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THE CONTENTS OF EMPEDOCLES' POEM:  
A NEW ARGUMENT FOR THE SINGLE-POEM HYPOTHESIS

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Introduction

Since Catherine Rowett's (then Osborne) 1987 article, 'Empedocles Recycled'<sup>2</sup>, there has been considerable controversy over whether the surviving fragments of Empedocles come from one or two poems. The prevailing assumption had been that the fragments come from two separate works: one entitled the *Περὶ φύσεως* or *Φυσικά*, containing a cosmology in the style of Ionian philosophy; the other, a predominantly religious poem entitled the *Καθαρμοί*.<sup>3</sup> Rowett argued instead that the fragments come from a single poem. The publication of the Strasbourg Papyrus in 1998 seemed to offer new support for this hypothesis,<sup>4</sup> which has also been espoused by Brad Inwood and Simon Trépanier. However, the question is far from settled, and there are several prominent adherents – perhaps, the majority of Empedocles scholars – to the two-poem hypothesis.<sup>5</sup> I present here a further argument, on the basis of the Strasbourg papyrus, in favour of the single-poem hypothesis. In particular, I suggest that ensemble a (ii) 23–30 of the Strasbourg papyrus is an ordered list of the poem's contents. Certain fragments are attributed to particular books of the *Φυσικά* or *Καθαρμοί*; if we assume that the two titles refer to the same poem, the order of those fragments corresponds to the order of the list in ensemble a.

The Problem and the Papyrus

The ancient sources, by and large, attribute the fragments of Empedocles to the *Καθαρμοί*, or to the *Φυσικά*, or (least frequently) to the *Περὶ φύσεως*.<sup>6</sup> Rowett pointed out that, given the conventionality of those titles, and the general lack of fixed titles for literary texts at this stage in antiquity,<sup>7</sup> the use of different titles by different testimonia does not necessarily entail that they refer to separate texts. The testimony of Diogenes Laertius 8.77, however, implies that the titles are of two separate poems:

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<sup>1</sup> I am most grateful to Tobias Reinhardt, Bruno Currie, Gregory Hutchinson, Malcolm Heath and Henry Spelman for comments on this piece at various stages of its gestation. Remaining errors are my own. Empedoclean fragment numbers beginning with 'B' (e.g. B62) are taken from Diels–Kranz (1952). Fr. 152 Wright is taken from Wright (1995), and was not noticed until after the publication of the various editions of Diels–Kranz. Fragments from the Strasbourg papyrus are cited by the ensemble letters and line numbers used in the *editio princeps*, Martin and Primavesi (1998). Translations, unless stated otherwise, are my own.

<sup>2</sup> Osborne (1987).

<sup>3</sup> This assumption goes back at least as far as the edition of Sturz (1805). Two scholars, drawing in part on the testimony of D.L. 8.57 (= Arist. *de Poetis* fr. 1 Ross = fr. 70 Rose) have argued that the fragments come from more than two poems: Solmsen (1980) argued that B131–4 come from a *Hymn to Apollo* and Sider (1982) argues that B34 comes from a *Persika*. For a convincing refutation of these views see Trépanier (2004) 20–3.

<sup>4</sup> Martin and Primavesi (1998).

<sup>5</sup> Since the Strasbourg papyrus came to light, Sedley (1998) 2–8, Cerri (2001), Kingsley (2002) 345–6 and Primavesi (2007) have argued specifically for the two-poem hypothesis.

<sup>6</sup> For *Καθαρμοί*: D.L. 8.54, 63, 77; Athenaeus 14.620; Theo Smyrnaeus, p. 104.1; Herodian Palimpsest (Empedocles fr. 152 Wright); Hippolytus, *Haer.* 7.30.3; cf. also Porphyry, *De abstinencia* 2.31 and Theo Smyrnaeus, p. 15.7. For *Φυσικά*: Aristotle, *Meteor.* 382a 1; Aëtius 1.30.1; Simplicius, *Phys.* 32.1–2, 157.27, 300.20, 331.10, 381.29; Tzetzes, *Chil.* 7.522, *Ex. II.* 53.23; schol. *ad Dionys.* Thrac. p. 166.13 (D.–K. 31 A 25). For *Περὶ φύσεως*: D.L. 8.60, 8.77; *Suda* s.v. Empedocles (D.–K. 31 A 2); Galen, *De elem. sec. Hipp.* 1.9 (1.487 K). For discussion of these titles see Osborne (1987) 24–8.

