EMPEDOCLES

D73 (≠ DK) Strasbourg Papyrus; (B17, B20) Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle's Physics

Twofold is what I shall say: for at one time they
[i.e. the elements] grew to be only one
Out of many, at another time again they
separate to be many out of one.
And double is the birth of mortal things, double
their death.

For the one [i.e. birth] is both born and
destroyed by the coming together of all
things,
While the other inversely, when they are
separated, is nourished and flies apart (?).
And these [scil. the elements] incessantly
exchange their places continually,
Sometimes by Love all coming together into
one,
Sometimes again each one carried off by the
hatred of Strife.
<Thus insofar as they have learned to grow as
one out of many,>

verse 232, is due to our designating 240a as the verse inserted by the editors, which he numbers 240.
236 ξύνοδος Martin-Primavesi (cf. v. 294, 300); σύνοδος
Simpl.
237 θρησκείας Panzerbiter; θρησκείας Simpl. F: θρησκείας Simpl. DE; διέστη Scatter; διέστη Simpl.
240a hunc versum (═ D77b.8) post Bergk add. odd. plerique
And inversely, the one separating again, they end up being many,
To that extent they become, and they do not have a steadfast lifetime;
But insofar as they incessantly exchange their places continually,
To that extent they always are, immobile
in a circle.

But come now, listen to my words: for learning will make your mind (phrenes) grow.
For as I already said, when I was indicating clearly the boundaries of my words,
Twofold is what I shall say: for at one time they grew to be only one
Out of many, at another time again they separate to be many out of one,
Fire, water, earth, and the immense height of air;
And baleful Strife is separate from them, equivalent everywhere,
And Love (Philetès) in them, equal in length and in breadth.

Look you upon her with your mind (noos)—and do not sit there with astounded eyes—
She who mortals too think is implanted in their joints (arthra),

1 In the masculine, thereby recalling that the elements are gods.
2 There may be a reference to the penis in particular.
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And by whom they have loving thoughts and perform deeds of union (arithmia).
Calling her ‘Joy’ as byname and ‘Aphrodite’;
That it is she who is going around among them [i.e. the elements], no mortal man
Knows this. But as for you, listen to the undeceitful voyage of my discourse.

For these are all equal and identical in age,
But each one presides over a different honor,
each one has its own character,
And by turns they dominate while the time revolves.

And besides these, nothing at all is added nor is lacking;
For if they perished entirely, they would no longer be. [beginning of Pap. Str.]
And this whole here, what could increase it, and coming from where?
And how could it be completely destroyed, since nothing is empty of these?
But these are themselves, but running the ones through the others
They become now this, now that, and each time are continually similar. [end of B17]

3 The manuscripts have ‘in the eyes’; the editors most often correct the text.

264 καζαπάλουτο Martin-Prinavesi; καί κήρυς ἀπάλουτο
Simpl. (καί om. F; κήρυς om. ed. Ald.); κήξαπάλουτο Diels
265 γε Pap.; δέ Simpl.
EARLY CREEK PHILOSOPHY V

But under the rule of Love we come together into one world,
While under that of Hatred inversely they separate to be many out of one.
They, from which come all things that were, that are, and that will be later:
Trees have grown [scil. from these], men and women,
Wild beasts and birds, water-nourished fish,
And long-lived gods, the greatest in honors.4
Under her [scil. Strife’s] rule,5 they incessantly shoot forth continually
In dense eddies...
Without interruption, and never...
Many earlier lifetimes...
Before from these they go over...
<And everywhere they incessantly shoot forth continually>
For neither the sun...
<... nor the moon>
Filled with this drive...
And none of the other things...
But exchanging their places, they shoot forth everywhere in a circle.

