation between the two senses of κόσμος, was sacrificed, so that these senses came to look unrelated,²² and the original σύστημα description was mutilated. As a result, the report is misleading: the added sense of 'heaven' is neither terminological nor even frequent in the Stoics. The correct report is Philo's who adduces 'heaven' and 'world' as common senses of the word, while specifically noting as peculiarly Stoic the notion of κόσμος as 'a certain substance either arranged (as the world) or unarranged'. This notion of κόσμος as an eternal substance which has alternating arrangements, διακόσμησις and ἐκπύρωσις, is indeed the characteristically Stoic meaning²³ which they were anxious to distinguish from the common use of κόσμος in the sense of 'world' while stressing the primacy of the former over the latter, for κόσμος in the sense of 'world' is, to borrow Clement's words, not other than the eternal κόσμος ὁ κατὰ τὴν διακόσμησιν λεγόμενος.

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²² As it is also in the continuation of Diogenes' report (vii 138): καὶ ἔστι κόσμος ὁ ἰδίως ποιὸς τῆς τῶν ὅλων οὐσίας ἢ, ὡς φησι Ποσειδώνιος ἐν τῇ Μετεωρολογικῇ στοιχειώσει, σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις φύσεων κτλ.

²³ Although it can be traced back to Aristotle *De caelo* A.10 280a20: ... εἰ τὸ ὅλον σῶμα συνεχὲς ὃν ὅτε μὲν οὕτως ὅτε δ' ἐκείνως διατίθεται καὶ διακεκόσμηται, ἢ δὲ τοῦ ὅλου σύστασις ἐστι κόσμος καὶ οὐρανός, οὐκ ἂν ὁ κόσμος γίγνοιτο καὶ φθειροίτο, ἀλλ' αἱ διαθέσεις αὐτοῦ.