<sup>7</sup> For the conventionality of these titles see Wright (1995) 85–6 and Osborne (1987) 24–8, and specifically (and most extensively) on *Περὶ φύσεως* Schmalzriedt (1970). *Καθαρμοί* was also used as a title for works attributed to Epimenides (3 A 2–3 D.–K.), Musaeus (schol. *ad Aristoph. Ran.* 1033 = 2 A 6 D.–K., Plato, *Rep.* 364e), Orpheus (Plato, *Rep.* 364e) and Pythagoras (*Carmen Aureum* 67f.), for which see Obbink (1993) 56–7 n. 15. In addition to the work by Aristotle, a *Φυσικά* was attributed to Orpheus *OF* 800–3.

Τὰ μὲν οὖν Περὶ φύσεως αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ Καθαρμοὶ εἰς ἔπη τείνουσι πεντακισχίλια, ὁ δὲ Ἰατρικὸς λόγος εἰς ἔπη ἑξακόσια.

The work *On Nature* of his, and the *Purifications*, stretch to five thousand verses, but the medical discourse runs to six hundred verses.

The medical work is rejected by most commentators as spurious, but the comment on the the *Περὶ φύσεως* and *Καθαρμοί* is the main evidence adduced by supporters of the two-poem hypothesis.<sup>8</sup> Rowett addressed this objection to the single-poem hypothesis by arguing that there is a strong likelihood that Diogenes was mistaken here: his testimony conflicts with the statement of the *Suda* even though both testimonies seem to draw on a common, notoriously unreliable source: Lobon. Simon Trépanier offers a further argument against taking this as evidence for the two-poem hypothesis: ‘Diogenes’ notice ... is not so much a title as a list of contents. Or, if one must insist that it is a title, what Diogenes preserves at VIII 77 is *the long form* of the title, somewhat like referring to Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, instead of the *Works*.’<sup>9</sup> He supports this suggestion with two points: firstly, the Strasbourg papyrus demonstrates that one poem contained teachings on physics with purifications and eschatology; and secondly, other bibliographical references ascribed to Lobon tend to have long, descriptive titles, and give line numbers to individual works.<sup>10</sup> The evidence of Diogenes, then, appears to be less than conclusive.

For positive evidence in favour of the single-poem hypothesis, Rowett turned to Plutarch’s introduction to B115:

ὁ δ’ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς φιλοσοφίας προαναφωνήσας (Plu., *Exil.* 17.607C)

Empedocles, at the beginning of his philosophy, says ...

Plutarch then proceeds to quote the fragment in which the narrator describes the ‘oracle of necessity’ according to which the δαίμων who commits a crime is punished with exile for 30,000 seasons. The fragment is also quoted by Hippolytus as being in the *Καθαρμοί* (*Haer.* 7.29). So Plutarch, a more trustworthy source than Diogenes, quotes a fragment from the *Καθαρμοί* as being ‘at the start of Empedocles’ philosophy’, without indicating that there was more than one poem.

Further support for the single-poem hypothesis was supplied by the publication of the Strasbourg papyrus: it demonstrated that religious and cosmological topics occurred in the same poem.<sup>11</sup> The papyrus contains both a fragment previously attributed to the *Καθαρμοί* (although on the basis of content, rather than ancient testimony: B139 = P.Strasb. d.5–6, in which the narrator laments committing a sin, probably of eating meat) and fragments attributed to the *Φυσικά*/*Περὶ φύσεως*.<sup>12</sup> The evidence of the papyrus therefore calls into question the traditional thematic distinction between the two texts.

Simon Trépanier has used the evidence of the papyrus, along with further analysis of the use of the book titles in the testimonia, as the basis for his support of the single-poem hypothesis.<sup>13</sup> He points out that the subject matter of B62, which is placed in book 2 of the *Φυσικά* by Simplicius, is similar in subject-mat-

<sup>8</sup> See n. 5 above.

<sup>9</sup> Trépanier (2004) 27, citing West (1978) 136 as support for *Works* alone as a common title in antiquity for Hesiod’s poem.