4 Lines 269–72 are cited by Aristotle at Metaphysics B4 1000a29–32.
5 Plutarch (D98) gives what is probably a paraphrase of lines 273–287.
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For at that time the earth runs untrodden, and the sun’s 
... as big as men can infer;
In the same way all these things [sic, the 
elements] always run through one another,
And each one, as it wanders, occupies a 
different place ... 
We have not yet arrived in the center to be 
only one.
But when strife reaches the uncrossable 
depths
Of the vortex, and Love comes to be in the 
center of the whirling,
Under her dominion all these things [i.e. the 
elements] come together to be only one.7
But make an effort so that my word arrives not 
only at your ears,
And, hearing from me what surrounds us, 
observe what does not deceive.
I shall show you by your eyes too, where they 
encounter a larger body,

6 Perhaps the ‘we,’ which is sometimes identified with the 
fallen divinities of the Purifications, simply represents the totality of 
all composed things (including Empedocles and his disciple). 
But the text of this lacunose line is very uncertain.
7 D75 returns to this point after the section beginning in line 
291.
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First the coming together and the unfolding of generation,
And all that still remains of this <birth>:
This, among the savage <kinds> of mountain-wandering wild beasts,
This, among the double race of human beings,
and this, among the species
Of root-bearing <flowers> and the vine-climbing <grape>.

From these things, derive by your mind truthful proofs of my <words>:
For you will see the coming together and
unfolding of generation,
<How Love and Strife...> crossing over.
This [secl. you will see] in the illustrious bulk of
mortal limbs:
Sometimes by Love we come together into one,
all
Limbs that the body has received in the flower
of booming life;
Sometimes in turn, cut apart by evil quarrels,
Each one wanders separately in the surf of life.
In the same way for bushes and water-dwelling fish

302 ἄν βροτέων Martin-Primavesi. Simpl. In Phys. 1124.12 AF:
And mountain-bedded wild beasts and wing-going birds.

D74 (≠ DK) Strasbourg Papyrus; (cf. B76) Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics

This, in sea-grazing, heavy-backed seashells,
And in rocky . . .
There you will see the earth living on the
highest level of skin;
<And once more, a breast-plate> of strong-backed

Yes indeed, of stone-skinned trumpet-shells and
turtles
<The carapaces, and> the ashen spears [i.e. antlers]
of horned stags, <mountain-wandering.>
<But I could never finish> telling <all the species.>

Three Reprises (D75–D77)

D75 (B35) Simplicius, Commentary on Aristotle’s On the
Heavens and Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics
οι δ' οτε μὲν κατὰ φῶντα μυγέντ' εἰς αἰθέρ' ἵνα<κοιταὶ> ἡ κατὰ θηρῶν ἀγροτέρων γένος ἡ κατὰ θᾶμνων ἡ κατ' οἰκωνών, τοῦτο μὲν τὸ<θε θεοῦ> γενέσθαι, εἰτε δ' ἀποκριθῆσθαι, τόδ' αὐτὸν δυσδαιμονάν πάτημιν.

υπίπτοι: οὐ γὰρ σφιν δολιχόφρους εἰσὶ μέριμναι, οἰ δ' γίγνεσθαι πάροι οὐκ ἕως ἐκπίζουσιν, ἡ τι καταθυμήσεως τε καὶ ἐξάλλυσθαι ἀπάντησιν.

οὐκ ἂν ἁνήρ τοιαύτα σοφὸς φρεσίμα μαντεύσηται, ὡς δὴρ μὲν τε βίωσι, τὸ δ' ἔκριτον καλὸςτι, τόφρα μὲν οὖν εἰσιν, καὶ σφιν πάρα δειλὰ καὶ ἐοθάλα, πρὶν δὲ πάγειν τε βροτοί καὶ <ἐπεὶ> λύθεν, οὐδὲν ἄρ' εἰσιν.

