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Alain Martin and Oliver Primavesi, *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg (P.Strasb. gr. Inv. 1665-1666). Introduction, édition et commentaire*. B.N.U.S. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1999. xii + 396 pp., vi planches. ISBN 3-11-015129-4.

A papyrus purchased by Otto Rubensohn in 1904 at Akhmin (Panopolis), folded and twisted into the shape of a funeral wreath (1f., 27-51), was sent to the Imperial Library at Strasburg where it remained 'under glass' (inventoried as nos. 1665 and

1666) for some 90 years. Finally parcelled out to Alain Martin, its connection with the writings of Empedocles was announced in April 1994 (2 n. 3). The contents of 1665-1666 consist of 52 fragmentary pieces which Martin and Primavesi (henceforth = M.-P.) have organized into six 'ensembles' (designated as **a**, **b**, **c**, **d**, **f**, **g**), together with several isolated pieces (2-7). From this assortment, M.-P. believe that they can reconstruct '74 (+?)' lines of Empedoclean hexameter ('complets ou lacunaires'), 25 of which show points of contact with the indirect tradition (20 are identical), the remainder of which were previously unknown (99f.). What is more, this text, which is dated on paleographic grounds to the first century AD (13-5), and which certainly appears to be a scholar's text (including sigla, corrections, and variants; 20-5), is said by the authors to represent the direct tradition (100-3). That is, it is neither a commentary (like *P.Derv.*), nor derived from some type of *florilegium*, but is claimed to be the remnant of an actual bookroll that originally contained (presumably) the whole of Empedocles' poem. If this is correct, then the Strasburg Empedocles is a major find. Not only does it present us with our earliest evidence for the text of Empedocles (and at several significant points corrects the indirect tradition; see, e.g., 297ff. ad DK 31B139), it supplies us with what is virtually the first, and certainly the fullest direct transmission of any major Presocratic author (101f.).

This *editio princeps* is meticulously produced. It includes a reconstructed text, translations, exhaustive commentary (159-323), plates, appendices, detailed indices, and a lengthy introduction (1-119), with English summary (339-48). The authors' conclusions, however, will in some points prove controversial.¹

The papyrus appears to support many of the traditional claims made for Empedocles' cosmogony. Cosmic alternation between the unity of the Sphere and its maximal dissolution under Strife is cyclical (cp. Pl. *Soph.* 242E 4ff.; Ar. *Met.* 985a25ff., *Phys.* 250b26ff.). At the point of maximal separation, the great elemental masses are organized into concentric spheres possessed of a (presumably) rotary motion (71ff., 88). Love is compressed into the center (see below), and is not driven out to the periphery (91ff.). Importantly, there is new evidence of a double zoogony (**a** [i].7 - [ii].17; see M.-P., 55ff., 75-82, 186ff.) that is in accord with the four stages described by Aët. 5.19.5 (*Dox. Gr.* 430.21ff. = DK 31A 72). Our world falls within the fourth and final stage, prior to the ultimate triumph of Strife (89, 95ff., 283f.).

Now, while the indirect tradition had on several occasions in its account of the Empedoclean cosmogony used the neuter participle *συνερχόμεν* to describe the process of the unification of the elements under the increasing influence of Love (DK 31B 17.7f.; 20.2; 26.5; cp. 35.5), the papyrus gives at several points, in similar or identical contexts, the first person plural *συνερχόμεθ* (**a** [i].6; **a** [ii].17 [*εἰσ-ρρχόμεθ*]; **c**3 [= B20.2]; cp. **a** [ii].20). At **a** (i).6 (cp. B26.5), and apparently (277) also at **c**3, this final *θ* is corrected by a second hand *supra lineam* to the *ν* of the indirect tradition. Such a repetitive error, admittedly, is not likely to be accidental (91) and M.-P. believe that both readings are genuine variants: i.e., that the correction

¹ See also O. Primavesi, *Empedokles-Studien: Der Strassburger Papyrus und die indirekte Überlieferung* (forthcoming); also *Elenchos* 19.2, 1998 (special issue); *Mnemosyne* 52, 1999, 525-44 (van der Ben).