<sup>10</sup> Trépanier cites *Suda* s.v. Eumolpus (= Lobon fr. 4 Crönert) and D.L. 1.111 (= Lobon fr. 16 Crönert) to demonstrate this point. See also Janko (2005) 100–4 who demonstrates the tendency Trépanier identifies with more examples, and suggests further problems with using Lobon as a source. Cerri (2001) 181–2 is more positive about his credentials and rejects the earlier view that he was a ‘falsario di notizie biografico-bibliografiche’; however, his proclivity for long, descriptive titles does not depend on such a view.

<sup>11</sup> As Inwood (2001) 78–9 notes.

<sup>12</sup> Most conspicuously, P.Strasb. a (i) 1–5 = B17.31–5, attributed to the first book of the *Φυσικά* by Simplicius (*Phys.* 157.25). See further Martin and Primavesi (1998) 7–8.

<sup>13</sup> Trépanier (2004) 1–30. He also follows Inwood (2001) 15–6 in arguing that the way in which certain testimonia talk about Empedocles’ work seems to suggest that there was one poem, as they comment on both the physical and religious matters without specifying that they came from two separate poems.

ter to that of fr. 152 Wright,<sup>14</sup> which is placed by Herodian in book 2 of the Καθαρμοί:<sup>15</sup> B62 describes the creation of males and females by fire, whilst 152 Wright appears to describe the formation of plants. Both fragments, then, deal with what we would call biology, and so the fact that one is attributed to the second book of the Φυσικά and the other to the second book of the Καθαρμοί may suggest that, in fact, the two works are one and the same.<sup>16</sup> Even if we do not accept this view, fr. 152 Wright demonstrates that a poem entitled Καθαρμοί contained biological (rather than purely religious) content. I shall argue that Trépanier's suggestion that B62 and fr. 152 Wright come from the same book of the same poem can be supported by the ordering of topics presented at ensemble a (ii) 23–30. First, however, it will be necessary to clarify my understanding of the arrangement of the fragments of the papyrus, and their position within the structure of the poem.

### The Papyrus and the Structure of the Poem

The papyrus has enhanced our knowledge of the structure of the first book of the poem. B17, which overlaps with Strasbourg ensemble a.1–5, is quoted by Simplicius (*in Ph.* 157.25) as coming from book I of the Φυσικά. The papyrus seems to mark ensemble a (ii) 30 as line 300;<sup>17</sup> this suggests that, once the papyrus is supplemented by the previously known fragments, we can reconstruct an unbroken stretch of lines 232–330 from book 1 of the Φυσικά.<sup>18</sup> However, the gap between ensemble d (containing B139) and the other ensembles of the papyrus has been an area of controversy. Ensemble d was placed by the editors substantially later than the other papyrus fragments, in book 2 of the Φυσικά on the basis that it must follow B62, which is said by Simplicius to come from that book.<sup>19</sup> The word αὐθις in ensemble d.10 (Martin and Primavesi print ἡμεῖς δὲ λόγων (σ') ἐπιβ[ήσομ]εν' αὐθις) suggested to the editors that the subject matter is being repeated. That subject matter is similar to that of B62: the ensemble describes the creation of reproductive organisms (d.13 ζῶν]α φυτ]άλαμ]α) under the influence of an 'inextinguishable flame' (d.11 φ[λογ]μός ἀτειρής),<sup>20</sup> whilst in B62, fire, after it was being separated from the Sphairos, is described as having brought up the shoots of men and women from the earth. The editors also held that a considerable amount of text was lost in between ensemble d and the earlier ensembles of the papyrus, as (they argued) Simplicius' comments imply that B21, B23, B26, B35 and B98 follow B17 (in that order), and B21 seems to follow from ensemble a (ii) 30 (= line 300).<sup>21</sup>

However, the theory that ensemble d came from a separate book from the rest of the fragments has been convincingly refuted by Richard Janko.<sup>22</sup> He points out that Simplicius' testimony implies that there is a considerable gap between B17 and B21; that it would be unusual for two separate books to come from the same roll; and moreover, he suggests that, as a methodological principle of working with fragmentary papyri, the best results are achieved by assuming the smallest possible number of lost columns (unless there is physical evidence to the contrary).<sup>23</sup> Instead, on the basis of the length of the columns, Janko posits a

<sup>14</sup> This fragment occurs in the Herodian palimpsest which was first published by Hunger (1967), and so is not in D.–K.