διπλ' ἔρεως τοτε μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἡζύχθη μόνον εἰσὶ ἐκ πλεούσων, τοτε δ' αὐτὰ διέφυ πλεοὺς εἰς ἐνὸς εἰσίν. δοιφ' δὲ θυρησιῶν γένοις, δοιφ' δ' ἀπολείψας τὴν μὲν γὰρ πάντων σύννοδος τίκτει τ' ὀλέκει τε, ἡ δὲ πάλιν διαφυμένων δραφθέαις διάπτησιν καὶ ταῦτ' ἀλλάσσοντα διάμπερες οὐδαμὰ λήγει, ἄλλοτε μὲν φιλοτητὶ συνερχόμεν' εἰς ἐν ἀπαντα, 5

It is not right, the way they speak, but I myself also assent to their convention.

Fools – for their meditations are not long-lasting – are those who expect that what previously was not comes to be or that anything dies and is utterly destroyed.

A man wise in his thoughts would not divine such things: that while they live what they call life for so long they are, and have good and evil things, but before they are formed as mortals and <when> they are dissolved, they are nothing.

I shall tell a double tale. For at one time [they] grew to be one alone from many, and at another, again, [they] grew apart to be many from one. And there is a double coming to be of mortals and a double waning; for the coming together of [them] all gives birth to and destroys the one,

while the other, as [they] again grow apart, was nurtured and flew away. And these things never cease from constantly alternating, at one time all coming together by love into one,
224 Fragments: Text

άλλοτε δ’ αὐ τις ἔκαστα φορεῖμενα νείκεος ἐξῆλθεν.
<οὕτως ἢ μὲν ἐν ἑκ πλεόνων μεμάθηκε φόβεσθαι>

10 ἥδε πάλιν διαφώντος ἐνὸς πλέον' ἐκτελέσθησιν,
τή μὲν γέγονεν τε καὶ οὐ σφυσιν ἐμπεδός αἰώνων
ἡ δὲ διαλλάσσοντα διαμπερίες οὐδαμά λύγειν,
ταύτη δ’ αἰεὶ ἔστιν ἀκίνητη κατὰ κύκλου.

Ἀλλ’ ἁγεῖ μέθυον κλύθη, μάθη γὰρ τοῦ φρενας αἰδεῖν:

15 ὡς γὰρ καὶ πρὶν ἔκειτα πιθανόσκον πείρατα μύθων,
δέπλι’ ἐρέω τοτέ μὲν γὰρ ἐν γυνήθη μόνον εἶναι
ἐκ πλεόνων, τοτέ δ’ αὐ τις ἂν πλέον’ ἐκ ἑνὸς εἶναι
πόρ καὶ ὀθωρ καὶ γαλα καὶ ἱέρος ἀπλετον ὕψος
νείκος τε οὐλόμενον δέχα τὸν, ἀτάλαντον ἀπάντητη.

καὶ φιλότης ἐν τοῖσιν, ἵστη μήκος τε πλάτος τε
τὴν ὑπὸ νόσῳ δέκειν, μηδ’ ὅμως ἃν γενομένος ἢτος
καὶ διεγείρεται ἐμφατοι ἀρόμοις.
τή τε φίλα φρονείσθε καὶ ἀρόμα ἐφοα τελουσί,
Γρηγορίηνε καλεύετε ἐπάνωσεν ἢδ’ Ἀφροδίτην

25 τίνι ὅ τις μετά τοῖσιν ἐλασσομένης διαδρήκηε
θυσία ἀνέρθ’ σὺ δ’ ἰκους λόγον στόλον οὐκ ἄπατηλον.
ταύτα γὰρ ἴσα τε πάντα καὶ ἡλικα γένως ἔσοι,
τιμῆς δ’ ἁλλ’ ἄλλης ἁλλὰ μέδει, πάρα δ’ ἢτος ἐκάστη,
ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέοιν περιπλομένοι χρόνοιο.