at issue was introduced by the second hand through collation with another manuscript tradition (93f.). But the authors insist that the first person plural, which they deem the *lectio difficilior*, is the correct reading ('la leçon authentique') for Empedocles. **a** (ii).17, which occurs just before Love (Φιλότης) comes into the center (μέση) of the eddy as Strife completes its domination (see **a** [ii].18-20; cp. DK 31B 35.3-5), as reconstructed, reads: 'and we were coming together to the middle places, so as to be only one' (μεσάτους τ' εἰσηρχόμεθ' ἐν μόνον εἶναι). Assuming these two 'centers' to coincide, the authors infer that this 'we' is precisely those same particles of Love that will presently seize the center of the eddy, and following Cornford, Kahn, O'Brien, and others who identify the δαίμονες of the Καθαρμοί with scattered fragments of Love, M.-P. argue that the 'we' of this passage must be just these very δαίμονες. In the present instance, at the final stage of the world, before its utter dissolution, the destruction of the physical bodies under Strife liberates ('libère') the *daemones* (i.e., the particles of Love) which, thus disincarnate, grab the center of the eddy just as they are about to begin on the process of reunification. In fact, 'leur retour ... dans la petite région centrale où les progrès de la Haine tiennent alors l'Amour confiné, constitue pour ce dernier le signal d'un nouvel essor' (95). Indeed, in all of the passages where the first person plural appears, though the context (as we shall see) is unequivocally cosmogonical, the 'we' points precisely to those δαίμονες otherwise associated principally with the Καθαρμοί. In this way, and on the back of these scattered *thetas*, M.-P. harmonize the doctrines of the *Physics* and the *Purifications*.²

But there is more. Ensemble **a** (see Planche III) preserves portions of two columns of writing: portions of the last nine lines of a left-hand column (= **a** [i]) and of all thirty lines of a right-hand column (= **a** [ii]). By a lucky chance, **a** (i).1-5 coincide with B17.30-35. We may therefore assume 28 lines (omitting B17.9) prior to the start of our fragment. We thus possess 68 continuous lines of text. Now, *Simpl. In Phys.* 157.25-27 Diels ascribes B17 to Book I of the *Physics* (οὕτως ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῶν Φυσικῶν παραδίδωσι). Furthermore, a stichometric notation just to the left of the right-hand column of **a** indicates that **a** (ii).30 is, in fact, line 300 (21f.). And so, assuming that we are indeed dealing with a direct transmission of the text of Empedocles' poem, M.-P. believe it certain that we now possess, relatively intact, vv. 233-300 of Bk. I of the *Physics*. So what precedes? B17 looks much like the start of the cosmogony (δίπλ' ἐρέω κτλ.) and is usually taken as such. Consequently, following Sedley (*GRBS* 30, 1989, 269-96), M.-P. suggest (111-4) that v. 233 was preceded by a lengthy proem. Moreover, the casual allusion to *daemones* which M.-P. find embedded in **a** require that the reader be prepared, prior to **a**, by some account of the demonology. Hence, with van der Ben, M.-P. would place B115 (ascribed by Diels and others to the Καθαρμοί), together with many, if not all, of the other fragments dealing with the demonology (cp. 118f.), into this 'proem' of the *Physics*.

In light of the content of DK 31 B112, and Diogenes' referral of it to the opening of the *Purifications* (8.54 αὐτὸς ἐναρχόμενος τῶν Καθαρμῶν), M.-P. are not willing

² On this last point, however, cp. H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (1935), 294 n. 15.

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to deny the existence of two separate poems. After all, both titles are well attested. Their conclusion is rather: 'Quoi qu'il en soit de la relation entre les deux titres, Empédocle n'a développé qu'une doctrine, dont le papyrus, par une rencontre heureuse avec la recherche récente, concourt à restituer à la fois la diversité et la cohérence' (119). However one judges the specifics of their case, students of the Presocratics will appreciate the clarity and thoroughness of this valuable edition.

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