<sup>15</sup> Herodian introduced the fragment as ἐν β' Καθαρμοῶν. Obbink (1993) 57 n. 15 states that the genitive is not partitive as it has been taken to be (i.e. 'in book 2 of *The Purifications*', for which we would expect ἐν καθαρμοῖς β') but a genitive of content (i.e. 'in the second book consisting of purifications'). If Obbink is right, there is further reason to believe that the Καθαρμοί was not a separate work from the Φυσικά / Περὶ φύσεως; however, I find the syntax more ambiguous – it could mean 'in book two of purifications', implying that there was more than one book of purifications, which may be tantamount to saying, 'in book 2 of *The Purifications*'.

<sup>16</sup> Trépanier (2004) 14.

<sup>17</sup> With the marginal letter Γ. See Martin and Primavesi (1998) 21–2.

<sup>18</sup> See Janko (2005) and Primavesi (2008) for alternative reconstructions.

<sup>19</sup> Martin and Primavesi (1998) 110–11.

<sup>20</sup> See now Rashed (2011) for a reconstruction and discussion of this section of the papyrus.

<sup>21</sup> Martin and Primavesi (1998) 107–8.

<sup>22</sup> Janko (2005) esp. 108–9. His criticism is accepted by Primavesi (2008) 60, and Rashed (2011).

<sup>23</sup> Simplicius, *Phys.* 159.13, after quoting B17, introduces B21 as follows: πλείονα δὲ ἄλλα εἰπὼν ἐπάγει ἐκάστου τῶν εἰρημένων τὸν χαρακτήρα, τὸ μὲν πῦρ ἥλιον καλῶν, τὸν δὲ ἀέρα ἀγῆν καὶ οὐρανόν, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ ὄμβρον καὶ θάλασσαν.

gap of around 22 lines between his ensemble c.7 = B20.7 (= c 8 Martin–Primavesi) which he identifies as col. xi.8, and ensemble d.1, which he considers to be col. xii.1.<sup>24</sup> In support of Janko’s reconstruction, the thematic content of B139/ensemble d.1–7 follows neatly from that of B20/ensemble c: the latter deals with the death of individuals, in disintegration by the agency of strife, which is common to humans as it is to plants and animals (ensemble c.6 = B20.6). B139/ensemble d then resumes the theme of death: the narrator wishes he had died before he devised ‘terrible deeds for the sake of food’ (d.6= B139.2), referring most probably to eating meat. The reason why, for Empedocles, this is lamentable, is because animals have souls as humans do (cf. B137); this may present a thematic link with the manner in which the common origins of animals, humans and plants has been stressed in ensemble c.<sup>25</sup> I agree with Janko, then, that ensemble d is to be retained in book 1 of the *Φυσικά*, and find Janko’s reconstruction of lines 233 to 364 (with a lacuna between 309–330) of the book plausible.<sup>26</sup>

P.Strasb. Ensemble d, B62, Fr. 152 Wright and the Structure of the Work

Nevertheless, I believe that the similarities between B62 (from *Φυσικά* book 2) and ensemble d are significant, and in fact, when taken in combination with fr. 152 Wright, ensemble a (ii) 23–8, and ensemble b + B76, can be seen to provide further support for the single-poem hypothesis. I quote the relevant fragments in the order in which I believe them to have occurred in the poem. The supplements for ensemble d lines 5–18 are those of Marwan Rashed.<sup>27</sup>

*P.Strasb. ensemble a (ii) lines 23–30 = Empedocles, Physika I lines 293–300*

<p>δείξω σοι καὶ ἄν’ ὅσσε ἴνα μείζονι σώμ[ατι κύρει]          [π]ρώτον μὲν ξύνοδόν τε διάπτυξίν τε [ε γενέθλης]          25 ὄσ[σ]α τε νῦν ἔτι λοιπὰ πέλει τούτοιο τ[όκοιο.]          τοῦτο μὲν [ἄν] θηρῶν ὀριπλάγκτων ἀγ[ρότερ’ εἶδη,]          τοῦτο δ’ ἄν’ ἀ[νθρώ]πων δίδυμον φύμα, [τοῦτο δ’ ἄν’          ἀγρῶν]          ῥιζοφόρων γέννημα καὶ ἀμπελοβάμ[ονα βότρυν·]          ἐκ τῶν ἀψευδῆ κόμισαι φρενὶ δείγματα μ[ύθων·]          30 ὅψει γὰρ ξύνοδόν τε διάπτυξίν τε γενέθλης.</p>	<p>I shall show to you through your eyes when they find a          greater body,          first of all the coming-together and unfolding of this race          25 and the things which now still remain of this generation,          on the one hand among the wild forms of mountain-          wondering beasts          on the other hand among the twofold race of men, and          among          the race of root-bearing fields and vine-mounting grape.          From these take the undeceptive proofs of my words in          your mind;          30 for you will see the coming-together and unfolding of          their race.</p>
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λέγει δὲ οὕτως. That the Strasbourg fragments all come from the same roll is suggested by the editors Martin and Primavesi (1998) 111 and may be evidenced by the fact that the papyrus seems to have uniform colouring and quality.