καὶ πρὸς τοις οὖσὶ ἃ τι ἐπιγίγνεται οὖσι’ ἀπολίγητε
ἐπη γὰρ ἐφεβείρων διαμπερίες, οὐκ ἄν ἐτ’ ἦσαν.
τούτο δ’ ἐπαυξήσει τὸ πάν τι κε, καὶ πόθεν ἐλθὼν;
πὴ δὲ κηθάπαλοιστα, ἐπεὶ τῶν’ οὐδέν ἐρήμων;

225 Fragments: Translation

and at another time again all being borne apart separately by the hostility
and at another time again all being borne apart separately by the hostility
of strife.
<Thus insofar as they have learned to grow as one from many>

and they finish up many as the one again grows apart,
in this respect they come to be and have no constant life;
but insofar as they never cease from constantly interchanging,
in this respect they are always unchanged in a cycle.
But come! Hear my words; for learning will expand your thought organs.

For as I said before, in revealing the limits of my words,
I shall tell a double tale. For at one time [they] grew to be one alone
from many, and at another, again, [they] grew apart to be many from one—
fire and water and earth and the boundless height of air;
and destructive strife apart from these, like in every respect,
and love among them, equal in length and breadth.
And you, gaze on her with your understanding and do not sit with
stunned eyes.
For she is deemed even by mortals to be inborn in [their] bodies [lit. joints]
and by her they think loving thoughts and accomplish works of unity
calling her by the names Joy and Aphrodite.

Her no mortal man has perceived whirling among them [i.e. the roots].
But you, hear the undeceptive expedition of [my] account.
For these things are all equal and of like age in their birth,
but each rules over a different prerogative and each has its own character
and they dominate in turn as time circles around.

And in addition to them nothing comes into being nor ceases [to be];
for if they constantly perished, they would no longer be.
And what could increase this totality, and whence would it come?
And how would it also be destroyed, since nothing is bereft of them?
226 Fragments: Text

allax' aipt' estoi taibta, di' allhlas de thneta
35

γίγνεται ἄλλοτε ἄλλα καὶ ἱμικές αἰεν ὁμοια.

35

227 Fragments: Translation

35 they become different at different times and are always, perpetually alike.
............ we come together into one cosmos,
.......................... to be many from one,
.......................... from which all things that were, that are, and will be in the future
.......................... have sprung: trees and men and women

40 and beasts and birds and water-nourished fish,
and long-lived gods first in their prerogatives.

.......................... they never cease from constantly darting
.......................... in the dense eddies ....
.......................... unceasingly, nor ever ...

45 .... lifetimes before ...

.......................... transferring from them ....
.......................... darting ....

For neither the sun ...

.......................... there [or: thus] ... full

50 nor any of the others ...

.......................... but interchanging .... in a circle ....
.......................... for on the one hand impassable earth and the sun run,
.......................... as large as even now for men ....

In the same way all these things through each other

55 ... other ... places ...

.......................... and in the very middle ... we come together to be one alone.

But when indeed strife ............... the depths passed over
.......................... and love in the midst of the whirl ....
.......................... indeed all these things come together to be one alone.

60 ... so that not through ears alone ...

..........................
... hearing me concerning things that are true ...
I shall show you also through your eyes ... larger body ...
First the coming together and the unfolding ...
and as many as now still remain of this ...

on the one hand among the ... of mountain-roaming beasts
and on the other hand among the double race of humans ...
the offspring of rootbearing ... and vine-mounting ...
From these stories carry to your thought organ proofs that are not false.
For you will see the coming together and the unfolding of the offspring.

But come! Gaze on this witness to my previous words,
if anything was in my previous [remarks] left wanting in form:
the sun, bright to look on and hot in every respect,
and the immortals which are drenched in heat and shining light,
and rain, in all things dark and cold;
and there flow from the earth things dense and solid.
And in wrath all are distinct in form and separate,
and they come together in love and are desired by each other.
From these all things that were, that are, and will be in the future
have sprung: trees and men and women
and beasts and birds and water-nourished fish,
and long-lived gods first in their prerogatives.
For these very things are, and running through each other
they become different in appearance. For the blending changes them.