<sup>24</sup> See the edition at Janko (2005) 130–1. He also places ensemble f in the gap, which, however, only preserves a few letters.

<sup>25</sup> See Janko (2005) 110.

<sup>26</sup> Primavesi (2008) offers an alternative, more ambitious reconstruction which places B21 in between ensembles a and b, and B23, 26, 35, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 in between ensembles c and d. However, as I argue below, there are good reasons for placing these fragments in book 1.

<sup>27</sup> Printed at Rashed (2011) 48.

*P. Strasb. ensemble d lines 5–18*

- 5 [Οὔ]μοι ὅτ(ι) οὐ πρόσθεν με διώλεσε νηλεὲς ἦμαρ,  
[πρὶν] χηλαῖς σχέτλι' ἔργα βορᾶς πέρι μητίσασθαι  
[νῦν δ]ἔ μάτη[ν ἐν] τῶιδε νότ[ωι κατέδ]ευσσα παρείας  
[ἔξικ]νοῦμε[θα γὰρ] πολυβενθ[έα Δῖνον], ὅίω,  
[μυρία τ(ε) οὐκ] ἐθέλουσι παρέσσει[ται ἄλγ]εα θυμῶι  
10 [ἀνθρώποις· ἢ]μεῖς δὲ λόγων ἐπιβ[ησόμε]θ' ἀῖθις  
[κείνων· ὀππότ]ε δὴ συνετύγγανε φ[λογ]μὸς ἀτειρῆς  
[θνητῶν ἠνεκέ]ως ἀνάγων π[ο]λυπήμ[ον]α κρᾶσιν,  
[δὴ τότε πρῶτα ζῶ]ια φυτάλμια τεκνώθ[η]σαν  
[οὔλομελῆ, τῶν ν]ῦν ἔτι λείψανα δέρκεται Ἡώς.  
15 ὀππότ[ε δ'] ἄερί συμμιχθ[ε]ῖς τόπον ἐσχάτιο[ν β]ῆ,  
δὴ τό[θ'] ἕκαστα διετμήθη κλαγ[γ]ῆι καὶ ἀϋτῆι  
θεσπε[σίηι, τὰ πρὶν Ὠκεανοῦ λει]μῶνα λαχόντα  
χόρ[τους τ'] ἀνθεμόεντας, ὅπηι εἴλ[υ]το περι Χθών.
- 5 Alas that the pitiless day did not destroy me  
before I devised wicked deeds with my claws for the  
sake of food;  
but as things are, in vain, in this storm, I wet my cheeks,  
for we have arrived at a very deep whirl, I think,  
and countless pains will be present to the heart  
10 of men, though they are unwilling. But we will enter  
again  
that path of words. Indeed, when a tireless flame  
chanced upon  
mortal things, continuously causing their painful  
intermixture,  
then, first, fertile creatures were born,  
single-limbed, whose remnants still the dawn beholds.  
15 When, mixed with aether, they reached the utmost edge,  
then each thing was separated with amazing shrieks  
and cries,  
which before had been allotted the meadow of the Ocean  
and the flowery pastures, where the Earth was enclosed  
around.

*P. Strasb. ensemble b + B76 lines 1–7<sup>28</sup>*

- τοῦτο μὲν ἐν κόγχαισι θαλασσονόμων βαρυνώτοις,  
ἦδ' ἐν πε]τραίοισι κα[  
ἔνθ' ὅψει χθόνα χρωτὸς ὑπέρτατα ναιετάουσαν  
θώρηξ δ' αὐ]τε κραταινῶτων α[  
5 ναὶ μὴν κηρύκων τε λιθορρίνων χελύων τε  
ὄστρακα κα]ἰ μελίαι κεραῶν ἐλά[φων ὀριπλάγκτων  
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν τελέσαιμι] λέγων σύμ[παντα γέ]νεθλα.
- First in the snales with heavy backs that range the sea  
and in the stony ...  
there you will see the earth dwell over flesh.  
Again, the armour-plate of strong-backed ...  
5 also the stone-skinned conches' and the turtles' shells.  
and spears of horned stags that roam the hills.  
But listing all such creatures I'd not end.

*Simplicius in Phys. 381, 31, quoting B62 lines 1–8*

- εἰπόντος δὲ τοῦ Ἐμπεδοκλέους ἐν τῶι δευτέρῳ τῶν  
Φυσικῶν πρὸ τῆς τῶν ἀνδρείων καὶ γυναικείων σωμάτων  
διαρθρώσεως ταυτὶ τὰ ἔπη
- νῦν δ' ἄγ', ὅπως ἀνδρῶν τε πολυκλαύτων τε γυναικῶν  
ἐννουχίους ὄρηκας ἀνήγαγε κρινόμενον πῦρ,  
τῶνδε κλύ· οὐ γὰρ μῦθος ἀπόσκοπος οὐδ' ἀδαήμων.  
οὔλοφουεῖς μὲν πρῶτα τύποι χθονὸς ἐξανέτελλον,  
5 ἀμφοτέρων ὕδατός τε καὶ εἶδος αἴσαν ἔχοντες·  
τοὺς μὲν πῦρ ἀνέπεμπε θέλον πρὸς ὁμοῖον ἰκέσθαι,  
οὔτε τί πω μελέων ἐρατὸν δέμας ἐμφαίνοντας  
οὔτ' ἐνοπήν οἶόν τ' ἐπιχώριον ἀνδράσι γυῖον.
- And Empedocles says, in the second book of his *Φυσικά*,  
before the destruction of the bodies of men and women,  
these verses:
- Now, come, hear from these words how fire, as it was  
being separated  
brought up by night the shoots of men and  
much-lamenting women.  
For my account is neither off the mark nor unlearned.  
First, whole-natured forms arose from the Earth,  
5 having a share of both water and heat.  
Some of them fire sent up, wanting to reach its like,  
when they did not yet show the lovely shape of their  
limbs  
nor a voice nor the kind of limb which is native to men.

<sup>28</sup> I adopt Richard Janko's translation for this fragment, printed in Janko (2004) and (2005).

## Fr. 152 Wright

τῶν γὰρ ὅσα ρίζαις μὲν ἐπασσυντέραι[σιν] ἔνερθε  
μανότεροις [δ' ὄ]ρπ[ηξί]ν ὑπέστη τηλεθ[άοντα].

Those that are formed with thick roots below  
flourish with thinner shoots above.

Ensemble d, as all editors agree, must go (at some point) after ensemble a, for we know from the indirect tradition that the latter was preceded by 30 lines of B17, making it unlikely that the other ensembles preceded it. As I have mentioned, the ἀϋθις of ensemble d line 10 suggested to the editors that the fragment resumed the content of B62, but this is implausible for the reasons pointed out by Janko. David Sedley has suggested that ἀϋθις means ‘later’ (see LSJ, *s.v.*, II 3) and refers to a later point in the poem, so that Empedocles will tackle this subject matter in the second book, where B62 is located.<sup>29</sup> Whilst such an interpretation is not excluded by the language of the fragment, it seems more plausible, as other scholars have pointed out,<sup>30</sup> that the term simply refers to the fact that Empedocles is resuming the cosmological narrative after the brief exclamation of remorse for having committed σκέτλι' ἔργα for the sake of food. This is supported by the fact that Empedocles uses a similar expression at B35.1–3.<sup>31</sup> The λόγοι κείνοι (if the latter word is the correct reading) could refer to the account of the creation of living things, which has been mentioned at a (ii) 23–8, as well as at a (i) 8–a (ii) 2.<sup>32</sup> The ἀϋθις, then, need not be taken as evidence that B62 precedes ensemble d. On the contrary, ensemble d appears to precede B62, as the former appears to be in book 1 while the latter is in book 2.

The similarity between the two fragments, I suggest, is to be explained as an instance of Empedocles' self-conscious tendency to repeat himself, in a manner which illustrates common underlying causes of disparate phenomena.<sup>33</sup> Both seem to describe the creation of originally sexless living things, which are then divided into two sexes (d.16 διειμήθη), a process which appears to have been satirized by Plato in the story of Aristophanes in the *Symposium*.<sup>34</sup> Even if we do not accept Rashed's supplements, ensemble d seems to describe the creation of φυτάλμια, fertile things, under the influence of fire, of which some remnants (λείψανα) remain. B62 is more explicitly focussed on the creation of the two sexes among humans, as is made clear by the first line, and by Simplicius' testimony. This seems to be more specific than the general ζῶια φυτάλμια of ensemble d. Soon after ensemble d, if we follow Janko's ordering, the narrator seems to have proceeded to describe the creation of familiar animals such as sea snails, tortoises and stags (ensemble b + B76).<sup>35</sup> The order of material described, then, appears to have been the creation of living things in general (ensemble d), then of animals (ensemble b), and then, in book 2, of humans.

I would suggest that this order follows the very order of the creation and destruction of things which Empedocles promises to describe at ensemble a (ii) 23–8. Indeed, his promise in those lines initially to reveal ὄσ[σ]α τε νῦν ἔτι λοιπά (a (ii) 25) is picked up by the description in ensemble d of τῶν ν]ῦν ἔτι λείψανα δέρεται Ἥως (ensemble d.14). The animals which are promised at a (ii) 26 occur, at least in the form of snails, at ensemble b + B76. It might be objected that snails and turtles are hardly θήρες

<sup>29</sup> This suggestion was first published in Sedley (2005) and then in Sedley (2007) 45–6 who presents Aeschylus Ag. 317 as a parallel.

<sup>30</sup> Laks (2002) 129 n. 6, Kingsley (2002) 339 n. 10 and Janko (2004) 7, who were familiar with Sedley's suggestion before he had published it.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. also Parm. B5.1–2. Sedley (2007) 45–6 n. 45 points out that Empedocles does not use ἀϋθις here, but the example does provide a parallel for this narrative tendency of Empedocles, to mark when he returns to the cosmological narrative from a digression.

<sup>32</sup> As reconstructed on the basis of similarity with B21.9–12.

<sup>33</sup> On this see Graham (1988) 304–6 and Rosenfeld-Löffler (2006) 137–56.

<sup>34</sup> The development into the different genders appears to occur in the final stage of the four-part zoogony attributed to Empedocles by Aëtius (V 19.5 = A72). This may be parodied in Aristophanes' story at Plato *Symp.* 189d5–191d5, as Rashed (2011) 39–48 sees Plato's passage as directly inspired by Empedocles, and reconstructs ensemble d accordingly; Sedley (2007) 55 identifies the similarity but rejects the likelihood of Empedoclean influence.

<sup>35</sup> Given that the description in ensemble b + B76 focusses on the hard parts of animals (such as shells and antlers) formed, according to Empedocles, of earth, it seems likely that B83, describing the spines on the backs of hedgehogs, also came from this section.



ὀρείπλαγκτοι, but the phrase there seems to be used by synecdoche to refer to all animals, as it designates the class of animals in general in contrast to humans and plants. The specification that it is the 'twofold tribe of humans' ἀ[νθρώ]πων δίδυμον φύμα (a (ii) 27) emphasizes the distinction between the two sexes, an aspect which B62 focusses upon, and begins to explain. We should expect, then, a description of the creation and destruction of plants to follow that of humans in book 2. This, I suggest, is a section of the poem to which fr. 152 Wright belongs. Of course, the meagreness of that fragment makes any interpretation highly speculative, but it is striking how it is specifically a description of roots, when Empedocles has promised to describe the ῥιζοφόρων γέννημα (a (ii) 28). The coherence of this fragment with the scheme promised by Empedocles, I suggest, further supports Trépanier's point that what Herodian refers to as book 2 of the *Καθαρμοί* (in quoting fr. 152 Wright), and what Simplicius refers to as book 2 of the *Φυσικά* (in quoting B62) are one and the same. The fragment (along with the other descriptions of the creations of plants, B77–82) would have come after the description of the creation and destruction of humans in book 2.

It might seem surprising that such a list of contents should occur so far (roughly 300 lines) into the poem. The gap between the start of the poem and this 'table of contents' is accounted for if, along with Trépanier, we accept that B112 and B115 occurred near the beginning of the poem (on the basis of the context for the fragments in Diogenes Laertius and Plutarch respectively),<sup>36</sup> and formed a lengthy first-person proem, before the narrator gave a summary of the cosmic cycle as a whole (B17 + Strasbourg ensemble a (i) and (ii)). As Trépanier observes, such a proem, of a different subject matter and narrative style to the main content of the poem would be paralleled in the openings of the poems of Parmenides and Lucretius.<sup>37</sup> Such a structural similarity with those two poems is perhaps to be expected, given the clear influence of the former on Empedocles, and the clear influence of Empedocles on the latter.<sup>38</sup> At any rate, line 293 (= ensemble a (ii) 23) makes clear the programmatic nature of the section, and 300 lines into the text would still be relatively early in a poem of 2000 lines (the length of the *Περὶ φύσεως* according to the *Suda*) or 5000 lines (the length of the *Καθαρμοί* and *Περὶ φύσεως* to Diogenes Laertius).

It is also noteworthy that this order is compatible with the placement of the only fragment attributed to a point in the poem beyond book 2. B134 is assigned to book 3 of the *Φυσικά* by Tzetzes (*Chil.* 7.514). This assignment is compatible with the order above, for it describes the limbless φρήν ἰερή which darts through the cosmos with its thoughts, and which is labelled by Ammonius as Apollo (*in Int.* 249.1). If Tzetzes' placement is correct, the narrator may have proceeded from describing the creation and destruction of animals, humans and plants in books 1–2, to describing the nature of gods in book 3.

### Conclusion

To summarize: if we take what I believe to be the most convincing reconstruction of the papyrus and the fragments from the indirect tradition with which it overlaps, the Empedoclean narrator seems to list the topics that will be covered over the course of the poem at lines 296–8 of the first book: he begins with animals, then proceeds to humans, before explaining the creation and destruction of plants. As the papyrus seems to begin to fulfill this promise by explaining the creation and destruction of animals in book 2, and we know that the creation and destruction of humans was treated in book 2 of the poem (in B62), we would expect the creation and destruction of plants to be treated in book 2 or later. We do indeed find such a treatment in book 2. Moreover, the specific detail in B62.1–2 that the narrator will describe the 'shoots of men and women' seems to correspond to the 'twofold race' that is mentioned at line 297 of book 1, whilst the focus on roots in fr. 152 Wright seems to correspond to the ῥιζοφόρων γέννημα mentioned at 298. It is also worth mentioning that such a 'table of contents' is paralleled at the start of Parmenides' poem, where the goddess states that she will teach her addressee both the 'unshaken heart of well-rounded truth' and the

<sup>36</sup> Trépanier (2004) 11–14. Diogenes Laertius describes Empedocles as 'beginning the *Purifications*' with the fragment (D.L. 8.62 ἐναρχόμενος τῶν Καθαρμῶν φησιν). In introducing B115, Plutarch describes Empedocles as 'stating by way of preface, at the start of his philosophy' (ὁ δ' Ἐ. ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς φιλοσοφίας προαναφωνήσας).

<sup>37</sup> Trépanier (2004) 11–14.

<sup>38</sup> For Parmenides' influence on Empedocles, note especially B12, 13 and 14 with the comments of Wright (1995) *ad loc.* For the influence of Empedocles on Lucretius see Sedley (1998) and Garani (2007).

‘opinions of mortals in which there is no true conviction’ (B1.29–30), the two topics which, in that order, will occupy the rest of the poem. Parmenides’ poem seems to have influenced Empedocles directly, given the latter’s clear allusions to the former. Similarly, yet another ‘table of contents’ is found in a later didactic poem which has been felt to show traces of Empedoclean influence,<sup>39</sup> Vergil’s *Georgics*: the first five lines of that poem list subject matter in the order in which it will be treated.

I hope to have offered a further, positive argument in favour of the possibility that the fragments we have come from a single poem, to add to the reasons adduced by Rowett and Trépanier. There is some degree of circularity in the reconstruction, as it requires assuming that Herodian’s Καθαρμοί and Simplicius’ Φυσικά refer to the same poem. However, the question of whether Empedocles wrote one poem or two is not one which admits of certainty, and some circularity is inevitable in the reconstruction of fragmentary poems.

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<sup>39</sup> See Nelis (2004) and (2014).